

NHL: Ovechkin scoring spree sparks Caps' hot start **Page 48**

MOVIES: Hugh Grant a great bad guy **Page 16**

MUSIC: Pixies' frontman embraces outsider role **Page 28**

EUROPE
& PACIFIC
WEEKEND
EDITION

GAMES
Call of Duty:
Black Ops 6
Page 15

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

stripes.com

Volume 83 Edition 147 ©SS 2024

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2024

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

\$1.00

World prepares for Trump 2.0

China is bracing for fresh tensions over trade, tech, Taiwan

By SIMINA MISTREANU
Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — The first time China faced Donald Trump in the White House, there was a trade war, a breach of protocol involving Taiwan's former leader, and a president-to-president bromance that turned sour.

As President-elect Trump prepares to start his second term in office, China is bracing for unpredictability in its ties with the U.S. and renewed tensions over trade, technology and Taiwan.

A new tariff war looms

Perhaps the biggest consequence for China — if Trump stays true to his campaign promises — is his threat to slap blanket 60% tariffs on all Chinese exports to the U.S.

Tariffs like that would be a blow to China's already unstable economy, which is suffering from high youth unemployment, a lengthy property slump and government debt. A 60% duty on Chinese imports could shave off 2.5 percentage points, or about half, of China's projected economic growth, according to an analysis published earlier this year by UBS.

During Trump's previous term, the U.S. imposed tariffs on more than \$360 billion of Chinese prod-

SEE CHINA ON PAGE 7

RELATED

US allies in Asia congratulate president-elect
Page 7



OLEG PETRASIUK, 24TH MECHANIZED BRIGADE PRESS SERVICE/AP

Ukrainian servicemen work on their tactical skills at the training field in Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Wednesday. President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to end the war, but that could mean Ukraine ceding land to Russia and suspending NATO ambitions for at least 20 years.

Ukraine cease-fire could include long delay in NATO bid, land concessions

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — President-elect Donald Trump's team is considering a plan that would see European troops in charge of a demilitarized zone in Ukraine, where the U.S. would continue to provide arms in exchange for Kyiv giving up sizable territory and its NATO ambitions.

The proposal, reported by The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday, is one of several being

RELATED

European leaders assess another term with Trump
Page 3

batted around by Trump advisers tasked with coming up with a plan to negotiate an end to Russia's war in Ukraine.

Kyiv has thus far ruled out giving up its claim to Crimea, which was forcibly annexed by Russia in 2014, or to the land Russian forces overran in the aftermath of the 2022 invasion.

But Trump has vowed to bring about an end to the war on day one of his presidency, which comes when he is inaugurated Jan. 20.

The Trump administration's approach to dealing with Ukraine and Washington's han-

SEE UKRAINE ON PAGE 3

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES									
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel					
Germany	\$3.478	\$4.025	\$4.386	\$3.945	Azores	..	..	\$4.241	..
Change in price	-2.8 cents	-3.8 cents	-3.5 cents	-3.7 cents	Change in price	..	..	-3.5 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.462	\$5.000	\$4.698	Turkey	..	..	\$4.057	\$4.321*
Change in price	..	-4.2 cents	-4.7 cents	+2.1 cents	Change in price	..	..	-0.6 cents	-3.5 cents
U.K.	..	\$4.025	\$4.386	\$3.945	Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective Nov. 8. The change in price is from Nov. 1.				
Change in price	..	-3.8 cents	-3.5 cents	-3.7 cents					

PACIFIC GAS PRICES									
Pacific gas prices were not available before press time.									

EXCHANGE RATES													
Military rates													
Euro costs (Nov. 8)	0.91	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8726										
British pound (Nov. 8)	\$1.26	Thailand (Baht)	34.00										
Japanese yen (Nov. 8)	148.00	Turkey (NewLira)	34.2390										
South Korean won (Nov. 8)	1366.00												
Commercial rates													
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769	(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 <table><tr><td>Prime rate</td><td>8.00</td></tr><tr><td>Interest Rates Discount rate</td><td>5.00</td></tr><tr><td>Federal funds market rate</td><td>4.83</td></tr><tr><td>3-month bill</td><td>4.55</td></tr><tr><td>30-year bond</td><td>4.61</td></tr></table>		Prime rate	8.00	Interest Rates Discount rate	5.00	Federal funds market rate	4.83	3-month bill	4.55	30-year bond	4.61
Prime rate	8.00												
Interest Rates Discount rate	5.00												
Federal funds market rate	4.83												
3-month bill	4.55												
30-year bond	4.61												
Britain (Pound)	1.2992												
Canada (Dollar)	1.3860												
China (Yuan)	7.1461												
Denmark (Krone)	6.8998												
Egypt (Pound)	49.2720												
Euro	0.9251												
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7715												
Hungary (Forint)	373.90												
Israel (Shekel)	3.7203												
Japan (Yen)	153.24												
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3067												
Norway (Krone)	10.8548												
Philippines (Peso)	58.41												
Poland (Zloty)	3.99												
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7560												
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3194												
South Korea (Won)	1385.04												

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

FRIDAY IN EUROPE

SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC

TODAY
IN STRIPES

Classified 46
Comics 34,38-39
Crossword 34,38-39
Faces 35
Opinion 40
Sports 41-48

STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us,
wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

EUROPE

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

STARS AND STRIPES

SHOW US YOUR STRIPES

Show us your Stripes! Send in a picture reading your favorite Stripes publication and be entered to win a PS5!

Scan the QR code to submit your photo or visit www.stripes.com/show.

WIN A PLAYSTATION 5

MILITARY

50 Europe leaders assess future with Trump

BY RAF CASERT AND JUSTIN SPIKE
Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary — Around 50 European leaders on Thursday called for a stronger defense posture across the continent that no longer necessitates a fundamental dependence on Washington as they gave a guarded welcome to incoming President Donald Trump.

The European Political Community summit on Thursday in Hungary’s capital Budapest reassessed trans-Atlantic relations in the hope that Donald Trump’s second U.S. presidency will avoid the strife of his first administration.

“He was elected by the American people. He will defend the

American interests,” French President Emmanuel Macron told the other leaders, adding that it was not the role of European Union leaders to “comment on the election ... to wonder if it is good or not.”

“The question is whether we are willing to defend the European interest. It is the only question. It is our priority,” Macron said.

Time and again, leaders stepped up to say European defense efforts should be increased.

During his 2017-21 presidency, Trump strongly pushed the European NATO allies to spend more on defense, up to and beyond 2% of gross domestic product, and to be less reliant on U.S. military cover. That point has totally sunk in.

“He was the one in NATO who stimulated us to move over the 2%. And now, also thanks to him, NATO, if you take out the numbers of the U.S., is above the 2%,” NATO chief Mark Rutte said.

Charles Michel, the council president of the 27-nation EU, agreed that the continent needed to become less reliant on the United States.

“We have to be more masters of our destiny,” he said. “Not because of Donald Trump or Kamala Harris, but because of our children.”

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said it was “time to wake up from our geopolitical naivete and to realize that we need to commit additional resources in order to be able to address major

challenges. It is a (question of) competitiveness and a European defense.”

During his election campaign, Trump threatened anything from a trade war with Europe to a withdrawal from NATO commitments and a fundamental shift of support for Ukraine in its war with Russia — all issues that could have groundbreaking consequences for nations across Europe.

“Of course he said a lot of things during the campaign,” said Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof, adding they won’t all be appearing in his official policies.

“Transatlantic cooperation is of the utmost importance both for the U.S. and European interests.”

For now, European leaders hope a new beginning holds the

promise of smoother relations.

Rutte, who was Dutch prime minister during Trump’s first presidency, said, “I worked with him very well for four years. He is extremely clear about what he wants.”

“He understands that you have to deal with each other to come to joint positions. And I think we can do that.”

And Rutte insisted that the challenges posed by Russia in Ukraine affected both sides of the Atlantic.

“Russia is delivering the latest technology into North Korea in return for North Korean help with the war against Ukraine. And this is a threat not only to the European part of NATO, but also to the U.S. mainland,” he said as he arrived at the summit.

Ukraine: Trump’s team considers plan for demilitarized zone to bring war to end

FROM PAGE 1

dling of the war amounts to a reversal of President Joe Biden’s long-stated promise to stick with Ukraine as long as it takes.

All the plans being looked at call for the war to be frozen along current battle lines, which have Russia holding about 20% of Ukrainian territory.

Altogether, the occupied territory amounts to an area roughly the size of Pennsylvania.

The proposals also require Ukraine to suspend its NATO membership ambitions, with one postponing any such move for at least 20 years, the Wall Street Journal reported.

In return, the U.S. would continue to deliver large supplies of arms to Ukraine’s military to help deter potential future invasions.

Meanwhile, Russia and Ukraine would need to agree to an 800-mile demilitarized zone policed by allies in Europe, with no U.S. forces involved, the Journal reported.

“We can do training and other support but the barrel of the gun is going to be European,” a member of Trump’s team told the Journal, speaking on condition of anonymity. “We are not sending American men and women to uphold peace in Ukraine. And we are not paying for it. Get the Poles, Germans, British and French to do it.”

It’s unclear whether Russia would have any interest in such a deal. But Ukrainian neutrality and a demilitarized zone monitored by a United Nations peacekeeping force were among the ideas that had traction among a wide range

of former Russian diplomats and analysts cited in a story by Foreign Policy Magazine in August.

Now in its third year, Russia has suffered hundreds of thousands of casualties during the war that was mismanaged by its battle commanders at the outset.

In recent months, Russia has made incremental gains by overtaking outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian forces. Russian President Vladimir Putin also put the country on a wartime economy, which has ramped up its industrial base to replace weaponry lost during the war.

A deal that has Russia gaining Ukrainian territory is certain to upset many allies in NATO who could see such an arrangement as a victory for Moscow.

Still, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is in a difficult spot. European allies aren’t in a position to make up the difference if the United States stops arming Ukraine and Zelenskyy refuses a peace deal.

Without sufficient arms and



EMBASSY OF UKRAINE IN THE USA/Facebook

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump in New York on Sept. 27.

ammunition, Ukrainian forces would be even more exposed.

“Strong and unwavering U.S. leadership is vital for the world and for a just peace,” Zelenskyy said Wednesday after a congratulatory phone call with Trump.

Wicker set to be chairman of Senate armed services panel

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Republican Roger Wicker of Mississippi, a staunch ally of Ukraine and proponent of greater military spending, is set to become the next chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Wicker won reelection to the Senate on Tuesday night. With the Republican takeover of the upper chamber, he is in line next year to lead the panel that oversees the Defense Department and helps set defense policy.

A former Air Force officer, Wicker became the committee’s most senior Republican in 2023 following the retirement of former Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla. The majority party member with the

greatest seniority traditionally serves as chairman.

“I’ll become chairman, and it will just give me another opportunity, a more significant opportunity, to back our military,” Wicker told WDAM 7 news in Mississippi as he campaigned last weekend.

Wicker was the driving force behind a proposal to raise President Joe Biden’s 2025 defense budget request by \$55 billion and successfully pushed the Senate Armed Services panel to agree to a \$25 billion hike.

He also laid out a plan in the spring that called for a “generational investment” in the U.S. military, including boosting defense spending to 5% of the gross domestic product in the next five to seven years.

“We’re not where we need to be in our Navy and our Air Force, and we don’t compensate our men and women in uniform as we should,” Wicker said Tuesday night in an interview with Mississippi’s WAPT News. “That’s going to be an opportunity for me as chairman of the Armed Services Committee.”

Under Wicker’s blueprint, the Navy’s fleet would grow to 357 ships by 2035, and the Air Force would buy at least 340 additional aircraft in five years. He also recommends more troops in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region in response to Russia’s war in Ukraine and Chinese aggression.

Wicker is poised to take over the chairmanship from Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., who has led the pan-

el since 2021. The triumph of Republicans in Tuesday’s election will give the United States the opportunity to “go back to [former President] Ronald Reagan’s concept of peace through strength,” Wicker told WAPT.

He said he would work across the aisle to build up the military “so we can stay out of war” and deter Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

“Peace through strength means that we tell this axis of aggressors, ‘We’re so powerful you won’t take us on,’ and so we have strength that leads to peace,” he told WAPT. “It keeps us out of war by having a strong military.”

Wicker is expected to continue his strong support for Ukraine even as members of his party in-

creasingly bristle at U.S. commitments to the embattled country. Incoming President Donald Trump has described Ukraine as a burden and said he would quickly seek a negotiated end to the conflict.

But Wicker last month pressed Biden to surge shipments of weapons to Ukraine in his last months in office and lift restrictions on the use of U.S.-provided weapons deep inside Russian territory. He sharply criticized the pace of equipment deliveries.

“I am frustrated — and mystified — that your administration has accomplished so little in the last three months regarding the war in Ukraine,” Wicker wrote to Biden. “You seem poised to leave the next president a weak hand.”

MILITARY

Germany arrests American on spying claims

Associated Press

BERLIN — Germany’s federal prosecutor office said it arrested an American citizen on Thursday who allegedly spied for China.

The office said that the suspect, who was only identified as Martin D., was arrested in Frankfurt and that his home was being searched.

The accused, who until recently worked for the U.S. Armed Forces in Germany, is strongly suspected of having agreed to act as an in-

Prosecutor: US citizen suspected of providing intelligence for Chinese government

telligence agent for a foreign secret service, the statement said.

Earlier this year, he contacted Chinese government agencies and offered to transmit sensitive information from the U.S. military to a Chinese intelligence service, according to an investigation by Germany’s domestic intelligence service.

He had obtained the information in question in the course of his work in the U.S. Army, the prosecutor’s statement said, without giving any further information.

German news agency dpa reported it appeared the suspect had not managed to transfer any data to Chinese authorities before the arrest.

German investigators have exposed several people suspected of spying for China this year.

Last month, German authorities arrested a Chinese national accused of passing information on a major air freight hub to a man who is suspected of spying for China.

And in April, a man who worked for a prominent German far-right lawmaker in the European Parliament was arrested on suspicion of spying for China.

News of that arrest came a day after three Germans suspected of spying for China and arranging to transfer information on technology with potential military uses were arrested in a separate case.



JEREMY STILLWAGNER/Stars and Stripes

This dilapidated cherry blossom tree was cut down and removed from the east side of Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Oct. 18.

Cherry blossom trees cut down for safety reasons at Yokota base

BY JEREMY STILLWAGNER
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Several of the iconic cherry blossom trees that make this airlift hub in western Tokyo a popular spot to visit each spring have gone missing.

Some trees that line McGuire Avenue just inside the east gate were deemed too old, unhealthy or deteriorated and subsequently removed, Master Sgt. Nathan Allen, spokesman for the 374th Airlift Wing, told Stars and Stripes via email this week.



STARS AND STRIPES

Sakura bloom on the east side of Yokota Air Base, Japan, on March 27, 2018.

Seven trees have been removed since Oct. 18. Removing the trees is not part of any specific project and is carried out as needed, according to Allen.

The air base opens once a year for its annual cherry blossom festival on McGuire Avenue, where crowds gather to admire the bloom.

Removing unhealthy trees is nothing new in Japan. Tokyo has approximately 850 miles of roads that are adorned with roadside trees that are inspected regularly, according to the Tokyo Bureau of Construction’s website.

Trees found to be unhealthy or

weak are rehabilitated or cut down to ensure they don’t topple onto the roadways during storms and potentially block emergency vehicles.

The potential hazards of weak roadside trees are no different on U.S. military installations.

“Removing unhealthy trees on the east side ensures safety for the community, as weak and damaged trees can pose serious risks to pedestrians and vehicles,” Allen said. “Additionally, removing dilapidated trees helps protect local ecosystems and contributes to overall environmental health.”

Cutting can prevent the spread of disease and pests to neighboring trees. Yokota has previously removed trees to stem pests.

In April, the Air Force faced a swarm of ambrosia beetles that plagued thousands of trees across its facilities in western Tokyo. The beetles carried a fungus that weakened the wood and allowed the beetle larvae to get inside and grow.

Because of the infestation, 80 trees were cut down and removed from Yokota and the nearby Tama Hills Recreation Area, popular for its 18-hole golf course.

Addressing unhealthy trees on the base prevents potential hazards from spreading to surrounding areas, Allen said.

Replacement trees were planted after the beetles were dealt with, but it is uncertain when the recently cut cherry trees will be replaced.

“The decision to replant new trees are still being discussed,” Allen wrote. “Experts from the 374th Civil Engineer Squadron are formulating a plan for future planting along McGuire Avenue for the 374th Airlift Wing commander’s approval.”

Guardisman who fled UK after major crash sentenced to prison

BY LORETTO MORRIS
Stars and Stripes

MILDENHALL, England — A Texas Army National Guardsman who severely injured a nurse last year in a head-on collision in England was sentenced Thursday by a British court to two years and eight months in prison.

Spc. Isac Alejandro Calderon’s appearance in Worcester Crown Court brought an end to a case that included his extradition from the United States.

Calderon, 23, “tried to escape justice for his action behind the wheel by fleeing the country,” Jennifer Winzor of the Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement Thursday. “Those who commit offenses in the U.K. cannot simply expect to walk away without accountability.”

In October, Calderon pleaded guilty to causing serious injury by dangerous driving, a charge that stemmed from the crash near Shucknall on July 31, 2023.

At his sentencing hearing, Judge Martin Jackson described Calderon’s actions as appalling and said his roadway behavior “was the sort of driving one expects from arrogant, young boy racers,” the BBC reported.

Calderon’s first name has been spelled Issac and Isaac in court statements and media reports. A Sky News report in July displayed a picture of his military-issued common access card, which says Isac.

Efforts to reach the Texas National Guard to ask what unit Calderon was assigned to at the time were not successful.

The collision occurred on the A4103 in a rural area less than 30 miles from the Welsh border. Elizabeth Donowho, a British nurse whose car was struck by Calderon, sustained broken bones and was temporarily unable to walk as a result.

Calderon also was injured in

the crash and had to be treated in a hospital, West Mercia police said in an October statement to Stars and Stripes.

After that, he showed up for interviews with authorities, so he was not arrested and was allowed to keep his passport, according to the statement.

Calderon said during a police interview that he didn’t plan to return to the U.S. until March 2024. But on Nov. 25, 2023, he left the country just before a scheduled court date, the BBC reported, citing court documents from the extradition hearing.

An arrest warrant was issued in December 2023. Calderon said he went back to Texas because he didn’t have enough money to remain in England, according to the court filings.

Witnesses saw him passing vehicles at high speeds before the crash, the BBC and Sky News reported, citing court documents. Sky News added that he told authorities that he had been vaping in the car and that his driving was “definitely not safe.”

Calderon also said he was “not at all” familiar with British road markings and did not know that solid white lines designate a no-passing zone, Sky News said, citing court documents.

In August, U.S. Magistrate Judge Peter Bray ordered Calderon’s extradition, concluding that there was “virtually no possibility that Calderon will appear in court in the U.K. of his own (volition),” the BBC reported.

It’s unclear what Calderon was doing in England at the time. Police told Donowho that he’d been visiting the British special operations base in nearby Herefordshire, according to Sky News.

But that report also said Calderon told authorities he was traveling for “personal activities” when the crash happened.

MILITARY

Army veteran killed in chase was shot 25 times

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — An Army veteran who was killed last month by police after a high-speed car chase had 25 gunshot wounds in his head, arms, legs and torso, according to an autopsy report.

Jeremy Culp, 32, was shot by police after the armed veteran crashed his truck and attempted to surrender to authorities. His death is considered a homicide, according to Forensic Medical of Texas, which performed the autopsy at the request of Hershel Stagner, a justice of the peace in Orange County, where the incident took place.



Culp

The toxicology results requested as part of the autopsy remain pending, according to the one-page report.

Culp, who deployed to Afghanistan in 2012 with the 82nd Airborne Division, had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury from his service. Though he initially struggled to return to civilian life, his family said he had been doing well managing his symptoms in recent years.

However, Culp woke up Oct. 15 clearly agitated and hypervigilant. Neighbors in Bridge City, where Culp lived, called police after he fired shots from inside his home and at other homes. He left the area in his white truck and hit a police officer on a motorcycle as he crossed a narrow bridge.

Police from five agencies were on scene when Culp crashed his truck near a middle school in Orange, roughly 9 miles from his

home in southeast Texas. Video recorded by a bystander of the encounter shows Culp exit his truck with a semiautomatic rifle, lay the weapon down and then lie on his stomach.

Officials said the veteran then reached back for the weapon, so police opened fire. The video is unclear of what exactly happened in that moment.

Police have not said how many officers were involved or how many rounds were fired. Channel 12 News in Beaumont reported at least five officers from three agencies were placed on leave after the shooting.

Daren Johns, the Army veteran's uncle, said 25 shots "seem really excessive," and he would like to see video taken through body-worn cameras of police officers on the scene.

The Orange Police Department denied a request to release the footage citing the ongoing investigation. The Texas Department of Public Safety also denied a request for video footage collected by state police at the scene. The decision on whether to release the footage sits with the Attorney General's Office.

Michael Sierra-Arévalo, a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, said it is not new to see police fire dozens of rounds during such an incident, even in instances where the person is not armed.

"Keep in mind, 25 wounds would strongly suggest that officers fired many more than 25 shots because most of the shots fired by officers in the U.S. do not hit their intended target," said Sierra-Arévalo, who wrote the book "The Danger Imperative," which looks at police culture and the use of violence.

Even if body-camera video shows Culp did not reach for his weapon, it might not make a difference in whether any officers could be held criminally liable for Culp's death, he said.

"It's going to be difficult, barring some very clear evidence that a reasonable officer would not

have perceived that Mr. Culp was reaching for his firearm or had a firearm in his possession, not to find the shooting reasonable," Sierra-Arévalo said.

Past cases have shown the standard of reasonable to be wide ranging and open to an officer's perception of a threat rather than

an actual threat, he said.

The investigation into Culp's death remains open with the Texas Rangers, a state police force that often investigates police involved shootings across the state. The agency did not respond Wednesday with an update on the investigation.



Worldwide Health Coverage Made Simple

Foreign Service Benefit Plan

Wherever your federal career takes you, we've got you covered.

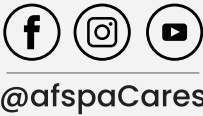
- Competitive Premiums
- Comprehensive worldwide medical coverage
- In and out-of-network benefits
- Wellness Incentives

2025 Open Season
(Monday, Nov 11 – Monday, Dec 9)

Check your eligibility now!
afspa.org/openseason



FEHB High Option Plan open to eligible Federal Civilian employees. All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the Foreign Service Benefit Plan's Federal brochure (RI 72-001)



Commander of San Diego leadership school is fired

By CAITLYN BURCHETT
Stars and Stripes

The Navy fired the commanding officer of its San Diego division of the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center, the service announced Wednesday.

Capt. Lester Brown Jr. was relieved Wednesday by Capt. Shawn Bailey, commander of the Navy Leadership and Ethics Center headquarters. Brown was relieved "due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command," the Navy said in a statement.

The U.S. military routinely cites only a vague "loss of confidence" when removing commanders and other leaders from authority positions.

The leadership and ethics cen-

ter is tasked with providing training and education for officers not yet in command as well as courses for the Navy's enlisted leader development program. It is headquartered at Naval Station Newport, R.I., with subordinate locations in San Diego and Virginia Beach, Va.

Brown assumed command of the San Diego command in September 2022. His biography was removed from the Navy's website by Wednesday afternoon.

Brown was reassigned to the Pacific Fleet's Naval Surface Force. Capt. Richard Zeber from the leadership school headquarters in Rhode Island was temporarily assigned to fill Brown's role in San Diego.

MIDEAST

Trump vow for Mideast peace to face test

BY TIA GOLDENBERG
 Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Donald Trump will return to the U.S. presidency at a time of unprecedented conflict and uncertainty in the Middle East. He has vowed to fix it.

But Trump’s history of strong support for Israel coupled with his insistence during the campaign that the war in Gaza should end quickly, the isolationist forces in the Republican party and his penchant for unpredictability raise a mountain of questions over how his second presidency will affect the region at this pivotal moment.

Barring the achievement of elusive cease-fires before the inauguration, Trump will ascend to the highest office in the country as a brutal war in Gaza still rages and Israel presses its offensive against the Lebanese Hezbollah militant group. A conflagration between Iran and Israel shows no signs of abating — nor do Israel’s conflicts with Iranian proxies in Iraq and Yemen — and Iran’s nuclear program remains a top concern for Israel.

Throughout his campaign, Trump has vowed to bring peace to the region.

“Get it over with and let’s get back to peace and stop killing people,” Trump said of the conflict in Gaza in an interview with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt in April.

Israel launched the war in response to Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, when militants killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250, with dozens still in Gaza. Israel’s offensive has killed more than 43,000 people, according to Gaza health officials, whose



SEBASTIAN SCHEINER/AP

President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shake hands at the Israel museum in Jerusalem in May 2017.

count does not distinguish between civilians and fighters, though they say more than half of the dead are women and children.

The war has ignited a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, driven Israel into increasing international isolation, with two world courts examining charges of war crimes, and has sparked a wave of protests on American campuses that have fueled debate over the U.S. role as Israel’s key military and diplomatic supporter.

International mediators from the U.S.,

Egypt and Qatar have tried unsuccessfully to bring about a lasting cease-fire.

Yet Trump has repeatedly urged to Israel “finish the job” and destroy Hamas — but hasn’t said how.

“Does finish the job mean you have a free hand to act in dealing with the remnants of Hamas? Or does finish the job mean the war has to come to an end now?” asked David Makovsky, director of the program on Arab-Israel Relations at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. “That’s part of the

enigmas here.”

Uncertainty also shrouds how Trump will engage with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. During his first term, Trump offered broad support for the Israeli leader’s hard-line policies, including unilaterally withdrawing from a deal meant to rein in Iran’s nuclear program that Netanyahu long opposed.

Trump also recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, bolstering its claim over the disputed city, and Israel’s annexation of the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war. He presented a peace plan with the Palestinians widely seen as favoring Israel. Settlement-building in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, seen as an obstacle to Palestinian statehood, surged under his presidency.

Trump also helped secure agreements between Israel and four Arab countries to normalize ties that were not contingent on progress toward Palestinian statehood — a major victory for Netanyahu. The Israeli leader hopes to replicate those successes with a deal with Saudi Arabia.

The leaders had a falling out after Netanyahu congratulated President Joe Biden following the 2020 elections — a move Trump viewed as a slight from his loyal ally, though Netanyahu visited Trump in Florida this year.

Under Biden, the U.S. has been critical at times and slowed some weapons deliveries in response to Israel’s conduct in Gaza. Netanyahu is likely hoping that Trump’s return will loosen any restraints on Israel to pursue its war goals.

For many Iranians, Trump’s win intensifies worries about conflict

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iranians, like many around the world, are divided on what Donald Trump’s next presidency will bring: Some foresee an all-out war between Tehran and Washington, particularly as other conflicts rage in the region. Others hold out hope that America’s 47th president might engage in unexpected diplomacy as he did with North Korea.

But nearly all believe something will change in the U.S.-Iran relationship.

“Trump will use tougher levers against Iran,” warned Ahmad Zeidabadi, a political analyst. “Iranian officials will keep rejecting him and that could make him escalate his pressure.”

And while Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has final say on all matters of state, has repeatedly expressed his own disgust with Trump, Iran’s new reformist president has kept the door open to talks with Trump to seek relief from international sanctions to buoy a cratering economy. The Iranian rial, in a free fall for years, hit its lowest value against the dollar on Wednesday before slightly recovering.

The U.S. and Iran have had an adversarial relationship since Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution and the takeover of the U.S. Embassy and 444-day hostage crisis that followed.

Trump’s first term in office was marked by a particularly troubled period, when he pursued a policy of “maximum pressure” against Tehran. He unilaterally withdrew America from Iran’s nuclear deal with world powers, leading to the sanctions hobbling the economy, and ordered the killing of the country’s top general.

Confirmation of Trump’s reelection came too late for most Wednesday papers. On Thursday, hewing to the official line, many decried the victory. The newspaper Hamshahri put an artist’s rendering of Trump in an orange prison jumpsuit and handcuffs under the headline: “Return of the murderer.” The hard-line Javan newspaper said it was “back to the crime scene.”

On the streets of Tehran, opinions varied more. Some feared a return to the low points of Trump’s first presidency. Others expressed joy.

“I’m very happy that Trump has won because he is really a powerful man,” said Fatemeh Kaveh, 40. “I see him as a role model in terms of

personality, and I always watch his stories (on social media), and I believe in him. I’m very happy he won.”

But the one opinion that matters above all in Iran’s theocracy is that of Khamenei, who has been the country’s paramount ruler for six American presidencies. He has made his views on Trump clear.

“I do not consider Trump as a person worth exchanging any message with and I have no answer for him, nor will I respond to him in the future,” Khamenei told the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2019. Those comments came a year after Trump withdrew the U.S. from the nuclear accord, which offered Iran relief from international sanctions in return for restrictions meant to prevent it from building an atomic bomb.

Then came Trump’s decision to assassinate Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani, a prominent figure within Iran, in a 2020 drone strike in Baghdad.

Khamenei’s personal website still hosts a video that imagines Trump being killed in an Iranian drone strike as he plays golf with former U.S. Secretary of State and CIA chief Mike Pompeo.

A new law allows Israel to deport attackers’ relatives

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel’s parliament passed a law early Thursday that would allow it to deport family members of Palestinian attackers, including the country’s own citizens, to the war-ravaged Gaza Strip or other locations.

The law, which was championed by members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud party and his far-right allies, passed with a 61-41 vote. But legal experts said that any attempt to implement it would likely lead to it being struck down by Israeli courts.

It would apply to Palestinian citizens of Israel and residents of annexed east Jerusalem who knew about their family members’ attacks beforehand or who “express support or identification with the act of terrorism.”

They would be deported, either to the Gaza Strip or another location, for a period of seven to 20 years. The Israel-Hamas war is still raging in Gaza, where tens of thousands have been killed and most of the population has been internally displaced, often multiple times.

It was unclear if it would apply in the occupied West Bank, where

Israel already has a long-standing policy of demolishing the family homes of attackers. Palestinians have carried out scores of stabbing, shooting and car-ramming attacks against Israelis in recent years.

Oded Feller, a legal adviser to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, dismissed the law as “populist nonsense.” He said it was unlikely to be applied, because there is no legal way for the Interior Ministry to send an Israeli citizen to another country or to Gaza.

His organization doesn’t plan to challenge the law unless authorities try to enforce it, in which case he expects any court challenge to succeed.

Eran Shamir-Borer, a senior researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute and a former international law expert for the Israeli military, agreed that the law was likely to be struck down by the Supreme Court.

He said that if a resident of east Jerusalem was deported under the law, it could be seen by many in the international community as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, because they view the area as occupied territory, although Israel doesn’t.

PACIFIC

US allies in China's shadow congratulate Trump

BY DAVID CHOI
AND SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — U.S. friends and allies in Asia congratulated President-elect Donald Trump on his victory on the day after his opponent, Democratic candidate Kamala Harris, conceded that the former president won a second term on Tuesday.

Trump's return to the White House in January may bring a change in the United States' approach to foreign policy where conflict with China seems a single collision or stray round away.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, whose government recently struck an early deal with President Joe Biden's administration over the cost to keep 28,500 U.S. troops in the country, expressed optimism over the future of the U.S. alliance.

Yoon phoned Trump with congratulations that day and spoke for about 12 minutes on national security and economic issues, he said at a news conference Thursday.

He said they also discussed North Korea's continuing weapons tests, including an intercontinental ballistic missile launched Oct. 30 that re-



Stars and Stripes

Then-President Donald Trump thanks service members and families for their support and dedication to the mission during a speech at Osan Air Base, South Korea, in June 2019.

portedly exceeded previous performance records.

Trump said the North's actions are difficult to believe and agreed that he and Yoon should meet soon to discuss a way forward, the South Korean president said.

During his first term, Trump frequently complained that South Korea, then under Yoon's predecessor, Moon Jae-in, was paying too little in exchange for the U.S. military pres-

ence and seemed to threaten to withdraw American forces.

"President Trump is a courageous leader who can negotiate peace even with his hostile counterparts," Moon said in a Facebook post Wednesday congratulating Trump for his election victory.

Of all his relationships with foreign leaders, Trump's exchanges with North Korea's Kim Jong Un generated more headlines than any

other, save Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Trump went from promising "fire and fury" for the "little rocket man" to exchanging "love letters" and crossing the Demilitarized Zone with Kim at the Joint Security Area, where the two sides face off.

As of Thursday afternoon, North Korea's state-controlled Korean Central News Agency, had not acknowledged Trump's win.

From Tokyo, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba began a five-minute phone call with Trump at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, according to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs news release.

Ishiba congratulated Trump on his victory and the two confirmed they would work to bring the U.S.-Japan alliance to "new heights," according to a read-out of the call. They also agreed to meet in person at the earliest opportunity that's "convenient for both sides."

Japan, facing a growing and assertive Chinese military, has spent ever greater sums in its defense budget the past several years while seeking tighter bonds and deeper cooperation with its American military partners.

From the Philippines, President

Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said "Trump has won, and the American people have triumphed," in a post on social platform X on Wednesday evening.

"We look forward to working with President Trump on a wide range of issues that will yield mutual benefits for two nations with deep ties, shared beliefs, a common vision, and a long history of working together," Marcos wrote.

Under Biden, the U.S. has repeatedly expressed support for the Philippines, a long-standing ally, as it parries territorial challenges off its western coast from China's coast guard and maritime militia.

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te also offered Trump congratulations. The island democracy faces direct challenges from China, including military exercises that surround and rehearse invasions of the island. Biden in September promised a substantial, \$567 million military aid package to Taiwan.

"I'm confident that the longstanding #Taiwan-US partnership, built on shared values & interests, will continue to serve as a cornerstone for regional stability & lead to greater prosperity for us all," Lai said in a post Thursday on X.

China: History shows both sides gain from cooperation, Xi told Trump

FROM PAGE 1

ucts. That brought Beijing to the negotiating table, and in 2020 the sides signed a trade deal in which China committed to improve intellectual property rights and buy an extra \$200 billion of American goods. A research group a couple of years later showed China had bought essentially none of the goods it had promised.

President Joe Biden retained most of those tariffs and added fresh duties this year on imports including steel, solar cells and electric vehicles.

Tariffs could again serve as a tool to force Beijing back to the negotiating table, said Henry Gao, a law professor at Singapore Management University who focuses on international trade.

"Given the weak economic position of China this time, I think there will be more willingness to talk," he said. "Thus, while the tariff might have some short-term effects on the Chinese economy, the situation might improve once they reach a deal."

Factoring into the trade talks could be Trump's appeals to Chinese President Xi Jinping to help negotiate a resolution to the Ukraine war, which Trump has boasted he'll be able to do quickly, without saying how.

Trump previously sought Xi's help in dealing with North Korea's rogue leader Kim Jong Un. That dynamic could repeat itself, with Trump weighing trade grievances against seeking China's support in global crises, according to Wang Huiyao, founder of the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization.

"China is the largest trading partner of both Russia and Ukraine," Wang wrote in a

recent commentary. "These close economic ties give China a unique opportunity to play a greater role in peace-making efforts."

Willing to go 'crazy' over Taiwan

There is one scenario in which Trump has threatened to impose even higher tariffs — 150% to 200% — on Chinese goods: if China invades Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy that Beijing claims as its own.

The U.S. does not recognize Taiwan as a country, but is its strongest backer and biggest arms provider.

Trump angered Beijing in December 2016 by taking a congratulatory call from Taiwan's then-president Tsai Ing-wen in a breach of diplomatic protocol. No U.S. president had spoken directly to a Taiwanese leader since Washington and Beijing established ties in 1979.

Trump's move created anxiety in China-watching circles, but ultimately, he stuck to supporting the status quo in relations between Taipei and Beijing.

China expects him to continue to do so, said Zhu Feng, dean of the School of International Relations at Nanjing University.

"Will (he) want to turn to support Taiwan independence? It is unlikely," he said.

As for China's repeated threats to annex Taiwan, Trump told The Wall Street Journal last month that he would not have to use military force to prevent a blockade of Taiwan because Xi "respects me and he knows I'm (expletive) crazy."

On the campaign trail, Trump sometimes talked up his personal connection with Xi, which started exuberantly during his first term but soured over disputes about trade

and the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But Trump has also said that Taiwan should pay the U.S. for defending it against China, likening the relationship to insurance. Taiwan spends about 2.5% of its GDP on defense, and purchased hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of U.S. weapons this year.

In a congratulatory message to Trump after his victory, Xi called for the U.S. and China to manage their differences and get along in a new era, according to Chinese state media. History has shown that both sides gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation, Xi said.

Trump has purposely maintained a sense of uncertainty in his relationship with China, said Da Wei, director of the Center for International Security and Strategy at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

"We are clear about the challenges," he said. "As for opportunities, we are yet to see them clearly."

Disputes over chips

During his first term, Trump began targeting Chinese technology firms over security concerns, focusing on large companies like the telecoms giant Huawei. Biden continued in that direction by placing curbs on China's access to advanced semiconductors, which are needed to develop strategic industries such as artificial intelligence.

