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Stars and Stripes

Unmoved by the findings

A mover packs a truck in Kaiserslautern, Germany. According to an Inspector General investigation, almost half of military household-goods shipments arrive late and 20% are damaged.

IG says military should get tough on companies for late, lost, damaged deliveries of household goods

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Nearly half of military household goods shipments arrive late and one in five are damaged in transit or lost, an audit by the Defense Department Inspector General has found.

Some Defense Department personnel, meanwhile, may be venting their frustration with what they say are poor moving services by filing wildly inflated damage estimates, the audit suggested.

One person filed a claim of \$1 million for a busted trash can and another tried to claim \$1 trillion for unspecified damages, the IG report said. Both claims were denied.

The IG made many recommendations on how the military can improve moving services, which have vexed service members for years.

The IG reviewed 9,852 shipments handled by four joint shipping offices in 2018 to determine the extent of problems with household goods shipments and whether proper actions were taken when goods were damaged, lost or arrived late during a move.

More than 4,000 of those shipments, or 41%, didn't arrive by the agreed-upon delivery date, the audit found. The delays were caused by problems with scheduling and equipment at the moving companies, the IG said.

SEE DELIVERIES ON PAGE 4

IRAN TENSIONS

US officials knew missiles were coming in advance

By SHANE HARRIS,
JOSH DAWSEY, DAN LAMOTHE
AND MISSY RYAN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Iranian missile strike on American locations in Iraq on Tuesday was a calibrated event intended to cause minimal casualties, give the Iranians a face-saving measure and provide an opportunity for both sides to step back from the brink of war, according to senior U.S. officials in Washington and the Middle East.

White House officials were bracing as early as Tuesday morning for Iran to respond to the U.S. killing last week of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force.

U.S. officials said they knew by Tuesday afternoon that Iran intended to strike at American targets in Iraq, although it was not immediately clear exactly which they would choose.

The early warning came from intelligence sources as well as from communications from Iraq that conveyed Iran's intentions to launch the strike, officials said.

"We knew, and the Iraqis told us, that this was coming many hours in advance," said a senior administration official, who like others spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence and diplomatic communications.

"We had intelligence reports several hours in advance that the Iranians were seeking to strike the bases," the official said.

At the Pentagon, the most senior levels of U.S. military leadership gathered in a room and waited for the Iranian missiles to head toward their targets.

"It was literally like right before" the Iranians launched their missiles, one senior defense official said.

SEE ADVANCE ON PAGE 6

1 in 5

Military household-goods shipments lost or damaged, according to an audit by the Department of Defense Inspector General.

\$33.1M

Amount late deliveries from four joint shipping offices cost the military in 2018.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Startup to air short videos

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A startup heavily backed by Hollywood is wagering that you're ready to set aside YouTube and TikTok to watch star-studded short videos on your phone — for a price.

The company behind this billion-dollar bet is Quibi (KWH-bee), which is preparing to offer movies, shows and other short-form videos designed for viewing in short bursts on mobile devices. It's an enormous gamble, especially considering that several earlier efforts in mobile entertainment — most notably Verizon's ill-fated Go90 service — fell flat.

It has backing from all the major movie studios and entertainment companies, \$1 billion invested in original programming and star power.

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	...	\$3.269	...	\$3.129
Change in price	...	+1.0 cents	...	+1.0 cents
Okinawa	\$2.629	\$3.129
Change in price	No change	+1.0 cents
South Korea	2.699	...	\$3.299	\$3.189
Change in price	No change	...	+1.0 cents	+1.0 cents
Guam	\$2.639**	\$3.09	\$3.279	...
Change in price	No change	+1.0 cents	+1.0 cents	...

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Jan. 10 - 16

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Gas prices were unavailable before press time

EXCHANGE RATES

	Military rates	Commercial rates
Euro costs (Jan. 10)	\$1.1392	0.9724
Dollar buys (Jan. 10)	60.8778	8.9740
British pound (Jan. 10)	\$1.34	...
Japanese yen (Jan. 10)	105.00	...
South Korean won (Jan. 10)	1,129.00	...
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770	...
British pound	\$1.3049	...
Canada (Dollar)	1.3063	...
China (Yuan)	6.9525	...
Denmark (Krone)	6.7274	...
Egypt (Pound)	15.9900	...
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.1108/0.9002	...
Hungary (Forint)	29.72	...
Israel (Shekel)	3.4687	...
Japan (Yen)	109.48	...
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3035	...
Norway (Krone)	8.8811	...
Philippines (Peso)	50.66	...
Poland (Zloty)	3.82	...
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7514	...
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3517	...
South Korea (Won)	1,185.72	...
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9724	...
Thailand (Baht)	30.28	...
Turkey (Lira)	8.9740	...

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

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	1.95
3-month bill	1.52
30-year bond	2.36

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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MILITARY

Brain injuries in combat linked to PTSD

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Service members who suffered moderate to severe traumatic brain injury in combat have significantly higher incidence of mental health disorders in following years as compared to warriors who sustained other traumatic injuries, a study found.

The study, published in the current issue of the journal *Military Medicine*, examined almost 5,000 cases of traumatic injury experienced by Marines, soldiers, airmen and sailors during combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from February 2002 to February 2011.

Among the study's findings is a clear relationship between moderate and severe brain injury and a greater risk for post-traumatic stress disorder, a link that contradicts a theory proposed by some previous researchers.

Traumatic brain injury has been the scourge of U.S. combatants during the extended war on terrorism, particularly the decade after the September 2001 World Trade Center attack. Improvised explosive devices were the weapon of choice by enemy guerrilla fighters in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Improvements in body armor and medical treatment saved the lives of many blast victims who would have died in earlier conflicts. By 2010, 7,832 warfighters had survived severe traumatic brain injury, the study said.

The new research compared two groups — one that sustained moderate to severe brain injury, the other experiencing general, critical injury — and looked for associations with anxiety and mood disorders, adjustment reactions, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, cognitive disorders, and post-traumatic

stress disorder, or PTSD.

The study found that most of these patients, 70.6%, were diagnosed with at least one of those five mental health conditions during multiyear follow-up periods.

That is "considerably higher" than the 42% found in a much smaller 2012 study, "even though our mental health diagnoses were defined more narrowly," the study said.

However, patients who suffered traumatic brain injury were at "consistently greater" risk for diagnosis of those five conditions than the group of patients suffering general trauma, the study found.

"If you have severe TBI, you are at risk of having something undesirable," said David Chin, the study's co-author and a professor at the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Previous studies found links

between mild and moderate traumatic brain injury and adverse mental health outcomes in combat veterans, but such research was usually limited to examining only a one-year post-injury period and primarily focused on PTSD and loss of mental function from physical injury.

The new study includes patients from all four service branches and examines mental health outcomes over longer periods of time, a median length of just over four years.

Chin said the study likely underestimates mental health outcomes for a few reasons.

Health records were available for care provided within a Defense Department health care facility or tied to the DOD's Tricare system. Encounters with health care providers outside that were not available for the analysis, he said.

The culture of underreporting

mental health issues among service members likely skews the data, he said.

Finally, an examination using longer follow-up periods would probably reveal more mental health diagnoses, he said.

"I think this illustrates that we just don't have enough information to really get at how big the problem of mental health care actually is for these patients," he said.

The study's findings contradict a hypothesis by earlier investigators theorizing that patients with moderate and severe traumatic brain injury could not develop PTSD because impaired consciousness confers a sort of "amnesiac effect" that precludes "encoding" the memories necessary for PTSD development, Chin said.

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Wing upgrades for Warthogs in Korea nearing completion

By MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — All but one of nearly two dozen Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt IIs in South Korea have completed wing upgrades that should extend the service life of the close combat support jet well into the 2030s.

The new wings are designed to last up to 10,000 flight hours without a major inspection. The upgrade includes a new wiring harness created for easier wing removal and is designed to reduce the chance of damaging the wing during the process.

"Most of our airplanes [at Osan] have between 9,000 to 12,000 airframe hours. They are old, but this upgrade is helping us to keep going. I wouldn't be surprised to see some of the airplanes go 16,000 hours." Senior Master Sgt. Dustin Schwartz, lead production superintendent for the 25th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, 51st Fighter Wing, told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

"As 8,000 hours approached the Air Force started to realize the wings were cracking," he added. "These wings were not designed to go this far."

In 2007, Boeing Co. was awarded \$1.1 billion under the Enhanced Wing Assembly program to manufacture 173 sets of wings to replace the original components, which were designed for 8,000 flight hours. In August, the Defense Department awarded the company a second contract for an indefinite number of wings with a ceiling

of \$999 million through 2030, according to Boeing's website.

Korean Air Lines, the country's largest commercial airline, under contract has completed 10 of 11 wing upgrades for Osan's A-10s, which are also known as Warthogs. The final aircraft is expected to be completed in early spring.

The remaining jets were flown to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, for the installation and have since returned to South Korea.

Most of the Air Force's A-10s had their new wings installed and flight tested at Hill. For Osan's 51st Fighter Wing, getting all of its Warthogs to Utah for the upgrades meant several days and a vast amount of manpower.

"Having Korean Air Lines here on the peninsula do our upgrades is huge because, one, we don't lose the time and effort trying to fly an airplane from here to Utah," Schwartz said. "These guys are good at what they do — every jet that they have turned for us has been really good. Having them here helps us keep our jets in the fight here."

The 45-year-old A-10 has proven its value and continues to garner the support of many politicians in Washington.

In late June, following his meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, President Donald Trump commented briefly on his support for the A-10 while speaking to service members at Osan.

"I've got more people asking us to keep the Warthog. We are going to keep them as long as we can," Trump said. "People love them. Sen. Martha McSally flew



ALEX LLOYD/U.S. Air Force

Warthogs, and every time I see her, she says please don't let the Warthog go, it's just a very great machine."

The Arizona Republican's efforts contributed to the Air Force awarding the new contract to Boeing, according to a statement on McSally's website.

"As a former A-10 pilot and commander of an A-10 squadron in combat, I know how critical the Warthog is to our military's success in the air and on the ground," she said in the statement. "Our troops rely on the A-10's outstanding and unique ability to provide close air support and combat search and rescue. The A-10 was specifically designed for these types of missions, so having it in the fight can make the difference between lives lost and lives saved."

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MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

At top: A technician sits in the cockpit of an A-10 Thunderbolt II while testing the aircraft's new wings at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, in June. Above: A 51st Fighter Wing A-10 Thunderbolt II with new wings from the Enhanced Wing Assembly program is parked inside a hangar at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Wednesday.

MILITARY

Afghan airstrike kills Taliban faction leader

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A U.S. drone strike killed a regional leader of a breakaway faction of the Taliban in western Afghanistan Wednesday and may have killed several civilians, officials and militants said.

“U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, at the request of Afghan Security Forces, conducted a coordinated defensive airstrike in support of Afghan forces in Shindand, Herat on January 8, 2020,” said a statement sent to Afghan media by U.S. military officials.

The statement did not comment on casualties and a spokesman for

‘U.S. Forces-Afghanistan... conducted a coordinated defensive air strike in support of Afghan forces in Shindand, Herat.’

U.S. military statement

U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan directed further questions to the Afghan defense ministry.

The ministry confirmed that airstrikes had occurred in the province, which borders Iran, and said an investigation has been launched to determine if any civilians were killed.

The strikes killed Mullah Mo-

hammad Nangyalai, a regional commander of an insurgent faction led by Mullah Mohammad Rasoul that split from the mainline Taliban in 2015, the breakaway militant group said in a statement.

The splinter group’s fighters will continue to fight against “the U.S. and other foreigners” in Af-

ghanistan, the statement said.

The attack began at 4 p.m. Wednesday in an area controlled by the government, Tolo News reported.

The drone strikes were launched as the Rasoul faction was planning to attack a government checkpoint, said Abdul Hakim, a resident of the district. “A few civilians were killed and injured” when a second strike hit as they gathered dead bodies after the initial strike, Hakim said.

An official from the area, Tor Mohammad Zariif, said several civilians were among the roughly 30 people killed in the strikes.

After the attack, at least 10 people were brought from Shindand

to the regional hospital in the city of Herat, about 90 miles away, said Dr. Abdul Hakim Tamana, Herat’s public health director. He was unable to say if the injured were civilians or militants.

A spokesman for the governor of Herat, Jalilani Farhad, confirmed that there were airstrikes.

The Rasoul group, which has operated with the tacit support of the Afghan government, continues to fight the mainline Taliban in Herat, but the clashes between the two groups are not as frequent or heavy as in previous years, a source within the group said.

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MATT YORK/AP

A ruling on Wednesday halted a federal judge’s ruling in December that had prevented the government from spending \$3.6 billion diverted from the military to pay for 175 miles of border wall.

White House welcomes new court ruling on its border wall spending

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House says construction of the U.S.-Mexico border wall will move forward after a federal appeals court ruling that frees up construction money.

The 2-1 ruling on Wednesday halted a federal judge’s ruling in December that had prevented the government from spending \$3.6 billion diverted from 127 military construction projects to pay for 175 miles of border wall.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit noted that the Supreme Court in July had stayed a similar injunction, clearing the way for the Trump administration to tap billions of dollars in Pentagon funds to build sections of border wall.

“The Government is entitled to

‘Entire Wall is under construction or getting ready to start!’

President Donald Trump

the same relief here,” the three-judge panel wrote.

President Donald Trump tweeted about the ruling and wrote that the “Entire Wall is under construction or getting ready to start!”

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said on Thursday that the court had lifted an “illegitimate nationwide injunction” and in doing so had allowed work on the border wall

to continue with military construction money.

“We will finish the wall,” she said in a statement.

The spending affected by the court ruling is intended for 11 projects in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The longest and most expensive by far would span 52 miles in Laredo, Texas, at an estimated cost of \$1.27 billion.

Opponents of the Trump administration’s actions had welcomed the earlier district court ruling that had put the work on hold, calling the Republican president’s actions an “outrageous power grab.” They noted that Trump had promised repeatedly during the 2016 presidential campaign that Mexico would pay for the wall.

Deliveries: DOD IG suggests issuing warnings, suspension letters to moving companies

FROM FRONT PAGE

Those late deliveries alone cost the military \$33.1 million, the IG said.

“Additionally, moving companies did not provide an explanation for delivering some of the shipments after the delivery date,” the IG said.

That meant DOD personnel and their families had the hassle of filing claims for lodging, food, rental and other costs, the IG reported.

At least one claim was filed in 21% of all domestic household goods shipments, the IG said. A review of 311 of those shipments found that the moving companies resolved 94% of the claims for around \$8.4 million. Forty claims remained unresolved because they weren’t filed through the proper channels, the IG said.

The Defense Department is the largest customer in the personal property shipping industry, representing about 15% of all domestic and international moves, the IG said. U.S. Transportation Command is in charge of administering the military’s household moves.

The IG suggested issuing warnings or letters of suspension to moving companies within 14 days of a missed delivery date. Warning letters would impact moving company ratings, which determine what future shipments will be offered, it said.

The IG also urged TRANSCOM to contact personnel who failed to complete a customer satisfaction survey within one month of receiving their shipment of household goods, and help members file inconvenience claims with moving companies within 14 days of a missed delivery date.

In addition, TRANSCOM should review all household goods claims that are more than 60 days old and contact claimants

to review shipment status, the IG recommended.

The audit was prompted by an online petition, which had been signed by 107,000 people as of October, calling for moving companies to be held accountable for losses and damages incurred during the military move process, the report said.

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MILITARY

New leather jackets coming for Navy's surface warfare officers

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—Navy surface warfare officers will soon be issued new leather jackets to wear and show their expertise and create a sense of pride.

The new jacket is similar to the famous aviation bomber jacket and is "meant to build esprit de corps" and symbolize the "tactical warfighter expertise" of being a qualified surface warfare officer, the Navy said in an announcement Thursday.

The jacket will be available starting in June. "The surface warfare community has a long-standing history of excellence and an uniquely identifiable item is one way to signify the outstanding achievement and professionalism of our surface warfare officers," Vice Adm. Richard Brown, commander of Naval Surface Forces, said in the announcement. "Those who wear the jacket will be easily identified as a part of a long lineage of professional ship drivers and maritime warfighters."

The jacket is black leather and features knitted cuffs and waistband, a pointed collar and will be fully lined. It also has two front pockets with flaps and a Velcro name tape patch on the left side.

Surface warfare officers will primarily wear the jacket while at sea with their at-sea uniforms, according to the Navy. They can be worn when officers are ashore as an optional outer jacket but only with the service uniform.

Active, Reserve, and full-time support officers who have earned the surface warfare officer qualification will be allowed to wear the jacket. Officers



WOODY S. PASCHALL/U.S. Navy

Wearing a leather jacket similar to those now being made available to Navy surface warfare officers, Vice Adm. Richard A. Brown, Commander, Naval Surface Forces, delivers the keynote address at a symposium on board Naval Base San Diego in August.

who later move to a different job specialty outside of surface warfare can still wear the jacket and can also wear it when they leave the Navy.

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Army says text messages about draft are a hoax

The Washington Post

The message seems urgent: The "United States Official Army Draft" has repeatedly tried to reach the recipient via email. The unwitting recipient has been marked "eligible" and now must report to the nearest branch for "immediate departure to Iran." Failure to respond could spell a six-year jail sentence.

The bizarre message is also entirely false, military officials reassure.

"U.S. Army Recruiting Command has received multiple calls and emails about these fake text messages and wants to ensure Americans understand these texts are false and were not initiated by this command or the U.S. Army," the agency said in a statement Tuesday.

It's unknown how many messages have been disseminated and to whom but individuals from around the U.S. have been sending Army recruiters screenshots text messages saying they've been drafted or are eligible for the draft, U.S. Army Recruiting Command Spokeswoman Kelli Bland told The Washington Post.

"Some [messages] have included fake names claiming to be Army recruiters, and others have used real names of leaders within

our command," Bland wrote in an email Wednesday. "Army security personnel are looking into the origin of the messages."

At least two versions of the hoax messages with slightly varied wording appear to target individuals in Florida and New Jersey.

The Selective Services, the federal agency tasked with maintaining a database of young men aged 18-26 who could be called up to serve should a crisis necessitate a military draft, hasn't had a draft since 1973, notes the Tuesday statement from USAREC. "The military has been an all-volunteer force since that time. Registering for the Selective Service does not enlist a person into the military."

But among young Americans — particularly young men born decades after the last draft and who fall into the age range for mandatory Selective Service registration — anxieties around conscription for airforce have grown in the days a U.S. airstrike killed one of Iran's top military commanders, Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, in Baghdad.

Even as tensions escalate between the U.S. and Iran, Congress and the president would have to pass legislation in order to reactivate the draft.

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MIDEAST

Advance: At least 2 sources of intelligence gave US time to prepare for Iran strikes

FROM FRONT PAGE

Defense Secretary Mark Esper had convened the meeting with Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with senior civilian leaders of the Defense Department. Esper was pulled out of the meeting when military officials received notification that strikes were underway.

"There was a lot of concern," the senior defense official said. "It was anxious, wanting to get updates." Early reports did not mention any U.S. casualties, "so there was some optimism after the initial rounds."

The advance warning gave military commanders time to get U.S. troops into safe, fortified positions at the bases. According to military officials, troops at bases in Iraq were ordered into bunkers, donned protective gear and were told to "shelter in place."

The troops remained in their protected positions for hours, including after the strike. One official said at least some left al Asad Air Base in western Iraq before the attack. That base was targeted, along with a facility in Irbil, in northern Iraq.

"It's not luck that no one got killed," a second senior defense official said. "Luck always plays a role. But military commanders on the ground made good judgment and had good response."

In an address from the White House on Wednesday morning, President Donald Trump credited an "early warning system" for helping prevent loss of life. A defense official later said the president was referring to the radar network the military has searching for potential enemy missiles.

At least two sources of intelligence gave the U.S. time to prepare. First, there were indications before the launch that Iran was preparing to strike at targets in Iraq, officials said. It was not clear whether that information came from a person or some technical means, such as intercepted communications. A defense official said the U.S. military had "clear indications" of a strike prior to launch from information "internal to [the] U.S. government."

Military officials had assessed that Iran would launch some kind of retaliation at the end of the official mourning period for Soleimani.

The Pentagon "fully expected a retaliation from Iran," the senior defense official said. "What that was was the issue," the official said. "But we fully expected some sort of reaction."

A second source of warning came from what one official described as technical means. The U.S. military has satellites that can detect a missile shortly after it is launched. U.S. officials alerted allies to the launches shortly after they occurred, according to one Western official.

Iran launched 16 ballistic missiles, including 11 that landed at al Asad Air Base and one on Irbil, Esper told reporters at the Pentagon. The missile in Irbil landed in an empty area between the facility and the U.S. Consulate, according to residents who live nearby. It was not clear what happened to the other four missiles.

As a precaution after the strike that killed Soleimani, U.S. military officials deployed a brigade of about 4,500 soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., to the Middle East and also shuffled some forces within the region.

Commanders on the ground, overseen by Marine Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, head of the U.S. Central Command, also moved some service members off small bases in the region and scattered equipment and people on installations to make them harder to hit.

"Let's get people out of less defensible areas and put them in more easily defended or better-defended areas," the senior defense official said, describing the thinking after the Soleimani strike. "But at the same time, let's not overly mass our personnel as a single target."

U.S. officials began alerting reporters to the possibility of Iranian strikes beginning at 4 p.m. Tuesday, an hour before they occurred. Vice President Mike Pence was scheduled to conduct a television interview that evening but canceled earlier in the day.

In Iran, the regime had positioned itself for a public messaging campaign. Late Tuesday afternoon, Iran transmitters led by the U.N. Security Council with a legal basis for military retaliation, but it was not made public, said a diplomat familiar with the document.

Military officials were not sure, once the missiles were launched, which locations Iran had targeted.

It was hard to tell at the Pentagon which bases were under attack "until actual impact on two specific bases," a senior U.S. military official said. "The attack spread out for more than an hour. ... It was more than an hour from the first attack to the last attack." "This was not a 'boom' and all of this hit at once," the senior defense official said. "This was launch, launch, launch."

Once the bases were taking incoming fire, there was constant communication among the White House, CENTCOM and two other combatant commands: Northern Command and Strategic Command, the second senior defense official said. They were called in because of their expertise in monitoring and tracking ballistic missile threats.

After the missiles hit, U.S. military officials began to assess the damage.

Pentagon officials called several partner nations and allies right



PLANET LABS INC., MIDDLEBURY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES/AP

Damage caused by an Iranian missile strike at the Al Asad Air Base in Iraq is seen in a satellite image. Iran's actions were in response to the U.S. killing of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

after the Iranian attack, part of a concerted effort to communicate with them in the wake of the Soleimani strike. While some of them questioned what the U.S. strategy is with Iran after Soleimani was killed, they were supportive and grateful for information Tuesday night, the senior defense official said.

By 7:30 p.m. Washington time Tuesday, officials at the White House had briefed Trump and were "able to pretty clearly say we don't think any Americans are going to be killed," the senior administration official said. "We knew that no Americans were hurt, either."

But U.S. officials were not certain there were no fatalities until Wednesday, after service members assessed the wreckage and roll calls were taken. Esper said the missiles hit tents and a helicopter but did not cause major damage.

The lack of casualties gave administration officials more confidence that the Iranians had intended to make a public show of force largely to save face at home, the senior administration official said. The official added that a consensus is building that Iran could have done more damage.

But not all military officials were certain of Iran's intentions. Milley told reporters that he assessed Iran had intended to cause material destruction and kill Americans but that an intelligence estimate had not been completed.

"I believe based on what I saw and what I know is that they were intended to cause structural damage, destroy vehicles and equipment and aircraft and to kill personnel," Milley said. "That's my own personal assessment."

Asked what he made of Iran's intentions, the second senior military official said, "You'd have to ask Iran."

Esper and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived at the White

House around 7 p.m. Tuesday to be with the president. About an hour later, Trump began calling lawmakers, including allies such as Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and James Inhofe, R-Okla. Trump told them that no Americans had been killed in the missile attacks and that a path to negotiations with Iran had now opened, the senior administration official said.

"The president doesn't want a war, but he doesn't want to tolerate provocation against American interests," Graham said in an interview with The Washington Post.

Graham said he hoped that Iran's attack was "a show of force for domestic purposes."

"They want a show of force," he said, "but they want this to end, because they are scared of the president. I hope that is true."

Matt Pottinger, the deputy national security adviser, told aides in a Roosevelt Room meeting Tuesday afternoon that it would take at least two months to understand whether the U.S. strategy was working.

"Our initial reaction has been, this was a domestic effort from the Iranians to save face, not to go to war, so we have proceeded in that vein," said another senior administration official with knowledge of the analysis.

Esper and Milley returned to the Pentagon about 9 p.m.

Trump had told senior military officials Tuesday evening that he did not want to start a war with Iran and wanted a path to ease tensions, which had been escalating at a frantic pace since the strike on Soleimani, the senior administration official said. When Trump's military advisers told him there was reason to believe the missile strikes were not designed to kill Americans, a way out appeared, the official said.

Even with the advance notice, U.S. military officials were still scrambling after the attack to assess the damage and determine

Iran's intentions. U.S. forces in the region remained on high alert after the strikes, but no significant troop movements have been made in Syria or elsewhere, according to military officials.

The second senior defense official acknowledged that officials on Tuesday night intended to limit information released to the public until the extent of the damage and how Trump might respond became clearer.

"We all understood that if the Iranians were to respond next, we owned the shot clock after," the official said. "So, you need to be very thoughtful, very deliberate."

The Pentagon and State Department sent staffers to the White House early Wednesday to write Trump's speech. He made some last-minute additions, including the decision to start his remarks by declaring, "As long as I am president of the United States, Iran will never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon."

"Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world," Trump said.

A third senior administration official said there was a sigh of relief when Trump agreed to read from prepared remarks and not take questions. Some aides were concerned that Trump might deviate from the precise remarks and misspeak if he made extemporaneous remarks to reporters, the official said.

Some officials acknowledged that Iran was likely to continue attacks via proxies and other means. But there was a growing sense among administration officials that killing Soleimani had sobered Iran up to Trump's willingness to act.

"We actually believe this will be de-escalation," the senior administration official said. "We're obviously going to be on alert for proxies with one-off attacks. But we think this worked."

MIDEAST

DOD: Iran attack meant to kill US troops

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's top leaders said Wednesday that they believe the ballistic missiles launched by Iran against U.S. military positions in Iraq was an unsuccessful strike meant to kill American troops in retaliation for an Iranian leader's death.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the barrage of 16 short-range ballistic missiles launched from three sites in Iran struck locations that would have likely hit U.S. and anti-Islamic State coalition troops had they not been prepared for the attack. The Pentagon leaders said their early warning systems of the impending attack worked properly, allowing troops to take cover.

"Bottom line is, in my professional assessment, ... the points

of impact were close enough to equipment and personnel that I believe, based on what I saw and what I know, they were intended to cause structural damage, destroy vehicles and equipment and aircraft, and to kill personnel," Milley told reporters at the Pentagon late Wednesday after briefing members of Congress on recent tensions in the Middle East. "That's my own personal assessment."

Esper said intelligence officials would work to determine whether the missiles were meant to inflict casualties on American troops. Some officials, who spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to talk publicly, suspected earlier Wednesday that Iran might have intentionally avoided hitting locations likely to kill Americans.

Reports earlier Wednesday indicated the United States had received verbal warning of the

imminent attack from the Iraqis, who said they were warned about an hour before the bombardment. Esper and Milley declined to confirm if such a warning was issued.

The attack did leave damage on al Asad, Esper said, but the impacts were "not major." He said missiles damaged structures, aircraft taxiways, a parking lot and a helicopter.

The Pentagon said its troops remained on high alert throughout the region, and cautioned that Iran-backed militias across the Middle East could still launch their own attacks as retaliation for the death of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's elite Quds Force and a chief adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader.

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JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, accompanied by Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley arrive to conduct briefings in Washington, on Wednesday. Esper and Milley say Iran's missile attack on U.S. bases were meant to kill American troops.

Iran: Missile strikes on US bases 'did not intend to kill'

By KAREEM FAHIM
AND SARAH DADOUH
The Washington Post

ISTANBUL — An Iranian military commander said Thursday that a barrage of missiles fired at bases used by U.S. troops in Iraq was not aimed at inflicting casualties, in the latest sign that Iran was seeking to avoid any further escalation of hostilities with the United States.

After more than a dozen missiles crashed down on the bases on Tuesday, both sides, for now, appear to be stepping back from further conflict.

"We did not intend to kill," said Brig. Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the head of the Revolutionary Guards Aerospace Force, according to Iranian state media. "We intended to hit the enemy's military machinery." He did, however, repeat the government's claim that "tens of people were killed or wounded." U.S. and Iraqi officials said the strikes caused no casualties.

Iran and the United States had been on a war footing since President Donald Trump approved the killing of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, one of Iran's most prominent military commanders, last week. Iran retaliated with the missile strike. By Wednesday, Iranian officials were suggesting that Iran did not intend any further attacks and Trump said he would not respond militarily to the Iranian strikes.

The soaring tensions had alarmed officials in Iraq, the main stage for the conflict between Tehran and Washington, and spooked governments throughout the region who feared a widening war.

Rocket attacks in Baghdad late Wednesday, however, suggested the risk of escalation had not yet passed. The strikes highlighted fears that Iraqi militias, backed

by Iran, could pursue revenge for the killing of one of their leaders in the same attack that killed Soleimani.

Two rockets struck Baghdad's Green Zone, which hosts the United States embassy and other foreign diplomatic missions, but caused no injuries, Iraqi authorities said.

Jawad al-Talibawi, a spokesman for the network of Iraqi militias known as the Hashd al-Shaabi, or Popular Mobilization Forces, told the Iraqi News Agency the network was not responsible for the attack.

"The bombing of the Green Zone might be an individual reaction, or an attempt by some parties

'We intended to hit the enemy's military machinery.'

Brig. Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh
Revolutionary Guards Aerospace Force

to distort the reputation of the Hashd factions."

The tension in Iran, however, continues to affect the main mission of U.S. forces in Iraq — fighting the Islamic State.

The coalition said Thursday that military operations against the extremist group in Iraq would remain "paused" while it focused on "protecting the Iraqi bases that host Coalition personnel."

The conflict between the U.S. and Iran had sparked concern that operations against ISIS would be sidelined at a moment when the extremists, driven from the vast swath of territory they once held, try to regroup in parts of Iraq and Syria.

In Iraq, hundreds of ISIS fighters have made their way to rural areas, stepping up their attacks in recent weeks, including ambushes and mortar strikes.

U.S. military officials first announced the suspension of anti-ISIS operations Sunday, as the Trump administration braced for possible Iranian attacks on American military bases in Iraq.

The same day, Iraq's prime minister urged parliament to take "urgent measures" to force the withdrawal of foreign forces following the killing of Soleimani.

Lawmakers responded by passing a nonbinding resolution calling on the government to end the foreign troop presence in Iraq.

The coalition statement Thursday said it was awaiting "further

clarification on the legal nature and impact of the resolution on foreign troops no longer being allowed to stay in Iraq."

Its training and support of troops fighting ISIS had been suspended, though other activities, including countering the militant group's propaganda, would continue, the statement said.

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MIDEAST

Lawmakers briefed, split along party lines on Iran

By STEVE BEYNON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Democratic lawmakers who came out of a closed-door briefing Wednesday with national security officials said they heard no evidence of an “imminent threat” that justified the killing last week of Iran’s top general in a U.S. airstrike.

“It’s not what I consider to be an imminent threat,” Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, told reporters.

“I was deeply surprised at the lack of information” presented of an imminent threat, said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., who is also on the committee.

Democratic lawmakers largely agreed the briefing was too short and lacked important information and had vague justification for the Jan. 3 drone strike in Baghdad that killed Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran’s elite Quds Force and a chief adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader.

“[The briefing] raised more questions than it answered,” Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., told reporters after the meeting.

Shortly after the national security officials briefed lawmakers, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi announced the House will vote Thursday on a resolution to rein in President Donald Trump’s war powers against Iran.

However, Republican lawmakers came out of the briefing in support of Trump’s decision to kill the Iranian general and the president’s restraint after Iran’s missile attack Tuesday against Iraqi military bases that house American troops.

“The guy is a designated terrorist, I find this whole idea that the national security team didn’t have a good reason to hit this guy ridiculous,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., one of Trump’s top allies in the Senate.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., also told reporters that Soleimani presented a “clear” and “ongoing threat” against the United States. Democrats have argued Trump was acting outside his constitutional powers when he authorized the attack on Soleimani without consulting Congress. However, Republicans dispute Trump needs to consult Congress for limited and targeted engagements.

“That is silly,” Rubio said of re-examining Trump’s power to authorize Iranian targets under the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists, which allows the president to go after anyone associated with the execution of the 9/11 attacks. “It is ridiculous.”

Rubio said there’s no need for a new war powers measure because Trump is “not planning an invasion.”

House to vote on restraining Trump’s actions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House is set to vote on a non-binding measure aimed at President Donald Trump’s ability to take military action against Iran as Democratic criticism of the U.S. killing of a top Iranian general intensifies.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Thursday that the war powers resolution, which does not require Trump’s signature, nonetheless “has real teeth” because it is “a statement of the Congress of the United States. I will not have that statement be diminished by whether the president will veto it or not.”

Pelosi announced the vote last Wednesday, declaring that the week’s drone strike that killed Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani was “provocative and disproportionate.”

The Democratic measure seems certain to pass over solid Republican opposition. A similar proposal by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., faces an uphill fight in the GOP-run Senate.

Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, the No. 2 House Republican, denounced the Democratic measure as “little more than a press release designed to attack President Trump,” noting that it has no binding effect and cannot be signed into law.

“This resolution only wastes our valuable time, plays politics with our national security and damages our ability to protect American lives and interests in the Middle East,” Scalise said. The vote comes a day after the Trump administration briefed lawmakers on its actions in Iran. Democrats and at least two Republicans called the briefings inadequate, adding that officials did not provide enough details about why the attack was justified.

Vice President Mike Pence said Thursday that Soleimani “was traveling the region making plans to bring an attack against American personnel

and American forces.” He said it was not possible to share full details of the intelligence with lawmakers.

“When it comes to intelligence we have to protect sources and methods, there’s only certain amount we can share with every member of Congress,” Pence said on ABC’s “Good Morning America.” “But those of us who have seen all the evidence know that there was a compelling case of imminent threat against American personnel.”

On Twitter on Thursday, Trump urged House Republicans to vote against the resolution. And John Bolton, his former national security adviser, insisted the 1973 War Powers Act, which forms the basis of the Democratic resolution, is unconstitutional. “It reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of how the Constitution allocated foreign affairs authority between the president and Congress” and should be repealed, Bolton tweeted Thursday.

The House vote was scheduled shortly after Iran retaliated for the Soleimani killing by launching missiles at two military bases in Iraq that house American troops. No casualties were reported.

“Congress hereby directs the President to terminate the use of United States Armed Forces to engage in hostilities in or against Iran or any part of its government or military” unless Congress declares war on that country or enacts legislation authorizing use of force to prevent an attack on the U.S. and its forces, the five-page resolution says.

“I think it’s extremely important that we as a country, if we are going to — either intentionally or accidentally — slide into war, that we have a debate about it,” said freshman Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., the measure’s sponsor. Slotkin is a former CIA analyst and Pentagon official who served in Iraq.

While Republican lawmakers applauded Trump’s efforts against Iran, many of them stopped short

of backing further military action. However, Graham said he thinks the United States should



MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, speaks to reporters following a Senate briefing on last week’s targeted killing of Iran’s senior military commander, Wednesday, on Capitol Hill. He stopped short of calling for further military escalation with Iran.

NATO chief responds to Trump’s call, says allies could do more

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday the alliance can do more in the Middle East but stopped short of detailing how allies might satisfy President Donald Trump’s demand that they become more involved in the region.

“NATO has the potential to contribute more to regional stability and the fight against international terrorism,” Stoltenberg told reporters at the alliance’s headquarters in Brussels.

A day earlier, Trump called on NATO to get more involved in the Middle East, where tensions have soared after the U.S. killed a top Iranian general last week.

Trump and Stoltenberg spoke by phone Wednesday after the U.S. president, in an address to Americans following Iranian retaliatory strikes for the killing of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, urged allies to step up.

NATO has about 500 troops in a training mission in Iraq,

but that effort has been suspended in light of security concerns in the country. The allies have said the mission could resume in the future.

It was not immediately clear what Trump wants from NATO or what more the alliance, already heavily involved in deterring Russian aggression in Europe, could do. It was too early to go into specifics, Stoltenberg said.

Trump has made increasing defense spending by NATO allies a top foreign policy priority but he also has called on the organization to focus more on terrorism threats and play a role in countering Islamic State.

In 2017 NATO formally joined the U.S.-led coalition to counter ISIS. Stoltenberg said the priority for NATO in general is training local forces to fight against terrorism.

“What President Trump called for yesterday was more NATO involvement and we are looking into what more we can do,” he said. “I will not speculate about the outcome.”

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increase its troop presence in the Middle East, even after the 82nd Airborne Division’s recent deployment to the region.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, stopped short of calling for further military escalation and was skittish with the idea of yet another war in the Middle East. He said Trump should seek approval war powers from Congress if a conflict erupts.

“I am very skeptical of overseas intervention. It is not the mission of our military to engage

in nation building or turn Iran or any other Middle East nation into a democratic utopia,” Cruz said. “I believe in the robust role of Congress, if we enter a situation where the administration were calling for a prolonged military engagement and active war fighting against Iran, I believe the administration should come to Congress and get authorization for that.”

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NATION

Pelosi will send impeachment articles 'soon'

By LISA MASCARO,
ALAN FRAM
AND ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Thursday she will transmit the articles of impeachment "soon."

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday she will "soon" transmit the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump, but warned that Senate Republicans are rushing to acquittal without a fair trial.

Pelosi brushed back GOP claims that Democrats are afraid to send the impeachment case to the Senate. And she said she has no concerns about the anxiety some House and Senate Democrats are showing over the standoff with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell over the terms of the delayed trial. It's now more than three weeks since the House impeached Trump on charges of abuse and obstruction.

"I'm not holding them indefinitely," Pelosi told reporters at the Capitol. "I'll send them over when I'm ready. That will probably be soon."

Pelosi said she's waiting for what she wanted from the start — "to see the arena" and "terms

of the engagement" that McConnell will use — before sending her House managers to present the articles of impeachment in the Senate.

"We are proud of our defense of the Constitution of the United

States," Pelosi said. "We are concerned the senators will not be able to live up to the oath they take."

The standoff over Trump's impeachment trial deepened this week as McConnell said there

will be "no haggling" with Democrats as Pelosi demands for more details and witnesses.

McConnell said on Thursday if Pelosi and House Democrats are "too embarrassed" to transmit the articles of impeachment, the Senate will simply move on next week to other business.

"They do not get to trap our entire country into an unending groundhog day of impeachment without resolution," McConnell said as he opened the Senate.

McConnell's Senate majority has the leverage Republicans need to launch Trump's trial toward swift acquittal of the charges, but Pelosi's reluctance to transmit the articles of impeachment leaves the proceedings at a standstill.

What started as a seemingly minor delay over process and procedures is now a high-stakes showdown between two skilled leaders facing off over the rare impeachment trial, only the third in the nation's history.

As Pelosi headed toward a morning meeting Thursday, Pelosi told reporters, "I know exactly when" she plans to send the impeachment articles over, but, "I

won't be telling you right now."

Trump tweeted Thursday that "Pelosi doesn't want to hand over The Articles of Impeachment, which were fraudulently produced by corrupt politicians like Shifty Schiff in the first place, because after all of these years of investigations and persecution, they show no crimes and are a joke and a scam!" Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., led the House impeachment inquiry.

Senators from both sides are eager to serve as jurors for Trump's day in court. The trial will be conducted in the Senate, where Republicans have a thin majority.

On the Senate floor Wednesday, Democratic leader Chuck Schumer promised he would force votes on witnesses, requiring senators to choose whether they want to hear from Trump former national security adviser John Bolton and others.

Some Senate Democrats have said the time has come for Pelosi to send the articles so the trial can begin. But aides downplayed any rift between the leaders, saying senators are simply eager to have their say.

Judge weighs bid to stop Trump's cap on refugees

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

GREENBELT, Md. — A federal judge on Wednesday pressed a government lawyer to explain why President Donald Trump signed an executive order allowing state and local governments to reject refugees, questioning whether the change was politically motivated.

U.S. District Judge Peter Messitte in Maryland didn't immediately rule on a request by three national refugee resettlement agencies for a preliminary injunction stopping the Trump administration from enforcing the order.

During a hearing on the request, the judge said the president's order essentially changed a federal law governing the resettlement of refugees.

"On what authority is the president acting?" Messitte asked Justice Department attorney Bradley Humphreys.

Humphreys said the 1980 Refugee Act gives the president "ample authority" to make such a change.

"Why change it now?" Messitte asked. "Is it purely a political thing?"

Humphreys said the executive order is designed to enhance the involvement of state and local officials in the process of resettling refugees. But he insisted it doesn't give them a "veto" over resettlement decisions.

The Trump administration announced in November that resettlement agencies must get written consent from state and local officials in any jurisdiction where they want to help resettle refugees beyond June 2020.

"It's not at all clear how it could be anything other than a veto, practically speaking," said Linda Everts, an attorney for one of the resettlement agencies that sued in November. "When you see how it operates in practice, or how we assume it will operate in practice,



MICHAEL KUNZELMAN/AP

Linda Everts, an attorney for the International Refugee Assistant Project, speaks to the media outside the federal courthouse in Greenbelt, Md., on Wednesday.

it can only mean a veto." The agencies argue the order illegally conflicts with the Refugee Act.

"These are difficult decisions," plaintiffs' attorney Melissa Keane said. "Placing a family in the right location is critical, and Congress understood that."

The judge said he should issue a decision "pretty quickly." He asked the attorneys to submit proposals for the scope of a preliminary injunction by Friday.

Facebook again declines to limit political ad targeting

By BARBARA ORTUTAY
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Facebook has decided not to limit how political ads can be targeted to specific groups of people, as its main digital-ad rival Google did in November to fight misinformation. Neither will it ban political ads outright, as Twitter did last October. And it still won't fact check them, as it's faced pressure to do.

Instead, it is announcing much more limited "transparency features" that aim to give users slightly more control over how many political ads they see and to make its online library of political ads easier to use.

These steps appear unlikely to assuage critics — including some of the company's rank and file employees — who say Facebook has too much power and not enough limits when it comes to its effects on elections and democracy itself.

Since last fall, Facebook has in-

sisted that it won't fact-check political ads, a move that critics say gives politicians license to lie in ads that can't be easily monitored by outsiders. CEO Mark Zuckerberg has repeatedly argued that "political speech is important" and that Facebook doesn't want to interfere with it.

Google, the digital ads leader, is limiting political-ad targeting to broad categories such as sex, age and postal code.

Facebook said in a blog post Thursday that it considered limiting the targeting of political ads. But the social network said it learned about their importance for "reaching key audiences" after conducting outreach with political campaigns from both U.S. parties, political groups and nonprofits.

The company said it was guided by the principle that "people should be able to hear from those who wish to lead them, warts and all, and that what they say should be scrutinized and debated in public."

