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WEEKEND
EDITION

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STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 81 Edition 40 ©SS 2022

FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2022

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

\$1.00



CONNIE DILLON/U.S. Army

Nursing student Ian Sheer gives a COVID-19 shot to Army Master Sgt. Jose Rivera on Feb. 24 in New York. Some service members who object to the use of fetal-derived cell lines or genetic technology could find that a new vaccine addresses their moral concerns.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Holdouts may have an option

New shot might be viable choice for troops with religious concerns

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A COVID-19 vaccine that could soon win federal authorization may offer a boost for the U.S. military: an opportunity to get shots into some of the thousands of service members who have refused other coronavirus vaccines for religious reasons.

At least 175 active-duty and reserve service members have already received the Novavax vaccine, some even traveling overseas at their own expense to get it. The vaccine meets Defense Department requirements because it has the World Health Organization's emergency use approval

SEE OPTION ON PAGE 7

RELATED

Officer convicted but not punished at COVID-related court-martial faces separation **Page 7**

House subpanel votes for pay raise for troops, smaller military

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A subpanel of the House Armed Services Committee voted Wednesday to raise pay for service members by 4.6%, reduce the size of the military and dedicate more resources for suicide prevention in the Pentagon's next fiscal year budget.

The pay increase backed by House lawmakers

on the military personnel subcommittee matches the White House's budget request for 2023 and would go into effect on Jan. 1. It will be debated by the full House Armed Services Committee alongside other recommended measures this month as Congress drafts an annual defense spending authorization bill.

Pay hikes for service members have hovered at about 2.7% during the last few years and the

proposed boost for 2023 represents the largest in 20 years. Members of Congress have expressed misgivings, however, that the 4.6% pay raise pitched by President Joe Biden's administration can adequately compensate service members amid an inflation rate of 8%.

"[It] may not be enough," Rep. Jackie Speier,

SEE RAISE ON PAGE 3

4.6%

Pay increase for service members supported by a subpanel of the House Armed Services Committee. The raise, which would go into effect Jan. 1, will next be debated by the full committee.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

FTC chair plans key work on kids' data privacy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The head of the Federal Trade Commission said the agency is pushing a robust agenda of actions and policies to help safeguard children's privacy online.

The ongoing work will include toughened enforcement of a long-standing law governing kids' online privacy and eyeing the algorithms used by social media platforms targeting young people.

"Children's privacy is enormously important and we want to

make sure we're doing everything we can ... to vigorously protect children's privacy and protect them from data abuses," said Lina Khan, who has led the consumer-protection agency for a year. She spoke in an interview over Zoom with The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Around the country, parents' concern has deepened over the impact of social media on kids. Frances Haugen, a former Facebook data scientist, stunned Congress and the public last fall when

she brought to light internal company research showing apparent serious harm to some teens from Facebook's Instagram platform.

The FTC recently warned that it will crack down on education-technology companies if they illegally surveil children when they go online to learn. The agency noted that it is against the law for companies to force parents "to surrender their children's privacy rights in order to do school-work online or attend class remotely."

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (June 10)	\$1.05
Dollar buys (June 10)	0.9081
British pound (June 10)	\$1.22
Japanese yen (June 10)	130.00
South Korean won (June 10)	1,228.00

South Korea (Won)	1,258.65
Switzerland (Franc)	.9732
Thailand (Baht)	34.54
Turkey (New Lira)	17.2240

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

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770
Britain (Pound)	1.2550
Canada (Dollar)	1.2596
China (Yuan)	6.6837
Denmark (Krone)	6.9611
Egypt (Pound)	18.6958
Euro	.9358
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8487
Hungary (Forint)	369.82
Israel (Shekel)	3.3449
Japan (Yen)	133.73
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3063
Norway (Krone)	9.5071
Philippines (Peso)	52.95
Poland (Zloty)	4.30
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7520
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3778

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.00
Interest Rates Discount rate	1.50
Federal funds market rate	0.08
3-month bill	1.27
30-year bond	3.17

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

Military says 5 dead in Marine Osprey crash

BY JULIE WATSON
AND LOLITA BALDOR
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO— All five Marines on board an Osprey aircraft were killed when it crashed in the California desert near the Arizona border, the Marine Corps said Thursday, a day after the accident.

The MV-22 Osprey went down at 12:25 p.m. Wednesday during training in a remote area in Imperial County near the community of Glamis, about 115 miles east of San Diego and about 50 miles from Yuma, Ariz.

The aircraft was based at Camp Pendleton with Marine Aircraft Group 39 and was part of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing headquartered at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego.

“We mourn the loss of our Marines in this tragic mishap,” Maj. Gen. Bradford J. Gering, commanding general of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, said in a statement.

“Our hearts go out to their families and friends as they cope with this tragedy.”

The statement said as a matter of policy, the Marine Corps would be contacting family members before identifying those who were killed. Efforts to recover equipment were underway and an investigation into the cause of the crash has started. No additional details were provided in the Marine Corps statement.

The Marines were participating in a routine live-fire training over their gunnery range in the Imperial Valley desert, said Marine Maj. Mason Englehart, spokesperson for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

The Osprey, a hybrid airplane and helicopter, flew in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan but has been criticized by some as unsafe. It is designed to take off like a helicopter, rotate its propellers to a horizontal position and cruise like an airplane.



RUBEN PADILLA/U.S. Marine Corps

Marines of Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1 prepare for flight aboard an MV-22B Osprey at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., on April 8.

Raise: Further pay increase weighed

FROM PAGE 1

D-Calif., the subcommittee's chairwoman, admitted during a budget markup Wednesday.

A subcommittee aide who spoke on condition of anonymity said Tuesday that there is interest in possibly raising pay further as Congress continues to weigh the bill. House lawmakers did not move to do so on Wednesday but agreed to require Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to assess the accuracy of military pay tables and military housing allowances for future funding legislation.

In March, the top Republicans on the Senate and House Armed Services Committees implored Pentagon leaders to consider how the rising cost of living will affect the pocketbooks of military families.

“It's ignorant to believe these historically high inflation rates aren't hurting our service members just like they are every other American family,” Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma and Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama wrote in a letter to Austin and other military officials.

The two lawmakers issued a statement last month faulting the Defense Department for not having “a good grasp on how inflation is hurting our service members and their families — and how this is in turn impacting recruiting and retention.”

Recruitment struggles are plaguing all the service branches, particularly the Army. House lawmakers signed off Wednesday on reducing the Army's end strength from 485,000 soldiers last year to 473,000 next year,

marking a reversal from a 2017 plan to grow the service to 500,000 active-duty troops by 2022.

The Pentagon is asking to cut 25,000 total positions from the military services.

Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher, the subcommittee's top Republican member, said the downsizing is concerning “in light of the threats of an increasingly aggressive China, to say nothing of the barbarity on display from Russia in recent months.”

“We will continue to monitor these end-strength reductions very closely to ensure we do not stretch the joint force too thin,” he said.

The House subpanel also voted to extend bonuses and other incentive programs for recruitment and retention by one year as the military wades through a small pool of potential recruits. Only 23% of Americans are qualified to serve due to poor health and other factors, Gen. James McConville, the Army chief of staff, told senators last month.

A significant portion of the subcommittee's bill also focuses on combating suicides in the military, which are especially acute in Alaska. Seven soldiers stationed in the state died by suicide in 2020 and 11 suicides followed in 2021. Another six soldier deaths from last year are still under investigation.

Lawmakers are calling for additional financial support, including extra pay and travel allowances, for soldiers assigned to Alaskan bases to help alleviate isolation and money problems that often contribute to suicidal

thoughts.

Several provisions seek to bolster the number of behavioral health providers available to troops by establishing a training program for civilian providers looking to work with the military and giving counselors more freedom to use their professional licenses in different jurisdictions.

“We must do everything that we can to get after this issue and look at it holistically,” Gallagher said.