But Trump has criticized Biden's CHIPS and Science Act, a bipartisan bill that earmarked \$53 billion to build up domestic manufacturing of semiconductors. Currently, Taiwan produces nearly 90% of the world's supply of the most advanced chips.

The island's largest semiconductor man-



SUSAN WALSH/AP

Then-President Donald Trump, left, meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping during a meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Osaka, Japan, in June 2019.

ufacturer, TSMC, expanded production in Arizona, partly to respond to the CHIPS Act, and to be prepared to withstand any other protectionist policies in the U.S., said Shihoko Goto, director of the Indo-Pacific Program at the Wilson Center.

Trump has promised to do away with the CHIPS Act, though critics say that would undermine his campaign to reindustrialize the U.S. The president-elect has also accused Taiwan of "stealing" the chip industry from the U.S. decades ago.

"Rather than providing a silicon shield, Taiwan's dominance in the chip industry could actually be the source of tension between Taipei and Trump, as Taiwan's successes in the chip sector may be seen as having only been possible as a result of the United States being taken advantage of," Goto said.

NATION

Harris allies place blame for loss on Biden

BY AAMER MADHANI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden’s name wasn’t on the ballot, but history will likely remember Kamala Harris’ resounding defeat as his loss too.

As Democrats pick up the pieces after President-elect Donald Trump’s decisive victory, some of the vice president’s backers are expressing frustration that Biden’s decision to seek reelection until this summer — despite long-standing voter concerns about his age and unease about post-pandemic inflation as well as the U.S.-Mexico border — all but sealed his party’s surrender of the White House.

“The biggest onus of this loss is on President Biden,” said Andrew Yang, who ran against Biden in 2020 for the Democratic nomination and endorsed Harris’ unsuccessful run. “If he had stepped down in January instead of July, we may be in a very different place.”

Biden will leave office after leading the United States out of the worst pandemic in a century, galvanizing international support for Ukraine after Russia’s invasion and passing a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill that will affect communities for years to come.

But having run four years ago against Trump to “restore the soul of the country,” Biden will make way after just one term for his immediate predecessor, who overcame two impeachments, a felony conviction and an insurrection launched by his supporters. Trump has pledged to radically reshape the federal government and roll back many of Biden’s priorities.

“Maybe in 20 or 30 years, history will remember Biden for some of these achievements,” said Thom Reilly, co-director of the Center for an Independent and Sustainable Democracy at Arizona State University. “But in the shorter term, I don’t know he escapes the legacy of being the president who beat Donald Trump only to usher in another Donald Trump administration four years later.”

Biden on Thursday avoided directly ad-



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

President Joe Biden departs after speaking in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington on Thursday.

ressing the electorate’s seeming repudiation of his presidency. Instead, he noted that Americans will feel the effects of the administration’s signature legislative efforts for years to come.

“Don’t forget all that we accomplished,” Biden said in a brief Rose Garden address attended by Cabinet members and top aides but not by Harris. “It’s been a historic presidency — not because I am president but because of what we’ve done. What you’ve done.”

He issued a statement shortly after Harris delivered her concession speech Wednesday, praising her for running an “historic campaign” under “extraordinary circumstances.”

Biden aides believe Democrats got caught up in a wave of anti-incumbency in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that upturned governments in democracies around the globe irrespective of ideology. Biden tried for years to counteract the trend before stepping

aside to give Harris a chance, but in hindsight they view the headwinds facing the party in power as having been insurmountable.

Only about 4 in 10 voters in the 2024 presidential election approved of how Biden handled his job as president, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 voters nationwide. Roughly 6 in 10 disapproved, and Donald Trump won a strong majority of those voters who were dissatisfied with Biden.

Some high-ranking Democrats, including three advisers to the Harris campaign, expressed deep frustration with Biden for failing to recognize earlier in the election cycle that he was not up to the challenge. The advisers spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly.

Biden, 81, ended his reelection campaign in July, weeks after an abysmal debate performance sent his party into a spiral and raised questions about whether he still had the mental acuity and stamina to serve as a

credible nominee.

But polling long beforehand showed that many Americans worried about his age. Some 77% of Americans said in August 2023 that Biden was too old to be effective for four more years, according to a poll by the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs.

The president bowed out on July 21 after getting not-so-subtle nudges from Democratic Party powers, including former President Barack Obama and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California. Biden endorsed Harris and handed over his campaign operation to her.

Yang argued that Democratic Party leaders also deserve blame for taking too long to push out Biden. With few exceptions, most notably Minnesota Rep. Dean Phillips, Democrats shied away talking publicly about Biden’s age.

“Why was this not coming from any Democratic leaders?” Yang said. “It’s a lack of courage and independence and an excess of careerism, if I just keep my mouth shut, we’ll just keep on trucking along.”

The campaign was also saddled by anger among some Arab American and young voters over its approach to Israel’s conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon. Sen. Bernie Sanders, an ally of Biden and Harris, said in a statement that Democrats lost the thread on working-class Americans’ concerns.

“Will the big money interests and well-paid consultants who control the Democratic Party learn any real lessons from this disastrous campaign?” the Vermont independent said. “Will they understand the pain and political alienation that tens of millions of Americans are experiencing?”

Democratic National Committee Chair Jaime Harrison took to social media Thursday to push back on Sanders’ critique, saying that Biden was “the most-pro worker President of my lifetime.”

Harris managed to spur far greater enthusiasm than Biden was generating from the party’s base. But she struggled to distinguish how her administration would differ from Biden’s.

Officers at US Capitol on Jan. 6 grapple with Trump’s return

BY JUSTIN PAPP
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The decisive election of Donald Trump on Tuesday sent a clear message to Aquilino Gonell and other officers who protected the Capitol from rioters on Jan. 6, 2021.

“It means that the American people have accepted Jan. 6 as something that could be condoned,” the former Capitol Police sergeant said the morning after Trump won his second, nonconsecutive term, handily beating Vice President Kamala Harris. “They have put Donald Trump above the law. ... He betrayed us. And the vast majority of the American people think that’s OK.”

Gonell has spent the last four years publicly sharing his experiences, one of a handful of officers to do so. They feel the events — when a mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol and assaulted

police in an attempt to stop the certification of election results — have been whitewashed, despite their best attempts to describe the violence. Now they are coming to terms with the reality of another Trump presidency.

“It feels like America said f— you, Mike Fanone. We don’t care about Jan. 6,” said former Metropolitan Police officer Michael Fanone, who was injured during the attack.

Watching America resoundingly elect Trump was a tough pill to swallow, Fanone said. It comes after House Republicans worked to absolve Trump, who falsely claimed the 2020 election was stolen from him, by poking holes in the work of the select committee



Gonell

that investigated the attack of Jan. 6, 2021, in the previous Congress.

And it means the Department of Justice will likely wind down its criminal cases against Trump, including one brought by special counsel Jack Smith related to the president-elect’s attempts to overturn the 2020 election.

“Nobody seems to be willing to hold Donald Trump accountable in any way,” Gonell said. “I think the majority of people in this country saw what happened on Jan. 6. But they seem to have amnesia.”

Gonell and Fanone have each written memoirs detailing their experience and have been vocal critics of Trump. They testified before the select committee in 2021, along with former Capitol Police officer Harry Dunn and MPD officer Daniel Hodges.

This election cycle, Gonell served as a campaign surrogate and played a more active role in

Harris’ presidential campaign, speaking at the Democratic National Convention and appearing in a campaign ad. Fanone, who is no fan of Trump but said he wasn’t inspired by Harris, was not affiliated with the vice president’s campaign. Both are involved with a group called Courage for America, which describes itself as “speaking out against an extremist agenda.”

They suffered physically and psychologically in the aftermath of the Jan. 6 attack, both have said.

Fanone was brutally beaten and shocked in the neck. He suffered a heart attack and a traumatic brain injury and left the force later that year. He said he’s the target of daily harassment and has struggled to find a steady job since then. Earlier this year, after Fanone called Trump “an authoritarian” with a “violence fetish,” his mother’s home was swatted.

He spent much of Wednesday

morning consoling his daughters, who feared Trump might make good on a promise to prosecute his political opponents and target their father.

“I was looking forward to not having to look over my shoulder,” Fanone said. “And now it’s like, you know something really bad is going to happen. It’s exhausting.”

Meanwhile, Trump has repeatedly pledged during his campaign to pardon rioters convicted for their participation in the Jan. 6 attack, a promise that feels like a slap in the face to Gonell.

“Oh, absolutely, I would. If they’re innocent, I would pardon them,” Trump said when asked in July during a panel hosted by the National Association of Black Journalists. “They were convicted by a very tough system.” The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment on that plan.

NATION

‘Sometimes the fight takes a while’

Harris optimistic as she concedes presidential race

By CHRIS MEGERIAN,
DARLENE SUPERVILLE
AND MATT BROWN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Faced with a sweeping rejection by American voters, Kamala Harris conceded the presidential election to Donald Trump on Wednesday and encouraged supporters to continue fighting for their vision of the country.

The Democratic vice president said the battle would continue “in the voting booth, in the courts and in the public square.”

“Sometimes the fight takes a while,” she said at Howard University, her alma mater, where she had hoped to make a victory speech after the election. “That doesn’t mean we won’t win.”

Harris’ decisive defeat shattered hopes that she could rescue Democrats’ chances after President Joe Biden’s reelection effort stalled and she replaced him at the top of the ticket.

She trailed in every battleground state to Trump, a Republican whom she described as an existential danger to the country’s foundational institutions. And Trump appeared on track to win the popular vote for the first time in his three campaigns for the White House — even after two impeachments, felony convictions and his attempt to overturn his previous election loss.

Despite her stark warnings about Trump, Harris reached for optimism on Wednesday.

“It is OK to feel sad and disappointed, but please know it’s going to be OK,” she told supporters as some of them wiped tears from their eyes.

Biden released a statement praising Harris after her speech, saying: “She will continue the fight with purpose, determination, and joy. She will continue to be a champion for all Americans. Above all, she will continue to be a leader our children will look up to for generations to come as she puts her stamp on America’s future.”

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Harris’ running mate, was in the audience with his family. So were Reps. Nancy Pelosi, the former House speaker, and Barbara Lee, both from Harris’ home state of California.

Before her speech, Harris called Trump to congratulate him on his victory. She told the crowd that “we will engage in a peaceful transfer of power,” an implicit reference to Trump’s unwillingness to do the same four years ago.

Some in the audience expressed disappointment that Harris was



STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH/AP

Vice President Kamala Harris gestures as she delivers a concession speech for the 2024 presidential election Wednesday, on the campus of Howard University in Washington. Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Harris’ running mate, was in the audience with his family.

not able to make history as the country’s first Black female president. Harris would also have been first U.S. president of South Asian descent.

Gregory Pate, 38, said he appreciated that Harris said she was “committed to the fight and not looking at this as a permanent defeat, but just another obstacle that we have to go through as Black people.”

“It is OK to feel sad and disappointed, but please know it’s going to be OK.”

Kamala Harris
vice president

“I think it was perfect. I think that it was timely, and it was a message that I came to hear,” said Pate, of Fairfax, Va.

Jay Evans, of Greenbelt, Md., said after Harris’ spoke that he’s wistful for what could have been.

“We’re partly sad, because hearing her speak, she would have been an amazing person to bring the country together and to keep us in a better path,” Evans said.

After Trump lost to Biden, he directed his supporters to march on the U.S. Capitol, leading to a violent insurrection that interrupted the ceremonial certification of the election results.

Now Harris is expected to oversee the same certification process

to finalize Trump’s victory as voters brush off concerns about the future of American democracy and return the Republican former president to the White House.

Biden spoke with Harris and Trump on Wednesday, and he invited the president-elect to meet with him soon.

David Plouffe, a top Harris adviser, said campaign staffers “left it all on the field for their country.”

“We dug out of a deep hole but not enough,” he said. “A devastating loss.”

Harris became the Democratic candidate after Biden, who was already struggling to convince voters that he could serve as president until he was 86 years old, stumbled badly in his June 27 debate with Trump.

He dropped out of the race on July 21 and endorsed his vice president, who swiftly unified the Democratic Party around her candidacy.

It was a remarkable twist of fate for Harris.

Four years earlier, her own presidential campaign had flamed out and revealed the political limitations of someone once dubbed “the female Barack Obama.” Even though Biden chose Harris as his running mate, she languished in the role after taking office as the first woman, Black person or person of South Asian descent to serve as vice president.

Some Democrats started writing her off when they pondered the party’s future after Biden. But Harris found fresh purpose after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, and she became the White House’s leading advocate for abortion rights.

Harris also made a more con-

certed effort to network with local politicians, business leaders and cultural figures, forging connections that could serve her down the road. The moment arrived sooner than she anticipated, and she was catapulted into the presidential race with Biden’s departure only a month before the Democratic National Convention.

Harris instantly reset the terms of the contest with Trump. She was 18 years younger and a former courtroom prosecutor going up against the first major presidential candidate convicted of crimes. Her candidacy energized Democrats who feared they were destined for defeat with Biden at the top of the ticket.

But she also faced steep odds from the beginning. She inherited Biden’s political operation with just 107 days until the end of the election, and she faced a restless electorate that was eager for change.

Although Harris pitched “a new way forward,” she struggled to meaningfully differentiate herself from the unpopular sitting president. In addition, she had limited time to introduce herself to skeptical voters, who never cast a ballot for her in a presidential primary.

Democrats now face the prospect of picking up the pieces during a second Trump presidency, and it’s unclear what role Harris will play in her party’s future.

“The work of protecting America from the impacts of a Trump Presidency starts now,” wrote Jen O’Malley Dillon, Harris’ campaign chair, in a letter to staff. “I know the Vice President isn’t finished in this fight, and I know the very people on this email are also going to be leaders in this collective mission.”

Like Gore, Harris to certify for opponent

By COLLEEN LONG
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump’s presidential win is going to be certified in Congress in January by the candidate he beat, Vice President Kamala Harris.

Under the Constitution, the vice president is the head of the Senate, and it’s the role of the Senate president to declare the result of a White House election.

That happens Jan. 6.

Under normal circumstances, the vote-tallying procedure performed by the vice president is a mere formality and it’s the final step in the complicated technical process of electing a new administration.

For example, in 2000, after the grueling 36-day Florida recount battle, Democrat Al Gore conceded the presidency on Dec. 13 to Republican George W. Bush.

Gore, too, was the vice president, and he certified Bush’s win.

“The whole number of the electors appointed to vote for president of the United States is 538,”

Gore said from the rostrum, going on to read off his own loss to Congress.

“George W. Bush of the state of Texas has received for president of the United States 271 votes. Al Gore of the state of Tennessee has received 266 votes.”

But this nearly didn’t happen four years ago.

Trump refused to accept defeat and sparked a violent insurrection at the Capitol, when then-Vice President Mike Pence was to certify Democrat Joe Biden’s win. Trump’s supporters chanted “Hang Mike Pence” as they ransacked Capitol offices.

Trump had wanted Pence to “do the right thing” and declare Trump the winner. Trump and his allies spent days in a futile bid trying to convince Pence that the vice president had the power to reject electors from battleground states that voted for Biden, even though the Constitution makes clear the vice president’s role in the joint session is largely ceremonial, much like a master of ceremonies.

Pence acknowledged that reality in a lengthy statement to Congress. He laid out his conclusion that a vice president cannot claim “unilateral authority” to reject states’ electoral votes. He gaveled in the joint session of Congress on Jan. 7, 2021, to certify for Biden.



Gore

NATION

Gender gap unremarkable this election

By ALEXANDRA OLSON
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Donald Trump ran a campaign centered on hypermasculinity, actively courting young men in particular with interviews on popular male-centric podcasts.

In the closing weeks of the campaign, the former president and many of his surrogates leaned into sexist remarks and jokes about Vice President Kamala Harris.

Some of his supporters, including former presidential rival Nikki Haley, warned that the former president risked exacerbating his persistent gender gap with Harris. Prominent surrogates from billionaire Elon Musk to Charlie Kirk, founder of the conservative youth organization Turning Point, called on men to vote in large numbers to counter Harris' expected strength among women.

In the end, the gender voting gap was unremarkable by recent

historical standards.

Men were more likely than women to support President-elect Trump, the survey showed. That gap in voting preferences has largely remained the same, even as vote choice among men and women has moved modestly.

Harris had the advantage among women, winning 53% to Trump's 46%, but that margin was somewhat narrower than President Joe Biden's in 2020, according to the survey. In 2020, Vote-Cast showed Biden won 55% of women, while 43% went for Trump.

And it's nothing new: The majority of women have preferred the Democratic candidate in every presidential election since 1996, according to the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University.

Trump benefited from narrow gains among men and women both, with Harris modestly under-



Sheron Campbell wears a Kamala Harris shirt while voting on Election Day in Oakland, Calif., on Tuesday.

performing compared with Biden in 2020. Fifty-four percent of men backed Trump in 2024, compared with 51% in 2020.

The shifts by gender were concentrated among younger voters, as well as Black and Latino voters. White voters across genders and older voters across genders voted similarly in 2024 as they did in 2020.

Women under 30 voted for Harris over Trump, but it was a somewhat smaller majority supporting her, at 58%, than Biden, at 65%.

There was some indication that the Trump campaign's overtures to young men worked: More than half of men under 30 supported Trump over Harris, but in 2020,

the split was reversed.

Trump also about doubled his share of young Black men, cutting into a key Democratic voting group. About 3 in 10 Black men under the age of 45 went for Trump, roughly double the number he got in 2020. For their part, Latino men were less open to the Democratic nominee than they were in 2020. Roughly half of Latino men voted for Harris, down from about 6 in 10 who went for Biden.

This was the first presidential election since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and it was the second chance in history for Americans to elect their first female president.

Those issues, along with wor-

ries about the sexist rhetoric from the Trump camp, were important to many women. But concerns about immigration and inflation weighed more heavily on many voters and cut across gender lines.

Kelly Dittmar, director of research at the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, said that while it may not have been main reason for his victory, Trump successfully tapped into fear that gender norms and power dynamics are being disrupted.

Dittmar said the results showed that "a majority of voters were willing to disregard misogyny and racism, and some were even motivated by it."

Wildfire tears through Southern Calif. community after burning down homes

Associated Press

CAMARILLO, Calif. — A fast-moving wildfire fueled by heavy winds was tearing through a community northwest of Los Angeles for a second day Thursday after destroying dozens of homes and forcing thousands of residents to flee when it exploded in size in only a few hours.

The Mountain Fire prompted evacuation orders Wednesday for more than 10,000 people as it threatened 3,500 structures in suburban communities, ranches and agricultural areas around Camarillo, California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement. The fire was at 0% containment late Wednesday, according to the Ventura County Fire Department.

The National Weather Service said a red flag warning, which indicates conditions for high fire danger, would remain in effect until 6 p.m. Thursday. Winds were expected to decrease significantly by Thursday night, the weather service said.

Officials in several Southern California counties urged residents to be on watch for fast-spreading blazes, power outages



Firefighters and deputies push a vintage MG away from a burning home as the Mountain Fire burns in Camarillo, Calif., on Wednesday.

and downed trees amid the latest round of notorious Santa Ana winds. There were more than 30,000 customers without power statewide early Thursday, including about 3,000 in Ventura County and about 4,000 Los Angeles County, according to poweroutage.us.

Flames consumed homes amid billowing smoke and firefighters worked to extinguish blazes and douse homes with water as fires approached.

The Mountain Fire was burning

in a region that has seen some of California's most destructive fires over the years. A thick plume of smoke rose hundreds of feet into the sky, blanketing whole neighborhoods and limiting visibility for firefighters and evacuees.

At least 800 firefighters were assigned to the blaze and hundreds more were arriving from around the state, the department said. Damage estimates were expected to begin Thursday, but the department said numerous structures were impacted.

Plea deals revived for alleged 9/11 defendants

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A military judge has ruled that plea agreements struck by alleged Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and two co-defendants are valid, voiding an order by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to throw out the deals, a government official said Wednesday.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the order by the judge, Air Force Col. Matthew McCall, has not yet been posted publicly or officially announced.

Unless government prosecutors or others attempt to challenge the plea deals again, McCall's ruling means that the three 9/11 defendants before long could enter guilty pleas in the U.S. military courtroom at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, taking a dramatic step toward wrapping up the long-running and legally troubled government prosecution in one of the deadliest attacks on the U.S.

The plea agreements would spare Mohammed and two co-defendants, Walid bin Attash and Mustafa al-Hawsawi, the risk of

the death penalty in exchange for the guilty pleas.

Government prosecutors had negotiated the deals with defense attorneys under government auspices, and the top official for the military commission at the Guantanamo Bay naval base had approved the agreements.

The plea deals in the Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaida attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people spurred immediate political blowback by Republican lawmakers and others after they were made public this summer.

Within days, Austin issued a brief order saying he was nullifying them.

Plea bargains in possible death penalty cases tied to one of the gravest crimes ever carried out on U.S. soil were a momentous step that should only be decided by the defense secretary, Austin said at the time.

The agreements, and Austin's attempt to reverse them, have made for one of the most fraught episodes in a U.S. prosecution marked by delays and legal difficulties.

WORLD

Cuba left reeling as hurricane rips island

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ
Associated Press

HAVANA — Cuba was left reeling Thursday after a fierce Category 3 hurricane ripped across the island, knocking out the country's power grid, downing trees and damaging infrastructure. No fatalities were immediately reported.

Hurricane Rafael crossed a western portion of Cuba on Wednesday evening about 45 miles west of Havana, where José Ignacio Dimas returned home from his night shift as a security guard to find his apartment building in the historic center of the city had collapsed.

"The entire front wall of the building fell," Dimas said in a tight voice as he scanned the damage early Thursday. Like many buildings in the capital, it was aging and lacked maintenance.

Some 50,000 people took shelter in Havana, with thousands more doing the same in regions south and just west of the capital since they lived in flood zones or in flimsy homes. The main road from Havana to the southern coastal city of Batabanó was strewn with dozens of utility poles and wires.

Lázaro Guerra, electricity director for the Ministry of Energy and Mines, said power had been partial-



RAMON ESPINOSA/AP

A Cuban flag shredded by the winds of Hurricane Rafael flies above the statue of General Calixto García in Havana on Wednesday.

ly restored in the island's western region and that generation units were powering back up. But he warned that restoring power would be slow-going as crews took safety precautions.

As it plowed across Cuba, the storm slowed to a Category 2 hurricane chugging into the Gulf of Mexico near northern Mexico and southern Texas, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

On Thursday morning, the hurricane was located about 200 miles west-northwest of Havana. It had maximum sustained winds of 100 mph and was moving west-northwest at 9 mph.

Rafael is expected to keep weakening as it spins over open waters and heads toward northern Mexico, although the hurricane center warned there was "significant uncertainty" in the storm's future track.

Meanwhile, many Cubans were left picking up the pieces from Wednesday night, with a strange sense of déjà vu after a rocky few

weeks in the Caribbean nation.

In October, the island was hit by a one-two punch. First, Cuba was roiled by island-wide blackouts stretching on for days, a product of the island's energy crisis. Shortly after, it was slapped by another powerful hurricane that killed at least six people in the eastern part of the island.

It stoked discontent already simmering in Cuba amid an ongoing economic crisis, which has pushed many to migrate from Cuba.

While the State Department issued a travel warning for Cuba because of the storm, the Cuban government also raised an alarm, asking citizens to hunker down.

Classes and public transport were suspended on parts of the island and authorities canceled flights in and out of Havana and Varadero.

Typhoon slams into a northern Philippine region still recovering

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — A strong typhoon slammed into a northern Philippine province on Thursday as thousands were evacuated in a region still recovering from back-to-back storms that hit a few weeks ago.

Typhoon Yinxing is the 13th to batter the disaster-prone Southeast Asian archipelago in 2024.

"I really pity our people but all of them are tough," Gov. Marilou Cayco of the province of Batanes said by telephone. Her province was ravaged by recent destructive storms and is expected to be affected by Yinxing's fierce wind and rain.

Tens of thousands of villagers were returning to emergency shelters, and disaster-response teams were again put on alert in Cagayan and other northern provinces near the expected path of Yinxing. The typhoon blew into Santa Ana town in Cagayan province on Thursday afternoon.

The slow-moving typhoon, locally named Marce, was packing sustained winds of up to 109 miles per hour and gusts of up to 149 mph just before it made landfall in the coastal town of Santa Ana in Cagayan province, government forecasters said.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage.

Aside from flash floods, authorities were concerned about the higher possibilities of landslides in northern mountainous region, which has been inundated by pounding rains from two previous storms.

The coast guard, army, air force and police were on high alert. Inter-island ferries and cargo services and domestic flights were suspended in northern provinces.

Tropical Storm Trami and Typhoon Kong-rey hit the northern Philippines in recent weeks, leaving at least 151 people dead and affecting nearly 9 million others. More than \$241 million in rice, corn and other crops and infrastructure were damaged.

The death and destruction from the storms prompted President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to declare a day of national mourning on Monday when he visited the worst-hit province of Batangas, south of the capital, Manila. At least 61 people perished in the coastal province.

Trami dumped one to two months' worth of rain in just 24 hours in some regions, including in Batangas.

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

HONDA & ACURA

www.honda-ecker.de

hauptstuhl@honda-ecker.de

Mon-Fri 0800 - 1700 • Sat 0900-1300

06372-4607 • Kaiserstr. 79, 66851 Hauptstuhl

Germany H&R Block Tax Offices.
Get face-to-face tax help.

Express filing ITIN & Reports of Foreign Bank Accounts (FBAR's)

Ramstein
06371-8020410

Wiesbaden
0611-890-23100

Vilseck & Grafenwöhr
0713-573-6112
jorellano@hrblock.com

Email:eclemons@hrblock.com

THE WORLDS OLDEST & BIGGEST

CUCKOO-CLOCK

Clocks - Gifts - Souvenirs

10% off everything!

- 78 Years of Experience
- Worldwide Shipping available
- Overseas repairs services
- Your specialist for cuckoo-clocks, beer mugs and all Christmas items!
- VAT Forms accepted

Opening Hours:
Monday – Saturday 10:00 – 18:00
Special arrangements possible

www.gifts-from-germany.com

Full English website includes driving directions, payment methods etc.

Gebr. Stern GmbH • An den Quellen 3 • 65183 Wiesbaden
Tel. 0611-30 21 12 • cuckooclocks@web.de

WORLD

Tiny nuke sample pulled from Fukushima

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO — A robot that has spent months inside the ruins of a nuclear reactor at the tsunami-hit Fukushima Daiichi plant delivered a tiny sample of melted nuclear fuel on Thursday, in what plant officials said was a step toward beginning the cleanup of hundreds of tons of melted fuel debris.

The sample, the size of a grain of rice, was placed into a secure container, marking the end of the mission, according to Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, which manages the plant. It is being

transported to a glove box for size and weight measurements before being sent to outside laboratories for detailed analyses over the coming months.

Plant chief Akira Ono has said it will provide key data to plan a decommissioning strategy, develop necessary technology and robots and learn how the accident had developed.

Despite multiple probes in the years since the 2011 disaster that wrecked the plant and forced thousands of nearby residents to leave their homes, much about the site's highly radioactive interior remains a mystery.

The sample, the first to be retrieved from inside a reactor, was significantly less radioactive than expected. Officials had been concerned that it might be too radioactive to be safely tested even with heavy protective gear, and set an upper limit for removal out of the reactor. The sample came in well under the limit.

That's led some to question whether the robot extracted the nuclear fuel it was looking for from an area in which previous probes have detected much higher levels of radioactive contamination, but TEPCO officials insist they believe the sample is melted fuel.

The extendable robot, nicknamed Telesco, first began its mission August with a plan for a two-week round trip, after previous missions had been delayed since 2021. But progress was suspended twice due to mishaps — the first involving an assembly error that took nearly three weeks to fix, and the second a camera failure.

On Oct. 30, it clipped a sample weighting less than .01 ounces from the surface of a mound of melted fuel debris sitting on the bottom of the primary containment vessel of the Unit 2 reactor, TEPCO said.

UK doctor sentenced for poisoning with fake shot

Associated Press

LONDON — A British doctor who was disgruntled about his inheritance and tried to kill his mother's boyfriend by injecting him with a fake COVID-19 vaccine that was poison was sentenced Wednesday to 31 years in prison.

Dr. Thomas Kwan disguised himself as a nurse making home virus booster visits to infect Patrick O'Hara with a flesh-eating poison because he believed the older man stood in the way of him inheriting his mother's home some day.

"It was an audacious plan to murder a man in plain sight and you very nearly succeeded," Justice Christina Lambert said.

Kwan, 53, pleaded guilty last month in Newcastle Crown Court to attempted murder.

O'Hara, 72, survived after being in intensive care for several weeks and having part of his arm cut away to prevent the necrotizing fasciitis from spreading.

UK has 4 cases of new mpox variant, first outside Africa

Associated Press

LONDON — British health officials say they have identified four cases of the new, more infectious version of mpox that first emerged in Congo, marking the first time the variant has caused a cluster of illness outside of Africa. Scientists said the risk to the public remains low.

Authorities announced the first case of the new form of mpox in the U.K. last week, saying the case was being treated at a London hospital after recently traveling to countries in Africa with outbreaks.

This week, the U.K. Health Security Agency said it had now identified three further cases who lived in the same household as the

first patient. They too are now being treated at a hospital in London.

"Mpox is very infectious in households with close contact and so it is not unexpected to see further cases within the same household," said Susan Hopkins, chief medical advisor of the U.K. Health Security Agency.

The new variant of mpox was

first detected earlier this year in eastern Congo. Scientists believe it causes milder symptoms that are harder to notice, which makes it easier to spread because people may not know they are infected.

Its spread in Congo and elsewhere in Africa prompted the World Health Organization to declare a global emergency in August.

Your Service Inspires Ours

Everything we do is inspired by the military service and sacrifice of our members. We're grateful for our 2 million+ Veteran members and their commitment to our country—and we're proud to support them with member-exclusive offers, financial resources and award-winning service.

See All We Do for You navyfederal.org/veterans



Our Members Are the Mission



Navy Federal is federally insured by NCUA.
© 2024 Navy Federal NFCU 14435 (7-24)



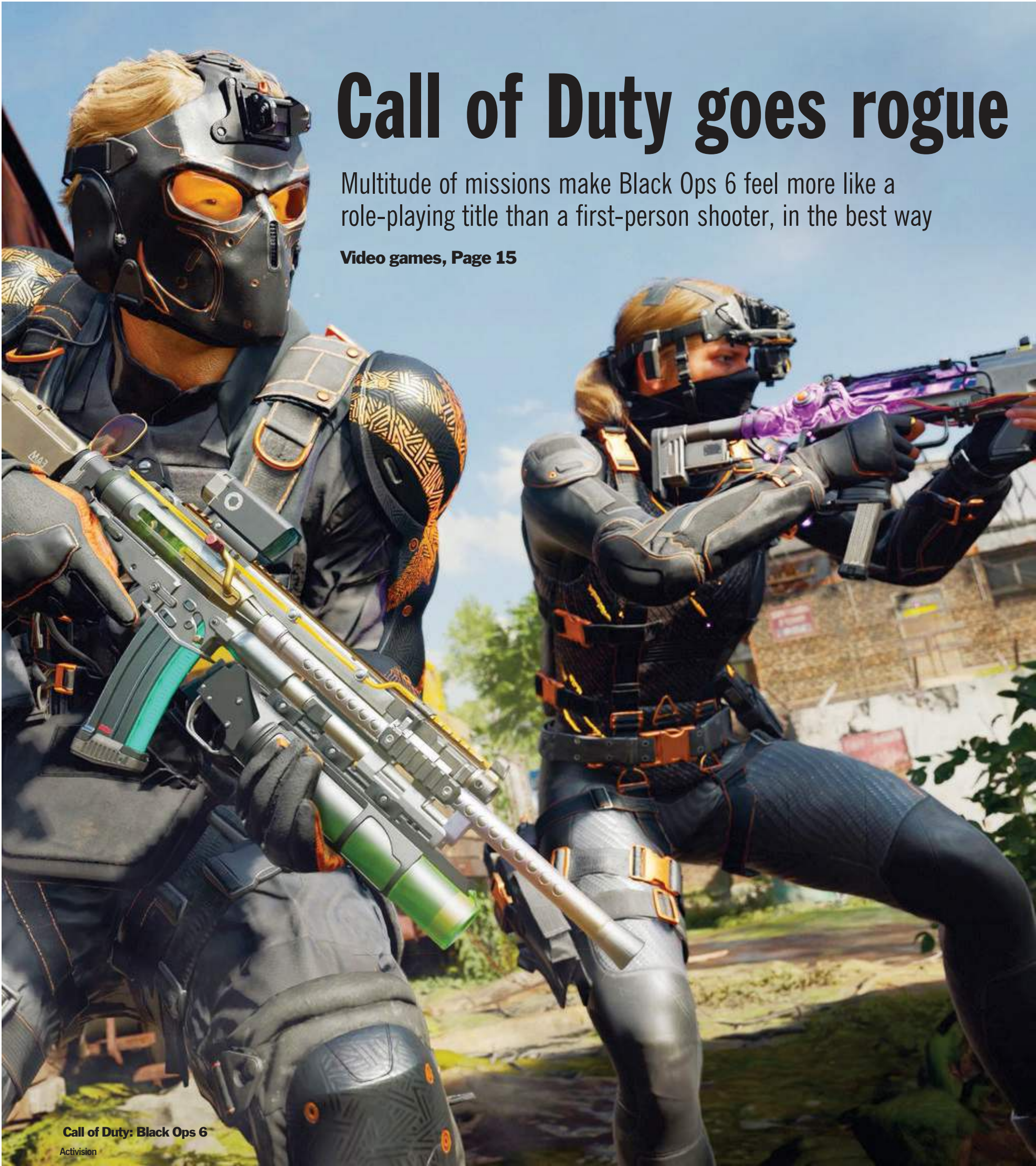
CELEBRATING VETERANS



WEEKEND



Hugh Grant discusses his dark career turn
Movies, Pages 16-17



Call of Duty goes rogue

Multitude of missions make Black Ops 6 feel more like a role-playing title than a first-person shooter, in the best way

Video games, Page 15

Call of Duty: Black Ops 6
Activision

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

Waking up to a burst of Nintendo frivolity

The Alarmo clock features images and sounds from nostalgic games, and may help you develop better sleep habits

By TODD MARTENS
Los Angeles Times

No one has ever applauded me for getting out of bed before. But for the past week-and-a-half, a tiny, cheery red machine has been rewarding me with a fanfare when I decide to rise. Its digital screen explodes with animations of paradelike confetti, and my first stretch of the morning is greeted with my own personal cheering section.

This is life with Nintendo’s Alarmo, a new alarm clock that’s part nostalgic love letter to the worlds of Super Mario Bros. and The Legend of Zelda, and part modern sleep-tracking device. As someone who has long suffered from insomnia and who feels energized when there are bits of whimsy in my day, I wondered: Has Nintendo just discovered a better way to wake up?

I’ve found that the idea of greeting the morning with an ovation is just the right amount of silly for my work-from-home and often monotonous single life. But Alarmo knows a few other tricks. Although it lacks some of the accouterments of fancier sleep devices — Alarmo isn’t promising, for instance, to track sleep cycles to wake you up at the opportune time — it manages to take a broad yet colorful approach to crafting stronger sleep habits.

Alarmo, despite its toy-like demeanor and images of Mario sleeping or Zelda’s Link relaxing at a campfire, is ultimately a luxury item. Surprise-released by Nintendo earlier this fall for \$100, its aim is arguably to resurrect a device of yesteryear. In an era of smartphones, fitness tracking watches and always-listening speakers, there’s no shortage of contraptions to wake us up via an assortment of sounds.

But so few interject a sense of play into our sleep habits.

Play is a destressor, and invites openness and vulnerability — so I don’t mind that Alarmo’s circular body with an orb-like button on top looks like a child’s plaything. (I will understand if your approach to home decor leans more coastal or midcentury modern than Nintendo.)

Alarmo, to be sure, isn’t for everyone. Those interested in, say, an alarm clock based more on mimicking natural light, or in the market for a sleep tracker that attempts to



NINTENDO OF AMERICA/TNS

Nintendo’s Alarmo clock has a playful look and generates fun video game-related images and sounds to encourage you to wake up and soothing ones to help put you in a calmer state. It was released earlier this fall for \$100.

capture our various sleep stages, would need a more complex device. Alarmo prides itself on simplicity. It does, via its motion-monitoring abilities, tell us how many hours we are spending in bed, and also informs on how long, generally, it takes us to get up. But it takes a wide view to sleep tracking.

And yet some of these tools have been a revelation for me. Like many of us, I have struggled with anxiety or depression, and am prone to plopping in bed when feeling overwhelmed or unable to focus. This, of course, doesn’t help my insomnia, as many a researcher will tell me that I’m training my body to not sleep while in bed. I also have a terrible habit of returning to bed shortly after waking to rest for a bit more before starting the workday. This is another impediment to routine.

Alarmo has helped me avoid some of these patterns. In my early usage, I’ve focused on images and sounds from the worlds of Super Mario Bros. and The Legend of Zelda, as these are the franchises I am most attached to (other options include Splatoon and Pikmin, with more promised via downloadable updates at a later date). Waking up to the sounds of Princess Peach giggling or Zelda softly cooing

“wake up,” is, yes, odd, but I appreciate the burst of frivolity before I start worrying about my to-do list.