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NATION

Justice Department: Too late to pass Equal Rights Amendment

By STEVE LEBLANC
Associated Press

BOSTON — The Justice Department has thrown a roadblock into efforts to revive the Equal Rights Amendment, finding that an expired pair of deadlines imposed by Congress on ratification of the measure means it's too late for additional states to ratify it now.

The memo by Assistant Attorney General Steven Engel comes as Virginia is poised to become the decisive 38th state to approve the ERA, nearly four decades after Congress sent it to states in 1972, attaching a 1979 ratification deadline to it.

That deadline was later extended to 1982. During that time just 35 states ratified it — three short of the 38 needed.

"Because three-fourths of the state legislatures did not ratify before the deadline that Congress imposed, the Equal Rights Amendment has failed of adoption and is no longer pending before the States," Engel wrote.

"Accordingly, even if one or more state legislatures were to ratify the proposed amendment, it would not become part of the Constitution," he added.

Engel's finding is unlikely to be the last word on the amendment. Democratic Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring said Wednesday he's going to make sure the will of Virginia is carried out and the ERA is added to the Constitution.

"Women in America deserve to have equality guaranteed in the Constitution," Herring said in a statement. "The fact that Republican attorneys general are suing to block the ERA, and that they now have the support of the Trump Administration, is absolutely repugnant."

On Tuesday, supporters of the ERA filed a federal lawsuit in Massachusetts aimed at clearing



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Kamala Lopez, right, president of Equal Means Equal, faces reporters as Natalie White, vice president of the organization, looks on during a news conference Tuesday in Boston. Supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment filed a federal lawsuit in Massachusetts.

a legal path for adoption of the amendment.

The lawsuit argues that because the deadline was set forth in legislation authorizing states to ratify the amendment — and not in the three-state amendment itself — it's not constitutionally binding and Virginia's vote would put the amendment over the top.

"We are not surprised that the Trump administration acted swiftly to declare its opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment," said Wendy Murphy, a lawyer for Equal Means Equal, one of the groups that filed the lawsuit in Massachusetts. "This development makes our lawsuit even more urgent."

Engel also said Congress may

not revive a proposed amendment after a ratification deadline has expired. He said the only option is for Congress to begin the process again.

Efforts by ERA opponents are underway to block its ultimate adoption as the Constitution's 28th Amendment, including a lawsuit filed in federal court in mid-December by Alabama, Louisiana and South Dakota.

Conservative activists have depicted the ERA as a threat to their stances on abortion and transgender rights.

The language of the ERA states that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

US to keep norms for autonomous vehicles voluntary

Associated Press

The Trump administration on Wednesday unveiled its most recent round of guidelines for autonomous vehicle makers that rely on voluntary standards despite calls for specific regulations.

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced the proposed guidelines in a speech at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas, saying in prepared remarks that "AV 4.0" will ensure U.S. leadership in developing new technologies.

But the guidelines fall short of expectations of auto safety advocates and the National Transportation Safety Board. In November, the NTSB, which investigates crashes and makes safety recommendations, condemned a lack of state and federal regulation for testing autonomous vehicles.

The NTSB said Chao's department failed to lead in regulating the new technology and put autonomous vehicle advancement ahead of saving lives.

In her remarks, Chao said that AV 4.0, a joint effort between her department and the White House, unifies autonomous vehicle work across 38 federal departments and agencies. It also establishes a list of government principles and says that safety is her department's No. 1 priority.

"It recognizes the value of private sector leadership in AV research, development and integration," she said.

The principles include protecting users and communities, promoting efficient markets by protecting intellectual property

and modernizing regulations, and facilitating coordinated standards and policies.

Other areas of focus include security and cybersecurity, ensuring privacy and data security and enhancing mobility and accessibility.

But the guidelines offer few specifics on how the government will accomplish the goals or put the principles into force.

While the guidelines say that the U.S. government "will promote voluntary consensus standards," there are few details on what the standards should say. The government will enforce existing laws to ensure companies don't make deceptive claims about the capabilities or limitations of autonomous vehicle technology, according to the document.

Cathy Chase, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit, called AV 4.0 a "regurgitation" of voluntary standards that have not held the industry accountable.

"This is a science experiment playing out in real time on our roadways without any safeguards or assurances," she said Wednesday.

AV 4.0 comes less than two months after the NTSB criticized another federal agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, for failing to regulate autonomous vehicle testing on public roads. The criticism came just before the board found that a distracted human safety driver was the main cause of a fatal 2018 Arizona crash involving an Uber autonomous test vehicle that ran down a pedestrian.

Minneapolis VA again cited for failures in patient's suicide

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in Minneapolis could have prevented the suicide of a patient in 2018 who repeatedly told staff, "I want to die," according to a watchdog report released Wednesday.

The VA Office of Inspector General faulted a dietician, chaplain and registered nurse who heard the veteran express suicidal thoughts. They did not involve a doctor — an action they were trained to take in those situations, the IG found. "The failure to involve treatment team members ... resulted in missed opportunities for a clinical provider to further evaluate the patient's condition and provide treatment that may have prevented the patient's suicidal behavior," the report states.

At the IG's direction, Patrick Kelly, the hospital director, reviewed the case and determined not to take any disciplinary measures against the employees. The dietician and chaplain no longer work at the hospital, the report notes.

The report was the second in recent years that cited the Minneapolis VA for failures in a patient's suicide. In September 2018, the Office of Inspector General determined that the hospital's mental health unit didn't follow VA policies in February of that year, when staff discharged Iraq War veteran Justin Miller. Miller shot himself in the facility's parking lot after leaving the mental health unit.

The IG did not identify the veteran in this latest report. The veteran was in his or her 60s and

died in the spring of 2018, the report says.

The veteran suffered from a drug addiction for more than 30 years before achieving 10 years sober. However, medical issues in 2017 led to the veteran's use of pain medications. Experiencing withdrawal symptoms from opioids and benzodiazepines, the veteran went to the emergency room at the Minneapolis VA in spring 2018.

The veteran was admitted to a medical unit in the hospital after telling ER staff about thoughts of suicide and homicide and a loaded gun at home. Over the next few days, the veteran told the hospital dietician, chaplain and a medical resident, "I came here to die," "I want to die" and, "I wish that someone could give me a dose of morphine so I could die."

The same day the veteran died by suicide, a registered nurse overheard a phone conversation, during which the veteran gave away property and expressed feelings of impending death.

About two hours after that phone call, the veteran was not in the hospital room. Nurses and VA police searched for the veteran, and then received a call that their patient had attempted suicide and was pronounced dead at an off-site ER. Details about the suicide, such as the method and location, where not included in the IG's report.

The inspector general found that the VA emergency room did not notify the hospital's suicide prevention coordinator about a suicidal patient, as VA policy requires. In addition to mistakes by the dietician, chaplain and regis-

tered nurse, the medical resident attending to the veteran didn't properly review or act upon notes about the patient's suicidal thoughts.

Since the veteran's death, the hospital has hired a suicide program manager and has offered more training to the chaplain service and nutrition staff, in addition to other measures, Kelly said in a written response to the inspector general.

"We are saddened by the loss of a fellow veteran and have extended our deepest condolences to the veteran's family," Kelly wrote. "Suicide prevention is the VA's number one clinical priority, and this tragic event has greatly impacted the family and the staff at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System."

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NATION

Twisted tale involves cult rumors, death

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Two dead spouses, two missing children and rumors of a cult. Confusion is growing around a series of mysterious deaths and the disappearances of a 7-year-old boy and 17-year-old girl that tie back to a couple who have since vanished themselves.

Joshua "JJ" Vallow and Tylee Ryan have not been seen since September.

Lori Vallow and her husband, Chad Daybell, never reported them missing and disappeared soon after being questioned about the children.

What has followed is a twisted tale spanning two states that revealed the deaths of both their previous spouses, the couple's doomsday beliefs and children who slowly slipped away from relatives who are desperate to find them.

"All I want before I go is just to see those children, and especially — and I'm being greedy — especially my boy JJ. My little man," grandfather Larry Woodcock said Tuesday at a press conference in Idaho announcing a \$20,000 reward for information leading to the kids.

Wife Kay Woodcock's brother, Charles Vallow, adopted JJ when he was a baby. Charles and his wife, Lori Vallow, also raised Lori's daughter from a previous relationship at their home in suburban Phoenix.

Lori Vallow was a hairdresser, always in a hair net, she was tried and styled, Larry Woodcock said. The Woodcocks, who live in Lake Charles, La., visited their grandson often and shared frequent phone calls and video chats when they couldn't be there in person.

"I do know that Lori always had the best, the absolute best interest in heart for JJ. She and Charles were the absolute best

parents," he said.

But things began to change a few years ago, Kay Woodcock said. Her brother confided that he feared Lori was cheating on him with Chad Daybell, an author of several religious-themed fiction books about prophecies and the end of the world.

Charles Vallow eventually filed divorce documents in an Arizona court last February claiming that Lori believed she was a "translated being" and "a god assigned to carry out the work of the 144,000 at Christ's second coming in July 2020." The Arizona Republic newspaper reported.

He also accused Lori of threatening to kill him, prompting him to seek a protection order.

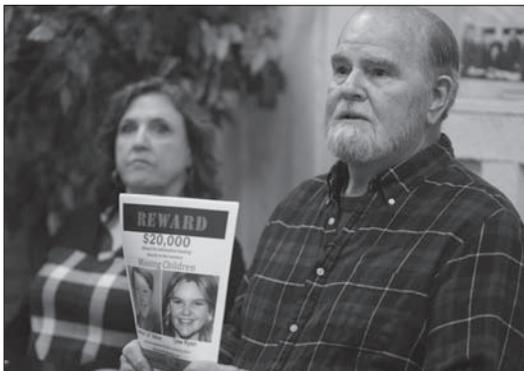
"He was highly concerned about it: Her emotional state, her mental state, and the fact that she had made threats about him," Kay Woodcock said Tuesday. "It all culminated into that cult that she's in."

Lori Vallow and Daybell did Preparing A People podcasts, run by Color My Media, which says it's not a cult or even a group to join and which distanced itself from the couple's beliefs. It advertises its lectures, podcasts and videos as reading people from the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Charles and Lori Vallow's divorce was never completed — Charles was killed in July by Lori's brother, Alex Cox. Cox told authorities that the shooting was in self-defense after Charles Vallow hit him with a baseball bat, but the case is unsolved. Whatever the findings, Cox won't stand trial — he died of unknown causes in December. Toxicology results could take weeks.

Kay Woodcock said Lori acted strangely when she told the family about Charles' death, not mentioning the cause.

"We knew it was a murder, we knew



JOHN ROARK, THE IDAHO POST-REGISTER/AP

Kay and Larry Woodcock are offering \$20,000 for information leading to their grandchildren, Joshua Vallow and Tylee Ryan, who were last seen in September.

Charles' death wasn't a justifiable homicide," Kay Woodcock said.

After the death, Kay and Larry Woodcock said they had a harder time reaching JJ. The once-frequent calls dwindled and grew short. The last one, in August, lasted just 36 seconds and seemed scripted, they said.

That month, Lori moved to Rexburg, Idaho, with the kids. It brought her closer to Chad Daybell's hometown of Salem, Idaho, where he lived with his wife, Tammy Daybell.

The Daybells ran a publishing company that produced his fiction books about end times and theology around the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as other authors' works.

Church spokesman Eric Hawkins declined to comment, saying the case doesn't involve the faith.

Two months after Lori Vallow moved to Idaho, Tammy Daybell died at her home. She was 49, and her obituary said she died

of natural causes on Oct. 19. Police questioned that and had her body exhumed for an autopsy. The results have not been released.

Chad Daybell married Lori Vallow two weeks after Tammy's death.

In the meantime, relatives were growing more concerned about the children. Larry and Kay Woodcock said they have left voice messages, emails and texts for JJ since August but haven't heard back.

Investigators later determined JJ and Tylee had not been seen since September, but Lori Vallow and Chad Daybell never reported them missing.

Two days before Thanksgiving, officers visited Lori and Chad to check on the children after getting calls from worried family members.

Investigators said the couple claimed JJ and Tylee were visiting relatives in Arizona. After discovering the lie, investigators returned to the home the next day — only to find Lori and Chad had left town.

Mothers demand answers for slayings at Miss. prisons

Associated Press

HATTIESBURG, Miss. — Manslaughter isn't supposed to be a death sentence. Nor is burglary. Nor is armed robbery, selling cocaine or stealing a vehicle.

But that is what the mothers of three inmates say was ultimately given to their sons, all of whom were killed in prison violence last week. As they plan their children's funerals, they are demanding answers. They want to know what happened, and why.

All three prisoners were slain by fellow inmates at Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman last week. Two other inmates were killed in prisons elsewhere in the state. The outbreak of violence has brought national attention to problems that have long plagued Mississippi's over-stretched prison system.

The mothers were told by their sons' fellow inmates that their deaths were gruesome.

"He was beat. He was stabbed. His chest, stomach. ... He has, well, he had a lot of bruises and things on him," says Jeffrie Hol-

lman of Hattiesburg, mother of Roosevelt Holliman, 32, who died Jan. 2.

Rotonia Gates, mother of Walter "Keon" Gates, 25, says she's been told not to look at the body of her son after he was repeatedly stabbed on Dec. 31. But she says inmates with contraband cell-phones sent her graphic pictures and descriptions.

Denorris Howell's body was so covered in blood that Sunflower County Coroner Heather Burton initially announced he had been stabbed on Friday, but later revised that to say he'd suffered a different kind of neck wound.

Relatives of all three inmates say they have few answers from prison officials, and they question whether guards acted properly.

"They're not releasing any information," Rotonia Gates says. "It seems like they're trying to hide something."

The Mississippi Department of Corrections has provided few answers to repeated questions from The Associated Press. Advocacy groups with contacts at the Department of Justice to investigate.



Fotis Dulos



Troconis



Mawhinney

Man accused of killing his missing, estranged wife

Associated Press

A Connecticut man was ordered detained Wednesday on \$6 million bail on charges that he killed his estranged wife — a crime investigators say stood to benefit him financially as the couple went through bitter divorce and child custody proceedings.

Fotis Dulos, 52, of Farmington, Conn., was arraigned in Stamford Superior Court, along with two other people authorities say helped him cover up the killing of Jennifer Dulos. Fotis Dulos may be able to post bail Thursday, his attorney said. If he is released, he will be placed under house arrest and barred from contact with his children.

Jennifer Dulos, 50, a mother of five from New Canaan, has not been seen since she dropped her children off at school on May 24.

Police have not commented on the murder charges, but the arrest warrants hint at a financial motive. Fotis Dulos had debt totaling \$7 million and would have expected some access to his children's trust funds if Jennifer Dulos disappeared and he got custody of the children, the warrants said. Jennifer Dulos' mother has custody of the children.

Fotis Dulos has denied any role in her disappearance. His lawyer, Norman Pattis, noted at the arraignment that Jennifer Dulos' body has not been found.

"What we have is a suspicious disappearance and an entirely circumstantial case," Pattis told reporters after the court hearings.

Also arraigned Wednesday were Fotis Dulos' former girlfriend, Michelle Troconis, and his friend, attorney Kent Mawhinney, who are each charged with conspiracy to commit murder. Police accuse them of helping Fotis Dulos cover up the killing, including by drawing up a bogus alibi for him.

Judge John Blawie set Troconis' bail at \$1.5 million and Mawhinney's bail at \$2 million. Both were arrested Tuesday after police took Fotis Dulos into custody at his home.

Lawyers for Troconis and Mawhinney have not publicly addressed the allegations.

Fotis Dulos had been identified months ago as the prime suspect in his wife's disappearance. He and Troconis were charged with evidence tampering and hindering prosecution in June and pleaded not guilty.

NATION

US-Iran tensions could alter Dem talking points

By WILL WEISSERT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democratic presidential candidates have spent the past year in a largely polite debate over domestic issues such as whether private health insurance should be eliminated in favor of a government-run program. That could change following escalating tensions this week between the U.S. and Iran.

The potential of open conflict involving the two countries was a reminder for many Democrats that for all the energy some progressive policy proposals have generated, the biggest decision a president makes often centers on whether and how to wage war. That could prompt some voters to reconsider which candidate they'll back with just weeks to go before the Iowa caucuses formally begin in the primary season.

"In the short run, there's no question" that the developments could reshape the race, billionaire environmentalist and presidential candidate Tom Steyer said in a phone interview. "If there are simmering tensions but no war, then I think Americans will go back to spending their time thinking about the economy and basic domestic issues."

Last week, President Donald Trump ordered the killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force. Iran retaliated by firing more than a dozen missiles from its territory at U.S. installations in Iraq. By Wednesday, both countries seemed to look for ways to de-escalate the situation. Speaking from the White House, Trump said he would impose new sanctions on Iran but didn't announce

additional military actions.

Now Democratic campaigns are assessing the political implications of a volatile week.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, once the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a leading Obama administration voice on international affairs, has sought to seize the issue to portray himself as the best candidate to take on Trump. Biden delivered extended remarks on foreign policy on Tuesday and has blasted Trump's handling of it during campaign events.

"People are looking for the person who can help navigate us out of the mess that President Trump has created," said Tony Blinken, Biden's top foreign policy adviser.

And Trump bashed the Obama administration on Wednesday for failing to contain the Iranian threat, an argument he'd surely revive if Biden becomes the Democratic nominee.

But Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders has also sought to appeal to Democratic voters by reminding them that he opposed the Iraq War in 2003 when few others in Congress, including Biden, dared to do so.

Pete Buttigieg has recently faced pointed questions about his foreign policy as the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., population 103,000. But the 37-year-old former intelligence officer in Afghanistan during 2014 gives him a unique perspective on other candidate in the field positions.

Buttigieg said in an Associated Press interview last week his experience as an officer and as a mayor put him closer to the day-to-day impact of national se-



BERBETO MATTHEWS/AP

Presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., addresses supporters, on Tuesday, during a campaign stop at Brooklyn's King Theatre in New York.

curity decisions affecting service members.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, meanwhile, spent months rising in the polls by promising to dramatically remake the political and economic system and deliver universal health and child care and wipe out student debt. Her support appeared to be leveling off in recent weeks, though, and a greater focus on national security — an issue that hasn't been at the forefront of her campaign — could make it tougher to recover.

All four have remained bunched near the top of many polls in Iowa and nationally, with no clear front-runner yet emerging. That's why the next several weeks will be critical, especially if national security issues remain in the headlines.

History shows foreign policy developments have altered past Democratic primaries in the final stretch before voting begins

— with diverging results.

During the 2004 primary, former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean was thought to be surging and Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry floundering until U.S. forces' capture of Saddam Hussein in December 2003 helped redraw the contours of the race barely a month before the Iowa caucuses. Kerry subsequently blistered Dean and other opponents with less foreign policy experience.

He ultimately lost the general election to Republican George W. Bush. Still, by 2008, war fatigue helped Democrat Barack Obama score an upset win in Iowa as he offered a dovish alternative to his primary rival Hillary Clinton, who backed the invasion of Iraq as a New York senator.

The question heading into 2020's Iowa caucuses is whether voters are in a 2004 or a 2008 mood.

California won't fill Hunter seat until 2021

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California Gov. Gavin Newsom will not call a special election to fill the unfinished term of U.S. Rep. Duncan D. Hunter, who resigned after pleading guilty to a corruption charge, a spokeswoman for the governor said Wednesday.

His decision means the solidly Republican, San Diego-area district will not have a vote in the House of Representatives until January 2021, when Hunter's successor takes office. Three Republicans and one Democrat face off in a March 3 primary, with the top two finishers advancing to a November runoff, regardless of party affiliation.

The Democratic governor won't call a special election "based on the timing of the resignation," said Vicky Waters, a spokeswoman.

Hunter, 43, tendered his resignation Tuesday, more than a month after he pleaded guilty to siphoning campaign funds for personal expenses. It takes effect Monday.

Newsom was under no obligation to call a special election after Dec. 6, the filing deadline for California's March primary.

Hunter's seat is being sought by three Republicans with strong local name recognition. They are former U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, one of the wealthiest lawmakers to serve when he represented a neighboring district. Carl DeMaio, a talk-radio host and former San Diego city councilman, and state Sen. Brian Jones, who highlights that he's the only major Republican candidate who lives in the district.

Democrat Ammar Campa-Najjar, a 30-year-old former Obama administration official who nearly defeated Hunter in 2018, is widely expected to emerge from the March primary for a November showdown.

Online fundraising rises as 6M give \$1B to Dems in 2019

By MICHELLE YE HEE LEE
The Washington Post

Democratic small-dollar donors gave \$1 billion through the online fundraising platform ActBlue in 2019, officials said Thursday, highlighting the explosion of online giving on the left heading into the presidential election year.

Of the 6 million donors who gave to Democratic candidates and organizations in 2019, half were first-time donors, officials said, pointing to the growing base of contributors who are giving online. Forty percent of the new donors made multiple times, according to ActBlue, in a sign of

the new donors' sustained political interest and engagement.

Donors contributing in low increments online gave \$343 million in the final three months of 2019, officials said.

The surge in online low-dollar donations points to the enthusiasm among Democratic voters and the increasing sophistication of campaigns and organizations in reaching donors on digital platforms and making it convenient for them to give money.

More than half of the donations on ActBlue in 2019 were made on mobile, marking the first year the majority of donations came through mobile devices, they said.

The Republican Party also stepped up its small-dollar online fundraising efforts in 2019 with the launch of WinRed, a donation platform modeled after ActBlue.

WinRed announced this week that it had raised \$101 million since it launched in the summer of 2019, with almost \$70 million in the final three months of the year.

WinRed officials credited House Democrats' impeachment of President Trump for a surge of online donations on the platform in the final months of the year, thanks to donors showing their support for the president and the Republican Party amid the impeachment inquiry and vote.

All Republican state parties and the majority of GOP Senate and House campaign committees have now adopted WinRed, officials said.

Small-dollar donors have played an important role during the Democratic presidential primaries in 2019, reshaping how candidates raise money in order to remain viable.

Erin Hill, ActBlue's executive director, said in a statement that the record-breaking Democratic online donations are a positive sign for the party and for its eventual presidential nominee, who will face Trump's formidable small-dollar online fundraising machine.

"Our nominee will need at least half of their funds from grassroots donors if they want to beat Donald Trump. Based on what we saw last year, the eventual Democratic nominee will have an army of grassroots donors behind them," Hill said.

The number of donors and individual contributions were higher in 2019 than in any other previous year since ActBlue's founding in 2004, officials said.

In 2019, more than 13,000 candidates and causes received donations through ActBlue, totaling 35 million contributions, officials said. The average contribution in 2019 was \$30.50, they said.

NATION

Calif. governor seeks \$1B for homeless crisis

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A billion-dollar investment last year has yet to curtail California's growing homeless crisis, and with the state ahead in revenue, Gov. Gavin Newsom wants to spend a billion more on programs aimed at getting people off the streets.

He signed an executive order Wednesday creating what he intends to be a \$750 million fund that providers could tap to pay rents, fund affordable housing or aid boarding and care homes. Newsom also wants to use vacant state property to house homeless people and is seeking changes to the state's Medicaid program to increase spending on preventive health care.

In addition, the Democratic governor said the final portion

of \$650 million in emergency homeless aid to cities and counties approved in June was being released Wednesday after a final federal homelessness count.

The report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found California's homeless population increased 16% last year, to about 151,000 people. That's more than a quarter of the national total.

President Donald Trump continued his criticism of California's Democratic leaders this week, and especially those in Los Angeles and San Francisco, for failing to adequately address homelessness. In a tweet, he called it a local issue but said that if city and state leaders "acknowledge responsibility and politely" ask for help, then his administration

"will very seriously consider getting involved."

Newsom made no mention of Trump in his announcement but acted with an eye toward an inevitable economic downturn that wouldn't allow the state to spend billions on the problem.

Although California is projected to have a \$7 billion surplus, the state's bipartisan legislative analyst said only \$1 billion should be spent on programs that will last beyond the year.

Because Newsom's proposal on homelessness would eat up the bulk of that \$1 billion, the governor proposed to "seed" the fund with one-time state revenue and called on philanthropic and private sector groups "to step up as well."

His order comes two days before

he'll unveil his annual budget plan, which he said includes \$695 million of state and federal matching funds to increase spending on preventive health care. The money would go to things that can prevent homelessness, like helping people find housing. A portion could even go to rent assistance if it helps people not use health care services as often.

A group representing the directors of California's county behavioral health programs praised Newsom's proposed budget increases.

David Wolfe, legislative director of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, was skeptical.

He noted that taxpayers in 2018 also approved \$4 billion in bonds for existing affordable housing programs for low-income resi-

dents, veterans and farmworkers. They also allowed the state to use up to \$140 million each year in existing county mental-health funds to pay for housing for homeless people with mental illness.

Lawmakers also allocated \$1 billion in the budget last year for homeless and mental health services.

"You can't just throw money at homelessness and a lack of affordable housing and expect that you're going to achieve the result that you're hoping to achieve," Wolfe said.

He and Republican Assemblyman Tyler Diep, vice chairman of the chamber's housing committee, said the state also needs to streamline its strict environmental protections to speed up housing construction.

Student engineers make walking easier for 2-legged dog

By KELLY MEYERHOFFER
Wisconsin State Journal

MADISON, Wis. — The client: A furry, 4-year-old Australian shepherd mix with a hankering for hot dogs and little ability to communicate beyond a bark.

The assignment for a group of UW-Madison students: Find a way for this two-legged dog to walk more easily.

An introductory engineering design course that has been around since the 1990s connects people (or pets) who have real-life problems with College of Engineering students assigned to solve them, according to lecturer Katie Kalscheur.

That's how Madison residents Pete and Pat Sammataro found themselves at UW-Madison's campus in early September introducing a group of first-year engineering students to their dog, Louie.

Louie — short for Lt. Dan, a character in the 1994 film "Forest Gump" — was born without his front legs and destined to be euthanized until the niece of a friend of the Sammataros saved him. When the couple adopted Louie in 2016, they saw how he copes with his limited mobility, by either hopping on his back legs or scooting along, chest low to the ground.

Pat longed for Louie to venture beyond the white picket fence surrounding their yard and take a walk in their Near West Side neighborhood.

She cried whenever she saw Louie heave himself forward, dragging the nubs that make up his front legs across the concrete.

The Sammataros tried a commercially-produced cart for Louie, but the device was unstable with him on it, sending him somersaulting over the two wheels.

These types of problems are the ones that Kalscheur wants to hear about, the Wisconsin State Journal reported.

"This class isn't possible without the community," Kalscheur



Pete and Pat Sammataro look on as their 4-year-old Australian shepherd mix, Louie, who was born without his two front legs, hops around the front yard at their home in Madison, Wis., last month.

PHOTOS BY AMBER ARNOLD, WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL/AP

said. "It makes such a difference when there's a real client with a need that can't be met by products currently on the market. Students are invested in coming up with a real solution."

Freshmen aren't on the engineering campus as often as they might expect because they're slogging through calculus, chemistry and other general education requirements, she said. The design practicum course gets students engaged in their field of study early, giving them a taste of what's to come. Research also shows this type of immersive learning experience increases retention among women and underrepresented minority groups in a discipline that is dominated by white men.

"I don't think all engineering schools have this," Kalscheur said of the course. "It gives students a



The Sammataros help Louie with his cart, designed by UW-Madison engineering students, in the front yard of their home.

feel what working on a team and having a real client is like."

Another student group in Kalscheur's section this fall teamed up with the Portage School District where visually

impaired students wanted to run track without someone else guiding them.

They devised a sensor that vibrates and makes sounds based on where a runner is located along the track.

The group of seven students assigned to Louie researched other products on the marketplace and began brainstorming ideas. They consulted with others at Makerspace, a largely student-staffed place on campus for engineers to help each other on projects and take advantage of university resources, including a 3-D printer.

Students cycled through several prototypes for Louie. One version had a 3-D cast, which the dog didn't like.

The group even created a back-up design, a scooter with guardrails, in the last week of the semester after Louie made "a bit of a scene" at Makerspace when he tried on one of the students' prototypes said UW-Madison freshman Jessica Nienhaus, one of the students in the group.

Nienhaus, of Racine, said the project was challenging because their client couldn't explain why a particular design didn't work, but she found it to be rewarding in a way that her high school projects catering to fictional clients were not.

The students' final design modified the Sammataros' existing cart, adjusting its height to fit Louie's and adding small wheels in the front and back for stability.

The Sammataros received Louie's cart earlier this month and they roll it out a couple of times each week to train him on his new set of wheels. They know that Louie learning to trust the cart to do what he has done on his own for four years won't happen overnight.

So the Sammataros keep trying, keep hoping for the day when they can take Louie for a walk and keep coaxing him along with hot dogs.

NATION

Program to curb repeat hospital stays fails test

By MARILYN MARCHIONE
Associated Press

Researchers thought they had a way to keep hard-to-treat patients from constantly returning to the hospital and racking up big medical bills. Health workers visited homes, went along to doctor appointments, made sure medicines were available and tackled social problems including homelessness, addiction and mental health issues.

Readmissions seemed to drop. The program looked so promising that the federal government and the MacArthur Foundation gave big bucks to expand it beyond Camden, N.J., where it started.

But a more robust study released Wednesday revealed it was a stunning failure on its main goal: Readmission rates did decline, but by the same amount as for a comparison group of similar patients not in the costly program.

"There's real concern that the response to this would be to just throw up our arms" and say nothing can be done to help these so-called frequent fliers of the medical system, said study leader Amy Finkelstein.

Instead, researchers need to seek better solutions and test them as rigorously as new drugs, said Finkelstein, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Federal grants and research groups at MIT paid for the study, which was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Just 5% of the U.S. population accounts for half of health care spending, and hospitalization is a big part.

"A decade ago, Dr. Jeff Brenner started working with hospitals in Camden, a city with high poverty and crime rates, to identify people

who go to hospitals frequently and target them with special services. He won a MacArthur genius grant for the work, and federal grants expanded the program to Aurora, Colo.; Kansas City, Mo.; Allentown, Penn.; and San Diego. The government also paid for a study to see if it truly worked.

The study enrolled 800 hospitalized Camden patients with at least two other admissions in the previous six months and at least two of these conditions: homelessness, drug use, a mental health problem, trouble accessing services, lack of social support or use of five or more medicines.

Half were given usual care when they left the hospital. The rest were enrolled in Brenner's program with nurses, social workers and others coordinating their care for three months. Patients received seven to eight home visits and nine phone calls on average. The effort cost about \$5,000 per patient.

Six months later, the readmission rate was 62% in both groups, and there was no difference in total health care spending.

Researchers don't know what usual care was for the comparison group. If that suddenly improved, it could explain why the program failed to prove better.

However, two key goals of the program — a home visit and a trip to a health provider within a week of leaving the hospital — were met for only 28% of participants. Homelessness and lack of a telephone were big reasons, and the program more recently has worked harder to get people into stable housing.

"If you're in a shelter or on the streets, it's just not easy to help and that sometimes leads to more hospitalizations," said the Camden project's leader, Kathleen Noonan.



ANDREW SELSKY/AP

A sign expressing opposition to a plan by Facebook to build a landing spot for a submarine cable connecting America with Asia stands on property in Tierra del Mar, Ore., on Wednesday.

Facebook riles tiny Oregon town with its plan for undersea cable

Associated Press

TIERRA DEL MAR, Ore. — A battle playing out in a tiny Oregon town with no stoplights or cell-phone service is pitting residents against one of the world's biggest tech companies.

Locals in coastal Tierra del Mar are trying to stop Facebook from using property in their quiet community to build a landing spot for an ultra high-speed, undersea cable connecting America with Asia.

Representatives of the social media giant say Tierra del Mar is one of the few places on the U.S. West Coast suitable for the cable, which will feature the latest fiber optic technologies. It will link multiple U.S. locations, including Facebook's huge data center in the central Oregon town of Prineville, with Japan and the Philippines, and will help meet an increasing demand for internet services worldwide, the company says.

But locals say vibrations from drilling to bring the submarine cable ashore in this village of some 200 houses might dam-

age home foundations and septic systems. They also point out that Tierra del Mar, arrayed along a pristine beach, is zoned residential. If the county and state allow the project, they say, more commercial ventures will come calling.

"This is a huge precedent. Once you open the shores to these companies coming anywhere they want to, Oregon's coast is pretty much wide open season," resident Patricia Rogers told county officials in written remarks.

Tierra del Mar, 65 miles southwest of Portland, is home to a mix of professionals and retirees who share a love of the unspoiled beach that is fringed with coastal pines and the deer, bald eagles and rare seabirds that inhabit the area. It has two businesses, a rock shop and antiques store, and no cell service, apparently because providers don't consider it profitable enough.

In recent years, locals fiercely opposed a plan by investors to turn a former farm just to the north into a high-end golf course. The site ultimately opened instead as a state nature area.

Residents' attention turned to Facebook in 2018 when a subsidiary bought the empty lot for the cable landing from former NFL and University of Oregon county backer Joey Harrington. County records show Edge Cable Holdings, USA, paid him \$495,000 for the beachfront property, about the size of 10 tennis courts.

Locals worry the project will pave the way for cell towers, power junctions and additional cable sites.

Rogers, who owns a house adjacent to the Facebook lot, stood on the beach in stormy weather Wednesday as waves charged the shore. A sign apparently toppled by the high tide said "Keep Facebook off our beach."

Rogers pointed to two other empty lots nearby. "If Facebook gets (approval), well, two companies will get those, and we'll have three of these drilling projects within a half a mile of each other," she said.

Facebook representatives told county officials the horizontal directional drilling will last about a month, and all that will remain is a manhole cover.

Weinstein lawyers seek judge's recusal from rape case over texting jabs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Harvey Weinstein's lawyers asked the judge in his New York City rape case to step aside Wednesday after she threatened to jail the disgraced movie mogul for texting in the courtroom.

Weinstein's lawyers sent a letter to Judge James Burke saying his comments Tuesday were "prejudicial and inflammatory" and raised questions about his impartiality. Burke has not ruled on the request.

Burke admonished Weinstein as jury selection was getting underway, asking: "Is this really the way you want to end up in jail for the rest of your life, by texting in violation of an order? Is it?"

Burke cut off Weinstein before he could respond. Weinstein's lawyers said the film producer, who has been seen clutching an iPhone, was using his cell phone before court was in session.

The defense further argued that Burke has failed to adequately safeguard Weinstein's right to a fair and impartial jury, in part

by rejecting a request to halt jury selection for a "cooling off" period after prosecutors in Los Angeles filed new sex crimes charges against him on Monday.

In addition to Burke's recusal, they demanded the trial be stopped until negative publicity from the new charges dissipates. Weinstein's lawyers also want more time for individual questioning of potential jurors and asked for permission to have his jury consultant sit with his lawyers during such questioning.

"Faced with extreme and un-

fairly prejudicial negative publicity both pre-trial and now during jury selection, (Burke) has refused the defendant's requests for additional necessary procedural safeguards," Weinstein's lawyers wrote.

Judges seldom step aside from cases over such requests, but Weinstein's lawyers could be also making a play to make an issue of Burke's comments and rulings for a possible appeal.

The recusal request came during a second day of jury selection that ended with 30 people invited

back next week for additional questioning. In all, 66 prospective jurors have advanced to the next stage in what is expected to be a lengthy selection process.

Weinstein is charged in New York with raping a woman in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013 and sexually assaulting another woman, Mimi Halevy, in 2006. If convicted, he could be sentenced to life in prison.

The 67-year-old ex-studio boss has pleaded not guilty and maintains that any sexual activity was consensual.

NATION



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL OWENS/For The Washington Post

Going to the mall just got cooler

Lou Fermentone of Northfield, N.J., gets air while snowboarding at Big Snow American Dream, an indoor, year-round ski resort in East Rutherford, N.J.

Shopping may be afterthought at indoor ski resort just off New Jersey Turnpike

BY KAREN HELLER
The Washington Post

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — To visit America's newest ski resort, follow the Jersey Turnpike, exit at MetLife Stadium and Meadowlands Racetrack, and head next door to American Dream.

Which, of course, is a mall. Actually, it is a \$5 billion behemoth still under construction from the people who brought America the Mall of America. When done, this consumer cathedral will be our nation's largest in square footage. And skiaje.

The mall's highlight is Big Snow American Dream, a mouthful for an audacious enterprise, which is more than four acres, packed with 5,500 tons of man-made powder and billed as North America's first indoor, year-round, real-snow, real-slope ski and snowboard experience.

At first glance, Big Snow appears to be a head-slapping, refrigerated folly. It's a lot of white stuff piled into a warehouse, dotted with trees and ersatz Alpinery. Mall skiing is an endeavor no one was asking for, akin to building a life-size replica of Noah's Ark, which Americans have also done, in Kentucky — and, by the way, is equally jaw-dropping.

There are indoor ski centers around the globe, notably in Dubai, rich in sand, devoid of snow.

But East Rutherford is close to skiing of the outdoor variety. There are two New Jersey resorts an hour away, including Mountain Creek, owned by Joe Hession, the big guy at Big Snow.

So why sink \$110 million into Jersey mall skiing? Because it may revolutionize the sport, expanding and diversifying its base. Still, do we want to take away the majestic glory of mountain snow sports by

plunking them in a 16-story steel-and-concrete container?

One December Wednesday before lunch, Douglas Nazur, 41, a contractor from Astoria, Queens, hit the mall and the slope. (Technically, there are three trails, and a terrain park for hot-dogging.)

Originally from Ecuador, "a really hot place," he says, Nazur had never snowboarded before Big Snow opened two weeks earlier. Now he's on his sixth visit.

Big Snow is no Vail, which may be the point. There are zero lines at the quad lift, and only a couple dozen boarders and skiers on the slope. Nazur completed four runs in less than an hour.

Nature is held in abeyance at Big Snow, where it is perpetually 28 degrees.

"It just feels weird but in a good way. There's no wind. There's no sunburn. And you're basically on the doorstep of New York City," says boarding veteran Skip Hagerty, 36, a recreational sports consultant from Sayreville, N.J.

"We are definitely going to come here in the summer," says his friend, bartender and freelance writer Glen Braunsdorf, 39, of Tinton Falls, N.J.

"There are two barriers to getting people skiing and snowboarding," says Hession, Big Snow's president and CEO. "The first is getting there. The second barrier is price."

Big Snow hopes to eliminate both.

It's located in the country's most densely populated state. Two-hour packages with all necessary gear (including pants and a jacket) are \$69.99, and a block of six lift-only passes comes out to \$16.66 a visit. To avoid interminable lift lines, only 500 patrons are permitted at a time on the trails.

"It's bringing the mountains to the people, and abstracting the sport," says University of Kansas professor Andrew Denning, who wrote a history of skiing. "It's a form of democratization."

The domestic ski industry is neither as robust nor as diverse as resort operators desire, and it faces a mountain of obstacles.

Only 3 percent of Americans ski, 10.3 million patrons per season.

Domestic skiing began in the 19th century, when there was nothing cushy or bougie about it. It was an activity of Norwegian immigrants in the Upper Midwest, Scandinavian immigrant miners in the West, and veterans of World War II's 10th Mountain Division, who helped develop resort skiing in the Rockies.

Today, it is considered the diversion of rich, white people.

To attract a fresh, diverse crop of patrons, snow sports need to blow up the existing model, by being inexpensive, accessible, easy and available more months of the year. They need to be more Jersey.

It just feels weird but in a good way. There's no wind. There's no sunburn. And you're basically on the doorstep of New York City.

Skip Hagerty
recreational sports consultant

Hession anticipates half a million patrons during Big Snow's first year of operation, half of them novices like Nazur, which would produce a 25 percent spike in national first-time visits. By comparison, Mountain Creek (a medium-size resort) averages 300,000 skiers per season. Killington in Vermont, the East Coast's largest destination, welcomes around 800,000.

So, when you think about it, why wouldn't America's newest ski resort be located in a mall off Exit 16W of the Jersey Turnpike?

America is a land rich in dead malls. Triple Five Group, which operates American Dream, reacted by creating one that's richer in experience than stuff. It's a palace of fun.

When completed, the mall will be 45 percent retail and 55 percent entertainment, including a Nickelodeon Universe theme park, and an NHL regulation-sized ice rink. Three restaurants will offer expansive second-floor views of Big Snow.

American Dream has yet to open the majority of its shops and restaurants, as well as the Angry Birds mini-golf and a massive DreamWorks water park with a wave pool and surfing. When the water park opens, Hagerty and Braunsdorf plan to snowboard and surf during a single visit.

On this Wednesday morning, Big Snow's patrons are far more diverse than skiing's snow-white image and include immigrants speaking multiple languages and plenty of novices.

These are the industry's dream patrons. Rappers Lil Uzi Vert and Meeek Mill had visited Big Snow just days earlier. (Did Big Snow stay open late for Meeek? Yes it did.)

Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Blackstone, 32, who is Puerto Rican and from Mount Laurel, N.J., says, "It's quick, indoor convenience," something that has never been said of snowboarding.

NATION

Woes remain after fires are contained

Officials try to tally smoke-related health issues

By MATTHEW BROWN
Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. — First came the flames, a raging fire-storm propelled by 50-mile-per-hour winds gusts that incinerated Kelsey Norton's house and killed 85 people in her community.

Then came the smoke — not just from the forest but also from 14,000 houses and their contents that burned, generating a thick plume that enshrouded portions of Northern California for weeks and left Norton gasping.

And since the fire, more than a year now, it's been sickness: repeated respiratory infections that sap Norton's strength, interfere with her work and leave the 30-year-old cardiac care nurse worried about future health problems.

"I don't want to have cancer in my 50s because I inhaled smoke in my 30s," she said.

The immediate toll of lives and property lost a year ago when the Camp Fire tore through the Sierra Nevada foothills town of Paradise, Calif., is well documented. Still unknown is the long-term impact of the intense smoke exposure suffered by the tragedy's survivors and the hundreds of thousands of people living in communities downwind of the blaze.

Increasingly intense wildfires are scorching forests from California to Australia and stoking concern among residents and health professionals about long-term health impacts from smoke exposure.

The issue has far-reaching implications as climate change turns some regions of the globe drier and more prone to fires that send up smoke plumes that can travel thousands of miles and affect millions of people.

The unprecedented fires scorching huge swaths of Australia offer the most recent example as they blanket major cities with dangerous air pollution. Smoke from those fires, which started burning in September, by this week had spread across more than 7.7 million square miles and drifted across the Pacific Ocean to reach South America, according to the United Nations' meteorological agency and the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service.

Compounding the danger, experts and firefighters say, is the proliferation of construction materials and household items made from petroleum-based plastics, ranging from plumbing pipes to exterior siding. Those burn hotter and generate smoke more toxic than wood does, exposing people to numerous hazardous chemicals.

Researchers and health officials are confident more people will get sick and many will die as areas of the West see bigger,



NASA/AP

Flames and smoke from the Camp Fire, 90 miles north of Sacramento, Calif., are seen from above in November 2018. Increasingly intense wildfires that have scorched forests from California to Australia are stoking worry about long-term health impacts from smoke exposure.



MATTHEW BROWN/AP

Kelsey Norton shows pictures of her property before it was overrun by a wildfire that incinerated her house in Chico, Calif. Norton says she's suffered repeated respiratory infections since breathing in smoke from the fire.

more intense wildfires.

An estimated 20,000 premature deaths now occur annually in the U.S. due to chronic wildfire smoke exposure. That's expected to double by the end of the century, according to scientists funded by NASA, as tens of millions of people get exposed to massive "smoke waves" emanating from blazes in Western states.