Other measures approved Wednesday by the subcommittee would reimburse moving expenses for military spouses with home businesses, expand professional development education for service members and improve educational services for military families with disabled children. Speier said the subpanel is also directing the Pentagon to complete a study on fair pay for military child care center employees.

“In 2021, more than 20,000 military children with immediate need for child care were stuck on waitlists,” she said. “Throughout the year, we have visited child development centers across various installations and believe the department is not doing enough to recruit and retain an adequate workforce to support the child care needs of military families.”

The subcommittee's recommendations will be included in a full House committee markup scheduled for June 22. The Senate Armed Services Committee will mark up its version of the bill next week.

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Brookings has placed retired general on leave amid FBI probe

Associated Press

The prestigious Brookings Institution placed its president, retired four-star Marine Gen. John Allen, on administrative leave Wednesday amid a federal investigation into his role in an illegal lobbying campaign on behalf of the wealthy Persian Gulf nation of Qatar.

Brookings' announcement came a day after The Associated Press reported on new court filings that show the FBI recently seized Allen's electronic data as part of the probe and detailed his behind-the-scenes efforts to help Qatar influence U.S. policy in 2017 when a diplomatic crisis erupted between the gas-rich monarchy and its neighbors.

Allen, who led U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan before being tapped to lead Brookings in late 2017, has not been charged with any crimes. His spokesman, Beau Phillips, said Wednesday that Allen had done nothing improper or unlawful.

“Through decades of public service in combat and diplomacy, General Allen has earned an unmatched, sterling reputation for honor and integrity,” Phillips said in a statement. “We look forward to correcting the falsehoods about General Allen that have been improperly publicized in this matter.”

Brookings told staffers in an email Wednesday that the institute itself is not under investiga-

tion and that the think tank's executive vice president, Ted Gayer, will serve as acting president.

“We have every confidence in the Brookings team's ability to remain focused on delivering quality, independence, and impact,” the email said.

Brookings pays Allen more than \$1 million a year, according to its most recently available tax records. The email to staff did not say whether Allen would continue to be paid while on leave.

The federal investigation involving Allen has already ensnared Richard G. Olson, a former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan who pleaded guilty to federal charges last week, and Imaad Zuberi, a prolific political donor now serving a 12-year prison sentence on corruption charges. Several members of Congress have also been interviewed.

An FBI agent said in an affidavit in support of a search warrant there was “substantial evidence” that Allen had knowingly broken a foreign lobbying law, and had made false statements and withheld “incriminating” documents.

Allen's behind-the-scenes work involved traveling to Qatar and meeting with the country's top officials to offer them advice on how to influence U.S. policy, as well as promoting Qatar's point of view to top White House officials and Congress, according to the FBI affidavit.

MILITARY

Colonel recalls aiding train crash victims

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

Army Col. Charles Bergman was on his way to meet his family last Friday for a long weekend when the vehicle ahead of him on the road to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, swerved abruptly.

It was the first sign that life was about to change. Next came a rush of dirt, mud and water flooding onto the roadway. Then Bergman couldn't believe what he was seeing.

A Deutsche Bahn train was flying off its tracks, one of its five cars angling sideways as it screeched through the trees and turned nearly upside down. After slamming into a creek bed, it came to rest. Bergman pulled over and ran to the guardrail.

"People started coming out of the trees, bloody and crying," he said. First 10 of them, then 20, then 30. Others were lying in the creek.

Bergman, 51, had happened upon one of Germany's worst train crashes in years. Among the five



Charles Bergman

Army Col. Charles Bergman, right, and Martin Maurer of the Partenkirchen fire department in Germany were among the rescuers when a train derailed near Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

people who died, two were Ukrainian women who'd fled the war with their children. A teenage boy and two women accounted for the other fatalities, and more than 40

people were injured.

"I don't know how to explain it," said Bergman, who is serving as an exchange officer with the German 10th Panzer Division, headquartered in Veitshoechheim. "Everything went into slow motion."

The career infantry officer's years of training took over. He and another man went to work managing the scene as others showed up to help.

Bergman and others stopped traffic, called rescuers, helped people out of the creek, checked airways and wounds, laid injured people near the side of the road and tried to calm hysterical victims.

Bergman heard wailing from inside the mangled train car and knew he had to go in. He steeled himself for what he might see as he crawled inside.

"Mein kind!" a woman holding a bloodied toddler was screaming. "My child!"

But the toddler was relatively OK. To Bergman's horror, however, the woman's other child, a girl about 4 years old, urgently needed help. Her head was outside the

train, grotesquely pinned against trees and bushes.

She cried, and Bergman rejoiced because it meant she was still alive. He hugged the mother.

"Help is on the way," he told the woman as the sound of sirens filled the air.

Besides the mother and her two children, there were three other people in the overturned carriage, including a moaning man who also was trapped between the train and trees. Bergman felt his pulse, touched his face and reassured him, too.

After helping the woman, her toddler and two passengers with suspected broken bones out of the train car, he waited to leave until the man and the girl had been extricated and flown to hospitals.

German paramedics told him the girl had been taken to Munich for treatment and was alive.

Bergman has deployed to war zones such as Iraq. He's seen terrible things. But what he witnessed in this normally idyllic Bavarian landscape haunts him.

"It was the scariest scene I've

ever seen in my life," he said.

All told, Bergman spent about 90 minutes at the crash site, he said, alerting the expert German rescuers to emergent patients, helping put people on stretchers and assisting in any other way he could.

"You're one of us now," they told him.

According to German news outlet Deutsche Welle, a task force is looking into the cause of the accident, and Munich prosecutors are investigating three Deutsche Bahn employees on suspicion of involuntary manslaughter.

After getting back on his way, Bergman called his wife but couldn't get the words out. He called an Army buddy to talk it over. Later, he hugged his children more tightly than usual.

That night, he couldn't sleep at all, he said. He still thinks about the girl and the man who were trapped and wonders how they are.

"You don't get over it," he said. "You get through it."

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Biden picks submariner Munsch for Italy-based command roles

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — An experienced submariner currently serving at the Pentagon is slated to be the next commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa as well as a joint forces command based in southern Italy.

Vice Adm. Stuart Munsch was nominated by President Joe Biden for promotion to admiral and leadership of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, U.S. Naval Forces Africa and Allied Joint Forces Command, Naples, the Pentagon said in a Wednesday statement.

Munsch is director for Joint Force Development, J7, in Washington, D.C., the Pentagon said. It's unclear when his appointment would be formalized or when he would assume



Munsch

his new duties.

However, the Pentagon typically refrains from making such announcements unless the appointment has been approved.

Adm. Robert Burke has served in the threefold leadership role in Naples since July 2020.

A 1985 graduate of the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., Munsch also earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Oxford University in England as a Rhodes scholar.

The North Dakota native subsequently served at sea on the Benjamin Franklin-class ballistic submarine USS Will Rogers and aboard the Los Angeles-class attack subma-

rines USS Jefferson City and USS Tucson, according to his Joint Chiefs of Staff online biography.

Munsch's assignment isn't the only change recently announced for U.S. naval operations based in Naples. In April, the Pentagon announced that Vice Adm. Eugene Black III had been nominated by Biden for a post in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington. Black serves as commander of U.S. 6th Fleet and Striking and Support Forces NATO, among other duties. The Pentagon announced May 20 that Biden had nominated Rear Adm. Thomas Ishee for promotion to vice admiral and assignment to the roles Black is leaving.

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Hecker nominated to lead airmen in Europe, Africa

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Lt. Gen. James B. Hecker has been nominated to lead U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa and be promoted to general, the Pentagon announced Wednesday.

He currently serves as commander and president of Air University, Air Education and Training Command, at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. If his nomination is approved, Hecker would succeed Gen. Jeffrey Harrigian, who's been in charge of USAFE-AFAFRICA for more than three years. No date for a change of command ceremony has been announced, but one is expected to take place before the end of the month, a USAFE-AFAFRICA spokesman said Thursday.