And Alarmo in its default mode is designed to get you moving. If I want to quiet Princess Peach, I need to start waving my arms. She’ll simmer down, but only for about five minutes. Within 20 minutes, Alarmo gets aggressive. Mario antagonist Bowser arrives on the screen, and the clock gets louder, the sounds no longer soothing. Rather than shut it off, I generally opt to just get up, behavior researchers encourage.

This is where Alarmo turns into something of a hall monitor. Sneak back into bed within an hour of waking, and its process begins anew. And sure, Bowser is no match for my ability to turn Alarmo off, but a small deterrent can sometimes be a powerful one. It should be noted, however, that Alarmo isn’t always perfect, as my cat jumping on my bed after I’ve vacated it can reactivate the clock.

Alarmo has also added a bit more structure to my evening routine. One of its strongest features is its wind-down music, 10 minutes of calming sounds designed to get us into a more restful state. For The Legend of Zelda, this is soft campfire noises; for the Super Mario Bros. franchise, this is space-age ambiance.

Although I wish Alarmo allowed me the option to set this audio for longer than 10 minutes, an ability that will hopefully come in a future update, Alarmo wants to keep us on schedule. You will have to tell Alarmo your bedtime, and as long as you stick to your promise — that is, enter bed after the programmed time — the sleepytime audio will commence. Since this is one of Alarmo’s nicest features — so badly do I want those Link wilderness sounds — I’ve resisted heading to bed out of boredom to play chess on my phone and instead wait till after my designated hour.

Sleep is personal, and although I’ve generally been charmed by Alarmo, it has its shortcomings. For one, the USB-powered device does not come with an AC adapter, so expect an additional purchase if you don’t have one lying around. Alarmo, too, won’t work well if there’s more than one person in the bed. I’m single — perhaps evident by my willingness to interject a fancy toy into my bedtime routine — so this hasn’t been an issue here, but Alarmo’s core features will be of little use to those coupled-up.

And in time, I may come to dislike Princess Peach laughing as I try to wake up, but for now, it’s been putting me in a lighthearted mindset, a reminder that nestled bedside is this goofy alarm clock that just might help me with my insomnia.

Never misplace your passport with Satechi’s new cover and Find My tracking technology

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Satechi’s new Vegan-Leather Passport Cover with Find My technology allows it to be located with Apple’s tracking system.

The case (5.6 by 4.2 by 0.7 inches, 3.7 ounces) has a slot for a passport, four credit cards and room for a boarding pass. But the technology inside makes the passport cover stand out, especially when it’s misplaced or even stolen.

Inside the case is a 210 mAH rechargeable lithium battery, which can be charged at 2.5 watts by placing the passport case on any Qi, Qi2 or MagSafe wireless charger (not included). A single charge is rated to last up to five months, but Satechi recommends charging every three months. A small LED indicator shines orange when charging and green when it’s complete.

A power/pairing button turns it on,

allowing it to be paired to your device via Bluetooth 5.2. RFID-blocking technology is also built into the case, which creates a protective shield for what you have inside. The RFID makes skimming impossible by disrupting the signal.

The cover has a built-in speaker with a volume level of up to 80-90 dB. We often misplace items around our house or in hotel rooms, and with the signal alert, you’ll hear exactly where it’s hiding.

It’s made with a soft vegan leather material with stitching around the perimeter. The Satechi logo is front and center, and acts as a guide for the placement of the wireless charger.

satechi.net ; \$59.99

From the gym to an airline flight to just lying down and listening to your favorite playlist, Astrum’s XP Pia true wireless earbuds are a great choice.

While the sound is a primary feature to consider when earbud shopping, appearance and design are also often important. This is where XZ Pia true wireless earbuds will catch the eyes of many. The XZ Pia earbuds have a pearl finish and a rose gold-plated metal alloy charging case.

While their appearance is stylish, they also deliver on sound. According to Astrum, the crisp, clear sound with exceptional detail comes from a triple-driver system and spatial sound via Qualcomm’s award-winning Snapdragon (aptX) processing. With its Fully Adaptive Active Noise Cancellation enabled, up to 37 dB of outside noise will be eliminated.

The stem-style earbuds have an ergonomic design and sit comfortably in your ears for all-day use. Three sets of different-sized ear tips are included to ensure a perfect fit. You’ll get about five hours of playtime with Bluetooth and ANC on and



SATECHI/TNS

The rechargeable battery within Satechi’s Vegan-Leather Passport Cover with Find My technology lasts up to five months.

seven hours with the ANC off.

Touch controls allow you to play your music, make hands-free calls and access voice assistants. The XZ Pia earbuds have an IPX4 rating. With Bluetooth 5.3, you’ll be able to connect to a pair of devices (iPhone and iPad, for example) via a multipoint connection.

astrumtech.com ; \$199

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Activision photos

Hordes of zombies return in Call of Duty: Black Ops 6, with two different settings available on release and more promised for the future.

More action, more story and more zombies

Call of Duty: Black Ops 6's campaign longer, more robust than that of other COD games

BY BRIAN BOWERS
AND SAM WEINSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Over the years, you could depend on Call of Duty to deliver a fast-paced campaign that wrapped up in about eight hours. Call of Duty: Black Ops 6 is very different — delightfully so.

Not only is the campaign longer and more robust than your typical COD storyline, it's almost like a series of games rolled into one.

Activision's first-person shooter was developed by Treyarch and Raven Software, which took the lead on developing the campaign. The story involves four operatives seeking the truth about a biological weapons program being pursued by a nefarious group known as Pantheon.

It sounds like a standard plot for COD, but it's much more.

For example, one mission features a miniature open world set in Iraq during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. You drive across the desert attacking missile launchers, antiaircraft sites and troop concentrations. The more obstacles you neutralize,



Call of Duty: Black Ops 6's multiplayer competition offers a wide array of maps and challenges. The main campaign feels more like that of a role-playing game than first-person shooter with the ability to boost characters' attributes between missions.

the less trouble you'll have when you assault one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in the mission's climax.

There's a foray into a contaminated research site that becomes a zombie-infused hallucination with an interesting set of enemies and challenges.

There's a casino heist, where each of the four operatives uses his or her special skills to reach the vault and acquire the

loot — information about Pantheon.

And there's an espionage mission involving a Soviet-era biological weapons facility that has been taken over by Pantheon. You are given three objectives and a variety of options for dealing with each one. Are you a silver-tongued trickster, or a wily saboteur who relies on stealth?

Between these and other missions, you return to a former Soviet safe house where

you can explore, discover secrets and boost your characters' attributes by purchasing abilities and gear using money that you've found during your missions. It's a major step into the world of role-playing games.

The campaign is set within the franchise's larger tale of operatives working to undermine America's enemies, both foreign and domestic. You meet several new characters, but the anchor is Woods, who suffered a paralyzing wound in a previous installment of Black Ops. His multigame arc of warfighting, injury and recovery tethers the whole franchise. He is answering the question of whether a wounded warfighter can continue to have a significant role, and his behind-the-scenes efforts at the safe house reflect a continued respect for those who continue to serve.

Overall, Black Ops 6's missions are well constructed, with interesting settings, challenges and foes that add up to hours of fun. That all of this fits into a coherent story is a tribute to the writers at Raven.

And in the end, the campaign does feel much more like that of a role-playing game than a hardcore first-person shooter. However, it's thoroughly enjoyable — definitely one of the best COD campaigns in years! And it's definitely an improvement over the muddled and off-tone story featured in last year's Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Q&A

More rewarding to play monsters

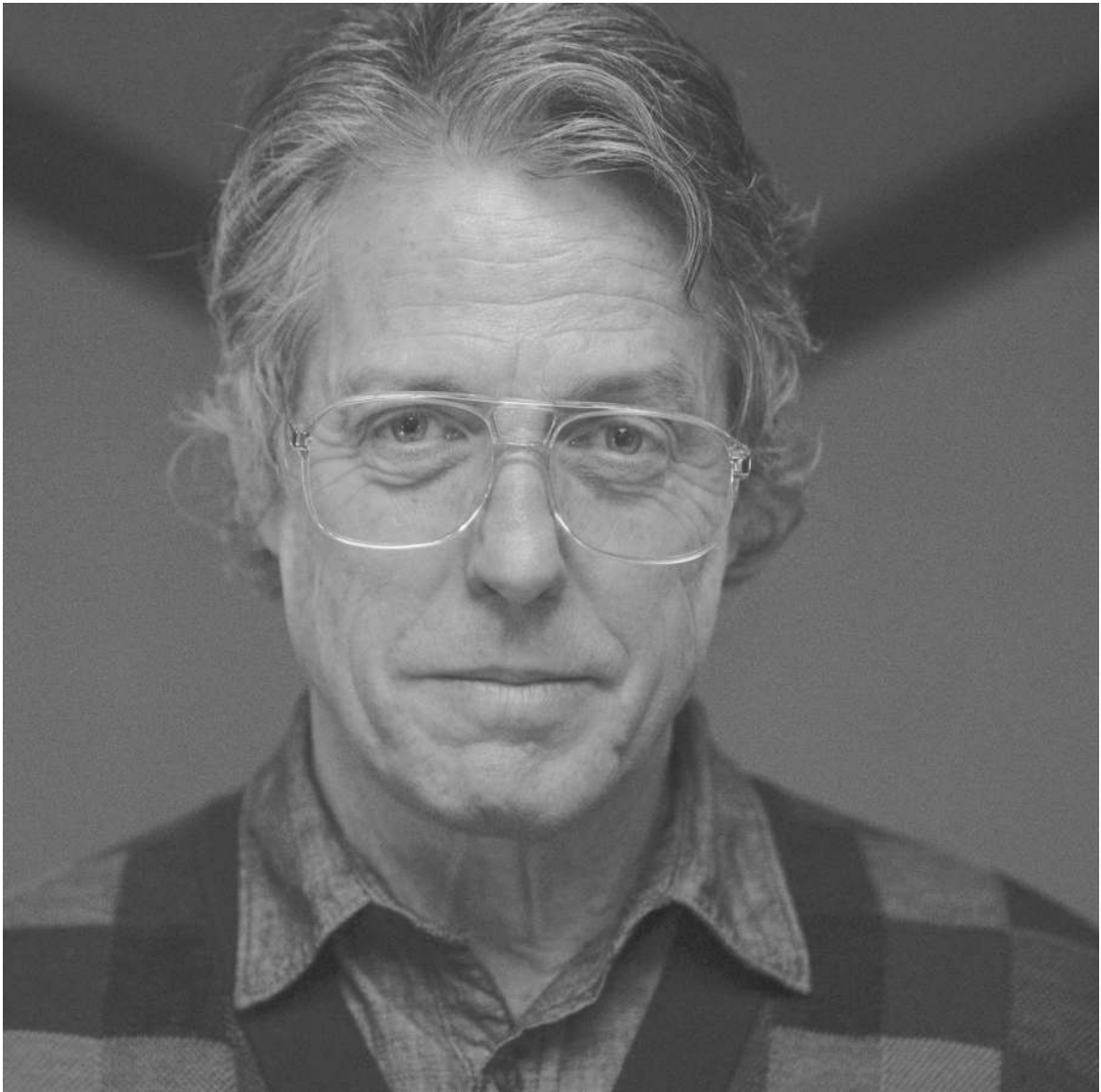
Rom-com idol Grant discusses his recent shift to the dark side for films like ‘Heretic’

By Jake Coyle
Associated Press

After some difficulties connecting to a Zoom, Hugh Grant eventually opts to just phone instead. “Sorry about that,” he apologizes. “Tech hell.” Grant is no lover of technology. Smartphones, for example, he calls the “devil’s tinderbox.” “I think they’re killing us. I hate them,” he says. “I go on long holidays from them, three or four days at a time. Marvelous.” Hell, and our proximity to it, is a not unrelated topic to Grant’s new film, “Heretic.” In it, two young Mormon missionaries (Chloe East, Sophie Thatcher) come knocking on a door they’ll soon regret visiting. They’re welcomed in by Mr. Reed (Grant), an initially charming man who tests their faith in theological debate — and then in much worse things. After decades in romantic comedies, Grant has spent the last few years playing narcissists, weirdos and murderers, often to the greatest acclaim of his career. But in “Heretic,” a horror thriller from A24, Grant’s turn to the dark side reaches a new extreme. The actor who once charmingly stammered in “Four Weddings and a Funeral” and who danced to the Pointer Sisters in “Love Actually” is now doing heinous things to young people in a basement. “It was a challenge,” Grant says. “I think human beings need challenges. It makes your beer taste better in the evening if you’ve climbed a mountain. He was just so wonderfully (expensive)-up.” “Heretic” is directed by Scott Beck and Bryan Woods, co-writers of “A Quiet Place.” In Grant’s hands, Mr. Reed is a divinely good baddie — a scholarly creep whose wry monologues pull from a wide range of references, including, fittingly, Radiohead’s “Creep.” In an interview, Grant spoke about these and other facets of his character, his journey from rom-com idol to horror villain and his abiding affection for “The Sound of Music.”

Associated Press: In this descent in darker territory, nothing may be more daring than your Jar Jar Binks impression in ‘Heretic.’
Grant: Yes, thank you. It’s not easy for any actor.
Was that scripted or did it come from you?
It’s hard to remember which was the writers, which was me. But I’m pretty sure doing the Jar Jar Binks impersonation was my idea.
So you knew you had a Jar Jar Binks impression in you?
No, I didn’t. I just thought it would be fun if the character did that because it’d be just weird. And, in fact, what’s odd about me is that I’ve never seen a “Star Wars” film.
Have you seen many horror films?
I can’t. They’re too frightening for me. I watched “The Exorcist” when I was too young and I’ve been in counseling ever since. I

watched one by mistake recently, which was “Midsommar.” I thought it looked like a jolly, Swedish comedy. I put it on one evening for my Swedish wife who needed cheering up and she’s still very, very traumatized.
Do you have any theories on why horror has been so popular in recent years?
It’s fascinating, isn’t it? I don’t know. Maybe these are the end of times, the end days, the apocalypse. We know it deep down but for some reason we won’t confront it. I don’t know, but it’s wonderful that it sends people into the cinemas.
You’ve spoken before about your affinity for the big screen. Is the seeming decline of theatrical moviegoing a concern for you?
It is. Talk about the end of days. To me, one of the gloomiest signs or omens is the gradual closing of cinemas — and not just that, where I live in London, but



A24/AP

Hugh Grant plays Mr. Reed, an initially charming man who tests two Mormon missionaries’ faith in theological debate — and then in much worse things — in “Heretic,” his latest film.

the closing of bars. The bar where I met my wife, which was party night every night of the week, is now largely closed. I think the fact that we’re all staying in, staring at our devil’s tinderboxes is deeply tragic, or watching things on streaming by ourselves with maybe one or two other family members. These things should be collective experiences.

One element that you’ve said factors into your choice of roles is whether you believe the film will be entertaining. Do you find your gauge for that is still accurate?
My ability to gauge what’s entertaining, I used to be very proud of it. In the old days, my old career, I used to say, “I’m not so proud of my acting but I’m proud of the fact that the films I’ve done, on the whole, have been entertaining and I’ve been good at choosing them.” And then, suddenly overnight, I became very bad at choosing them. I don’t know, I lost the zeitgeist, I suppose. That can happen. Now, I feel like I’ve found something again. If the character amuses me and I think I’m going to enjoy being that person, then I tend to do the job. Sometimes, when actors are enjoying it, it works.

So you go more now on what you personally respond to?
Yes, I’ve got nothing else to go on. And I’m not the lead character; the film doesn’t rest on me. I don’t have to worry that much if it does well, medium or badly. I just go by: Do I think I’m going to have some fun in this?

When would you mark this shift for you?
The big shift was after “Did You Hear About the Morgans?” That was sort of officially the end of romantic comedy for me. Nothing much happened after that in showbiz terms. I went off and did political campaigning and I was quite happy, in fact. But in drips and drabs, strange little projects, like the Wachowskis’ “Cloud Atlas,” then Stephen Fears came along with “Florence Foster Jenkins” and “A Very English Scandal.” “Paddington 2.” These interesting, complex, often not very nice, narcissistic weirdos started to emerge from the woods.

I always thought, while you made some excellent comedies, you had the misfortune of becoming a star when Hollywood wasn’t so great at making comedies.
Looking back, I was very lucky. I had Richard Curtis on the one hand, who is not only a gifted comic writer — he can just do flat-out comedy like “Black Adder” — but he’s an unrecognized dramatist. Those comedies are based on pain. The comedy is there to deal with pain. It’s people with unrequited love, lost love, bereavement, brothers with mental illness — proper pain. So I was lucky with him.

And I think I was very lucky with Marc Lawrence who just had a wonderful gift for the celebration of life. He actually likes people, which is so weird. So films like “Music and Lyrics” have a very sustaining and uplifting buoyancy to them. He’s an unrecognized talent.

I do like his movies.
You know who really loves them? The most surprising person in the world: Quentin Tarantino. Tarantino pushed his way through a crowd at a party in London once to say, (does Tarantino impression) “Man, I loved ‘Music and Lyrics’ and ‘Two Weeks Notice.’” He told me the whole plot of both films and how he was watching one of them on a plane and the plane landed and he had to rush off to a DVD shop to buy the disc so he could watch the end of it. I thought maybe he was joking, but I don’t think he was. Someone told me at his cinema here in Hollywood, a rather cool, 35mm-showing theater, he’s been showing “Music and Lyrics,” no less.

Perhaps that’s a bit like how you feel about “The Sound of Music.”
Yes, my enthusiasm for that film has spread. I’ve just been

SEE MONSTERS ON PAGE 17

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEW

High discourse, gore and a shifty Grant

In ‘Heretic,’ actor weaponizes his familiar charm for religion discussion that emerges from horror wrapper

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

Hugh Grant’s latest film, “Heretic,” opens with an unusual table-setter: Two young missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are discussing condoms and why some are labeled as large even though they’re all pretty much a standard size.

“What else do we believe because of marketing?” one asks the other.

That line will echo through the movie, a stimulating discussion of religion that emerges from a horror movie wrapper. Despite a second-half slide and feeling unbalanced, this is the rare movie that combines lots of squirting blood and elevated discussion of the ancient Egyptian god Horus.

Our two church members — played fiercely by Sophie Thatcher and Chloe East — are wandering around trying to covert souls when they knock on the door of a sweet-looking cottage. Its owner, Mr. Reed, offers a hearty “Good afternoon!” He welcomes them in, brings them drinks and promises a blueberry pie. He’s also interested in learning more about the church. So far, so good.

Mr. Reed is, of course, if you’ve seen the poster, the bad-die and he’s played by Grant, who doesn’t go the snarling,



A24/AP

From left, Mr. Reed (Hugh Grant), Sister Barnes (Sophie Thatcher) and Sister Paxton (Chloe East) engage in a theological discussion in a scene from “Heretic.”

dead-eyed Hannibal Lecter route in “Heretic.” Grant is the slightly bumbling, bashful and self-mocking character we fell in love with in “Four Weddings and a Funeral,” but with a smear of menace. He gradually reveals that he knows quite a bit about the Mormon religion — and all religions.

“It’s good to be religious,” he says jauntily and promises his wife will join them soon, a requirement for the church. Homey touches in his home include a framed “Bless This Mess” needlepoint on a wall, but there are also oddities, like his lights are on a timer and there’s metal in the walls and ceilings.

Writer-directors Scott Beck

and Bryan Wood — who also combined on “A Quiet Place” — have remarkably set us up for an unexpected theological debate here. Mr. Reed is not unlike an earnest professor of comparative religion set against two naive missionaries armed with talking points who are hiding their own doubts.

Mr. Reed knows exactly where the weak points are and thrusts in the philosophical knife.

“How do you feel about awkward questions?” he asks before tackling the church’s stance of polygamy. “Yeah, it’s sketch, for sure,” East’s Sister Paxton finally admits.

Soon the discussion turns on

which religions are marketed better. Mr. Reed is, after all, facing a pair of walking and talking advertisements for Mormonism.

So beautifully constructed and acted in the first half is “Heretic” that you won’t really notice when it turns into a horror movie. You might be a step ahead of the missionaries, but not by much. Mr. Reed alternates between creepy and funny, well-versed in Spider-Man and Voltaire, Radiohead and the Hollies, Wendy’s and Taco Bell. Grant has gloriously weaponized his natural charm.

Mr. Reed has his own grand theory about religion and you

will learn it. And he may or may not have some creepy stuff in his basement.

“It’s all terrifying. It is scary. I’m scared,” he says adorably, but he’s referring to organized religions. You’ll find him utterly terrifying, a fanatical heretic in sheep’s clothing who can cutely mimic Jar Jar Binks from the “Star Wars” universe.

Beck and Wood take this fascinating premise as far as it can go before it becomes an airless stage play. By the halfway point, the audience who came for the horror — not the lectures on religious marketing — are baying for blood, and blood they will get. The plot by the end is a murky, muddled and disturbing mess, a combination of too many ideas and no clear ending.

Grant, with his comfy cardigan and candles, is the movie’s draw, but there’s great work by Thatcher and East, who are trying to not act scared even when they’re terrified. They’re no mere ingenue targets — they bite back with worthy criticism of Mr. Reed’s beliefs through shaking teeth.

Producers have added a little marketing manipulation with “Heretic,” adding to some screenings the scent of blueberry pie along with the gore. Don’t be distracted. Keep your eyes on Hugh Grant and just, well, pray.

“Heretic,” now in North American theaters, is rated R for “some bloody violence.” Running time: 110 minutes.

Monsters: Actor says he’s fascinated by humans’ ‘bizarre, weird distortions’

FROM PAGE 16

invited to a 60th anniversary next year in Salzburg. I might go. I might wear lederhosen. Or I might wear a white dress with a blue satin sash, as I did in school when I played Brigitta Von Trapp.

Is that true?

Yeah, I was at all-boys English school and I played, I think, the third youngest daughter.

Is anything else on the level of “The Sound of Music” to you?

The older I get the more I love song and dance. I find myself watching a lot more Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, things like that. Because life is so stressful and the news is so ghastly that it’s hard to watch very serious stuff and pick yourself up afterwards. I did watch “The Zone of Interest” coming over from London the other day. And I have to say that’s just about as good as film-making gets. Short of “The Sound of Music,” obviously.

Looking back on your turn into more dramatic, complicated

roles, has it been rewarding?

Yes, weirdly it has, and it’s hard to say why. Is it a sort of exorcism or something? I don’t know. Way back in my 20s, when I started out acting, the only thing I thought I could ever bring to entertainment was doing silly characters, doing voices. I did them as a kid to the point where I drove people mad. I was never myself. My parents and my school teachers used to say, “Come on, just drop it. Who’s the real Hugh Grant?” So it was a bit weird to have a career as a leading-man romantic comedies where I didn’t get to be anyone unusual or weird. So I feel like this is something I can do, and quite like doing. At the same time, I learned some tricks of film acting and got a little bit better.

What kind of tricks?

The big thing for me was I learned to trust myself a bit more when you’re actually in front of the camera. There’s a terrible danger when people do film

acting. They’re so frightened of this big, pressure moment that’s coming up that they sort of pre-rehearse and think, “I’m going to say the line this way, and it’s excellent that way, and I shall just try to reproduce that on the day.” But that’s no good. You’ve got to reinvent it on the day.

The prep work should not be how you’re going to say the lines, the prep work should be — well, for me, anyway — a kind of absurdly prolonged in-depth marinade like a piece of old meat that you leave soaking for weeks and months in sauce until it’s full of flavor. So my marinade takes the form of very, very painstaking, minute examination of the script: Why do I say this? Why do I do this? What happened in childhood for this person to behave like this? What was his mother like? What was his father like?

In the case of Mr. Reed in “Heretic,” it’d be: Let’s look at some serial killers. Let’s look at some cult leaders. Let’s look at some atheists. It’s funny how

important costume is. Suddenly some thing, one thing, one visual, physical thing makes you go: That’s him. With Mr. Reed it was the idea of double denim. I don’t actually wear double denim in the film but I realized, yes, he’s Mr. Double Denim. He thinks he’s a groovy teacher at university, the one who’s down with the kids, making jokes.

I was surprised to learn you’ve done that kind of research for roles since the 1990s.

Yeah, that’s true. But doing it on those romantic comedies, I’m not sure I really got anywhere particularly. I wasn’t really creating monsters. It’s easier when you’re creating monsters. I’m fascinated by the bizarre, weird distortions that human beings twist themselves into emotionally, intellectually, physically from the trials and tribulations of life. I’m not sure that any of my characters in the romantic comedies were sufficiently twisted to fully get my juices flowing.

Do you share Mr. Reed’s

skepticism when it comes to faith?

Not necessarily from the point of view of religion. But there is a part of me — probably a not very attractive part of me — that likes to smash people’s idols. Anyone I feel is being a bit too smug or too pretentious, I don’t like to see that. I like to just take them apart a little bit. My mother did it. She didn’t like me or my brother being too up and she’d find some way to bring us back to ground level.

After this role, it might be hard for you to find something darker...

I agree.

Does that make you want to push darker still or rebound back in the other direction?

It’s a very good question that I do not have the answer to. As a matter of fact, there is one thing sitting on my desk in the other room here which is pretty weird and relatively fresh. I agree; I’m not quite sure where to go from here. Maybe it’s song and dance.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS



LIONSGATE/TNS

Beatrice Schneider as Imogene Herdman and Judy Greer as Grace in “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.” After Imogene bullies her way into the role of Mary in Grace’s Christmas pageant at their local church, she must find the confidence within herself to actually go up on stage.

The next holiday classic?

‘Best Christmas Pageant Ever’ a sweet, cute, bland season kick-starter

BY MARK MESZOROS
The News-Herald
(Willoughby, Ohio)

With the nail firmly in Halloween’s coffin, it is time for a parade of holiday season fare.

“The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” wants to get on your merry ol’ to-do list ahead of buying the Thanksgiving turkey and stringing all those lights.

An adaptation of Barbara Robinson’s 1972 children’s novel of the same name, “Pageant” is the latest bit of output from the Kingdom Story Company, the Christian-based affiliate of the larger Lionsgate studio responsible for offerings including 2021’s “American Underdog,” last year’s “Jesus Revolution” and “Ordinary Angels,” which landed in February, pushing all the intended emotional buttons as it did.

That it is directed by Dallas Jenkins — creator, director and co-writer of the ongoing Christian historical drama series “The Chosen” — also all but screams, “This is faith-based entertainment!”

Do not let that steer you away, for “Pageant” is far less interested in preaching as it is being accepted as an instant classic that sits comfortably among family-friendly gems.

And while it falls a bit short of “classic” status — it’s simply a bit too flat in stretches — it is cute, easily digestible and an admirably message-driven bit of fun.

Most appealingly, Robinson’s tale — seemingly fairly faithfully adapted by screenwriters Ryan Swanson, Platte Clark and Darin

McDaniel — makes heroes of its apparent villains: the Herdmans.

Narrated by the adult version (Lauren Graham) of sweet and thoughtful girl Beth (Molly Belle Wright), “Pageant” immediately and efficiently educates us on these siblings, a gang of lewd kids who steal, cuss out teachers and start fires. Seriously. Fires.

When oldest sibling and de facto gang leader Imogene (Beatrice Schneider) takes Beth’s prized locket and the latter dares to object, Imogene gives her a choice: the necklace or her neck.

It’s not much better for Beth’s brother, Charlie (Sebastian Billingsley-Rodriguez), who sees the tastiest part of his school lunch taken by a Herdman boy three days in a row.

Home, with loving parents Grace (Judy Greer) and Bob (Pete Holmes), is a safe space, of course. Church is a Herdman-free zone, too — at least until Charlie shoots off his mouth, telling the lunch stealer that the thefts are no big deal, that he gets all the delicious snacks he could ever want at the place of worship.

That’s all they needed to hear, the Herdmans soon arriving at the church en masse. Worse, they become interested in being a part of the coming Christmas pageant. And this isn’t just ANY pageant — it’s the 75th annual incarnation, and more people than normal are expected to attend this event that stretches about as far back as the town’s founding.

Plus, it’s become the responsibility of Grace — who steps in to direct after the person who usually holds the reins becomes incapacitated — largely to prove to certain town busybodies that

she’s capable of more than they think.

As it’s told from Beth’s perspective, “Pageant” is somewhat concerned with the girl’s desire to help her mother in any way she can. Refreshingly, though, this ultimately is Imogene’s story; after bullying her way into the important role of Mary, can she find what’s needed for the task — including confidence — within herself to actually go up on stage?

It helps that Schneider (“The Pradeeps of Pittsburgh”) gives the most interesting performance in the movie, peeling away the layers of this supposedly tough-as-nails young woman.

Also worth a mention is Kynlee Heiman, for repeatedly scoring laughs as Imogene’s outlandish younger sister, Gladys.

Other than the Herdmans, “Pageant” is about as flavorful as melba toast, with talented actors Greer (“13 Going on 30”) and Holmes (“Crashing”) unable to bring much personality to their characters as written.

As Grace works against pressure to exclude the Herdmans from the pageant, Bob — and we DO relate to this — is enthused by the idea that this may in fact not be just any other incarnation of the typically boring affair thanks to the infusion of fresh, um, talent.

“The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” isn’t the best Christmas movie ever, but it likely will see you and the family leaving the theater more in the holiday spirit than when you entered.

“The Best Christmas Pageant Ever” is rated PG for thematic material and brief underage smoking. Running time: 99 minutes. Now playing in select on-base theaters.

‘Piano Lesson’ narrates generational ghost story

BY LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

An heirloom piano takes on immense significance for one family in 1936 Pittsburgh in August Wilson’s “The Piano Lesson.” Generational ties also permeate the film adaptation, in which Malcolm Washington follows in his father Denzel Washington’s footsteps in helping to bring the entirety of The Pittsburgh Cycle — a series of 10 plays — to the screen.

Malcolm Washington did not start from scratch in his accomplished feature filmmaking debut. He enlisted much of the cast from the recent Broadway revival with Samuel L. Jackson (Doaker Charles), his brother, John David Washington (Boy Willie), Ray Fisher (Lymon) and Michael Potts (Whining Boy). Berniece, played by Danielle Brooks in the play, is now beautifully portrayed by Danielle Deadwyler. With such rich material and a cast for whom it’s second nature, it would be hard, one imagines, to go wrong. Jackson’s own history with the play goes back to its original run in 1987 when he was Boy Willie.

It’s not the simplest thing to make a play feel cinematic, but Malcolm Washington was up to the task. His film opens up the world of the Charles family beyond the living room. In fact, this adaptation, which Washington cowrote with “Mudbound” screenwriter Virgil Williams, goes beyond Wilson’s text and shows us the past and the origins of the intricately engraved piano that’s central to all the fuss. It even opens on a big, action-filled set piece in 1911, during which the piano is stolen from a white family’s home. Another fleshes out Doaker’s monologue in which he explains to the uninitiated, Fisher’s Lymon, and the audience, the tortured history of the thing. While it might have been nice to keep the camera on Jackson, such a great, grounding presence throughout, the good

news is that he really makes narration shine as well.

Wilson purists will certainly have opinions on these artistic choices, but they let the film breathe a bit, offering some respite from the living room with the looming piano. And most of the film stays right there, in 1936. Boy Willie and Lymon descend early one morning, uninvited, on the Pittsburgh home of Berniece and her uncle Doaker. It’s a family reunion with an agenda: They’ve driven a truck full of watermelons up north from Mississippi, and Willie, Berniece’s younger brother, wants to sell the watermelons and then the piano. The dusty old instrument represents to him a chance to let the past go and start a future. With the money, he wants to buy the land that his enslaved ancestors worked. Berniece has other ideas about the piano, namely keeping it. It’s a connection to the past, not an anchor. Besides, it might be haunted.

Yes, “The Piano Lesson” isn’t just a meditation on family history. It’s also a literal ghost story, with creaks, spooks and shadows lurking when the piano is disturbed. Deadwyler is electric as Berniece, who bears the brunt of the haunting, walking on eggshells in her life, trying to care for her young daughter and fend off passes from men who assume she can only be fulfilled with one at her side. Now she must deal with her somewhat manic brother who might, Doaker wisely reminds, actually, annoyingly, have a point. Perhaps the film academy will make up for its snub of her performance in “Till” with this turn.

Regardless of your familiarity with Wilson’s Pittsburgh Cycle, “The Piano Lesson” is a worthwhile, captivating and moving watch full of charismatic performers.

“The Piano Lesson” is rated PG-13 for strong language, violent content, some suggestive references and smoking. Running time: 125 minutes. Now playing in select North American theaters and streaming Nov. 22 on Netflix.



NETFLIX/AP

Samuel L. Jackson plays Doaker Charles in “The Piano Lesson,” one of The Pittsburgh Cycle’s 10 plays adapted for the screen.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

When in Berlin, keep your eye on the Wall

Whenever I visit Berlin, I can't help remembering my spooky visit to East Berlin back in 1971. I vividly recall how, as we were about to return to West Berlin, our tour bus was stopped and emptied at a border crossing so mirrors could be rolled under the bus. The guards wanted to see if anyone was trying to hitch a ride to freedom. (For a teenager caught up in the anxiety of the Cold War, that left quite an impression.)

For nearly 30 years, the Berlin Wall divided Germany's biggest city in two, just as a heavily fortified fence cut all of East Germany off from the West. Within Berlin, the border consisted of a low-profile inner wall and a 12-foot-high concrete outer wall topped with barbed wire and a rounded, pipe-like surface to discourage grappling hooks. Sandwiched between was a no-man's-land ("death strip") between 10 and 50 yards wide, patrolled by sentry towers.

It was built to encircle West Berlin, a 185-square-mile island of capitalism — the three sectors of the city occupied by US, UK, and France forces after World

War II — surrounded by Soviet-controlled East Germany (aka the DDR). Between establishment of the DDR in 1949 and 1961, more than three million



Rick Steves

East Germans emigrated (fled) to freedom, many of them via Berlin. To stanch their population loss, the DDR erected the 96-mile-long "Anti-Fascist Protective Rampart" around West

Berlin almost overnight, beginning on August 13, 1961.

Of course, the wall soon became an emblem of the cruel injustices imposed on all Europeans behind the Iron Curtain. The world rejoiced at the sight of happy Berliners standing atop the wall on the night of November 9, 1989, when Easterners were first allowed through it — a sure sign that the once-mighty Soviet empire was crumbling from within. That very night, as celebrants passed beers to their long-lost cousins on the other side and adorned the famously Wall-adjacent Brandenburg Gate with flowers like a parade float,



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCELLI/Rick Steves' Europe

The oft-repainted East Side Gallery is the longest preserved stretch of the outer layer of the Berlin Wall.

bystanders with hammers began chipping away at the concrete symbol of oppression.

Today, after decades of being nearly devoured by persistent "Wall-peckers," little remains of the grandest souvenir of Cold War Berlin. Its former path is now marked by a subtle double row of cobbles in the streets.

The lengthiest stretch still standing is the East Side Gallery, near the Ostbahnhof train sta-

tion. Murals by international artists cover nearly a mile of the concrete panels. (The artwork is routinely whitewashed so new works can be painted.) Right in the middle of town, near the Topography of Terror exhibit, is a shorter section at Niederkirchnerstrasse/Wilhelmstrasse.

But the best place to take in a long stretch of the surviving Wall, and to learn about its history, is the Berlin Wall Memorial.

Exhibits line up along four blocks of Bernauer Strasse, stretching northeast from the Nordbahnhof S-Bahn station with various open-air info points and memorials, several fragments of still-standing Wall and two museums offering an insightful and well-presented history of the Wall and its impact on Berliners' lives.

This article is used with the permission of Rick Steves' Europe (www.ricksteves.com). Rick Steves writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours.

These foreign sites commemorate American historical figures

Many events of great significance to U.S. (and indeed world) history and politics took place on foreign soil. In a trio of European capital cities, visitors eager to experience encounters with some of our nation's most beloved presidents and famous statesmen can explore these addresses both famous and obscure.