But while those forecasts help illustrate the profound impacts of a warming climate, they can't predict which fires will prove deadly and which individuals will develop lung ailments or other illnesses.

One of relatively few long-term studies on the issue is under way at the California National Primate Research Center. Fifty rhesus monkeys living in outdoor pens year-round were exposed to a prolonged period of wildfire smoke as infants in 2008. They've developed lungs 20% smaller than another group of monkeys born a year later, researchers found.

"It's the closest animal model to replicate what happens with kids," said Lisa Miller, the center's associate director of research.

The difference first showed up when the animals were adolescents, and has continued as they've matured. It's impossible for the untrained eye to distinguish the smoke-exposed monkeys from hundreds of others that share their pens, but Miller's team next plans to investigate how the decreased lung function affects activity levels of the monkeys.

As the animals age, any diseases they develop and how they die would give clues into the fate of humans heavily exposed to smoke.

Studies of wildland firefighters also give insights into the risks of smoke inhalation. They've shown significantly higher rates of lung cancer and death from heart disease, said Michael Kleinman, who researches the health effects of air pollution and is a professor of environmental toxicology at the



CALIFORNIA NATIONAL PRIMATE RESEARCH CENTER, UNIVERSITY CALIFORNIA DAVIS/AP

Rhesus monkeys are seen in their outdoor enclosure at the California National Primate Research Center in Davis, Calif. A group of the animals exposed to wildfire smoke as infants have developed lungs that are about 20 percent smaller than other rhesus monkeys.

University of California, Irvine.

Firefighters get much higher and more frequent doses of smoke, but Kleinman said a proportional increase in illnesses could be expected among the general public exposed to wildfire smoke across California and the West.

"It's safe to say there will probably more effects at the long-term level," Kleinman said. "Especially if those events happened over a longer period of time or more repeatedly, there will be cumulative damage to the lung and heart which eventually will lead to chronic disease."

As she fled with her boyfriend ahead of the fire that destroyed Paradise on the morning of Nov. 8, 2018, Norton said the smoke was so thick "it was like midnight."

A few days later, she went back to work at a hospital in Chico, about 15 miles from Paradise. But smoke from the still-burning fire had made it inside the facility. There weren't enough face masks to go around so Norton

said she went without one for several days.

Initially she felt just a bit wheezy, as she had during the last major fire in the area about a decade earlier. But two weeks later she came down with a respiratory infection that brought fever and severe congestion.

When that finally cleared, she got another, then another — eight or nine infections in all over the past year. She missed so much work in the months after the fire that she got a warning from a supervisor.

Norton is among about 9,000 people who responded to a health survey as part of a long-term health study of smoke exposure in Paradise and other California communities. The work is led by researchers at the University of California, Davis, who plan to track the lung health of a small number of those respondents in coming years by measuring their breathing capacity.

WORLD

US: 'High confidence' that Iran downed Ukrainian jet

The Washington Post

MOSCOW — U.S. officials have "high confidence" that an Iranian anti-aircraft missile brought down a Ukrainian passenger jet near Tehran, killing all 176 aboard, a U.S. official said.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said U.S. authorities believe the plane was hit by a Russian-made SA-15 surface-to-air missile.

The official gave no other details on the circumstances that led to the possible missile firing on Wednesday, which came about four hours after Iran launched ballistic missiles into Iraq against U.S. targets in retaliation for the killing of Iranian Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani.

The SA-15 system dates back to the Cold War and can be used to down planes, helicopters, drones

or incoming missiles. Russia has exported the system to a number of countries, including Iran.

Earlier, Ukrainian investigators said they were considering the possibility that an anti-aircraft missile brought down the Kyiv-bound passenger jet. Iran said the plane was on fire while still in the air and was turning back toward Tehran's airport because of a "problem" when it went down. Ukrainian investigators said they were also looking into engine failure or a terrorist attack as possible causes of the crash. Several independent aviation experts have noted that, based on video and the wide debris field, it appeared that the Boeing 737 800 was breaking apart in the air.

A team of 45 experts and search-and-rescue personnel from Ukraine arrived in Tehran early Thursday to participate in

the probe, as well as to identify and repatriate the bodies of the 11 Ukrainians on board, including all nine crew members.

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, wrote on Facebook that his team wants to search for possible debris of a Russian missile after seeing online reports about the discovery of possible fragments of one near the crash site. The reports could not be independently confirmed.

He added that Ukraine's commission includes specialists who helped investigate the July 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in Ukraine. The government in Kyiv has also suspended all Ukrainian flights over Iranian and Iraqi airspace.

The Ukraine International Airlines flight departed Tehran at 6:12 a.m. Wednesday and was



UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE/AP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy lays flowers at a memorial for the flight crew members of the Ukrainian plane that crashed in Iran at Borispil International Airport near Kyiv, Ukraine, on Thursday.

approaching 8,000 feet when it abruptly lost contact with ground control, officials said.

The report from Iran's Civil Aviation Organization said witnesses — on the ground and among the crew of another flight in the vicinity — reported seeing a fire while the Boeing 737 800 was still in the air, followed by an explosion when it slammed into a field near an amusement park.

Iranian officials said immediately after the crash that the plane had encountered technical problems, but this did not appear in the report, which also noted that there was no distress call from the aircraft.

The passengers on the plane were mostly Iranians but also included Europeans and more than 60 Canadian citizens.

Australians on coast urged to flee amid rising fire risk

Associated Press

TOMERONG, Australia — Residents in the path of wildfires razing southeast Australia were urged to evacuate on Thursday if they don't intend to defend their homes as hot and windy conditions are forecast to escalate the danger over the next two days.

The Rural Fire Service in New South Wales state has told fire-weary community meetings south of Sydney in the coastal towns of Nowra, Narooma and Batemans Bay that northwesterly winds were likely to once again drive blazes toward the coast. Vacationers have retreated to beaches and into the ocean in the area in recent weeks as destructive fires and choking smoke have encroached on the tourist towns, scorching sand dunes in some places.

In neighboring Victoria state, fire-threatened populations were urged to act quickly on evacuation warnings.

"We can't guarantee your safety and we don't want to be putting emergency services — whether it be volunteers or paid staff — we do not want to put them in harm's way because people didn't follow advice that was given," Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said.

Temperatures in the threatened area were expected to reach more than 110 degrees Fahrenheit on Friday, and conditions remained tinder dry.

"If you can get out, you should get out," said Andrew Crisp, Victoria's emergency management commissioner. "Because tomorrow is going to be a dangerous and dynamic day."

The unprecedented fire crisis in southeast Australia that has claimed at least 26 lives since September, destroyed more than 2,000 homes and scorched an area twice the size of the state of Maryland has focused many Australians on how the nation adapts to climate change. Prime Minister Scott Morrison has come under withering criticism both at home and abroad for downplaying the need for his government to address climate change, which experts say helps supercharge the blazes.

Last year was Australia's hottest and driest on record. The Bureau of Meteorology's head of climate monitoring, Karl Braganza, said while the country's rainfall was expected to pick up a bit, it wouldn't be enough to snuff out the blazes anytime soon.

"Unfortunately, we're not looking at widespread, above-average rainfalls at this



ROCK RYCKROFF/AP

A sign is displayed beside a burned out house near Mogo, Australia, on Thursday shows thanks for "fires," a colloquial term for firefighters.

stage," he said. "That's really what we need to put the fires out fairly quickly. It is going to be a campaign, in terms of the fires. We are not looking at a short and sharp end to the event — it looks like something that we will have to persist with for some time."

Along a main roadway in southern New South Wales, forests of evergreen eucalyptus trees have taken on a ghostly autumnal appearance, with golden leaves and black-

ened trunks. The forests appear devoid of any wildlife. Outside, it often smells like a campfire that has been recently snuffed out, and hazy waves of smoke drift past.

In many small towns, most homes appear untouched apart from one or two that have been razed to the ground, sometimes with only a chimney stack still standing. People have hung signs and banners thanking the volunteer firefighters they call "fires."

EU's official says no-deal Brexit is more harmful for Britain than EU

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union's chief Brexit negotiator said Thursday that if Britain wants as much access as possible to the bloc's market after it leaves, it won't have unfettered freedom to subsidize its industry.

Michael Barnier also insisted that the state aid rules in any future trade deal would be more

stringent than with nations like Canada or Japan, simply because of the physical proximity of the departing EU nation.

"If the U.K. wants an open link with us for the products — zero tariffs, zero quotas — we need to be careful about zero dumping at the same time," Barnier told a conference in Stockholm.

"I hope that this point is, and will be correctly understood by

everybody. We will ask necessarily certain conditions on state aid policy in the U.K.," Barnier said, adding that if that is not the case, access to the lucrative EU market will be negatively affected.

The EU has been stressing the need for a level playing field in the upcoming trade deal negotiations, meaning that access will be strictly linked to commitments to social welfare and environmen-

tal standards, among others. On Thursday, he stressed the need for state aid limits too.

As a member state, Britain was bound by strict state aid rules enforced by the powerful European Commission to make sure there would be no unfair competition among EU nations in its vast single market. Third countries aren't immediately bound by such strictures.

Britain has decided to leave the EU by Jan. 31, partly because it doesn't want to be tied down by EU rules, which it feels impedes its sovereignty. But negotiating a trade deal will still involve many compromises on rule setting.

Barnier also insisted that Britain's goal to have a full free trade deal by the end of the year was unrealistic.

WORLD

SPECIAL DELIVERIES

US lab chimps were dumped on Monkey Island in Liberia and left to starve. Their caretaker saved them.

By DANIELLE PAQUETTE
The Washington Post

MONKEY ISLAND, Liberia — All was quiet when the motorboat pattered to a stop. Saltwater lapped at the narrow sandy shore. Mangrove leaves fluttered in the breeze. Then the man in a blue life jacket cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted: Hoo hoo!

Like a secret password, the call unlocked a hidden primate universe. Dozens of chimpanzees emerged from the brush, hairy arms extended. They waded up to the rusty vessel with the nonchalance of someone fetching the mail.

“Time to eat,” said Joseph Thomas, their wiry guardian of 40 years, tossing bananas into the furry crowd.

Chimps aren’t supposed to be stuck on their own island — especially one with no food — or mingle with much-waker humans. But nothing about Liberia’s Monkey Island is normal. It’s a spectacle, an increasingly costly burden and the enduring legacy of American scientists who set out to cure hepatitis B in 1974.

Animal testing has existed since doctors in ancient Greece studied the anatomy of rodents — an estimated 115 million creatures are still used each year in research worldwide — but rarely is the aftermath so visible. Rarely is it so hungry.

This colony of 66 chimpanzees, which never learned to survive in the wild, eats roughly 500 pounds of produce each day, plus a weekly batch of hard-boiled eggs for protein.

They rely on money from a charity abroad and the devotion of men who’ve known them since they lived in steel cages.

“That’s Mabel,” said Thomas, the captain of that small crew, pointing to a 100-pound female. “Look! She likes to wash her food in the water.”

As if on cue, Mabel dunked her banana in the mud-brown river.

Thomas, 60, met the chimp, 36, when she was a baby who pressed the soft black pads of her fingers into his open palm.

The New York researchers who once injected her with viruses quit the country on Africa’s western coast during the deadliest Ebola outbreak in history, abandoning Mabel and other animals who can live half a century. Thomas hadn’t planned to de-

vote his life to protecting chimps through epidemic and civil war.

His long, strange mission started on the tennis court. He dreamed of becoming a professional athlete until he met a researcher from the New York Blood Center. She would give him a job, he said, if he could give her tennis lessons.

At 20, Thomas became a caretaker at the nonprofit’s chimp laboratory in Robertsville, a remote town about 20 miles from the capital, Monrovia. He fed the animals, cleaned up after them and got to know their personalities, which ranged from shy to class clown.

He was promoted four years later to medical technician. The chimps were infected with hepatitis and river blindness, an eye sickness caused by a parasite, as researchers developed vaccines.

Chimp testing doesn’t happen anymore. They hate to be cooped up. They laugh, cry, get jealous and have temper tantrums — “just like us,” Thomas said.

He tended the animals as if they were his children. He hoped the experiments would ease suffering in West Africa and beyond. The New York Blood Center set up shop in Liberia because chimps — now considered an endangered species — were already climbing the trees of its dense forests.

No one expected the lab to tumble into chaos.

In the early 1990s, Charles Taylor — the rebel leader who would become Liberia’s 22nd president



PHOTOS BY DANIELLE PAQUETTE/The Washington Post

Chimpanzees catch food from a team of caretakers on Monkey Island, Liberia, in November.

and later a convicted war criminal — unleashed his ragtag army across the country, killing thousands and forcing untold others from their homes.

The American researchers fled. Thomas stayed behind with the chimps. Taylor’s soldiers, he said, stole the lab’s cars.

Conflict surged into the 2000s as militants fought for control of Liberia, and public pressure to end testing on chimps snowballed. The New York Blood Center halted tests in 2004, sparking a big question: What would they do with all the animals?

Putting them back into the nation’s forests wasn’t an option. They could spread disease to others, and they didn’t know how to pick fruit or hunt insects.

Another problem arose from their artificial comfort zone. What if the chimps heard the familiar sound of people talking

— or poachers talking — and ambled out to say hi?

“The only way to hold them was to put them on an island,” Thomas said.

There are six islands in the Farmington and Little Bassa rivers. These makeshift sanctuaries on the Atlantic coast became known collectively as Monkey Island.

Thomas and the other caretakers collected funds from New York to deliver buckets of bananas and lettuce, among other goods, to the chimps every two days. A veterinarian stayed on the nonprofit’s payroll to check on the animals.

In 2009, the New York Blood Center said it was getting hard to pay for Monkey Island. The charity contacted Liberia’s then-president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, for help and received no reply, its spokeswoman told The Washington Post. (A spokesman for Sirleaf declined to comment.)

By 2015, as the Ebola virus ravaged the country, the New York Blood Center notified the Liberian government that it could “no longer divert funds from its important lifesaving mission here at home,” a spokeswoman said in a recent statement.

Thomas stuck to the feeding schedule until the last penny was gone.

He went with the other caretakers from fruit stall to fruit stall, seeking donations — a daunting task in a time of epidemic. One particularly generous neighbor gave him 50 pieces of coconut. The men gathered enough food to keep the chimps alive, if not full, for a few weeks.

During that period, Thomas remembers pulling up to islands and seeing frantic, desperate animals. They screamed and fought over scraps. It wasn’t enough.

He told the story to whoever would listen, he said, and eventu-

ally found a sympathetic ear with connections to the Humane Society in Washington.

The nonprofit has since bankrolled the care, spending about \$500,000 annually on Monkey Island. Meals now happen twice a day. The price grows, though, as the colony does.

Despite the team of 10 caretakers’ best family planning efforts, which include vasectomies for males and slipping birth control in sugary milk paste, the chimps have had a few babies. “Very cute accidents,” Humane Society chief executive Jilly Block said.

Over the years, Monkey Island has become a local legend, though some news articles have painted the inhabitants as infectious threats.

“A bunch of ‘monster’ Chimps are living on their own island in a Planet of the Apes meets Resident Evil-style scenario,” one Australian reporter wrote in 2018.

Thomas rolls his eyes. The public should stay away from animals that might get spooked and attack, he said, but it’s unclear if the chimps still carry disease. Tests are too expensive.

The caretakers dream of building an animal hospital on one of the sanctuaries, as well as a proper security system to keep people away. As of now, one man sits on a small dock off each island, telling onlookers to scam.

That doesn’t stop fishermen from floating over for a peek, and guidebooks from irresponsibly advising tourists to hitch a ride.

No one can get as close as Thomas. Photos show him standing knee-deep in river water, hugging the chimps he sees as family.

He greets them by name: Mabel. Stuart. Juno. Ellyse. Annie. “I’ll be doing this,” he said, “until they die or I do.”



For 40 years, Joseph Thomas has been the caretaker of a colony of chimpanzees who were infected with hepatitis B in the 1970s and dumped on Monkey Island, Liberia.

WEEKEND

New consoles
bringing fresh takes
on beloved titles

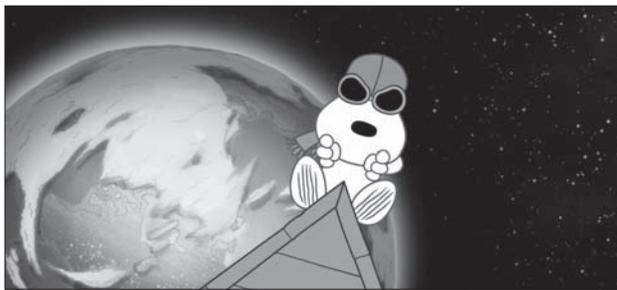
Video games, Page 25



■ Director Sam Mendes describes his vision behind the film's seeming one ceaseless shot — Page 21

■ Washington Post film critic Ann Hornaday says "1917" is anchored by George MacKay's breakout performance — Page 22

WEEKEND: GADGETS



APPLE/AP

Apple TV Plus execs hope Snoopy, shown in a scene from the animated short "Snoopy in Space," will appeal to multigenerational audiences as the streaming service hopes to lure subscribers

Competing for kids' eyes

Companies like Apple, Netflix incorporating familiar characters to get families' attention

BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

New technology. Same furry faces. When Apple was thinking about what kind of children's TV programming it wanted on its new streaming service, it doubled down on two multi-generational crowd-pleasers — Snoopy and "Sesame Street."

Apple TV Plus has carved out prominent roles for Charlie Brown's floppy-eared beagle and for puppets from the famed Sesame Workshop in its slate of kid- and family-friendly programs.

"Both Snoopy and Sesame Workshop are crown jewels of the last decades in what family entertainment looks like. There's a reason that we went proactively to those two entities," said Zack Van Amburg, who is Apple's head of worldwide video alongside Jamie Erlich.

The decision to use existing children's icons as the bedrock for the fledgling platform is one shared by several other streaming services, often with one eye on looming Netflix, the world's largest streamer with an arsenal of titles attracting kids and families.

The services are competing for kids' eyeballs not only from each other but also from shows on YouTube and traditional broadcast channels. Often the safest way forward is piggybacking on established titles that parents already know from their childhood and leaning into the nostalgia.

Amazon Prime Video has rebooted "Clifford the Big Red Dog" and has original shows featuring Kung-Fu Panda, Pete the Cat, and Rocky and Bullwinkle. CBS All Access has series built on the classic book "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs" and the classic cartoon "Danger Mouse."

Disney Plus is offering shorts starring Forky from "Toy Story 4" and a reboot of the Hilary Duff-led "Lizzie McGuire," another show built around Phineas and Ferb, plus a new series based on Marvel Comics' "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier." And, yes, it, too, has Muppets — the unscripted series "Muppets Now."

Netflix has embraced shows built around Captain Underpants, "Lost in Space," the book "Green Eggs and Ham," the comic book "Raising Dion" and even a youth-oriented "Fast and Furious" series.

"Our intention is to offer a lot of choice. When we think about kids or we think about a family au-

dience, one of the things we think about is there's no two kids that are the same, and there are no two families that are the same," said Melissa Cobb, Netflix's vice president of kids and family. Brian Wright, vice president of original series at Netflix, said its creators are hoping to craft content that allows a family to have a shared experience and a shared conversation — wherever that family is.

"We really want to be in the space of building really appealing worlds that have something for everybody," he said. "One thing that we talk a lot about is reflecting the world back at itself. We want to break down the barriers of who gets to be seen and represented."

Apple TV Plus subscribers may not get as many shows as Netflix, but executives are building a carefully curated list, including a dozen 8-minute "Snoopy in Space" animated shorts, as well as episodes of "The Snoopy Show," with each installment featuring three seven-minute cartoons starring the Peanuts crew.

They'll also get two series from Sesame: the live-action preschool-aimed "Helpsters," which mixes human actors and puppets, including Cody, a new puppet that loves computer coding. And there's "Ghostwriter," a live-action fantasy series that re-imagines the Sesame Workshop's 1992 series.

The streamer will also have the original animated series "Here We Are" based on lauded author Oliver Jeffers' book, the animated series "Wolfboy and the Everything Factory," the live-action animated hybrid "Lovely Little Farm" and a pair of animated series based on children's books "Doug Unplugged" and "Zen Shorts."

"When you look at the breadth of programming, I think you'll see a mix of established book properties, reboots of television shows, but also new properties from diverse creators," said Tara Sorensen, Apple's head of children's programming. "Apple as a whole believes in great storytelling, and so we want to make sure we represent that across our slate."

Van Amburg and Sorensen said that what makes Apple TV Plus distinctive from some of the others is a commitment to education and imparting lessons. "We want to make sure parents feel good about watching these programs together as a family but also putting their kids in front of them solo," said Sorensen.

GADGET WATCH

Misfit smartwatch gets you moving

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

The Misfit Vapor X smartwatch is powered by Wear OS by Google and works with both Android and Apple.

I love that it looks like a watch and is comfortable but also allows me to play music, track my heart rate and steps, check my calendar and, if paired with an Android, view messages.

With Bluetooth and Wi-Fi built in, the first thing you do is download the Wear OS by Google companion app. From there, the setup was simple right out of the box, easily connecting to my home Wi-Fi and Apple iCal. A simple swipe on the screen allowed me to get my calendar notifications, weather updates, access my heart rate with the heart rate sensor and all the important steps for the day.

Other internal sensors include accelerometer, altimeter, ambient light, gyroscope, internal microphone (talk to Google Assistant), NFC and Untethered GPS, all powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon Wear 3100 processor. Inside is 4GB of storage and 512MB memory (ram).

With the ambient light sensor, I could view the smartwatch night or day. I put it to the test going from bright outside conditions to darker rooms at my home gym, and the screen was always perfectly visible.

Pushing the buttons on the side took me to the apps like Google Pay, Google Fit and the Play Store to get more apps for the smartwatch. Third-party app integration includes Spotify and Pandora.

The watch is compatible with Android 6.0+ (excluding Go edition) and iOS 10+. The internal battery (310mAh) lasted about a day with the app running and was quickly recharged by setting it on the magnetic charger.

The aluminum Vapor X is swimmproof up to 30 meters and has interchangeable 20-mm-wide straps for different looks and customizable watch faces.

The 42-mm circular watch case is 12 mm



Scosche's BaseLynx charging system

thick and comes in a choice of black, champagne, rose gold, stainless steel and gunmetal.

All in all, there's a lot you can do with this watch. Like many others, I'm on the fitness trail as the new year starts, and the Misfit Vapor X is going along with me for the ride.

Online: misfit.com; Misfit Vapor X \$279.99, additional straps range from \$19.99-\$39.99

Charging for multiple devices can be a problem after all the gadgets generated during the holiday season, but Scosche has made it simple with the new BaseLynx charging system.

It allows for a choice of charging iPhones, AirPods, Apple Watch, iPad, cameras, portable gaming systems, headphones

together or individually, all from a single AC power cord. Scosche describes the BaseLynx as a little island of order in what can sometimes be a messy world. It's a clever, attractive and innovative charging system, allowing you to configure it as needed, with each module connecting to the system in seconds.

The devices you have will dictate what modules you need. Each module charges a specific device, some with Qi Wireless (\$49.95), Apple Watch (\$69.95) or a vertical stand (\$49.94) to hold these devices where you connect your USB charging cable directly to the module. The vertical module has charging for one 18W USB-C Power Delivery port and two 12W USB-A ports.

The Apple Watch stand charges your watch flat, or you can flip the charging element up to display your watch in Nightstand Mode while it charges.

At the end of each module, you can add a BaseLynx EndCap (\$39.95) to add one 18W USB-C Power Delivery port, and one 12W USB-A port.

The modules are available exclusively at Apple and can be used individually, or as many as needed. There really is no setup; just snap them together to work off the one included power cord.

A Pro Kit has a big price savings with the wireless charging pad, Apple Watch, vertical charging station, a pair of USB (A and C) to lightning cables and dual-port end caps bundled for \$199.

Online: scosche.com

WEEKEND: MOVIES

BY JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

After the juggling act of two Bond films, with their cadre of characters and army of gadgets, Sam Mendes had something cleaner in mind for his next film.

Two main characters. No backstory. Real time. And one shot.

From the start, Mendes envisioned his "1917" as unfolding continuously and breathlessly. In the British trenches of World War I, two soldiers are tasked with delivering an urgent message to stop an attack, planned for the next morning, that's doomed to fail.

The Germans have stealthily retreated. Mendes, working with cinematographer Roger Deakins and production designer Dennis Gansner (both collaborators from Mendes' 007 epic "Skyfall"), follows their "narrowing journey without blinking, hiding any edits to give the impression of a ceaseless and fluid film.

For even the 54-year-old Mendes, renowned for his inventive stagings (he won a Tony earlier this year for directing "The Ferryman" and this March will bring "The Lehman Trilogy" to Broadway), it's an especially bold enterprise, one that extends the cinematic history of the long take (see "Rope," "Russian Ark," "Birdman," among others) into a new realm.

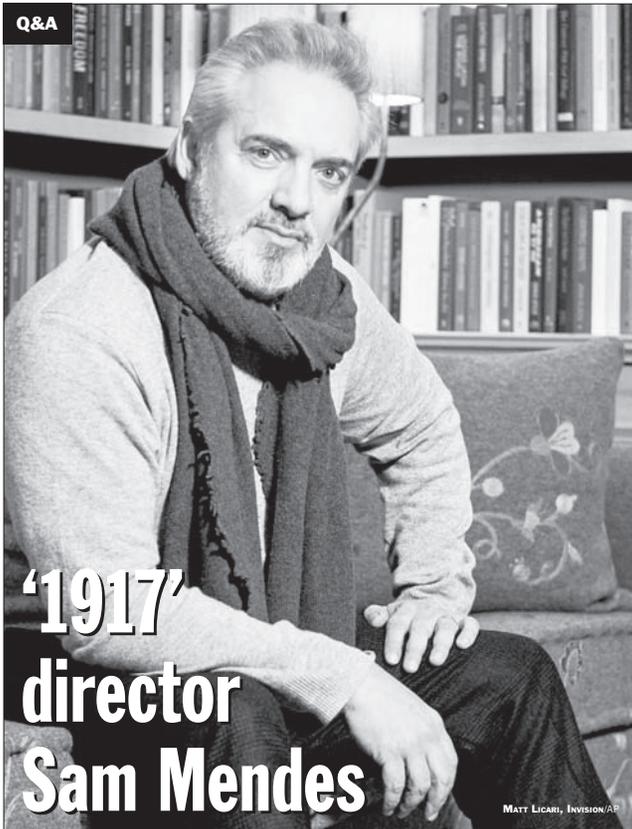
As "1917" expands into wide release Friday, Mendes discussed why he hopes people are drawn in by his technical achievement but, as soon as the lights go down, forget it.

AP: You opened "Spectre" with a great long take. Is that when you started thinking about more elastic ways to shoot?

Mendes: That was one I was really proud of and enjoyed, and I loved the process of doing it. It asks you to think of the multiple ways a camera can tell a story that are not close-up, close-up, over-the-shoulder, over-the-shoulder, two-shot, push-in through the door. I found myself quite quickly defaulting to standard ways of telling a story. Just coverage, coverage and more coverage. The challenge here was to make it on the day and not in post. You feel like everyone's saying that on the day because everyone knows there's no way out of this. This is the movie. And over single member of every department is engaged on every shot. Normally, it's like, "Well, we're in close-up so special effects can go have some break-flegs. And now we're in a shot of a building blowing up. The hair and makeup isn't so important." But here, everyone was engaged in every second of the film. It happened at the beginning of "Spectre." Everyone was maxed out, and I love that feeling.

Are you concerned that it could come off as just a gimmick?

We experience life as a single shot. We go through life with one unbroken take. It's editing that's the gimmick. Editing is a wonderful tool if you want to jump time, jump space, jump from one story to another. But editing is so overused it's just a basic scene. You and me talking — we



would have already used five or six different setups. You have to ask yourself: Why is that now our default?

How extensive was the rehearsal?

The difference between this and a normal movie is that the actors started prep with the crew. We couldn't build anything or judge anything until we had physically rehearsed the journey they were going to take. Everything started on empty fields with scripts in hand, planting flags for the trenches and no man's land. This is the distance, this is where the trenches cross, etc. Then you extrapolate that onwards through vast areas of land. Only then could we start digging the trenches, and we dug over a mile of trenches and filled them with people. Every step of the journey was accounted for.

Early in the film, one of the soldiers hurts his hand on a barbed wire. Does that cut precede the first film cut?

There are a couple of cuts beforehand, but I wouldn't call them cuts. Blends, stitches, whatever you want to call them. Morphs. On the whole, there were long takes of five, six min-

utes, as long as eight and a half. Even if you know what it's going to be going in, I hope you forget about it and get immersed in it. The goal is to remove as many layers between the audience and the characters as much as possible, not add them. So we never moved the camera in a way that was self-advertising. It's a constantly shifting dance between the subjective and the objective, between being intimate and being epic.

To prepare, did you go back and watch Hitchcock's "Rope" or 2002's one-take "Russian Ark"?

I had seen "Rope." I had seen "Birdman." And not just one-shot movies, but movies that deal with long, continuous takes. I thought "Children of Men" was a masterpiece of camera work and poetry. I didn't go back to look at them because even the movies that are most similar to it are quite dissimilar. "Birdman," for example, which is a movie I loved, is a very surreal film. It's not asking you to experience time. It's asking you to forget about it, in a way. "Son of Saul," which is an absolute masterpiece, is very subjective. It's very shallow

depth of field — everything drops out of focus. That wasn't like our movie, either. So wherever we looked, it was like, "Well, that's not quite what we're doing." We had to make up our own rules.

This is your fourth film with cinematographer Roger Deakins. On "Skyfall," you together reached a high level, especially in the moving neon reflections of the Shanghai tower scene. Was it a given you'd reach out to him?

Yeah, it's pretty much a given that I try to him to do anything. The answer is yes or no, or he's doing a movie with the Coen brothers, and he's not available. I've been fortunate to work with him from the beginning, and particularly on this one. For that scene, Dennis Gansner, who also designed this movie, built the office tower in Shanghai as a model, and then we would move all the LED screens to begin to understand how the reflections work within those glass cubes. I remember sitting for hours with the lights off in the room in Pine-wood with Roger and Dennis trying to work out how we would construct it. We did a similar thing with this, Dennis building a model of the town and putting

'The goal is to remove as many layers between the audience and the characters as much as possible, not add them.'

Sam Mendes
Director of "1917"

the flames on tiny wires so we understood how the shadows fell, and the big church in the center of it a flame and how the light from that would streak through and intersect with Scofield's journey. That feeling that it was both an environment and a conduit for light — that existed in both of those sets. In a way, they're my two favorite sets. They share in common that somehow the light and the world are one thing.

"1917" is designed to be seen on the big screen. How much do you think about a movie today having to compete with streaming?

I've made franchise movies, but I've also made movies on a much, much smaller scale that would today probably be on a streaming service and would be fine on a streaming service.

What I did want to do, though, was make a film where the audience went, "Ooh, I'll be missing out if I didn't see this in a cinema." But I don't think there's that thing that used to happen where pretty much everyone who made a story with a beginning, middle and end that lasted two hours thought it as their God-given right to be on a big cinema screen. That's no longer the case. You have to fight for that.

You once compared your experience making two Bond films to "a siege." Would you ever make a franchise film again? I imagine you're conscious that in the time of one Bond film, you could have directed three plays.

Exactly. Or maybe five. I think my franchise years are probably over. Never say never — excuse the pun. I learned a whole lesson about great advice. But I think that in the end, the feat of engineering sometimes overwhelms the human element of storytelling. And it's the human element of storytelling that interests me the most.

"1917" is dedicated to your grandfather, Alfred Mendes, who was a runner in WWI. What prompted you to return to him now?

The winds that were blowing before the First World War are blowing again. It was 100 years ago, perhaps the day that I started writing. The danger is that war is being gradually forgotten. Those that lived through it and fought in it are dead. These men were fighting for a free and unified Europe, which right now would be worth remembering in my country, perhaps. So, there is a sense there's something unsettled in the air, the shifting of borders, the obsession with nations over universal goods. I thought it was time to be reminded of that and also make a movie that's not defined by its nation. It's about the human experience of war.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

'1917' goes the distance

Continuous-shot war film powerful and unforgettable

By ANN HORNBADY
The Washington Post

As a technical exercise in filmmaking, "1917" is reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's "Rope" and "Birdman" — a nearly two-hour "one" or continuous shot, during which the story seems to unfold in seamless real time. The fact that Sam Mendes used the conceit to portray the bravery, anguish, death and desecrated landscapes of World War I feels like the right approach at the right time. Just last year, Peter Jackson's magnificent documentary "They Shall Not Grow Old" reignited interest in the Great War, and sequences like Joe Wright's single-shot depiction of Dunkirk in "Atonement" prove how powerfully immersive such basic genres can be.

Which makes it all the more of a letdown that "1917" is impressive but oddly distancing, ultimately stirring but too often gimmicky. While its visual language and subjective camera might hold promise for conveying the suffering and sacrifice

of World War I to a generation raised on video games and virtual reality, there are moments when "1917" feels as rote as any other exercise in leveling-up. Thankfully, the film is anchored by a lead performance that overcomes its self-imposed limitations.

As a British lance corporal named Schofield, George MacKay delivers a breakout performance, acquitting his primary task — to both witness the horrors of war and confidently lead the audience through them with just the right combination of vulnerability and quiet command. As "1917" opens, Schofield and his friend Blake (Dean-Charles Chapman) are assigned the daunting task of delivering a life-or-death message to 1,600 British troops preparing to attack German enemy lines. What ensues is a classic race against the clock — made more urgent by the fact that the survival of Blake's own brother is at stake — as the soldiers encounter perils as well as moments of improbable poetry, altruism and blunt human cruelty.



George MacKay, center, stars in "1917," directed by Sam Mendes.

And, as idealistic young men, they must endure the war-ravaged pessimism of their elders, who appear right on cue to give voice to variations on the theme of war-as-hell. As cinematographer Roger Deakins sends his unchained camera through the muddy, rat-infested trenches, corpse-strewn battlefields and abandoned farms of the French countryside, an all-star cast of actors shows up to appear in brief but vivid cameos, including Colin Firth, Benedict Cumberbatch, Mark Strong and Andrew Scott. Using occasional moments of darkness as editing opportuni-

ties, Deakins creates a remarkably convincing simulation of the uninterrupted flow of time: doing away with shaky-cam naturalism, he combines fluid, dancelike movement with stately composition and framing to create images of breathtaking beauty.

As often as not in "1917," those images exist alongside hyper-real sequences that would be at home in any action movie or video game, where protagonists dodge booby traps, collapsing buildings and other obstacles to gain extra life. As generic or even downright corny as some of these encounters can

be, MacKay and Chapman do an outstanding job of grounding them in the palpable fears and shaky courage of men who are still clearly boys. Although Mendes and his co-screenwriter Krysty Wilson-Cairns eschew the kind of commentary that made films like "Paths of Glory" such persuasive indictments of military hierarchy, "1917" leaves viewers with the indelible and overwhelming impression that war isn't just hell, but an unconscionable waste.

"1917" is rated R for realistic violence and strong language. Running time: 119 minutes.

'Just Mercy' a tale both shattering and satisfying

By ANN HORNBADY
The Washington Post

The stirring, stylish legal drama "Just Mercy" feels familiar on several levels. The story of a wrongfully accused man sent to death row, it joins such films as "Dead Man Walking" and the more recent "Clemency" as an affecting examination of how justice is confused with inhumane retribution.

Based on factual events, "Just Mercy" is the story of Walter "Johnny D." McMillian, who in 1987 was arrested for a murder he didn't commit, but who was railroaded by a racist and incompetent legal system in Alabama — a story that is as old as the rugged cross itself. McMillian's case became famous all over again — played in an epoch-making memoir of Bryan Stevenson, a brilliant, Harvard-educated attorney who came to his defense and has gone on to become a visionary leader in criminal justice reform.

Both on a macro and micro level then, "Just Mercy" — which takes its title from Stevenson's book — might feel like something we've seen before. But in the judicial hands of director and co-writer Daniel Creton, it feels not new exactly, but fresh and urgent and more timely than ever.

Largely, that's because Creton, best known for his exceptionally assured 2013 breakthrough "Short Term 12," knows exactly when to get out of the way and let Stevenson and McMillian's story simply unfold. "Just Mercy" begins in 1987, when McMillian — played in an astonishing comeback performance by Jamie Foxx — is in a forest outside Monroe, where he works as a pulpwood contractor. Arrested for the murder of a white dry cleaning clerk back in town, McMillian insists he couldn't have committed the crime (he was at a church fish fry that day along with several witnesses). Still, he winds up on death row, the result of countless assaults on his human and constitutional rights that come once he's there.

McMillian would have been just another statistic of



Warner Bros. Pictures

Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx star in "Just Mercy," based on the real-life tale of a wrongly convicted man.

structural racism and irrational fear and revenge, had Stevenson not decided to move from the Northeast to Monroeville, where upon his arrival he's encouraged to visit the "To Kill a Mockingbird" museum and to stand "right where Atticus Finch once stood." In "Just Mercy," the painful and infuriating gaps between myth and reality of the contemporary South aren't underlined as much as opened up and revealed, allowing audience members to come to conclusions that will range from wincing discomfort to outrage.

Played by Michael B. Jordan with his usual combination of composure and submerged fire, Stevenson is the main protagonist in "Just Mercy," but this isn't a biopic. As much as viewers come to admire him for his courage and dedication, they don't necessarily come to feel they know him. Similarly Brie Larson, who plays Eva Ansley, who joined Stevenson in founding the nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative, is often relegated to little more than

providing awkward chunks of earnest exposition. There are moments when "Just Mercy" threatens to become as meandering and mired-down as McMillian's case itself.

But Creton keeps the narrative on course, leading the audience through the stakes and specifics of Stevenson's quest with welcome clarity. Perhaps ironically, "Just Mercy" comes most to life on death row, where, when Stevenson first visits him, he's ordered to submit to a humiliating strip search. A group of prisoners act as a moving Greek chorus while Stevenson doggedly searches for the truth and McMillian awaits a fate that feels tragically preordained. "That's how it's done down here," McMillian says in one scene; it's an eloquent if dispiriting summation of the emotional labor it takes to manage the anxiety, aggression and impunity otherwise known as white supremacy.

Foxx, delivering one of the finest performances of his career in a role that involves as dramatic a physical transformation as his Oscar-winning turn in "Ray," is joined by an equally impressive supporting cast, which includes O'Shea Jackson Jr., Darrell Britt-Gibson and Rob Morgan, who brings enormous sympathy to a prisoner whose extenuating circumstances throw the perversity of the death penalty into heartbreaking relief.

Punctuated by a twitchy, uncanonically on-point turn from Tim Blake Nelson as a crucial witness named Ralph Myers, "Just Mercy" is transformed from a mere billboard declaring that racism is bad to an intimate, immediate and deeply moving portrait of the trauma and psychic toll imposed on its victims and practitioners. Propelled by a musical score by Joel P. West, "Just Mercy" keeps its emotions on a low simmer, finally coming to a climax that is satisfying on one level, and absolutely shattering on another. From its smooth visuals and warm, swinging sounds to its magnificent performances, "Just Mercy" is masterfully constructed to keep us inside a story that otherwise would be too brutal to bear.

"Just Mercy" is rated PG-13 for mature thematic material including some racial epithets. Running time: 137 minutes.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Justice on, off screen

Racial injustice film 'Just Mercy' is the first major studio movie produced with an inclusion rider

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

Michael B. Jordan doesn't usually get starstruck. Bryan Stevenson had a different effect on him.

Stevenson, whom Jordan plays in the legal drama "Just Mercy," has led one of the most successful efforts to combat mass incarceration and racial injustices in the United States legal system. In 1989, he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a nonprofit. He's argued five times before the Supreme Court. He and the EJI have successfully challenged more than 125 death row convictions. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has called him "America's Mandela."

"You don't really come across too many people like that. There isn't a voice like his," says Jordan.

"Meeting that person is like, 'Man, this is the hidden gem. This is the unsung hero. This is the national hero that needs to be protected at all costs. I wanted to do his story justice.'"

"Just Mercy" is based on Stevenson's acclaimed 2014 memoir "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption." It's centered on a formative case for Stevenson, one that helped birth the EJI. In 1989, Stevenson defended Walter McMillian, a then-47-year-old black tree cutter who the year before had been falsely accused and swiftly sentenced to death for the murder of an 18-year-old white woman in Monroeville, Ala., the hometown of Harper Lee.

"Just Mercy," in which Jamie Foxx plays McMillian, has the shape of a civil rights drama like "To Kill a Mockingbird," but it's more contemporary. The story might not be set during slavery or segregation, but those histories are innately connected to the prejudices and injustices that lead to the jailing of men like McMillian. Stevenson believes movies like "Just Mercy" can play an important role in raising awareness.

"We don't see those kinds of stories very often, and I think that's created a void in our consciousness about what's happening. We have the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and most people in this country have no knowledge of that," says Stevenson. "That lack of knowledge and that lack of compassion

is what's made us so vulnerable to the abuse that is on display in this story."

Jordan and Stevenson were speaking in a recent interview together amid the copious publicity demands of a much-touted holiday movie release, one that has drawn warm reviews since its premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and found awards season attention ahead of its Dec. 25 release. It expands nationwide Jan. 10.

Stevenson has dedicated much of his life to advocacy outside the courtroom (including a widely watched TED Talk), yet even he was slightly shell-shocked by the experience. "I think I did 67 interviews yesterday," he said, bewildered.

But both Stevenson and Jordan want "Just Mercy" to be as talked about as possible. The movie is, itself, a representation of the ideals it upholds. "Just Mercy" is the first major studio movie produced with an inclusion rider, the contractual provision mandating the consideration of people from underrepresented groups for cast and crew positions.

After Frances McDormand famously uttered the term in her acceptance speech at the 2018 Oscars, Jordan's production company, Outlier Society, adopted it. That helped lead to a similar such commitment by WarnerMedia, the parent company of "Just Mercy" distributor Warner Bros., which has a first-look deal with Outlier Society.

"This is the first opportunity for me to really implement the inclusion rider in a real way," says Jordan. "It's a step. You've got to be able to adapt and find ways to make change. I'm just trying to play my part in the bigger puzzle of it all. Change is something that's uncomfortable, so you have to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I've learned that from Bryan."

Jordan, the 32-year-old Newark, N.J.-raised star of "Black Panther," and "Creed," and the 60-year-old Stevenson, who experienced segregation and violence firsthand growing up in Delaware before attending Harvard Law, have found a bond despite their divergent worlds. They are both black men from humble Northeast origins who have risen to the heights of their respective industries, and are trying to give their considerable abilities to effect change.



MATT LICARI, INVISION/AP

Michael B. Jordan, right, poses with civil rights attorney Bryan Stevenson, left, Dec. 16 to promote "Just Mercy." Jordan plays Stevenson in the film.

"He's not just somebody trying to be famous," Stevenson says of Jordan. "He's trying to be somebody who makes a difference in the world. I so appreciated that and respected that about him. It made me more hopeful and confident that this project would be OK because I was very apprehensive at first."

Stevenson had seen plenty of legal dramas that prized the actresses over issues. But he was put at ease, in part, by Jordan's desire to make the film with the inclusion rider.