An experienced combat pilot and Air Force Academy graduate,



Hecker

Hecker has more than 3,600 hours flying various aircraft, including the F-15C Eagle, F-22 Raptor, MQ-1B Predator, HH-60 Pave Hawk, C-208 Caravan and the T-38C Talon, according to his official USAF biography.

The Pentagon also announced two other nominations: Air Force Gen. Anthony J. Cotton to be commander of U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., and Air Force Lt. Gen. Tony D. Bauernfeind as commander of Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

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Navy electronic warfare squadron leader ousted over loss of confidence

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The commander of a U.S. Navy Growler squadron assigned to an aircraft carrier strike group deployed to the Mediterranean Sea since December has been relieved of his duties, the service said Wednesday in a statement.

The Navy cited a loss of confidence in Cmdr. Matthew McCormick in removing him from his

leadership post in Electronic Attack Squadron, or VAQ, 137, although it did not give details about his dismissal. He had been in his position since September.

The squadron flies Boeing EA-18G Growlers, a variant of the F/A 18 family that is designed for electronic attack warfare while retaining the range of capabilities of the F/A 18E/F Super Hornet, according to the Navy's website.

Cmdr. Scott Maynes, executive



McCormick

temporarily was reassigned to Electronic Attack Wing Pacific at Naval Station Whidbey Island, Wash., according to the statement.

officer of VAQ 137, is serving as acting commanding officer of the squadron until a replacement is identified.

McCormick

VAQ 137 is deployed with USS Harry S. Truman, which currently is sailing in the Ionian Sea, according to the USNI fleet tracker.

In December, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered Truman to stay in the Mediterranean as fears grew in the face of mounting Russian aggression in southeastern Europe.

The carrier, which left Norfolk, Va., on Dec. 1, had been slated for deployment to U.S. 5th Fleet in the

Middle East. The Mediterranean is part of the area of operations of the Naples-based U.S. 6th Fleet.

Since then, Truman has supported training and patrol flights from the Mediterranean, participated in naval exercises with NATO allies and partners and made port calls in Crete, Croatia and Italy.

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MILITARY

Policy update defines how HIV-positive troops can stay

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Asymptomatic HIV-positive service members can now remain in the military and deploy on missions if the amount of virus in them is clinically confirmed undetectable, according to an updated Pentagon policy.

The decision, implemented Monday, was made “in view of significant advances in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention” of HIV, according to a Pentagon me-

mo released this week.

“Personnel ... will have no restrictions applied to their deployability or to their ability to commission while a service member solely on the basis of their HIV-positive status,” the policy states. “Nor will such individuals be discharged or separated solely on the basis of their HIV-positive status.”

Previously, commanders had the authority to involuntarily separate a service member who tested positive for the human immu-

nodeficiency virus or prevent them from deploying, which can lead to a discharge. Instead, the new policy calls for HIV-positive military personnel, including military academy cadets and midshipmen, to be “evaluated on a case-by-case basis.”

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has ordered a Pentagon working group develop standards for case-by-case determinations for such personnel, according to the memo.

“Included in such standards will be the period during which,

and method by which, covered personnel must exhibit an undetectable viral load and be symptom free,” Austin said.

The proposed standards are due to Austin in six months, according to the memo. Also, the secretaries of the military departments will now be required every six months to report the number of HIV-positive troops separated in their branches and the number of asymptomatic HIV-positive troops who were declined promotion, according to the policy.

About 350 service members are diagnosed with HIV annually, according to a 2019 report by the Congressional Research Service.

The policy does not change HIV-positive status as a disqualification for new enlistments, however. Diagnosis must occur after a service member is already in the military or enrolled in a commissioning program at a military academy, according to the policy.

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Naval Academy midshipman who died on leave was Marine vet

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Naval Academy midshipman who died while on leave was a 24-year-old Marine Corps veteran, the school said Wednesday.

Midshipman 1st Class Taylor Connors of Pleasant View, Utah, died early Tuesday in Philadelphia “with family at his bedside,” according to an academy statement. The circumstances of his death are under investigation, though foul play is not suspected, the academy said.

Connors entered the academy in 2019 after enlisting in the Marine Corps in 2016. Before that, he attended the Utah Military Academy “where he attained the rank of group commander, responsible for over 250 cadets,” the Naval Academy said.

“Our Naval Academy community is mourning a tragic loss this

week of a life taken far too soon,” said Vice Adm. Sean Buck, the superintendent of the academy in Annapolis, Md. “Through the grieving process, I encourage members of the brigade, faculty and staff to reach out and offer support to one another from near and far this summer.”

The Physics major was on the school’s jiu-jitsu team and a member of the 23rd, 2nd and 16th companies. He was also a member of the Semper Fi Society and participated in intramural sports.

Connors was described as a

“leader among his peers,” serving as the 2nd Company first sergeant last fall, “working alongside the company commander and executive officer, responsible for ensuring accountability during day-to-day company operations,” according to the statement.

“Last summer, Connors served as a Plebe Summer squad leader, a fundamental leadership role responsible for transitioning newly reported midshipman candidates from civilians to basically trained midshipmen prepared to join the brigade,” the academy said.

Marine Corps Maj. David Emison II, the academy’s training officer and Connors’ mentor, described him as “intensely bright, thoughtful and a man of faith.”

“Taylor Connors was the best of us. He was a true mentor and leader among his peers, but I know he saw himself as a Marine infantryman first and foremost,” Emison said. “There is something to be said about an ethos like the one he exemplified.”

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PACIFIC

N. Koreans could be vaccinated, fed on missile budget

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The estimated \$650 million spent by North Korea on a record number of missile launches since January would pay for one dose of COVID-19 vaccine for each of its citizens, according to a South Korean defense institute.

North Korea spent between \$400 million and \$650 million on its missile tests, said a report Thursday by the government-funded Korea Institute for Defense Analyses based in Seoul. The communist regime has fired an estimated 28 to 33 ballistic missiles in 17 rounds of tests so far this year.

Manufacturing the missiles runs between \$208 million and \$325 million, or about 50% to 80% of the total cost, according to the

report. Labor accounts for 10% to 30% and miscellaneous expenses make up the difference.

That total is still less than the \$800 million needed to procure one battery of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, a U.S.-manufactured missile defense system deployed to South Korea since 2017.

With the \$650 million high-end estimate for its launches, North Korea might have obtained 20 million to 33 million doses of coronavirus vaccine, about one for each of its 25 million people, or relieved the nation's food shortage for the year, according to the institute.

North Korea is believed to be undergoing a COVID-19 outbreak. After denying a problem with the coronavirus respiratory disease since the pandemic began in March 2020, the North's



KCNA

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, gestures during a parade celebrating the 73rd anniversary of the regime's founding on Sept. 9, 2020.

state-run media starting in May has reported more than 4 million cases of an unspecified fever.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un rebuked his country's health officials for allowing the fever to spread, according to the Korean Central News Agency. The impoverished country, which is believed to have a vaccination rate close to zero, also refused offers

of vaccines from COVAX, the World Health Organization program, and from South Korea.

North Korea is also undergoing a food crisis, partly due to its self-imposed isolation from the world, and has a food gap wide enough keep its people hungry for two to three months, or about 860,000 metric tons, according to the CIA World Factbook.

Meanwhile, the nation's military has fired more missiles in five months than in any previous full year. The latest round of launches came May 25, when North Korea fired an unprecedented eight short-range ballistic missiles in a single event.

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US teacher, nurse held for longer stay in Okinawa jail on 2nd pot charge

By MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japanese police on Okinawa rearrested a Defense Department teacher and a school nurse on Wednesday on suspicion of growing cannabis at home, extending their jail time as much as 20 days.

John R. Gouldman, 59, a teacher at Kadena Middle School, and Holly A. Gouldman, 57, a nurse at Kubasaki High School at Camp

Foster, were indicted Tuesday on charges of cannabis possession stemming from their arrest May 17 at their Chatan home, a spokeswoman for the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

Once indicted for alleged possession, the Gouldmans were arrested again by police the next day on suspicion of growing cannabis, a tactic that permits authorities to hold the pair another

20 days.