Paris

■ On Sept. 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed by U.S. and British representatives, thus ending the American War of Independence. The signing of this treaty by Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and John Jay on the American side took place at the no-longer-in-existence Hôtel d'York located at 56 Rue Jacob, in the city's St. Germain district. On the corner of Rue Jacob and Rue des Saints-Pères, between a café and the Hotel du Danube, a plaque was installed to mark the spot. Online: tinyurl.com/3nccudjr



Karen Bradbury

Franklin served as the modern-day equivalent of ambassador to France, and from 1777 to 1785, he resided in the Passy area in Paris' 16th arrondissement. Much beloved by the French, a bronze statue of Franklin now overlooks the Square de Yorktown, so named for the battle that took place in Virginia in 1781. The bronze, a replica of a statue located in Philadelphia, was given to Paris by American banker John H. Harjes on the 200th anniversary of Franklin's birth. The monu-



iStock

This statue of Thomas Jefferson has stood on Paris' Left Bank in the 7th arrondissement since 2006.

ment stands, fittingly, on the end of Rue Benjamin-Franklin, the name of the street since 1791. Franklin's former home, the Valentois Mansion, is located at what is now 66 Rue Raynouard. Online: tinyurl.com/4buputdn

■ In 1785, Thomas Jefferson succeeded Franklin as first Minister to France, a role he held through 1789. On July 4, 2006, the Florence Gould Foundation, along with Alec and Guy Wildenstein, presented a

statue of Jefferson, third president of the United States, to the city. The statue can be found on the Left Bank, in the 7th arrondissement, near Passerelle Léopold-Sédar-Senghor. The statue is also very close to the Palais de Salm, one of the buildings to have inspired Monticello, Jefferson's home in Virginia. Online: tinyurl.com/yeypm5nw

■ George C. Marshall, appointed the Army's chief-of-staff in 1939 and the first man to be promoted to the rank of five-star General of the Army during World War II, served as secretary of state to President Harry S. Truman from 1947 through 1949. It was in this role that he achieved one of his greatest victories, the implementation of the Marshall Plan, which was instrumental in helping allied European countries rebuild their economies and halt the proliferation of communism. In 1953, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. A plaque commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Marshall Plan's signing can be seen on Hôtel de Talleyrand, on Rue de Rivoli, in the northeast corner of Place de la Concorde. The building served as the European headquarters of the Marshall Plan from 1948-1951 and later housed other U.S. government offices. Online: tinyurl.com/3bykhmsf

London

■ The Ben Franklin House, located at 36 Craven Street in the heart of London, was opened to the public on Jan. 17, 2006, on what would have been Franklin's 300th birthday. The house, considered an archi-

tectural gem in its own right, shines a light on the nearly 16 years between 1757 and 1775 that Franklin spent at this address. Programs for visitors include a historical experience featuring costumed re-enactors, architectural tours and other events. Online: benjaminfranklinhouse.org

Berlin

■ On June 26, 1963, U.S. President John F. Kennedy delivered a speech to the citizens of Berlin from the square in front of the former City Hall of West Berlin, famously stating: "Ich bin ein Berliner." On Nov. 25, 1963, three days after Kennedy's assassination, the square in the Schöneberg section of Berlin was renamed John-F.-Kennedy-Platz in his honor. One year following his speech, a large plaque dedicated to Kennedy was affixed to the wall by the entrance to the former city hall. Online: tinyurl.com/5c946w87

■ Upon his visit to Berlin, Germany, on June 12, 1987, U.S. President Ronald Reagan gave a speech commemorating the city's 750th anniversary in front of the Brandenburg Gate, imploring General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall. On Nov. 9, 1989, destruction of the wall began, and on the eve of the 30th anniversary of this event, a statue of Reagan was unveiled. The larger-than-life bronze statue sits on the rooftop terrace of the U.S. Embassy, overlooking the Brandenburg Gate. The statue joins a memorial plaque to Reagan installed along the Strasse des 17. Juni in 2012. Online: de.usembassy.gov/reagan

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Hotels embracing day passes for amenities

Trend is cheaper for guests than booking a room and provides additional revenue

By Hannah Ziegler
The Washington Post

Honolulu resident Melanie Alano regularly enjoys the idyllic beaches and pricey cabanas that dot her tourism-driven city. But she’s always struggled to feel like she’s on vacation in Hawaii because her job tethers her to the real world, while travelers get to fully unplug.

But now, Alano can blend in with the carefree, piña-colada-sipping crowds at her favorite resorts thanks to a growing trend in the hospitality industry: day passes that let people use hotel amenities without renting a room.

“We do day passes to feel like we’re part of the crowd,” said Alano, 52. “When you’re next to the people that are on their vacation, it makes you feel like you’re on vacation.”

As vacationers rein in their spending and take trips closer to home, hotels have struggled with rising labor costs and the pullback on travel spending. Those factors — and a drop in occupancy rates at the height of the pandemic — have fueled a new business model for the hospitality industry. Thousands of hotels, particularly in popular tourist destinations like Florida and Hawaii, now rent their pools, spas, office spaces and cabanas to guests without requiring them to reserve a room, providing a separate source of revenue for hotels.

The trend is here to stay, according to hospitality consultant and former hotel manager Anthony Melchiorri.

“People are looking for different ways to get away for a half day, and for the hotels and resorts, things aren’t getting any cheaper,” Melchiorri said. “Every space in that hotel, if it’s not being used at every moment, it can be used. It’s a perishable item. It goes to waste.”

The average hotel room price increased nearly 14% between August 2019 and August 2024, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Inflation for overnight stays has slowed across the past year as hotels have found ways to cut costs, but luxury rates have remained high. Average nightly rates in the luxury hotel industry are 60% higher this year than in 2019, according to Virtuoso, a global network of luxury travel agencies. That spike peaked in July when the average cost of a luxury hotel room in the United States was 65% higher than it was the same month in 2019.

Those increases have weighed on travel-loving consumers like Fort Lauderdale, Fla., resident Lillya Nashanchik.

Like many Americans, Nashanchik’s trips were longer and more frequent before the pandemic. But now, instead of paying \$350 to \$500 per night at her favorite hotel, she snags a day pass to the pool or cabana about once a month for under \$100.

“I get there early in the morning, I spend the entire day, I take full advantage, and then I go home,” said Nashanchik, 56. “It’s saving me a lot of money.”



Consumers also use day passes to fill the gap between hotel checkouts and flights during longer vacations or avoid resort fees that hotels often tack onto their nightly rates. Those fees for amenities such as pools and gyms are most common at higher-end hotels and have recently come under fire for a lack of transparency.

ResortPass, a site that facilitates day-pass booking between consumers and resorts, tripled its business over the past two years as consumers shortened their vacations, chief executive Michael Wolf said. The company works with more than 1,700 hotels and is adding about 100 new ones to the platform each month, he said.

Hilton launched a partnership with

University. But the pandemic was a “wake-up call” that showed the industry they couldn’t rely on the stability of sold-out overnight stays, Bogicevic said.

While many hotel chains pushed into day-pass offerings because of the pandemic, Shea said, the trend has boomed as value-hungry consumers search for experiences that promote self-care and wellness.

“People really want to have impactful experiences and get the most out of their vacation or trip, and I think we can broaden that to say it’s not just about travel — it’s about time off, time with family, time well spent,” Shea said. “People may be pulling back on what they’re spending, but

couple of years, as we reemerge from COVID, you have travel coming back, but you have this relationship that you’ve built with your local communities.”

The success of day-pass programs has shown hotels that overnight guests won’t mind — or often even notice — other customers sharing pools and spas, Melchiorri said. Now the hospitality industry has to balance the logistics for overnight and day guests as demand for shorter trips grows.

Some hotels are still “working out the kinks” of having a new third-party platform to coordinate day passes, said Anne Nemer, a 41-year-old Los Angeles resident who recently bought a day pass to a nearby hotel pool. Although her ResortPass reservation had an 11 a.m. arrival time, the concierge told her and a friend that the facilities wouldn’t open until noon. They arrived at the cabana to find the pool and bar closed and the staff still preparing for the day.

Nemer described the first-time experience as “annoying” and “clunky.” But once the pool and bar opened, it was worthwhile to save on hotel and flight costs that have made her avoid longer vacations in recent years.

“It wouldn’t deter us from doing it again,” Nemer said. “It’s such a fun way to make a weekend special without having to spend double that money or time. It was all really breezy after that. They just weren’t ready.”

Moving forward, new hotel developments may also evolve to increase the number of communal spaces that can provide day-pass revenue to each brand, Bogicevic said.

Though day-pass revenue will never surpass that of overnight stays, Melchiorri said, the added business model provides too many benefits for hotels to abandon it, even if economic conditions improve and travel spending increases.

“I think we broke the barrier from a hotel perspective,” Melchiorri said.

“It’s malpractice if you’re not using an empty pool chair or empty spa to make incremental revenue. Every little bit helps.”

“It’s malpractice if you’re not using an empty pool chair or empty spa to make incremental revenue. Every little bit helps.”

Anthony Melchiorri
hospitality consultant, former hotel manager

those values are not shifting.”

Day-pass users skip a hotel’s nightly rate but often spend more on food, drinks and activities than overnight guests, making their presence a “win-win” for hotels, Shea added.

One-day guests also drive brand loyalty, Bogicevic said. For younger consumers who can’t afford a weekend stay, booking a luxury hotel’s day pass makes future stays more likely as their purchasing power grows.

Before the pandemic, U.S. hotels worried about compromising their brand’s exclusivity, consultant Melchiorri said. But over the past year, many U.S. hotel chains have looked to strengthen ties to their communities — a long-established priority in other parts of the world, Bogicevic said.

“COVID created an opportunity where travel stopped, but you had an opportunity to offer services to people in your local markets,” Ahmed added. “Over the last

ResortPass this year and has more than 175 hotels on the app, according to Jessica Shea, the company’s vice president of wellness, retail and leisure operations for the Americas. Hyatt has about 240 hotels engaging in day-pass activities, including some through ResortPass, according to Asad Ahmed, Hyatt’s senior commercial sales vice president for the Americas. Many other large chains, including Marriott and Wyndham, have properties on the app.

“There will always be an overnight guest, but day guests can complement them, and it’s great for the hotel,” Wolf said. “It’s providing ancillary revenue, introducing new guests, helping fill underutilized amenities and driving food and beverage spend.”

Hotels typically prioritize boosting room revenue, which accounts for most of their sales, rather than overall revenue, said Vanja Bogicevic, a clinical associate hospitality marketing professor at New York

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

How to plan a biking vacation with family

With a little prep, you can take a enjoyable trip on 2 wheels

By EDWARD RUSSELL
Special to The Washington Post

My family was about halfway through a 280-mile, eight-day bike tour around Denmark this summer when we stopped at a coastal hamlet with a sheltered dock, a line of vacation homes and a small, seaweed-strewn beach.

The stop offered a reprieve after my husband and I had been towing our two boys, 18 months and 5 years, in trailers for two hours over some 20 miles. It also offered a chance, as we sat on the beach together and the boys played, thousands of miles from home, brought to that spot under our own power, to reflect on how lucky we were to have moments like these.

A regular cyclist at home, I had long dreamed of doing a multiday bike trip. I wanted to see new places and watch the landscapes unfurl at 10 miles per hour. With 2024 a milestone birthday year for me, my husband proposed we do a bike trip together — as a family.

Bike trips are on the rise in the United States and Europe, for travelers with and without kids alike. In Germany, a center of bike-tour culture, some 37 million people took at least a one-day bike trip in 2022, more than 1.5 million of those being families with kids under 14.

We picked Denmark both because we had never been and because of its own legendary cycling culture, where even 5-year-olds bike to school. It also looked flat, a plus for us bike-tour newbies.

Our trip, which began and ended in Copenhagen, was not all beautiful countryside and kid-friendly beaches. But we spent almost every night somewhere new, and each day brought different sights, activities and challenges.

Here's how you can organize your own family vacation on two wheels — and the best lessons we learned from our first.

Where and how you can plan

Organizations like Adventure Cycling Association in the United States and EuroVelo in Europe offer ready-to-go routes for anyone interested in planning their own multiday trip. The former is best known for its TransAmerica route from Astoria, Ore., to Yorktown, Va. And the latter's Atlantic-Black Sea route from Nantes in France to Constanta in Romania is its most popular.

For those who do not have the time or energy to research routes, find bikes and search for suitable accommodations, there are a number of tour operators who will plan everything for you. These range from global operator Intrepid Travel — which can arrange a bike tour just about anywhere around the world — to local operators, like RockVelo in Slovenia.

Melissa Moser, a cartographer at Adventure Cycling who lives in Missoula, Mont., has taken her 6-year-old daughter on several multiday bike tours. She suggests starting small.

"One to 20 miles is good for a first," she said.

We planned our route by combining sections of several of Denmark's national bike routes together and using the Komoot app to fill in the holes. We chose a large loop, picking up and returning our bikes and trailers to One Way Bike Tours in the suburbs of Copenhagen, over concerns with trying to take everything on a Danish train.

"With this little thing," One Way Bike Tours founder Birger Kjaerbye said when

we arrived, pointing to his phone, "the Komoot apps, the Ride with GPS, you can find the whole thing there. Your accommodation, your point of interest, and so on. You build your own adventure."

Get gear that works

All successful bike trips begin and end with a bike. We chose standard hybrid touring bikes similar to what we ride at home. An e-bike, which has a small battery-powered motor to assist with pedaling, is also a popular option for multiday bike tours — and can take the edge off pulling your kids and gear.

Finding bikes to rent, if you are not bringing your own, is typically easy. Most major U.S. and European cities have multiple shops that offer a variety of bikes.

A family trip also requires gear for your kids. We chose trailers but young children can also ride in a child's bike seat, or on a cargo bike.

Renting trailers, we found out, is not as easy as finding bikes. Most bike rental companies in Copenhagen market Danish cargo bikes for families. We rented one around the city but I would not want to ride it for hours at a time. It was only after a lot of online searching, and numerous emails, that I found One Way Bike Tours.

Older children can ride their own bikes. For kids who want to ride but can't tackle a full route, one option is the FollowMe Tandem, an attachment for the back of your bike that allows an adult to tow a child's bike behind them.

A key decision that lightened the load: We stored our suitcases at a hotel in Co-



Edward Russell

Ready to board a ferry in Kalundborg. Edward Russell and his family took a 280-mile, eight-day, bike tour around Denmark this summer.

penhagen, packing only what we needed into large backpacks.

Proper lodging can go a long way

On their first self-supported tour, Moser and her daughter went about three miles before they set up camp for the night, she said. But whether to camp on a family bike trip is entirely up to you.

My husband and I chose the accommodations route. We didn't want to add the camping gear to our towing, and it was really nice to have a bed to collapse onto each night, too.

Our nights ranged from posh (a bed-and-breakfast in Denmark's Skjoldungernes Land national park) to simple campground cabins and rustic farm stays. The latter were our boys' favorite after a long day on the road: One had a large yard they could run around and play in and animals they could feed.

Don't expect (or try) fine dining

One thing a family bike tour with young children doesn't have: fine dining.

Between our boys' picky eating and seeming inability to sit still in a restaurant — especially after riding in a trailer all day — we stuck most nights to casual, often carb-heavy dinners like pizza (with an all-you-can eat Asian buffet in Korsør being one exception). Solo bikers or older

groups might be more ambitious, but while we planned the broad outlines of our ride before we left, we largely decided meals as we went.

At night, we sometimes noted dining highlights on the next day's route, but mostly we made sure to carry sandwich makings and plenty of snacks. Nearly every Danish town has a supermarket, and in a pinch, a gas station convenience store has enough for a meal. Dinners we typically sorted once we arrived at our lodging for the night.

Build in breaks

From my computer at home, I had mapped a route for us to ride close to 40 miles most days. But after our first back-to-back 40-mile days my husband and I agreed to lower our daily distance. We were tired, but more importantly the four-plus of hours pedaling was too long for the boys, who would end the day amped-up with energy.

Somewhere around 30 miles a day, with plenty of breaks for the boys, proved the sweet spot for us. And it was the breaks that really made the trip.

"I want to stay here 1,000 nights!" my older son routinely exclaimed before we went to bed, excited from all the things he saw and did that day.

We wanted to, too.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

The kitchen and dining area in this tiny house owned by Sezi Homes in Vilseck, Germany, has lots of conveniences and can be easily maneuvered despite its compact layout. The rental comes fully furnished.

Live like Thoreau in this tiny home

Rental with 645 square feet of space in Vilseck, Germany, lets guests try out minimalist lifestyle

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

Living in what has been dubbed a tiny home is growing in attraction for many Americans, with housing costs soaring in lots of markets and social media influencers presenting an array of modern minimalist possibilities.

My 8-year-old son and I recently decided to go on a tiny-house trial run, spending a day in one of the two downsized dwellings in Vilseck’s bustling Sonnenleite neighborhood owned by enterprising businessman Sezayi Er, owner of Sezi Homes.

It was a warm September day when the two of us settled into a fully furnished, 645-square-foot home for a guys’ staycation less than 2 miles from Rose Barracks.

I found the digs surprisingly spacious, with an expansive living room complete with TV, Wi-Fi and an L-shaped couch. There was a kitchen, with a sink and stove, and a family-sized table. The refrigerator and washing machine were tucked away in cabinets.

“This isn’t tiny at all!” my son exclaimed.

The bedroom was a bit smaller



The washing machine in this tiny house is tucked into a cupboard.

than the typical American master bedroom, but I didn’t feel cramped. The shower room was plenty big enough and reminded me of the quaint Cape cottages of my youth.

The only room I found constricting was the bathroom, just big enough for a toilet and sink.

We ate delivery pizza and watched soccer. It was a great escape.

My interest in tiny-house living began at a very early age. During my childhood in Massachusetts, my mother exposed me to the works of poet and transcendentalist philosopher Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau was just 27 when in 1845 he eschewed modern socie-



On the QT

Address: Sonnenleite 8h, Vilseck, Germany
Hours: Check website for availability
Cost: 95 euros per night for one person; 115 euros per night for two
Information: sezi-homes.de/tiny-house-mieten/

Matthew M. Burke

ty and built his 10-by-15-foot cabin in the Concord woods by Walden Pond.

Thoreau lauded the humble log homes and cottages of the poor and urged freedom through minimalism.

“Most men appear never to have considered what a house is, and are actually though needlessly poor all their lives because they think that they must have such a one as their neighbors have,” Thoreau wrote in “Walden.”

It was in that same vein that Er, a 36-year-old entrepreneur from Weiden, settled on renting tiny houses as his new venture in 2020. Business was slow at his telecommunications stores due to the coronavirus pandemic.

He launched his first tiny house, and then a year later, he added a second next door. Both are the same size.

While there is no agreed-upon



The master bedroom is spartan yet adequate. While a bit smaller than the typical American master bedroom, it didn’t feel cramped.



The living room is remarkably spacious, showing that tiny-house living doesn’t have to be uncomfortable.

industry standard dictating the size of a tiny house, most are under 550 square feet, according to the Tiny House Co., a broker based in Lippstadt, Germany.

In the U.S. there are more than 10,000 tiny homes and the average cost is around \$50,000, which is 87% cheaper than the typical U.S. home, according to the website Today’s Homeowner, which is operated by contractor and Emmy-nominated TV personality Danny Lipford.

Tiny homes have become particularly popular in Germany in recent years, Er said. Various initiatives, consultants, manufacturers and settlements made up of such houses can be found online.

The movement is attractive to

Germans who want to take the hassle of planning and cost out of home ownership, said Er, who has rented his properties to many curious Americans.

I found out about the tiny houses in the area from a German friend who owns and rents out his own tiny house. I asked about that one, but it was booked, so he suggested Sezi Homes.

My tiny house experience was a far cry from that of Walden Pond. I didn’t have time to contemplate life’s mysteries, nor was I “roughing it” in any real way, but I did learn that I could survive and thrive in a tiny dwelling.

So I think Thoreau would be proud.

burke.matt@stripes.com
[@MatthewMBurke1](https://www.instagram.com/MatthewMBurke1)

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

A taste of the tropics

Army spouse's sought-after Caribbean cuisine draws crowds to Grill in Grafenwoehr, Germany

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

To sample the West Indian flavors at the Caribbean Grill in Grafenwoehr, Germany, you'd better get there early or call ahead and place an order.



AFTER HOURS GERMANY

Caribbean Grill

Address: Diessfurter Strasse 18, Grafenwoehr, Germany
Hours: Tuesday through Thursday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 4-7 p.m.
Cost: 3.50 euros for a beef or curry chicken stuffed dumpling; 13 euros for curry goat; jerk pork is 12 euros and oxtail is 13 euros
Information: +49 0176 2471 8519; facebook.com/caribbeangrill.graf/

Matthew M. Burke

The cottage-sized to-go restaurant several hundred feet from Tower Barracks' Gate 3 serves Jamaican, Trinidadian and Tobagonian dishes, and on most days, all the food sells out less than two hours after the place opens.

Even though I drive past it every day, I don't know that I ever would have found the Caribbean Grill had it not been for a trip to pick up a new car.

The restaurant is nestled in a nook between American Motors and CrossFit Grafenwoehr and can't be seen from the adjacent Diessfurter Strasse.

I noticed the line, which starts forming shortly before the 11 a.m. opening, stretching to the parking lot. Being an avid fan of Jamaican music, culture and food, I came back with my wife the following day for lunch.

We made sure to be there when it opened to ensure we got a plate. My wife got the jerk pork, and I chose the oxtail. We shared our plates and also split a stuffed dumpling. The pork was tender with a crispy jerk crust.

The level of spice managed to thread the needle of being enough for me, a lover of spicy food, and not too much for the more modest tastes of my wife.

Having been to Jamaica and tasted the cuisine of the island at its source, I can attest to the jerk's bona fides. The meat was complimented by chewy fried plantains, which were sweet like a raisin, and spicy soul rice and peas.

The oxtail arrived in a delicious but mysterious sauce that tasted somewhere between curry and beef stew. The meat was sublime, a medium-cooked amalgamation of solid protein and gelatinous collagen that melted in my mouth.

I felt like a caveman as I ripped the meat from the bone. The dish came with a side of rice and peas, as well as cabbage with green onions and carrots, cooked with various seasonings and butter.

The beef dumpling was a shining star that truly represents the

essence of the tropics. It featured finely minced meat and savory sauce inside what tasted like a semisweet and crispy old-fashioned doughnut. I washed it down with a spicy ginger beer.

And thanks to the generous portions of both dishes, we made two meals out of our lunch by bringing home the leftovers.

In addition to ginger beer, the grill also sells Baba Roots herbal beverage, a product of Jamaica, and Big Bamboo's Jamaican Irish Moss, a thick, vanilla-flavored concoction.

Owner Christine Francis, an Army spouse originally from the Queens borough of New York, prepares every dish to taste.

"As far as cooking, I think that's just probably in my blood," Francis said. "I don't cook with recipes. My end result is what I want it to taste like."

Francis arrived in Germany in 2010 and originally worked at the Tower Barracks commissary. Unable to find sufficient home-cooked fare, she opened the grill in 2017, incorporating family recipes and flavors from her own island roots.

She uses proprietary spice blends and swears off pressure cookers, saying that they degrade the flavor. Francis is aided daily by her 25-year-old son, Cameron Flanigan.

Her culinary offerings became an instant hit in this Bavarian outpost, with every bite imbued with the vibrance and passion of the tropics. Count me and my wife as loyal members of the Caribbean Grill clientele.

burke.matt@stripes.com
@MatthewMBurke1



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

A queue at the Caribbean Grill in Grafenwoehr, Germany, starts forming before opening at 11 a.m. on Oct. 22. The restaurant routinely sells out of food within the first two hours of service.



Christine Francis, owner of the Caribbean Grill in Grafenwoehr, stirs oxtail simmering on the stove Oct. 22. Francis, an Army spouse originally from Queens, opened the highly popular restaurant after finding a scarcity of options for West Indies cuisine in the area.



The oxtail is a medium-cooked combination of solid protein and gelatinous collagen. The dish is a culinary staple in Jamaica and elsewhere in the West Indies.



The jerk pork at the Caribbean Grill in Grafenwoehr has a spice level that manages to appeal to a range of palates.



The beef dumpling at the Caribbean Grill features finely minced meat and savory sauce inside what tastes like a semisweet, crispy doughnut.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Tomato-forward chicken fricase is warm and hearty

BY CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL
Milk Street/Associated Press
 It may have a French-sounding name, but this homey, hearty, tomato-forward chicken braise, made with sofrito as its base and with golden rum as part of the cooking liquid, is Caribbean in essence and flavor.
 In this recipe from our cookbook “Milk Street 365: The All-Purpose Cookbook for Every Day of the Year,” we adapted San Juan chef Jose Santaella’s recipe from his book “Cocina Tropical.”

You will need 1 cup of sofrito for this recipe, so be sure to cook up a batch in advance.
 The braising liquid is quite acidic. Be sure to use a nonreactive pot, such as stainless steel or enamel-coated cast iron, so the metal does not react to the acidity and cause “off” flavors. After returning the browned chicken to



Chicken Fricase with Tomatoes, Potatoes and Carrots is a dish Caribbean in essence and flavor.
 MILK STREET/AP
 the Dutch oven, cover the pot only partially. A little evaporation is desirable so the braise isn’t too watery. Serve with rice and, if you’re so inclined, with fried sweet plantains.

Chicken Fricase with Tomatoes, Potatoes and Carrots

Start to finish: 1¼ hours (30 minutes active)
Servings: 4 to 6
Ingredients
 1 tablespoon dried oregano
 Kosher salt and ground black pepper
 2½ pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs, trimmed
 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
 1 cup sofrito
 ½ cup pitted green olives
 4 bay leaves
 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
 1 pound carrots, peeled, sliced ¼ inch thick on the diagonal
 14½-ounce can crushed tomatoes (1½ cups)
 6-ounce can tomato paste
 1 cup dry white wine
 ½ cup golden rum
 Chopped fresh cilantro, to serve

Directions
 In a small bowl, stir together the oregano and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Season the chicken on all sides with the mixture. In a large Dutch oven over medium-high, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the chicken and cook, turning once or twice, until browned on both sides, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a large plate; set aside.
 Add the sofrito to the pot along with the olives and bay leaves; cook, stirring, until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the potatoes, carrots, 2 cups water and ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer, then cover and simmer until the vegetables are tender-crisp, about 10 minutes. Add the crushed tomatoes to the pot along with the tomato paste, wine and rum; stir to combine. Return the chicken to the pot, nestling the pieces into the

mixture, then add the accumulated juices. Return to a simmer, cover partially and cook, stirring once or twice, until the vegetables are tender and a skewer inserted into the chicken meets no resistance, 40 to 45 minutes.
 Remove the pot from the heat, then remove and discard the bay leaves. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with cilantro.
Sofrito
Start to finish: 30 minutes
 Makes about 2 cups
Ingredients
 ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped
 10 medium garlic cloves, minced
 1 tablespoon tomato paste
 ¼ cup finely chopped smoked ham
 8 ounces ripe tomatoes, cored and chopped
 1 large cubanelle pepper or 1 medium red, yellow or orange bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and chopped
 3 tablespoons drained capers
 2 bay leaves
 1 tablespoon dried oregano
 1 tablespoon annatto oil
Directions
 In a 12-inch skillet over medium-high, heat the olive oil until shimmering. Add the onions and cook, stirring often, until beginning to brown, 2 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and tomato paste; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the ham and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute.
 Add the tomatoes, pepper, capers, bay, oregano and annatto oil (oil optional). Cook, stirring often, until the mixture begins to stick to the pan, 6 to 8 minutes; reduce the heat if it begins to brown. Transfer to a small bowl.



PHOTOS BY JUAN KING/Stars and Stripes
 Burger King Japan has introduced the Kyoto Whopper, a saucy rice-and-hamburger combination available for a limited time only at selected restaurants in the country.

Burger King’s saucy Whopper is named after historic Kyoto

BY JUAN KING
Stars and Stripes
 East meets west with a new take on the signature flame-grilled offering from Burger King in Japan.
 The Kyoto Whopper, a collaboration between Yadaime Gihei, a 230-year-old rice business in Kyoto, the historic former capital of Japan, and the American restaurant chain, introduces a well-seasoned beef patty atop a rice patty grown domestically and developed exclusively for the sandwich, according to the company’s website.
 Expect zesty flavors to surge across your taste buds, including Japanese ginger sauce with four types of dashi, or Japanese soup stock, and Japanese spices.
 My experience matched the set-up. The spices hit the palate and went well with the grilled patty and rice, with the usual crispy lettuce, tomatoes, onions and pickles.
 The combination of rice and hamburger is a common dish found on many lunch and dinner tables throughout Japan.
 The rice, a mixture of both white and brown, was soft and chewy as expected, and the sea-



The Kyoto Whopper costs 990 yen — about \$6.50, including tax. A meal set that includes medium fries and a medium drink is 1,290 yen.



The rice in the Kyoto Whopper, a mixture of white and brown, is soft and chewy.

soning, though a little intense, only slightly overwhelmed the taste of the rice.



Kyoto Whopper
Location: Burger King restaurants throughout Japan, though the Kyoto Whopper may not be available at all locations.
Hours: Vary by location.
Prices: 990 yen for sandwich only; 1,290 yen with medium fries and drink.
Dress: Casual
Information: burgerking.co.jp
 Juan King
 Overall, the Kyoto Whopper proved to be a delicious creation by the burger giant.
 The sandwich alone at 990 yen — about \$6.50, including tax — is probably enough to fill your stomach, but I opted for the meal set with medium fries and a medium drink for 1,290 yen.
 The Kyoto Whopper is around for only a limited time, and may not be available at all locations in Japan.
 king.juan@stripes.com
 @juanking_17

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Yokosuka event strikes chord with music fans

Annual Japanese festival combines jazz and rock over 3-day weekend

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

Vivacious melodies filled the streets of Yokosuka city for three days as dozens of bands brought their music just outside the home of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

Dulcet vocals, dynamic saxophone solos and lively marching pieces reminiscent of New Orleans were just a sampling of the genres on display at Yokosuka Tomodachi Jazz 2024 and Yokosuka Jazz Rock Festival, two events that ran simultaneously Friday through Sunday.

If you missed it this year, the annual event occurs on the weekend surrounding Japan's Culture Day holiday on Nov. 3.

More than 50 musical artists turned out for the festival, which included 14 venues across downtown Yokosuka just outside Yokosuka Naval Base between Yokosuka-Chuo and Shioiri stations. Fans, many wearing Yokosuka's iconic sukajan souvenir jackets, meandered back and forth from the various stages.

Food vendors also joined the fray, while musicians stood by to speak with fans and other audience members after their performances.

The annual event aims to establish Yokosuka as a "city of music, sports and entertainment," according to the Yokosuka Tourism Promotion and Promotion Executive Committee's website.

Among the highlights were members of Waseda University's Jazz Club marching through Dobuita — known as the Honch to American sailors — and a closing event featuring Shigeorian Meteor Shower, a Tokyo-based band that won Yokosuka's 2024 Mind Rock Award in September.

wilson.alex@stripes.com
@AlexMNWilson



PHOTOS BY ALEX WILSON/Stars and Stripes

Members of Waseda University's jazz club march down the Honch during the annual jazz and rock festival in Yokosuka, Japan, on Nov. 4.

On the QT

Directions: The event area is within walking distance of Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, between Yokosuka Chuo and Shiori stations.

Times: The annual event occurs on the weekend surrounding Japan's Culture Day holiday on Nov. 3.

Costs: Free

Food: You'll find numerous restaurants in the area, along with festival-related food vendors.

Information: Online: wakuwaku-yokosuka.jp



Above: Members of OM Connection perform outside Mikasa Shopping Plaza in Yokosuka, Japan, on Nov. 3. Right: The Atsuhiko Sugimoto Band performs just outside Coaska Mall on Nov. 3.



Your votes. Your favorites. Your Best of the Pacific.

ANNOUNCING
THE BEST OF 2024



Pick up the magazine
or get it online



STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: BOOK REVIEWS

As charming as ever

‘The Great Hippopotamus Hotel,’ the 25th book in McCall Smith’s ‘No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency’ series, follows a familiar formula

By MALCOLM FORBES
Special to The Washington Post

In 1980, Alexander McCall Smith, a professor of medical law at the University of Edinburgh, visited friends in Botswana. One day, he ordered chicken for lunch. He watched in amazement as a woman chased the bird around a yard and then wrung its neck in front of him. He got his lunch, but he also got inspiration for a literary heroine, one who was tough, sharp, shrewd and enterprising.

Fast-forward 18 years, and Botswana’s only female private eye made her first appearance in print. “The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency” introduced Precious Ramotswe, a 35-year-old “traditionally built” woman who didn’t solve crimes so much as mysteries in people’s lives. Utilizing observation, insight and intuition, she investigated cases involving a severed finger, a stolen car, a negligent doctor, a wayward daughter and an errant husband — a playboy she had little time for. “I much prefer men with ordinary shoes and honest trousers,” she revealed.

Brimming with warmth, wit and charm, the book was a hit with readers when it was published by a small, independent Scottish press. By the time McCall Smith had a couple of sequels under his belt, the rest of the world had begun to show an interest. His books became word-of-mouth bestsellers, garnering international acclaim and winning Mma Ramotswe legions of

adoring fans. Indeed, it is no overstatement to class Botswana’s sole lady detective as one of modern fiction’s most popular characters.

Over the course of 24 books, Mma Ramotswe has looked into a variety of problems. In “Morality for Beautiful Girls” (2001), she was hired to check the worthiness of four contestants in the Miss Beauty and Integrity contest, while in “The Full Cupboard of Life” (2003), she assessed the honorable intentions of a wealthy businesswoman’s four potential suitors. In “The Joy and Light Bus Company” (2021), a son believed that his ailing father’s live-in nurse had resorted to underhanded methods to claim an inheritance; in “Tea Time for the Traditionally Built” (2009), the owner of the Kalahari Swoopers soccer club suspected foul play within the team. Other intriguing cases have revolved around the Minor Adjustment Beauty Salon, the Go Go Handsome Man’s Bar and the Cool Singles Evening Club.

McCall Smith’s latest book, his 25th, is something of a milestone achievement. It could have been an opportunity to tear up the template, deviate from the norm and take the narrative in a radical new direction. But why do so when you are on to a good thing giving loyal readers what they want?

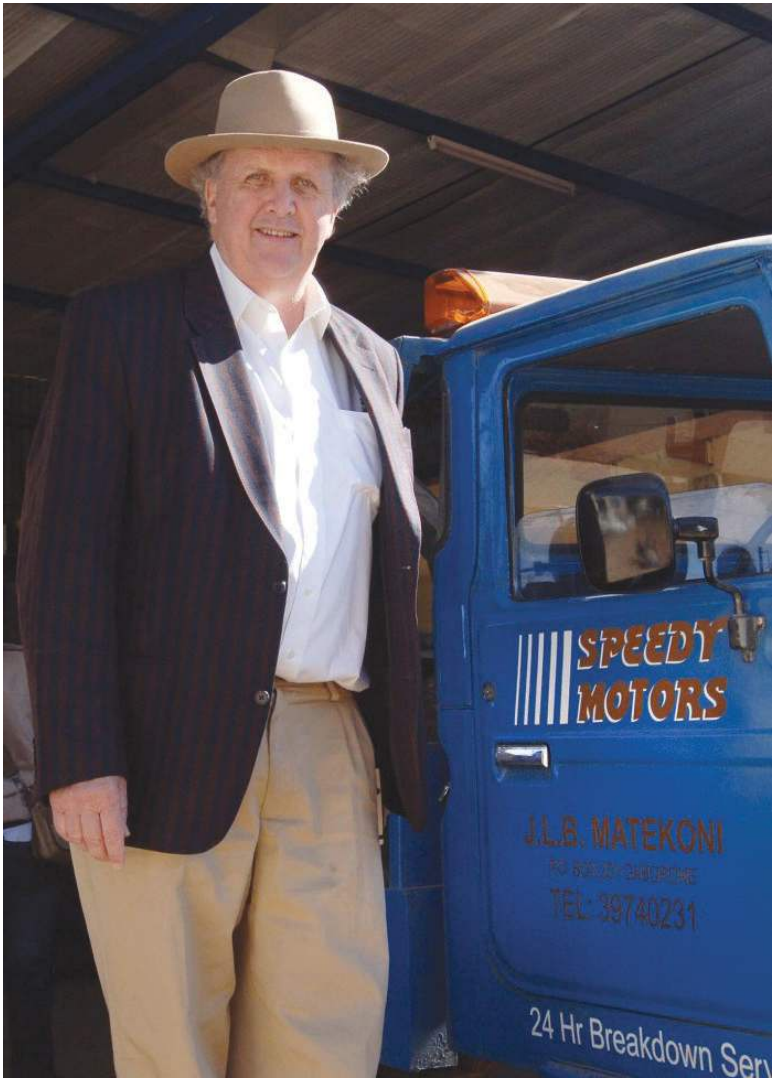
And so “The Great Hippopotamus Hotel” follows a tried-and-tested formula, and is all the better for it. Mma Ramotswe still works alongside her trusty asso-

ciate, the no-nonsense, straight-talking Grace Makutsi, star of the Botswana Secretarial College, and she still lives on Zebra Drive with her husband, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni, the proprietor of Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors, and his adopted children. She continues to spend her days serving up red-bush tea and sympathy, radiating goodwill, and, as one book has it, dealing with the concerns “of both ladies and others.”

This time around, Mma Ramotswe is approached by a man who is baffled by, and worried about, a succession of “unwelcome surprises.” Quick Babusi, the manager of the Great Hippopotamus Hotel (a place that boasts a “world-renowned dining room”), explains how ever since it came under new ownership, the establishment has suffered one misfortune after another. At first, bad luck came in threes: Guests fell ill from food poisoning, kitchen staff didn’t show up for work, and laundry disappeared from the drying line. But when a scorpion was found in a bedroom, and a bathroom flooded, a pattern emerged, and negative reviews spread.

Mma Ramotswe takes on the case and sets out to discover who is trying to tarnish the hotel’s reputation. However, Mma Makutsi is certain that this is not the work of a rival hotel owner or an embittered ex-employee but rather her archenemy Violet Sephotso, she of the “sharp tongue and devious ways,” and so goes on a mission to find evidence and bring her down once and for all.