"Having a film about justice that isn't in some way dealing with issues like diversity and inclusion and opening doors to women and people of color would be paradoxical," says Stevenson. "I was enormously proud that Michael made that part of this."

The film's director, Destin Daniel Cretton ("Short Term 12"), is currently prepping Marvel's first Asian-led film, "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings." In making "Just Mercy," he said he saw the direct effects of the production's focus on inclusivity.

"We had department heads who have never been a department head in their careers, and they had very long careers. They just had never been given the chance," said Cretton, specifically citing makeup department head Patrice Coleman. "Now she has that on her résumé, and she will get hired again. That is a really beautiful thing to me. I hope more productions and more studios take the steps to do that."

"Just Mercy" isn't just about one case. There is another, har-

rowingly depicted in the film, about a man on death row (Herbert Richardson, played by Rob Morgan) who doesn't dispute his guilt but does dispute the state's right to end his life. "Just Mercy" becomes a drama about the death penalty, itself. In his book, Stevenson writes: "The real question of capital punishment in this country is: Do we deserve to kill?"

Stevenson remains optimistic and tireless. "You can triumph," he says. "You can make a difference." His empowering message of hope has resonated for Jordan.

"I feel like I grew up a lot in the last four or five years. Something greater than me has kind of called me in to help push something forward," Jordan says. "This movie changed me. It opened up my eyes."

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Can aliens swim ‘Underwater’?

Film plays homage to ‘Alien’ with similar roles, plot but different setting

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

The opening shot of “Underwater” roves around the empty, industrial passageways of some kind of transport vessel, its walls creaking. Motivated by an unknown force, the camera’s pan ultimately lands on Norah (Kristen Stewart), who has cropped bleached hair and a mouthful of toothpaste, clad in her skivvies. Immediately the audience recognizes this will be Stewart’s “Ripley moment,” paying homage to Sigourney Weaver’s iconic role in Ridley Scott’s “Alien” (but at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, rather than in outer space).

Norah is a mechanical engineer aboard a large structure surrounding the Kepler ocean drill, which is in the business of penetrating the Earth’s crust searching for minerals like a hungry ant eater. She’s a cynical sort of savior, scooping spiders from the sink, but she knows how to make the tough decisions too. When the structure is rocked by several massive jolts, she’s forced to sacrifice a couple of colleagues while sealing off a passageway to save the whole ship. Soon it’s just a small group of survivors, hoping to make their way down to the ocean floor and across to another drilling station, the Roebuck. It seems their vulnerable suits and the deadly pressure from the miles of water they’re

under will be the most dangerous thing to navigate, but they’re of course underestimating the real threats of what lies beneath.

Written by Brian Duffield and Adam Cozad, the specter of “Alien” haunts “Underwater,” a damp riff off and tribute to the 1979 extraterrestrial horror thriller. One can imagine the pitch meeting: “It’s ‘Alien’ on the ocean floor!” But it heeds so closely that one can easily predict each story beat, each reveal, each jump scare. Director William Eubank distinguishes the formulaic film with a jittery artfulness rendered in shades of gray and green, but what elevates the B-movie is the presence of Stewart, who is both a movie star and a great actress. Although she sometimes seems to vacillate between the two poles (“Charlie’s Angels” vs. “Personal Shopper,” for example), in “Underwater,” she is both, bringing her cool elan to this monster movie under the sea.

Oh yeah, “Underwater” is a monster movie, but you know that, right? This Lovecraftian tale takes the “Alien” structure and plunges it “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea,” with a nod to Neil Marshall’s claustrophobic 2006 cave horror flick “The Descent.” The result is something Jules Verne could only dream of, putting even the iconic Xenomorph to shame.

The sickly green aesthetic and harried editing brings a queasy



Twentieth Century Fox/AP

Kristen Stewart takes on a very Sigourney Weaver-ish role in “Underwater.”

verve to the proceedings, and coupled with the cast (Stewart is joined by Vincent Cassel, John Gallagher, Jr., Jessica Henwick, Mamoudou Athie and T.J. Miller), “Underwater” rises above its generic provenance. But as stylish as it is, and with as many deeply treacherous and inventive

dilemmas as the group faces, the film is too faithful to the formula that it never achieves pulse-quickening suspense. It devolves into a grim box-checking as our final girl drags herself around the murky environs of the ocean floor: “Underwater” never quite

breaches the surface from good to great, though this well-appointed creature feature proves to be an excellent showcase for Stewart’s screen presence.

“Underwater” is rated PG-13 for sci-fi action and terror, and brief strong language. Running time: 95 minutes.

‘Like a Boss’ makeup film covers up too much talent

Michael O’Sullivan
The Washington Post

“Like a Boss” is the perfect airplane movie: something that won’t distract you terribly much while you work the New York Times crossword puzzle during a long flight, periodically looking up at the screen when the 2-year-old in the seat behind you kicks the back of your chair. Oh well. At least that way you won’t fall asleep.

In a warm movie theater with reclining lounge chairs, the risk of drifting off is far greater — which is, quite frankly, shocking, considering this is a Tiffany Haddish movie.

With Rose Byrne, the normally hilarious Haddish plays the co-owner of a small, bricks-and-mortar cosmetics shop named, after the childhood best friends, Mel & Mia’s. (You know: the kind of quaint, stand-alone boutique selling hand-mixed foundation and blush that is ground using a mortar and pestle — the kind of place that doesn’t actually exist, except on screen.)

A half-billion dollars in debt, Mel and Mia are miraculously bailed out by Claire Luna (Salma



Paramount Pictures/AP

From left: Salma Hayek, Tiffany Haddish and Rose Byrne star in “Like a Boss.”

Hayek), a predatory makeup mogul who immediately — and predictably — begins driving a psychological wedge between the business partners, playing Byrne’s Mel (the money-minded one) off against Haddish’s Mia (the creative one) so that Claire

herself can assume a controlling interest in their company.

But the power of female friendship is too great, in a movie that keeps hammering that point home, between jokes about sex, marijuana and a baby-shower cake with a doll’s head emerging

from what looks like an anatomically correct 3-D model you’d find in an OB/GYN’s office.

During a preview screening, the laughs were few and far between, even counting that cake scene. The roster of otherwise funny supporting actors — Billy

Porter, Jennifer Coolidge, Karan Soni, Jimmy O. Yang — does little to leaven this flat loaf, which isn’t just flavorless but half-baked. Case in point: Mel and Mia’s product that initially draws the attention of Claire, for instance, is a single-use makeup kit called the One Night Stand, which isn’t just a dumb idea, but a wasteful one. As wasteful as the film is of its talent.

As for director Miguel Arteta, a filmmaker who, from his 1997 breakout “Star Maps,” to 2017’s “Beatriz at Dinner,” has never been afraid to be edgy, even transgressive, it’s a mystery why he would make this film, when Hollywood is full of no-name hacks willing to do the job.

True to its workplace-themed title, “Like a Boss” feels like a chore someone was handed. Perhaps oddest of all, Mel & Mia’s company is all about selling makeup that doesn’t hide a woman’s natural beauty. But “Boss” trowels on the clown white, strenuously reaching for nonexistent yuks instead of trusting in the talent of its likable but ill-used cast.

“Like a Boss” is rated R for coarse language, crude sexual material and drug use. Running time: 83 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

By ELISE FAVIS

The Washington Post

Last year was a strong one for games. Remedy's Control let us explore a cerebral, David Lynch-inspired world, Respawn wowed us with the surprise release of battle royale title Apex Legends, and Hideo Kojima's mind-bending, package-delivering thriller Death Stranding got love from fans as well as critics.

Now that 2019 has come to an end, what can we look forward to in 2020?

The new year leaves us on the precipice of a new console generation. Titles like Hellblade: Senua's Saga, Halo: Infinite and Godfall are announced for next-gen platforms, while others haven't revealed PlayStation 5 or Xbox Series X versions (i.e. Cyberpunk 2077) and will release for the current generation. Despite this transitional period, we still have plenty to be excited about.

Cyberpunk 2077

Platform: PS4, Xbox One, PC, Google Stadia

Release date: April 16
Cyberpunk, a science fiction subgenre about dystopian futures and humans with robotic limbs, has a storied history in video games, with games like Deus Ex and Shadowrun. The cyberpunk trend has slowed somewhat in recent years, but Cyberpunk 2077 hopes to bring it back to the forefront.

Cyberpunk 2077, the next RPG from the makers of The Witcher series, was first announced back in 2012. Now, eight years later, it's finally ready. Set in the futuristic metropolis of Night City, that world is geographically smaller than that of The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, but it's expected to be denser with more verticality. It's one of the first massive open worlds to exclude loading screens completely, leaving you with uninterrupted immersion. Kenji Reeves will play Johnny Silverhand, an iconic character from the original Cyberpunk 2020 tabletop game on which the video game is based. We expect his role to be nothing short of breathtaking.

Ghost of Tsushima

Platform: PS4

Release date: TBA 2020

This samurai action-adventure is a big tonal shift for Sucker Punch, a studio best known for the superhero series Infamous. Taking place in an open world set in a feudal Japan, Ghost of Tsushima puts a katana in your hands, but it won't be all about



Washington Post illustration

Final Fantasy VII Remake, Hellblade 2 and Cyberpunk 2077 are a few hotly anticipated games in 2020.

Games go next-gen

2020 to bring much-anticipated sequels, fresh takes to consoles new and old

mowing down foes. Stealth will play a part, too, and you will wield a grappling hook to scale walls like Nathan Drake in Uncharted 4. The Game Awards gave us a first proper peek at the game, and it looks gorgeous, but much of the details remain a mystery. The PlayStation exclusive arrives this summer for PS4, with no word yet on whether it will come to next-gen as well.

The Last of Us 2

Platform: PS4

Release date: May 29
Some, including me, were hesitant about a sequel to The Last of Us. The first entry from 2013 had a fitting end, possibly one of the best endings in a video game to date. But after witnessing several The Last of Us 2 trailers, developer Naughty Dog is convincing me otherwise. Maybe there's more for us within the game's painful, yet beautiful, world.

The Last of Us 2 is a tale of revenge. Instead of playing as Joel, the protagonist from the original, you now play as a teenage Ellie who has been through hell and back. She's no longer telling puffed-one liners, or awed by the remnants of beauty that remain in a ravaged United States. She's mad. In fact, she's furious. She's lost too many loved ones to a traumatic zombie apocalypse, and she's seen too many horrors. She isn't letting it go.

Exactly where The Last of Us 2 takes us and who is along for the journey (Joel shows up briefly in a trailer from E3 2018), remains to be seen. But we expect it will be one hell of a ride when it's released this May.

Halo: Infinite

Platform: Xbox Series X, PC
Release date: TBA 2020

Halo has long been the face of Xbox, so it wasn't a surprise to find out its newest entry is one of the launch titles for Xbox Series X. Halo: Infinite is the sixth main entry in the iconic first-person shooter franchise, and once again puts you inside the helmet of Master Chief. 343 Industries has built a new engine for Halo: Infinite, which will likely show off Series X's potential. Despite the popularization of battle royale over the past couple years, with other long-running shooter franchises creating their own iterations like Call of Duty Black Ops 4's Blackout, 343 Industries has stated that it will not be creating such a mode for Halo.

Watch Dogs: Legion

Platform: PS5, Xbox Series X, PS4, Xbox One, PC
Release date: TBA

What if you could play as any character you see in a bustling virtual world? That's what Ubisoft is promising. Taking place in a post-Brexit London, you once again play as a hacker activist. But now, you can play as any NPC or non-player character (even a grandma vigilante) when you recruit them to your cause.

The Watch Dogs series dates back to 2014, and it's had some bumps in the road. The first Watch Dogs was met with mixed reception due to its bleak world and weak protagonist. Watch Dogs 2 improved somewhat, by introducing a vibrant and beautiful San Francisco, expanding

on hacker tools and non-lethal options and featuring a tongue-in-cheek narrative that was both playful and juvenile. We hope Watch Dogs: Legion further improves on those points, and considering its setting, we're crossing our fingers that Ubisoft will finally take a political plunge with the story.

Watch Dogs: Legion was delayed a couple times. Most recently, it was expected to come out in March, but this date has since shifted to "increase development time." Ubisoft hasn't publicly stated a new launch day, but we expect it will still be out in 2020. It's also coming to next-gen consoles. We're excited to see how it all comes together.

Godfall

Platform: PS5, PC

Release date: TBA 2020

Godfall is the first title to be revealed for the PlayStation 5, as announced at The Game Awards. It's published by Gearbox, the makers of Borderlands, and developed by Counterplay Games. Godfall is best described as a "looter slasher" — it combines Diablo-like looter gameplay, RPG mechanics and melee combat. Set in a fantasy world split into realms of Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Spirit, it looks action-packed to the fullest. Based on the trailer shown at The Game Awards, it looks like someone swapped out Destiny's guns for swords.

Counterplay CEO and Godfall creative director Keith Lee wrote in a press release that the team is "innovating with Godfall to provide a fresh take on action

RPGs by rewarding skill-based offensive gameplay and making every hit matter."

Godfall will also release on PC. It does not yet have a release date, but it's confirmed to launch alongside the PS5 this year.

Final Fantasy VII Remake

Platform: PS4

Release date: March 3

It's been a long time coming. The Final Fantasy VII Remake began to feel more like a dream than reality when it was a no-show at events like E3 for several years. However, it's back. With a release date in tow and gameplay trailers showing it in action, like the recent sneak peek from The Game Awards, we have a better idea of what to expect from this highly anticipated, re-imagined classic.

Final Fantasy VII Remake ditched the iconic turn-based format of the 1997 original for a flashier, action-driven alternative similar to Final Fantasy XV. If you've hard-pressed to play turn-based combat, though, you can hop into the settings and switch to classic mode. With slick visuals and a modern twist, Final Fantasy VII never looked better.

Senua's Saga: Hellblade 2

Platform: Xbox Series X, PC

Release date: TBA

The first Hellblade, which came out in 2017, was a harrowing tale about a woman named Senua suffering from psychosis and venturing into the depths of hell to save her lover. But Senua's story isn't over: Ninja Theory announced during the 2019 Game Awards that the studio is working on hers. Little was shown outside of a short trailer, which showed Senua covered in ritualistic markings as she screamed. The first Hellblade was a deeply and painfully emotional game, one that sticks with you. We hope that Ninja Theory continues its effective portrayal of mental health in this new chapter.

Hellblade 2 is one of the few titles confirmed for the Xbox Series X. Hellblade 2's release date is unknown, but as a next-gen console game, it will arrive on the Xbox Series X's holiday launch.

Animal Crossing: New Horizons

Platform: Nintendo Switch

Release date: March 20

Animal Crossing fans have been clamoring for another mainline installment since New Leaf, which released in 2012 on the Nintendo 3DS. Animal Crossing: New Horizons brings the popular simulator franchise to Nintendo Switch and it comes with a bevy of changes. New Horizons moves out from the usual urban setting of Animal Crossing to a deserted island. With crafting, more customization options and changing seasons that can be matched to reflect your real-life region, it already looks like it's going to be a great experience. Expect new and returning villagers, too. Familiar characters, like Tom Nook and Isabelle, will be on this tropical island feel like home.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Pawternity perks for pet parents

Some companies acknowledge that four-legged adoptees are part of the family too

BY MARK WILLIAMS
The Columbus Dispatch, Ohio

To BrewDog, furry families are as important as the human ones. That's why the Scottish brewer, which has based its U.S. operations in Canal Winchester, Ohio, gives its employees an unusual perk: A week of paid time off when they adopt a dog that they can use one time.

"The regular family isn't everyone's thing. We have to make sure we're nurturing people's family, whether that's furry families or human families," said Miranda Dietz, the company's supply chain manager. "This is just a really cool way to make sure we're taking care of our people."

While still few in number, other companies have started to offer similar benefits.

Minneapolis digital marketing agency Nina Hale has a "furry-ternity leave" policy that gives new pet parents a week of work-from-home days so that they can adjust to their new pets.

"Part of embracing employee satisfaction as a business priority means recognizing important life events that happen outside of the office," Nina Hale CEO

'Pet owners increasingly think of their pets as members of the family. When employers offer pet-friendly benefits, it sends an important signal that the company cares about every member of the family, even the ones with four legs.'

Steven Feldman
Director of the the Human Animal Bond
Research Institute

Donna Robinson said when the policy was put in place in 2018. "If we want to continue to set the example as a top workplace, it is crucial to offer innovative benefits that help to preserve the work-life happiness of our employee owners."

Pet-food company Mars Petcare encourages its workers to talk with their managers to figure out time off when they adopt a new pet. In addition, the company's new U.S. headquarters in a suburb of Nashville, Tenn., has a "doggie playcare" with full-time pet-sitters.

The New York City-based software

company mParticle offers two weeks paid time off for those who adopt a rescue dog or cat.

Bark, the company behind the dog toy and treat subscription BarkBox, doesn't have an official policy when it comes to giving workers time off at its Columbus operations when they adopt a new dog. Still, it gives employees time to work from home and has an extensive support system to provide help to new pup parents in the office, said Stacie Grissom, director of content and communications at Bark, where employees are permitted to bring their dogs to work.

"There are so many questions in the first few days and weeks of having a new dog, and we've noticed that it's extremely helpful to have these in-real-life human resources to support folks with a new dog," she said.

One employee has fostered 63 dogs in the past four years, making her a sort of "dogmother" to the dogs and humans in the office who need help, Grissom said.

For pet-friendly companies, the payoff from such policies is employees more likely to be engaged with their work, research shows.

A 2018 study by Nationwide, the nation's

largest pet insurer, and the Human Animal Bond Research Institute found that 90% of employees in pet-friendly workplaces feel highly connected to their company mission and willing to recommend their employers to others. That drops to less than 65% in less dog-friendly companies, according to the report.

"Pet owners increasingly think of their pets as members of the family," the institute's executive director, Steven Feldman, said in the report. "When employers offer pet-friendly benefits, it sends an important signal that the company cares about every member of the family, even the ones with four legs."

John Macari, 32, of Columbus, took a paid week off from work at BrewDog when he adopted Khaya, a Rhodesian Ridgeback that is now 14 months old.

Macari said the benefit might be unusual for most companies, but not for BrewDog, which also allows workers to bring their pets to work with them. Taking time off allows the puppy and its owner to get more accustomed to each other in a new environment for the dog, he said.

"It's good for the dog," he said. "It's good for us. It helps the dog get settled, helps you bond with them."



JOSHUA A. BICKEL, COLUMBUS DISPATCH/TNS

BrewDog employee John Macari, 32, poses for a portrait with his dog, Khaya, a 14-month-old Rhodesian Ridgeback, on Dec. 12, at BrewDog Franklinton in Columbus, Ohio. BrewDog gives up to a week of paid time off for its employees when they adopt a dog.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

If you live in Germany, several airlines have direct flights from Frankfurt to Innsbruck. You're there in an hour.

Driving: When you get to Austria, or at a service station on the way, pick up a toll pass, called a vignette. We chose the 10-day vignette for 10 euros. A two-month vignette would have run us 30 euros. Failure to buy a vignette if you plan to use the Austrian highways, which you probably will, can result in a spot fine of at least 120 euros.

— Norman Llamas



PHOTOS BY NORMAN LLAMAS/Stars and Stripes

Beautiful and colorful Innsbruck city buildings line the River Inn, with the majestic Alps complementing the view.

The town that Max built

BY NORMAN LLAMAS
Stars and Stripes

Just before Christmas this year, my family and I visited Innsbruck in Austria. Located around 180 miles, or four hours by car, from Aviano, Innsbruck is not only surrounded by the majestic Alps and all they have to offer, but is also home to the Swarovski crystal company and has some great Christmas markets.

We made our way around town on foot, walking along the River Inn or through the Old Town to wherever our curiosity took us.

Our wanderings took us to a giant, illuminated Christmas tree decorated with Swarovski crystal, and set in the middle of one of many Christmas markets around the city. The next day, we visited the Old Town, a densely populated area full of colorful buildings that house a variety of modern and antiques shops. The area is believed to have been built by Maximilian I, the Holy Roman Emperor from 1508-1519.

When we were there, four Christmas markets were set up in the Old Town. In one, we tried *Kiachin*, a hot donut-like fried bread served with warm sauerkraut and *Almdudler*, a soda made with alpine herbs, and browsed the many shops and stands for artisanal knick-knacks, some from as far afield as Ukraine and Ecuador.

In addition to shopping and dining, there are many beautiful and historic churches and museums to explore in Innsbruck. I really enjoyed visiting the Hofkirche mit Silberner Kapelle, a Catholic church adjacent to the royal palace. In this church are the tombs of Emperor Maximilian I (with larger-than-life iron statues of family members and friends of Maximilian) and Archduke Ferdinand, whose assassination in Sarajevo in 1914 triggered World War I.

There's also a museum inside the church where you can see artifacts from the Maximilian I era. If you buy the church and museum ticket option, you can climb up the tower for an amazing view of the city and the mountain ranges.

Other must-sees in the Old Town are the Hospital Church of the Holy Spirit



The Golden Roof, located in Innsbruck's city center, is a canopy entirely made of golden shingles that is believed to have been built by Emperor Maximilian I.

— a marvelous pink building with an even more astonishing interior — and the Triumphforte, Innsbruck's small victory arch with its impressive architecture. There's also the Golden Roof, a canopy built entirely of golden shingles, and the Hofburg, or royal palace, which is considered one of the three most significant cultural buildings in the country, along with the Hofburg Palace and Schoenbrunn Palace, both located in Vienna.

No matter what you like exploring while on vacation, Innsbruck has something for everyone and that really impressed us.

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Innsbruck's Triumphforte, or victory arch, is in the southeastern part of the city center.



The Royal Palace, or Hofburg, of Innsbruck is a former Habsburg palace and considered one of the three most significant cultural buildings in Austria, along with the Hofburg and Schoenbrunn palaces, both in Vienna.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Crawling through Venice's cicchetti pubs

Venice was once a European superpower. Today, it's just a small town of about 55,000 people — yet it attracts millions of visitors each year. On a recent trip, a Venetian friend confided in me that there are no truly untouristy restaurants left in Venice. He said to stay in business these days, every restaurant must cater to tourists. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he added, "But there are still the cicchetti bars."

Venice has a wonderful tradition of cicchetti (pronounced chi-KET-tee) — the local appetizers that line the counters of little pubs all over town at the end of each workday. When in town, my favorite meal is what I call "The Stand-Up Progressive Venetian Pub Crawl Dinner" — visiting a series of these characteristic hole-in-the-wall pubs, eating ugly-looking morsels on toothpicks, and washing it all down with little glasses of wine. An added advantage is that local characters surround you. And, in a town with canals and no cars, pub-crawling is safe and easy. (Perhaps safer if you know how to swim.)

Venetians call this pub crawl the giro d'ombra. Giro means "stroll," and ombra — slang for a glass of wine — means "shade." This dates back to the old days, when a portable wine bar scooped with the shadow of the Campanile bell tower across St. Mark's Square. That wine bar is long gone, but the cicchetti bars remain, tucked away in the back streets.

While Venice is, it seems, sinking in tourist crowds, 90 percent of them seem to gather along the glitzy shopping streets between the Rialto Bridge and St. Mark's Square. The rest of the tourists are tourists is to wander. Don't worry about getting lost. In fact, get as lost as you can. Keep reminding yourself, "I'm on an island

and I can't get off." You generally won't find street names. When you want to find your way, simply look for small signs on the corners directing you to the nearest landmark (e.g., "per Rialto"). Given the confusing street plan, nearly every hotel or restaurant has a neighborhood map on its card. So, if you're disoriented, simply drop by any business and ask for its business card.

It's in the far reaches of Venice that you'll bump into the thriving little bacari (as the local pubs are called). Try deep-fried mozzarella cheese, gorgonzola, calamari, artichoke hearts, and anything odd on a toothpick. Crostini (small toasted bread with a topping) are popular, as are marinated seafood, olives, and prosciutto with melon. Meat and fish (pesce) munchies can be expensive, but veggies (vegetari) are cheap, at about 3 euros for a meal-sized plate. In many places, there's a set price per food item (e.g., 1.50 euros). To get a plate of assorted appetizers for 8 euros (or more, depending on how hungry you are), ask for: "Un piatto classico di cicchetti misti da otto euro." Bread sticks (grissini) are free for the asking.

Cicchetti bars have a social standup zone and a cozy gaggle of tables where you can generally sit down with your cicchetti or order from a simple menu. In some of the more popular places, the local crowds spill apply out into the street. Food usually costs the same price whether you stand or sit.

Bar-hopping Venetians enjoy an aperitivo, a before-dinner drink. Boldly order a



Rick Steves

Along with memorable and inexpensive eating, a cicchetti pub crawl is a great way to mingle and have fun with Venetians.

Bellini, a spritz con Aperol or a prosecco, and draw approving looks from natives.

Drink the house wines. A small glass of house red or white wine (ombra rosso or ombra bianco) or a small beer (birrino) costs about 1 euro. The house keg wine is cheap — 1 euro per glass, about 4 euros per liter. Vin bon, Venetian for fine wine, may run you from 2 to 6 euros per little glass. A blackboard usually lists several fine wines that are uncorked and available by the glass.

Bars don't stay open very late, and the cicchetti selection is best early, so start your evening by 6 p.m. Most bars are

closed on Sunday.

A few words are critical for your pub crawl vocabulary: If you like your wine full-bodied, specify corposo. A good start drink is fragolino, the local sweet wine, either bianco or rosso. It often comes with a little cookie (biscotto) for dipping. Also handy: "Le dispiace se mi siedo qui?" (Do you mind if I sit here?) and "Seti il mio pub bel ricordo?" (You are my most beautiful souvenir).

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Alpine adventures for non-skiers

One need not be a fan of snow sports to appreciate the sight of unspoiled landscapes and snow-capped peaks. There's plenty to do in the Alps, even for those not into downward dashes.

Watch balloon ascents: the cold clear days of January can provide some ideal conditions for ballooning, and the protected location of Filzmoos, Austria, makes the town well suited to host the sport. Ballooning festivals attracting teams from around the world occur back to back. A highlight of the International Balloon Festival (Jan. 11-18) is the Night of Balloons on Jan. 18, when the balloons are illuminated, drinks are served, bands play and fireworks light up the town. During the Hahnenhof Balloon Week (Jan. 18-25), some 45 balloons take to the skies, weather permitting, starting at 9 a.m. daily. During both events, it's possible to book an approximately 2½-hour balloon ride of your own. Online: filzmoos.at

Ice sculptures: At the World Snow Festival in Grindelwald, Switzerland (Jan. 20-25), 10 teams of international artists are presented with 10-foot high blocks of snow. Throughout the daytime hours of the week, the teams transform their ice sculptures under the admir-



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: [stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler](https://www.stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler)

ing eyes of visitors. Each year's competition is based on a theme, and in 2020, their finished works should reflect the idea of hospitality. While most of the teams are hard at work at the Baepplatz and Eiger Squares downtown, an additional two will sculpt and shape at the Maennlichen ski area. On Jan. 24 and 25, the finished works are set off to best effect with colorful illuminations. Entry is free. Online: grindelwald.swiss.ch

A similar event is the Snow Sculpture Contest in Valloire, France. From Jan. 21-24, teams of some of the world's best ice sculptors work with chain saws and more delicate tools of the trade to create mythical creatures, abstract forms and other works of art. At night, the light-

bathed sculptures beckon visitors on an evening stroll. Online: tinyurl.com/teoh4y

Overnight in an igloo: The Austrian resort of Brixen im Thale offers guests the chance to spend a night snuggled in ultra-warm sleeping bags, atop reindeer skins, in their very own igloos. A gondola ride whisks guests to the site of the Alpenhju village on the mountain's slope. Guests choose between a VIP stay or a romantic arrangement complete with candle-lit dinner in one of its 18 igloos. "Iglou Magic Evenings," available on Wednesday or Saturday evenings, consist of a mulled wine welcome drink, guided tour of the village, the chance to carve an ice sculpture, fondue dinner, hike by torchlight and a taxi ride back down to the valley. Overnight stays start at 420 euros for a couple in their own igloo, while the event visit without accommodation goes for 95 euros. The village remains open through the middle of March. Online: alpenhju.com

Low season: Time to put plans in order

Europe's most quiet season in terms of fests and events is a time to slow down and plan adventures for the year ahead. While not all of next summer's activities have to be planned

down to the last detail, and spontaneity is a wonderful thing, it can be wise to book early in terms of the following activities:

Music festivals: tickets to Europe's major music festivals can go in the blink of an eye, but as of this writing, they remained available for Rock am Ring in Nuerberg, Germany, where headliners include Green Day and System of a Down, June 5-7; Hurricane Festival in Scheeßel, Germany (Seeed, Kings of Leon, Twenty One Pilots) June 19-21, and the Roskilde Festival in Roskilde, Denmark (Taylor Swift, Tyler, The Creator) June 27-July 5.

Tomorrowland, an electronic dance music festival in Boom, Belgium, known for its spectacular staging, had some 400,000 attendees in 2019. Tickets sell out in minutes, but to have a chance, preregister and create an account on the event website for the worldwide pre-sale at 5 p.m. Jan. 25. The event itself takes place across two weekends, July 17-19 and July 24-26. Online: global.towerland.com

Runs and sporting competitions: While it's often possible for runners to register for short and mid-distance races on the spot, those with a big-city marathon in their sights may find they need to sign up months in advance. Registration fees are generally less the further out they're made, and

accommodation is more readily available. A race in 2020 that's yet to open its registration is the Medoc Marathon in southern France, loved for its vineyard scenery, costumed participants and wine drinking along the route. Registration starts in March, and the race itself takes place Sept. 12. Online: marathon-dumecoc.com

Some themed runs book out quickly, among them The Muddy Angel women's 5 km run. Runners face not only plenty of mud but a series of obstacles. Places remain available for races in this series in Frankfurt on May 9; Munich on June 21, Mannheim on June 27, and Stuttgart July 18-19. Online: en.muddyangelrun.com

The Fishermen's Friend Strongman Run is another race for which advance registration is advisable. Chose from distances of 6, 10 and 20 km and be part of this race over a challenging obstacle course on your own or as part of a team when it comes to Nuerburg, Germany on May 9 or Cologne Sept. 12. Online: strongmanrun.de

Distance walkers wishing to take on the Four Days Marches in Nijmegen, Netherlands July 21-24 should already be checking the event website for registration information. Online: 4daags.nl/en

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY DAVID EDGE/STARS AND STRIPES

The El Patron plate at Hacienda Mexican Restaurant in Wiesbaden, Germany, is three beef enchiladas smothered in cheese and a beef taco, with sour cream, guacamole and pico de gallo.

Mexican on the Rhine

Hacienda in Wiesbaden offers Tex-Mex with a twist

By DAVID EDGE
Stars and Stripes

The land of schnitzel and bratwurst will probably never be known for its daring takes on Mexican cuisine, but there are restaurants in Germany that do fine enough renditions of tacos, burritos and other standards.

Located on the Rhine river in downtown Wiesbaden, Hacienda Mexican Restaurant is a picturesque spot with a large, L-shaped dining room. The lighting is a little dark, but it makes the dining experience very cozy.

The menu is long and offers an impressive array of enchiladas, tostadas, tacos, burritos and salads.

Once seated, free chips and salsa arrived at the table. The chips were warm but the salsa — basically diced-up stewed tomatoes, onions and cilantro — left me wanting. I really missed the bell peppers and jalapenos that the Texan in me expects in a good salsa.

The drink menu offered a variety of wine, beer, tequila and margaritas. My guest and I both ordered frozen strawberry margaritas, which were a little on the weak side but very flavorful.

For the main course I ordered the El Patron plate, three beef enchiladas smothered in cheese and a beef taco, with sour cream, guacamole and pico de gallo. The meat was a little bland, but the smothering of sauce and cheese ended up making it really enjoyable.

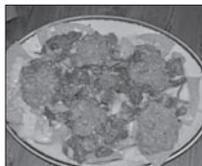


Hacienda is a picturesque eatery with mood lighting and an extensive menu.

My companion ordered the pulled pork nachos, with guacamole and pico de gallo. The flavor-packed pork was tender and juicy, tasting like it had been braised for hours.

As a very critical Texan, I found lacking the spicy heat that I associate with Tex-Mex. But dialing down the heat isn't all that unusual in Germany.

If you are a Mexican food lover in Wiesbaden, I'd recommend Hacienda. What the food lacks in heat, it makes up for by being



Hacienda's pulled pork nachos with guacamole and pico de gallo are flavor-packed.

HACIENDA MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Location: Biebrich Rheinsteingasse 152, Wiesbaden, 65203

Hours: Monday-Friday, 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Saturday 4 p.m.-11 p.m.; Sunday 12 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Prices: Most entrees are 10-20 euro

Menu: German with English under each description
Information: hacienda-restaurants.de/kontakt; reservations recommended.

— David Edge

well-prepared, and the servers are very attentive.

edge.david@stripes.com

Gadgets worth your kitchen's real estate

By KATIE WORKMAN
Associated Press

I love a shiny new kitchen object as much as the next cook, and at times my kitchen has resembled a kitchen specialty store. But what if you have a small kitchen, and counter space and cabinet storage are at a premium?

Here are some of my all-time favorite gadgets to make your cooking life better.

I'm skipping the bigger appliances like slow cookers and air fryers. I'm also skipping knives, cutting boards, pots and pans, measuring cups and the like, because you pretty much know you need those.

This is about great gadgets, both low- and high-tech, that deserve a spot in your kitchen because they work hard and smart.

Perfect peeler

I use a peeler pretty much every day for something. Potatoes, carrots, apples, winter squash, etc. I am a fan of Kuhn Rikon peelers, which are lightweight and easy to use on peels thick and thin. OXO also make an assortment with different blades, shapes and widths.

Pepper mill

Nothing is more important in the kitchen than salt and pepper, and freshly ground pepper is much better than pre-ground. The Peppermate Traditional Pepper Mill is sleek and contemporary looking, made of ceramic with a side crank. It has a removable, clear bottom cup under the grinder to catch the pepper, and an adjustable grinding size, from very fine (for most things) to very coarse (for things like steak au poivre). For a more classic look, Peugeot makes high-quality mills.

Mandoline

It's hard to get perfectly thin slices for most of us home cooks, even with a good knife. But with a mandoline, you can get even slices of all sorts of vegetables and other ingredients. One example is the OXO Good Grips Hand-Held version, which comes with settings for three different thin-thinness, and a handle so you can slice safely and quickly into a bowl or over a plate.

Food processor

I use no appliance more than this one. I use it for pureeing, chopping, slicing and shredding. Cuisinart has long been my go-to brand. I grew up with one and now own half a dozen. Other companies, like KitchenAid and Breville, also make good food processors. Sizes range from quite large (14- or 16-cup bowls) to mini (about 2 cups). I recommend one little one, for things like mincing garlic or making pesto, and one large, for everything else.

Microplane

One of those products where the brand name has become synonymous with the thing itself, even though other manufacturers make similar items. This is basically a small, handheld grater. The most classic one is long and narrow, with lots of fine blades that turn lemon zest and hard grating cheeses and chocolate into fluffy mounds of delicate tiny shreds. You can also get versions that grate food into larger strands.

Instant-read thermometer

There are many versions on the market, from digital to analog to Bluetooth to infrared. When you want to make sure that you are not overcooking a roast beef, or that your bread is cooked through, an instant-read thermometer is indispensable. In the most user-friendly digital arena, I recommend instant-read thermometers that are fast and precise with a wide temperature range.

Immersion blender

I love my blender and food processor, but if you've ever tried to transfer a pot of hot, chunky soup to a blender then you understand why an immersion blender is such an asset. Instead of pouring, just place the immersion blender right into the pot. You can even stick the wand into a can of whole tomatoes and puree them right there. There are loads of good ones on the market, from companies like Breville, All-Clad, Braun and Philips.

Wine opener

If you're not a wine drinker, then obviously this isn't a go-to gadget, but if you are, investing in a nice one makes opening a bottle a real pleasure. Williams Sonoma makes a great assortment including classic winged corkscrews and easy-to-use lever corkscrews. Rabbit is another reliable name in the wine-opener world, and you might splurge on a Pro Electric Corkscrew with an Infrared Thermometer for the true oenophile in your life.

Sous vide

If you're not curious about sous vide, then now is a good time to try this latest technology gadget: there are lots of options out there at pretty reasonable prices. Sous vide is a cooking method that entails putting food in a vacuum-sealed bag and cooking it in water at a controlled temperature. It's making it impossible to overcook it. The Joule Sous Vide is small compared to other sous vide appliances, but powerful, as well as sleek and attractive enough to leave out. It works with phone apps as well for the ultimate in modern cooking.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

WHERE TO GO
2020
WHAT TO DO

It's the dawn of a new year in travel, and while we can quibble over whether 2020 represents a new decade or the last year of the 2010s, we can be fairly confident that the love shown to Europe as a destination for the rest of the world will continue.

According to the statistics published by the World Tourism Organization, Europe accounted for half of the world's international arrivals in 2018, the most recent full year for which statistics are available. But where to go and what to do once on the continent remains the same divine dilemma as ever. Anniversaries, themed years and events that only come around every so often can guide travelers to destinations they might not have otherwise considered.

Trending destinations

The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) has tagged several European places amongst its destinations to watch in 2020. Italy's Basilicata region wins mention for ancient cave dwellings converted into hotels, cafes and art galleries and a cuisine based on locally sourced fish, meat and veg. Georgia gains a place for its open and friendly people, unspoiled countryside, and its youthful and fun capital city of Tbilisi, offering great restaurants, impressive wine bars and an expanding club scene. Madrid rates for its party and museum culture, along with its interesting and easily accessible neighboring cities of Toledo, Segovia, Avila, and Cuenca. The Netherlands claims its place on the list for its strong artistic heritage, with the master works of Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh and gems of cities including Delft, Haarlem and Utrecht to explore. Vienna scores points for its pristine baroque architecture, coffee house culture and classical music heritage. abta.com

Lonely Planet's Best in Travel preview for the upcoming year always features plenty of European entries. Included on their list for 2020 are the regions of Le Marche (hilltop towns, food festivals, beaches) in Italy; Cadiz Province (sherry and Michelin-starred restaurants) in Spain; and the Kvarner Gulf (a less trodden coastal area with a gritty but on-the-rise port city Rijeka) in Croatia. Cities include Salzburg, Austria (100 year anniversary of its classical music festival); Galway, Ireland (pubs, buskers and street entertainment) and Bonn, Germany (concerts celebrating native son Beethoven's 250th birthday). Countries include England (seaside and coastal parties), Netherlands (celebrations marking 75 years of freedom since the end of World War II) and North Macedonia (a new name and flight routes making Lake Ohrid more accessible than ever). lonelyplanet.com/articles/lonely-planet-best-in-travel-2020



Georgia has been named a destination to watch in 2020 by the Association of British Travel Agents. The country's capital city of Tbilisi is becoming known for its great restaurants, wine bars and club scene. Shown: Vakhtang Gorgasali Square.

Cultural capitals

Each year, two cities are awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, and in 2020, Rijeka, Croatia and Galway, Ireland, share the honors. Rijeka positions itself as "The Port of Diversity" and serves up 600 cultural events and 250 artistic projects, including an exhibition of the early works of Gustav Klimt that's set to run from July through October in its City Museum. Galway structures its program of events around the four seasons of the old Celtic calendar. Its opening event on Feb. 8 will be an open-air extravaganza celebrating the passing of winter. Galway's International Arts Festival is already considered one of the top multidisciplinary summer festivals of Europe; dates for this year's edition are July 13-26. "Wires Crossed," slated for Aug. 6-9, is billed as the largest circus spectacle to ever be staged in Ireland. The event entails a high-wire crossing of the River Corrib and Claddagh Basin to be undertaken by 400 individuals of all ages. Online: rijeka2020.eu/en and galway2020.ie/en

Transportation

A means of travel that seemed poised to die out until fairly recently is the night train's sleeper car. With environmental concerns and the phenomenon of "flight shame" on the rise, many travelers have once again embraced the concept of overnight rail travel. A journey by night train is lauded as a comfy



ISTOCK PHOTOS



Galway, Ireland, has been named a European Capital of Culture in 2020. On Feb. 8, it hosts an open-air extravaganza celebrating the passing of winter, and its International Arts Festival will run July 13-26.

way to arrive in the heart of a city center and a means to save money on hotel costs. Such services can take passengers to some pretty far-flung places. Board a French Intercités de Nuit train in Paris and wake up in Latour de Carol, a town in the Pyrenees close to the Spanish border, or hop on board the SJ night train in Malmö, Sweden and ride all the way to Narvik, a coastal town in the north of Norway some 140 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

Sports

The 2020 UEFA European Football Championship, played every four years, will take place in 12 countries from June 12 to July 12. The sharing of hosting duties between so many nations is a one-off event to celebrate the competition's 60th anniversary. Matches between the 24 teams to qualify will take place in London, UK; Munich, Germany; Rome, Italy; Baku, Azerbaijan; St. Petersburg, Russia; Budapest, Hungary; Bucharest, Romania; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Bilbao, Spain; Glasgow, Scotland; Dublin, Ireland and Copenhagen, Denmark. Online: uefa.com/uefaeuro-2020

Festivals

A trio of music festivals will be celebrating 50th anniversaries or editions in 2020: The U.K.'s Glastonbury Festival (June 24-28); Denmark's Roskilde Festival (June 27-July 4) and France's Festival Interceltique de Lorient, a celebration of Celtic music and culture (Aug. 7-16).

A COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY GUIDE

AUSTRIA

Vienna fetes the musical genius of Ludwig van Beethoven, who left his mark on the city during the 35 years he made it his home. Concerts, opera performances and special exhibitions will mark the year in which Beethoven would have celebrated his 250th birthday. Online: wien.info/en/music-stage-shows/beethoven-2020

BELGIUM

The World Choir Games is the world's largest competition between non-professional choirs. The 2020 edition of this event, which consists of competitive and non-competitive sections and a festival, will be hosted by the Flanders cities of Antwerp and Ghent July 5-15. Some 364 choirs from 56 countries and regions have already registered. [interkultur.com/events/world-choir-games/flanders/2020/](http://Online: interkultur.com/events/world-choir-games/flanders/2020/)

ENGLAND

When VE-Day dawned on May 8, 75 years will have passed since the guns fell silent at the end of World War II in Europe. VE-Day 75, a three-day international celebration of the arrival of peace, is slated to take place throughout Britain May 8-10. Online: veday75.org

FRANCE

The city of Rouen is taking the lead in celebrating the centenary of the canonization of Joan of Arc. A number of cultural events to mark the date will take place there through September 2020, including official ceremonies on May 17. Reims hosts its festival in honor of the national heroine June 6-7. Online: rouen-tourisme.com/agenda/evenerment-rouen-fete-joane-d-arc-7562

The industrial city of Lille has been awarded the title "World Capital of Design 2020" for a number of new initiatives that are transforming the city into a

FROM PAGE 30

cosmopolitan oasis, from hotels and restaurants to an art museum in the former premises of an Art Deco swimming pool.