Japan does not permit defendants to post bail prior to an indictment. Until then, they may be held 10 days with a possible 10-day extension, according to the Japan Federation of Bar Associations.

Local police acting on a tip from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service allegedly discovered about two ounces of cannabis at the Gouldmans' home, a spokes-

man for the Okinawa Police Station told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday. The two were employed by the Department of Defense Education Activity.

He said the Gouldmans allegedly had 32 cannabis plants growing at home, but were only charged initially with possession. Withholding the cultivation charge until the couple's indictment for possession allowed police to keep them in custody, "so that we can

investigate the case carefully," the police spokesman said.

No date is set for their first court appearance on the possession charge, according to a spokeswoman for Naha District Court over the phone Thursday. Government spokespeople in Japan customarily speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

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State Department official meets Marcos in Philippines in diplomatic push

By DAVID RISING
Associated Press

BANGKOK — A top State Department official met Thursday with Philippine President-elect Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in Manila, part of an ongoing diplomatic outreach in the Asia-Pacific region by Washington to try and blunt growing Chinese influence.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman tweeted after meeting Marcos that the two discussed a range of issues, including the Philippines-U.S. alliance, deepening economic ties, advancing human rights and "preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific."

Marcos, the son of longtime Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. who was ousted in a popular uprising in 1986, was

elected in a landslide last month, alarming human rights activists and pro-democracy groups.

The United States appears prepared to work with him, with President Joe Biden being one of the first world leaders to call Marcos and congratulate him on his electoral victory.

Following the meeting with Sherman, Marcos' spokesman Victor Rodriguez said the two had "discussed the importance of deepening the alliance and friendship between the Philippines and the United States, as well as partnering together in order to strengthen the economy between the two countries."

Sherman's trip comes as part of a broader effort to reach out in person to leaders in the region as concern increases over China's

push to expand its own influence in a strategically critical area.

It includes the South China Sea, where the Philippines and Vietnam, among others, have squared off with China's efforts to dominate the strategic waterway it claims virtually in its entirety. The U.S. and its allies have responded with so-called freedom of navigation patrols, sometimes encountering a pushback from China's military.

Australia protested after it said a Chinese fighter jet made dangerous maneuvers around one of its surveillance aircraft and forced it to return to its base last month. Beijing rejected the accusation.

Sherman is also making stops in South Korea, Laos and Vietnam. U.S. State Department Counselor Derek Chollet is also

in the region, meeting with officials in Thailand, Singapore and Brunei.

The State Department said the two trips highlight American commitment to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a 10-member regional bloc known as ASEAN, as well as Washington's bilateral partnerships.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin is also a featured speaker on the weekend at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Asia's premier defense and security forum.

China has itself been active in its diplomatic engagement in the region, recently inking a security deal with the Solomon Islands that the U.S., Australia and others worry could give Beijing the opportunity to establish a naval

base in the South Pacific.

China and Cambodia on Wednesday also broke ground on a port expansion project at Cambodia's Ream Naval Base, which the U.S. and others fear could provide Beijing with a strategically important military outpost on the Gulf of Thailand.

Following the Solomon Islands deal, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi traveled to multiple other island nations, hoping to sign an ambitious deal with 10 of them covering a broad range of areas including security and fisheries. He couldn't find consensus on that deal but instead signed smaller bilateral agreements.

Australia pushed back, sending its own foreign minister to several Pacific island nations on her own diplomatic outreach.

MILITARY

Officer convicted of COVID violation faces separation

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

An Army officer convicted and sentenced to no punishment during a court-martial for violating coronavirus prevention protocols said he now faces involuntary separation from service.

First Lt. Mark Bashaw, an entomologist with the Army Public Health Center at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., was counseled Monday by his company commander, who placed a “flag” on Bashaw’s record “due to a referral of involuntary separation and since the command has lost confidence in him,” according to a statement from Bashaw’s attorney David Willson.

The restriction on his record blocks a promotion to captain for which Bashaw was previously selected but was held up during court-martial proceedings.

“They now have egg on their faces and are thoroughly embarrassed that their plan of making an

example of 1st Lt. Bashaw has gone awry,” Willson said.



Bashaw

The 16-year veteran of the Army and Air Force now faces an administrative separation, according to Bashaw, who has taken a strong religious stance against receiving the coronavirus vaccine. The Defense Department has mandated all service members receive the vaccine and has begun separating those who don’t.

Army Public Health Center declined to confirm or discuss information related to Bashaw’s separation.

“Out of respect for our employees’ privacy, [Army Public Health Center] does not discuss personnel matters,” said Chanel Weaver, spokeswoman for the center.

The Army has separated 818 soldiers as of June 2 for refusing the vaccine, according to the service.

Those soldiers were separated for refusing a lawful order.

More than 4,450 religious exemptions have been requested and only 11 approved, the service said.

Bashaw filed his own religious exemption for all vaccines in September, which is among the 1,105 denied by the Army. He said he has filed an appeal.

As part of his Christian beliefs, Bashaw said he will “rely on my God-given immune system.”

Bashaw was convicted in a court-martial in April for failing to comply with orders related to coronavirus prevention efforts in his unit’s offices. Col. Robert Cohen, the military judge who presided over the case, declined to punish Bashaw.

Cohen also said in court that he would recommend the case

against Bashaw be dismissed by the general officer who convened the court-martial, Willson said.

However, Maj. Gen. Robert L. Edmonson II, senior commander at Aberdeen Proving Ground, approved the conviction on May 26, according to the base.

The charges stem from Bashaw’s actions on Nov. 30 when he failed to obey orders meant to prevent the spread of coronavirus, which violates Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, according to court documents. He did not comply with orders to submit a negative coronavirus test before reporting to work and did not obey an order to wear a mask indoors.

The following month, Bashaw filed a formal complaint, known as an Article 138 in the UCMJ. In the complaint, he said he faced discrimination from his company commander for his religious beliefs as well as for questioning the validity of orders involving prod-

ucts under emergency-use authorization. He lost his security clearance, access to his unit’s facilities, and was singled out because of his beliefs, according to the complaint.

Bashaw also wrote he faced retaliation for a previous Article 138 inquiry and other questions that he has raised to Army Public Health Center leadership and a task force stood up in response to the coronavirus pandemic about certain medications, treatments and the side effects and deaths associated with coronavirus vaccines under emergency use.

Bashaw transitioned to the Army in 2019 after serving in the Air Force.

He enlisted in 2006 as a pest management craftsman, attaining the rank of master sergeant, according to his official service record.

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Option: Vaccine an option for those concerned about abortion link

FROM PAGE 1

and is used in Europe and other regions. The Food and Drug Administration is considering giving it emergency use authorization in the U.S. The Novavax vaccine may be an acceptable option for some of the 27,000 service members who have sought religious exemptions from the mandatory vaccine. Military officials say many troops who refuse the shots cite certain COVID-19 vaccines’ remote connection to abortions.

Laboratory-grown cell lines descended from fetuses that were aborted decades ago were used in some early-stage testing of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and to grow viruses used to manufacture the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The vaccines do not contain fetal cells. Novavax, however, says that “no human fetal-derived cell lines or tissue” were used in the development, manufacture or production of its vaccine.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory last year, saying the shots were critical to maintaining military readiness and the health of the force. Military leaders have

argued that troops for decades have been required to get as many as 17 vaccines, particularly for those who are deploying overseas.

One group involved in lawsuits targeting the military’s vaccine requirement said it’s possible some shot opponents may see Novavax as an amenable option.

“I definitely think it is for some, but certainly not for all,” said Mike Berry, director of military affairs for First Liberty Institute. “There are some for whom abortion is really the ultimate issue, and once that issue is resolved for them spiritually, then they’re willing.”