Aficionados will regard this as a delightful new installment. Yet some first-time readers of



Alexander McCall Smith has given loyal readers exactly what they have come to expect from him in his latest book.

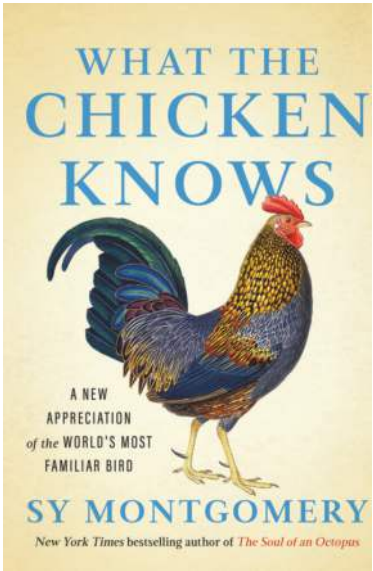
McCall Smith may take issue with a key aspect of the book — and, by extension, the series. Despite the marital pressures, family disputes and commercial skulduggery, the novel has a distinct lack of tension and drama, and all is neatly topped and tailed in a happy ending in which lessons are learned and kindness and compassion win the day.

While this is true, it would be churlish to begrudge McCall Smith this, as his novels don’t claim to be anything other than gentle comfort reads. Those seeking gray, gritty realism should look elsewhere.

There is also the charge that McCall Smith, a white Scotsman, is out of his depth channeling

African characters. In his defense, he has spent a lot of time in Botswana, and his affection for the place shines through in his depictions of the country and his portraits of its people. His books have been well received there, and that seal of approval has enabled him to write more adventures for his lovable heroine.

In these increasingly fractious and febrile times, we perhaps need Mma Ramotswe more than ever. She is a soothing presence, a heart-gladdening tonic. She endears and she endures. “I fix cars,” her husband-to-be tells her in the first book; “you are a fixer of lives.” Long may she continue fixing, entertaining and working her magic.



‘Birdology’ author highlights charm of chickens

By ROB MERRILL
Associated Press

Three clucks to Sy Montgomery, who 14 years after publishing “Birdology” is still finding ways to make money off the charming stories she told in that book about avian species. “What the Chicken Knows,” subtitled “A New Appreciation of the World’s Most Familiar Bird,” was a chapter in “Birdology,” but is being re-released as a mini hardcover.

Readers who haven’t read it will be, briefly, captivated. In just 67 pages (16 of which are glossy color photographs), Montgomery

introduces us to her “Ladies,” the ever-changing flock of hens she raised on her New Hampshire farm for decades starting in the 1980s. Blending her personal experiences as queen of the coop with everything you’ve ever wanted to know about chicken behavior, it’s a fun and informative way to spend an hour.

Here’s a sampling of what you’ll learn: Chickens outnumber people 4:1; they have more in common, anatomically, with dinosaurs than humans; you can mail order up to 350 different varieties of chicks; and roosters really are much meaner than

hens. Montgomery sprinkles in those facts and plenty more as she shares stories about how her chickens behaved over the years and what they taught her about “how rich and varied their lives are, as fraught and joyous and changeable as our own.”

Montgomery is wary of anthropomorphizing her feathered friends, so while she names them, she also tells plenty of stories that could be rebranded for a TV show called “When Chickens Attack!” The funniest involves her minister, who makes the mistake of running his hand down one of the hens’ backs, a

gesture that makes them assume a distinctive mating crouch. Across the yard, Alex “saw a moral travesty, an insult to his roosterhood: the minister was trying to have sex with his hen.” The minister survives the bloody “spurs first” attack to the back of his calves, but learns to tend his own flock.

“What the Chicken Knows” joins “A Hummingbird’s Gift” and “The Hawk’s Way” as mini-books pulled from “Birdology.” Each has a new introduction by the author and would make nice stocking stuffers for bird lovers in anyone’s life.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

APPRECIATION

Quincy Jones' career in 15 essential songs

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

As a musician, a producer, a composer and an executive, Quincy Jones created hits. But in a career that stretched across three-quarters of a century, what may have been more important about this giant of American music — who died Nov. 3 at age 91 — is that he created the conditions for hits. Jones was a crucial connector of talent and repertoire; he had an instinctive sense of where artists should go to find success; he built a multimedia empire with an eye toward empowering people for whom show business didn't always make room. His magnum opus was Michael Jackson's "Thriller," widely agreed upon as the best-selling album of all time. But even that blockbuster merely scratches the surface of his cultural impact. Here, in the order they were released, are 15 of his essential recordings:

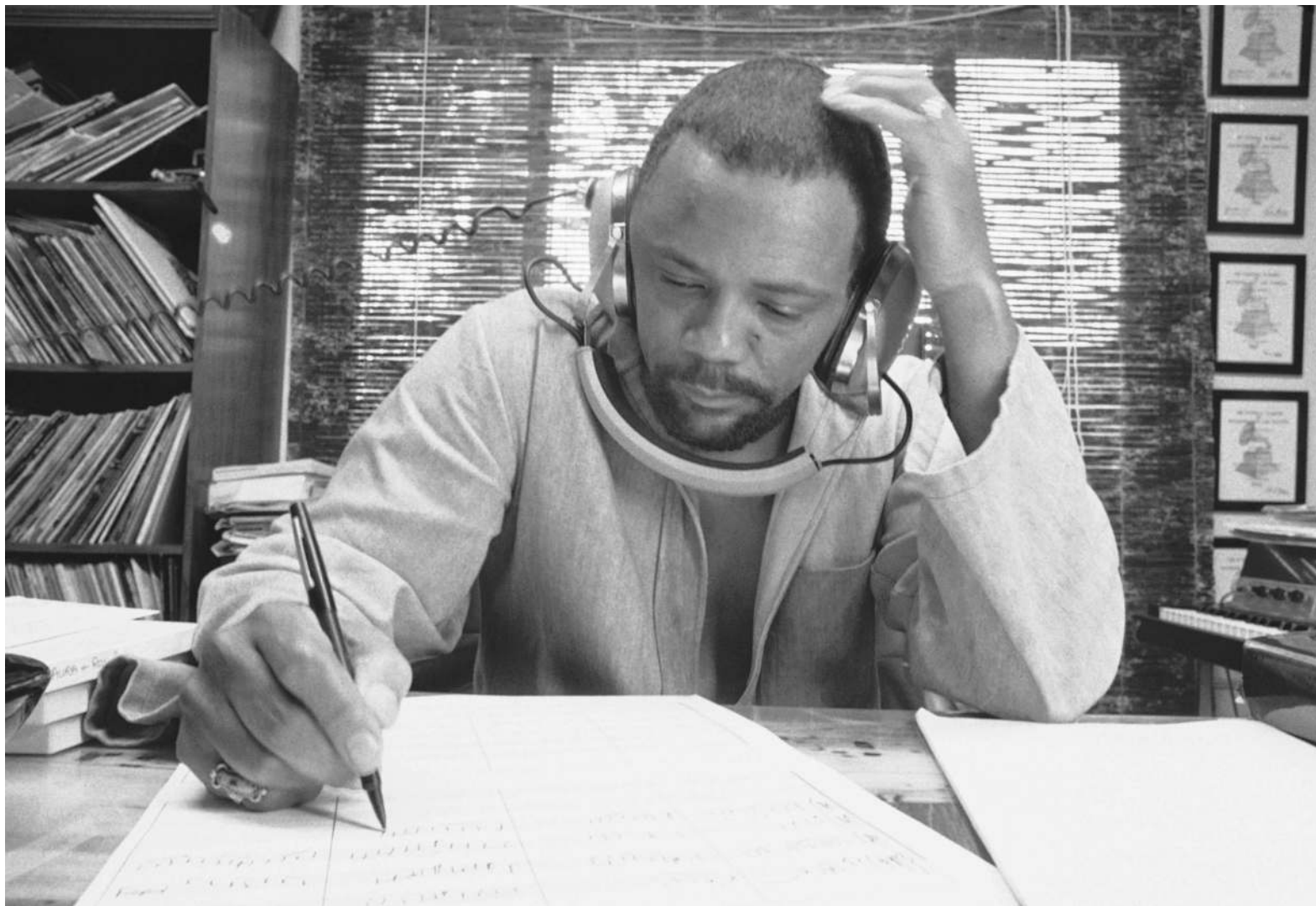
'Soul Bossa Nova' (1962): If Mike Myers hadn't created Austin Powers — whose series of films employs this instrumental ditty as a theme — somebody would've had to have come up with a similar character just to take advantage of the song's limitless swag.

Lesley Gore, 'It's My Party' (1963): At 16, Gore topped Billboard's Hot 100 on her very first try: Her debut single, which Jones put together as part of his day job as a staff producer at Mercury Records, is a rollicking expression of teenage frustration, with drums and horns that feel about two clicks rawer than you'd expect no matter how many times you hear the song.

Frank Sinatra, 'Fly Me to the Moon' (1964): Johnny Mathis, Nancy Wilson and Peggy Lee had already recorded Bart Howard's romantic entreaty by the time Jones arranged a version for Sinatra on the latter's "It Might As Well Be Swing" LP with Count Basie. But nobody made the song jump like Jones did — one reason Ol' Blue Eyes kept working with him for the next two decades (including on Sinatra's final solo studio album, 1984's wonderfully schmaltzy "L.A. Is My Lady").

'The Streetbeater' (1972): TV never knew a funkier theme song than the one Jones composed for "Sanford & Son."

Aretha Franklin, 'Somewhere' (1973): Franklin made only a single studio LP with Jones: "Hey Now Hey (The Other Side of the Sky)," which they recorded in the wake of Franklin's twin 1972 landmarks, "Young, Gifted and Black" and the live gospel



Quincy Jones works at his home studio in October 1974, writing music while listening to a recording on his headphones. Jones, a legendary musician, composer, producer and executive, died on Nov. 3. He was 91.

AP

album "Amazing Grace." Her slow-burning rendition of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's "West Side Story" ballad — "my all-time favorite," Jones told The Times in 2018 — is six minutes of lush orchestral jazz in which Franklin sounds as untethered as she ever did.

'Body Heat' (1974): Primo '70s soul-funk later sampled by Tupac Shakur for his chart-topping "How Do U Want It."

The Brothers Johnson, 'Strawberry Letter 23' (1977): Written and recorded in the early '70s by the psychedelic-soul eccentric Shuggie Otis, "Strawberry Letter 23" went pop when Jones cut a version half a decade later with the Brothers Johnson. The song circled back again in the early '90s when Color Me Badd interpolated it for "I Wanna Sex You Up" and then again in the early 2000s when Outkast drew on it for "Ms. Jackson."

Diana Ross and Michael Jackson, 'Ease on Down the Road' (1978): Jones and Jackson met when the two worked on director Sidney Lumet's big-screen adaptation of the Broadway musical "The Wiz." Their propulsive take on the show's "Ease on Down the Road" —

with Ross as Dorothy and Jackson as the Scarecrow in a proudly African American retelling of "The Wizard of Oz" — provided a tantalizing hint of what was to come when the singer and the producer hunkered down to plot Jackson's next career move.

Michael Jackson, 'Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough' (1979): What happened, of course, was this: a glittering disco-soul fantasia that still ranks as one of the greatest album openers in pop history. "You know, I was wondering if you could keep on," Jackson murmurs over a strutting bass line in his breathy spoken introduction, "because the force, it's got a lot of power, and it make me feel like ..." Then the 20-year-old unleashes the high-pitched squeal that let everybody know this former kiddie star had become a man.

George Benson, 'Give Me the Night' (1980): Having drafted Rod Temperton of Heatwave to write for Jackson's "Off the Wall" LP, Jones drew on Temperton's talents again for this perky disco-soul jam by the jazz guitarist turned adult-contemporary hitmaker.

'Just Once' (1981): One of three tracks sung by the great

James Ingram on Jones' album "The Dude," this quiet-storm ballad (written by the venerable husband-wife duo of Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil) is one of Jones' swankest R&B productions.

Michael Jackson, 'Wanna Be Startin' Somethin' (1982): "Thriller" spun off bigger hits ("Billie Jean") and more iconic cultural moments ("Beat It"). But as a demonstration of the musical intelligence that Jones and Jackson commanded together in the studio, the album's astonishing opener simply has no equal. You could spend days under your headphones unraveling the dense weave of riffs, licks, rhythms and languages in this song.

USA for Africa, 'We Are the World' (1985): The charity single to end all charity singles is rightly remembered as a feat of logistics (in an era before smartphones, no less). But listen, if you haven't in a while, to the distinct vocal performances Jones coaxes out of just a few of the song's many stars in the section where Dionne Warwick (cool and regal) throws to Willie Nelson (trippy yet down-home), who throws to Al Jarreau (smoothly declama-

tory), who throws to Bruce Springsteen (as parched as anyone in LA has ever been).

'The Secret Garden (Sweet Seduction Suite),' with Barry White, Al B. Sure!, James Ingram and El DeBarge (1989): Jones used his star-studded "Back on the Block" album to prove that he still mattered as an R&B auteur in an age dominated by some of his inheritors, including Teddy Riley and the duos of Babyface and L.A. Reid and Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. Thanks in part to this steamy boudoir confab, the LP took the top album of the year Grammy Award (along with five more out of his total of 28) at the Grammys in 1991.

The Weeknd, 'A Tale by Quincy' (2022): Speaking of inheritors: The final high-profile appearance of Jones' career came in the form of a monologue about his complicated childhood that serves as an interlude on the Weeknd's very "Off the Wall"-ish "Dawn FM." Think of the track as one last testament to Jones' belief in music as a place to explore one's emotional vulnerabilities — and one more instance in which he understood the value of proximity to heat.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

“We’re not very good at any particular genre. We like all of the genres of so-called popular music.”

Black Francis
Pixies frontman



ANDY KROPA, INVISION/AP

Black Francis poses for a portrait on Oct. 22 in New York. The Pixies frontman was promoting the band’s 10th studio album, “The Night the Zombies Came.”

Eclectic, eccentric outsiders

Pixies’ Black Francis on ‘The Night the Zombies Came,’ 35 years of ‘Doolittle’ and Steve Albini

BY MARIA SHERMAN
Associated Press

The undead, medieval-themed suburban restaurants, the mall. Druidism, decapitated chickens, rebirth. Church, sheep slaughter, science fiction. These are a few, not all, of the topics touched upon on the Pixies’ 10th studio album, “The Night the Zombies Came.” A 13-track kaleidoscopic collection of songs — their first with new bassist Emma Richardson — the album veers from folk to punk to psychedelia and back again and in between, never neatly fitting into a particular formula. In truth, “The Night the Zombies Came” plays out more like a film, each song a small vignette. Frontman and visual artist

Black Francis, born Charles Thompson, says that’s particularly evident in their slow or midtempo songs — the ones where they value space and reverb — an energetic choice as well as a musical one. “When you play, like, surf music, but you kind of dress it up in a little bit of a tuxedo or whatever, and you end up coming up with something that’s a little more spaghetti Western, right? Or more and you know, Ennio Morricone,” he says. “We’re not very good at any particular genre. We like all of the genres of so-called popular music.” That’s evident across “The Night the Zombies Came.” Eclectic folk moments pull influence from Shirley Collins; Black’s chanty monotone on “Jane (The Night the Zombies Came)” is all Baxter

Dury meets Sleaford Mods, though he says the song is “a mixture of Lou Reed and church music.” The quirky palm-muted guitar pop of “Hypnotized” is loosely written in the style of a sestina, a poetic form. Closer “The Vegas Suite” is based off the 1950s standard “Que Sera, Sera.” “There isn’t really a unifying theme,” Francis says — and there really hasn’t been one on any of the Pixies’ albums. But listeners, of course, are free to draw their own connections: Like the one that might be made between “Ernest Evans,” a rollicking burst about American singer Chubby Checker, best known for “The Twist” and “Kings of the Prairie,” inspired by Mexican troubadours touring the West Coast. There, the image of an exhaustive performance schedule — the

open road, an endless sea of motel doors and gigging — feels like a thematic throughline in an album of unexpected turns. And it works: the Pixies have always been outsiders; it’s what makes their music connect. Earlier this year, the Pixies’ “Doolittle,” one of the great alternative rock records of the past few decades — and certainly the one that cemented his band as an eccentric, strange, revolutionary force in guitar music soon to be acknowledged by the mainstream — turned 35. Francis isn’t one to use an anniversary as a tool for reflection, rather, suggesting that his relationship with the album has remained the

SEE PIXIES ON PAGE 29

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

Charlie Parker

Bird in Kansas City
(Verve)

Listening to Charlie Parker's saxophone gymnastics on a new album of rare recordings is like watching Simone Biles stretch during warmups.

A new collection, "Bird in Kansas City," captures Parker's grace and greatness in casual settings. On 13 cuts recorded in his hometown from 1941 to 1951, the bebop pioneer's playing is largely informal and relaxed, yet still Olympian.

The material, much of it never heard before, includes two sets of private recordings with local musicians made during breaks in his travels and concludes with two unreleased songs with the Jay McShann Band. Parker solos from start to finish on each of the private recordings, and he's in fine form, ideas pouring through the sort of improbable improvisations that tested the limits of his instrument — and jazz. There's some crackle and hiss in the recordings, and his rhythm section can be difficult to hear, but Bird's alto sax comes through loud and clear.

He experiments with energetic embellishments and long, elaborate phrases. He doesn't always stick the landing, but it's virtuosity at high velocity. Judges may not give "Bird in Kansas City" a perfect 10, but it's a welcome addition to Parker's monumental catalog.

— Steven Wine
Associated Press



Pixies: Francis says he enjoyed Albini's approach

FROM PAGE 28

same. "I think we knew we were doing good work at the time," he says. "We were glad people liked it."

"At the risk of sounding faux-humble, it's not really my position to kind of go, 'Well, here's how my music sits in the pantheon of records and what it means and all that (expletive),' " he says. "It's hard to talk about your own records as being quote-unquote influential or important or whatever because yeah, it sounds a little crass."

"Doolittle" follows "Surfer Rosa," the band's canonized 1988 album known to Nirvana fans the world over as the one that inspired Kurt Cobain's songwriting on the 1991 landmark album "Nevermind." It's one many fans have been returning to in 2024, following the untimely death of its legendary producer, Steve Albini, after a heart attack in May. He was 61.

"It was nice, in a way, to work with someone who wasn't taking it all too seriously, wasn't taking us that seriously, was a little sort of almost dismissive," he says of working with Albini. "That is a tone ... that one can take when you're making your art or whatever that can be useful. It can be useful to not take it all too seriously. That you have to be willing to just go, 'It's good, but we could just also destroy it all right now and start over.' I mean, you have to not be so precious about it."



EVAN AGOSTINI, INVISION/AP

Halsey arrives at the MTV Video Music Awards on Sept. 11 at UBS Arena in Elmont, N.Y. The singer's new album, "The Great Impersonator," chronicles her health battles.

“Long story short, I’m lucky to be alive,” are the words Halsey chose to introduce their fifth studio album, “The Great Impersonator.”

Born Ashley Frangipane, the pop singer who uses she/they pronouns shared the note on Instagram in June, later revealing she’d been privately battling both a form of lupus and a rare T-cell lymphoproliferative disorder since 2022. “The Great Impersonator,” released Oct. 25, is a chronicle of that time, made in the space of survival. And it wasn’t only health crises and treatment threatening their well-being: Across the last two years, she was also dropped from her longtime label and separated from the father of their son.

In some ways, “The Great Impersonator” is an artifact of someone not sure they’ll live to make another record. It’s full of reflection, from the early days of their career, the whirlwind that followed and the existential wisdom that comes when cutting it close to death.

It may seem ironic, then, that on this album — the one that feels like an artist trying to get to the core of their interiority — she’s chosen to compose songs that directly pull from their greatest inspirations. Each song is a kind of impersonation of another performer, filtered through their own songwriting style. But that’s exactly the point: Halsey has been chameleonic across their career, a forerunner in the internet’s age of genre-averse alt-pop. What is truest to them may very well be an album of impressions.

It’s a return to both the music that made Halsey a teenage superstar all those years ago and the influences that were previously hidden from their work. In the former category, there’s the interpolation of Britney Spears on “Lucky”; the shoegaze-meets-nu-metal “Lonely is the Muse,” where Deftones and Evanescence can be heard in equal measure; the pop-punky, Third Eye Blind-like “Ego”; and the folky “The End.”

Elsewhere, there’s the big-hearted, reverbed Bruce Springsteen-channeling “Letter to God (1983),” lest anyone forget Halsey is from New Jersey. Sonically,



Halsey

The Great Impersonator
(Columbia)

about an artist rectifying their relationship with fame and by extension, career. Halsey’s blockbuster pop singles appear to be a thing of the past, a necessary sacrifice to make the most interesting work of their career. Their last album, 2021’s “If I Can’t Have Love, I Want Power,” saw Halsey teaming up with Nine Inch Nails’ Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross for an industrial concept record on motherhood and the Freudian “Madonna-whore complex.” It is their most ambitious work, and what she has recently called her least commercially successful release. “The Great Impersonator” is aware of that legacy, and instead of attempting to reclaim traditional markers of achievement, bucks up against them.

In the opening track, “Only Living Girl in LA,” Halsey offers brutal honesty and crippling satire: “I don’t know if I could sell out my own funeral (Ah-ah) / At least not at this point in time.” Near the end, the folky opener fractures into explosive distortion — something that might be at home on an Alex G record. He is one of this album’s producers, along with Michael Uzowuru, known for his work with SZA, Frank Ocean, FKA Twigs, Beyoncé and more.

Those collaborators are only a piece of “The Great Impersonator,” an album that feels truest to Halsey — strangely, arriving in a moment where she’s made herself the least available she has ever been to the public. It’s an ambitious, contemplative album — self-involved and hyper-referential — perhaps the best document yet of the person behind the moniker.

— Maria Sherman
Associated Press

Tyler, the Creator

Chromakopia
(Columbia)

On his seventh studio album, “Chromakopia,” Tyler, the Creator pulls back the curtain. Across 14 tracks, the rapper born Tyler Okonma interrogates the anxieties that come with age and fame, intertwining them with his own wisdom and some that arrive via carefully-placed voice messages.

Tyler is a jack of all trades excelling across industries in music, fashion and television. Like his hero Pharrell Williams, Tyler is known for his unconventional fashion sense as the founder of luxury label’s Golf Wang and Golf le Fleur, along with his television work on the Adult Swim sketch comedy series “Loiter Squad.” He established his role as a countercultural tastemaker and controversial rule breaker with his first mixtape, 2009’s “Bastard,” and continues to push the boundaries of music.

“Chromakopia” starts off strong with “St. Chroma” — an introduction to the new masked persona on the album’s cover — with forceful military cadences in the background of both Tyler and R&B singer Daniel Caesar’s vocals. A reassuring woman’s voice is heard at the beginning, “You are the light. It’s not on you. It’s in you.”

“I ain’t never had a doubt inside me,” he raps. “And if I ever told you that I did, I’m (expletive) lyin’.”

As a whole, the album “Chromakopia” represents the two-time Grammy-award-winning artist as he delves into his 30s. In this new era, he seeks understanding in all aspects of his life as he seeks to understand himself.

It’s not all light, like on the track “Like Him,” where Tyler explores similarities to an estranged father.

“Give me love and affection / Attention, protection (Go),” he sings in the second verse. “How could I ever miss a chance (Go) / That I never had?”

He’s thinking about a lot: “Hey Jane” details a pregnancy scare atop dreamy production, “Take Your Mask Off” tells the story of various characters afraid to live in their truth. It’s as much about Tyler, the Creator himself as it is about them. “I hope you find yourself,” he says. “I hope you take your mask off.”

“Noid” targets celebrity, addressing paranoia and the strange parasocial relationships that come with fame in a claustrophobic, transgressive package. The chorus samples Zambian rock band Ngozi Family’s 1977 track “Nizakupanga Ngozi.”

But the album isn’t all deep introspection. Tyler is as brash as ever on “Thought I Was Dead” and “Rah Tah Tah,” which use deep bass that reverberates, felt in the listeners’ bones.

His fun and outrageous personality isn’t hidden, either. It’s clearly heard on tracks like the cheerful “Sticky,” which features Lil Wayne, GloRilla and Sexxy Red, and “Balloon,” which features Doechii.

The entire album, as stated on the “Chromakopia” artwork, was written, produced and arranged by Tyler Okonma. It’s a too-early midlife memoir, one many 30-somethings will relate to: An album that considers all that he’s accomplished, fears and hopes for the future to come.

— Leslie Ambriz
Associated Press



WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Interest in supersize TVs growing

As the holidays approach, stores are stocking more and more enormous sets

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
Associated Press

For some television viewers, size apparently does matter.

Forget the 65-inch TVs that were considered bigger than average a decade ago. In time for the holidays, manufacturers and retailers are rolling out more XXL screens measuring more than 8 feet diagonally. That's wider than a standard three-seat sofa or a king-size bed.

Supersize televisions only accounted for 1.7% of revenue from all TV set sales in the U.S. during the first nine months of the year, according to market research firm Circana. But companies preparing for shoppers to go big for Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa have reason to think the growing ultracategory will be a bright spot in an otherwise tepid television market, according to analysts.

The 38,100 televisions of at least 97 inches sold between January and September represented a tenfold increase from that of the same period last year, Circana said. Best Buy, the nation's largest consumer electronics chain, doubled the assortment of hefty TVs — the 19 models range in price from \$2,000 to \$25,000 — and introduced displays in roughly 70% of its stores.

"It's really taken off this year," Blake Hampton, Best Buy's senior vice president of merchandising, said.

Analysts credit the emerging demand to improved technology and much lower prices. So far this year, the average price for TVs spanning at least 97 inches was \$3,113 compared to \$6,662 last year, according to Circana. South Korean electronics manufacturer Samsung introduced its first 98-inch TV in 2019 with a hefty price tag of \$99,000; it now has four versions starting at \$4,000, the company said.

Anthony Ash, a 42-year-old owner of a wood pallet and recycling business, recently bought a 98-inch Sony for his 14,000-square-foot house in Bristol, Wis. The device, which cost about \$5,000 excluding installation fees, replaced an 85-inch TV in the great room off his kitchen. Ash now has 17 televisions at home and uses some to display digital art.

"We just saw that the price was affordable for what we were looking for and thought, 'Why not?'" he said of deciding to upsize to the Sony. "You get a better TV experience with a bigger TV. You're sitting watching TV with a person on TV that is the same size as you. You can put yourself in the scene."

The amount of time that many people spend staring at their cellphones and tablets, including to stream movies and TV shows, is another factor driving the growth of widescreen TV screens. Overall TV sales revenue fell 4%, while the number of units sold rose 1% from the January through September period, Circana said.

Most people only invest in a television every seven years, but when they do, they



RICHARD DREW/AP

A 98-inch TCL QM-8 Q-Class Mini-LED QLED 4K HDR Smart TV is displayed at the Pepcom Holiday Spectacular event in New York on Oct. 30. Analysts credit the emerging demand for XXL screens to improved technology and much lower prices.

typically choose bigger ones, according to Rick Kowalski, the senior director of business intelligence at the Consumer Technology Association. In the past 15 years, the size of flat-panel TVs shipped to U.S. retailers and dealers grew an average of one inch a year, Kowalski said.

The coronavirus pandemic accelerated the elongation trend as people spent more time at home. In fact, screen sizes increased an average of two inches in both 2021 and 2022, and 85-inch TVs began

to be sold in 2021. "If you're watching YouTube TV content or 'NFL Sunday Ticket,' you can actually get four screens up, and that's four 48-inch screens on it," he said.

Manufacturers are also adding new features. Samsung said it designed its 98-inch lineup with a component that analyzes what the viewer is watching to increase sharpness and reduce visible noise across every scene.

James Fishler, senior vice president of the home entertainment division of Samsung's U.S. division, said the way people

watch TV is shifting.

"It's even more so about watching TV as a shared experience," Fishler said. "They want to host a watch party and gather around their TV to watch the big game, or set up a cinematic movie experience right at home."

Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, its Sam's Club division, and Chicago retailer Abt Electronics, also say they are expanding their TV ranges to meet customer demand for supersize screens.

TV industry experts say these monster TVs are beginning to encroach on home theater projectors, which create a 100- to

120-inch image that is less sharp and require rooms with blackout curtains or without windows.

"A dedicated viewing room for watching movies was exclusively the purview of projectors," Andrew Sivori, vice president in the entertainment division of LG Electronics, another Korean manufacturer. "But you can get a much better viewing experience with direct TV."

Retailers and TV makers said the buyers trading up range from millennials and members of Generation X to the tech-native Gen Z crowd. But as Jon Abt, co-president of Abt Electronics said, "It's still a niche business."

"A lot of people just don't have the space to put one of those in," he added.

Before dreaming big for the holidays, shoppers therefore should make sure a 98-inch TV will fit. Best Buy said its Geek Squad team asks if stairwells and entry halls are large enough to accommodate delivery and installation. An augmented reality feature on the Best Buy app that allows customers to see if products are the right size has been especially helpful for XXL TVs, the retailer said.

But for those worried about having the space for viewing, the good news is that the recommended distance for a 98-inch TV is actually just 6-12 feet from the seating area. The rule of thumb is to multiple the diagonal length of the TV by 1.2 to determine the ideal viewing distance, Samsung's Fishler said.

If bigger is better in the TV department, how big can they go?

"I think we'll have to wait and see," Fishler said.

"You get better resolution over time. You get better picture quality. And so just over time, it's easier to produce those sets and improve the technology."

Rick Kowalski

senior director of business intelligence at the Consumer Technology Association

gaining traction with consumers, Kowalski said. Shipments of 98-inch TVs to the U.S. are picking up pace this year, and models as huge as 110-115 inches are on the market right now, he said.

"You get better resolution over time," Kowalski said. "You get better picture quality. And so just over time, it's easier to produce those sets and improve the technology."

Best Buy's Hampton said a benefit of a colossal TV is the viewer can watch multiple shows at once, an experience he described as "incredible."

"If you're watching YouTube TV con-

WEEKEND: TELEVISION



CBS ENTERTAINMENT/AP

“Georgie & Mandy’s First Marriage” continues the “Young Sheldon” storyline revolving around Georgie (Montana Jordan), right, and Mandy (Emily Osment), left, who are navigating young parenthood with a newborn daughter and also adapting to their new marriage.

Old-school show, old-school format

‘Georgie & Mandy’s First Marriage’ co-creator Holland says ‘90s series filmed in multicam because of cast’s ‘spark’

BY KAITLYN HUAMANI
Associated Press

Chuck Lorre is responsible for some of the most successful sitcoms of all time. He says he has the recipe for success, and it’s simpler than you’d think.

“The whole thing boils down to great actors and great scripts. And if either one of those is missing, it doesn’t work,” he told The Associated Press.

Lorre’s latest venture, alongside his longtime collaborators, Steven Molaro and Steve Holland, is “Georgie & Mandy’s First Marriage,” a CBS sequel to their hit series “Young Sheldon.” The latter is a prequel of “The Big Bang Theory,” which Lorre, Molaro and Holland worked on for its run from 2007 through 2019.

The CBS series, which premieres Sunday on AFN-Pulse, stars Montana Jordan and Emily Osment reprising their roles from “Young Sheldon.” Jordan plays Georgie Cooper, Sheldon’s older brother, and Osment plays Mandy McAllister, Georgie’s new wife. The series follows the pair as they navigate young parenthood with a newborn daughter while also adapting to their new marriage.

Unlike their previous series, though, “Georgie & Mandy” taps into a crucial part of what made fans love “The Big Bang Theory” — it’s filmed in the old-school multicamera format.

Multicamera sitcoms date back to classics like “I Love Lucy” and “The Mary Tyler Moore Show,” but “The Big Bang Theory” stands alone as a highly successful modern sitcom filmed in the format with an audience.

“Georgie & Mandy’s First Marriage” will carry on that practice with a live studio audience and a traditional sitcom feel. Holland, who is an executive producer with Lorre and Molaro, said the goal was to separate it from its predecessor so it didn’t feel like “‘Young Sheldon’ 2.0 or something.”

“We’ve always had a soft spot for multicam and seeing this cast and seeing how they sort of spark together, the thought of putting them in front of an audience like a theatrical experience seemed great,” Holland said.

Distancing the series from Sheldon Cooper, played by Iain Armitage in the prequel and Jim Parsons on “The Big Bang Theory,” meant stepping away from a character they had worked on for 19 seasons, but Holland said it felt like they had “gone to that vein a lot.”

“The chance to tell stories in this world where we don’t know the future, or we know very little about the future, was exciting,” he added.

Speaking before the series began filming, Jordan, who had never worked on a multicamera show before, said he was feeling optimistic about the new process.

“I kind of just throw the nerves away, just get them out of my life, throw them out somewhere,” he said.

“People fell in love with Georgie on ‘Young Sheldon,’ so I’m just gonna keep playing that, see how it goes,” he added in his signature Southern drawl.

Osment, however, is no stranger to studio audiences, having appeared as a teenager in Disney Channel’s “Hannah Montana” with Miley Cyrus, followed by a starring role in “Young & Hungry” for five seasons on Freeform. She said she was looking forward to being

back in front of an audience because she had “kind of forgotten what that feels like.”

Osment also added that she enjoys the moments when the cast breaks character by laughing. “That’s fun too,” she said.

“Sometimes, you get the best stuff ever when you can’t keep it together and sometimes, they use it. Especially with working with a baby. There’s going to be moments of that,” she said. “But we’re good at that. We’re good at rolling with it.”

Georgie and Mandy’s baby daughter Ceecee is portrayed by twins, Isabelle and Zariah Booko.

Having a baby on set is “wonderful,” Osment said, because adjustments are made to keep the atmosphere calm:

“The crew and the cast sort of soften. They don’t speak very loudly in front of the baby. They don’t overly try to touch up your wardrobe or your hair, makeup because, like, your job is just to hold this precious, beautiful thing and people kind of leave you the heck alone.”

When the Booko girls aren’t available or the baby is in a scene but not really visible, Osment says “an extremely expensive animatronic baby” is brought in.

“They get way more nervous when we go towards that robot baby,” Osment joked. “Like, ‘You guys have the real thing handled, but don’t mess up this robot baby.’”

Lorre reiterated that this cast and the series, which is set in the ‘90s, was meant to be filmed in the multicamera format.

“Putting on a play in front of an audience is as fundamental as you can get to how to tell a story,” he said.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

How to recover after finishing a marathon

Sports medicine experts, experienced participants offer some advice and tips

BY MARLENE CIMONS

The Washington Post

Fall marathon season is here. Thousands of athletes — from the swiftest to those at the back of the pack — are training to take on the challenge of running 26.2 miles. If you are among them, you probably aren't thinking beyond crossing that finish line. Perhaps you should.

The moments after you finish a marathon can be euphoric. But the hours and days that follow can bring a world of pain: Your legs will hurt, and so will your arms. Walking will be difficult; stairs — even street curbs — will seem insurmountable. Your feet — and your toenails — will take a beating.

“For some people, especially novice runners, it's the most sore they will ever be in their lives,” said Scott Trappe, director of the human performance laboratory and a professor of human bioenergetics at Ball State University. “Recovery is one of the more underutilized aspects in a runner's toolbox. You need to take it just as seriously as your training.”

Running a marathon is a grueling event, for first-timers in particular. The biggest effect is on the muscles. Running depletes them of glycogen — the stored form of glucose — the muscles' main source of energy. The prolonged pounding of legs and feet on pavement, especially running downhill, also causes microscopic muscle tears.

Running a marathon stresses the heart, lungs and the body's thermoregulatory system that controls internal body temperature.

“The peak function of all of these systems is reduced for hours and at least a few days after you run a marathon,” said Michael J. Joyner, a physiologist and an anesthesiologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

We asked sports medicine experts as well as a few experienced marathoners — to share their tips for a successful recovery:

What is best for pain relief after a race?

If you must take something for pain relief, don't take an NSAID (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory), but stick to acetaminophen, which does not affect inflammation, said experts, who believe that inflammation promotes healing.

“There's no question NSAIDs interfere with a few of the muscle pathways involved in muscle buildup, turnover and recovery,” Trappe said. “After a marathon, if the discomfort is considerable, go with the acetaminophen over the NSAID.”

“NSAIDs can interfere with the natural healing process,” said John L. Ferrell III, director of sports medicine at Regenerative Orthopedic Sports Medicine, which has several locations in the Washington area.

“Also, while they can provide temporary relief, they come with potential risks like gastritis and acute kidney injury.”

What causes postmarathon soreness?

For years, a buildup of lactic acid (lactate) — a chemical produced when cells break down carbohydrates — has been blamed for postmarathon muscle-burning and soreness. It is also a myth, experts say.

“What you are feeling in your muscles is the result of pounding, microtrauma and energy depletion,” Trappe said. “Lactate is not the bad molecule everyone has made it out to be. Lactate production is actually relatively low from running marathons.”

Lactic acid “probably plays a part in soreness, but its role has been overblown,” Ferrell said.

Ice bath or a warm shower?

Some athletes sink into a tub of ice following a rough game or other intense competition. But “the emerging consensus is that warm, not cold, is better,” Joyner said. “Whether this speeds recovery at the cellular level or just helps people feel better is an open question.”