GERMANY

The town of Oberammergau in the Bavarian Alps stages its Passion Play just once every ten years. The tradition dates back to 1634, when villagers first reconnected the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a means of thanking God for delivering them from the plague. Oberammergau keeps the faith by staging the spectacle from May 16 through Oct. 4. Ticket prices range from 30 to 180 euros and are available on the event website. Online: passionspiele-oberammergau.de

ITALY

The 500th anniversary of the death of Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, better known as Raphael, is being marked by several exhibitions, including one in his hometown of Urbino. The Galleria Nazionale delle Marche's tribute to the Renaissance painter runs through Jan. 19. The exhibition titled "Raffaello," on March 5-June 2 at the Scuderie di Quirinale in Rome, will feature over 100 of his paintings and sketches. Online: scuderiequirinale.it

The Italian Capital of Culture 2020 is the city of Parma, whose contributions to making the world a tastier place include Parmesan cheese and prosciutto ham. The surrounding Emilia-Romagna region blesses mankind with balsamic vinegar, Lambrusco wine and top-quality olive oil. In addition to eating well there, visitors can enjoy world class, art, architecture and an opera house rated to be amongst the best in all Italy.

LUXEMBOURG

Starting March 1, public transport within the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg will become free to use for residents and non-residents alike. The free ride applies to travel in second class only, and those who wish to travel in first class will have to pay for it. Online: mobiliteit.lu/en/tickets/free-transport

NETHERLANDS

The Dutch celebrate the capitulation of Nazi Germany and what marked the end of World War II for their country with their national holiday Liberation Day on May 5. The day is celebrated on a grand scale, particularly in Haarlem and Wageningen, the small towns in which the Germans troops in the Netherlands capitulated in 1945. With 75 years having passed since that date, look for 2020's celebrations to be quite special. Online: holland.com/global/tourism/information/events/liberation-day.htm

The opportunity to host the annual Eurovision Song Contest is awarded to the country whose contestant won the competition in the previous year. As the 2019 winner hailed from the Netherlands, the 65th edition of the contest will be held in Rotterdam May 12-16.

SWITZERLAND

The city of Schaffhausen will celebrate its 975th anniversary with a grandiose street party. SCHAFFUSIA '20 will see the Old Town transformed into a festival grounds offering entertainment and unique attractions June 26-27. Online: schaffusia.ch

Germany DIRECTORY

Restaurants

KAISERSLAUTERN	BAVARIA	STUTTGART	RHEIN MAIN
 <p>Zimtblüte asian food Call 0631-58047 for Pick-Up Orders Tue-Sun 11am-Open Mon Closed Wolfsbacher Str. 110 07661 Kaiserslautern</p>	 <p>BOHM Neue Amberger Straße 39 92655 Grafenwöhr 09641 9360-0 • www.hotelboehm.de</p>	 <p>Kashmir 50777/81 Pfaffenlocher Str. 200 Phone 0714 38 34 04 ECHT/REINIGEN Kullager Str. 11 Phone 0714 39 76 34 LEONBERG Leuninger Str. 10 Phone 0714 30 24 37 Hours: 10:00 - 10:00 and 12:00 - 10:00</p>	 <p>Come Experience Germany's Finest Beer and Authentic German Cuisine www.kraushaus-cs.de Otto Saly Ring 27 55232 Mainz-Kastell Tel: 06134-20999 Open daily from 11:00 - 24:00</p>
 <p>ENCHILADA COCKTAIL CASINO BUFFET Dinner ENCHI Dinner Schillerplatz 3-5 67655 Kaiserslautern 0631-399238 www.Enchilada-kaiserslautern.de</p>	 <p>Caribbean Grill Savor the Flavor of the Islands Diefertstr. 18 92655 Grafenwöhr 0152-5898167/59 1-547-02-728</p>	 <p>Two Locations: Hohenloherstraße 8 70435 Stuttgart and Marienstraße 28 70178 Stuttgart TRIPLE B - High Quality Burgers www.beeff-burger-brothers.de</p>	 <p><i>China Restaurant</i> Mayflower Open daily 11:30 - 15:00 & 17:30 - 23:30 USD accepted - Master Card/Visa Tel: 06134-258928 Uthmann Strasse 8, Mainz-Kastern</p>
 <p>CANTINA MEXICANA Kaisersr. 117 67661 Kaiserslautern-Emselderhof 0631-399238 www.cantina-mexicana.com</p>		 <p>olio e pane <small>OPEN 2020</small> OUTLET/RY METZGEREN Lindener Str. 2555 Metzgeren +49 (0)7123 38 11 61 Opening Hours: Mon - Sat 11:30am - 10pm</p>	 <p>BULLS HERTLÖVERS OPEN Monday - Friday 06:00 - 20:00 Weekends 08:00 - 20:00 Located in the Wiesbaden Main Train Station: directly after entering the main entrance.</p>
		 <p>SPICE CAFE Turmstr. 6 71080 Holzgerlingen 07031 414777 www.destadcafe.de Opening Times Mo-Fr 8:30am to 7pm Sa 9am to 6pm Sun 9am to 7pm</p>	 <p>WORLD'S BEST AMERICAN RESTAURANT Chillers BÄHNHOFPLATZ 1 85189 WIESBADEN OPEN EVERYDAY FROM 10PM WINE MENU AND SPECIALS ON 11 SEE WWW.CHILLERS-WIESBADEN.COM RESERVATIONS AVAILABLE WEEKEND!</p>
		 <p>EHRBAR BEST BURGER IN TOWN Lauchhammer 1 • 71032 Böblingen 1-07031 88 96 961 www.ehrbar-imb.de Deutschland's 1st Burger Restaurant</p>	

Hotels

 <p>HOTEL RESTAURANT BOHM Neue Amberger Straße 39 92655 Grafenwöhr • 09641 9369-0 www.hotelboehm.de</p>	 <p>Hotel Forsthaus by Garmisch Free breakfast, Family Apartments, Hot Tub, Sauna, Dogs Welcome, American/German Owned, 36 Euro/Person, Double Occupancy, Per Night. Tel: 0824-9120 • Email: hotel@forsthaus-obersau.de VA! Forms accepted! www.forsthaus-obersau.de</p>	 <p>pullman HOTELS AND RESORTS WITTENBERG PARKING Vollmoellerstrasse 5 • 70563 VAHINGEN - STUTTGART t +49 714 300-1 • f +49 714 300-201 • e: h4@pullman.com BOOK TODAY 0711 730 2300</p>	 <p>EDELWEISS LODGE and RESORT</p>
		 <p>Hotel Villa Just 3 Minutes from Rose Barracks Amberger Str. 9 • 92449 Wöckel E-Mail: hotel-villa@nemal.de Tel.: +49 (0) 9662/42070 www.hotel-villa-viueck.de</p>	



Wine for France,
Black Tea for England,
Manuka for New Zealand ...

**What is the origin
of Red Ginseng
representing Korea?**

The Pope,
the Queen of England,
French President ...

**What did Korea give to
these heads of state as a gift
with 120 years of heritage?**



Claiming a 76.9 percent
share of the market, (Korea Food and Drug Administration,
domestic sales in 2018)
loved for over 1,000 years ...

**Which Red Ginseng brand
do Koreans love the most?**

KOREA GINSENG CORP



Origin of Korean Red Ginseng, which represents health functional foods of Korea

Each country has its own foods for taking care of health. Like wine with France, Black Tea with England, and Manuka with New Zealand, Korean Red Ginseng has been associated with Korea. Korean Red Ginseng and its components may help prevent several types of harmful viruses. This supports the claim that Korean Red Ginseng boosts the immune system and illustrates why it has been a popular herbal remedy for more than 2,000 years.

6 Efficacies of Korean Red Ginseng



Supports Healthy Immune System



Helps Main Healthy Energy Levels



High in Antioxidants



Supports Healthy Circulation



Helps Support Healthy Brain Function



Supports Normal Aging

These statements have not been evaluated by THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION. This products is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Heritage of KGC, the professional of Korean Red Ginseng with 120 years of history

KGC(Korea Ginseng Corporation) was established in 1899, and has taken the lead in preserving the tradition of Korean ginseng for the past 120 years. KGC now runs four regional headquarters in the US, China, Japan, and Taiwan, and operates overseas branches in over 40 countries with more than 2,000 employees. Expanding our reputation as a ginseng specialist, KGC now aims to gain recognition as a global general health & wellness brand.

1899
2019
120th ANNIVERSARY

World's No.1 CheongKwanJang, the very Red Ginseng brand Koreans love the most

CheongKwanJang is the Korean Red Ginseng brand created by know-hows and passion of KGC. It has been the national gift from Korea's president to other national leaders visiting Korea. This gift was also given to the leaders who participated in the 2019 ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit which took place in November 2019. We are extremely proud of our heritage and it is our mission to keep this tradition alive by introducing to consumers worldwide. A 76.9 percent share of the Korean Red Ginseng market! (source: Korea Food and Drug Administration, domestic sales in 2018) This figure just makes it obvious for CheongKwanJang to be the most beloved Korean Red Ginseng brand. Now it's your turn to share this loved one for an active & energetic lifestyle all year long. It's your turn to share our tradition for an active & energetic lifestyle all year long.



Korean Red Ginseng Honey Paste



10ml x 20Pouch
10ml x 30Pouch



Korean Red Ginseng Extract Everytime Balance

3g x 100Pouch



Korean Red Ginseng Extract Tea

2g x 10Pouch



Korean Red Ginseng Tea COOL

20g x 6Slices



Honeyed Korean Red Ginseng Slices

50ml x 60Pouch



Korean Red Ginseng Won Pouch

240g



Renesse Korean Red Ginseng Candy

180g



Renesse Sugar-free Korean Red Ginseng Candy

600mg x 120Capsule



Nutripack

• Sale Company HOLY Co., • Cell phone 010-3827-5600
• Address 522-2, Daedong-ro, Yeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Korea

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific



PHOTOS BY THERON GODBOLD/Stars and Stripes

Tokyo German Village, a theme park in Chiba prefecture, Japan, offers paddleboats and other activities.

Light up the night

Tokyo German Village is a feast for the eyes

By THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

In the hills of Chiba, near Sodegaura city east of Tokyo and across the bay, a theme park lights up for the winter.

Tokyo German Village opened in 2001 and has established itself as one of the three greatest theme parks in the Kanto region. It's listed as a Japan heritage nightscape, according to Japan-Chiba-Guide.com.

This year — the 14th year of illumination at the park — the theme is 1980s video games. The holidays may be past, but the light show at the village lasts until early April.

Up close, the fields of light look like someone laid out their Christmas lights to check for burned-out bulbs, but walk to the viewing area and everything changes. An immense fantasy scene takes you on an 8-bit adventure with castles, swords and flying pigs.

This family-friendly park has more than just lights. The smell of bacon, sausage and turkey legs will inundate your senses while you pass the food area on your way to a 200-foot-long tunnel of lights leading to the Ferris wheel.

For 800 yen, or a little less than \$8, you can grab some of the fare which resembles that found at many German-themed parks in the United States.

From high atop the slowly spinning ride, you will see the many attractions the park has to offer, such as an 18-hole miniature golf course, petting zoo and swan-shaped paddle boats.

One of the greatest drawbacks for this slice of outdoor pleasure is its distance from anywhere, about a 1½-hour drive from Yokota Air Base or about a 2½-hour train ride. A trip to Tokyo German Village is a daylong excursion.

The entrance fee is minimal at 500 yen, or a little under \$5, for ages 4 and up, but make sure to bring cash because most rides and attractions cost extra.

Parking is 3,000 yen, a little under \$30.

The park is open year-round, weather permitting, with no set closed days.

With more than 500,000 square feet of gardens, activities, food and lights, the Tokyo German Village could make for a great day trip families, friends or anyone looking to get out and see the country.

godbold.theron@stripes.com
Twitter: @GodboldTheron



Tokyo German Village is holding its 14th annual winter illumination festival. The theme is 1980s video games.



Visitors stroll through a 200-foot-long rainbow light tunnel on the way to the Ferris wheel.



An illuminated pig looks over a field of electric tulips.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Address: 419 Nagayoshi Sodegaura-shi, Chiba
From Yokota, enter the Chuo Expressway headed toward Tokyo. About a 1½-hour drive from Yokota Air Base or about a 2½-hour train ride.

TIMES

Open daily 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., closed during inclement weather

COSTS

500 yen for ages 4 and up; free for those younger than 4

FOOD

There is a variety of food available at the park with multiple vendors selling a Japanese take on German fare. Prices start at 800 yen for a turkey leg but can reach nearly 2,000 yen for a sausage, side and drink.

INFORMATION

Phone: 0438-60-5511

— Theron Godbold



A child plays an illuminated dragon at one of the many interactive light displays.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific



PHOTOS BY JAMES BOLINGER/Stars and Stripes

Raku Beer in Hiroshima, Japan, features a variety of craft beers from IPAs to stouts.

Tap into something good

Raku Beer offers 15 Japanese craft beers

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Iwakuni, the city that lends the nearby Marine Corps air station its name, is a wonderful place to live, but it lacks one thing: a pub-style establishment with a large selection of craft beer.

Luckily, Raku Beer, a small restaurant just 1¼ miles from Hiroshima Station, is a perfect weekend getaway for a quick bite and 15 Japanese craft brews on tap.

Hiroshima is about 45 minutes north of MCAS Iwakuni by train, and a 1,000-yen taxi ride from the south exit of the station to Raku Beer takes about eight minutes.

Inside, you're met with a softly lit interior, English menus and a bartender that hails from the good old USA.

The restaurant's proximity to Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park means it attracts a multicultural clientele. The park marks ground zero for the first atomic bomb ever deployed during war time.

The beer

For 1,000 yen, or around \$9.50, you can get a flight of three beers to taste.

Raku has everything from Hefeweizen and pale ales to India pale ales and stouts, all of which looked good coming out of the tap.

I settled for a Hefeweizen from Daisen G Beer, a wheat king wit from Baird Brewing, and my favorite, the Mugamüchu, an Imperial IPA from Shiga Kogen Beer.

I love IPAs, but the Mugamü-



chu is special. Smooth, hoppy and not overly carbonated, this IPA has all the flavor without the after effect of leaving me feeling full after the first one. It's easily one of the top 10 beers I've ever had and is hands down the best IPA. I would drink this every day, and it would be a hit at any restaurant or bar stateside.

That being said, it was far from the cheapest beer on the tap list. A pint cost 1,600 yen, or about \$14.60.

The least expensive option is the Sōrachi 1984 golden ale from Sapporo Beer, at 1,050 yen a pint. The most expensive is the Shitatenage Double IPA from Ushitora Brewery at 1,650.

All the beers are offered in smaller 10-ounce glasses for an average of 550 yen, or \$5 less per glass.

Raku offers patrons a variety of cuisines, from Japanese-style curry and fish and chips with malt vinegar, to fried pickles, fried Camembert cheese and personal pizzas. They also have a flower-shaped Bologna sausage that the menu claims is a Hiroshima favorite.

On the bartenders' recommendation, I tried the curry. It is made from scratch with fresh, local ingredients, which means that every day it's different, depending on what is available.

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Raku offers patrons a variety of cuisines, from Japanese-style curry and fish and chips with malt vinegar, to fried pickles, fried Camembert cheese and personal pizzas. Shown: curry made from scratch.

RAKU BEER

Location: 3-3 Mikawacho, Hiroshima, Naka Ward 730-0029

Hours: Open daily, expect Tuesdays, from noon to midnight.

Dress: Casual

Directions: A 20-minute walk, about 1½ miles, from Hiroshima Station, between the Peace Memorial Park and the Nagarekawa district. Taxis and buses are available from the station.

Information: Phone: 082-247-6768; online: rakubeer.jp

— James Bolinger

It was full of potatoes, peas and minced pork paired with locally sourced rice. It cost 880 yen, and while not as spicy as I would prefer, it was still very tasty.

My other go-to dish here is the fish and chips, which comes in two sizes: a small plate for 650 yen and a large plate for 980 yen. The batter for this white fish is thin and crispy and it pairs well with the malt vinegar you get to dip it in.

Both dishes were complemented by the Mugamüchu, but would pair well with any of the beers I've had here.

Raku Beer is not a large restaurant and can get busy around dinner time, but I've always been able to get a seat at the bar. There are a number of tables that seat two to six people.

bolinger.james@stripes.com



Raku Beer, a pub-style restaurant in Hiroshima, Japan, offers customers an eclectic menu.



Raku Beer boasts more than a dozen Japanese craft brews on tap.



Raku Beer has a variety of cuisines, from Japanese-style curry and fish and chips with malt vinegar, to fried pickles, fried Camembert cheese and personal pizzas. Shown: curry made from scratch.

WEEKEND: MUSIC



K-popularity

Will SuperM be the new BTS? What to look for in 2020

BY AUGUST BROWN
Los Angeles Times

In 2019, K-pop saw some of its brightest lights and darkest hours.

There were huge successes in the scene, which shows no signs of slowing in the United States. BTS' triumph at the Rose Bowl; Blackpink becoming the first major K-pop act to perform at Coachella; groups like Monsta X signing with U.S. major labels and collaborating across genres. LA's KCON, once again, helped drive the conversation around the genre in new and inclusive directions.

Yet after both the Burning Sun sexual assault scandal and the suicides of singers Goo Hara and Sulli, K-pop's global legion of devoted fans had

to confront the consequences of a corporate pop scene where stars are driven to exhaustion and policed in their personal lives, and yet its larger systems are rarely scrutinized.

The year 2020 will likely be a hugely consequential one for the genre, in South Korea and elsewhere. Can new partners keep established stars in the U.S. pop consciousness and bring new ones into the fold? Can global attention on mental health, misogyny and corporate opacity in K-pop drive real change? Here are a few of the new stars and emerging narratives to watch out for next year in K-pop.

Is SuperM the next supergroup?

Collaborations, subgroups and member swaps are as common in K-pop as crossover episodes were in '90s sitcoms. But SuperM is a novel idea: a boy band culled from top-tier K-pop acts, created by South Korean leviathan SM Entertainment and Capitol Records pitched largely for English-speaking countries. The group draws from popular acts NCT 127, Shinee, EXO and WayV. Its pedigree was secure enough for a Billboard 200 No. 1 album last year. But the way it was done—a public debut with a show outside the Capitol Records building in Hollywood, Calif., and not in Seoul, and a largely English-language kickoff single “Jopping”—suggests that SM's Lee Soo-Man and his U.S. counterparts are aiming this at a U.S. audience that doesn't even see K-pop as especially foreign anymore. It could also make a solo star of singer Taemin, who has a slate of beguiling new music ready while his Shinee bandmates serve in the South Korean military.

Another interesting twist is that SuperM brought back U.S. physical sales, a common way for Korean fans to declare allegiance to a group. In an age of ubiquitous streaming services, “The 1st Mini Album” earned 98% of its tally in album sales, which must have left Capitol executives toasting like they did in the mid '90s. Rising acts like Ateez, TXT and X1 are already getting similar overtures from U.S. execs looking for the next BTS as well.

Itzy, Chungha, (G)I-DLE and girl groups' next wave

Headliner Ariana Grande might have been only the second most popular female pop act with a high ponytail and something to prove at Coachella in 2019. Blackpink arguably put on a better show, and certainly did more to diversify the fest's ranks as a launchpad for global pop. So who might be next? Twice is certainly a contender, after making its U.S. debut at the Forum in July. But take a strong look at Itzy, who won best new female artist at the MAMA awards (K-pop's best analog to the Grammys) and the mercurial and independent-minded (G)I-DLE, who both seem well-placed to pick up Blackpink's mantle.

Also watch for Chungha, a former member of I.O.I. and a rare female solo act to have a major commercial breakthrough with her single “Gotta Go.” She also recently collaborated with Rich Brian on a compilation from the 88 Rising collective, an influential label for edgy Asian pop. The '80s synths and pitch-twisted vocals on “These Nights” feel like Roger Troutman meets the “Drive” soundtrack.

From left: Mark, Lucas, Taeyong, Baekhyun, Ten and Taeyong of SuperM perform Oct. 5 in Los Angeles.

RICH POLK, GETTY IMAGES FOR CAPITOL MUSIC GROUP/TNS

Will Jannabi lead Korean rock, or stumble out of the gate?

For all of K-pop's futuristic inclinations, emo-tinged rock is having something of a resurgence there too. Acts like N.Flying and Day6 have had huge breakthroughs with earnest, guitar-driven hits that Panic! at the Disco and Lewis Capaldi fans could get behind (N.Flying, like Panic!, has a lung-bursting “Frozen” cover of its own).

No band was better positioned to lead this Korean rock revival than Jannabi, who debuted in 2014 but recently vaulted to K-pop-level fame with the album “Legend” in March. They won the MAMA for best band performance with “For Lovers Who Hesitate,” which revives a pre-K-pop style of Korean rock ballad-eering, and sounds more like late-career Elliott Smith than the high gloss at KCON.

But the band hit several stumbles before getting a chance to break wide. Keyboardist Yoo Young-hyun left the band after being accused of bullying a classmate more than a decade ago, and singer Choi Jung-hoon faced questions over any association with his father's potentially suspicious business ties and friendship with disgraced politician Kim Hak Eui. Choi denied any meaningful connections (he made a long statement explaining his position in May), but in a South Korean music industry still reeling from Burning Sun, that could dampen the rise of the country's most promising acts.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

By DAN DeLUCA

The Philadelphia Inquirer

In January 2019, Yola was a little-known singer facing an uphill battle.

The 35-year-old artist was about to release her first full-length album under her own name, as a black, British, country music-loving songwriter attempting to establish herself in the Nashville-based Americana genre.

Twelve months later, things have gone rather well. "Walk Through Fire," Yola's debut album produced by Dan Auerbach of the Black Keys, was released last February. In November, she earned four Grammy nominations.

When the awards are presented in Los Angeles on Jan. 26, she'll be up for Americana album and best Americana roots song and performance (both for "Faraway Look"), as well as best new artist, a high-profile category in which she's competing against Billie Eilish, Lil Nas X and Lizzo. "Everything has happened!" says Yola — full name: Yolanda Quartey — in an interview from her home outside Nashville. She splits time between the Music City and Bristol, in the southwest of England, near her childhood home of Portishead.

"It's not even been a year," she says. "Just from the point of not even having a record out yet, and wondering how people are going to receive it, and no one knowing who I am ... We've gone from dreaming that a Grammy might be possible somewhere off in the distance, to being nominated for four in the present. And then all the people I've met, from having my cover of Elton John endorsed, to meeting Dolly (Parton) and Mavis (Staples)."

John premiered Yola's version of "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road," which is included on the deluxe version of "Walk Through Fire," on his Rocket Hour radio show, and she sang with Parton at the Newport Folk Festival in July. "All of these things, if we had one of them happen, we would have deemed it a successful year," she says. "But to have them all happen, it's been outrageous. Crazy."

Yola's recent success has come quickly, but preceding it were years of music industry struggles.

She was raised by a single mother who moved to England from Barbados in the 1970s, a nurse who was part of the "Windrush generation" of immigrants lured to the United Kingdom from its former colonies by the promise of economic opportunity.

Her mother, who died in 2013, was a music lover. "What she was massively into, and is still a soft spot for me, is disco," the singer recalls. "She was like the hospital DJ. She would take blood, make the rounds, and then play disco on the radio."

"She loved Chic and Boney M. and the Bee Gees, and she also loved Dolly and Elton John. And Aretha, so we had (Franklin's 1972 album) 'Young, Gifted and Black' around the house."

Those vintage sounds blended with the music, from rap to alternative rock, that Yola heard



Yola, shown performing at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena on Oct. 25, says her parents instilled a love of music, but forbade her to pursue it as a career.

Jason Kerrin, Getty Images/TNS

'I didn't settle'

Grammy-nominated British singer Yola credits hard work for 2019 breakthrough

growing up in the 1990s.

"I was listening to hip-hop, and also Bjork and Beck and Mazzy Star. And then we'd go over to our friends' houses and everyone was going through their dad's record collections and listening to bands like The Kinks."

Those influences went into the

deeply personal songs on "Walk Through Fire," whose title track was inspired by a blaze at Yola's house in Tennessee in 2016, from which she escaped without injury. A marketing push dubs her the "Queen of Country Soul," but the singer refers to her sound as "a genre-less mix."

Though Yola's mother instilled a love of music, she forbade it as a career. "It was that way for me and all my other friends who were black or brown and had strict parents. Music was OK to listen to, but there were only three acceptable jobs: doctor, lawyer, and engineer. Music

wasn't an option."

Yola pursued it anyway, singing at jazz gigs when she was 14, and trying to keep her mother from finding out. "You sneak around till it's not feasible to sneak around anymore."

She had more than her share of ups and downs before "Walk Through Fire," whose album art is by Philadelphia graphic artist and musician Perry Shall. After dropping out of university, she was homeless in London at age 21.

She fronted the British country-rock band Phantom Limb. She sang with Bristol music collective Massive Attack. Without being credited, she contributed vocals and co-wrote dance music hits by Duke Dumont and Sub Focus and also wrote lyrics and melodies for British singers Will Young and Chase & Status.

In 2016, under the stage name Yola Carter, she released a promising six-song EP called "Orphan Offering."

She spent time in Los Angeles trying to make headway as a songwriter, but found it easier in Nashville. "Gossip travels faster in Nashville," she says. "Even through it's growing, it's a smaller city, and you have these bump-in situations where people start hearing about you."

Working with Auerbach and writers like Memphis legend Dan Penn (who co-wrote Aretha Franklin's "Do Right Woman, Do Right Man") came naturally. "They extol the virtues of the link between country and soul music," she says. "That made things easier for me, because I had a lot less explaining to do."

Yola's rise to prominence as a black woman on the Americana music scene led to her featured role on the self-titled debut album by The Highwomen, the country supergroup of Brandi Carlile, Amanda Shires, Maren Morris and Natalie Hemby. Carlile has called Yola an honorary Highwoman, and she contributed to the album's feminist title track, with a verse that gives voice to a martyred civil rights movement Freedom Rider.

After spending her adult life working in music in marginalized roles, Yola, now 36, believes she finally broke through because she finally fully expressed herself.

"To be absolutely fair, I've been withholding my name, and withholding my commitment to music, because there wasn't anything I wanted to do," she says. "It was like, 'Here are your options, and I didn't like any of them. So I was purposely holding back until the right moment."

"It was like, 'You can change yourself and who you are at the very core, if that suits you.' And I was like, 'No, it doesn't suit me to change who I am, how I sing, what I'm into.'"

Yola says she could have "carried on turning out mediocre music. But ... I held out. There is so much fear in people to settle, in life, in music, in work. And I didn't do that. I didn't settle. I waited, and I waited, and I kept on trying things to find what I really wanted to do within my range of taste."

When she ultimately found is "who I am."

WEEKEND: BOOKS

'Mobituaries' offers different take on history

By LYNN ELBER
Associated Press

A conversation with Mo Rocca is akin to his "Mobituaries" podcasts and his new book of Rocca-style obituaries: A swooping exploration of people and things past, with the author playing connect-the-dots in entertaining and enlightening fashion.

For instance, he starts discussing parallels between U.S. presidential brother Billy Carter and British royal sister Princess Margaret and the second-fiddle roles they played. Carter is in Rocca's book, assessing Margaret's similarities appeared to be a sudden fancy.

"My fantasy PSAT has a question, (Queen) Elizabeth is to Margaret as Jimmy Carter is to ...," said Rocca, a "CBS Sunday Morning" correspondent known for his droll humor.

"Mobituaries: Great Lives Worth Reliving" takes on obituaries of people, as is customary, but includes those whose exploits were ignored or who Rocca thinks deserve reappraisals. He also digs up background for products (there's a tribute

to the "behemoth known as the station wagon," for one), fictional characters and historical milestones.

He recently discussed how he approached the book (written with Jonathan Greenberg) and its browsing-friendly format that makes it a standout for bathroom reading (a compliment, which Rocca said he took as such) and the rare example that has footnotes. Quotes have been edited for clarity and length.

AP: Given your access to TV and podcast audiences, why write a book?

Rocca: There are certain things that are easier to write about than to do an audio program about, things like the station wagon. And my head has long been stuffed with a lot of factoids and arcana, and that's kind of fun on a page. The book has what I call "graveyards." After each essay, I wanted there to be a graveyard that would surprise you in its relationship to the essay that came before it. So, for

instance, Sammy Davis Jr. is followed by other famous one-eyed people, Thomas Paine is followed by other famous disembodied body parts. (Paine's remains were exhumed and later disappeared.) And I think that that looks nice on the page.

The book ranges so far afield with information on so many topics. Have you been gathering string for years?

I have gathered string for a long time, ideas that have been circulating. My colleague, the film critic David Edelstein, helped me with this one: I'm a big Strindberg fan, as you can probably tell from the book, and drawn to the idea that the movie "Funny Girl," when you watch it, you forget that it's the story of this person, Fanny Brice. You think you're watching the story of Barbra Streisand. At least I think that, and it's because the performance is so eclipsing and volcanic that it kind of displaces the person it's about. And this is the kind of book that had a place for that, and that the "graveyard" has other people, historic figures, who were eclipsed by the people who played them.

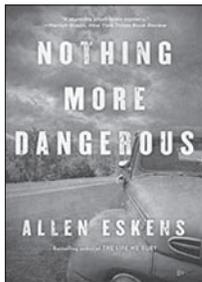
As the footnotes demonstrate, the book was thoroughly researched. Is it impor-

tant to that readers understand it is fact-based history?

It is important to me. Look, I like to surprise the reader, and there's two different ways that are opposites. I like a topic that seems like it's going to be fun and fizzy and it's going to be a trip, like Billy Carter is going to be about Billy Beer and when you go into it, it's "Why am I choking up?" Conversely, I like to take something that seems like it's going to be heavy. I like the challenge of (post-Civil War) reconstruction, a word that's going to make people go, "We're really doing this this year?" and then make it go down easy. And in this case, I chose to humanize it by making it about the black congressmen of reconstruction.

What surprised you in your research?

I think a lot of people confuse "past" with "backward" and, I'll be transparent here, I've chosen to be generous with the past. I do think we need to cut the past some slack because the tendency is to disqualify people for their imperfections. I think that people are messy, and I really sought in this to embrace not only the messiness of people, but eras.



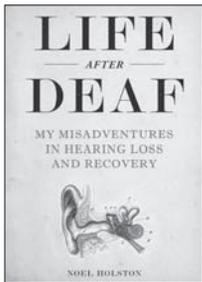
Allen Eskens

Nothing More Dangerous

Nothing is more dangerous, says one character quoting the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., than "sheer ignorance." That danger can be extended to anger, bigotry, uncontrolled anger and family ties as Allen Eskens' sixth novel poignantly shows.

Positioned as a memory novel set in 1976, "Nothing More Dangerous" follows 15-year-old Boddy Sanden, who dreams of leaving his small town of Jessup, Mo., where he lives with his single mother in a small house. Boddy feels out of place, especially at his Catholic school where he is constantly bullied by three mean boys or ignored by the rest of his classmates. But Boddy's life changes when he becomes friends with Thomas Elgin, a black boy whose family moves in across the road. The boys don't exactly hit it off — Boddy accidentally knocks Thomas into a pond and then carelessly uses a racial epithet, a phrase he doesn't think is offensive because everyone uses it. Eventually, the two become real friends, and through fishing, camping and talking, they find out how similar they are.

—Oline H. Cogdill
Associated Press



Noel Holston

Life After Deaf

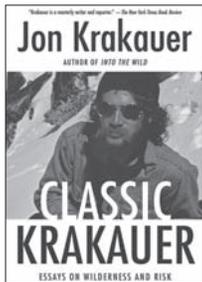
At first they thought the problem might be blocked sinuses, but when Noel Holston's hearing evaporated overnight and did not return, he and his wife, Marty, headed to the doctor. The news was sobering: The microscopic hairs in his inner ear that catch sound had collapsed, and with them Holston's hearing.

"Life After Deaf," Holston's memoir of losing his hearing at age 62, is a graceful and compelling read. As the title hints, and as Holston himself admits, he has never met a pun he didn't like, so consider yourself forewarned — there are plenty.

But puns aside, the story moves quickly, with anger, frustration and humor, as Holston navigates this new, silent world that, he said, "was making me invisible."

There are unexpected inconveniences — one day he accidentally left his car running, unable to hear the engine or the warning beeps that sounded when he locked the door and walked away. And one night he locked his wife out of their hotel room, unable to hear her knocks.

—Laurie Hertzog
Star Tribune-Minneapolis



Jon Krakauer

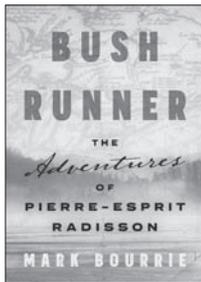
Jon Krakauer: Essays on the Wilderness and Risk

The essays are older, from publications such as Smithsonian's Air & Space Magazine and Outside magazine, but "Classic Krakauer: Essays on Wilderness and Risk" is very Jon Krakauer. Krakauer's storytelling is so confident and engrossing, it begs for a reader's undivided attention.

Most of the essays are adventure-oriented, but there are a few exceptions. Of terrifying note is "Loving Them to Death," about a Utah wilderness teen therapy program, originally published in Outside magazine in October 1995, that laid out several preventable teenagers' deaths and the trials that followed. It's the stuff of parental nightmares.

The morose fantasies this book churns up speak to what it really is — the perfect companion for armchair travelers. Don't want to visit the remote Brooks Range in northern Alaska? Let Krakauer go. He'll write about it. Wanna skip rock climbing atop a jagged peak in the North Cascades National Park in Washington state? Fine. We'll send Krakauer, then read about it.

—Jennifer Forker
Associated Press



Mark Bourrie

Bush Runner: The Adventures of Pierre-Esprit Radisson

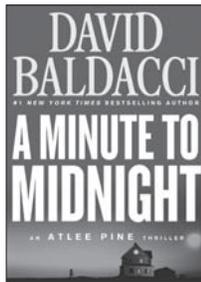
It's not too hard to guess that Radisson was an early European adventurer in North America. But it would take a vivid imagination to concoct a yarn that was even half as wild as the life that Pierre-Esprit Radisson actually lived.

The 17th-century French fur trader's biography is an incredible, head-spinning tale of capture by Mohawk warriors, adoption by a powerful indigenous family, participation in Iroquois war parties, escape, then recapture and escape again, capture by pirates near Spain, travel to the Arctic, military adventure in the Caribbean, and shipwreck off Venezuela. That's for starters.

Perhaps you've heard of Hudson's Bay Company, the oldest North American corporation, still in existence after 350 years? Radisson co-founded it.

Besides being a businessman, he was an admitted cannibal and murderer, and he enjoyed connections to royal courts and enthralled kings by writing — especially for them — accounts of his journeys.

—Dennis J. McGrath
Star Tribune-Minneapolis



David Baldacci

A Minute to Midnight

David Baldacci made his literary debut in 1996 with a political thriller, "Absolute Power." The drama begins as FBI agent Atlee Pine comes upon a registered sex offender trying to abduct a little girl. She overpowers the man and pulls the girl to safety, but she doesn't stop there. She beats him until he is unconscious. In her mind, the man has become confused with the still unidentified individual who came into her bedroom when she was 6 years old, almost killing her and running off with her twin sister Mercy.

Ordered to take a vacation, Pine returns to her hometown in Georgia and attempts to solve the crime that happened nearly 30 years ago.

Many remember the horrific incident, but no one can shed any new light on it. Meanwhile, a woman's corpse in a wedding veil turns up, followed by another in a tuxedo and yet another in an American Civil War costume.

Pine manages to solve these new cases and even discovers some surprising secrets about her parents, but the answer to her old case still evades her.

—Waka Tsunoda
Associated Press

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“**Maleficent: Mistress of Evil**”: While 2014’s live-action “Maleficent” had a clear goal of rehabbing the image of Sleeping Beauty’s evil stepmother with a compelling performance by Angelina Jolie, its sequel adds much more chaos to the mix.

Initially this comes in the form of meeting the in-laws (relatable?), with the marriage of Queen Aurora (Elle Fanning) and Prince Philip (Harris Dickinson) uniting the two kingdoms. The family is led by a cutthroat Queen Ingrith (Michelle Pfeiffer), eventually inspiring Maleficent to storm off, with plenty of pandemonium to ensue.

Also available on DVD: “**Gemini Man**”: An assassin (Will Smith) faces a cloned version of his younger self attempting to kill him.

“**Jexi**”: A man who is addicted to his phone (Adam Devine) receives an artificial intelligence-driven virtual assistant (voiced by Rose Byrne) that becomes increasingly more aggressive.

“**The Death and Life of John F. Donovan**”: An actor (Ben Schnetzer) recalls his childhood correspondence with a renowned actor who has died of an overdose (Kit Harington).

“**Beyond the Law**”: An ex-mobster and detective face off against an ex-cop seeking revenge for the murder of his son. Steven Seagal, DMX and Johnny Messner star.

“**Code 8**”: A man with superpowers (Robbie Amell) gets in trouble with the law after a heist gone wrong.

“**Krypton: The Complete Second & Final Season**”: The Syfy series follows Superman’s grandfather, Seg-El (Cameron Cuffe), on his home planet.

“**Line of Duty**”: A disgraced cop (Aaron Eckhart) and livestreaming journalist (Courtney Eaton) attempt to save the police chief’s kidnapped daughter.

“**Macgyver: Season 3**”: The crime-solver with a knack for using unusual methods (Lucas Till) returns in the 2018-19 season of the CBS adventure-drama series.

“**Mob Town**”: A sergeant (David Arquette) stands up to a group of mafia bosses. Based on a true story.

“**Raising with the Devil**”: A CEO sends two employees to investigate a manipulated cocaine supply line. Nicolas Cage and Laurence Fishburne star.

“**The Big Trip**”: In this animated film, a team of animals sets out to bring a panda accidentally dropped off by a stork to its rightful home. Drake Bell and Pauly Shore star.

“**Turkey Bowl**”: A man visiting his Midwestern hometown (Ryan Hansen) is forced to complete a high school football game that was canceled years ago.

“**Vee**”: Season 7: The final season of the acclaimed HBO comedy series has Selina Meyer (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) fighting for support from early primary states.

— Katie Foran-McHale/TNS



GILLES MINGASSON/Freeform

From left, Valentina, Emilio, Rafael and Beto Acosta deal with the deportation of their parents in “Party of Five.”

Bringing ICE to the party

‘Party of Five’ reboot features family affected by immigration

By HANK STUEVER
The Washington Post

Viewers have earned the right to be picky — and even disdainful — when it comes to the steady excess of TV reboots, resurrections and revivals. Not only do such shows feed a troubling nostalgia addiction in our popular culture, they prevent progress and true innovation. For every reboot that crowds the schedule, an original idea is lost at sea.

Still, there’s nothing wrong with showing some compassion for the stronger efforts. Freeform’s capable and compelling rendition of “Party of Five,” from the same creators who brought us the 1990s hit drama about five orphaned siblings, makes a more than adequate case for do-overs.

This “Party of Five,” which premiered stateside on Wednesday, is about a Los Angeles family, the Acostas, whose lives are turned upside-down when Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers raid Los Cantaritos, the casual Mexican restaurant owned by parents Javier (Bruno Bichir) and Gloria (Fernanda Urrejola).

Tipped off that ICE is on its way, Javier hustles his undocumented kitchen employees out the back door, never dreaming that the agents have come for him and Gloria instead. They’ve spent two decades building a family and a business, paying taxes and pledging their patriotism — yet, indeed, they themselves lack the necessary proof. (“You think the rules don’t apply to you?” one of the officers growls. “Things have changed, Mr. Acosta. I need to see your papers.”) They’re arrested and sent to a detention center where they await a deportation hearing.

That’s an immediate, and topical, swerve from the original series, where the parents

of the Salinger siblings were killed in a car crash. Yet the result is tonally similar: The Acosta children — four siblings and a baby brother — are left to fend for themselves, juggling school, child care and restaurant management in one fell swoop while also trying to hire the best legal aid for their parents.

Oldest brother Emilio (Brandon Larracuente), who was an infant when his parents hiked a desert to get to the United States, is a striving musician with an increasingly jeopardized “dreamer” status; beyond that, he’s preoccupied with fronting his band, the Natural Disasters. (Talk about a ‘90s throwback: His grunge-lite performances would be right at home in the old series.)

The remaining four Acosta siblings are natural-born citizens who are so Americanized that they never learned to speak much Spanish. Twins Lucia (Emily Tosta) and Beto (Niko Guardado) are high school juniors with opposite problems: She’s a gifted student aiming against authority figures; he’s a happy-go-lucky jock in danger of flunking half his classes. Kid sister Valentina (Elle Paris Legaspi) is the family genius, skipping grades in math but also the most visibly traumatized by what’s happened. Their baby brother, Rafael, is an adorable reminder of big change (who always needs changing).

The echoes to the first series are apparent but not forced. Creators Amy Lippman and Christopher Keyser have put great thought and empathy into telling the Acosta family’s story in all the ways that it would naturally differ from the Salinger days, using the opportunity to give American viewers a solid, up-close experience of how easily U.S. immigration policy (and its blunt enforce-

ment) can tear apart a good, law-abiding family. That in itself is an overdue idea for a TV drama.

But Lippman and Keyser have also retained the lived-in, comfortable pace of their earlier show, reminding viewers that this family’s daily dramas can be ordinary as often as they can be extraordinary. Their young actors — particularly Guardado and Tosta — ably convey the emotional instability of a devastated household, helped greatly by dialogue that sounds and feels authentic rather than oversweetened (or over-politicized).

When Javier and Gloria’s appeal is denied by an immigration court judge and they are deported to Mexico, Lucia angrily argues with the officers taking her parents away.

“Dignity, mi hija,” Javier tells his daughter, from behind a chain-link fence. “Show them who we are.”

“They don’t care who we are, Papi,” Lucia says. “Don’t you see that by now?”

“We’ll show ourselves,” Javier replies.

Where the Salinger kids processed the grief of their parents’ deaths, the Acosta kids must cope with a different kind of loss — a better brother and worse by constant video chats, texts and calls from their parents.

When an out-of-work psychology major, Vanessa (Amanda Arcuri), joins the restaurant staff as a hostess (and quickly becomes Emilio’s lover), she quickly diagnoses a modern-age problem, thanks to iPhones and iPads: The parents are still too enmeshed in what happens with the kids and the restaurant, which compounds the stress and the pain. Then and now, “Party of Five” relies on the idea that the kids must find their own way.

The premiere episode of “Party of Five” is available on Hulu.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREA VILLARI/Stars and Stripes



Mom, mother thyself

Many moms feel they must care for their young children past the point of exhaustion

By DANIELLE CAMPOAMOR
Special to The Washington Post

“So, how long have you been sick?”

I had been coughing for weeks, battling fevers as high as 104 and struggling to find enough energy to sufficiently care for two children, ages 5 and 1. It wasn’t until I was holding my 5-year-old son’s hand at 2 a.m. in the middle of the pediatric emergency room that someone noticed how sick I was — that someone being the attending pediatrician. After the doctor listened to my son’s lungs, and after he ordered a chest X-ray that would later confirm pneumonia, he turned his attention to me.

“You’re clearly very sick,” he said. “I know you don’t want to leave your son, so I’m going to have someone from the adult emergency room come over and examine you.”

After a quick examination by the “adult doctor” and a chest X-ray of my own, I was diagnosed with severe bronchitis and exhaustion. I felt embarrassed, especially because I was supposed to be focusing on my son, and self-conscious for allowing myself to become so ill. After all, what kind of mother can’t take care of herself?