Berry added, however, that for others, abortion is “just a tangential issue,” and they have broader opposition to vaccines as a whole. “A rudimentary way of looking at it is that they’ve asked for God’s will, and they believe that it would be wrong for them to get the vaccine,” Berry said. “In other words, they believe that God has told them no.”

Novavax also may appeal to people who are uncomfortable with the new genetic-based technology used in Pfizer and Moderna’s so-called mRNA vaccines.

They deliver genetic instructions for the body to make copies of the coronavirus’ outer coating, the spike protein.

The Novavax vaccine is made with a more familiar technology, like those used for years to prevent hepatitis B and shingles. It trains the body to fight the coronavirus by delivering copies of the outer coating which are grown in insect cells, then are purified and packaged into nanoparticles that to the immune system resemble a virus, according to Novavax re-

search chief Dr. Gregory Glenn.

While some religious groups oppose the shots, when COVID-19 vaccines first started rolling out the Vatican’s doctrine office called the options “morally acceptable” and Pope Francis, who has received Pfizer shots, has strongly encouraged widespread vaccination.

Berry said he doesn’t know how many would consider Novavax acceptable, but guessed it may be a small percentage. First Liberty Institute and the law firm Schaerr

Jaffe LLP are representing a number of Navy sailors in one lawsuit, and nine airmen in another.

Military officials declined to publicly detail the nature of any service members’ religious exemption requests, but spoke on condition of anonymity to provide some descriptions.

They said that the most predominant issue mentioned in waiver requests is the remote link to fetal cell lines, while others argue that their body is a temple that must remain pure.

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EUROPE

3 sentenced to death for fighting with Ukraine

Associated Press

BAKH MUT, Ukraine — Two British citizens and a Moroccan were sentenced to death Thursday for fighting on Ukraine's side, in a punishment handed down by the country's pro-Moscow rebels.

A court in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic found the three men guilty of working toward a violent overthrow of power, an offense punishable by death

in the unrecognized eastern republic. They were also convicted of mercenary activities and terrorism.

Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti reported that the three — Aiden Aslin, Shaun Pinner and Saadun Brahim — are set to face a firing squad. They have a month to appeal.

The separatists argued that the three fighters were "mercenar-

ies" not entitled to the usual protections afforded prisoners of war. They are the first foreign fighters to be sentenced by Ukraine's Russian-backed separatists.

Aslin's and Pinner's families had contended that the men, who are both said to have lived in Ukraine since 2018, were "long-serving" members of the Ukrainian military.

British Foreign Secretary Liz

Truss condemned the sentencing as a "sham judgment with absolutely no legitimacy." Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman Jamie Davies said that under the Geneva Conventions, POWs are entitled to immunity as combatants.

The three men fought alongside Ukrainian troops. Pinner and Aslin surrendered to pro-Russian forces in the southern port of Ma-

riupol in mid-April, while Brahim did so in mid-March in the eastern city of Volnovakha.

The Russian military has argued that foreign mercenaries fighting on Ukraine's side are not combatants and should expect a long prison term, at best, if captured.

Another British fighter captured by the pro-Russian forces, Andrew Hill, is awaiting trial.

Milley: Military to train Ukrainian platoons on rocket artillery

The Washington Post

The U.S. military has devised a plan to train a platoon of Ukrainian soldiers at a time on how to use sophisticated multiple-launch rocket artillery, the Pentagon's top general said Wednesday, raising the likelihood that more of the weapons could be sent to Ukraine.

The plan is contingent on an initial group of Ukrainian soldiers, now learning the system from U.S. troops in Germany, showing proficiency on it, said Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The transfer of additional rocket artillery to Ukraine from existing U.S. Army or U.S. Marine Corps stocks would also require explicit approval from the Biden administration.

"We've got to start this thing with a program that is rational and deliberate, and gets them trained to a standard where they become effective," Milley said, speaking to reporters as he returned to Washington from France. "It will do no good to just throw this weapon system into the battle. You've got to be trained on it to get the maximum effective use out of the weapon as a precision system."

The comments came after the Biden administration last month approved the transfer of four M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, commonly known as HIMARS, to Ukraine, and after Britain said it would send three M270 multiple-launch rocket systems, which perform a similar function. The British will also train a platoon at a time under the plan, Milley said, allowing Ukrainian forces to build up their rocket artillery.

Ukrainian officials have said for days that they need dozens of rocket artillery systems to beat back Russian forces, which continue to make slow gains in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region after a full-scale invasion launched Feb. 24.

Milley said the Russians have "demonstrated that they are out-gunning and outranging Ukrainian artillery" so far in fighting in the eastern Donbas region,

which has become the primary emphasis in Russian operations.

The United States has already shipped Ukraine dozens of M777 howitzers, artillery that commonly launches explosive 155 mm rounds up to about 25 miles. Milley said Ukrainian forces have used those weapons to great effect, but the Ukrainians need "some longer-range artillery systems" that can reach farther distances.

Colin Kahl, the U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy, left open the possibility that the U.S. could send additional HIMARS to Ukraine, as he announced the first four systems had been approved June 1. The U.S. first wants to get more information about how useful they are and how the Ukrainians are using them, he said. He predicted it would then take about three weeks to train the first group of Ukrainian soldiers. Milley said Wednesday that it will take three or four.

The Biden administration approved the transfer of the first four systems after receiving assurances from Ukraine that it would not use them to launch cross-border attacks on Russia, Kahl said. The administration also decided to send munitions for them that have a range of about 45 miles, rather than the long-range Advanced Tactical Missile System that can reach up to 186 miles.

Both the HIMARS and multi-launch system the British are providing require a significant amount of training, Milley said. U.S. troops have developed an accelerated training program for Ukrainian soldiers who have already fired other kinds of artillery in part because they are not starting from scratch.

"The Ukrainians have very good artillerymen. Very good gunners. They're excellent at artillery," Milley said. "But they have been using Soviet-era systems, and then transitioning to different [Western] systems."

On Wednesday, Ukrainian forces remained locked in a brutal fight to maintain territory in the city of Sievierodonetsk, a key



RYAN PARR/U.S. Army

U.S. soldiers in 3rd Battalion, 321 Field Artillery Regiment conduct a live fire of M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems at the 7th Army Training Command's Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, on March 24.

battleground in the Kremlin's bid to capture the Donbas region, as Kyiv and Moscow continue to spar over a U.N.-backed proposal to avert worsening global food shortages by securing safe corridors for millions of tons of Ukrainian grain.

Luhansk regional governor Serhiy Haidai said Ukrainian troops were facing an onslaught of Russian shelling that is targeting Ukrainian-held supply lines in Sievierodonetsk, the largest city in Ukraine's Luhansk region, where Moscow claims it now controls 97% of the territory.

Sievierodonetsk would be a significant symbolic win for Moscow, which claims it has recently restored rail and road links to the annexed Crimean Peninsula via freshly captured Ukrainian cities, consolidating its gains in the country's south.

Turkish and Russian foreign ministers met in Ankara on Wednesday for "substantial" talks on a U.N.-backed proposal for secure safe shipping lanes, designed to facilitate exports of

some 20 million tons of grain trapped by a Russian blockade of the Black Sea ports.

The blockade has raised alarms over a potential global food shortage that could lead to famine in developing countries if shipments aren't able to leave the ports, some of which have been littered with defensive Ukrainian mines and are under fire from Russian land and sea units.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said following the meeting that the proposal — which reportedly includes a plan for Turkey to assist in demining the Ukrainian ports and escorting commercial vessels — was "reasonable."

He also said it's "entirely legitimate" for Russia to request relief from sanctions on its own exports as part of any deal. No immediate agreements have come of the talks.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday blamed Ukraine for the impasse and said Russia was willing to provide security guarantees if

Kyiv agreed to remove mines from its Black Sea ports or "ensure passage through the minefields, as our Turkish friends are telling us."

Lavrov denied the current global food shortage was linked to the war in Ukraine, while European Union leaders railed against what they have said are Russian efforts to weaponize food supplies since the invasion began.