Ferrell recommends starting with heat “because it



AP

Runners cross the finish line of the 2016 New York City Marathon. Recovery should be taken as seriously as training.

increases the blood flow,” he said. “You don't want to tamp down inflammation immediately, but once the healing process is underway, you can use ice after a couple of days.”

Amby Burfoot, who won the 1968 Boston Marathon and is still running them at 78, heads straight for the hot tub.

“My body is stiff and sore, and the warm water feels very comforting,” he said. “I'm not going to do anything to stress my leg muscles the next several weeks, so I don't have to think about ice and anti-inflammatories and that sort of thing.”

Should you run or not run the day after?

The fastest runners often do — their talent, training and body type enable them to bounce back quickly — but it's probably not a good idea for the rest of us.

“Elite runners have put a lot more miles in, and they also are lighter,” Trappe said. Moreover, having trained for the pounding, “the overall trauma for them is not as significant,” he said.

“They're out on the course for less time,” he said. “They are still beat up but not as much compared to a four-hour recreational runner. The recovery profile is definitely different.”

Don't underestimate the healing power of rest. Most runners should take it easy and give their body two to four weeks to return to normal, he added.

He and others recommend light “cross-training” activities in the days following a marathon, such as swimming, walking and easy spin cycling.

“Savor your accomplishment and go on a period of active rest, which means modest levels of physical activity and stretching until the snap in your legs comes back,” Joyner said.

Burfoot, who has run about 75 marathons (he's lost count), starts with very easy recumbent bicycling, spin cycling and elliptical workouts a few days postmarathon.

“Nothing hard or high-resistance,” he said. “Maybe I'll do three to four miles of walking a day in my second week, then begin running the third week. In the old days, I wanted to return to training as soon as possible to get ready for the next starting line. Now my first thought is: ‘I can't wait to begin my two-week layoff.’”

Does it take longer to recover as you age?

“The older you get, the longer it takes” to recover, Trappe said. “We also get smarter and tend to respect the process more.”

Joan Benoit Samuelson, 67, won the inaugural women's Olympic marathon in 1984 and ran the Tokyo Marathon in March.

“You can't run the miles and expect to recover fully both in training for and running a marathon,” she said. “Don't set high expectations. Cross-train before and after running a marathon. Don't think you can carry high-mileage training weeks forever.”

What should you eat after a marathon?

For the first 72 hours, refuel your depleted muscles with calories and fluids. Trappe recommends healthy food — complex carbohydrates such as fruits and vegetables, and items that are low in saturated fat — but he understands not everyone will do this because “you want to reward yourself and go out for a pizza and a shake.”

Cheryl Bimler Link, 62, a retired health care information technology specialist from Dublin, Ohio, said she quickly forgot her postmarathon pain after a friend gave her a bloody mary in the runners' tent.

“The tomato juice and salt settled my stomach and had me feeling great,” she said. “Or maybe it was the vodka.”

Connie Chan, 70, a retired university professor from Orleans, Mass., who has run 33 marathons, said she eats whatever she wants for a couple of days, “including sandwiches with french fries and maybe onion rings” — before returning to a healthy diet.

Mary Harada, a retired history professor from Durham, N.H., warns against binges. Decades ago, after her last marathon, she ate an entire frozen cheesecake.

“It was the most stupid thing I ever did after a marathon,” she said.

How to cope with the postmarathon letdown

“Postmarathon blues are real,” Trappe said. “You've been focused on this big goal, and now you don't have that purpose anymore.” He suggests planning ahead for something big soon after, such as a vacation, “just to give your mind something else to do.”

Julia Kim, 65, a technology executive from Boston, spends two days “swearing: never again,” then signs up for another one.

Burfoot said these days he feels grateful after every marathon, never sad.

“I appreciate that I was able to reach another marathon finish and thankful I still have the fitness and strength to cover 26.2 miles,” he said. “And I'm hopeful I'll be able to do it again in the next year.”

WEEKEND: FAMILY

For the smallest chefs in the house

Bittman says ‘We had to try to think like kids and about kids’ for new cookbook aimed at ages 8-12

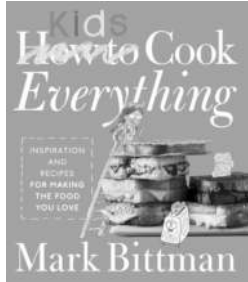
BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

Mark Bittman has taught us how to cook everything — how to bake and grill, prepare fish and vegetarian meals — do it fast. This fall, he’s targeting a different kind of home chef — the little ones.

“How to Cook Everything Kids” is written for children aged 8-12 and is bursting with photos, graphics, advice and techniques to empower any mini-Julia Childs in your home.

“It required a different kind of thinking,” Bittman says. “This is a book that is built to please kids, and we’re not kids. So we had to consult with kids. We had to try to think like kids and about kids.”

Bittman, who has evolved from recipe developer and culinary writer into one of the leading voices on food and health policies, offers his take on kid-friendly dishes like baked ziti, chicken nuggets and chicken with orange sauce, giving easy directions and variations, like pork chops with apples for the latter dish.



The tone is less pedantic and more encouraging, allowing room for younger chefs to experiment and customize dishes. There are lists — like “9 Ways to Flavor Scrambled Eggs” — and recipes for substituting soy sauce glaze with sweet-and-sour, peanut and hot variations.

“You do you,” Bittman writes at one point.

‘Fun visually’

It’s a useful resource for first-time cooks, explaining things like how garbanzo beans are the same as chickpeas and offering helpful sections on spices and herbs, kitchen equipment and how to prep everything from butternut squash to corn. There are pictures of kids throughout the book.

“We wanted it to feel inviting and fun visually for the kids. I think keeping their interest and holding their attention was something that we really wanted to do,” says Jacqueline Quirk, an associate editor at Harvard, an imprint of HarperCollins.

Bittman says the hope is that “How to Cook Everything Kids” will teach children that cooking isn’t hard and they can produce things that taste good — lifelong paths toward better health and breaking the addiction to eating out.



A grilled cheese sandwich from the book “How to Cook Everything Kids” by Mark Bittman. In the book Bittman offers his take on kid-friendly dishes.

“If you empower them to make it themselves, they’ll be more likely to enjoy it, even if it’s a strange vegetable or something like that,” Quirk says. “We wanted to inspire an adventurousness in kids.”

Bittman is also the author of several other books, including “How to Cook Everything,” “Fish” and “Food Matters,” which looks at the intersection of diet, personal and planetary health. Extending his franchise to kids made sense.

“There’s a lot of stuff in here that 4- and 5-year-olds might get a kick out of if they’re so inclined,” Bittman says. “The important thing is that parents set the example and that’s a more important thing than having kids do hands-on cooking.”

He laughs that, when he was a kid, the only cooking he did was to mix chocolate syrup and peanut butter in a glass to see what would happen.

“Now you’ll have 4-year-olds who will tell you that they want to be chefs when they grow up and that’s really different. Chefs were not visible people when I was younger, even when my kids were young,” he says. “Even being a food writer is an acceptable career.”

Color and sweetness but no mandolins

The book — organized by dishes like soups, breakfast, sandwiches, pasta, breads, main meals and grains and beans — reaches a crescendo with a beef and vegetable stir fry, a dish Bittman considers part of a holy trinity.

“I think there’s three critical recipes in this world. And they are: stir fry, rice and beans, and chopped salad. Imagine mastering those, or having a sense of those, when you were 12 — you’re sort of set for life at that point,” Bittman says.

“Almost everything that people wind up cooking can fall into one of those three categories. Those are sort of the mainstays of world cooking,” he adds.

The book tries not to lean on kitchen machines — and urges kids to get a parent or caregiver to help with things like blenders — and one utensil was banished completely: the mandolin. Even Quirk is wary of them.

Bittman has bent to his audience to make visually attractive dishes — like pasta with blueberry — and cooks some ingredients, like sweet potatoes and carrots, for a long time so the natural sugars shine.

“There’s more color in here than we would normally pay attention to. And, quite frankly, there’s more sugar in here than we would normally pay attention to,” he says. “We are focusing on real foods and good foods, but we’re allowing for the fact that kids really do gravitate toward sweets and you have to accommodate that to some extent.”

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Let’s open eyes, hearts to the needs around us

“Now serving B-4-1-1, at Window No. 3,” a mechanical female voice said from the base clinic’s automated pharmacy system. My ticket read “B-419.”

I grabbed a copy of the local free newspaper and took a seat in the waiting area. I searched the pages for something to distract me from my tendency to blatantly people-watch and settled in on the sudoku puzzle.

“Now serving B-4-1-2 at Window No. 2.” *Sigh*

After a swish of the revolving door, I heard heated banter, prompting me to peek over my newspaper.

“Now you sit down right there!” a tiny woman with bushy salt-and-pepper hair and a shirt embroidered with teddy bears barked at her companion, while pointing to a row of chairs. The companion was a taller, even older woman with short, wispy white hair, thick glasses and a quad cane.

The companion hobbled over to the chairs and sat begrudgingly, muttering something about not needing any help. The two argued about where to put their purses, until one blurted, “Knowing me, I’ll forget where it is anyway. I can’t even remember where I parked the car!” They both leaned into each other, erupting in cackling, snorty laughter.

I now understood. The two were good friends, most likely retiree military friends or military spouses who help each other during outings, like trips to the base pharmacy. Clearly, their hostile banter was just a shtick.

As I watched them, I wondered, “What had their lives been like?”

They looked to be in their late 70s or 80s, both wearing the kind of elastic-waisted polyester pants that are advertised in the back of Parade Magazine. Where had they lived? What had they lived through? How did they both end up here?

I wasn’t the only one watching the feisty old ladies’ comedy act. A man in uniform waiting nearby stepped toward them and said, “I got you a number from the kiosk over there. You need one to pick up a prescription. It’s a new system, but I can help you.”

The white-haired woman grumbled and snatched the ticket. Her salt-and-pepper friend thanked the man kindly, before scolding her companion for being rude.

Others standing by peeked over to see the number on the women’s ticket — B-421 — so they could alert them when the time came. Everyone seemed to understand that these women had earned their place in the line, and in life.

There was no need for the women to abide by the new pharmacy system or tone down their cantankerous banter. Somehow, the rest of us in the waiting room knew they were to be respected and taken care of, and it was our duty to do it.

We watched with genuine reverence, knowing that someday, we’ll be the retirees and retired spouses in the military clinic pharmacy waiting rooms needing help. We’ll be the ones wearing wraparound sunglasses, pushing shopping carts through commissaries, bickering over coupons and deli meats. We’ll be the ones telling stories of proud moments, of sacrifices, of military friends lost and gained along the way.

Without a spoken word between us, we made a collective pact to help the two old women that day.

It took 37 minutes for my number to be called, but I was grateful for the opportunity to observe the military folks around me. Whether we know each other personally or not, we are one people, one community, one family. We share experiences and a sense of respect for our unique lifestyle.

And we take care of each other.

This Veterans Day, we must open our eyes and hearts to fellow military members in our communities. Don’t forget about military spouses and children. Their lives are directly impacted by military orders, so they deserve recognition, too.

Hear their stories, show respect and lend a helping hand.

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

WORKING THE NIGHT SHIFT
BY JEFFERY MARTINOVIC AND JEFF CHEN / EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

Jeffrey Martinovic is a mechanical-engineering student at Western University in London, Ontario. Jeff Chen, of Seattle, is a writer and longtime Times crossword contributor. They brainstormed puzzle ideas and entries over email and nearly three months, 200 messages and 100 grid versions later, submitted the artful puzzle here. The theme is neatly explained at 111-Across.

- ACROSS
- 1 Exams first administered in 1926

5 View from St. Moritz

9 “I thought you were my friend!?”

13 Load of laundry

17 Jeweler’s unit

19 Complete journey . . . or what 84-Down makes in this puzzle?

21 Woodworker’s spinner

22 Like Yeats, but not Keats

23 Aids in car buying

24 Remove from packaging

25 Complete some reps

27 In the red

28 Do-to-do delivery?

29 Joan Cusack and Robert Downey Jr. each spent one season on it, for short

30 Certain court documents

33 In which 1 + 1 equals 10

36 Former senator Kennedy

37 Completing a cycle, like 84-Down in this puzzle?

40 “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” for one

42 Borrower’s note

43 Like many verification codes

46 Impressively tough, in slang

47 Crocheting template

50 Re-lease?

52 Nickname for a 2000s Yankee slugger

53 Montreal hockey player, to fans

54 Check scanner, for short

56 A.P.R.-lowering option

57 A.P., Reuters, etc.

59 Hudson Bay or the Caspian

63 Hair-lightening brand

64 Sherlock Holmes, e.g.

66 Apt central entry for this puzzle

67 The Lone Ranger, to Tonto

69 Gender-neutral possessive

71 Possesses

72 Office message

73 Millimeter-wide photo used for conveying secret messages

77 Pants, informally

81 Roofed porch

82 Late-night sub, say

86 Garfield’s predecessor

88 Weary cry

90 Company whose name ends in an exclamation point

91 Steak option in northern Canada

93 Celebrity chef Hussain who won “The Great British Bake Off”

94 However

95 Fit to serve, in a way

96 Ireland, poetically

97 Newlyweds’ booking

104 Behind

105 Gives a lot of attention, with “on”

107 Old ____, Conn.

108 Supermodel with a palindromic name

109 ____ Johnson Sirleaf, Africa’s first elected female head of state

110 “What have we here!”

111 “They’ll grow out of that” . . . or a description of eight squares in this puzzle

115 Every member of the C.I.A.’s K-9 unit

116 “____ Affaire de Femmes” (1988 French classic)

117 It can be quite sappy

118 Half of an exchange

119 “Let’s do it!”

120 Texter’s “As I see it . . .”

121 Co. that introduced Dungeons & Dragons

122 Means of getting unstuck

123 Black ____

124 Margaret Thatcher, e.g.

125 Chiding sound

12 Big name in shipping

13 Wish-list item

14 Time “up”

15 Act rudely in a crowd

16 Did some spelling?

18 Jersey-born rock icon, familiarly

20 Roman numeral that anagrams to part of the eye

21 “Charlie’s Angels” actress

26 Charlie’s Angels and others

28 Their dorsal fins can reach six feet in height

31 Stopover

32 Vessel for an omelet

34 Diminuendo al ____ (“fade to nothingness,” on a score)

35 Slot-machine lever

37 Marked

38 Property unit

39 Europe’s highest volcano

40 Nintendo antagonist in purple overalls

41 Decorate

44 First name on the Supreme Court

45 Lifesaving device, for short

46 Cry loudly

48 Skilled

49 Symptom of an allergic reaction

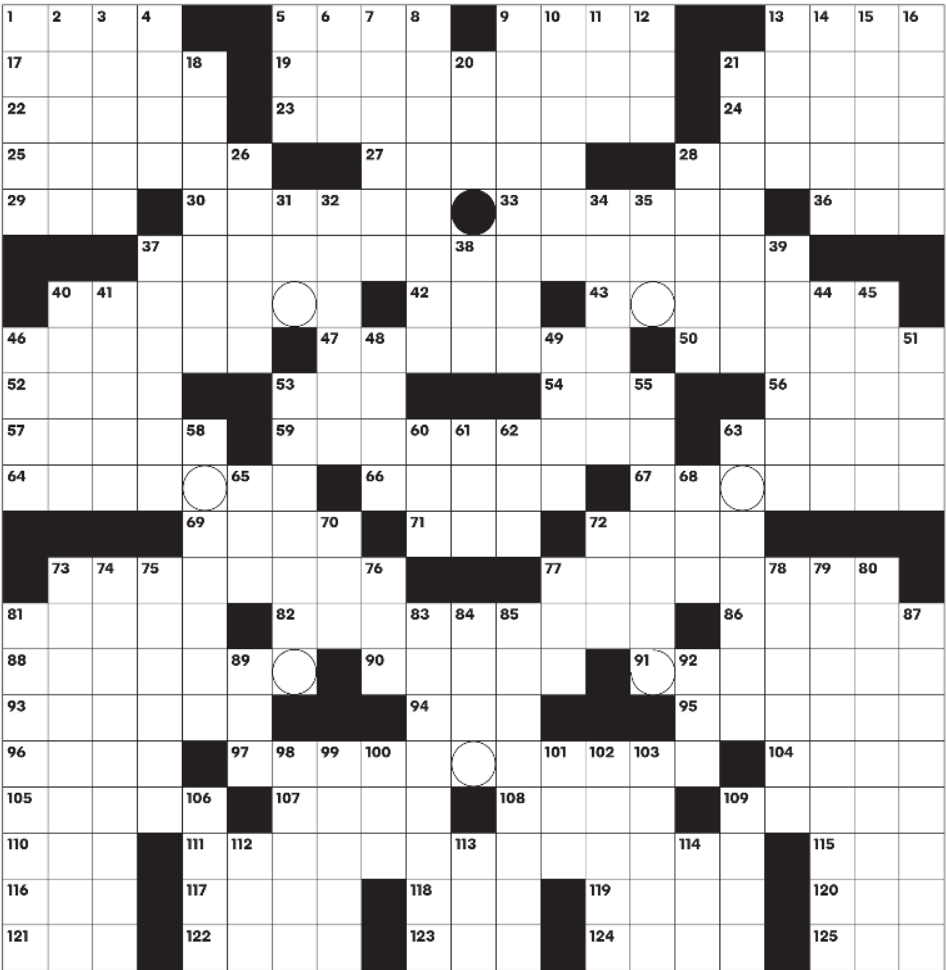
51 Fork part

53 Mob enforcer

55 Add milk to a customer’s coffee, in diner lingo

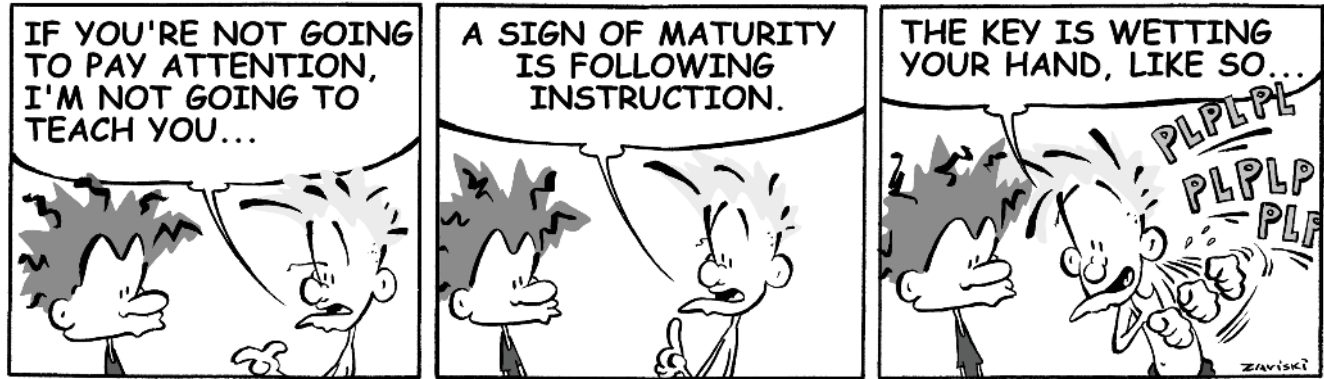
58 Feature of James Earl Jones’s voice

60 “That hits the spot!”



- 61 Gun-lobby org.
- 62 Some N.F.L. linemen, in brief
- 63 Gave a big kiss
- 65 Big name in experimental music
- 68 CPR expert
- 70 Insignificant amount
- 72 “____ Robinson” (Simon & Garfunkel hit)
- 73 Cookies made with ground almond or coconut
- 74 Highly agitated
- 75 Ain’t that the tooth!
- 76 Crime-novelist Josephine
- 77 Sound from beneath a sheet
- 78 Skywalker portrayer
- 79 Guesstimate
- 80 Elite naval groups
- 81 Nearly succeeded . . . but there’s a catch!
- 83 Green-light
- 84 This puzzle’s subject
- 85 Places for grilling
- 87 Horned antelope of southern Africa
- 89 Cry of frustration
- 92 “You follow?”
- 98 Elizabeth of “WandaVision”
- 99 A.F.C. East player
- 100 Bird that’s incapable of walking backward
- 101 Ballpark figure
- 102 Cry in a laser-tag arena
- 103 Spanish “I love you”
- 106 Jedi foe
- 109 Nonsense word in a playground rhyme
- 112 Prefix with glyceride
- 113 Gentle attention-getter
- 114 Polite term of address

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



STARS AND STRIPES

15 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN

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

Only \$14.99 with Free Shipping

ORDER NOW at www.stripesstore.com

FACES

30 years of music

Andrea Bocelli shares his thoughts on album, film, longevity

By MARIA SHERMAN
Associated Press

It's one of the most immediately recognizable voices on the planet: Andrea Bocelli's tenor is beloved across generations, cultures and borders, known to induce tears in as few as three simple words: "Con Te Partirò," or in its English performance, "Time to Say Good-bye."

This year, he's celebrating the 30th anniversary of his career with a new compilation album, "Duets," featuring both previously released and brand-new collaborations of his best-known work — as well as a few surprising contemporary covers — and the release of a new concert film, "Andrea Bocelli 30: The Celebration," which will arrive in theaters on Friday.

So, why duets?
"I've loved voices since when I was a child, and I like very much to share the stage with the best artists and voices. So, this album, there are the best duets that I did in my life," he told The Associated Press. "From the first, 'The Prayer' with Celine Dion, until the last, like 'Perfect' with Ed Sheeran and many, many others. And the album has been remastered and remixed. So, I hope the sound can be better."

He says: "The most important thing in voices ... is to be recognizable, to give emotion."

Sheeran was an interesting collaboration because when Bocelli first attempted to sing "Perfect," the English singer-songwriter wasn't a fan. "He didn't like what I did because I sang in a pop style," he recalls. "He wanted to listen to my voice, like in an operatic style." So, Sheeran traveled to Bocelli's home in Tuscany, and the song was transformed. "He was right because this song had a huge success."

When asked if there is anyone he would've loved to add to the "Duets" collection, Bocelli says of course — but "they passed away before I began to sing. For example, I would like very much to sing with Maria Callas or (Renata) Tebaldi or Magda

Olivero. Many great, incredible singers. They are not anymore with us, unfortunately."

Three decades into his career, Bocelli has performed for presidents, popes and sold-out stadiums across the globe — in addition to having sold nearly 90 million records worldwide, according to a press release. "Reality exceeded my wildest dreams," he says.

How he reflects on that time should come as no surprise. "I like to sing to the future. Honestly, I don't like to think with nostalgia to the past," he says. "My first time on stage, for me it is like yesterday. The time is gone so quickly, so fast. And, yeah, now I like to think to the future."

So, what, then, does he hope becomes his legacy in the next 30 years, 300 years? "In Italy, we have a very famous expression: The people that come after us will judge us," he says with a translator. "So I can't force the judge(ment) of the people. But I feel that my audience has a big affection for me, and this is my goal. When somebody in the street comes to me and says (to) me, 'Thank you for your voice, for your music,' I think mission is accomplished."

Across "Duets," Bocelli sings in Italian, English, French and Spanish. "There are many languages, but it's so difficult. I remember the day I tried to sing in Chinese, only few lines, but it has been so hard for me," he says, laughing.

He also performs across genres, working with everyone from Latin superstars like Karol G and Jennifer Lopez to country musicians like Chris Stapleton and Shania Twain. "I would like to try to sing jazz," he says. "But it's too difficult for me because you must live in an atmosphere, to learn step by step, day by day. I like jazz but it's too far from the experience of my life."

There is little he hasn't done across these last three decades, but the ultimate goal now, he says, is steeped in faith. "I have been very lucky and I reached the affection of the people. Now I must try to deserve the affection of the God. It's more difficult."



MATT LICARI, INVISION/AP

Andrea Bocelli, shown Oct. 28, is releasing a new compilation album called "Duets."

Grande going public with controversial romance with 'Wicked' co-star

By MALIA MENDEZ
Los Angeles Times

Although it hasn't always been pop-u-lar with the public, Ariana Grande's relationship with her "Wicked" co-star Ethan Slater is now Instagram-official.

The "Eternal Sunshine" singer on Monday celebrated the Jon M. Chu-directed movie musical's upcoming release with photos from its Australian premiere. Among them is a candid shot of Slater — who plays Boq — carrying the train of Grande's Glinda-inspired Vivienne Westwood gown as she makes her way down the stairs at Sydney's State Theatre. (Slater also shared the photo on his account.)

Slater's appearance at the Sunday premiere also swept across social media after a fan filmed him



Slater



Grande

accepting a friendship bracelet on Grande's behalf.

"Is it possible for you to give this to Ari for me?" the fan asks in the video, to which Slater replies, "I'm pretty sure she's coming if you want [to give it to her], but I can do that." He also reassured the fan, saying, "I'm sure she'll love it."

Footage of the interaction went viral after it was reshared by a "Wicked" fan account, whose owner wrote, "Ethan Slater seems like the kindest and most genuine

person. The world owes him an apology."

Slater and Grande, who met on the "Wicked" set, came under scrutiny when they first sparked dating rumors in 2023 — after their respective (and highly publicized) splits from previous partners. At the time of the coinciding divorce filings, Slater's ex-wife, singer Lilly Jay, with whom he shares a 2-year-old son, said, "My family is collateral damage."

The pair has since kept mum about their romance. But that changed in September, when Grande addressed the media stir surrounding her relationship with Slater in a Vanity Fair cover story.

While declining to delve into "certain details," the Grammy-winning songstress said, "It definitely doesn't get any easier, see-

ing some of the negativity that was birthed by disreputable tabloids."

She said that, like many other "Wicked" cast members, she "went through a lot of life changes during the filming of this movie."

"The most disappointing part," Grande said, "was to see so many people believe the worst version of it. ... There couldn't be a less accurate depiction of a human being than the one that the tabloids spread about [Slater]. No one on this earth tries harder or spreads themselves thinner to be there for the people that he loves and cares about."

Slater echoed Grande's comments in his October GQ cover story, saying the blowback was difficult to manage.

"There were a lot of big changes in private lives that were really

happening," he said, "so it's really hard to see people who don't know anything about what's happening commenting on it and speculating, and then getting things wrong about the people you love."

"But, of course," he said, "it was an amazing year and a really beautiful thing, and I'm just really excited."

Slater added that he's "really, really proud of Ari and the work she's done" on "Wicked."

"She's poured herself into it," he said, "and I'm really excited to be there for this next step of it when the world gets to see the amazing thing that she did."

The Journey Through Oz press tour has stops scheduled in Los Angeles, Mexico City, New York and London before "Wicked" opens in theaters Nov. 22.



STARS AND STRIPES

Letters to Santa

SEND YOUR WISH LIST TO SANTA!

1

Write your letter



Don't forget to decorate it!

2

Address it to:

Santa Claus
c/o Stars and Stripes
North Pole
Unit 29480
APO, AE 09211-9480



3

Drop it into any US or APO mailbox*



For more information, visit

letterstosanta.stripes.com

*Postmark by Dec. 16, 2024 and Santa may have time to send a note in return!

SPONSORED BY





HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

We wish you and yours the very best this season.





Are you in the picture?



Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

No one covers the bases the way we do.

Happy Birthday, U.S. Marines

Thank you to all who have served
in the United States Marines.

We understand the unique challenges,
financial and otherwise, that our veterans,
military and their families face, and are here
to support you.



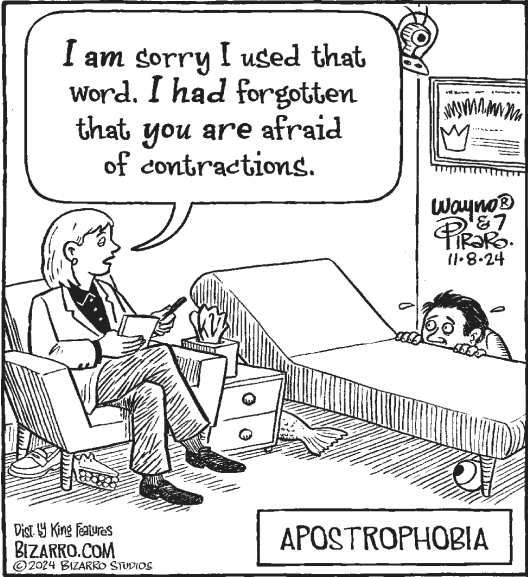
We're here for you. Scan QR code
or visit servicecu.org/military.



Proudly Serving The U.S. Military Since 1957
Checking | Auto | Credit Card | Foreign Exchange

servicecu.org | 00800.4728.2000

Bizarro



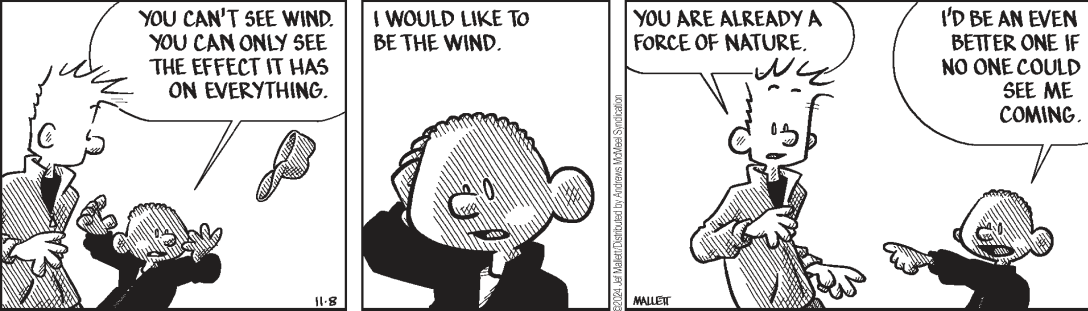
Loose Parts



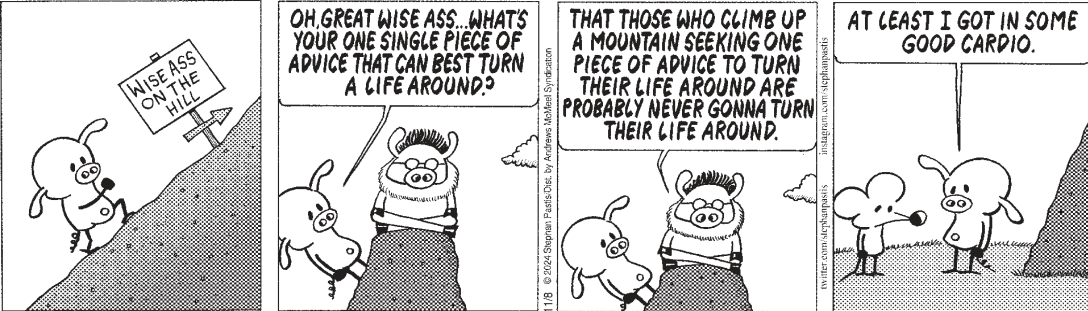
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16			17					
18				19								
20				21		22				23	24	25
				27	28			29	30			
31	32	33						34				
35					36		37					
38					39	40			41	42	43	44
					45			46		47		
48	49	50	51							52		
53						54				55		
56						57				58		

Frazz



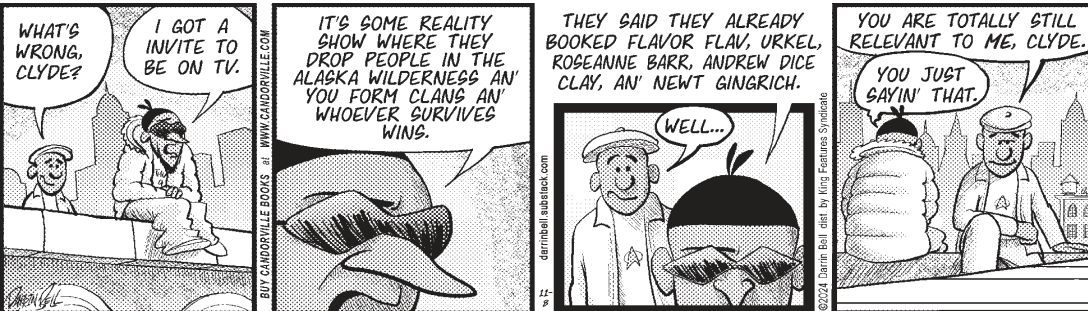
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



- ACROSS
- 1 Pickle holder
- 4 Orig. texts
- 7 Shiny lip application
- 12 Giverny summer
- 13 U.K. recording label
- 14 Gossip
- 15 Tolkien monster
- 16 Massive
- 18 Actress Vardalos
- 19 Bygone Olds
- 20 Openings
- 22 Farm female
- 23 Drench
- 27 Writer's block?
- 29 Fan-shaped tree
- 31 Venomous viper
- 34 Limb stabilizers
- 35 — Mae
- 37 Memo letters
- 38 "Zounds!"
- 39 Neckline shape
- 41 Canal feature
- 45 Church chimers
- 47 Quilters' get-together
- 48 Bar mixer
- 52 USN bigwig
- 53 — Carta
- 54 Bit of ink
- 55 Sailor's chart
- 56 Animal's nose
- 57 Twisty letter
- 58 Curator's concern
- DOWN
- 1 "Community" actor Ken
- 2 Places in the heart
- 3 Summary
- 4 Very large
- 5 Showed pleasure
- 6 Tendon
- 7 Greek pita sandwich
- 8 NASA moon craft
- 9 Artist Yoko
- 10 Disco guy on "The Simpsons"
- 11 Airline to Sweden
- 17 Calif. neighbor
- 21 Shell out
- 23 Slow mover
- 24 Letters of approval?
- 25 CIA employee
- 26 Decks in the ring
- 28 Onassis nickname
- 30 Glacial
- 31 Mature
- 32 Use a shovel
- 33 Genetic stuff
- 36 Always
- 37 Dudes
- 40 Delight
- 42 "Becoming" memoirist
- 43 Fragrant wood
- 44 Neat
- 45 Exhausted
- 46 Wimbledon divisions
- 48 Baseball execs
- 49 "Atonement" author McEwan
- 50 Private aid gp.
- 51 Bearded beast

Answer to Previous Puzzle

W	H	O		T	O	M	B		S	E	T	H
O	E	R		R	H	E	A		C	L	I	I
O	R	A	T	I	O	N	S		A	M	P	S
		N	U	T		S	E	A	M	O	S	S
B	I	G	T	O	P		D	I	M			
O	N	E		N	A	Y		R	E	B	U	T
A	C	R	E		D	E	R		R	O	B	E
R	H	Y	M	E		T	O	T		R	E	A
		B	O	P		C	I	G	A	R	S	
A	L	M	A	N	A	C		N	A	B		
A	G	A	S		P	L	E	T	H	O	R	A
R	B	I	S		A	I	D	E		R	O	N
E	T	S	Y		L	O	U	D		A	D	A

11-8

CRYPTOQUIP

ROJL EL SKKHXXJLKJ KEHNJN

QPGJXQEM XJQALQLA RSPJL ZS

NOSHZ "RSR!," QZ QPGXJNNJN

JPGXJNNJN.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT SONG HAS BECOME THE OFFICIAL ANTHEM FOR NOISY LITTLE DOGS? "DON'T WORRY, BE YAPPY."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals W

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18				19					20			
			21				22					
23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31				32			
33				34				35				
			36				37					
38	39	40					41			42	43	44
45						46				47		
48						49				50		
51						52				53		

ACROSS

- 1 Prattle
- 4 Asia's — Sea
- 8 Iranian money
- 12 Flamenco cry
- 13 Jeans maker
- 14 Theater award
- 15 Lass
- 16 "Star Wars" princess
- 17 Castor's mother
- 18 Simple salad dressing
- 21 Director Craven
- 22 Gender
- 23 Scatter about
- 26 Actress Saldana
- 27 Scoundrel
- 30 Fluffy scarves
- 31 Scooted
- 32 Haydn nickname
- 33 Mimic
- 34 Jazzy style
- 35 Chaps
- 36 "Tasty!"
- 37 Hearing thing
- 38 Coffee order
- 45 Done with
- 46 Hammer target
- 47 "Caught ya!"
- 48 Dweeb
- 49 New York's — Field
- 50 Utter
- 51 Love god

- 52 Formerly, once
- 53 "Nova" channel

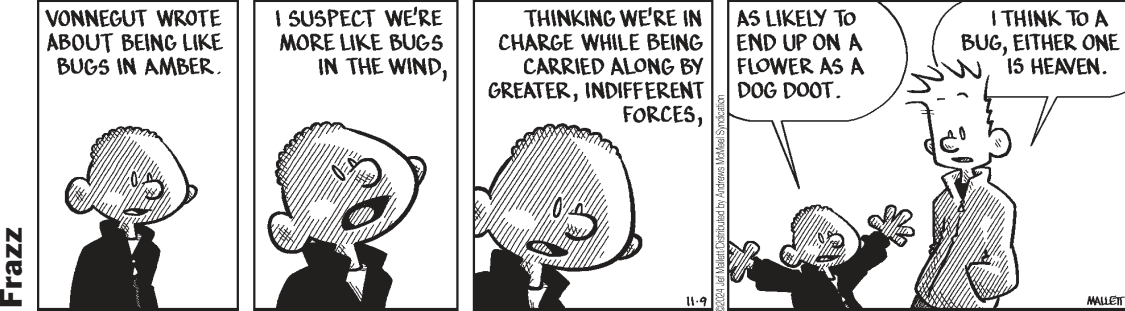
DOWN

- 1 Type of dancer
- 2 Jai —
- 3 End-of-round sound
- 4 Never before seen
- 5 Marsh growth
- 6 Tel —
- 7 Intermediary
- 8 Luxury watch brand
- 9 "— your pardon!"
- 10 Verdi heroine
- 11 Tragic king
- 19 Dazzles
- 20 Formerly called
- 23 Govt. lender for some start-ups
- 24 Surpass
- 25 "Norma —"
- 26 Microwave
- 27 Tuna container
- 28 Suitable
- 29 German article
- 31 Harlequin genre
- 32 Andean land
- 34 Vagrant
- 35 Illuminated, as old streets
- 36 Gridiron units
- 37 Tends texts
- 38 Scoop holder
- 39 KOA patron
- 40 Architect
- 41 "Vanity Fair" director Mira
- 42 React in horror
- 43 Melville captain
- 44 Sun beams