The answer, of course, is most moms. In a country without mandated paid parental leave or affordable child care, where motherhood and martyrdom are often seen as pseudonyms, more often than not, moms are not taking care of themselves. We’re ignoring calls for us to put our oxygen masks on before we tend to our children as we gasp for air.

As a result, it’s the people we trust to care for our children who end up noticing that we need to be cared for, too.

“I can’t even tell you how many times I end up noticing something is wrong with Mom,” says Sara Siddiqui, a pediatrician and clinical assistant professor in the

pediatrics department at NYU Langone’s Hassenfeld Children’s Hospital, who has treated children for more than 20 years.

“First of all, we’re sometimes the first person to see them after they have a baby,” Siddiqui has diagnosed moms who have arrived in her office two or three days postpartum with swollen feet or difficulty breathing, who haven’t seen any doctor but the one tasked with examining their newborns.

“I even had a mom almost pass out in my office as I’m examining her baby because she just had a C-section and

me, five years after having your first child, can have serious consequences.

But it’s not just a lack of sleep, the understandable shift in priorities, the intense physical changes in the postpartum period or the myriad germs children seem to attract that’s making and keeping moms sick: It’s our unwillingness to treat ourselves with the same care that we provide our children.

Moms are notoriously bad at asking for help, a byproduct of our “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” culture that has attached a person’s worthiness to their

If we encouraged moms to help themselves as often as they help their children, and if we believed moms when they said they are sick or in pain, perhaps we wouldn’t have the worst maternal mortality rate in the developed world.

she didn’t realize that she was still very weak,” she continues.

As priorities shift after a mom has her baby — and as the people around the mom focus on the baby instead of her — she begins to care less for herself and more for her child. This mindset doesn’t change as the child grows, either. But parents, especially parents of young children, are more susceptible to illness. Scientists have found that children younger than 6 contract an average of six to eight colds in a calendar year, and because their immune systems are still developing, it takes them much longer to recover. And because parents — particularly moms, who are still doing the majority of the child rearing and are getting less sleep than their male partners — are tired and run-down, it’s more difficult for their immune systems to protect them from their children’s colds.

Failing to adequately care for oneself, whether in the postpartum period or, like

lows us to hide the fact that we cannot live up to unrealistic expectations. “Perfection is the goal, and honestly saying, ‘I can’t do it,’ let alone, ‘I don’t want to do it,’ is too anxiety-inducing because it threatens to unmask our vulnerability; saying these things means we aren’t what we imagined to be the ideal mother, and that’s scary.”

So us moms do what I did: ignore our needs in the name of perceived perfection, even if it literally makes us sick.

“Moms must realize that our children need us to be healthy, but we are human and sometimes we all get sick,” Snyder tells me. “We can’t heal quickly or effectively if we don’t give our bodies a chance to do so.”

But knowing that I need help doesn’t make asking for help any easier. Knowing that I need to remain healthy so I can adequately care for my children doesn’t make it any easier to prioritize my own health, mental and physical.

As moms, we are encouraged to prioritize our children’s health over and even to the detriment of our own. We are hailed as “great parents” if we race our children to their pediatrician’s office at the first sign of distress while “powering through” our own illnesses. We are applauded for our selflessness over and over again until caring less and less for the self is less of a choice and more of a default response. When our jobs as mothers are often thankless, any praise — even if it requires the deterioration of our mental and physical health — seems worth it.

But if we encouraged moms to help themselves as often as they help their children, and if we believed moms when they said they are sick or in pain, perhaps we wouldn’t have the worst maternal mortality rate in the developed world. Perhaps fewer moms would be feeling isolated, alone and overwhelmed. Perhaps motherhood, as Snyder says, could “become far less like a chore and far more joyful.”

WEEKEND: FAMILY



Giving while staying whole

Teaching tweens healthy emotional boundaries

By PHYLIS FAGELL
The Washington Post

As middle-schoolers separate from parents and other authority figures, they invest more in their friendships.

“There’s a lot of stormy weather, but it’s also a time of deeply tender moments of shared vulnerability,” explains Helen Riess, an associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and author of “The Empathy Effect: Seven Neuroscience-Based Keys for Transforming the Way We Live, Love, Work, and Connect Across Differences.” “This is when some kids just keep giving and giving because they confuse moral virtue with emotional exhaustion.”

As tweens sort out their identity, they want to be seen as trustworthy and caring, but insecurity can generate pressure to be “the best.” We’re experiencing an unprecedented decline in empathy and can’t afford to discourage kindness, and we also need to impart lessons about reciprocity, healthy boundaries and the limits to generosity.

Applaud them for taking small steps

Because tweens operate in complex networks, they have less autonomy and mobility in their social lives than adults. “One bold announcement at lunch won’t effectively shift firmly established dynamics,” says Lisa Damour, psychologist and author of “Untangled” and “Under Pressure,” explains. A child could decide to stop sitting with a specific friend at lunch, but then get assigned to the same group project or have to play on the same team. Recognize that restoring equilibrium takes time and courage, and applaud them for making even small changes.

Honor their need for autonomy

Tweens may be open to help, but then shut down or rebel if an adult tries to dictate their behavior. It can be excruciatingly hard to watch your child experience bumps and bruises, but “the key for parents is not to shield them from that inevitability, but to make sense of it,” says Daniel Pink, author of

“When,” “Drive” and other books. “That begins by working to build an environment of psychological safety so that young people know they can be who they are and admit difficulties without negative consequences or judgment,” he explains.

To respect their desire for independence, point out when a friend confuses emotional support with friendship, but don’t insist that they drop that friend. Highlight red flags, such as feeling pressure to keep a secret, dreading someone’s call or feeling physically worn out.

Connect the dots through stories

Parents can use parables to demonstrate the difference between self-sacrifice and reciprocity. In Shel Silverstein’s classic book “The Giving Tree,” for example, a tree gives a boy everything from her apples to her branches until she’s only a stump with nothing left to give. In contrast, in Grant’s “The Gift Inside the Box,” co-authored with Allison Sweet Grant, a mysterious package encounters a series of selfish kids until he meets the perfect recipient: a little girl who views him as a special gift for someone else.

Read both stories, then pose questions that encourage critical thinking, such as: “What would make the relationship between the tree and the boy less lopsided? Why does the box steer clear of all the ‘me, me, me’ individuals? What’s the difference between pleasing others and helping them?” As Grant explains, “Being generous doesn’t mean you never say no. It means you’re thoughtful about who you help, when you help and how you help.”

Brainstorm solutions together

“Remind your child that they don’t have to solve everyone’s problems,” says Michele Borba, author of “UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World.”

Underscore that helping should be a shared responsibility. In the school setting, I demonstrated this by adapting Grant’s Givex exercise. I had my sixth-graders write on an index card something that they wanted or needed but couldn’t provide for themselves. The requests ranged from, “I want to get

better at basketball,” to, “I could use a friend.” “I then asked the students to put their name on any card with a request they could fulfill. To their surprise, no card was left empty. They realized that everyone wanted to help, and no one had to carry an undue burden. When kids understand that empathy is a two-way street, they’re less likely to give to someone who consistently takes advantage of them.”

Challenge gender stereotypes

Parents need to challenge the stereotype that girls are responsible for emotional labor or that “real men” suppress their feelings. “There’s a common dynamic where girls will give, give, give of themselves in processing boys’ emotions until it’s harmful to them physically, and it’s equally harmful to boys,” says Peggy Orenstein, author of “Cinderella Ate My Daughter,” “Boys & Sex” and other books about teens and tweens. “We have an epidemic of male loneliness and suicide, and we have to be aware of how equitable the divide is, and how much boys are learning to connect with one another and not just the girls or women in their lives.”

On the positive side, a father’s perspective may be particularly useful to daughters because men are socialized differently. “Fathers should pay attention to where their daughters fall on that spectrum and be talking about relationships, too,” Orenstein says. This isn’t to discount the importance of mothers. “As women, we have to interrogate how we conduct our relationships and be role models,” she adds.

Mention when they’re out of their depth

When well-meaning, generous tweens spend a huge amount of time offering a friend support at the cost of their own sleep or mental health, Damour suggests implementing a three-part plan: Reassure the givers that not only are they unable to provide the appropriate support, but many adults also don’t have the necessary specialized training. Help them get their friend the support they deserve, then help them navigate their friend’s needs going forward.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



A 5-step prelude to starting my diet

I’m a little upset that my husband didn’t give me a Peloton for Christmas, but then again, he might be in the doghouse if he did. Without a shiny new exercise machine in my living room, I’m left to muster the motivation to begin a 2020 fitness regimen all by myself.

Essentially, I know every trick in the book. I’ve been on my first rodeo. I’ve been yo-yo dieting for longer than most of my readers have been alive. I’ve shed and packed back on more total pounds than there are calories in a bacon double cheeseburger, fries and a shake. I’ve been on the Cleveland Clinic Diet, Weight Watchers, Cabbage Soup Diet, Slim Fast, South Beach Diet, Carbohydrate Addict’s Diet, Atkins Diet, Fast Metabolism Diet, Intermittent Fasting, and, most recently, Keto.

This month, as the general public gears up to tackle New Year’s resolutions to lose excess pounds, I’ll share what I’ve learned with my fellow yo-yo dieters. I won’t tell anyone how to lose weight. No, weight loss plan choice is quite personal, and might ultimately depend on whether or not your husband gave you a Peloton for Christmas.

Instead, I’ll pass along the five steps that I take before going on a diet. If you follow these universal words of wisdom, you’ll be ready to succeed on any New Year’s diet.

1. Visit discount clothing store

Before passing Go, I hit the stores for new workout clothes. With a couple of crisp Jacksons and some luck at TJ Maxx’s post-holiday clearance rack, I adorn myself with matchy-matchy exercise gear. Enskenced in new Spandex, I look the part of a fitness guru as I drive up to the Starbucks window and order a Caramel Macchiato with extra whipped cream on my way home.

2. Stop by base gym, but do not exercise

Prior to beginning my diet plan in earnest, I make a visit to the base gym. I wear my new Spandex to impress the poor slobs pumping away on the treadmills, but I have no intention to exert myself. Instead of heading for the stair machine, I simply punch a schedule from the desk and go home, where I tape it to my refrigerator. Although the schedule does not burn calories, it assures me that I’m ready to begin my fitness regimen, right after I wolf down this mixing bowl full of Frosted Mini-Weats.

3. Order the book

Even though all diets basically boil down to “eat less, move more,” a new diet book can make the same old diet seem trendy, fresh, exciting. So, before I commit to a plan, I order the book. Amazon’s two-day shipping, plus a few days to read, buys me a whole week of lounging around in my new Spandex before I’m obligated to start.

4. Eat everything in sight

In order to prompt my body’s natural messaging system, I continue the holiday overeating and daily cocktail drinking for as long as possible. This serves dual purposes — it clears the house of high-calorie foods that could derail my upcoming diet, and it triggers my body’s inner voice to plead, “For the love of God, STOP!” This message is a clear sign (along with stomach distension and back rolls) that it’s time to give my body a break.

5. Do an initial weigh-in

Once I’ve reached my maximum level of personal disgust, it’s time for the initial weigh-in. The goal is not accuracy, but rather to register the highest weight possible. It can only go down from here. It makes sense a few days into my diet, when I’m so hungry I find myself eyeing the dog’s kibble. Desperate for a bit of good news to motivate me to stick to the plan, I step on the scale after emptying my bladder, trimming my toenails, shaving my legs and blowing my nose. Inevitably, I’ve lost a pound or two.

It might be water weight, but if I’ve learned anything about yo-yo dieting by now, it’s that success is on the scale of the beholder.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari’s columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

BY ANDREW CHAIKIN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Andrew Chaikin, of San Francisco, is a singer and meditation teacher who goes by the name Kid Beyond. He has opened for such luminaries as James Brown, Ray Charles and Sara Bareilles. This is his third Sunday crossword for The Times. Last January he made a resolution to have another puzzle in the paper by the end of the year. In October, with time running out, he thought, 'What's an idea they'd want to publish by Dec. 31?' Volkt — W.S.

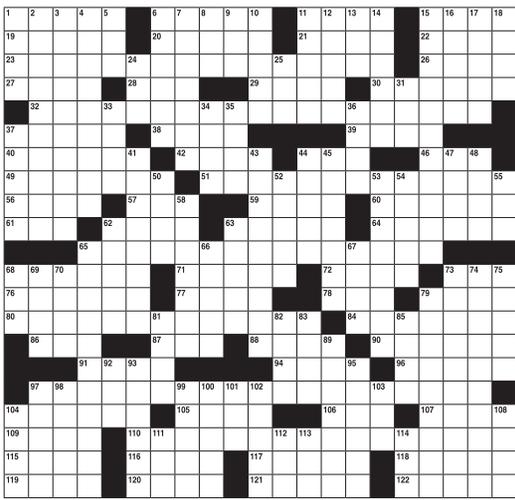
- ACROSS
1 Reveal, as a plot twist
6 Hit 1980s-'90s show with TV's first lesbian kiss
11 Closed
15 Blemish
19 Groan-inducing, perhaps
20 Pop up
21 The eyes have it
22 Fictional lab assistant
23 Casino gambler's resolution?
26 Reputation
27 Locale of 10 Winter Olympics
28 Match.com, e.g.
29 Helen Mirren or Judi Dench
30 New Age author Chopra
32 sitcom lover's resolution?
37 Emmy-winning TV producer Klein
38 Morales of "NYPD Blue"
39 Encouraging start?
40 "Wow, awesome!"
42 French, say, to a Brit
44 Georgia, once: Abbr.
46 Sold-out sign
49 Popular Fisher-Price toy for kindergarten

- DOWN
1 Hen's resolution?
5 Round of applause
57 "___Tiki"
59 Small dam
60 Children's author Beverly
61 Wall St. works on it all summer
62 Simple
63 First of two U.S./U.S.S.R. pacts
64 Locale of New York's Frederick Douglass Blvd.
65 Nun's resolution?
68 ___ Shepherd, former co-host of "The View"
71 Trees used in furniture-making
72 Hub
73 C.E.O.'s deg.
76 Whip, as cream
77 Best Actor winner Malek
78 Junior
79 Many a TikTok user
80 Stalking tiger's resolution?
84 "Arabian Nights" locale
86 Floral wreaths by a coral reef
87 Olympic gymnast Raisman
88 Line from the past?
90 Standout star
91 Prominent part of a Mickey Mouse costume
94 Historic plaintiff Scott

GUNSTON STREET



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



- 10 Creeping Charlie and Good-King-Henry resolution?
11 Many plays are seen in it
12 Actor Rutger of "Blade Runner"
13 Letters naval gazers see
14 What punctual people arrive on
15 They appreciate a nice bouquet
16 Visibly stunned
17 Not illicitized
18 Quite a hike
24 Lead-in to "Town" or "Gang"
25 Scenery chewer
31 Direct deposit, for short
33 Verizon offering
34 Da ___ Vietnam
35 Fashionable Christian
36 Pull down
37 Israel's Duxan
41 Feature of many a summer camp cabin
43 Get lost or stolen, in British lingo
44 Metalworker
45 Some of them call Homs home
47 Honest-to-goodness
48 Shrek, e.g.
50 "Auld Lang Syne" time
52 Fuses
53 Spiny antacers
54 Online magazine since 1996
55 Locale involved in many a New Year's resolution
58 Like Switzerland during World War II
62 Jollity
63 "Same here!"
65 Comic foil of early TV
66 Having the taste of smoke, as some Scotchies
67 Nincompoop
68 Toothy tool
69 Get better
70 Famed Deco designer
73 Having deep thoughts
74 Marilyn Monroe or Beyoncé
75 "Consequently ..."
79 Fly off the handle
81 Treasure chest feature
82 Rock band that Slash really ought to play time
83 Lip-puckering
85 Kind of monster
89 50 sips a day, say
92 "Feliz ___ Nuevo!" (cry on el 1 de enero)
93 Title heroine of classic 60-Across books
95 P.R. advice for the accused, maybe
97 New moon, e.g.
98 Boxer Ali
99 Beat by a hair
100 "Shall we?"
101 Season ticket holder, e.g.
102 Wields a red pen, perhaps
103 It stops a round and a bout
104 Start a triathlon
108 Trial
111 "Star Wars" villain Kylo
112 Hit with a ray gun
113 Squeeze (out)
114 N.B.A. one-pointers: Abbr.

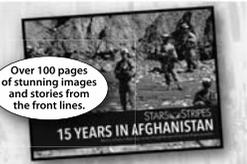
RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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FACES

Early Oscars leave voters scrambling

By JOSH ROTTENBERG
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — We all know the feeling of coming back from a leisurely holiday break to suddenly face a wall of deadlines. This year in Hollywood, that experience has had its own unique twist.

The voting period for this year's Academy Awards nominations closed Tuesday afternoon — a full two weeks earlier than normal — a compressed timetable that forced Oscar campaigners to push their “for your consideration” blitzes forward and left many of the motion picture academy's nearly 9,000 voting members scrambling to plow through piles of DVD screeners, make their lists and check them twice. Despite the academy's frequent reminders, some it seems may have been unaware of the earlier deadline altogether, believing they still had more time to set aside for, say, Martin Scorsese's sprawling, 3½-hour gangster epic “The Irishman” or the black-and-white Czech war drama “The Painted Bird.”

“It was very rushed this year, and it was hard to watch over the holidays while traveling,” said Australian documentary filmmaker Eva Orner, who produced 2007's Oscar winner “Taxi to the Dark Side.” A lot of screeners came late in the second half of

December. I actually like to unplug over holidays, so it was very difficult.”

The awards season calendar, like the presidential election calendar or a religious calendar, has its own familiar rhythms and longstanding rituals and milestones.

Any change in that calendar is bound to create ripple effects through the entire awards ecosystem, from the consultants who strategize Oscar campaigns down to the designers who dress the stars for the red-carpet galas. And this year, the academy made a big change: After more than a decade of the Oscars being in late February or early March, the 92nd Academy Awards will be held Feb. 9, the earliest date ever.

Knowing the effect the shortened schedule would have, the academy gave its members — and all of Hollywood — plenty of time to prepare. In October 2019, the academy began steadily sending its members nudges to remind them of this year's key dates, an effort that has since intensified to nearly daily emails, robo-calls and text messages.

For some members, the constant stream of reminders has been a bit wearying. “They’ve been telling us for weeks: It’s a shorter window. Vote. Vote,” said one screenwriter, who declined to speak on the record due to having a film in this



GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Get those red carpets and Oscar statues ready: The Academy Awards are Feb. 9 this year, two weeks earlier than normal.

year's awards race.

“I’ve never received so many emails from the academy,” said another member in the acting branch, who is also involved in a potential contender and wished to remain anonymous. “They’ve been extremely diligent. Do I wish I had more time? Yes. But I feel that way every year.”

Still, anecdotally, it seems some academy voters may not have received the message. Last week, as the nominations deadline loomed, film journalist and longtime

academy observer Mark Harris tweeted, “Based on my extremely informal survey of Oscar voters, a high number of them have NO idea that voting for nominations ends in three days.”

Those who have been left feeling frazzled can take comfort in two things: One, the academy has already announced that in 2021 and 2022, the Oscars will return to their traditional late-February spot. And two, as frantic as this year may feel, it’ll all be over that much sooner.

Oscars to go hostless for 2nd consecutive year

The Oscars are going without a host again this year.

ABC Entertainment President Karey Burke said the Feb. 9 telecast will focus on what worked last year: “huge entertainment value, big musical numbers, big comedy and star power.”

Last year's ceremony attracted 29.6 million viewers, the second-smallest in Oscars history but 12% more than in 2018, which ended a four-year slide in viewership. Comedian Kevin Hart was originally announced as host, but he backed away when some anti-gay tweets he posted a decade ago resurfaced.

ABC and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences agreed to go hostless for a second straight year, Burke said.

“We expect that we’re going to have a very commercial set of nominations,” Burke told a TV critics meeting Tuesday, “and a number of elements have come together that convinced us we’ll have a very entertaining show.”

Nominations will be announced on Monday.

From The Associated Press

Prince Harry and Meghan to ‘step back’ as senior UK royals

From wire reports

Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, say they plan to “step back” as senior members of Britain's royal family in a stunning announcement that underscores the couple's wish to forge a new path for royals in the modern world.

A statement issued Wednesday evening by Buckingham Palace, described as “a personal message from the Duke and Duchess of Sussex,” said Harry and Meghan intend to become “financially independent” and to “balance” their time between the U.K. and North America.

“After many months of reflection and internal discussions, we have chosen to make a transition this year in starting to carve out a progressive new role within this institution,” the statement said. “We intend to step back as ‘senior’ members of the royal family and work to become financially independent, while continuing to fully support her majesty the queen.”

The 35-year-old Harry, the youngest son of Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana, is Queen Elizabeth II's grandson and sixth in line to the British throne. With his ginger hair and beard, he has become one of the royal family's most popular members.

Before marrying the prince in a royal wedding watched around the world in 2018, the 38-year-old Duchess of Sussex was an American actress known as Meghan Markle and a star of the TV show “Suits.” The couple's first child, Archie, was born in May 2019.

In their statement, the couple did not reveal where in North America they plan to make a second home, but they cited their

baby as a reason why they decided to live part of their time outside Britain.

Trebek: ‘Jeopardy!’ retirement isn’t imminent despite cancer

The brief farewell that Alex Trebek says will close his final “Jeopardy!” episode isn't on the horizon.

“I don't foresee that 30-second moment coming up in the near future,” Trebek said Wednesday, referring to his request for time to close out his decades-long run with the quiz show.

While treatment for pancreatic cancer is taking a toll, Trebek said he's not ready to retire although he's mullied it in recent years. He spoke during a panel promoting “Jeopardy! The Greatest of All Time” with top contestants Ken Jennings, Brad Rutter and James Holzhauer. The prime-time contest is airing this week.

Harry Friedman, the program's longtime executive producer, said no successor was lined up.

Posthumous Mac Miller album to be released next week

Mac Miller's family announced Wednesday that they would be releasing a posthumous album next week titled “Circles,” intended as a companion record to his last. A statement shared on the late rapper's Instagram page says he was “well into” recording the new album when he died.

“This is a complicated process that has no right answer. No clear path,” the family wrote. “We simply know that it was important to Malcolm for the world to hear

it. One of the most difficult decisions in the process is how best to let people know about it — how to communicate meaningfully while keeping sacred what should be kept sacred. So this will be the only post on any of his channels.”

Miller, born Malcolm McCormick, died accidentally in September 2018 from a powerful mix of fentanyl, cocaine and alcohol. He was 26.

Justin Bieber says he's battling Lyme disease

Justin Bieber says that he has been battling Lyme disease.

In an Instagram post on Wednesday, the pop star wrote that “it's been a rough couple years but (I'm) getting the right treatment that will help treat this so far incurable disease and I will be back and better than ever.”

Lyme disease is transmitted by Ixodes ticks, also known as deer ticks. Lyme can cause flu-like conditions, neurological problems, joint pain and other symptoms.

The Grammy-winning singer said he will discuss battling the tick-borne infection on his upcoming YouTube docuseries, “Justin Bieber: Seasons,” which debuts Jan. 27. The 10-episode show will follow Bieber while he creates his new album and will also highlight his private life.

Other news

■ ABC has given the go-ahead to a pilot for “Thirtysomething(else),” a sequel to the series that followed a group of baby boomers and their struggles. The show

will feature a group of new actors playing the grown-up, 30-something children of the original cast. Ken Olin, Mel Harris, Timothy Busfield and Patricia Wettig have signed on to reprise their roles.

■ Former “Saturday Night Live” star Leslie Jones will host a new version of “Supermarket Sweep,” which originally aired on ABC from 1965-67. The show follows three teams of two as they compete using their grocery shopping skills and knowledge of merchandise to win cash prizes.

■ “Modern Family” will air its finale after 11 seasons on April 8, and there are no spin-offs in the works involving its large cast. The show starring Ed O'Neill was an immediate hit and holds the record with “Frasier” of five straight Emmy Awards as television's best comedy.

■ Jimmy Kimmel is going to help celebrities help their favorite charities. He's hosting a prime-time edition of “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” with stars as the contestants and winnings earmarked for their causes of choice. Kimmel's version will debut stateside April 8, with the celebrity contestants yet to be announced.

■ British actor Jeremy Irons will head the jury at the Berlin International Film Festival next month, organizers said Thursday. Irons will be jury president at the festival's 70th edition, running from Feb. 20 to March 1.

■ ABC will follow up its successful live staging of “The Little Mermaid” with a live monster musical — “Young Frankenstein.” The network said Wednesday it will air “Young Frankenstein Live!” the stage version of Mel Brooks' 1974 film classic. The cast and air date were not revealed.

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OPINION

This Republican seeks a credible Dem nominee

By SHEILA BAIR
Special to The Washington Post

Over the past 40 years — about as long as I've been of age to vote — the country has seen a downward spiral in the qualifications of the individuals we have elected as president. We arguably hit a new low with Donald Trump, who had zero years experience in public service. He was able to defeat a highly pedigreed Hillary Clinton not because he was a compelling candidate but because a large segment of the electorate wanted to register a vote against her perceived elitism and disinterest in the working class.

Voters often use their ballots as weapons of punishment; indeed, Oscar Wilde described democracy as “simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people.” But an unfortunate side effect of negative voting is for elections to favor naïfs over pros, because the pros have amassed so many years' worth of activity for the public to get mad at.

Trump now has three years' experience as president. While he has had some policy victories, he has also given opponents plenty of issues with which to bludgeon him. Demagogic President Donald Trump's mania in their eagerness to oust him. They seem most interested in finding the candidate best positioned to do so, regardless of qualifications. Enter Pete Buttigieg, whose primary asset seems to be a thin resumé. He hasn't done much to prove his chops in the national political arena. On the other hand, his lack of a record would provide scant fodder for Trump to exploit in a gen-

eral election.

Indeed, this 37-year-old man has never held national office. He has never held statewide office. The sum total of his government experience includes valorous military duty and eight years as the mayor of the roughly 300th-largest town in the United States. He gives a good speech and has some interesting ideas. But he seems more adept at pointing out the frailties of his experienced opponents than explaining how he has any hope of surviving the “swamp” if elected, given his complete lack of Washington know-how.

His supporters whisper that the same was said about a relatively inexperienced Barack Obama when he ran for the nation's highest office. But I had occasion to work a bit with President Barack Obama when I chaired the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., and to paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen, Pete Buttigieg is no Barack Obama. Obama was, and is, an exceptional, inspirational leader, skilled politician and grass-roots organizer. He was also 10 years Buttigieg's senior when he was elected president and had served four years in the U.S. Senate.

Importantly, many feel Obama could have been even more effective if he had waited longer to become president. This is particularly true in the area of financial reform, where his inexperience led him to rely heavily on establishment advisers who had played major roles in devising the very financial system he was trying to reform. The result was incremental change without a restructuring of Washington's power structure. As a consequence, the beneficial reforms achieved under Obama have remained under relentless attack by those

same powers.

I am a Republican who has never voted for a Democrat in a presidential election. But I share Democrats' concerns that our system is rigged to favor the wealthy and powerful over working families. I am tired of a loophole-ridden tax code that advantages investors over workers. I am tired of spending trillions in taxpayer money on health care and education only to see private profiteering of those programs as consumer costs continue to escalate. I regret to admit that I also voted negative in 2016, casting a protest vote for the Libertarian Party ticket because I didn't think Clinton or Trump were really committed to change. I would prefer not to do so again.

I like Buttigieg and would be happy to endorse him ... 20 years from now, after he has proved himself. Today, however, he is not ready, and I have a sickening fear that much of his impressive fundraising is driven by the moneyed interests who profit from the current system and think his lack of experience will lead to a preservation of the status quo.

Democrats need to decide whether they just want to beat Trump or whether they want a credible candidate who has the vision, commitment and proven skills to truly reform our government. They have plenty of experienced candidates to choose from. Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren stand out as two candidates with strong records of public achievement.

Please give me someone to vote for.

Sheila Bair is the former chairwoman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and has held senior appointments in four Republican and Democratic administrations.

McConnell has it right on impeachment path, tactics

By HENRY OLSEN
The Washington Post

The decision from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., to push through rules governing President Donald Trump's impeachment trial that meet none of the demands of Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has been harshly criticized. McConnell is right, and his critics are wrong.

This impeachment has been a purely political affair from the start. A majority of Democrats and even some GOP pundits and commentators have wanted Trump gone from day one. Their relentless — often vitriolic — 24/7 campaign to persuade Americans to remove the hated interloper from office before the next election is unprecedented in modern politics. The House Democrats' decision to pursue formal impeachment proceedings after the disclosure of Trump's phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was simply the fire that set off the explosion many had long clamored for.

The political challenge for impeachment advocates was that this never-ending barrage of hatred, votes and supporters' resolve. These people interpret the past three years as an unsubtle attempt to coerce their unconditional surrender on matters of policy and culture that they deeply care about. Cornered dogs fight fiercely rather than submit. Trump voters are no different.

House Democratic leaders, then, faced a serious choice when they decided to take up impeachment. They would need 20 GOP votes to convict Trump in the Senate. That was not going to happen so long as supermajorities of Trump voters opposed impeachment. Changing that calculus would have required a vast coalition of never-ending assaults to calmer ef-

forts to persuade. That would require GOP cooperation and take time.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., would have none of that. We can't know another's mind, but her actions were entirely consistent with those of someone who wanted to simultaneously gratify her party base and put Republicans on the defensive. The House process was designed to accomplish those goals.

Democrats conducted closed-door proceedings, but their findings were always mysteriously leaked to friendly media each afternoon, ensuring that they controlled the narrative on the defensive. The public hearings chaired by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., were a mockery of an evenhanded inquiry. As his daily opening and closing statements showed, this was the political equivalent of a grand jury hearing where a prosecutor controls the information to ensnare indicted jurors on his or her terms. The hearings chaired by House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., were less competently run, but equally imbalanced and outcome-driven. Unlike the successful Watergate hearings, the final outcome was never in doubt.

Impeachment advocates seem to have never fully grasped, however, that they would have no influence over how McConnell would run the Senate trial. So long as McConnell could get 51 votes behind him, he could set the rules for the trial every bit as much to his political advantage as Pelosi did in the House. With Trump voters unswayed by the fact that the Senate would be doing his party a disservice to do anything other than what he's doing.

McConnell is widely acknowledged as one of the Senate's shrewdest leaders ever. He knew that it ultimately wouldn't matter whether the handful of politically motivated Republican senators such as Susan Collins, of Maine; Lisa Murkowski,

of Alaska; and Cory Gardner, of Colorado, voted against Trump in impeachment, so long as he had their loyalty on the rules. And it was always in their interest to give him that commitment.

Democrats and their elite pundit allies are furious that McConnell held his ground rather than meekly surrender. But that's always been McConnell's way. He is a consummate political animal and tactician whose behavior tracks the Oakland Raiders' unofficial motto, “Just win, baby.” Unconditional surrender, or even a negotiated truce, was never going to be in the card.

McConnell's decision should remind impeachment advocates, who constantly bray about their devotion to democracy, of two democratic principles. The first is that in our federalist, bicameral system, you need more than simply narrow majorities to rule. The leaders of the Senate are even better constitutionally empowered to fight for their interests, and those of their voters, as leaders of the House or the president are to fight for theirs.

The second is that Trump voters are Americans, too. There's a reason it's hard to impeach and remove someone: The Founders never constitutionally empowered that narrow partisan majorities could not take power away from people whose power flows from elections. That means some Trump voters needed to be convinced to defect, and that required treating their views and opinions compassionately. Anti-Trumpers have never done that.

This impeachment has always been an exercise in bare-knuckle politics. McConnell excels at winning this type of fight. It's not his surprise he's ruthlessly exercising the power he has. It will also be no surprise that Republicans will praise him for doing this.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Embrace 2nd chance to assist Puerto Rico after quakes

By **Maria Herold**

Puerto Rico is now dealing with the aftermath of a powerful 5.8 earthquake and equally powerful aftershocks. Casualties are low, and electrical power is slowly returning. But the quakes are just the latest natural disasters to cripple the U.S. commonwealth.

Puerto Rico still is healing from the hit it took years ago from Hurricane Maria. Gov. Wanda Vazquez has declared a state of emergency. President Donald Trump has done the same. That's the very least the Trump administration should do. It would be unconscionable for it to repeat its appalling, also unconscionable, record of neglect and inaction in 2017, when Trump practically mocked islanders' pain and suffering, and recovery efforts became a political football between island leadership and Trump.

Vazquez said that she expects more quakes, and called up the National Guard. Declaring a state of emergency is a no-brainer. This is also an election year, to be cynical, and Florida, whose population of Puerto Ricans soared after Hurricane Maria, is in play. But more than a year and a half after Maria hit, the president was still talking trash about Puerto Ricans, saying in 2019 that they "only take from the USA while our spokesperson referred to it as 'that country.'"

No, Puerto Ricans are Americans. They vote in U.S. elections.

The administration, which has yet to be held accountable for its ham-handed response to the hurricane destruction, should also expedite the release of unused funding for hurricane recovery.

In December, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said it was withholding an additional \$8 billion in unmet-needs disaster relief from Puerto Rico. But in total, HUD is delaying the release of two tranches of aid, roughly \$18 billion that Congress appropriated for the U.S. territory. The money is a combination of mitigation and the unmet-needs funds designed to upgrade infrastructure, hardening electrical grids, for instance, and rebuilding homes, businesses and bridges to better withstand future disasters.

But HUD fears the funds could fall victim to corruption. That's a legitimate concern no matter what country needs our aid. The Trump administration was not alone in its bungled response to Maria. Puerto Rico's leaders come in for blame, too, unable to get an accurate casualty count, for example, for months after the storm.

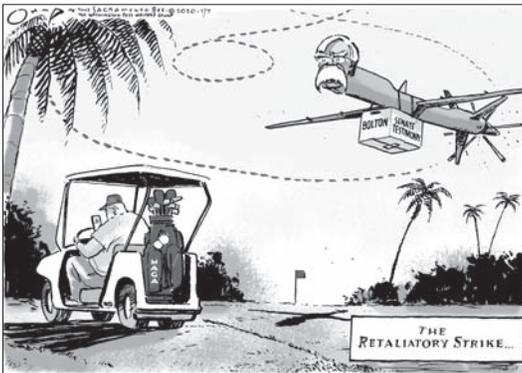
However, that fear should stop progress in its tracks. Rather it should propel both administrations to establish rigorous checks and balances to ensure money does not go into grifters' pockets.

Drone attack at least put foreign policy on Dems' radar

By **The New York Times**

President Donald Trump's assassination of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's intelligence and security services, has pushed the issue of foreign policy to the Democratic primary race for president.

Soon after the attack, former Vice President Joe Biden, the national front-runner, issued a statement charging that Trump had "tossed a stick of dynamite into a tinderbox." Biden also called for increasingly harsh critiques from the can-



campaign trail, warning that Iran is now in "the driver's seat" in the region and predicting that Soleimani's death will strengthen support for the regime in Tehran. "This is a crisis totally of Donald Trump's making," he said at an event Sunday in Iowa.

Among other top candidates, Pete Buttigieg has expressed his dismay at the president's recklessness, while Sen. Elizabeth Warren has issued a series of escalating denunciations. Befitting his longtime opposition to military intervention, Sen. Bernie Sanders is promoting a broad antiwar message. "Maybe what we should be doing is figuring out how as a planet we work together instead of going to war with each other," he said at a Jan. 8 campaign rally. This heightened attention on the White House trail is an important shift. Up to now, foreign policy has been largely ignored, with the candidates focused on domestic topics, such as health care and economic inequality. This has suited the backgrounds of the contenders. Aside from Biden, most of the pack have more experience in the areas of job creation and crime prevention than in maintaining global order.

But the imbalance is also a reflection of what voters care deeply about, and that tends to be not foreign affairs. In a September poll, FiveThirtyEight and Ipsos asked Democratic voters what issue was most important to them. Foreign policy ranked 15th, behind such domestic concerns as gun control, jobs, immigration, the makeup of the Supreme Court, racism and education.

This is not unusual.

Short of a war or other violent attacks on American installations, foreign policy rarely takes center stage during presidential elections," Daniel Drezner, a professor of international politics at Tufts University, lamented in The Times late in the 2012 presidential race. "Presidential candidates almost always campaign on how they intend to jump-start the economy."

He noted that in poll after poll, foreign policy and national security issues were typically cited as the top priority for only 3% to 5% of voters.

The paradox, as Drezner pointed out, is that presidents have far more leeway to influence global affairs than they do in the economy, where Congress has more of a say. And while lawmakers can be more than happy to derail a president's domestic agenda, they are more hesitant to cross the White House on international affairs.

The growing tension with Iran is merely the latest, most acute example of Trump's impulse toward global destabilization. This president has given Americans reason to abandon their complacency on foreign affairs.

In just a few weeks, the voting in the Democratic contest for president will begin. Voters must now decide whom they trust not only to work with Congress on

cutting health care costs and cleaning up the political system but also to navigate a world that Trump has helped make increasingly unsettled and unsettling.

Biden, a former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is making the case that this calls for a candidate with extensive foreign policy experience.

Sanders, in turn, is touting his antimilitarist credentials as part of his populist platform. Sanders' campaign is also reminding voters that, unlike Biden, he did not support the Iraq War in 2003.

Buttigieg is playing up his military background. "As a military intelligence officer on the ground in Afghanistan," he said last Friday at a campaign event in New Hampshire, "I was trained to ask these questions before a decision is made."

Experience matters. But perhaps more important are temperament and judgment and the candidates' philosophies on the use of American power, both hard and soft. Also, the people a president turns to for advice can be as important as his or her own expertise.

To aid voters, the moderators for next Tuesday's Democratic debate should set aside time to drill down on everything from what type of advisers candidates would seek out to how they would adjust our relationship with Saudi Arabia now that they would have handled the situation in Syria differently from Trump — or President Barack Obama. Foreign policy can no longer be an afterthought in this election.

Bolton's testimony relevant, plus it would stifle GOP ways The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

A major hiccup has been introduced into Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's plans for a speedy acquittal of President Donald Trump at his impending impeachment trial. Former national security adviser John Bolton says he is prepared to testify if subpoenaed. McConnell, with a big assist by Missouri Republican Sen. Josh Hawley, was all but prepared to declare the impeachment process dead.

Until Bolton's announcement Monday, GOP leaders had convinced themselves that weeks of House testimony by former and current administration officials — describing multiple ways in which Trump abused his presidential power — really amounted to nothing. Senate Republicans had been hoping and praying that no new testimony or evidence would surface to derail their plans to acquit Trump and be done with this entire impeachment mess.

The last thing Senate Republicans wanted was the prospect of testimony from someone with undeniable credibility. Bolton was in the room when many of the Ukraine discussions occurred between Trump and the top administration officials. Former aides described Bolton as

harshly critical of the pressure being applied on Ukraine.

Bolton resigned abruptly on Sept. 10 as details of the Ukraine aid suspension were surfacing publicly. Bolton's public dispute with Trump over the reasons for his White House departure accented the possibility that Bolton would not offer flattering versions of Trump's involvement in the Ukraine affair if subpoenaed to testify.

That's exactly why McConnell is likely to do anything he can to circumvent the possibility. Hawley offered help Monday by introducing a resolution allowing the Senate to dispense with the trial altogether if House Speaker Nancy Pelosi continues to delay delivery of the articles of impeachment. And why is she delaying? Because Pelosi says she wants to ensure that the Senate will hear testimony and conduct a fair trial instead of railroad this proceeding to acquittal, as McConnell has indicated he plans to do.

Despite McConnell and Hawley's antics, the American people deserve to hear what Bolton has to say. Anything short of that would expose these Republican plots for what they are: a cowardly bid, at all costs, to hide the truth from the public.

What Australia can do to mitigate its climate calamities

By **The Washington Post**

If a Hollywood producer ordered up these images, they might be dismissed as too dramatic: orange skies, ash-filled rain; fire tornadoes; flames leaping as high as 150 feet; people huddling for shelter on the beach. Australia's wildfires are a disaster on a scale hard to fathom, charring an area roughly the size of West Virginia. California's massive 2018 blazes hit a sixth as much land as Australia's have so far this fire season. Government officials release a climate-change link. And, yes, there are forces at work around Australia that pre-existed climate change. But the context in which every natural variation in temperature or precipitation now plays out is hotter, making dangerous conditions and deadly results more likely.

Historically, southern Australia's temperatures have risen about 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit since 1950. Conditions over the past 20 years have been hotter and drier than in the 20 years before that, and the 20 years before that, and so forth. Heat and drought have taken their toll on Australia's countryside into a tinderbox.

A major factor worsening Australia's fire season is a natural cycle known as the Indian Ocean Dipole, which can make water in the western Indian Ocean warmer and in the eastern Indian Ocean cooler. This results in less rainfall over Australia. This period of drier conditions has lasted for two years. Though it is too early to quantify any link between climate change and the dipole's recent behavior, scientists have warned that global warming is shifting the cycle, making extended Australian drought more likely.

It could also become a poster child for the ill-effects of freakish fossil-fuel burning. Its iconic Great Barrier Reef is in peril as ocean temperatures rise and atmospheric carbon-dioxide emissions acidify the seas. Its sky-high temperatures and raging fires are a warning that land and water are being pushed to the limit. And yet it is the world's largest coal exporter, and its government has dragged its feet on curbing planet-warming emissions.

Australia, which has profited off fossil fuel extraction and use, has a responsibility to help lead the world. So does the U.S., which under the Trump administration is every bit as complicit.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 men accused of trying to scam lottery

MS FLOWOOD — Authorities in Mississippi said two men attempted to scam the state lottery commission by submitting a losing ticket that had the winning numbers glued onto it.

Odis Latham, 47, and Russell Sparks, 48, were charged with offenses including uttering counterfeit instrument over \$1,000.

The state lottery commission called Flowood police about the fake ticket Monday morning, Sgt. Adam Nelson said. Officers were told the suspects presented an altered \$100,000 ticket that appeared to have the winning numbers glued onto it.

Corn spill forms smooth path on railroad tracks

MN CRYSTAL — Bushels and bushels of corn spilled from a freight train and formed a smooth, yellow path for more than a third of a mile on railroad tracks in a northern Minneapolis suburb.

The spill happened in Crystal on the Canadian Pacific line. The Star Tribune reported the corn stretched for about 2,000 feet. Assuming the corn was about 1.5 inches deep the entire way, the Tribune estimated the spill would amount to about 900 bushels.

Twins born in different decades

IN CARMEL — Twin siblings born in an Indiana hospital around the New Year's holiday have birthdays in different decades.

Dawn Gilliam delivered one baby, Joslyn, at 11:37 p.m. on Dec. 31, 2019, and a second baby, Jaxon, 30 minutes later at 12:07 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2020.

The babies weren't due until February, but Gilliam made a New Year's Eve trip to the hospital when she had a concern about a lack of fetal movement. Gilliam said hospital staff told her she would have to deliver much sooner.

Man wanted to go to jail to support girlfriend

KY LANCASTER — Authorities in Kentucky said they've arrested a man who wanted to go to jail to support his jailed girlfriend.

Raymond Pace, 47, was charged with offenses including possession of methamphetamine, heroin and drug paraphernalia, news outlets reported.