Speaking in the European Parliament on Wednesday, Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the European Union's executive branch, said the blockade on Ukrainian grain was "a cold, callous and calculated siege by Putin on some of the world's most vulnerable countries."

Ukraine has made urgent calls for a deal on the shipping lanes, but remains wary of the U.N. proposal, which it has said could allow Russia to exploit safe zones to carry out strategic attacks on southern cities, including Odesa, which is still under Ukrainian control.

NATION

Jan. 6 riot panel goes prime time with probe

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With never-seen video, new audio and a mass of evidence, the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol will attempt to show the “harrowing story” not only of the deadly violence that erupted that day but also the chilling backstory as the defeated president, Donald Trump, tried to overturn Joe Biden’s election victory.

Thursday’s prime-time hearing will open with eyewitness testimony from the first police officer pummeled in the mob riot and from a documentary filmmaker who recorded the melee, and it will feature the committee’s accounts from Trump’s aides and family members of the deadly siege that put U.S. democracy at risk.

“When you hear and understand the wide-reaching conspiracy and the effort to try to corrupt every lever and agency of government involved in this, you know, the hair on the back of your neck should stand up,” Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a member of the 1/6 committee, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

“Putting it all together in one place and one coherent narrative, I think, will help the American people understand better what happened on January 6th — and the threats that that could potentially pose in the future.”

The 1/6 panel’s yearlong investigation into the Capitol attack will begin to show how America’s tradition of a peaceful transfer of presidential power came close to slipping away. It will reconstruct how Trump refused to concede the 2020 election, spread false claims of voter fraud and orchestrated an unprecedented public and private



MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON/The Washington Post

Thousands of former President Donald Trump’s supporters march to the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.

campaign to overturn Biden’s victory.

The result of the coming weeks of public hearings may not change hearts or minds in politically polarized America. But the committee’s investigation with 1,000 interviews is intended to stand as a public record for history. A final report aims to provide an accounting of the most violent attack on the Capitol since the British set fire to it in 1814 and to ensure such an attack never happens again.

Emotions are still raw at the Capitol, and security will be tight for the hearings. Law enforcement officials are reporting a spike in violent threats against members of Congress.

Against this backdrop, the committee will try to speak to a divided America, ahead of the fall midterm elections, when voters decide which party controls Congress. Most TV networks will carry the hearings live, but Fox News Channel will not.

The committee chairman, civil rights leader Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., and vice chair Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., the daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, will set the tone with opening remarks.

The two congressional leaders will outline what the committee has learned about the events leading up to that brisk January day in 2021 when Trump sent his suppor-

ters to Congress to “fight like hell” for his presidency as lawmakers undertook the typically routine job of certifying the previous November’s results.

“People are going to have to follow two intersecting streams of events — one will be the attempt to overturn the presidential election, that’s a harrowing story in itself,” Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the committee, told the AP.

“The other will be the sequence of events leading up to a violent mob attack on the Capitol to stop the counting of Electoral College votes and block the peaceful balance of power,” he said.

First up will be wrenching accounts from police who engaged in

hand-to-hand combat with the mob, with testimony from U.S. Capitol Police Officer Caroline Edwards, who was seriously injured in the attack. Also appearing Thursday will be documentary maker Nick Quested, who filmed the extremist Proud Boys storming the Capitol.

Some of that group’s members have since been indicted, as have some from the Oath Keepers, on rare sedition charges over the military-style attack.

Along with the live eyewitness testimony, the panel will unveil multimedia presentations, including unreleased video and audio, and a “mountain of evidence,” said a committee aide who insisted on anonymity to preview the hearing. There will be recorded accounts from Trump’s senior aides at the White House, the administration and the campaign, as well as members of Trump’s family, the aide said.

The panel, made up of nine lawmakers, faced obstacles from its start. Republicans blocked the formation of an independent body that could have investigated the Jan. 6 assault the way the 9/11 Commission probed the 2001 terror attack.

Instead, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ushered the creation of the 1/6 panel through Congress over the objections of Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell. She rejected Republican-appointed lawmakers who had voted Jan. 6 against certifying the election results, choosing her own preferred members to serve.

Trump has dismissed the investigation as illegitimate, and many Republicans are poised to defend him.

Officials: Millions of COVID-19 vaccines have been ordered for youngest children

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses have been ordered for small children in anticipation of possible federal authorization next week, White House officials say.

The government allowed pharmacies and states to start placing orders last week, with 5 million doses initially available — half of them shots made by Pfizer and the other half the vaccine produced by Moderna, senior administration officials said.

As of this week, about 1.45 million of the 2.5 million available doses of Pfizer have been ordered, and about 850,000 of available Moderna shots have been ordered, officials said. More orders are expected in the coming days.

Young children are the last group

of Americans who have not been recommended to get COVID-19 vaccinations. Up to about 20 million U.S. children under 5 would become eligible for vaccination if the government authorizes one or both shots.

It’s not clear how popular the shots will be. A recent survey suggests only 1 in 5 parents of young children would get their kids vaccinated right away.

And public health officials have been disappointed at how many older U.S. children, who have been eligible for shots for months, have yet to be vaccinated: Less than one-third of kids ages 5 to 11 have gotten the two recommended doses, according to government figures.

“As we go down in the age groups, we see lower and lower uptake” of vaccines, said Dr. Lucia Abascal of

the California Department of Public Health.

Pfizer has asked FDA to authorize three doses of its COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 6 months to 4 years. Each dose is one-tenth of the amount adults receive.

Moderna has asked FDA to authorize two shots for kids ages 6 months to 5 years, each containing a quarter of the dose given to adults.

The Food and Drug Administration authorizes the use of vaccines, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issues recommendations to doctors and the public about using them.

An FDA advisory committee is scheduled to meet Tuesday and Wednesday to review data from the two companies. Officials say they expect a FDA decision shortly after that meeting.

More Americans apply for jobless benefits last week

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More Americans applied for jobless aid last week, but the total number of Americans collecting unemployment remains at a five-decade low.

Applications for unemployment benefits rose by 27,000 to 229,000 for the week ending June 4, the most since mid-January, the Labor Department reported Thursday. First-time applications generally track the number of layoffs.

The four-week average for claims, which evens out some of the weekly volatility, rose by 8,000 from the previous week to 215,000.

The total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits for the week ending May 28 remained unchanged from the previous week at 1,306,000, the fewest since Jan.

10, 1970.

American workers are enjoying historically strong job security two years after the coronavirus pandemic plunged the economy into a short but devastating recession. Weekly applications for unemployment aid have been consistently below the pre-pandemic level of 225,000 for most of 2022, even as the overall economy contracted in the first quarter and concerns over inflation persist.

Last week, the government reported that U.S. employers added 390,000 jobs in May, extending a streak of solid hiring that has bolstered an economy under pressure from high inflation and rising interest rates.

The job growth in May, though healthy, was the lowest monthly gain in a year.

FACES

Humbling journey

Myles Frost moonwalks from 'The Voice' castoff to Tony award nomination

BY KARU F. DANIELS
New York Daily News

Singer and actor Myles Frost is a Tony Award nominee for his performance as superstar Michael Jackson in the Broadway musical "MJ," but the path to fame was no moonwalk in the park.

The 22-year-old Silver Spring, Md., breakout star has gone from being a castoff during the 2017 season of reality music competition "The Voice" to a Tony nod for best leading actor in a musical.

The jukebox musical, now playing at the Neil Simon Theatre, was written by two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage and helmed by Tony winner Christopher Wheeldon. "MJ" is set in 1992, before the pop icon had been tarnished by public allegations of child sexual abuse, and glosses over the controversy. The "King of Pop" died in 2009.

Frost is up against Broadway veterans Billy Crystal ("Mr. Saturday Night"), Hugh Jackman ("The Music Man") and Rob McClure ("Mrs. Doubtfire") and fellow newcomer Jaquel Spivey ("A Strange Loop") when the Tony Awards are handed out Sunday night in New York City.