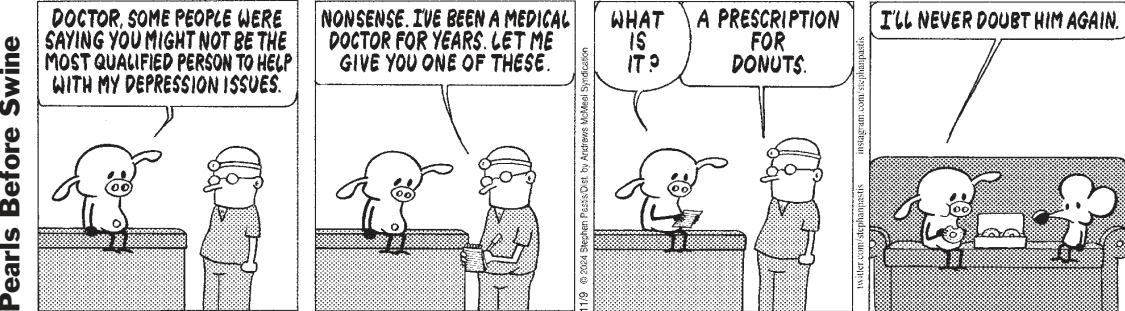
Answer to Previous Puzzle

J	A	R		M	S	S		G	L	O	S	S
E	T	E		E	M	I		Y	E	N	T	A
O	R	C		G	I	N	O	R	M	O	U	S
N	I	A		A	L	E	R	O				
G	A	P	S		E	W	E		S	O	A	K
				P	A	D		G	I	N	K	G
A	D	D	E					C	A	S	T	S
G	I	N	N	I	E		F	Y	I			
E	G	A	D		V	E	E		L	O	C	K
					B	E	L	L	S		B	E
G	I	N	G	E	R	A	L	E		A	D	M
M	A	G	N	A		T	A	T		M	A	P
S	N	O	U	T		E	S	S		A	R	T

Frazz



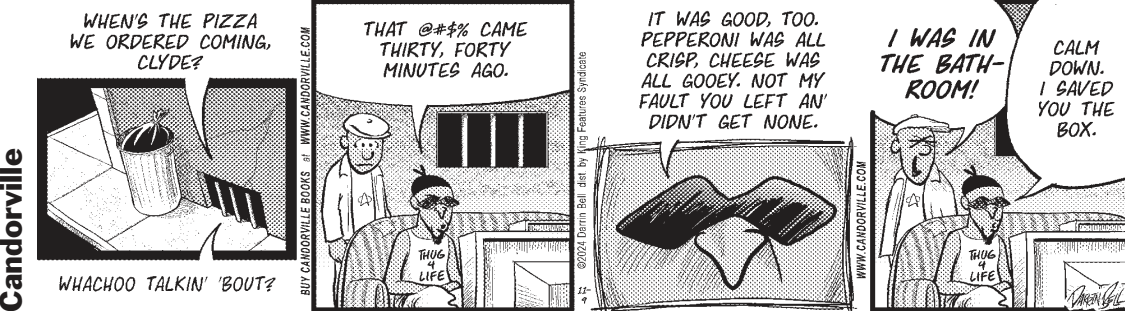
Pearls Before Swine



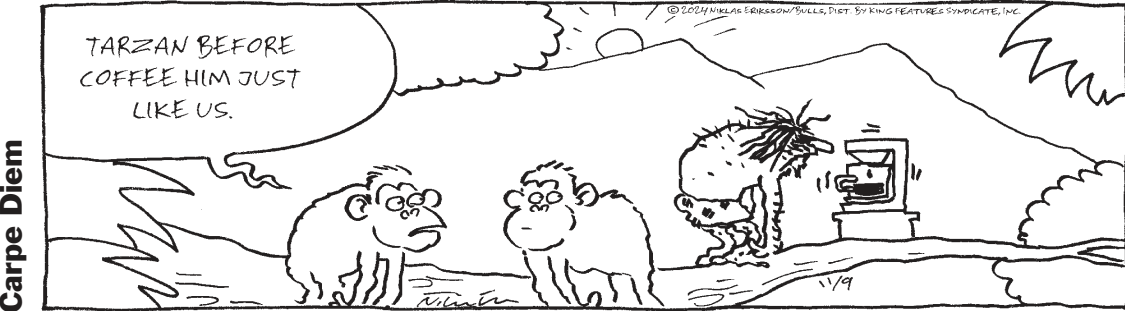
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



11-9

CRYPTOQUIP

H VDR JCMITMNU FNDWWTR YC
GTLCIT DW DMLVDTCNC SHQY,
GZY H JTDMTR H IHSVY TWR ZF
HW MZHWQ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN AN OCCURRENCE CAUSES IMPERIAL REIGNING WOMEN TO SHOUT "WOW!," IT IMPRESSES EMPRESSES.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals G



Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer
 Lt. Col. Katie R. Fidler, Europe commander
 John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff
 Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Pacific commander

EDITORIAL

Robert H. Reid, Editor in Chief
 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
 David Schultz, District Manager
 schultz.david@stripes.com
 xsscirculation@stripes.com
 +49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

Europe
 Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager
 aquino.carlo@stripes.com
 memberservices@stripes.com
 +49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

Pacific
 Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
 +81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington
 tel: (+1)202.886.0003
 633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters
 letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts
 stripes.com/contactus

OMBUDSMAN

Jacqueline Smith

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) published daily (except Saturday, Sunday, 25 December and 1 January) for 50 cents (Monday through Thursday) and one dollar on Friday by Stars and Stripes Pacific, OPC 706 BOX 7, APO AP 96301-9001. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, OPC 706 BOX 7, AP 96301-9001.
 The Stars and Stripes newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense (DoD) for the overseas U.S. military community. As an authorized newspaper, Stars and Stripes publications may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DoD personnel are located. The content printed in this newspaper is not classified as command information and is neither endorsed by nor represents the official views of the U.S. government.
 The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense, Stars and Stripes, and or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

OPINION

Trump’s Euro allies are defenseless against MAGA

By LIONEL LAURENT
 Bloomberg Opinion

The congratulations from European leaders to President-elect Donald Trump are flowing like champagne, which is incidentally how Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban planned to celebrate. Those on the nationalist and euroskeptic end of the political spectrum are feeling energized; those on the left are no doubt tweeting through gritted teeth. Over in France, America’s oldest ally, the mood is conflicted: President Emmanuel Macron’s English tweet offering to “work together” with Trump was followed up by a French-language tweet stridently promising a stronger, more united Europe.

Yet no amount of Trump-whispering changes the fact that the Old Continent looks woefully defenseless in the face of the coming geopolitical storm. A MAGA-Republican White House and Congress would bring the risk of more “America First” spending, punitive tariffs on European imports and fights over taxes and red tape on U.S. tech (including Elon Musk’s). Trump has also put collective defense under NATO’s Article 5 on notice by making it conditional on spending; his preoccupation is China, not Ukraine. The slow agony of Europe’s economic and productivity decline under Sino-American pressure makes it hard to picture a robust response, as does the soft-power-led continent’s reliance on U.S. security.

A stark choice awaits the European Union’s 27 members along with neighbors like the U.K. Leaders can adopt the typical muddle-through treatment, lining up to pay homage to Trump and seek preferential treatment through deals or (more likely) concessions, prolonging the status quo of a lopsided relationship with a U.S. that increasingly doesn’t care about a continent stuck in economic and demographic decline. This might offer an extension of what the International Institute for

Strategic Studies’ Francois Heisbourg calls les trente paresseuses—the 30-year geopolitical slumber typified by Germany’s model of free-riding on U.S. defense, China trade and Russian gas while leaving defense spending and strategic credibility to wither.

Or it could try more assertiveness and investment — starting with defense — that would allow for better burden sharing, more independent support for Ukraine’s search for a “just peace” and a more balanced relationship with Trump’s America.

I appreciate this kind of talk is starting to sound more like theology than reality. It’s been almost a decade since Macron rode into power with all kinds of promises of sovereignty and strategic autonomy — yet even today, with the largest full-scale conflict on European soil since 1945, South Korea has supplied more shells to Ukraine than all of Europe, and Musk’s Starlink is the technological game-changer. As Zbigniew Brzezinski, who served as President Jimmy Carter’s national security adviser, once said, Europe is a U.S. protectorate with a deep economic dependency. This doesn’t just get thrown off one day.

Still, there are the faintest hints of change afoot. Trump symbolizes a security deal that looks less appealing to both sides: The United States’ pivot to Asia means 100,000 of its service members in Europe are no longer a no-brainer, as Trump himself has warned, while for the continentals the historically pitiful amounts spent by the likes of Germany on defense look like a liability as Russia’s war economy whirs. Hence why that spending is going up: European NATO members’ military outlays are set to rise by \$33 billion this year to \$380 billion, hitting 2% of gross domestic product, with Poland the biggest individual contributor relative to GDP. That doesn’t signal readiness, with \$650 billion in EU defense spending needs over the next decade. But Europe is at least set to match Russia’s ammunition production next year.

This wake-up call isn’t just coming from the usual suspects — ahem, France — but Europe’s own “swing states” with once-unshakable faith in the U.S. Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk recently tweeted that “the era of geopolitical outsourcing is over,” Estonia’s former Prime Minister Kaja Kallas has thrown her support behind joint EU defense funding and Lithuania’s ex-Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius has been given the new job of European commissioner for defense and space. Germany’s reticence is a key stumbling block, but Friedrich Merz, front-runner to be the next chancellor, has taken a strong pro-Ukraine line and is calling for EU solutions as the U.S. turns inward.

There are still pieces of the puzzle missing. Europe has a strong defense-industrial base, but it needs more contracts, less fragmentation and modernized procurement systems in a more tech-driven world. It also needs faster decision-making: Former French and Moldovan ministers Laurence Boone and Nicu Popescu are arguing for a European version of the U.S. Defense Production Act to speed up responses in crises. And given fiscal constraints, there’s a renewed case for defense bonds that would increase spending, make it more efficient and encourage coordination, the Center for European Reform argues.

While the trans-Atlantic relationship has a multitude of issues, everything flows from defense: It is both a direct cause of tension because Europeans aren’t pulling their weight and an indirect one because it gives Trump lever to extract concessions elsewhere. More defense means more autonomy, more credible geopolitics and a healthier industrial base. If the old ways win instead — and the risk of this is high — then the coming geopolitical winter will be incredibly cold.

Lionel Laurent is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist writing about the future of money and the future of Europe. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Dems took minority voters for granted. It cost them.

By SHADI HAMID
 Special to The Washington Post

Eight years ago, after Donald Trump’s first presidential victory, Democrats could at least take solace in having won the popular vote. Trump’s win was a fluke, an asterisk in the broader march of progress. That narrative has now been shattered. This is who we are. This is a country in which Hispanics, Blacks and perhaps even Puerto Ricans broke toward Trump just enough to grant him another four years in power.

Trump won, in other words, by building an unusually diverse, multiracial coalition, with the backing of 46% of Hispanics, 39% of Asians and 21% of Black men, according to national exit polls. Where, in 2016, Democrats could blame white supremacy and elide their own responsibility, now they can — and probably should — blame themselves.

There’s an irony, of course. In the final stretch, the Trump campaign trafficked in casual racism and demonized immigrants. There will be a temptation to dismiss the expanding share of Trump voters as irrational and oblivious to their own real interests. This should be resisted. The responsibility should be put squarely at the feet of the Harris campaign and the Democratic Party for failing that most basic of tests: the test of persuasion.

Even if Kamala Harris should have won —

against a Trump campaign that was increasingly adrift and undisciplined — she didn’t deserve to win. In a democracy, votes must be earned, and she failed to earn them.

Instead of tending to her base, Harris spent her final few weeks courting a constituency of never-Trump Republicans that no longer really exists. Her string of high-profile appearances with former Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming seemed designed to please no one in particular. On several occasions, the campaign’s leading surrogate, former President Barack Obama, criticized Black men for having doubts about Harris, as though by the sole virtue of being Black, there was only one right way to vote. “Part of it makes me think that, well, you just aren’t feeling the idea of having a woman as president,” Obama lectured, “and you’re coming up with other alternatives and other reasons for that.”

At a rally in Michigan, former President Bill Clinton adopted a similarly patronizing tone toward Arab and Muslim Americans, chiding them for not lining up behind Harris.

If minority voters — or anyone else for that matter — choose not to vote blue, they presumably have a reason for doing so. Not all grievances are legitimate, but many of theirs were. With the stock market reaching all-time highs and economic growth chugging along at an impressive clip, the system worked — but not for everyone. Given high interest rates, a

housing crunch, an affordability crisis and crime still elevated relative to pre-pandemic levels, it was perfectly reasonable for poor and working-class Americans to question whether more of the same was good enough.

Even with ample time to prepare, Harris repeatedly struggled to answer the challenge of how her administration would differ from President Joe Biden’s. Unsurprisingly, 80% of voters who said their financial situation was worse than four years ago went for Trump. As sociologist Musa al-Gharbi notes in his new book, “We Have Never Been Woke,” the 2020 reckoning over racial injustice raised expectations for a new era, but little changed materially. If anything, he writes, the country witnessed an “exacerbation of inequalities,” with upper-income liberals “exploiting desperate and vulnerable people, whose poverty and precarity are prerequisites for the elite lifestyles [they] enjoy.”

As I wrote in a recent column, no one should cry over an election. We get the leaders we deserve. Will we condemn our fellow Americans for their choice — or will we make a genuine effort to understand how the Harris campaign and the Democratic Party lost their way? For the sake of the country, I hope it’s the latter.

Washington Post columnist Shadi Hamid is a research professor of Islamic studies at Fuller Seminary and the author of “The Problem of Democracy” and “Islamic Exceptionalism.”

SCOREBOARD

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wednesday's scores	
MIDWEST	
N. Illinois 42, W. Michigan 28 Ohio 41, Kent St. 0	
Schedule	
Friday's games	
EAST	
Dartmouth (6-1) at Princeton (2-5)	
SOUTH	
California (4-4) at Wake Forest (4-4) Rice (3-6) at Memphis (7-2)	
FAR WEST	
Iowa (6-3) at UCLA (3-5) New Mexico (3-6) at San Diego St. (3-5)	
Saturday's games	
EAST	
Lincoln University (CA) (0-2) at Mercy-hurst (2-7) Brown (3-4) at Yale (4-3) LIU Brooklyn (2-7) at Sacred Heart (4-5) Robert Morris (6-3) at Duquesne (6-2) Minnesota (6-3) at Rutgers (4-4) Morgan St. (3-6) at Delaware St. (1-8) Columbia (5-2) at Harvard (6-1) Lehigh (5-3) at Holy Cross (4-5) Syracuse (6-2) at Boston College (4-4) Penn (3-4) at Cornell (3-4) Monmouth (NJ) (4-5) at New Hampshire (5-4) Lafayette (4-5) at Colgate (2-7) Albany (NY) (3-6) at Stony Brook (7-2) CCSU (4-5) at Stonehill (1-7) NC A&T (1-8) at Villanova (7-2) Fordham (1-8) at Bucknell (4-5) Hampton (5-4) at Towson (4-5) Rhode Island (8-1) at Delaware (7-1) Bryant (2-7) at Maine (4-5) SC State (6-2) at Howard (4-5) Washington (5-4) at Penn St. (7-1) Virginia (4-4) at Pittsburgh (7-1)	
SOUTH	
Navy (6-2) at South Florida (4-4) Texas State (4-4) at Louisiana-Monroe (5-3) Miami (9-0) at Georgia Tech (5-4) W. Carolina (5-4) at ETSU (5-4) Elon (3-6) at William & Mary (6-3) Liberty (5-2) at Middle Tennessee (3-6) Morehead St. (6-3) at Davidson (5-4) Marist (0-9) at Stetson (2-6) E. Illinois (2-7) at Gardner-Webb (3-6) Mercer (8-1) at VMI (1-8) Missouri St. (7-2) at Murray St. (1-8) Chattanooga (5-4) at The Citadel (4-5) Cent. Arkansas (6-3) at E. Kentucky (5-4) Wofford (4-5) at Furman (2-6) UT Martin (6-3) at Charleston Southern (1-8) Tarleton St. (7-2) at West Georgia (3-6) Uconn (6-3) at UAB (2-6) Tennessee Tech (4-5) at Samford (3-5) Bethune-Cookman (2-7) at Southern U. (5-4) Alabama St. (5-3) at Grambling St. (4-5) MVSU (0-9) at Jackson St. (7-2) Marshall (5-3) at Southern Miss. (1-7) Texas Southern (3-5) at Alcorn St. (4-5) Clemson (6-2) at Virginia Tech (5-4) Georgia (7-1) at Mississippi (7-2) Georgia St. (2-6) at James Madison (6-2) Duke (6-3) at NC State (5-4) Richmond (7-2) at Campbell (3-6) Abilene Christian (6-3) at Austin Peay (4-5) Temple (2-6) at Tulane (7-2) South Carolina (5-3) at Vanderbilt (6-3) Jacksonville St. (5-3) at Louisiana Tech (3-5) Arkansas St. (5-3) at Louisiana-Lafayette (7-1) Mississippi St. (2-7) at Tennessee (7-1) Northwestern St. (0-9) at SE Louisiana (5-5) Alabama (6-2) at LSU (6-2)	
MIDWEST	
San Diego (5-3) at Dayton (5-3) West Virginia (4-4) at Cincinnati (5-3) Purdue (1-7) at Ohio St. (7-1) Youngstown St. (3-7) at S. Illinois (2-7) SE Missouri (8-1) at Lindenwood (Mo.) (4-6) Drake (6-1) at St. Thomas (Minn.) (5-4) Indiana St. (4-5) at South Dakota (6-2) Illinois St. (6-3) at N. Iowa (2-7) Butler (7-2) at Valparaiso (3-5) S. Dakota St. (7-2) at North Dakota (5-4) Tennessee St. (6-3) at W. Illinois (3-6) Iowa St. (7-1) at Kansas (2-6) Michigan (5-4) at Indiana (9-0) Florida St. (1-8) at Notre Dame (7-1) Oklahoma (5-4) at Missouri (6-2)	
SOUTHWEST	
Florida (4-4) at Texas (7-1) Alabama A&M (3-5) at Ark.-Pine Bluff (3-6) Nicholls (4-5) at Houston Christian (3-6) Florida A&M (5-3) at Prairie View (4-5) Lamar (5-4) at Incarnate Word (7-2) Army (8-0) at North Texas (5-3) Kennesaw St. (1-7) at UTEP (1-8) Colorado (6-2) at Texas Tech (6-3) Stephen F. Austin (6-3) at Texas A&M Commerce (1-8) Oklahoma St. (3-6) at TCU (5-4)	
FAR WEST	
E. Washington (2-7) at N. Colorado (1-8) Sacramento St. (3-6) at Montana St. (9-0) Idaho St. (4-5) at Weber St. (3-6) North Alabama (3-7) at S. Utah (4-5) San Jose St. (5-3) at Oregon St. (4-4) Idaho (6-3) at Portland St. (2-6) W. Kentucky (6-2) at New Mexico St. (2-6) Maryland (4-4) at Oregon (9-0) UCF (4-5) at Arizona St. (6-2) N. Arizona (5-4) at Cal Poly (2-6) Nevada (3-7) at Boise St. (7-1) UNLV (6-2) at Hawaii (4-5) Fresno St. (5-4) at Air Force (1-7) UC Davis (8-1) at Montana (7-2) BYU (8-0) at Utah (4-4) Utah St. (2-6) at Washington St. (7-1)	

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL						
AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	7	2	0	.778	260	173
N.Y. Jets	3	6	0	.333	171	183
Miami	2	6	0	.250	124	187
New England	2	7	0	.222	141	217
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	6	3	0	.667	201	200
Indianapolis	4	5	0	.444	188	193
Tennessee	2	6	0	.250	140	213
Jacksonville	2	7	0	.222	195	252
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	6	2	0	.750	187	119
Baltimore	6	3	0	.667	283	219
Cincinnati	4	5	0	.444	236	227
Cleveland	2	7	0	.222	148	213
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	8	0	0	1.000	203	147
L.A. Chargers	5	3	0	.625	159	101
Denver	5	4	0	.556	183	161
Las Vegas	2	7	0	.222	168	251
NATIONAL CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	7	2	0	.778	263	189
Philadelphia	6	2	0	.750	199	155
Dallas	3	5	0	.375	171	225
N.Y. Giants	2	7	0	.222	139	202
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	6	3	0	.667	221	216
Tampa Bay	4	5	0	.444	259	243
Carolina	2	7	0	.222	147	293
New Orleans	2	7	0	.222	207	229
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	7	1	0	.875	258	148
Minnesota	6	2	0	.750	209	150
Green Bay	6	3	0	.667	230	194
Chicago	4	4	0	.500	172	148
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	5	4	0	.556	207	214
L.A. Rams	4	4	0	.500	170	194
San Francisco	4	4	0	.500	210	182
Seattle	4	5	0	.444	210	221

Thursday, Oct. 31	
N.Y. Jets 21, Houston 13	
Sunday, Nov. 3	
Atlanta 27, Dallas 21 Baltimore 41, Denver 10 Buffalo 30, Miami 27 Carolina 23, New Orleans 22 Cincinnati 41, Las Vegas 24 L.A. Chargers 27, Cleveland 10 Tennessee 20, New England 17, OT Washington 27, N.Y. Giants 22 Arizona 29, Chicago 9 Philadelphia 28, Jacksonville 23 Detroit 24, Green Bay 14 L.A. Rams 26, Seattle 20, OT Minnesota 21, Indianapolis 13 Open: Pittsburgh, San Francisco	
Monday, Nov. 4	
Kansas City 30, Tampa Bay 24, OT	
Thursday's game	
Cincinnati at Baltimore	
Sunday's games	
N.Y. Giants vs. Carolina at Munich Atlanta at New Orleans Buffalo at Indianapolis Denver at Kansas City Minnesota at Jacksonville New England at Chicago Pittsburgh at Washington San Francisco at Tampa Bay Tennessee at L.A. Chargers N.Y. Jets at Arizona Philadelphia at Dallas Detroit at Houston Open: Cleveland, Las Vegas, Green Bay, Seattle	
Monday's game	
Miami at L.A. Rams	
Thursday, Nov. 14	
Washington at Philadelphia	
Sunday, Nov. 17	
Green Bay at Chicago Jacksonville at Detroit Las Vegas at Miami L.A. Rams at New England Cleveland at New Orleans Baltimore at Pittsburgh Minnesota at Tennessee Indianapolis at N.Y. Jets Atlanta at Denver Seattle at San Francisco Kansas City at Buffalo Cincinnati at L.A. Chargers Open: Arizona, Carolina, N.Y. Giants, Tampa Bay	

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Wednesday's men's scores	
EAST	
CS Northridge 97, Le Moyne 75 Columbia 90, Villanova 80 Georgetown 85, Lehigh 77 Maine 98, Maine-Fort Kent 47 Mercyhurst 78, Morgan St. 73 New Hampshire 99, Mass.-Boston 69 Rutgers 75, Wagner 52 UConn 92, Sacred Heart 56	
SOUTH	
Appalachian St. 108, St. Andrews 54 Auburn 94, Vermont 43 Georgia Tech 85, West Georgia 62 High Point 93, Coppin St. 51 LSU 95, Louisiana-Monroe 60 Morehead St. 89, Boyce 48 Norfolk St. 104, Va.-Lynchburg 60 Presbyterian 120, Centurions 45 Richmond 101, Mount Olive 68 SC-Upstate 103, Piedmont 70 Virginia 65, Campbell 56	
MIDWEST	
Cleveland St. 91, Baldwin Wallace 53 Creighton 99, Texas Rio Grande Valley 86 E. Illinois 97, Earlham 61 Indiana 80, SIU-Edwardsville 61 Minnesota 80, Oral Roberts 57 Notre Dame 89, Stonehill 60 South Dakota 91, Texas A&M Commerce 83 Wright St. 89, Ohio Christian 60	
SOUTHWEST	
Ark.-Pine Bluff 99, Champion Christian 57 Arkansas 76, Lipscomb 60 Texas Southern 100, Jaguars 66	
FAR WEST	
Boise St. 87, Oakland 43 E. Washington 93, Seattle 86 Pepperdine 77, W. Illinois 64 Portland 83, Lewis & Clark 70 Rider 68, San Diego 67 San Diego St. 63, UC San Diego 58 Utah St. 101, Alcorn St. 46	
Men's AP Top 25 schedule	
Friday's games	
No. 1 Kansas (1-0) vs. No. 9 North Carolina (1-0) No. 2 Alabama (1-0) vs. Arkansas St. (1-0) No. 7 Duke (1-0) vs. Army (1-0) No. 13 Texas A&M (0-1) vs. Texas A&M Commerce (0-1) No. 14 Purdue (1-0) vs. N. Kentucky (0-1) No. 18 Marquette (1-0) vs. George Mason (1-0) No. 19 Texas (0-1) vs. Houston Christian (1-0) No. 20 Cincinnati (1-0) vs. Morehead St. (0-1) No. 22 UCLA (1-0) vs. New Mexico (1-0) at Henderson, Nev. No. 24 Mississippi (1-0) vs. Grambling St. (1-0)	
Saturday's games	
No. 3 UConn (0-0) vs. New Hampshire (0-1) No. 4 Houston (1-0) vs. No. 11 Auburn (0-0) at Houston No. 8 Baylor (0-1) vs. No. 16 Arkansas (0-0) at Dallas No. 10 Arizona (1-0) vs. Old Dominion (0-1) No. 12 Tennessee (1-0) at Louisville (1-0) No. 23 Kentucky (1-0) vs. Bucknell (1-0)	
Wednesday's women's scores	
EAST	
Army 66, Siena 56 Georgetown 88, Va.-Lynchburg 31 Navy 103, Bryn Athyn 45 Robert Morris 68, Point Park 44 Saint Joseph's 102, Goldkey-Beacom 30 UMBC 79, Notre Dame of Maryland 24	
SOUTH	
Alabama St. 55, Stillman 50 Appalachian St. 97, Columbia (SC) 43 East Carolina 81, Charleston Southern 56 Jacksonville 80, Edward Waters 59 Lipscomb 69, MVSU 56 North Florida 146, Trinity Baptist 53 VCU 75, Md.-Eastern Shore 60	
MIDWEST	
Bellarmine 105, Midway 70 Butler 87, Chicago St. 45 DePaul 74, Mercyhurst 53 Illinois St. 81, Northwestern 77 Iowa 91, N. Illinois 73 Kansas 56, Lindenwood (Mo.) 43 Milwaukee 74, Carroll (Wis.) 49 Purdue 87, Fort Wayne 77	
SOUTHWEST	
Sam Houston St. 98, Jarvis Christian 47 Tulsa 63, Ark.-Pine Bluff 60 UALR 88, Central Baptist 43	
FAR WEST	
BYU 67, Idaho 62 Cal Poly 72, UC Merced 40 Oregon 76, Nevada 58 San Diego 75, Biola 30 UC Santa Barbara 70, Claremont Mudd 26 Utah Valley St. 72, UMKC 48	
Women's AP Top 25 schedule	
Friday's games	
No. 7 LSU (1-0) vs. Northwestern St. (1-0), 8 p.m. No. 10 Oklahoma (1-0) vs. Virginia (1-0) No. 17 Louisville (0-1) vs. S. Indiana (1-0) No. 21 Creighton (0-0) at S. Dakota St. (1-0)	
Saturday's games	
No. 3 Southern Cal (1-0) vs. Cal Poly (0-0) No. 16 West Virginia (1-0) vs. Niagara (0-1) No. 23 Nebraska (1-0) vs. SE Louisiana (1-0)	

PRO SOCCER

MLS playoffs	
First Round	
Best-of-three	
x-if necessary	
Eastern Conference	
Cincinnati 1 New York City 1	
Cincinnati 1, New York City 0 New York City 3, Cincinnati 1	
Sunday, Nov. 9: at Cincinnati	
Orlando 1, Charlotte FC 1	
Orlando 2, Charlotte FC 0 Charlotte FC 0, Orlando 0, Charlotte wins 3-1 on penalty kicks	
Saturday: at Orlando	
New York 2, Columbus 0	
New York 1, Columbus 0 New York 2, Columbus 2, New York wins 5-4 on penalty kicks	
Miami 1, Atlanta 1	
Miami 2, Atlanta 1 Atlanta 2, Miami 1	
Saturday: at Miami	
Western Conference	
Seattle 2, Houston 0	
Houston 0, Seattle 0, Seattle wins 5-4 on penalty kicks Seattle 1, Houston 1, Seattle wins 7-6 on penalty kicks	
Los Angeles FC 1, Vancouver 1	
Los Angeles FC 2, Vancouver 1 Vancouver 3, Los Angeles FC 0	
Friday: at Los Angeles FC	
Minnesota 2, Real Salt Lake 0	
Minnesota 0, Real Salt Lake 0, Minnesota wins 5-4 on penalty kicks Minnesota 1, Real Salt Lake 1, Minnesota wins 3-1 o penalty kicks	
LA Galaxy 2, Colorado 0	
LA Galaxy 5, Colorado 0 LA Galaxy 4, Colorado 1	
NWSL playoffs	
Quarterfinals	
Friday's game	
Orlando vs. Chicago	
Saturday's game	
Kansas City vs. North Carolina	
Sunday's games	
Washington vs. Bay FC Gotham FC vs. Portland	

TENNIS

WTA Finals	
Thursday	
At King Saud University	
Riyadh	
Purse: \$15,250,000	
Surface: Hardcourt indoor	
Women's Doubles	
group 3	
Gabriela Dabrowski, Canada, and Erin Routliffe (2), New Zealand, def. Desirae Krawczyk and Caroline Dolehide (5), United States, 4-6, 6-3, 10-6.	
Dow Tennis Classic	
Wednesday	
At Midland Community Tennis Center	
Midland	
Purse: \$115,000	
Surface: Hardcourt indoor	
Women's Singles	
Round of 32	
Polina Kudermetova (9), Russia, def. Katrina Scott, United States, 6-4, 6-2. Astra Sharma, Australia, def. Ann Li (5), United States, 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (3).	
Round of 16	
Lesia Tsurenko (8), Ukraine, def. Jil Teichmann, Switzerland, 7-5, 7-5. Lauren Davis, United States, def. Whitney Osuigwe, United States, 6-0, 6-1. Alina Korneeva, Russia, def. Gabriela Knutson, Czechia, 7-5, 7-5. Alycia Parks (3), United States, def. Caty McNally, United States, 6-1, 4-6, 6-4.	
Oster Cup	
Wednesday	
At Club Campestre	
Calí, Colombia	
Purse: \$115,000	
Surface: Red clay	
Women's Singles	
Round of 16	
Tina Nadine Smith, Australia, def. Robin Montgomery (3), United States, 6-3, 6-3. Irina-Camelia Begu (2), Romania, def. Emiliana Arango, Colombia, 6-2, 6-2. Leyre Romero Gormaz, Spain, def. Alicia Herrero Linana, Spain, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3. Jazmin Ortenzi, Argentina, def. Valentina Mediorreal Arias, Colombia, 6-0, 6-1. Veronika Erjavec, Slovenia, def. Francesca Jones, Britain, 7-6 (3), 5-0, ret. Anca Alexia Todoni (8), Romania, def. Solana Sierra, Argentina, 6-4, 7-6 (5). Camila Osorio (1), Colombia, def. Nuria Brancaccio, Italy, 7-6 (6), 4-6, 6-2. Panna Udvardy, Hungary, def. Darja Semenistaja (7), Latvia, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.	

Moselle Open	
Wednesday	
At Arenes de Metz	
Metz, France	
Purse: Euro 579,320	
Surface: Hardcourt indoor	
Men's Singles	
Round of 16	
Zizou Bergs, Belgium, def. Hugo Gaston, France, 6-4, 7-5. Quentin Halys, France, def. Pierre-Hugues Herbert, France, 6-1, 4-6, 6-4. Cameron Norrie, Britain, def. Luca van Assche, France, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. Benjamin Bonzi, France, def. Casper Ruud (2), Norway, 6-4, 6-4. Yunchaokete Bu, China, def. Jesper De Jong, Netherlands, 6-4, 7-6 (1).	

DEALS

Wednesday's

MLB/NBA

Boras hints Soto may try to exceed Ohtani's record \$700M contract

BY RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Agent Scott Boras indicated Juan Soto may be seeking to top Shohei Ohtani's record \$700 million contract because he is three years younger than the Japanese two-way star was when he reached his deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Boras gave a pun-filled, 48-minute assessment of the market at the general managers meetings on Wednesday, calling Soto "the Mona Lisa of the museum." Boras said only a handful of players have matched Soto's accomplishments at age 26, mentioning Willie Mays, Hank Aaron and Ted Williams, and boasted "he has literally 15 years more of his prime to offer."

"You're talking about a business opportunity where you can make literally billions of dollars by acquiring somebody," Boras said. "You can really see that owners, general managers, that they're kind of called upon to be championship magicians. ... It's hard to do, to put together that magic of a championship run, but behind every great magician obviously is the magic Juan."

Ohtani agreed to his 10-year contract late last year and helped lead the team to its second World Series title in five years. The deal contains \$680 million in deferred money payable from 2034-43, reducing its average annual value for purposes of baseball's luxury tax to approximately \$46.08 million.

"I don't think Ohtani has much to do with Juan Soto, at all," Boras said. "It's not something we discuss or consider. Juan Soto is — he's in an age category that separates him from all."

He wouldn't publicly discuss specifics of what Soto is seeking.

"I'm not going to talk about dollars and cents. That's something we'll take care of with the clubs," Boras said.



The New York Yankees' Juan Soto talks with agent Scott Boras before Game 1 of the World Series against the Dodgers on Oct. 25.

He dismissed the idea of Soto accepting deferred money similar to Ohtani.

"I don't think that tax considerations are the focal point when you're talking about a business opportunity where you can make literally billions of dollars by acquiring somebody," he said.

Boras sprinkled in attempts at humor when discussing several of his top free agents:

- First baseman Pete Alonso, nicknamed the Polar Bear: "We hear a lot about the bear market for power-hitting first baseman and for Pete's sake, it's the polar opposite."
- Pitcher Corbin Burnes: "He continues to be a Corbin copy of his previous seasons."
- Pitcher Blake Snell: "There's no doubt that the Snelling salts have created a lot of whiffs."
- Third baseman Alex Bregman: "He's provided the Astros with an infusion of championship blood. I'd say everything about him is AB positive."

Soto is expected to be pursued by the New York Mets and billionaire owner Steve Cohen.

"The Mets are obviously trying to get to their goal, which is winning a world championship," Boras said. "I think they've been very clear about pursuing this aggressively."

Soto intends to meet with owners who want him.

"I'm going to commit my career to it and I want the owner to commit his resources to it," Boras said of his client's mindset. "That's really why Juan Soto became a free agent."

Boras said Soto would be a money-maker for whichever team he signs with.

"When the owners win repeatedly, their revenues skyrocket. They develop the impact of post-season play, attendance, rights in the streaming world," he said. "Plus the international branding."