Pace called authorities to report a stolen laptop, according to a statement by Clay County police. Officer Steven Debord arrived to find an intoxicated Pace requesting to be jailed for several months to support his girlfriend, who Pace said was serving five months in jail.

Pace showed the officer in an attempt to be arrested, but the officer denied until Pace pulled out a bundle of drug paraphernalia, police said.



STEVE RINGMAN, THE SEATTLE TIMES/AP

Riding out the storm

Jim Buttrick of Seattle was out in the wind and rain with friends off Magnuson Park in Seattle riding a hydrofoil kiteboard that was lifting him above the waves. He said, "It's just like a perfect powder day while skiing, dropping in, turn after turn." A storm brought record rainfall to the Northwest and prompted flood warnings, disrupted train traffic, closed roads and caused some power outages.

Man uses zip ties to detain hit-and-run driver

MT BUTTE — A Butte man used zip ties to detain a hit-and-run driver, Butte-Silver Bow law enforcement officers said.

Dispatchers received two reports of hit-and-run crashes Jan. 2. A man who witnessed the suspect rear-end a car and drive away called police and followed the suspect.

The suspect was driving on three wheels due to damage sustained in the hit-and-run, according to police reports.

The suspect got out of the car and jumped over a fence, but fell. The witness followed and used zip ties to detain the suspect until police arrived and swapped the zip ties for handcuffs.

6 teens arrested in melee at skating rink

AZ MESA — Six teenagers were arrested after several fights broke out at a crowded indoor skating rink in Mesa, authorities said.

Mesa police said they were called to Skateland in response to a report of teens fighting.

THE CENSUS

2 The number of sets of twins a Florida mom gave birth to the same year. Doctors told Alexandria Wolliston she had a better chance of winning the lottery than of giving birth to two sets of twins in the same year. But Wolliston said she won the jackpot last year with the births of Mark and Malakhi in March and Kaylen and Kaleb in December. She said her 3-year-old daughter helped her prepare for the double dose of twins.

other disruptive behavior amid a crowd of roughly 1,000. Hundreds of people fled as more police arrived. Yet, fights continued to erupt inside and outside.

In a statement on its Facebook page, Skateland said the melee began when a customer became angry about not being allowed to go in and out of the building with her rental skates. According to the facility, she attempted to charge at an employee. The incident escalated with others in her group getting unruly.

Police say suspect lured seagulls, ran them over

MD LAUREL — Police in suburban Washington are investigating an apparent animal cruelty case involving seagulls that officers say were lured with popcorn and then run over with a vehicle.

The Laurel Police Department said at least 10 seagulls were

killed in a shopping center, The Washington Post reported.

Police said someone emptied a bag of pre-popped popcorn, "intentionally luring" the gulls, and then ran them over.

Husband, wife married in 1953 die on same day

MI PORT HURON — A Michigan man and woman married over 60 years died within hours of each other on New Year's Day, family members said.

Robert and Janet Perry married in 1953 and remained in the Crosswell area until their deaths of natural causes, according to The (Port Huron) Times Herald. He was 84 and she was 85.

Their son, Bart Perry, said they met in high school because his father had a horse trailer and his mom needed a horse taken to a saddle club.

Big rig carrying trash overturns on highway

GA ATLANTA — A tractor-trailer full of trash overturned on an Atlanta highway, spilling its cargo and closing the road for hours.

No injuries were reported in the wreck on Interstate 285 crash near Interstate 75, Georgia State Patrol Lt. Stephanie Stallings said.

She said the cause of the accident was not yet known, and she did not know whether the driver was cited.

School evacuated after firework ignites inside

TX HOUSTON — Officials evacuated a Houston-area high school after reports that a firework was ignited inside the campus cafeteria.

It wasn't immediately known if anybody was injured during the incident at Klein Forest High School in Klein, Texas.

In a tweet, the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office said one person might have been injured. But the Klein school district said in a separate tweet that all students and staff were safe.

From wire reports

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Automotive 140

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Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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ACROSS

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- 7 Quartz variety
- 12 "Homeland" org.
- 13 Deluge refuge
- 14 Farms up
- 15 Rocker Rose
- 16 Curly-haired lap dog
- 18 Pensioned (Abbr.)
- 19 November birthstone
- 20 Imperfection
- 22 Floral garland
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- 27 Ninny
- 29 Bit of scribbling
- 31 First American orbiter
- 34 Passion
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- 39 Tic-tac-toe loser
- 41 Cilium
- 45 Parsley piece
- 47 Ruby of films
- 48 Stick-in-the-mud
- 52 "— a Camera"
- 53 Photo book
- 54 Moray, for one
- 55 Flamenco cry
- 56 Use the rink
- 57 Hwys.
- 58 Tax form ID

DOWN

- 1 Muffler
- 2 Computer screen dot
- 3 1945 conference site
- 4 "The Martian" actor Damon
- 5 Slobbers
- 6 Video chat format
- 7 Whole range
- 8 Stickum
- 9 Moreover
- 10 — Aviv
- 11 Jargon suffix
- 17 Picked up the tab
- 21 Magic sticks
- 23 Pink hue
- 24 Annex
- 25 "Alice" waitress
- 26 Always, in verse
- 28 NBC weekend show
- 30 Rowing tool
- 31 "Pygmalion" monogram
- 32 Singer Reed
- 33 Ages and ages
- 36 Big fair, for short
- 37 Thwarted
- 40 Sequence
- 42 Francisco's farewell
- 43 Elite Navy group
- 44 Macho types
- 45 Not all
- 46 Hair goops
- 48 "Now, where — I?"
- 49 Yellowstone grazer
- 50 TV schedule abbr.
- 51 Fanatic

Answer to Previous Puzzle

G	A	P	B	U	S	T	K	N	E	W
O	L	E	O	A	T	H	W	O	V	E
P	E	D	I	G	R	E	E	A	P	E
A	V	A	W	I	N	N	E	R	S	
W	I	N	E	R	O	Z				
E	S	T	T	E	L	N	A	S	A	L
E	L	I	S	W	O	E	A	C	L	L
P	A	C	K	S	L	B	J	R	A	N
			J	I	B	E	R	I	N	G
A	D	A	M	A	N	T	T	O	M	
H	O	L	A	G	O	S	S	I	P	E
A	T	M	S	O	R	S	O	E	R	E
B	E	A	K	T	E	N	N	D	A	B

1-10

CRYPTOQUIP

IL CGLCQGTZ IXQ INXRMH DC

UXIN HIGLRM HIGXRM, ZLD

RQQW IL CYZ YIIQRIXLR IL

INQ IUXRZ WQIYXTH.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FAMOUS VOCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN TO DANCE TO MUSIC OF THE SEVENTIES: DISCO TECH.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: 1 equals T

Frazz



Dilbert



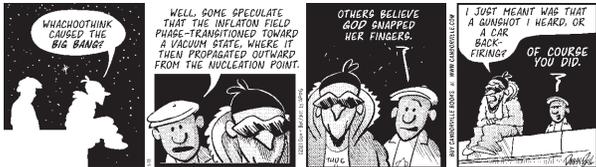
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



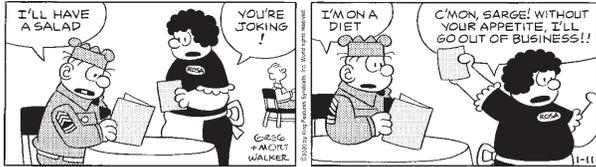
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19					20				
		21						22				
23	24	25				26			27	28	29	
30						31			32			
33						34			35			
						36						
38	39	40						41		42	43	44
45						46				47		
48						49				50		
51						52				53		

ACROSS

- 1 Bread spread
- 4 Desist
- 8 Use an eggbeater
- 12 Swelled head
- 13 Mystique
- 14 Get wind of
- 15 Passing craze
- 16 Trucker with a handle
- 17 Madame Bovary
- 18 Squeaky clean
- 21 Director Craven
- 22 Belly
- 23 March honoree, for short
- 26 Watch chain
- 27 Vinyl records
- 30 Algerian port
- 31 Press for payment
- 32 Differ
- 33 Chignon
- 34 Sawbuck
- 35 Autumnal quaff
- 36 Bro's kin
- 37 "Now I get it!"
- 38 Totally harmless
- 45 Concept
- 46 Knocks
- 47 Diner dessert
- 48 Tale teller
- 49 Nest setting
- 50 Scrape (out)
- 51 Shoulder muscle, for short

DOWN

- 2 Zero-star review
- 26 Gaiety
- 27 Young fellow
- 28 Opposite of "post."
- 29 Neighbor of Leb.
- 31 Arid areas
- 32 Test tube
- 34 Up to
- 35 Went after
- 36 Kick off
- 37 Colorado music festival town
- 38 Coat with gold
- 39 Falco of "Nurse Jackie"
- 40 Actress Patricia
- 41 Bern's river
- 42 Pinnacle
- 43 Karaoke
- 44 Honey bunch?

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	P	I	Y	M	D	S		A	G	A	T	E	
C	I	A		A	R	K		T	O	N	E	S	
A	X	L		T	O	Y	P	O	D	D	L	E	
R	E	T		T	O	P	A	Z					
F	L	A	W		L	E	I		C	A	F	E	
			A	S			D	O	O	D	L	E	
G	L	E	N					A	R	D	O	R	
B	O	O	D	L	E		F	R	A				
S	U	N	S		X	O		L	A	S	H		
	W	E	T	N	O		S	P	R	I	G	D	E
	A	L	B	U	M		E	E	L		O	L	E
	S	K	A	T	E		R	D	S		S	S	N

1-11

CRYPTOQUIP

DSWLEB WNBLOLBJ LEOPFOLEX

QEXFLRG NPSEBHI XQEBFAQE

APOLEX BP ASRLN LE

BWECQA: RDSLHQ CWENLEX.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TO PROPERLY TIE THINGS UP WITH STRONG STRING, YOU NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE TWINE DETAILS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: E equals N

Mobile



Mobile apps with constantly updating news, featuring breaking news and stories from reporters at overseas bases. Unique galleries of images available nowhere else presented in an uncluttered interface and a responsive, intuitive design. One iOS app serves both phone and tablet devices.

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Web



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SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules. myafn.net

College hockey

Wednesday's game

8:05 a.m. Boston U., **EA**
3:30 p.m. Brown, **T**

AP spotlight

Jan. 10
1920 — Newswy Lalande scores six goals to help the Montreal Canadiens beat the Toronto St. Pats 14-7 at Montreal's Mount Royal Arena. The 21 goals set an NHL record that doesn't get matched for 65 years.
1951 — Philadelphia Quakers defeat the Montreal Maroons 4-3 in overtime to end their 15-game losing streak. The record losing streak isn't broken until the first-year Washington Capitals sweep Montreal in 1974-75.
1960 — Don Simmons of the Boston Bruins becomes the first player to goale to wear a mask on a regular basis. Simmons, wearing a mask, makes 37 saves in a game against the Toronto Maple Leafs at Boston Garden.
1982 — goaltender Jim Stewart, playing in his first and only game with the Boston Bruins, gives up three goals in the first four minutes of the game and is the first five in the first period. He's replaced by Mike Eruzione in the NHL, and goes to Dwight Clark with 51 seconds remaining, lifts the San Francisco 49ers to a 28-7 victory over the Dallas Cowboys in the NFC title game.
1985 — Seattle's Lenny Wilkens becomes the first to coach a win over 1,000 NBA games. He coached the Portland Trail Blazers to the Golden State Warriors 89-86.
1998 — Michelle Khan receives eight points in five minutes for artists in the free skate to win her second U.S. Figure Skating Championships in 20 years.
2005 — Todd Eldredge wins his sixth U.S. Figure Skating Championships title. After skipping two seasons of competition, Eldredge edges defending champion Tim Goebel.
2010 — Michelle Khan wins her seventh straight title and eighth overall at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, finishing Alex Onizko's reign at 124 million, 13-year contract extension with the Montreal Canadiens as the first \$100 million deal in NHL history.

College basketball

Wednesday's men's scores

EA
 Auburn 78, Medgar Evers 73
 Birmingham 79, UMC 75
 Boston 82, Lehigh 67
 Colgate 92, Loyola (Md.) 70
 Cornell 85, Saint Joseph's 60
 Farmingdale 65, St. Joseph's (NY) 62
 Furman 73, Hampton 78
 Hartford 80, Mass.-Lowell 68
 Lafayette 82, Holy Cross 64
 Marist 60, Fairfield 66
 Navy 60, Bucknell 56
 North Carolina 75, Wake Forest 61
 Hampshire 57, Maine 51
 Old Westbury 80, St. Joseph's (LI) 70
 Penn State 69, Duquesne 69
SB
 Stony Brook 81, Vermont 77
 Conn. 67, Tulane 77
SO
 Alabama 90, Mississippi State 69
 Auburn 85, Vanderbilt 79
 Campbell 64, UNC Asheville 62
 San Antonio 73, North Carolina 68
 ETSU 64, UNC Greensboro 57
 Florida 78, Wake Forest 68
 Furman 73, Chattanooga 66
 LSU 79, Arkansas 77
 West Virginia 67, Charleston Southern 56
 NC State 73, Notre Dame 68
 New Orleans 86, Cent. Arkansas 78
 North Carolina 73, North Carolina 73
 Radford 67, Gardner-Webb 64
 South Carolina 63, Hampton 78
 St. Bonaventure 61, George Mason 49
 Tennessee 67, VMI 85
 Winthrop 79, High Point 57
 Wofford 67, Samford 62
MW
 Bradley 72, Evansville 52
 Eastern Michigan 69, Cleveland State 73
 Illinois 71, Wisconsin 70
 Indiana 65, North Carolina 62
 Kansas 79, Iowa 53
 Purdue Fort Wayne 57, W. Illinois 69
 Kansas 63, Georgetown 58
 Seton Hall 83, Xavier 71
SW
 Penn State 82, Seton Hall 81
SOUTHWEST
 McNeese St. 87, Abilene Christian 84

College football

Bowl schedule
Buffalo 31, Charlotte 9
Frisco (Texas) Bowl
 Kent State 51, Utah State 21
Saturday, Dec. 21
Celebration Bowl
 at Atlanta
 NC A&T 64, Alcorn State 44
Albuquerque
 San Diego 40, New Mexico 38
Curse Bowl
 Orlando, Fla.
 Liberty 23, Georgia Southern 16
Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl
 FAU 52, ULI 28
Camellia Bowl
 Montgomery, Ala.
 Arkansas State 34, FIU 26
New Orleans Bowl
 Appalachian State 21, UAB 17
Las Vegas Bowl
 Washington 38, Boise State 7
Monday, Dec. 23
Gasparilla Bowl
 at Tampa, Fla.
 UCF 48, Marshall 25
Tuesday, Dec. 24
Hawaii Bowl
 Hawaii 38, BYU 34
Thursday, Dec. 26
Independence Bowl
 Shreveport, La.
 Louisiana Tech 14, Middle Tennessee 10
Quick Lane Bowl
 Detroit
 Pittsburgh 34, Wake Forest 20
Friday, Dec. 27
Armed Forces Bowl
 Fort Worth, Texas
 Tulane 30, Southern Miss 13
Pinstre Bowl
 Michigan State 27, Wake Forest 21
Texas Bowl
 Texas A&M 24, Oklahoma State 14
Holiday Bowl
 Iowa 49, South Carolina 24
Chick-fil-A Bowl
 Phoenix
 Air Force 21, Washington State 21
Camping World Bowl
 at Orlando, Fla.
 Notre Dame 33, Iowa State 9
Contender Classic
 Arlington, Texas
 Penn State 53, Memphis 39
Beach Bowl
 Atlanta
 CFP Semifinal: LSU Oklahoma 28
Fiesta Bowl
 Glendale, Ariz.
 CFP Semifinal: Ohio State 23
SPRINKLE First Responder Bowl
 Dallas
 Western Kentucky 23, Western Michigan 20
MUSIC City Bowl
 Nashville, Tenn.
 North Dakota State 28, Mississippi State 28

Nicholls 61, Lamar 54
 Oklahoma 72, Texas 62
 SMU 81, UCF 74
 Texas Tech 67, St. Joseph's 61
 Texas A&M 27, Stephen F. Austin 72
SOLE WEST
 Boise St. 73, UNLV 67
 SC Northridge 99, Long Beach St. 77
 Cal Baptist 83, CS Bakersfield 67
 S. Dakota St. 89, Denver 58
 San Diego St. 72, Wyoming 52
 San Jose St. 69, Nevada 68
 UC Santa Barbara 63, Cal Poly 45

AP Men's Top 25 schedule
Friday's games
 No. 6 Utah at Providence
 No. 12 Maryland at Iowa, **EA**
 No. 1 Gonzaga at Loyola Marymount
 No. 2 Duke vs. Wake Forest
 No. 3 Kansas vs. North Carolina
 No. 5 Auburn vs. Georgia
 No. 11 Ohio State at Wake Forest
 No. 9 Oregon vs. Arizona State
 No. 13 Ohio State at Wake Forest
 No. 13 Louisville at Notre Dame
 No. 14 Kentucky vs. Alabama
 No. 15 Dayton vs. UMass
 No. 16 Villanova vs. Georgetown at Wake Forest Center
 No. 17 West Virginia vs. No. 22 Texas Tech
 No. 18 Virginia vs. Syracuse
 No. 20 Penn State vs. Wisconsin

Wednesday's women's scores
EA
 American U. 73, Amherst 67
 Baruch 61, Medgar Evers 34
 Birmingham 61, UMC 43
 Bucknell 61, New 24
 Colgate 76, Loyola (Md.) 74
 Fairfield Dickinson 56, St. Anns (Pa.) 47
 George Washington 65, Duquesne 50
 Marist 67, Lafayette 66
 Lehigh 51, Boston U. 34
 Maine 57, New Hampshire 50
 Mass.-Lowell 68, Hartford 63
 Merrimack 78, Bryant 66
 Penn State 86, CCSU 58
 Saint Louis 77, La Salle 61
 St. Francis Brooklyn 88, IU Brooklyn 63

Redbox Bowl
 Santa Clara, Calif.
 California 35, Illinois 20
Orange Bowl
 Miami Gardens, Fla.
 Florida 36, Virginia 28
Tuesday, Dec. 31
Balk Bowl
 Charlotte, N.C.
 Kentucky 27, Virginia Tech 30
San Bowl
 El Paso, Texas
 Arizona State 20, Florida State 14
Liberty Bowl
 Memphis, Tenn.
 Navy 20, Kansas State 17
Arizona Bowl
 Tucson, Ariz.
 Wyoming 38, Colorado State 17
Alamo Bowl
 Texas 38, Utah 10
San Antonio
 Wednesday, Jan. 1
Citrus Bowl
 Orlando, Fla.
 Alabama 35, Michigan 36
Outback Bowl
 Tampa, Fla.
 Minnesota 21, Auburn 24
Rose Bowl
 Pasadena, Calif.
 Oregon 28, Wisconsin 27
Sugar Bowl
 New Orleans
 Georgia 26, Baylor 14
Thursday, Jan. 2
Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl
 Cincinnati 28, Cincinnati 6
Gator Bowl
 Jacksonville, Fla.
 Tennessee 23, Indiana 22
Friday, Jan. 3
Armed Forces Bowl
 Boise
 Ohio 30, Nevada 21
Navajo, Jan. 4
United Forces Bowl
 Fort Worth, Texas
 Tulane 30, Southern Miss 13
Pinstre Bowl
 Michigan State 27, Wake Forest 21
Lendinger Bowl
 Mobile, Ala.
 Louisiana-Lafayette 27, Miami (Ohio) 17

College Football Championship
New Orleans
 Clemson 100 vs. LSU (14-0)
Saturday, Jan. 18
East-West Shrine Classic
 at St. Petersburg, Fla.
 East vs. West
NFLPA Coliseum Game
 at Pasadena, Calif.
 American vs. NFLPA
Saturday, Jan. 25
at Mobile, Ala.
 North vs. South
Sunday, Jan. 26
Hula Bowl
 East vs. West

NCAA FCS playoffs
Championship
Saturday, Jan. 11
Nashville, Tenn.
 Frisco, Texas
 North Dakota State (15-0) vs. James Madison (14-1)

Stony Brook 67, Vermont 49
 Towson 86, Chestnut Hill 49
 UMass 62, Southwestern 52
 UVP 69, St. Bonaventure 52
 Abilene Christian 90, McNeese St. 70
 Davidson 74, Fordham 62
 Incarnate Word 66, Memphis 56
 Lamar 84, North Carolina 78
 Marist 66, St. John's 67
 SMU 55, East Carolina 77
 Sam Houston 65, Tulane 62
 St. Louis 62, Saint Joseph's 40
 Ball St. 86, Northwestern 80
 Cent. Michigan 73, Ohio 71
 Dayton 69, Western Michigan 65
 E. Michigan 74, Kent 69
 Miami (Ohio) 66, N. Illinois 64
 North T. Buffalo 60
 W. Michigan 56, Akron 51
 Youngstown 69, Cleveland 69
SOUTHWEST
 New Orleans 28, Ark. Arkansas 37
 Oklahoma 77, Oklahoma St. 75
 Oral Roberts 70, N. Dakota St. 62
 Stephen F. Austin 65, Texas A&M 64
 Temple 61, Houston 28
FAUST
 Texas Tech 62, UConn 45
 CS Bakersfield 66, Cal Baptist 61
 Fresno St. 49, New Mexico 83
 San Diego St. 67, San Jose St. 67
 San Jose St. 72, Nevada 70
UNLV 66, Boise St. 52

AP Women's Top 25 schedule
Friday's games
 No. 2 Oregon at Arizona State
 No. 3 Oregon State at No. 18 Arizona
 No. 1 Stanford vs. California
 No. 8 UCLA at Utah
 No. 10 Stanford vs. Seton Hall
 No. 20 Missouri State vs. Drake
Saturday's games
 No. 1, U. Wake Forest at the XL Center, Hartford, Conn.
 No. 6 Gonzaga vs. Pacific
 No. 22 South Dakota vs. Omaha
 No. 25 Princeton at Pennsylvania

Pro football

NFL playoffs
Wild-card Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 4
 Houston 20, New Orleans 20, OT
 Tennessee 20, New England 13
Sunday, Jan. 5
 Minnesota 26, New Orleans 20, OT
 Seattle 17, Philadelphia 9
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 11
 Minnesota 26, New Orleans 20, OT
 Tennessee at Baltimore
Sunday, Jan. 12
 Houston at Kansas City
 Seattle at Green Bay
Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 19
 AFC: Tennessee-Baltimore winner vs. Houston-Kansas City winner
 NFC: Minnesota-San Francisco winner vs. Seattle-Green Bay winner
Pro Bowl
Sunday, Jan. 26
 AFC vs. NFC
Super Bowl
Sunday, Feb. 2
 at Miami Gardens, Fla.
 NFC champion vs. AFC champion

NFL injury report
NEW YORK — The National Football League injury report, as provided by the league (OUT = definitely will not play; DNP = did not practice; LIMITED = limited participation; PROBS = probable; FULL = full participation in practice).
Saturday
MINNESOTA VIKINGS at SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — VIKINGS: DNP: CB Mackenzie Alexander (knee), WR Stefan Diggs (illness), 5 Jayron Kearse (tie knee), LIT:OT Tyrell Linnell (groin), WR Adam Thielen (ankle), FULL: TE Tyler Conklin (knee), RB Dion Lewis (ankle), FULL: WR Josh Kelly (elbow), CB Xavier Rhodes (ankle, shoulder), DT Shamar Stephen (knee), DT Stephen Weatherly (tooth), 49ERS: No Report released.
Sunday
TENNESSEE TITANS at BALTIMORE RAVENS — TITANS: DNP: LB Jay Brown (injury related), LB Kamalei Combs (injury related), WR Adam Humphries (ankle), CB Adoree Jackson (tooth), LIMITED: G Nate Davis (illness), RB Dion Lewis (ankle), FULL: WR Corey Hollister (ankle), WR Kahlil Williams (concussion), RAVENS: DNP: RB Mark Ingram (collar), DT Brandon Williams (concussion), DT TE: Mark Andrews (ankle), FULL: CB Jimmy Smith (not injury related), 5 Earl Thomas (not injury related).

HOUSTON TEXANS at KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — TEXANS: DNP: LB Jacob Martin (injury related), LB Jamal Adams (ankle), (knee), TE Jordan Akins (hamstring), CB Dontay Newberry (ankle), RB Derrick Favors (groin), CB Jonathan Joseph (hamstring), S A.J. Moore (hip), WR Kenny Stills (concussion), DT J. West (shoulder), FULL: T Chris Clark (concussion), CHIEFS: DNP: CB Morris Claiborne (injury related, shoulder), LIMITED: TE Travis Kelce (knee), FULL: DE Tamba Hali (knee), G Austin Retter (wrist), G Andrew Wylie (ankle).

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS at GREEN BAY PACKERS — SEAHAWKS: No Report released. FULL: DE Tamba Hali (knee), TE Jimmy Graham (wrist, not injury related), RB Doris Miller (ankle), G Billy Turner (ankle), RB Dan Vitale (knee), FULL: T Braxton Miller (concussion, not injury related), LB Rashan Gary (ankle), WR Allen Robinson (ankle), Corey Linsley (back), LB Blake Martinez (wrist), WR Tyler Lockett (hamstring), RB Jamaal Williams (shoulder).

Pro basketball

NBA EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	25	10	7th
Brooklyn	25	13	11th
Philadelphia	24	14	13th
Brooklyn	26	15	14th
NY	29	28	16th

Central Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	33	6	1st
Indiana	21	10	9th
Detroit	14	24	16th
Chicago	17	21	17th
Cleveland	10	30	22nd

WESTERN CONFERENCE Southwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	23	14	6th
Houston	23	14	7th
Memphis	16	22	11th
New Orleans	14	24	13th

Northwest Division

W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	26	11	5th
Utah	10	1	11th
Oklahoma City	21	16	16th
Minnesota	14	22	18th

Pacific Division

W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	27	8	1st
L.A. Clippers	26	16	4th
Golden State	24	18	6th
Phoenix	14	23	16th
Golden State	9	30	21st

Deals

Wednesday's transactions
BASEBALL
American League
DETROIT TIGERS — Acquired C Eric Haase from Cleveland for cash considerations. Designated RHP Darío Araoz for assignment.
National League
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Extended the contract of Craig Counsell through the 2023 season.
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Agreed to terms with INF ASCabrera and 1B Eric Thames on one-year contracts.
BASKETBALL
NBA — Fined Golden State coach Steve Kerr \$25,000 for verbally abusing a game official and failing to leave the court in a timely manner following an ejection during a Jan. 6 game. The team also fined New York Knicks FC Bobby Portis \$25,000 for recklessly making contact above the shoulders of an airborne shooter during a Jan. 7 game.
Miami Heat — Signed G Gabe Vincent. waived GM Darin Motaung.
National Football League
LOS ANGELES RAMS — Announced the resignation of special teams coordinator Fassel to take the same position with Dallas.
NEW YORK GIANTS — Named Joe Judge coach.
National Hockey League
ARIZONA COYOTES — Recalled F Barrett Hayton.
CALGARY FLAMES — Agreed to terms with Ransen Anderson on a six-year contract extension.
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
D.C. United — Re-signed G Earl Edelman. Re-signed G Scott Sebring.
LOS ANGELES FC — Signed D Tristan Blackwood to a three-year contract extension through the 2022 season, with a club option for 2023.
MLB
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Named Tim Lincecum — Acquired Soccer League **HOUSTON DASH** — Acquired F Katie Sayers. Signed overall draft pick from Utah Royals FC for Houston's natural second-round picks in the 2020 and 2021 drafts. Signed the natural 2021 first-round draft pick from Portland Thorns for Boston.
COLLEGE
Big 12 Conference — Fined West Virginia coach Huggins \$10,000 for referring to an officiating crew as "three dumb f---ing idiots." Jailed **ALBANY NY** — Named Vic Cogoli as president after the death of Leslie Moore as associate athletic director for facilities, scheduling and game operations.
EAST CAROLINA — Announced the retirement of defensive line coach Jeff Hanson.
WISCONSIN — QB Jake Anderson will enter the NFL Draft.
OREGON STATE — Signed football coach Darrell Hazell to a three-year contract extension through the 2025 season.
PITTSBURGH — Agreed to terms with 2nd-round pick coach Jeff Capel on a two-year contract extension through the 2026-27 season.
NEW YORK STATE — Announced the retirement of Rocky Long football coach, Portland State's head coach Steve Hoke to football coach.
WISCONSIN — Head coach Tyler Bladner announced he will enter the NFL Draft.

Wednesday's games

Miami 11, Indiana 10
San Antonio 129, Boston 114
Toronto 112, Charlotte 110
Utah 120, Dallas 106
Denver 107, Dallas 106
San Antonio 127, Atlanta 115
New Orleans 123, Chicago 108
Utah 126, NY 104
San Antonio 120, Boston 114
San Antonio 120, Boston 114

Thursday's games

Boston at Philadelphia
Cleveland at Detroit
Portland at Sacramento
Houston at Oklahoma City

Friday's games

Atlanta at Philadelphia
New Orleans at New York
Indiana at Chicago
San Antonio at Memphis
Charlotte at Phoenix
L.A. Lakers at Dallas

Saturday's games

Milwaukee at Sacramento
Golden State at Dallas
Minnesota at Oklahoma City
Chicago at Detroit
New Orleans at Oklahoma City
Philadelphia at Dallas
San Antonio at Memphis
Milwaukee at Portland
San Antonio at Memphis
Miami at New York
Utah at Washington
Cleveland at Detroit
Golden State at Memphis
San Antonio at Toronto
Charlotte at Phoenix
L.A. Clippers at Denver

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division		GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	44	25	13	4	1	61	146	113
Tampa Bay	42	25	13	4	0	54	156	127
Toronto	44	19	17	6	5	54	162	129
Florida	43	22	16	5	0	49	153	146
Buffalo	43	19	17	7	3	54	162	129
Montreal	44	18	19	7	4	43	139	143
Ottawa	43	16	22	5	3	37	118	149
Detroit	44	11	30	3	2	25	96	158

Metropolitan Division

Washington	45	19	16	5	65	163	133
N.Y. Islanders	42	27	12	3	57	120	108
Pittsburgh	43	26	12	5	52	146	116
Carolina	43	22	16	2	52	145	123
Philadelphia	44	23	15	6	52	140	136
Columbus	44	21	16	6	50	117	123
N.Y. Rangers	42	20	18	4	44	138	141
New Jersey	42	15	20	7	37	109	148

Western Conference

Central Division		GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	44	27	10	4	7	61	138	121
Dallas	43	25	14	4	54	117	105	
Colorado	44	25	15	4	54	159	130	
Winnipeg	44	24	16	4	52	137	134	
Minnesota	43	20	17	6	46	153	145	
Nashville	42	19	16	7	44	144	143	
Chicago	44	19	19	6	44	128	143	

Pacific Division

Arizona	45	18	16	6	54	133	114
Vegas	46	24	16	6	54	147	137
Edmonton	45	23	17	5	51	137	142
Calgary	45	23	17	5	52	125	135
Vancouver	43	23	16	4	50	143	134
San Jose	45	22	14	4	42	121	116
Anaheim	43	17	21	5	39	113	136
Los Angeles	45	17	24	4	38	113	142

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.

Medicine games
Philadelphia 3, Washington 2
Winnipeg 4, Toronto 1, SO
Dallas 2, Los Angeles 1

Thursday's games
Winnipeg at Boston
Vancouver at Florida
Edmonton at Montreal
New Jersey at N.Y. Rangers
Arizona at Tampa Bay
Buffalo at St. Louis
Nashville at Chicago
Minnesota at Calgary
Dallas at Anaheim
Los Angeles at Vegas
Columbus at San Jose

Friday's games
Arizona at Carolina
Ottawa at Detroit
Colorado at Colorado

Saturday's games
Buffalo at Ottawa
Los Angeles at Carolina
Boston at N.Y. Islanders
Philadelphia at Montreal
Tampa Bay at Philadelphia
New Jersey at Washington
N.Y. Rangers at St. Louis
Chicago at Chicago
Edmonton at Calgary
Columbus at Vegas
Dallas at San Jose

Sunday's games
Nashville at Winnipeg
Vancouver at Minnesota
Buffalo at Detroit
Pittsburgh at Arizona
Toronto at Arizona
Tampa Bay at New Jersey

Leaders

Goal scoring		GP	G
David Pastrnak, Boston	44	32	
Auston Matthews, Toronto	44	29	
Jack Eichel, Buffalo	42	26	
Nathan MacKinnon, Colorado	44	26	
Alex Ovechkin, Washington	44	26	
Leon Draisaitl, Edmonton	44	26	
Patrick Kane, Chicago	44	24	
Connor McDavid, Edmonton	44	24	
Sebastian Aho, Carolina	43	23	
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	42	23	
Kyle Connor, Winnipeg	42	21	
Anthony Duclair, Ottawa	42	21	
Brad Pittburgh	44	20	
Brad Marchand, Boston	44	20	
Elias Pettersson, Vancouver	43	20	
Marc Scheifele, Winnipeg	43	20	
James Neal, Edmonton	45	19	
William Nylander, Toronto	44	19	
Max Pacioretty, Vegas	46	19	
Jean-Gabriel Pageau, Ottawa	43	19	
Nick Schmaltz, Arizona	45	28	

Plus/Minus		GP	+/-
Ryan Graves, Colorado	43	30	
Bougie Hamilton, Carolina	43	28	
Jacob Slavin, Carolina	43	24	
Ian Cole, Colorado	49	22	
Radko Gudas, Washington	44	20	
Brad Marchand, Boston	44	20	
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	42	20	
Bryan Rust, Pittsburgh	24	18	
John Carlson, Washington	44	17	
Zdeno Chara, Boston	43	17	
Brian Dumoulin, Pittsburgh	42	17	
Roman Josi, Nashville	42	17	
Justin Holl, Toronto	44	16	
Auston Matthews, Toronto	44	16	
Ondrej Palat, Tampa Bay	41	16	
Shane Bieber, Washington	41	16	
Ryan Ellis, Nashville	39	15	
Phillips Myers, Philadelphia	42	15	
Kevin Shattenkirk, Tampa Bay	42	15	
Carson Soucy, Minnesota	40	15	

Celebrator

Jan. 26 — All-Star Game, St. Louis.
Feb. 6 — NHL Stadium Series: Los Angeles Kings at Colorado Avalanche, Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Around the league

Scorers happy rough play fading

Price for playing in front of net isn't as costly

By LARRY LAGE
Associated Press

It's still no man's land in front of NHL goaltenders, a forbidden place for offensive players who risk hard shoves, cross-checks — or worse — when they settle in.

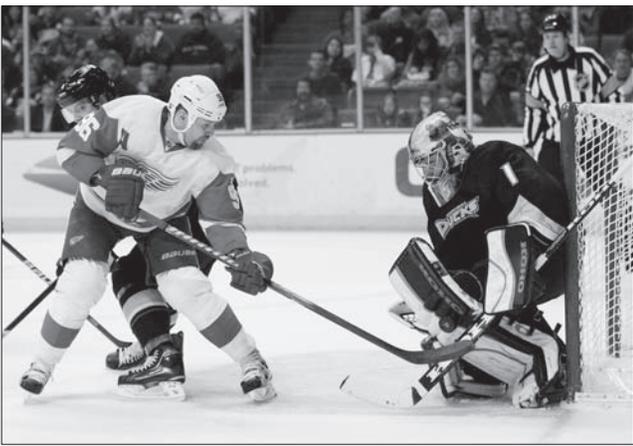
But it isn't nearly as rough and tumble as it used to be. The league has cracked down on the over-the-top physical play in general and that includes going after players who park themselves in front of the net in hopes of blocking a goalie's view, tipping in a shot or sliding in a rebounding puck for a great goal.

The savage blows once seen on a nightly basis are now far more rare, certainly in the regular season.

"It has changed drastically," San Jose Sharks defenseman Brent Burns said. "I think they're trying to create more goals and that's one way to try to do it. It's a great place for forwards to go to make a big difference."

James Neal is one of those players.

The Edmonton winger has scored 19 times this season, put-



Former Detroit Red Wings left wing Tomas Holmstrom, left, is widely regarded as one of the game's great net-front players, paying the price for the role from 1996 to 2012.

ting him on pace to approach his career high of 40 goals. Neal honed his puck-tipping craft a lot last summer and it helps that he is surrounded by a lot of talent that opens up space on the ice.

"It's definitely something I've

worked on, and it's really helped," Neal said. "I've scored a lot more goals in front this year."

Net-front play is critical in every NHL game simply because goalies tend to stop shots they can see. Interfere with their view, their concentration, and the pucks start going in. Tipping a fast-moving puck with a stick to change the trajectory of a shot is another way to score, and being in front of the net is the best place to employ that mix of skill and luck.

It's up to defensemen to move opponents out of the way without drawing a penalty that could give the other team a power play.

"This game within the game has evolved over the years."

Former Detroit forward Tomas Holmstrom, who is widely regarded as one of the game's great net-front players, paid the price for his No. 1 role from 1996 to 2012. Holmstrom was hit with fists and sticks, sometimes both, as teams tried to get him off his spot in front of the crease.

"He got abused pretty good back in the day," Red Wings goal tender Jimmy Howard recalled.

That didn't stop him as he did the dirty work to help the franchise win four Stanley Cup championships.

"I grew up in Detroit and watched him for a long time," Colorado defenseman Ian Cole said. "Not only was he so good at establishing that position, and holding that position, he was unbelievable at tipping the pucks. He was also really good at knowing when to let pucks go."

Florida Panthers forward Aleksander Barkov is another player who makes a living in front of the net.

"He seems to get his stick on everything and he takes your eyes away," Howard said.

In today's game, it is difficult to defend the front of the net because physical play against someone without the puck often draws a penalty. Cole said the key is to try to prevent opponents from getting where they want to be.

"It's really tough to move guys when they're already there," Cole said. "There are things you can do, but you're probably going to 100% take a penalty. Just the way your skates are, you're not going to be able to push guys sideways. They're going to dig their edges in and not going to move. Then you start to push them forward and they rotate their foot and you can't push them forward."

Goalies, while the puck travels on from stick to stick, stay on the move over so slightly so that they can see what they're trying to stop.

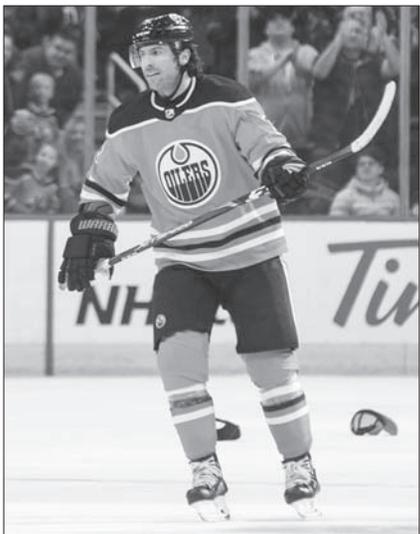
"As a goalie, our eyes are on our everything," Howard said. "If you see the puck, nine times out of 10 guys are going to stop it."

And that's easier said than done.

Game of the week

Edmonton at Calgary (Saturday): The battle of Alberta should be intriguing, matching up teams that may be competing the rest of the season for the third and guaranteed playoff spot in the Pacific Division or a wild-card berth. The Flames beat the Oilers 5-1 two weeks ago on the road in their first of five games.

AP hockey writer John Sawrow in Buffalo, N.Y., and AP Sports Writer Pat Gamble in Denver contributed to this report.



The Edmonton Oilers' James Neal is on pace to approach his career high of 40 goals, honing his puck-tipping craft over the summer.

JASON FRANSON, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/MLB

Girard showing grit at Syracuse

Freshman guard becoming key player as Orange try to make headway in the ACC

By JOHN KEKIS
Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Joe Girard lay flat on his back after a fall on the hardwood of Jim Boeheim Court and stared up at Notre Dame's Prentiss Hubb as the sophomore hovered over the Orange freshman guard, glaring down in menacing fashion late in a tight game with the Irish.

Girard hopped up and walked away after the brief altercation as the referees huddled and then called a technical foul against Hubb. Girard responded by sinking into both free throws, the beginning of 10 straight points from Girard while Hubb responded by hitting a pair of three-pointers to keep the game close.

It was a moment that will be etched in the minds of the Orange faithful for a long time, reminiscent of the grit Gerry McNamara brought to the team nearly two decades ago.

"If somebody challenges me or any competitor, usually you're going to stop your game up a little bit," said Girard, who drained a three-pointer at the final buzzer and pleaded for a foul call that never came as the Orange lost by a point. "I think I was a little bit surprised. He was just competing. The refs saw it. He got over it. I got over it."

The departure of his backcourt — point guard Frank Howard and Tyus Battle — after last season left Orange coach Jim Boeheim with big holes to fill. The 6-foot-1, 180-pound Girard, one of five freshmen, has stepped up to the challenge, and he's well known in Orange country. He scored 434 points as an eighth-grader on the varsity at Glens Falls High

School in eastern New York, the same school where one of his mentors, Jimmer Fredette, had wowed the locals a decade earlier before going on to lead the nation in scoring and earning national player of the year honors at BYU in 2011.

Girard put up another 4,329 points in his final four years, leading Glens Falls to a state championship as a senior. The Basketball Coaches Association of New York named him as its Mr. Basketball.

Girard picked Syracuse among several suitors and Boeheim inserted him in the starting lineup in the third game of the season. He responded by scoring a season-high 24 points against Seattle, hitting five three-pointers.

New York state's all-time leading high school scorer had found his niche. He has started every game since, has reached double figures in scoring 10 times, and is averaging just under 12 points to rank third on the team. He's also third with 32 three-pointers in 96 attempts.

"Obviously, he can score, but he's done a much better job handling the ball playing the point guard position," Boeheim said. "His ballhandling has been really solid for a freshman. His decision-making has been really good overall. He's having a tremendous year for a young player. He stepped in and has really stepped it up."

Especially at the free-throw line, where he's on pace to break school records held by McNamara, now his position coach at Syracuse. Girard has 41 makes in 43 attempts (95.3%) to rank second nationally to senior Bryson Robinson of New Orleans. Girard is the only freshman in the top 30.



MARY ALTFERRER/AP

Freshman guard Joe Girard, right, has become an important player for Syracuse, averaging just under 12 points per game. He's also third on the team with 32 three-pointers.



DAVID BANKS/AP

Indians team president Chris Antonetti said Wednesday he's more confident that four-time All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor, above, will be in Cleveland's lineup to start the season.

Indians growing confident Lindor will be in the lineup opening day

By TOM WITHERS
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Francisco Lindor's status with the Indians has been slightly upgraded.

Team president Chris Antonetti said Wednesday he's more confident the All-Star shortstop will be in Cleveland's lineup to start the season after the Indians didn't receive a trade proposal to their liking over the past few weeks.

Antonetti did not disclose what has been offered for Lindor, a four-time All-Star and one of baseball's best all-around players. Cleveland has him under contract through the 2021 season, but the Indians have been unsuccessful in their attempts to sign him to a long-term deal. There appears to be little chance he will re-sign.

Antonetti believes Lindor will be around for at least a little while.

"I still have every expectation that Francisco will be our short-stop opening day," Antonetti said on a conference call. "I'm more confident today in saying that, as more of the offseason has passed. But that's still our expectation."