Frost described his journey to Broadway as "humbling."

"I think I've really been able to understand the true definition of being humbled to immaculate experiences, and this is definitely one," he said. "So being able to experience all these different things, and explore a world that's unfamiliar to me, the world of Broadway, and be welcomed with such open arms — it feels amazing. And I'm so blessed and honored."



MICHAEL LOCCISANO/TNS

Myles Frost takes part in a curtain call Feb. 1 for "MJ" in New York City.

He's come a long way from being the 17-year-old who was sent home after twirling and doing splits in silver sneakers on "The Voice." His pitchy rendition of the Stevie Wonder classic "My Cherie Amour" didn't win over judges Blake Shelton, Miley Cyrus, Jennifer Hudson and Adam Levine during televised blind auditions.

Frost, who said he didn't choose to sing that song, chuckled about the experience and said he took the judges' advice.

"It was at a time where I thought I kind of knew everything. I was 17... I thought I had everything under control," said the YouTube sensation, who can play five musical instruments.

"I was a senior in high school, I won all of these high school talent shows so I thought I was ready for the big league, only to get hit with a song that was so challenging."

Now, five years later, he's accomplished what no other castoff has — headlining a show on the Great White Way and performing some of the most iconic songs in pop music history.

"So when I got to 'MJ,' I was really able to delve into the attitude and the intention behind every song, every dance move, in every scene," he said.

It's been a rocky ride to Broadway for the Bowie State University student. Since the pandemic-delayed production opened in December, he endured two bouts of COVID-19 and broke a toe, keeping him out of the show for a number of weeks.

"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, baby," he said. "I believe that wholeheartedly."

"I had a really bad allergic reaction the day before my in-person audition, to the point where I couldn't even rehearse the dancing that I had done in preparation for my audition," he said. "So I went into my audition, like, kind of cold turkey, if you will, and I still got the part."

Frost is looking forward to showing the world what he has to offer on the Tony Awards telecast Sunday, where he is set to perform a number from "MJ."

"You can expect to see on the big screen who Myles is, you know, you get a chance to see what we as a musical bring, with the type of energy we produce," he said.

"I think this is going to be a new energy to the Tonys and I can't wait to provide that. I also can't wait to just be in the room and sit among legends like Hugh Jackman and Billy Crystal."

Blondie to issue box set this summer

From wire reports

Blondie has figured out where to put their heart of glass — a big ole box.

The iconic rockers said Wednesday they will release their first authorized collection in their 50-year history, a huge box set that includes 124 tracks, 36 of which were never issued.

"Blondie: Against The Odds 1974-1982" drops Aug. 26. The remastered music is accompanied by two volumes of liner notes, track-by-track commentary, a 120-page illustrated discography and dozens of previously unpublished photos.

"When I listen to these old tracks, it puts me there like I am a time traveler. As bad as it was sometimes, it was also equally as good. No regrets. More music," said frontwoman and songwriter Debbie Harry in a statement.

The heart of the box set is the band's first six studio albums: "Blondie," "Plastic Letters," "Parallel Lines," "Eat to the Beat," "Autoamerican" and "The Hunter," with the hits "Heart of Glass," "Atomic," "Tide Is High," "Sunday Girl," "Rapture" and "Call Me."

The set also includes four dozen demos — including the group's first-ever recording session — as well as alternate versions and studio outtakes.

The collection, via UMe and The Numero Group, is available to pre-order now. It is available in four formats — Super Deluxe Collectors' Edition, Deluxe 4LP, Deluxe 8CD and 3CD editions.

Foo Fighters to honor Hawkins with tribute shows in London, LA

Foo Fighters plan to honor their drummer Taylor Hawkins with their first shows after his death.

The famed rock band will make their return during the "Taylor Hawkins Tribute Concert" at London's Wembley Stadium on Sept. 3. Later that month, they'll trek to Los Angeles for a Sept. 27 date at the Kia Forum.

Tickets will go on sale June 17 and will be available on the band's website.

MTV's newest scream queen, Jenna Ortega, promotes multiple projects



Netflix

Jenna Ortega stars as Wednesday Addams in the Netflix series "Wednesday," scheduled for release later this year.

BY CHRISTI CARRAS
Los Angeles Times

Rising scream queen Jenna Ortega continues to establish herself as a mainstay of the horror genre while promoting multiple upcoming spooky projects.

Hot off Ortega's victory for most frightened performance at last weekend's MTV Movie and TV Awards, Netflix released a teaser trailer for "Wednesday," starring the 19-year-old performer as the titular goth teen from the "Addams Family" franchise.

Directed by horror veteran Tim Burton, the eight-part spinoff series will follow the brooding Wednesday Addams on a mission to solve a supernatural

mystery from her parents' past.

"I feel very lucky to have been able to portray Wednesday Addams as a teenager and to watch her go off in boarding school and insert herself in a place full of outcasts, where she still remains an outcast," Ortega told Entertainment Tonight on the red carpet Sunday at the MTV Movie and TV Awards.

"Thing about Wednesday is we've never seen her onscreen for such a long period of time. She's always been the one-line joke, and so it's been really interesting ... creating a deeper emotional arc for her and giving her a bit more range than she has had previously."

Ahead of Sunday's show, Orte-

ga additionally teased her forthcoming turn in "Scream 6." The "Elena of Avalor" alum made her "Scream" debut this year as Tara Carpenter, the first target of the franchise's masked serial killer, Ghostface, in the latest sequel.

"What I will say is: Ghostface gets a lot more intimidating" in "Scream 6," Ortega told Entertainment Tonight.

"I just read part of the script, and it gets more and more gory. ... This is probably the most aggressive and violent version of Ghostface we've ever seen, which will be really fun to shoot."

"Wednesday" is scheduled for release this year, and "Scream 6" is slated to open on March 31, 2023.

NATION

House passes gun control bill after recent shootings

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House passed a wide-ranging gun control bill Wednesday in response to recent mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas, that would raise the age limit for purchasing a semi-automatic rifle and prohibit the sale of ammunition magazines with a capacity of more than 15 rounds.

The legislation passed by a mostly party-line vote of 223-204. It has almost no chance of becoming law as the Senate pursues negotiations focused on improving mental health programs, bolstering school security and enhancing background checks. But the House bill does allow Democratic lawmakers a chance to frame for voters in November where they stand on policies that polls show are widely supported.

“We can’t save every life, but my God, shouldn’t we try? America we hear you and today in the House we are taking the action you are demanding,” said Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-Texas. “Take note of who is with you and who is not.”

The push comes after a House committee heard wrenching testimony from recent shooting vic-

tims and family members, including from 11-year-old girl Miah Cerrillo, who covered herself with a dead classmate’s blood to avoid being shot at the Uvalde elementary school.

The seemingly never-ending cycle of mass shootings in the United States has rarely stirred Congress to act. But the shooting of 19 children and two teachers in Uvalde has revived efforts in a way that has lawmakers from both parties talking about the need to respond.

“It’s sickening, it’s sickening that our children are forced to live in this constant fear,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Pelosi said the House vote would “make history by making progress.” But it’s unclear where the House measure will go after Wednesday’s vote, given that Republicans were adamant in their opposition.

“The answer is not to destroy the Second Amendment, but that is exactly where the Democrats want to go,” said Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio.

The work to find common ground is mostly taking place in the Senate, where support from 10 Republicans will be needed to get a bill signed into law.

Man arrested for threat to kill Justice Kavanaugh

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A man carrying a gun, a knife and zip ties was arrested Wednesday near Justice Brett Kavanaugh’s house in Maryland after threatening to kill the justice.

Nicholas John Roske, 26, of Simi Valley, Calif., was charged with the attempted murder of a Supreme Court justice. During a court hearing, he consented to remain in federal custody for now.

Roske was dressed in black when he arrived by taxi just after 1 a.m. outside Kavanaugh’s home in a Washington suburb. He had a

Glock 17 pistol, ammunition, a knife, zip ties, pepper spray, duct tape and other items that he told police he would use to break into Kavanaugh’s house and kill him, according to a criminal complaint and an affidavit filed in federal court in Maryland.