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	7	2	.778	—
Brooklyn	4	4	.500	2½
New York	3	4	.429	3
Toronto	2	7	.222	5
Philadelphia	1	6	.143	5
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	4	5	.444	—
Miami	3	4	.429	—
Charlotte	3	5	.375	½
Orlando	3	6	.333	1
Washington	2	4	.333	½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	9	0	1.000	—
Indiana	4	4	.500	4½
Chicago	3	5	.375	5½
Detroit	3	6	.333	6
Milwaukee	1	6	.143	7

Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	5	3	.625	—
Dallas	5	3	.625	—
Memphis	5	4	.556	½
San Antonio	3	5	.375	2
New Orleans	3	6	.333	2½
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	7	1	.875	—
Denver	5	3	.625	2
Minnesota	4	3	.571	2½
Portland	3	5	.375	4
Utah	1	6	.143	5½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	7	1	.875	—
Golden State	7	1	.875	—
Sacramento	5	3	.625	2
L.A. Lakers	4	4	.500	3
L.A. Clippers	4	4	.500	3

Wednesday's games	
Charlotte 108, Detroit 107	
Indiana 118, Orlando 111	
Atlanta 121, New York 116	
Golden State 118, Boston 112	
Houston 127, San Antonio 100	
Cleveland 131, New Orleans 122	
Memphis 131, L.A. Lakers 114	
Dallas 119, Chicago 99	
Denver 124, Oklahoma City 122	
Phoenix 115, Miami 112	
L.A. Clippers 110, Philadelphia 98	
Sacramento 122, Toronto 107	
Thursday's games	
Minnesota at Chicago	
Portland at San Antonio	
Utah at Milwaukee	
Friday's games	
Atlanta at Detroit	
Indiana at Charlotte	
New Orleans at Orlando	
Brooklyn at Boston	
Golden State at Cleveland	
Milwaukee at New York	
Phoenix at Dallas	
Houston at Oklahoma City	
Washington at Memphis	
Miami at Denver	
Portland at Minnesota	
L.A. Clippers at Sacramento	
Philadelphia at L.A. Lakers	
Saturday's games	
Utah at San Antonio	
Brooklyn at Cleveland	
Chicago at Atlanta	
Toronto at L.A. Clippers	

Scoring leaders					
Through Wednesday					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Davis, LAL	7	80	66	228	32.6
Antetokounmpo, MIL	6	76	34	186	31.0
Tatum, BOS	9	87	60	272	30.2
Jokic, DEN	8	84	44	230	28.8
Doncic, DAL	8	76	51	229	28.6
Ball, CHA	8	79	30	225	28.1
Durant, PHO	8	81	39	222	27.8
Maxey, PHI	7	67	37	193	27.6
Lillard, MIL	7	57	52	193	27.6
Edwards, MIN	7	66	23	191	27.3
Gil-Alexander, OKC	8	75	45	208	26.0
DeRozan, SAC	8	74	49	205	25.6
Brunson, NY	7	64	30	177	25.3
Powell, LAC	8	71	25	200	25.0
Thomas, BKN	8	66	48	199	24.9



The Cleveland Cavaliers' Kenny Atkinson became the first head coach in NBA history to win his first nine games with a new team.

Cleveland marks historic 9-0 start

BY BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS—Taking their cues from Jarrett Allen, the Cleveland Cavaliers celebrated the first 9-0 start to a season in franchise history by pouring water bottles over coach Kenny Atkinson's head in the locker room.

There will be much bigger games, with higher stakes, than Cleveland's 131-122 victory in New Orleans on Wednesday night.

But Atkinson didn't mind taking a moment to enjoy something no other Cavs team had done in the 55 years since Cleveland joined the NBA for the 1970-71 season.

"You have to," said Atkinson, who also became the first NBA coach to win his first nine games with a new team. "This season's so long. It's so hard to win in this league. So when you do have moments like this, you have to celebrate a little."

After hitting 54.2% of their shots in the Big Easy — including 48.6% (17-for-35) from 3-point range — the Cavs are shooting an NBA-best 52.6% on the season from the field.

"We're playing good basketball," said All-Star guard Donovan Mitchell, who had a team-high 29 points in New Orleans, while five other teammates scored 11 or more. "We've done it in so many different ways. We've had blowouts, close games, come-from-behind wins.

"It's just the habits that really get me excited about what we're doing," Mitchell said. "My biggest thing is just being consistent. Let's continually be this team."

Cleveland next plays at home Friday night against the Golden

State Warriors, who set the NBA record for the best start to a season by winning their first 24 games during the 2015-16 campaign.

Against the Pelicans, the Cavs got 50 points from reserves while four of five starters scored 14 or more.

"Again, everyone contributes," Atkinson said. "It's what good teams do. We're in a good place physically. We're in a good place mentally.

"When you win nine in a row, it's not one or two guys; it's the whole roster," he added.

In his four previous seasons as a head coach with Brooklyn, Atkinson had just one winning record, going 42-40 in 2018-19.

He spent the past four seasons as an assistant — the first with the Los Angeles Clippers and the last three with Golden State.

Now he's off to a rather auspicious start in his second head coaching stint, albeit with a team that won a playoff series a season ago and was expected to be in the Eastern Conference postseason picture again this season.

"The vibes are great, energy's great, he's done a phenomenal job with us and we've also bought in," Mitchell said. "He's given us input but also allowed us to give input ourselves, and I think that's what's special."

Atkinson, meanwhile, sounds gratified by the synergy he's sensed not only among his players, but between them and himself.

"What I think about is this team and the camaraderie they have, and the chemistry we have going and how connected they are," Atkinson said.

NHL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Finding: Ovechkin has eight goals in 12 games

FROM PAGE 48

Ovechkin is now six away from breaking Jaromir Jagr’s record for the most career game-winning goals. His 130th helped the Capitals improve to 9-3-0 this season and sent the Predators to their ninth loss in 13 games.

“We’re connecting, playing for each other, and that’s the most important thing,” Ovechkin said Tuesday. “It doesn’t matter if you’re scoring goals or make an assist, you just have to do the same thing over and over again.”

Ovechkin has done the same thing — put the puck in the net — better than everyone but Gretzky in the history of the sport. Eight goals this season have gotten him to 861, 34 back of breaking the record.

Washington’s longtime captain also became just the third player age 39 or older to score in five or more consecutive games, after Johnny Bucyk in 1974 and Brett Hull in 2003.

“It’s fun to play with him, to just see his excitement every time he goes on the ice and scores goals,” Protas said. “You want to help him more with that, want to be with him and get the energy out of it because he’s a phenomenal player, for sure. He’s chasing something special right now, and for sure it’s great to be with him and be a part of it.”

Ovechkin taking it into his own hands by reviewing game tape with younger teammates is something coach Spencer Carbery called “leadership 101.” Protas said it has been very helpful, and it doesn’t hurt that the advice came from a superstar with Ovechkin’s résumé.

“Any time when he speaks up about where we need to be offensively and how we can be better, obviously we’re going to listen,” said Strome, who is tied for third in the league with 15 assists and leads the Capitals in scoring with 19 points. “It’s a good combination right now, so (we’ve) got to keep it rolling.”

Ovechkin, who on Monday was

named the NHL’s first star of the week, did not score his seventh goal last season until his 34th game on Dec. 30.

Asked what was different, he joked, “Strome find me and give me the puck.”

Strome doesn’t necessarily disagree. His philosophy when playing with Ovechkin is simple: “Get him the puck.”

“Got to play with your instincts. If your instincts are the guy that has 860 goals is open, you’re probably going to want to pass the puck to him,” Strome said. “He’s making great plays, too. That’s the thing: It’s not just his goals. I think his assists are up, too, and he’s making really good passes and we’re finding a way to connect.”

Ovechkin has eight assists. Last month, he joined Gretzky, Gordie Howe, Jaromir Jagr, Marcel Dionne and Phil Esposito as the only players with 700 goals and 700 assists.

And it’s not just Ovechkin, Strome and Protas who are producing. Connor McMichael has matched Ovechkin with eight goals, and Tom Wilson has six to begin his new contract in style.

The Capitals are scoring 4.08 goals a game, sixth in the NHL, after averaging 2.63 last season to rank 28th out of 32 teams.

“I feel like we’re just a way better team offensively,” Carbery said. “We’re possessing the puck, which in the end, we’re controlling more play this year than last year.”

After eking into the playoffs and getting swept in the first round by the New York Rangers, the Capitals were reconstructed to be better offensively. And while things have been good so far, players understand there’s a long way to go and success can be fleeting.

“When you’re winning, it’s always nice, but there’s going to be ups and downs,” Ovechkin said. “We have to see how we’re going to respond when we go down because those days are always going to be there. And we just have to stick together.”



Nick Wass/AP
Center Connor McMichael, left, has matched Ovechkin this season with eight goals of his own. He also has five assists.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	13	9	3	1	19	48	41
Toronto	14	7	5	2	16	43	39
Tampa Bay	13	7	6	0	14	48	43
Detroit	12	6	5	1	13	33	36
Boston	14	6	7	1	13	34	46
Ottawa	12	6	6	0	12	43	38
Buffalo	13	5	7	1	11	41	43
Montreal	13	4	7	2	10	35	53
Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	11	9	2	0	18	45	27
Washington	12	9	3	0	18	49	35
New Jersey	15	8	5	2	18	53	42
N.Y. Rangers	11	8	2	1	17	44	24
Columbus	12	5	5	2	12	40	40
N.Y. Islanders	13	5	6	2	12	32	40
Pittsburgh	14	5	7	2	12	41	54
Philadelphia	13	4	8	1	9	35	50
Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	13	12	1	0	24	62	30
Minnesota	12	8	2	2	18	42	33
Dallas	11	7	4	0	14	35	27
St. Louis	13	7	6	0	14	35	40
Utah	13	5	5	3	13	37	45
Colorado	13	6	7	0	12	46	54
Chicago	14	5	8	1	11	38	45
Nashville	13	4	8	1	9	31	44
Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	13	9	3	1	19	58	39
Los Angeles	14	8	3	3	19	47	41
Vancouver	11	6	2	3	15	35	34
Calgary	13	7	5	1	15	38	40
Edmonton	14	6	7	1	13	33	45
Seattle	14	5	8	1	11	40	45
Anaheim	12	4	6	2	10	25	36
San Jose	14	4	8	2	10	34	51
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.							
Wednesday's games							
Washington 3, Nashville 2 Detroit 4, Chicago 1 Vegas 4, Edmonton 2							
Thursday's games							
Buffalo at N.Y. Rangers Calgary at Boston Montreal at New Jersey N.Y. Islanders at Ottawa Nashville at Florida Pittsburgh at Carolina Philadelphia at Tampa Bay Chicago at Dallas Colorado at Winnipeg Utah at St. Louis Minnesota at San Jose Vancouver at Los Angeles							
Friday's games							
Detroit at Toronto Pittsburgh at Washington Minnesota at Anaheim Vegas at Seattle							
Saturday's games							
Calgary at Buffalo Dallas at Winnipeg Philadelphia at Florida Montreal at Toronto N.Y. Rangers at Detroit Ottawa at Boston Washington at St. Louis New Jersey at N.Y. Islanders Utah at Nashville Carolina at Colorado Columbus at Los Angeles Edmonton at Vancouver							
Sunday's games							
Minnesota at Chicago San Jose at New Jersey Columbus at Anaheim							
Scoring leaders							
Through Wednesday							
	GP	G	A	PTS			
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	13	6	19	25			
Cale Makar, COL	13	5	18	23			
Nikita Kucherov, TB	13	10	12	22			
Mark Stone, LV	13	6	15	21			
Kirill Kaprizov, MIN	12	7	14	21			
Sam Reinhart, FLA	13	10	11	21			
Martin Necas, CAR	11	7	13	20			
Dylan Strome, WSH	12	4	15	19			
Jack Eichel, LV	13	4	15	19			
Kyle Connor, WPG	13	9	10	19			
Artemi Panarin, NYR	11	9	9	18			
Tim Stutzle, OTT	12	6	11	17			
Mikko Rantanen, COL	13	6	11	17			
Mark Scheifele, WPG	13	7	10	17			
Nikolaj Ehlers, WPG	13	8	9	17			



BONNIE RYAN/AP
Creighton center Ryan Kalkbrenner shoots over Texas-Rio Grande Valley forward Tommy Gankhuyag as guard DK Thorn looks on during the second half Wednesday in Omaha, Neb.

Creighton center scores 49 points

BY ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — It turns out the Big East’s three-time defensive player of the year can play a little offense, too.

Make that a lot of offense.

Ryan Kalkbrenner turned in the performance of the young college basketball season Wednesday night, scoring 49 points in No. 15 Creighton’s 99-86 victory over Texas-Rio Grande Valley. He made a school-record 20 field goals on 22 attempts to help the Bluejays hang on in their opener.

“I kind of didn’t realize how much I had,” Kalkbrenner said. “We were in a close game. I was thinking about that more. It comes with the flow of the game.”

When the 7-foot-1 center finally exited to a standing ovation, he looked up at the scoreboard to see his point total.

His thought?
“Pretty good game,” he said.

Kalkbrenner, the Big East pre-season player of the year, also had 11 rebounds and three blocks.

The crowd began chanting encouragement late in the game, imploring him to shoot so he could hit the 50-point mark. Kalkbrenner, not knowing he was one point away, decided to pass the ball to a guard and let the clock run down.

“Having a good first game is awesome,” Kalkbrenner said, “but we have thirty-something games left, and hopefully games that mean a lot more.”

As he walked off the court and through the tunnel after the buzzer, fans nearby chanted “MVP! MVP!”

“We kind of went into the game with a plan to establish me in the post and we went with that,” he said. “I kept working and wasn’t really thinking about what happened the previous play. I was just trying to make the next one.”

Kalkbrenner’s 49 points were second-most by a Creighton player. Bob Portman holds the record with 51 against UW-Milwaukee in 1967.

It was the 15th time a Creighton player had 40 or more points. Six of those games belong to Doug McDermott, the school’s career scoring leader, a three-time All-American and the 2014 national player of the year.

Kalkbrenner is among three players to win the defensive player of the year award three times in the Big East. The others are Patrick Ewing and Alonzo Mourning.

His offensive game has plenty of flair, too. Kalkbrenner scored with his left hand, right hand, on spin moves — and he even hit a couple of 3-pointers. He was 7-for-8 on free throws and added two assists.

“He’s one of the best players to ever play here, and there have been some really good players that have played here,” coach Greg McDermott said. “If you don’t have him in this conversation, you’re not paying attention.”

Kalkbrenner, who averages 14 points per game for his career, considered leaving Creighton after last season to enter the NBA Draft. He decided to return to the school for a fifth season so he could polish his game.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Army stays cool pursuing perfect season

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

DENTON, Texas—Army's pursuit of its first perfect season in 75 years doesn't seem to be causing much of a ripple among the Black Knights.

At least that's the view of coach Jeff Monken with his No. 18 team on a 12-game winning streak going back to last season, the longest in the nation right now and Army's best since 1949-50.

"I don't really know how to put into words the temperament of this team," said Monken, who has led Army to its highest ranking since 1962. "They seem to be unfazed by the victories, as crazy as that sounds. Sometimes, teams get in this position and you say, 'Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh.' There's almost a pressure that you have to win the next one. I don't think our guys feel that."

The next one is Saturday at North Texas, where the Black Knights (8-0, 6-0 American Athletic) will match their No. 5 defense nationally against the third-best offense in the country.

That's enough for Monken to feel a little angst, even if he's not aware the Mean Green (5-3, 2-2) had a decisive victory over an undefeated team the last time they hosted a ranked opponent. UTSA was 11-0 when it lost 45-23 in Denton three years ago.

"I've just been watching their offense for the last two hours, and I want to throw up in my garbage can," Monken said. "They are so explosive and talented."



Air Force head coach Troy Calhoun, left, and Army head coach Jeff Monken shake hands after Army's 20-3 win on Nov. 2 in West Point, N.Y. The win moved Army to 8-0 as it pursues its first perfect season in 75 years.

The Black Knights, who haven't trailed at any point during their winning streak, have long been methodical with their triple-option offense. Monken says he's not sure who will be in charge of it.

Bryson Daily missed last week's 20-3 victory over Air Force with an undisclosed injury and illness. He was leading the nation with 19 touchdowns rushing at the time.

Dewayne Coleman took over at quarterback, but the offensive star against the Falcons was running back Kanye Udoh, who had a career-high 158 yards rushing and scored both touchdowns.

"His health is improving," Monken said of Daily. "We anticipate that before the end of the week, he's going to be able to practice and that will allow us to determine his status for the game on Saturday. I'm optimistic because there is a chance."

Defensive struggles

As good as the North Texas offense has been, a struggling defense is the biggest reason behind consecutive losses with a chance to gain bowl eligibility in coach Eric Morris' second season.

The Mean Green lost 52-44 at

Memphis and 45-37 at home against Tulane before getting two weeks to prepare for Army's unique offense. UNT is 121st in total defense, allowing 449 yards per game.

"We're going to have to prepare for both," Morris said of Daily and Coleman. "That doesn't make it any easier by any stretch of the imagination. Teams have had trouble figuring them out all year."

Prolific passing

Chandler Morris of North Texas leads the FBS in passing yards per game at 359.1 and is tied for second



No. 18 Army (8-0)
at North Texas (5-3)
AFN-Atlantic
9:30 p.m. Saturday CET
5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



Navy (6-2)
at South Florida (4-4)
AFN-Atlantic
6 p.m. Saturday CET
2 a.m. Sunday JKT

Ole Miss faces Georgia in must-win situation for playoff and SEC title

By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

Lane Kiffin typically steers clear of talk about playoffs and championships. This week is an exception.

There's no sugarcoating the situation facing Kiffin and No. 16 Mississippi: They have to win out to keep those postseason hopes intact, starting Saturday with powerhouse No. 2 Georgia.

"I told our players — because they hear it all the time — you still have that stuff alive," Kiffin said. "In my opinion, anybody that's going to win it is going to have to go through Georgia at some point. They're the premier program in college football."

The Bulldogs (7-1, 5-1 Southeastern Conference, No. 3 CFP) have won two of the last three national titles and already toppled then-No. 1 Texas. Only a loss to Alabama mars their record.

The Rebels (7-2, 3-2, No. 16) have dropped two games by a field



No. 2 Georgia (7-1)
at No. 16 Ole Miss (7-2)
AFN-Sports
9:30 p.m. Saturday CET
5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

goal apiece to Kentucky and LSU.

They're coming off a record-setting offensive performance in a 63-31 win over Arkansas. But leading rusher Henry Parrish Jr. is out and star receiver Tre Harris — who hasn't played in the last two games — is listed as doubtful with injuries on the SEC's availability report.

Injured runners

Ole Miss will be without Parrish. Georgia's top running back,

Trevor Etienne, left last week's win against Florida with a rib injury. He wasn't included on the availability report.

"The big thing is just his ability to sustain and deal with a little bit of pain because he's going to have some there," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "But he's a tough kid, and I think he'll do well with it."

Ole Miss had Ulysses Bentley IV, Matt Jones and Domonique Thomas behind Parrish. Parrish has 678 yards and 10 touchdowns. Etienne has 453 rushing yards and seven touchdowns.

Beck's picks

Georgia quarterback Carson Beck has three straight games with multiple interceptions. Kiffin manages to put a positive spin on that, figuring it's a fixable problem for a talented passer.

"Versus some people around the country where you go, well, they protect the ball but the quar-



Despite being ranked at No. 16, coach Lane Kiffin, center, and Mississippi are in a tight situation, needing a win against dominant No. 2 Georgia to keep their playoff hopes alive.

terback can't make the throws," the Ole Miss coach said. "It's a good problem to have."

Dart's big game

Mississippi quarterback Jaxson Dart broke Archie Manning's school record with 562 total yards (515 passing, 47 rushing) in the Rebels' win at Arkansas. He also had six touchdown passes.

"This guy's playing uncanny

football when you talk about the accuracy, the completion percentage, the yards he's throwing it for," Smart said. "He's not throwing dink and dunk passes now. This guy's throwing the ball vertical down the field, shots. Then let's say you cover all that, and you do that, he can take off and run."

Jordan Watkins had 254 receiving yards and five touchdown catches.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



Miami quarterback Cam Ward scores a two-point conversion during the second half against Duke on Nov. 2 in Miami Gardens, Fla. Miami won 53-31 to jump up to the No. 4 spot in the AP Top 25 poll.

LYNNE SLADKY/AP

No. 4 Miami, No. 13 SMU sit undefeated atop ACC

By GARY B. GRAVES
Associated Press

The Atlantic Coast Conference's guaranteed berth in the College Football Playoff could include a surprise representative. Maybe a couple.

Unbeaten and fourth-ranked Miami (9-0, 5-0), predicted this summer by media to finish third in the ACC behind defending champion Florida State and Clemson, is rated No. 4 as a projected league champion among the 12 teams announced in Tuesday night's initial bracket. One of just five unbeaten Football Bowl Subdivision teams, the Hurricanes could earn a first-round bye if they go on and win the title — unless the Mustangs or Tigers beat them to it.

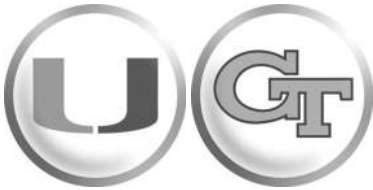


Lashlee

"I think the hunger grows," Miami coach Mario Cristobal said this week. "I think we understand what a blessing it is to be in November and to be playing very significant football."

League newcomer SMU (8-1, 5-0) sits just outside at No. 13 and is hoping to crack the field. It's the highest playoff ranking ever for the Mustangs, who are enjoying their first season back as a Power 4 school after winning the American Athletic championship last fall.

"I think it means that our program belongs at this level and our program is capable of competing at this level, which we all believe,"



No. 4 Miami (9-0)
at Georgia Tech (5-4)
AFN-Sports2
6 p.m. Saturday CET
2 a.m. Sunday JKT

SMU coach Rhett Lashlee said after beating Pitt last week. The Mustangs have a bye before hosting Boston College.

The first rankings include three other ACC teams including No. 23 Pitt (7-1, 3-1, No. 18 CFP); No. 25 Louisville (6-3, 4-2, No. 22 CFP), which returned to the poll this week after beating Clemson 33-21; and the 19th-ranked Tigers (6-2, 5-1, No. 23 CFP), who are just a half-game behind in the hunt for the championship they've claimed six times since 2015.

FSU? The one-win Seminoles are just above ACC newcomer Cal at the bottom of the standings.

ACC Network analyst Eric Mac Lain believes having its top five teams in the rankings speaks volumes about the league's depth and the respect it has earned as a result.

For all the initial recognition of FSU and Clemson, he noted there was just as much curiosity in what Miami could achieve with Ward, who arrived in south Florida after passing for 6,963 yards and 48 touchdowns the previous two sea-

sons at Washington State. Ward is now considered the Heisman Trophy favorite.

"It's good to see a team like Miami, who we all thought in the off-season about the run they could go on," he said. "When you look at who they've acquired and (having) a big-time coach who came home and a lot of expectations, for them to deliver on that is truly amazing."

Meanwhile, the two new faces sharing first place are focused on staying healthy and maintaining high-scoring offenses led by dynamic quarterbacks.

Ward has guided college football's top attack at 556.9 yards and 47.4 points per game. The senior has completed 67% of his passes for a nation-leading 29 touchdowns and 3,146 yards that rank second.

Ward strung together a school-record seven consecutive 300-yard passing games to start the season and has eight overall, including 400 with five scores in last week's 53-31 victory over Duke. Miami's defense is pretty stout as well, ranking 19th nationally at 310.7 yards per game to help build their best start since beginning 10-0 in 2017.

The Mustangs, who rank seventh with 40.1 points and 23rd with 446.1 yards per contest, have won six in a row since sophomore Kevin Jennings took over at QB after an 18-15 loss to No. 9 BYU in September. SMU has taken off on both sides of the ball, allowing an ACC-best 90 yards rushing per game defensively while boasting the league's No. 4 unit overall (341.0).

BYU-Utah rivalry has increased importance after Big 12 reunion

By JOHN COON
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah's move from the Pac-12 to the Big 12 brought a reunion with BYU after 13 years apart. It also reinvigorated one of the nation's fiercest rivalries, one that encompasses many sports.

The Big 12 quickly designated the Holy War as one of four protected football rivalries in the league. BYU and Utah are guaranteed to meet annually for as long as both schools remain Big 12 members — starting Saturday when the No. 9 Cougars visit the Utes at Rice-Eccles Stadium. Protecting this rivalry extends beyond football to sports like basketball and volleyball, where the Utes and Cougars meet twice during the regular season.

Players and coaches on both sides of the rivalry are excited these games carry more weight than mere bragging rights again.

"It's a fun game to be part of and I'm glad it's back and want our guys to enjoy every second of it," BYU coach Kalani Sitake said.

Religion fuels some animosity that prevails between Utah and BYU. A church versus state component characterizes the rivalry since BYU is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Utah is a public school.

During his junior season at Utah in 2001, Chris Burgess helped the Utes win a share of the Mountain West Conference men's basketball title. But BYU also claimed a share of the title after securing its first regular-season win over Utah in six years.

"You're trying to not to make the game bigger than it is, but it was just hard," said Burgess, who also coached at Utah and now is in his second stint as assistant coach at BYU. "You know everybody on that side and you're close with guys on that side and you want to win it."

For players and coaches who grew up in Utah, having these games factor into conference championships again feels like a moment where the rivalry has re-



No. 9 BYU (8-0)
at Utah (4-4)
AFN-Sports2
4:15 a.m. Sunday CET
12:15 a.m. Sunday JKT

turned to its roots.

"That rivalry from the time I entered this world was just ingrained in me," said Kennady McQueen, a senior guard on Utah's women's basketball team. "I would just say it's a huge part of the state of Utah. There's extra juice for each team. Everything's a little extra for that game."

One unique aspect of the rivalry between Utah and BYU is how interconnected the coaches are in multiple sports. It has helped create an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Kyle Whittingham was an all-WAC linebacker for BYU under LaVell Edwards before going on to coach at Utah. Many of Whittingham's former assistants are now at BYU. Sitake, offensive coordinator Aaron Roderick and defensive coordinator Jay Hill all coached under Whittingham at Utah earlier in their careers. Hill also played under Whittingham.

Sitake counts Whittingham as a mentor and close friend and credits his time at Utah for helping him to be a head coach at BYU.

"I have a lot of love for that program and a lot of love for the people there," Sitake said.

Burgess echoed Sitake's feelings, saying his coaching stints as an assistant at BYU and Utah have given him the chance to forge lasting friendships at both schools and see the rivalry through new eyes.

"Being on both sides has only intensified my love and respect for this rivalry," Burgess said. "I can truly appreciate what it means for both fanbases."



RICK BOWMER/AP

BYU head coach Kalani Sitake has led the Cougars to an 8-0 record, which has been good for the No. 9 ranking in the country.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Irish not taking Seminoles lightly as they chase CFP

BY CURT RALLO
Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman keeps reminding his players of the lessons from Week 2.

Be ready, be prepared and avoid the mirage by taking nothing for granted.

If that inexplicable early season loss to Northern Illinois did anything for the Fighting Irish, it's steered them for Saturday night's matchup against reeling Florida State.

The Seminoles five-game losing streak and 1-8 record has taken the luster off what was supposed to be one of this weekend's marquee matchups when the season began. And with No. 10 Notre Dame (7-1, No. 10 CFP), Freeman knows his team cannot afford another misstep if it hopes to make the expanded 12-team playoff field.

"It's a mental preparation and a physical preparation, and we know what the result is when you don't mentally prepare the right way," Freeman said. "We know it, and that's why we say, 'Keep the pain of NIU,' because that's a result of not having the right mindset."

It's been an epic freefall for the Seminoles, who were snubbed from last season's four-team playoff despite posting an unbeaten regular-season mark and who started this season ranked in the Top 10.

But nothing has gone as expected. Coach Mike Norvell's team didn't have just one early season stumble — it lost its first three games before beating California and hasn't won since. In fact, the Seminoles are 0-4 outside of Tallahassee, and in a season they're trying to salvage something, a win

at Notre Dame might be just the trick.

"I am shocked in where we are," Norvell said Monday. "You look at some of the results we've faced, you look at some of the circumstances that have shown up, you go into a season and you have a picture in your mind of what things are going to look like. It really has been shocking some of the things that have kind of evolved throughout this season."

Freeman is equally surprised.

And he wants his players to fully understand what they're up against this week — a team with four straight strong recruiting classes and a team capable of beating anybody. Even a foe in the playoff picture.

"Listen, it's a very talented football team, and it doesn't take long to turn on the film and realize how talented they are," Freeman said.



Notre Dame quarterback Riley Leonard runs past Navy cornerback Andrew Duhart during the first half on Oct. 26.

"The record doesn't reflect their talent. They've had to deal with some injuries, especially at quarterback, that has affected the outcome of their games. Our team must, and we will respect the challenge Saturday night presents."

The Irish don't have a choice if they want to make the playoff.

Matchup problems

In Notre Dame's 51-14 victory over then-No. 24 Navy two weeks

ago, the Irish forced six turnovers. That's not good news for Florida State, which ranks 132nd in the FBS with a minus-12 turnover margin and has been outscored 68-3 in points off turnovers.

While that's been a major problem all season for Florida State, it's hardly the only one. The Seminoles rank 133rd in yards rushing per game (76.1), are averaging just 14.4 points and are 101st in yards passing (208.2 per game).

STARS AND STRIPES
SERVICE DIRECTORY
The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market



Transportation944

VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service

- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

For Further Information Please Contact

GERMANY

Phone: +49-(0)6134-2592730

Toll-free: 0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)

E-Mail: info@transglobal-logistics.de

WEB: www.transglobal-logistics.de

UNITED KINGDOM

+44-(0)1638-515714

enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk

www.carshipuk.co.uk

U.S.A

+1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701

+1-800-264-8167 (US only)

info@tgal.us

www.tgal.us

Trans Global

LOGISTICS EUROPE GMBH



Are you in the picture?



Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

No one covers the bases the way we do.

Transportation944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA



OPENING HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri

0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de

Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!



Concert, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...

STARS AND STRIPES

STARS AND STRIPES

NFL

Those who knew Daniels expected success

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — Jayden Daniels has not given much thought to how he has handled half a season playing quarterback in the NFL.

“I still have some ways to go,” he said. “I’ll sit back and reflect after my rookie year is done.”

That’s OK. The rest of the sport has plenty to say about Daniels taking the league by storm, leading the Washington Commanders to their first 7-2 start since 1996 and becoming not only the favorite to be the AP Offensive Rookie of the Year but putting himself firmly in the MVP conversation.

“You guys got to stop calling him a rookie quarterback,” veteran tight end Zach Ertz said. “He may be a rookie quarterback in terms of years in this league. But his maturity, his poise is that of a 10-year vet.”

Daniels’ breakout season has come as no surprise to those who knew the San Bernardino, Calif., native during stints at Arizona State and then LSU, where he blossomed into the 2023 Heisman Trophy winner and the second pick in the draft. Teammates turned friends and coaches over the years have seen a player determined to be the best and a person humble enough to make these past nine weeks look like just the start of a lengthy career with no limit on what Daniels could accomplish.

The start

Inheriting the pressure of being Washington’s face of the franchise for an organization decades removed from its glory days did not seem to get to Daniels, who teammates have said has had the same approach since the first day of offseason workouts through throwing a Hail Mary touchdown pass to Noah Brown in Week 8 to beat Chicago.

That is one of his first 163 completions on 228 attempts — a success rate of 71.5% that ranks among the best QBs in the NFL of any experience level. He has thrown for nine touchdowns, run for four more and has just two interceptions.

“He doesn’t turn the ball over a lot,” said Herm Edwards, who coached Daniels for three seasons at Arizona State. “That isn’t part of his DNA. That’s not what happens. You never worry about that as far as him with the football in his hand, whether he’s throwing it or running. He’s become a smarter runner, obviously, and that’s needed in this league.”

The biggest blip for Daniels came when he injured his ribs getting tackled and landing awkwardly at the end of a long run. He left that game — a 40-7 rout of Carolina — and might have played if the stakes were



SETH WENIG/AP

Washington Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels, left, talks with New York Giants wide receiver Malik Nabers on Sunday. The two were teammates at LSU.

higher, then he was right back on the field a week later.

Daniels, even with sore ribs, has thrown for 535 yards and three TDs and ran 16 times for 87 yards.

“It’s not a surprise to me,” said San Francisco receiver Brandon Aiyuk, a teammate of Daniels’ at Arizona State. “He’s just always been that good.”

The competitor

Malik Nabers heard the chatter about Daniels when he was transferring to LSU in 2022, and that first season finished with some great numbers: 17 touchdowns, three interceptions and a 10-4 record. Then, after training with C.J. Stroud and others in California, Nabers noticed a shift in Daniels’ mindset and demeanor.

“He was just like picking defenses apart,” said Nabers, the sixth pick in the draft and now the No. 1 receiver for the NFC East-rival New York Giants. “He was working extra, staying extra long, making sure we got the plays after practice. He was the ultimate leader. I think that’s what he changed: He became like the ultimate leader and started leading by example, leading by vocalness and just taking the offense over.”

Daniels led the country with 40 TD passes in 2023, ran for 10 more and won the Heisman as the final accomplishment of his college career. But the arriving early and staying late did not stop, from walkthroughs in the team’s practice bubble before spring

workouts with rookie receiver Luke McCaffrey to nights coach Dan Quinn observed Daniels studying film well after dark during the Commanders’ week in Arizona between games.

“It’s not any magic that’s going into this. ... He really puts in the work,” Quinn said. “There’s no magic pixie dust that we’re throwing into him. It is absolutely grinding, working, and a lot of confidence comes from that.”

The innovator

It’s not just sweat equity. At LSU, Daniels underwent cognitive processing tests on a computer, and with the school’s director of performance innovation, Jack Marucci, developed a program with a virtual reality headset to work on his anticipation.

“You could see his efficiency and speed improving and how he was scanning,” Marucci said, pointing out it was like Daniels got another 250 snaps a week and 2,600 over the course of a season. “It’s knowing and anticipating where he’s going to end up and now you have to hit a spot on the field.”

“It’s been a great tool, not just for me, but the other quarterbacks — the guys that want to use it to get an edge and get the reps without having to go out there and physically do stuff,” Daniels said.

The connection

Offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury interviewed for multiple jobs around the NFL. After coaching Patrick Mahomes at

Texas Tech, Kyler Murray with the Arizona Cardinals and then (as an adviser) with Caleb Williams at Southern California, the chance to work with Daniels — who was drafted a few months after he was hired in Washington — and the Commanders made too much sense.

“Kliff Kingsbury is an outstanding fit for him,” LSU coach Brian Kelly said. “And the kind of offense that they run, it’s something that I think is seamless for him.”

Cincinnati cornerback Cam Taylor-Britt derided it as “simple” and a “nice college offense.” Daniels burned the Bengals on 21-for-23 passing for 254 yards and two touchdowns in a 38-33 victory on “Monday Night Football.”

When the Bears-Commanders game was flexed to national TV, it provided Daniels’ signature moment so far when he scrambled for nearly 13 seconds and lofted up a pass that sailed 65 yards in the air before tipping up and into Brown’s hands in the end zone.

Edwards, who still texts Daniels on a regular basis, almost foreshadowed it talking about the 23-year-old two weeks before the Chicago game.

“He has the ability to extend plays, and what he does — and people can already see it and it’s not luck — he can throw the deep ball,” said Edwards, who’s now an ESPN analyst. “He can throw it with accuracy on the run or from the pocket. He has a feel for throwing the ball down the field.”

The composure

The Hail Mary exemplified what everyone around Daniels raves about: his poise under pressure. Edwards calls it Daniels’ “ability to keep his composure when the lights got the brightest.”

Terry McLaurin, who has been Washington’s top receiver since being drafted in 2019, said Daniels came into the league more ready than most rookies at the most important position in sports.

“Washington is in good hands with him,” Ravens linebacker Roquan Smith said “He’s the truth.”

Only Jackson, Buffalo’s Josh Allen, Mahomes and Detroit’s Jared Goff have shorter MVP odds on BetMGM Sportsbook, which now has Daniels at 10-1. Nabers said his friend’s success stems from a desire to win that he doesn’t see in many others.

“I know when he is in that moment, he’s not scared of it,” Nabers said. “He’s not scared of the hype, the big plays to be made. If it is crunch time, he wants to ball.”

AP sports writers Brett Martel in Baton Rouge, La., Tom Canavan in East Rutherford, N.J., and Josh Dubow in Santa Clara, Calif., contributed.

On AFN



Pittsburgh Steelers (6-2) at Washington Commanders (7-2)
AFN-Sports
7 p.m. Sunday CET
3 a.m. Monday JKT



Denver Broncos (5-4) at Kansas City Chiefs (8-0)
AFN-Sports2
7 p.m. Sunday CET
3 a.m. Monday JKT



Philadelphia Eagles (6-2) at Dallas Cowboys (3-5)
AFN-Sports
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT



New York Jets (3-6) at Arizona Cardinals (5-4)
AFN-Sports2
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT



Detroit Lions (7-1) at Houston Texans (6-3)
AFN-Sports
2 a.m. Monday CET
10 a.m. Monday JKT

SPORTS



Impressive start

Cavaliers take moment to recognize, celebrate 9-0 record » **NBA, Page 42**

Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin sits at 861 career goals, just 34 shy of breaking Wayne Gretzky's record atop the category.

PHOTOS BY NICK WASS/AP



NHL

Finding his game

With Ovechkin scoring, Capitals off to hot start

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Alex Ovechkin approached linemates Dylan Strome and Aliaksei Protas after the second game of the Washington Capitals' season to do some film study.

The trio which had never before played together watched its shifts from that game, and Ovechkin thought the three needed to be more predictable, hesitate less and find one another for passes quicker.

It worked, and the result has been a hot start for the Capitals and their 39-year-old captain, who is approaching one of hockey's more unapproachable records faster than most expected. Ovechkin has six goals in his past five games to get on pace to catch and pass Wayne Gretzky for the NHL career goals mark before the end of the season — and Washington has won nine of 12.

His latest was Wednesday night, when he scored the game winner in Washington's 3-2 victory over Nashville.

SEE FINDING ON PAGE 43



Skating on a line with Ovechkin, center Dylan Strome, right, leads the Capitals in scoring with 19 points.

Washington QB Daniels' success unsurprising » **NFL, Page 47**



027664 520705