Lindor's uncertain future hangs over the Indians like a storm cloud. The 26-year-old has become the face of the franchise, a rare player who drives ticket sales and drives in runs while performing defensive wizardry.

The team understands that the longer it hangs on to Lindor, the tougher it will be to get a top-quality package of players in return.

Cleveland won 93 games last season, just missing the playoffs, and the Indians expect to be in the postseason hunt again this

By the numbers

4.7

Francisco Lindor's Wins Above Replacement in 2019 as he won a Golden Glove and hit .284 with 74 RBIs.

7.9

Lindor's WAR in 2018, when he led the American League in runs and hit .277 with 92 RBIs and a career-high 38 homers.

5.5

Lindor's 2017 WAR. He hit .273 with 89 RBIs, 33 homers and also led the league's shortstops in double plays.

SOURCE: BaseballReference.com

year — assuming Lindor is on the roster.

Lindor hit .284 with 32 homers, 74 RBIs and 22 steals while batting leadoff last season.

"I don't think it's constructive to get into specifics on any individual player, on what trade conversations we've had or haven't had," Antonetti said. "I don't think that's fair to the player and I'm also not sure it's most constructive for our dialogue with other teams."

Lindor is scheduled to appear at the team's Tribe Fest fan event on Feb. 1. The team did note the list of players scheduled to attend is subject to change, and there's always a chance Lindor could get moved if the Indians get the right proposal.

"I have never had a different expectation other than Francisco will be our shortstop opening

day," Antonetti repeated. "That was my expectation when the season ended. That's still my expectation. I can't control the conduct of other teams as far as them calling us with interest and wanting to explore things."

"We have a responsibility to be responsive to those teams when they engage with us. I can say that we've had conversations on the majority of our major league roster and a bunch of players in our minor league system over the course of the offseason. The majority of those guys, other than just a couple, are still with us."

The Indians did sign free-agent second baseman Cesar Hernandez, who spent the past seven seasons with Philadelphia. Hernandez fills the hole created by the team's decision not to re-sign Jason Kipnis, and it means Jose Ramirez will stay at third.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Best of the bowls

LSU's Burrow, Jefferson lead All-Bowl Team

BY STEVE MEGARGE

Associated Press

Joe Burrow and Justin Jefferson were easy selections for The Associated Press All-Bowl Team after they connected for four first-half touchdowns in LSU's College Football Playoff semifinal blowout of Oklahoma.

Selecting the rest of the team wasn't nearly as simple.

Although the season won't end until LSU faces Clemson in the championship game Monday night in New Orleans, all the post-season games with "bowl" in the title have been played. So why wait?

Because some defenses run a 4-3 scheme, some run a 3-4 and others use the nickel as their base defense, AP included four linemen, four linebackers and five defensive backs in picking the honorees. There are also 13 players on offense, since we include an all-purpose player and a third running back.

There were far more receivers than tight ends worthy of consideration, so we left out the tight end position and went with three receivers instead.

Offense

Quarterback

Joe Burrow, LSU (Peach): The Heisman Trophy winner tied a bowl record by throwing seven touchdown passes in the top-ranked Tigers' 63-28 victory over No. 4 Oklahoma — all in the first half. Burrow went 29-for-39 for 394 yards passing. He also had a touchdown run.

Running back

Journey Brown, Penn State (Cotton): Brown rushed for 202 yards and two touchdowns on just 16 carries in the 13th-ranked Nittany Lions' 53-39 triumph over No. 15 Maryland. He scored from 32 and 56 yards away.

Lamical Perine, Florida (Orange): Perine ran for 138 yards and caught five passes for 43 yards in the ninth-ranked Gators' 36-28 victory over No. 24 Virginia. Perine had two touchdown runs and one touchdown catch.

Xazavian Vaiday, Wyoming (Arizona): Vaiday rushed for 204 yards and one touchdown on 26 carries as the Cowboys beat Georgia State 38-17. He also caught three passes for 91 yards, including a 63-yard score.



JOHN AMIS/AP

Joe Burrow tied a bowl record by throwing seven first-half touchdown passes in top-ranked LSU's 63-28 Peach Bowl victory over No. 4 Oklahoma.

Wide receiver

Justin Jefferson, LSU (Peach): Jefferson caught four of Burrow's seven touchdown passes. Jefferson ended up with 14 receptions for 227 yards.

Jerry Jeudy, Alabama (Citrus): Jeudy caught an 85-yard touchdown pass on the No. 9 Crimson Tide's first play from scrimmage and finished with six receptions for 204 yards in a 35-16 victory over No. 17 Michigan.

Tyler Johnson, Minnesota (Outback): Johnson had 12 receptions for 202 yards and two touchdowns as the No. 16 Gophers defeated No. 9 Auburn 31-24.

Line

Tremayne Anchrum and Jackson Carman, Clemson (Fiesta): The Tigers' two offensive tackles helped limit Heisman Trophy finalist Chase Young in third-ranked Clemson's 29-23 victory over No. 2 Ohio State in the other CFP semifinal.

Samuel Cosmi, Texas (Alamo): Cosmi anchored a line that helped the Longhorns rush for 231 yards against a 12th-ranked Utah team that had been leading the nation in run defense. The Utes also ranked third in total defense, but Texas gained 438 total yards in its 38-10 victory.

Charlie Heck, North Carolina (Military): The Tar Heels' left tackle led a line that allowed no sacks against Temple, which had 39 during the regular season. North Carolina gained 534 yards in a 55-13 blowout.

Ford Higgins, Navy (Liberty): The Midshipmen's center helped pave the way for quarterback Malcolm Perry's 213-yard rushing performance as 21st-ranked Navy edged Kansas State, 20-17. The Midshipmen controlled the ball for 36½ minutes against a Kansas State team that was ranked fourth in time of possession.

James Hudson, Cincinnati (Birmingham): The Michigan transfer made his Bearcats debut as a starting left tackle and helped 23rd-ranked Cincinnati gain 343 yards in a 38-6 rout of Boston College.

All-purpose

Lynn Bowden Jr., Kentucky (Belk): The receiver-turned-quarterback rushed for 233 yards and two scores and threw a game-winning touchdown pass with 15 seconds remaining in the Wildcats' 37-30 victory over Virginia Tech.

Defense

Line

A.J. Epenesa, Iowa (Holiday): The Associated Press All-America second-team defensive end collected 2½ sacks and forced a fumble as the 19th-ranked Hawkeyes defeated No. 22 Southern California, 49-24.

Malcolm Koonce, Buffalo (Bahamas): Koonce had two of the Bulls' five sacks in a 31-9 rout of Charlotte. He also forced a fumble and had five tackles.

Jesse LEMONIER, Liberty (Cure): Lemonier had eight tackles and recorded two sacks to improve his two-year career sack total to 20½. He was named the game's most valuable player after the Flames' 23-16 victory over Georgia Southern.

Kenny Wilkes, Michigan State (Pinstripe): Wilkes made nine tackles, forced a fumble and delivered 1½ sacks in the Spartans' 27-21 triumph over Wake Forest.

Linebacker

Joseph Ossai, Texas (Alamo): Ossai posted nine tackles — six for loss — and three sacks against Utah.

Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, Notre Dame (Camping World): Technically listed



DANNY KARNIK/AP

LSU wide receiver Justin Jefferson had 14 catches for four touchdowns and 227 yards in his team's Peach Bowl defeat of Oklahoma in Atlanta.

as a rover, Owusu-Koramoah recorded nine tackles — four for loss — and three sacks in the 14th-ranked Fighting Irish's 33-9 victory over Iowa State. He also forced and recovered a fumble.

Micah Parsons, Penn State (Cotton): Parsons had seven solo tackles, seven assists, three tackles for loss, two sacks, two forced fumbles and two pass breakups against Memphis.

Rashad Smith, Florida Atlantic (Boca Raton): Smith scored on a 34-yard fumble return and also had a 22-yard interception return as well as 11 tackles in the Owls' 52-28 triumph over SMU.

Secondary

Khoury Bethley, Hawaii (Hawaii): Bethley made 10 solo tackles — one for loss — and picked off two passes in a 38-34 victory over BYU. His second interception clinched the game with 25 seconds left.

Brazy Brezee, Oregon (Rose): Brezee scored on a 31-yard fumble return and also forced a fumble to set up No. 7 Oregon's go-ahead touchdown in a 28-27 victory over No. 11 Wisconsin. He had 11 tackles and a pass breakup.

Antwan Collier and Richie Grant, Central Florida (Gasparilla): Grant had 10 tackles in a 48-25 win over Marshall and opened the scoring with a 39-yard interception return.

Collier had a 34-yard interception return, two fumble recoveries and six tackles.

Richard LeCounte, Georgia (Sugar):

LeCounte picked off two passes in the fifth-ranked Bulldogs' 26-14 victory over No. 8 Baylor.

Elijah Molden, Washington (Las Vegas): Molden had a 31-yard interception return, forced a fumble and made nine tackles in the Huskies' 38-7 victory over No. 18 Boise State.

Special Teams

Kicker

Riley Patterson, Memphis (Cotton): Patterson made all six of his field-goal attempts, connecting from 37, 41, 42, 44, 48 and 51 yards away. His accuracy gave him a slight edge over Western Kentucky's Cory Munson, who made a game-winning 52-yarder on the final play of the First Responder Bowl but missed a 29-yard attempt earlier in the game.

Punter

Michael Turk, Arizona State (Sun): Turk averaged 45.8 yards on his eight punts and had four of them downed inside the 20-yard line in the Sun Devils' 20-14 victory over Florida State. He landed three straight punts inside the Seminoles' 10 in the third quarter.

Returner

Ihmir Smith-Marsette, Iowa (Holiday): Smith-Marsette scored on a 98-yard kickoff return. He also had a six-yard touchdown run and a 12-yard touchdown catch.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

LSU, Clemson get big help from little backs

Edwards-Helaire, 5-8, and Etienne, 5-11, are now hard to overlook

By PETE IACOBELLI
Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — LSU's Clyde Edwards-Helaire and Clemson's Travis Etienne have much more in common than their Louisiana backgrounds heading into the national title game.

Both are smallish running backs who were overlooked at times in high school but have emerged as critical factors for next week's College Football Playoff championship game.

"Definitely a great opportunity to go out there and finish it off with a W," said Etienne, a junior considering a jump to the NFL after playing for a second straight national crown.

Etienne has proven he can get it done on the biggest stage. But his path from Jennings, La., to Clemson was far from direct.

The Tigers were locked into another promising tailback commit from Tennessee before Cordarrian Richardson had a change of heart and caused Clemson offensive coordinator and running backs coach Tony Elliott to scramble to fill the roster spot. Etienne emerged as a possibility and Elliott went to meet him in mid-January 2017 — soon after Clemson won the 2016 national championship over Alabama.

"When we saw him, we just hit it off," said Elliott, who remembered waiting through visits from LSU and Tennessee before meeting the 5-foot-11 Etienne.

Etienne grew up a fan of the Southeastern Conference, first of Alabama and then LSU, from attending so many games as a teenager.

But after meeting Elliott and talking with coach Dabo Swinney, Etienne became hooked on Clemson.

"He still can't fully believe that Clemson reached out to "a small kid from Jennings, La.,"

He can thank Richardson for that, who played at UCF as a freshman before transferring to Texas A&M.

But when Clemson did make the call was when Etienne decided where he wanted to play college football, "like this is meant to be, me going there."

The coupling has been fruitful. Etienne was the Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year the past two seasons, setting league marks for most rushing touchdowns (55) and total TDs (60).

He's run for 1,536 yards so far this season and is 7 yards away, at 3,990 in three seasons, at breaking Clemson's career rushing mark.

LSU coach Ed Orgeron, the interim coach in 2016, said whenever he sees Clemson play "for every time I've seen (Etienne) having success, I'm sick to my stomach."



RIK SCUTERA/AP

Clemson junior running back Travis Etienne, the ACC Player of the Year, has 192 carries for 1,536 yards and eight touchdowns this season.



National Championship
No. 1 LSU (14-0)
vs. No. 3 Clemson (14-0)
AFN-Sports
2:15 a.m. Tuesday CET
10:15 a.m. Tuesday JKT

laire is just 5-7. Edwards-Helaire has embraced the challenge, more than living up to that LSU running back pedigree. He has rushed for 1,305 yards and 16 touchdowns this season.

He was crucial in ending LSU's eight-year run of futility against Alabama in a 46-41 victory this season with 103 yards and three touchdowns rushing with nine catches for 77 yards and another score.

Edwards-Helaire, whose mother once thought he was too small to play football, has dealt with having to prove himself on the field.

"It's, 'Let's see what this small guy can do as far as football,' and then it's, 'Oh my gosh, he's actually good,'" Edwards-Helaire said.

Edwards-Helaire had a hamstring injury leading up to LSU's 63-28 win over Oklahoma at the Peach Bowl and was pretty much just a decoy in the semifinal win. He had just two rushes for 14 yards and sat once the game turned into a blowout.

Orgeron has said Edwards-Helaire should be ready to play against Clemson.

Edwards-Helaire has plenty of highlight reels making defenders miss, spinning free for long gains. "It's something I've been doing,

but it's being displayed on a bigger screen right now," he said.

Edwards-Helaire is confident in his abilities and is ready to prove doubters wrong once again.

"I knew what I could do," he said. "The people in my corner knew what I could do."

And Clemson knows what he can do.



IAN MALLE, TULSA (OKLA.) WORLD/AP

LSU junior running back Clyde Edwards-Helaire, with ball, has 199 carries for 1,304 yards and 16 touchdowns this season.

NFL PLAYOFFS

Versatile Honey Badger could haunt Texans

Houston coach O'Brien wanted to retain Chiefs S Mathieu in offseason

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — One of the first things Bill O'Brien wants to make perfectly clear is that he never wanted to lose the Honey Badger.

In just one season in Houston, versatile safety Tyrann Mathieu had become such a ball-hawking leader that he was voted a team captain. He piled up nearly 90 tackles, filled in at nickel back when injuries decimated the Texans' defensive backfield, and he helped to lead the franchise back to the playoffs after a one-year absence.

So when Mathieu's one-year prove-it contract was up, the Texans made a strong push to keep him. Various reports suggest they offered him a multiyear contract worth about \$11 million per year, a nice bump from the \$7 million he made last season.

It wasn't enough. Not when the Kansas City Chiefs entered the picture.

With new coordinator Steve Spagnuolo transitioning the Chiefs to a 3-4 defensive scheme, the Chiefs knew they needed to find some help rushing the passer and in the secondary. General manager Brett Veach solved the first problem by trading for defensive end Frank Clark and signing him to a long-term contract, and he solved the second by luring Mathieu to Kansas City with a \$42 million, three-year deal and the chance to play for a legitimate Super Bowl contender.

Now, the Honey Badger has the



Ed ZUMA/AP

Chiefs safety Tyrann Mathieu celebrates an interception last month in Kansas City, Mo. Mathieu won 75 tackles, two sacks and picked off four passes — the second most of his career — in his first season since joining the Chiefs on a \$42 million, three-year contract last offseason.

Chiefs one game away from a repeat appearance in the AFC title game. And wouldn't you know it? Standing in their way Sunday is the team that wanted so desperately to keep him.

"It was hard. He's a great guy," O'Brien said. "He's got awesome leadership qualities, you know? Really instinctive, good football player. Cares about his team. Cares about his teammates. But that's the NFL. The NFL, every team has a salary cap to deal with, every player has the ability once they reach free agency to do what's best for him and their fam-

ily. We have a ton of respect for Honey Badger. He did a great job for us last year."

He's done an even better job for the Chiefs this year. The 27-year-old Mathieu had 75 tackles, a couple of sacks and picked off four passes, the second most of his career. He played all over the field for Spagnuolo, showing a deft ability to switch from playing center field to man-to-man defense to blitzing off the corner depending on the call, the scheme and the game situation.

He also provided leadership for a team whose defense was the

biggest culprit in its overtime loss to the Patriots in last year's AFC title game. He brought the same swagger that earned him his college nickname to the Chiefs, and it proceeded to sweep through the locker room, even giving the Chiefs' high-powered offense a boost of confidence.

"The Honey Badger came in, and guys like Kendall Fuller who have been here, they kind of pieced it together. This happened to me in New York and I credited the players that were there and the same thing happened here," Spagnuolo said. "Our guys have



**Houston Texans (11-6)
at Kansas City Chiefs (12-4)**
AFLN-Sports
9 p.m. Sunday CET
5 a.m. Monday JKT

done a really good job of embracing the new players that came on board."

Mathieu, a former Heisman Trophy finalist, had an up-and-down first five seasons with the Arizona Cardinals, though injuries were a significant factor in that. Regardless, Mathieu found himself looking for a job last offseason and ended up signing with Houston, where he managed to stay healthy enough to reestablish himself among NFL safeties.

There were certainly other ones available in free agency, but the Chiefs insisted they targeted Mathieu all along.

It has turned out one of the best signings of the entire NFL offseason — Mathieu was voted second-team All-Pro at safety and first-team All-Pro at defensive back.

"We knew that was what we were getting," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "I had talked to Bill actually. Bill would have loved to have had him there. It's just part of the National Football League and the way it works. He told me that he was phenomenal kid both on the field and off. Great leader."

Now, the only question left is if he can lead the Chiefs all the way to the Super Bowl.

Surprise: WR Metcalf has played major role for Seahawks

FROM BACK PAGE

still playing while a lot of teams are at home."

Metcalf is hoping he has a few more weeks before giving full reflection on his rookie season. He may have a significant role in whether that happens when Seattle travels to Green Bay on Sunday in the NFC playoffs with the winner advancing to the conference championship game.

He played a major part in Seattle getting to this point. Metcalf set an NFL postseason record among rookies with 160 yards receiving on seven catches and a touchdown in last week's 17-9 win over Philadelphia to open the postseason. His 53-yard touchdown catch in the third quarter gave Seattle a 17-6 lead, and his 36-yard catch on the final drive clinched the victory.

His performance drew attention and accolades from all over, even a shout out from LeBron James on social media. It was a breakout game because of the stage and the importance. But it wasn't an outlier based on how



**Seattle Seahawks (12-5)
at Green Bay Packers (13-3)**
AFLN-Sports
12:30 a.m. Monday CET
8:30 a.m. Monday JKT

the second half of the season has gone.

"It was cool, but like I said it's time to focus in," Metcalf said of the attention. "Can't harp on just that one moment."

Metcalf was the star of the NFL combine last year, but his draft slide was a running headline until the Seahawks finally took him off the board late in the second round. He was criticized for his route-running skills shown in college at Mississippi and some evaluators believed his ceiling would be as a big target

who could only run straight down the field.

"When he came in, I was pretty confident he was able to do a lot of things that a lot of people weren't giving him credit for," Seattle wide receivers coach Nate Carroll said.

Metcalf's season turned in Week 9 when he had six catches for 123 yards against Tampa Bay. Up to that point, Metcalf had 23 receptions, four touchdowns and was averaging about 17 yards per catch. It was solid, but not spectacular numbers from the rookie.

In the nine games that followed — including that Week 9 win over the Bucs — Metcalf has 42 receptions for 658 yards while his responsibilities within Seattle's offensive scheme have expanded. While the game against the Eagles was the best of his young career, Metcalf had been building toward that kind of performance for weeks.

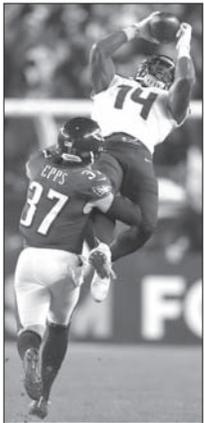
Seattle coach Pete Carroll said Metcalf had disappointment from the Seahawks' earlier meeting against the Eagles — which

also finished 17-9 — and wanted a chance to atone for the previous game.

"He didn't play the game he wanted to play last time we were there," Pete Carroll said. "It was important to him to put that to rest. He was very competitive about it."

Metcalf knows as his numbers increase so will the attention he receives from opponents. He was shut out by Arizona in Week 16 in his only game of the season without a catch. He doesn't know how Green Bay will defend him this week.

"He wants to run through everybody, which I love that part of him, and we all do and it gets us all going," Nate Carroll said. "But at the same time, you've got to make sure that the ball safety is paramount. That's the next evolution right there is just understanding when to and when not to. I think that's been the coolest thing is just seeing him be able to just feel comfortable out there and just play fast every chance he gets."



Julio Cortez/AP

The Seahawks' D.K. Metcalf catches a pass late in Sunday's wild-card playoff game against the Eagles in Philadelphia.

NFL PLAYOFFS

Andrews shines as Jackson's favorite target

TE led Ravens in catches, yards, TDs

By DAVID GINSBURG
Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — The Baltimore Ravens were preparing for the 2018 NFL Draft when coach John Harbaugh began studying tape of a pretty good tight end at Oklahoma by the name of Mark Andrews.

"He always got open. He always made catches. He had a knack," Harbaugh recalled. "You're like, 'Is he going to be able to get that open and make those plays in the NFL?'"

The answer: Undoubtedly, yes.

Following a modest rookie season, Andrews led the Ravens this year with 64 catches, 852 yards receiving and 10 touchdown receptions. He also earned an invitation to the Pro Bowl and is one big reason why Baltimore (14-2) will bring a 12-game winning streak into its playoff opener Saturday night against the Tennessee Titans.

Sure, the Ravens are known for their ability to run. But when dual-threat quarterback Lamar Jackson decides to throw, more often than not he will start his progression with Andrews.

"Mark does a great job of reading the defense, knowing when they're zoning," Jackson said. "He finds a way to get open. I just call it street ball."

Andrews was targeted 98 times this season, 27 more than runner-up Marquise Brown and at least twice as often as anyone else. In addition, his 10 TD catches were only one fewer than the combined total of everyone else on the squad.

Andrews is the biggest threat among the receivers, and that's not just because of his 6-foot-5, 256-pound frame.

"The quarterback has a lot of confidence in him," Tennessee coach Mike Videl said Tuesday. "He's got great length, good body control, good hands, catches it in traffic and can create space with his body. It looks like the quarterback really trusts him and likes him and knows where he's going to be."

Andrews was a receiver in high school and was recruited by Oklahoma to be a wideout before making the switch early in his career with the Sooners. In his final college season, he had 62 catches for 958 yards and eight TDs to earn the Max Mackay Award as the nation's top tight end.

And yet, Andrews was the second tight end drafted by the Ravens in 2018, behind Hayden Hurst. Andrews finally went in the third round, but that doesn't mean the scouts — and Harbaugh — did not appreciate his body of work.

"The truth is, I think hindsight would say that he was undervalued by the NFL world of evaluation," Harbaugh said. "But when we first did it, he was our top tight end in the rankings."

Jackson and Andrews entered the NFL together, and it didn't take a whole lot of practice for them to get on the same page — even if it wasn't precisely out of the playbook.

"I would run a route maybe a little differently than how it was drawn up, and he would see it the same way and would throw it perfectly on time," Andrews said. "We've had that kind of chemistry pretty early on from the start."

Hurst and Nick Boyle give Jackson a couple of options in terms of tight ends to target. But it's clear who is the No. 1 choice.

"Obviously, he likes his Pro Bowler, Mark Andrews," Titans safety Kenny Vaccaro said. "I think what makes him good is Lamar trusts him."

Vaccaro lauded Andrews for his "catch radius" — the ability to snag a ball in the immediate vicinity — along with the tight end's effort to catch the ball at its highest point.

Though Andrews has displayed soft hands downfield, he's not afraid to bang helmets on the line of scrimmage.

"I'm never going to shy away from someone. I don't fear anybody," he insisted. "A lot receiving tight ends, you look at them and they don't go into the block wanting to block. That's not who I am. I'm a guy who wants to do my job to the best of my ability. I've worked really hard at getting better at that."

‘He finds a way to get open. I just call it street ball.’

Lamar Jackson
Ravens QB on Mark Andrews



Tennessee Titans (10-7)
at Baltimore Ravens (14-2)

AFN-Sports
2 a.m. Sunday CET
10 a.m. Sunday JKT



RON SCHWANE/AP

Baltimore Ravens tight end Mark Andrews scores on a 39-yard touchdown reception during the first half of a Dec. 22 game against the Browns in Cleveland. Andrews led the Ravens this year with 64 catches, 852 yards receiving and 10 touchdown receptions.

NFL PLAYOFFS

Titans' top duo in final year of contracts

Tannehill, Henry may wind up on different teams next season

By TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

Ryan Tannehill has gone from a quarterback traded away in March to the NFL's top-rated passer fresh off a victory in his playoff debut for Tennessee. Derrick Henry led the league in rushing and seemingly gets stronger and harder to tackle each game.

Their next loss could be their final game in a Tennessee Titans uniform.

Tannehill and Henry are in the final years of their contracts, the quarterback in a deal reworked when

'I don't even think about that. It's just on the game at hand.'

Ryan Tannehill

Titans QB on whether he'll get a new contract with Tennessee

and do everything I can to get ready to play and go win a game."

Henry made clear during the offseason program that he wasn't thinking about his contract status.

"I don't worry about that," Henry said then. "Next question."

The way Tannehill and Henry are playing keeps raising their asking price.

Tannehill is 8-3 since being named the starting quarterback, and he led the NFL with a career-high 117.5 passer rating, throwing for 22 touchdowns and six interceptions. He's thrown at least one TD pass in 11 consecutive games since moving into the lineup in Week 7, a streak he extended with a TD pass on the Titans' opening drive of their 20-13 wild-card win in New England last weekend.

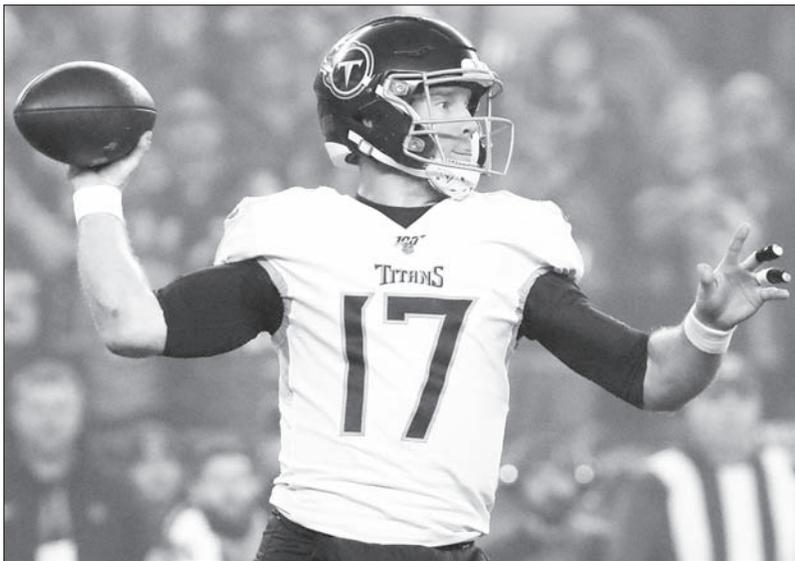
Henry has had a career year, with 1,540 yards rushing in the regular season.

The Titans' third draft pick in the second round of 2016 has been even better the past seven games, with 1,078 yards rushing for an average of 154 yards per game. Sitting out the Week 16 loss to New Orleans helped him rest a sore left hamstring, and Henry ran for 211 yards against the Texans the next week, helping the Titans clinch the AFC's No. 6 seed. He set the franchise's postseason rushing mark with 182 yards against the Patriots.

Second-year coach Mike Vrabel leaves the contracts to general manager Jon Robinson, and the GM doesn't talk about contracts until a deal is done.

"I really just try to coach the guys that are here and try to get the best out of them," Vrabel said. "Guys have helped us win a lot of games. They've helped us get to this point. All that stuff really gets taken care of in the offseason."

First up, the Titans (10-7) are trying to advance to the franchise's first AFC championship game since January 2003, when



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

Ryan Tannehill is 8-3 since being named Tennessee's starting quarterback, and led the league with a 117.5 passer rating.

all Tennessee had to do was beat Pittsburgh in a divisional game at home.

Once Tennessee gets to the offseason, Robinson will have options, with a projected \$57 million in salary cap space for 2020, according to Spotrac.com. Robinson kept

safety Kenny Vaccaro out of free agency with a four-year extension last March.

At least 18 Titans are in the final year of their contracts, including starting cornerback Logan Ryan and starting right tackle Jack Conklin.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Running back Derrick Henry has had a career year, with 1,540 yards rushing during the regular season. In the last seven games, he's averaging 154 yards per game.

The NFL being in the final year of its collective bargaining agreement allows teams to use both the franchise and transition tags, which could by the Titans more time to negotiate extensions, if needed. The toughest decision then might be which tag to use on which player.

Henry has been so dominating that he is due for a hefty raise from the \$1.13 million base salary he's earned this season. Overthecap.com projects the franchise tag for a running back could be as much as \$12.4 million. The transition tag is cheaper at possibly \$10.1 million but allows other teams to make contract offers that the Titans could match to keep Henry.

Tannehill wouldn't be the only quarterback hitting free agency. The projected franchise tag for quarterbacks currently is \$26.8 million, with a transition tag possibly \$24.3 million. That would be a massive raise for Tannehill, whose base salary is \$1.75 million, with Miami picking up \$5 million and having taken an \$18.4 million salary cap hit by trading him away.

Ryan, who sealed last week's win with an interception returned for a TD, said it's easy to focus now with the stakes at hand.

"I would be foolish and selfish to worry about myself or something about my deal — whatever that may be — and not worry about this game at hand nor this huge opportunity for my deal," Ryan said. "So to me, it's all about the team. It's all about the opportunity to play the Ravens, all the opportunity to represent Nashville and the excitement in the city to go up there and get an upset, ideally."

Notes: LB Jayon Brown (shoulder) did not practice, along with RG Nate Davis (illness), WR Adam Humphries (ankle) and CB Adoree' Jackson (foot). WR Kalif Raymond (concussion protocol) practiced fully. RB Dion Lewis (shoulder) and WR Cody Hollister (ankle) were limited.

NFL

6th seeds showing strength

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

There's strength at six.

Both No. 6 seeds advanced to the divisional round of the playoffs for the second year in a row, marking the first time that's happened in consecutive seasons since the NFL instituted the current 12-team format in 1990.

First, the Tennessee Titans (10-7) sent the New England Patriots (12-5) to their earliest exit in a decade. Then, the Minnesota Vikings (11-6) knocked off the New Orleans Saints (12-5).

Last year, the Indianapolis Colts and Philadelphia Eagles won wild-card games as No. 6 seeds. Both teams lost in the divisional round.

Since 2013, No. 6 seeds are 10-4 in the wild-card round. But those teams were 0-12 the following week. The last time a No. 6 seed reached the conference championship was the 2010 season, when the New York Jets and Green Bay Packers did it. The Packers went on to win the Super Bowl.

The Vikings and Titans aim to upset No. 1 seeds on Saturday. Minnesota visits the San Francisco 49ers (13-3) in the early game and Tennessee faces the Baltimore Ravens (14-2) in the nightcap.

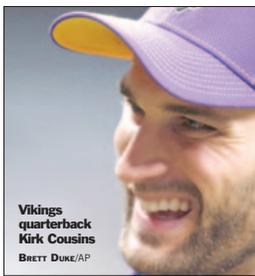
The 2005 Steelers are the only other No. 6 seed to win a Super Bowl. The 2008 Ravens and 2008 Eagles also reached conference title games as No. 6 seeds before losing.

You like that: Kirk Cousins was 0-15 in his career against teams with a 700 winning percentage before leading Minnesota to an overtime win against the Saints. With the Vikings, he had been 0-10 against 10-win teams, 2-10 against playoff teams, and 3-11-1 against teams with a winning record.



Tennessee cornerback Logan Ryan celebrates his interception for a touchdown against the New England Patriots in their wild-card playoff game on Saturday in Foxborough, Mass. The Titans won 20-13.

STEVEN SENNE/AP



Vikings
quarterback
Kirk Cousins
BRETT DUKE/AP

Old school football: Derrick Henry set a postseason franchise record with 182 yards rushing in Tennessee's win at New England. Titans quarterback Ryan Tannehill completed only eight passes against the Patriots, the same number of passes Nick Foles completed on the go-ahead touchdown drive when the Patriots had previously lost a playoff game, Super Bowl 52 against Philadelphia.

Old school football II: The Titans-Ravens matchup features two of the top three rushing teams in the league. The Ravens set an NFL record with 3,296 yards rushing and the Titans had 2,223.

Henry led the league with 1,540 yards rushing while Baltimore got 1,206 from quarterback Lamar Jackson and 1,018 from Mark Ingram.

This will be the fourth time the team with the top rushing offense met the team with the league's leading rusher in the playoffs during the Super Bowl era. The team with the leading rusher won the first three.

Young guns: When the Texans (11-6) visit the Chiefs (12-4) on Sunday, it'll be the third time two quarterbacks under age 25 face off in the divisional round of the playoffs since 1967. Houston's Deshaun Watson is three days older than Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes.

Chasing greatness: Aaron Rodgers enters Green Bay's game against Seattle with 36 TD passes in the playoffs, fifth-most in league history. Tom Brady is first with 73, Joe Montana had 45, Brett Favre had 44 and Peyton Manning 40.

Briefs

League investigating if Bills violated injury reporting rules

Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — The NFL is looking into whether the Buffalo Bills violated league rules on reporting injuries in connection to defensive end Jerry Hughes revealing he played with torn wrist ligaments.

The league on Thursday notified the Buffalo chapter of the Pro Football Writers of America that it is standard policy to review what happened after being made aware of concerns raised earlier this week.

Hughes, who did not miss a game, revealed the severity of the injury in a note posted on his Twitter account Tuesday. He wrote he wasn't going to let "my wrist slow me down as the team was so close to achieving our goal of an AFC East banner and playoff games."

He finished with 4½ sacks in the regular season, down from seven the previous year. He then set a team playoff record with three sacks in a 22-19 overtime loss at Houston in a wild-card game Saturday.

The Bills never listed Hughes as having an issue with his wrist on their injury report this season.

A message left with the Bills was not immediately returned. During five weeks he was listed on the report as missing practices due to rest, including the week leading up to the playoff game. He was also twice listed in November as having a groin injury.

A message left with the Bills was not immediately returned. Coach Sean McDermott on Tuesday wouldn't say why the Bills didn't list Hughes on the report for having a wrist injury. McDermott said the times Hughes was listed was not in relation to his wrist.

Browns meet Vikings OC for coaching job

The Browns' coaching search went back on the road Thursday. The team is interviewing Vikings offensive coordinator Kevin Stefanski, who took a break from playoff planning to meet with Cleveland's group.

Stefanski was a finalist last year for the Browns job, which went to Freddie Kitchens but came open again after a woeful 6-10 season.

The 37-year-old Stefanski is the seventh candidate to meet with the Browns, who talked with Eagles defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz on Wednesday. The Browns are scheduled to interview Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels on Friday. He's the presumed favorite to get the gig because McDaniels has

NFL head coaching experience and success working with star quarterback Tom Brady.

Two years ago, McDaniels agreed to coach the Indianapolis Colts, but he backed out to stay with New England. He went 11-17 as Denver's coach in 2009-10.

Giants finalize deal to hire Judge as coach

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The struggling New York Giants went into their third coaching search since 2015 looking for a leader for their young team.

In hiring New England Patriots special teams coordinator and wide receivers coach Joe Judge on Wednesday, the Giants settled for a 38-year-old assistant who has never run a team either at the college or NFL level.

What they did get with Judge, though, was a young man who has worked with two of the best football coaches in the past 30 years in Bill Belichick and Nick Saban.

The hope is the success those men have had rubs off and makes the Giants relevant in the NFL again.

"Joe is one of the brightest young coaches in our profession, and I think he will do a tremendous job as the head coach of the New York Giants," Saban said in a statement. "They are getting an extremely smart football coach who is very loyal, organized and diligent about getting the job done."

The Giants and representatives for Judge reached a contract agreement Wednesday, less than 24 hours after he was offered the job.

NFL PLAYOFFS

Harris a secondary success story for Vikings

Safety has come long way from undrafted practice squad player

By DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — Over Minnesota's past six games, Anthony Harris has picked off Russell Wilson, Aaron Rodgers and Drew Brees, owners of three of the four lowest interception percentages in the NFL this season.

The fifth-year safety has come a long way from undrafted practice squad player, as some of the league's best quarterbacks have been reminded recently. Harris, who became a full-time starter last year, tied for the regular-season league lead with six interceptions in 2019.

"Every time he got an opportunity, he stepped up," Vikings defensive coordinator George Edwards said.

The tandem Harris has formed with Harrison Smith in the secondary has been a significant part of the success the Vikings defense has had this season, a value that will be scrutinized at team headquarters in the coming months with his contract set to expire which will make him an unrestricted free agent. Harris and Smith will be an integral part of the plan to stop San Francisco's versatile offense in the divisional round game on Saturday.

"The scheme they play in is very good. It puts a lot of pressure on them, but it allows them to make a lot of plays, too," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said.

Harris has done just that. All three of those statistically improbable interceptions led to touchdowns for the Vikings. When Wilson's pass for Seattle was swatted at the line of scrimmage, his ill-fated attempt to knock the ball to the turf let it hang in the air long enough for Harris to snag it and run it in for a 20-yard score to break a second-quarter tie.

Harris helped break a second-quarter



BRETT DUKE/AP

Saints running back Alvin Kamara, bottom, tackles Minnesota Vikings defensive back Anthony Harris after an interception in the first half of last Sunday's wild-card playoff game in New Orleans. Harris tied for the league lead in interceptions with six this season.

tie against Green Bay, too, when he darted in front of Davante Adams to grab an underneath throw by Rodgers and return it 10 yards. The Vikings were in the end zone three plays later.

Then at New Orleans, with the Vikings trailing 10-6 just before the two-minute warning, Harris hung on to the deep ball from Brees after landing on his back with a leaping catch, climbed to his feet and returned it 30 yards to reach Saints territory. The Vikings scored the go-ahead touch-

down seven plays later and, with Harris helpingound star wide receiver Michael Thomas and keep Brees from doing his usual damage, pulled out a 26-20 victory in overtime to oust the Saints and advance in the playoffs.

Rodgers is the least likely quarterback to be picked off in league history, with a career interception rate of just 1.4%. He dropped that to 0.7% in 2019, with Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes, Wilson and Brees right behind him on the leader board.

Harris tied for the league lead with six interceptions in 2019. The Vikings have 17 takeaways over their past six games, including five forced turnovers against Green Bay and New Orleans.

"It's been a long journey, but I look at it as a continuous thing," the 6-foot-1, 202-pound Harris said. "It's not just something like, 'Now I'm here. Now I've arrived.' It's going to be a continuous process for me. It's just been embracing the opportunity that I have."

QB Garoppolo set to make first playoff start for 49ers

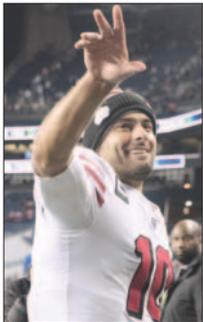
By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Jimmy Garoppolo's postseason experience consists of a couple of garbage-time handoffs for New England during the 2014 AFC championship game that is remembered far more for the controversy surrounding deflated footballs.

Garoppolo will carry a much bigger burden when he makes his first career playoff start for San Francisco as the 49ers host the Minnesota Vikings on Saturday in their first playoff game since the 2013 season.

"I've seen the atmosphere in the building ramp up, the atmosphere of the coaches and players and everyone," Garoppolo said Tuesday about the lessons he learned during his time with the Patriots. "Just a lot more energy in the building for sure."

Garoppolo's first full season as a starting quarterback in the NFL was a success as he helped lead the Niners (13-3) to the playoffs for the first time in six years, earning the top seed in the NFC. He had highs and lows, with



STEPHEN BRASHEAR/AP

49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo will make his first career playoff start for San Francisco when the 49ers host the Minnesota Vikings on Saturday.

Garoppolo's 18 turnovers being the most by any playoff quarterback but his four fourth-quarter comebacks tying for the most in



Minnesota Vikings (11-6)
at San Francisco 49ers (13-3)
AFL Sports

10:30 p.m. Saturday CET
6:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



the NFL.

In all, the good outweighed the bad moments. Garoppolo posted three games with four TD passes and ranked third in the league with 8.4 yards per attempt.

That performance helped justify the commitment San Francisco made to him following his 5-0 finish to the 2017 season after a midseason trade from New England.

The Niners rewarded Garoppolo with a five-year, \$137.5 million contract in the hopes that he would lead the team back to the playoffs and then shine on the big stage.

"He's been the same guy since

he's been here since Day 1," tackle Joe Staley said. "He's going to try to be the most prepared person he can be. He'll practice the same way every day. He's not going to try to reinvent anything. He's not going to try to do anything different. He's going to be the same person for this franchise that he's been."

The first season of the deal was hardly a success. He threw three interceptions in a season-opening loss to the Vikings and then suffered a season-ending knee injury in a Week 3 loss at Kansas City.

That injury contributed to coach Kyle Shanahan's reluctance to put too much on Garoppolo's plate early this season, relying more on a dominant defense and running game.

But as the defense regressed in the second half of the season and opposing defenses focused on shutting down the running game, Garoppolo showed the ability to carry a much heavier load.

He had a pair of four-touchdown games against Arizona, had a mostly flawless prime-time performance against Green Bay, led the fourth-quarter comeback

in a 48-46 win at New Orleans and beat the Seahawks on the road in the season finale to clinch the division and top seed.

Now the Niners are counting on Garoppolo to deliver in the postseason.

"I thought last week was a 'playoff game,'" Shanahan said. "That was pretty intense when we played Seattle. He's shown he can handle himself with poise. ... I think Jimmy has played some pretty big games. Anyone who's around him in those games and talks to him, it's not much different in those games than it is in a preseason game."

Garoppolo has more playoff experience than most of his teammates, having served as Tom Brady's backup in New England in Super Bowl-winning runs in the 2014 and '16 seasons.

But the only time he made it on the field came in the closing minutes of the 2014 AFC championship game against Indianapolis, when he handed off twice in a 45-7 win. Brady was later suspended four games when the NFL said he directed equipment staffers to deflate footballs to make them easier to grip.

SPORTS



Orange's juice
Freshman Girard emerging as key player
for Syracuse » **College hoops, Page 56**

NFL PLAYOFFS

Seahawks' surprise

Rookie WR Metcalf found
'perfect situation'
in Seattle

By **TIM BOOTH**
Associated Press

ARENTON, Wash. — Mid an avalanche of attention following the best game of his career, DK Metcalf allowed himself a little bit of reflection.

What would have happened if he hadn't unexpectedly slid out of the first round of the NFL Draft last April? What if all the hype that surrounded his performance at the NFL combine had led to hearing his name called on the first night of the draft and not a day later when the Seattle Seahawks swooped in to grab the wide receiver with the 64th overall pick.

"It was a perfect situation for me," Metcalf said on Wednesday. "At the moment I was mad, but after everything was said and done looking back at it I'm just happy that I landed here. Great quarterback. Great offense. Great team. Great organization. We're in the playoffs

'It was a perfect situation for me. ... Great quarterback. Great offense. Great team. Great organization.'

DK Metcalf

Rookie wide receiver, pictured, on being drafted with the 64th overall pick by the Seattle Seahawks

SEE SURPRISE ON PAGE 59

Inside:

■ TE Andrews is favorite target of Ravens QB Jackson, Page 60



AP photos

LSU's Burrow, Jefferson lead All-Bowl Team » Page 57