Roske said he purchased the gun to kill Kavanaugh and that he also would kill himself, the affidavit said.

Roske told police he was upset by a leaked draft opinion suggesting the Supreme Court is about to overrule Roe v. Wade, the landmark abortion case. He also said

he was upset over the school massacre in Uvalde, Texas, and believed Kavanaugh would vote to loosen gun control laws, the affidavit said.

When he got out of the taxi, Roske was spotted by two U.S. Marshals who are part of round-the-clock security provided to the justices following the leak of the draft opinion last month.

But Roske was only apprehended after he called 911 in Montgomery County, Md., and said he was having suicidal thoughts and planned to kill Kavanaugh, having found the justice’s address online.

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WORLD

Berlin driver's motives in crash are investigated

Associated Press

BERLIN — Investigators are trying to make sense of “confused” statements by a man who drove into a school group in Berlin in what appears to have been a deliberate rampage, the city’s mayor said Thursday.

Wednesday’s incident on a popular shopping street in the center of the capital left one woman dead, a teacher with the school group from central Germany, and six people with life-threatening injuries. Another three were seriously injured.

Berlin’s top security official, Iris Spranger, told the state legislature Thursday that 29 people were injured in total, 14 of them students — seven of whom were in hospitals, along with another teacher.

The driver, a 29-year-old German-Armenian who lives in Berlin, was held by passersby and detained swiftly after his car came to a halt in a shop window. Berlin Mayor Franziska Giffey said that, by Wednesday evening, authorities had determined that it was an “amok act by a really seriously psychologically impaired person.”

She told public broadcaster RBB Inforadio that investigators are working to determine the context and what if anything else influenced him. They are also “trying ... to find out more from the partially confused statements he is making,” she added.

Spranger had said Wednesday that posters were found in the car “in which he expressed views about Turkey.” She told lawmakers Thursday that it remains unclear whether they are connected to the incident and reiterated that there was no claim of responsibility.



FABIAN SOMMER, DPA/AP

A policeman takes a photo of the damaged storefront at the scene of the fatal accident in Berlin on Thursday.

The man’s apartment was searched on Wednesday evening and his cellphone and computer are still being examined, Spranger said.

The suspect obtained German citizenship in 2015 and apparently had “psychological problems” in the past, she said. He was known to police because of proceedings for suspected bodily harm, trespassing and slander, but not for political or other extremism, she added.

The regional government in central Hesse state said that the students who were hit attended a 10th-grade class — ages roughly 15-17 in Germany — in the town of Bad Arolsen.

State governor Boris Rhein, visiting the town on Thursday, said the students had been on a final-year trip. He said 17 members of the group had been brought home.

The car plowed into pedestrians close to the site of a 2016 attack in which an Islamic extremist drove a commandeered truck into a Christmas market, resulting in 13 deaths. Giffey said Wednesday’s crash “reopens deep wounds and traumas” associated with that event.

Fire in South Korea caused by suspected arson kills at least 7

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — A fire caused by suspected arson spread through an office building Thursday in South Korea’s Daegu city, killing at least seven people and injuring dozens, fire and police officials said.

Dozens of firefighters and vehicles quickly put out the blaze, which began in the late morning on the second of a seven-floor office building near the city’s district court.

Seven people were confirmed dead, including an unidentified man who police suspect set the fire in a lawyer’s office. At least 49 others were hurt, mostly from smoke inhalation, and 31 of them were being treated in hospitals, the Daegu Fire Department said.

The high number of casualties was possibly because the building didn’t have sprinklers on office floors, according to Park Seok-jin, chief of Daegu’s Suseong district fire department. He didn’t answer

directly when asked whether there were any lapses in legally required safety standards.

Jeong Hyeon-wook, an official from Daegu Metropolitan Police, said security camera footage shows the suspect leaving his home holding an apparent container with both hands that may have been used to set the blaze. Jeong said all of the dead were found in the same room and that police were investigating possible motives. A team from the National Forensic Services was also deployed to the site.

With the suspect dead, it’s unclear whether anyone will be prosecuted over the fire unless police find an accomplice, Jeong said.

Photos showed people awaiting rescue on the roof and crowded balconies as smoke emerged from the building in Beomeo-dong, an affluent business district in Daegu, which is South Korea’s fourth-largest city and home to more than 2.4 million people.

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WEEKEND



Guitar guru covers Sinatra songbook

Music, Page 28



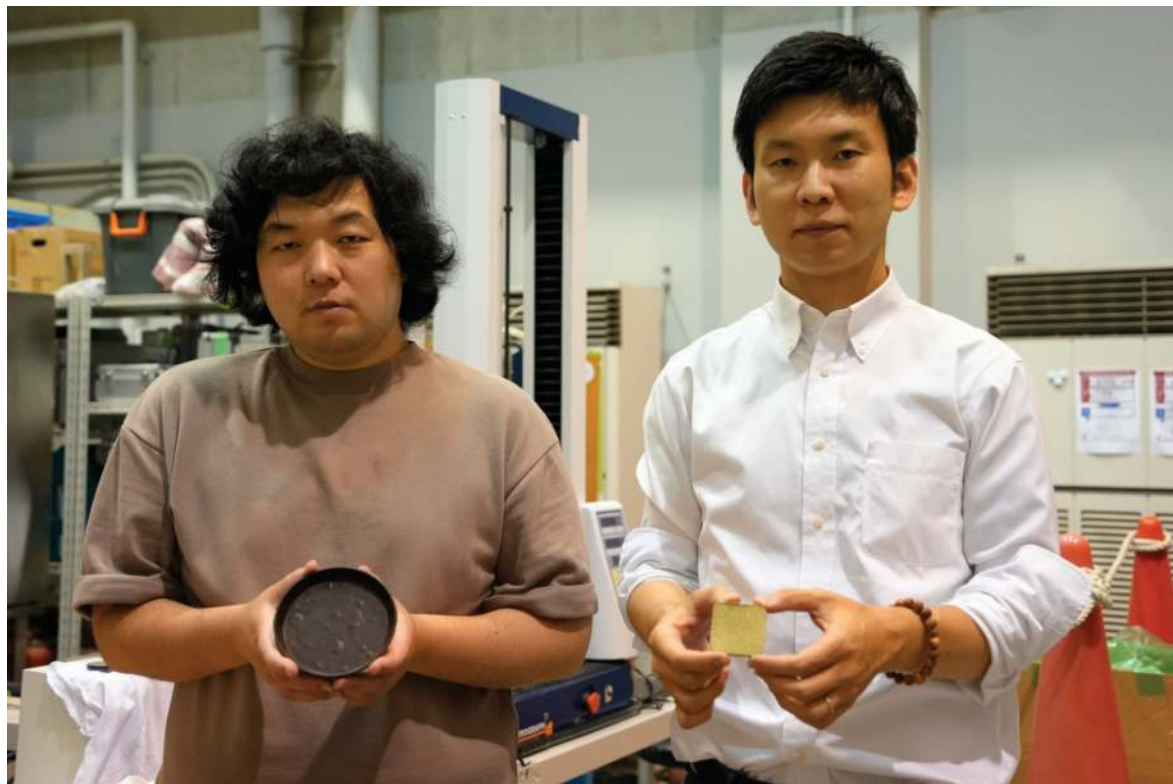
END OF AN ERA

'Jurassic World' trilogy comes to a toothy close with 'Dominion'

Movies, Pages 15-16

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT/AP

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



CHISATO TANAKA/AP

Tokyo University researchers Yuya Sakai, right, and Kota Machida pose for photos May 26 with products they made out of “food cement” at their laboratory in Tokyo. Sakai and Machida developed a technology that can transform food waste into “cement” for construction use.

Cement out of food waste

Researchers create a gingerbread house-style building option

By CHISATO TANAKA
Associated Press

Ever dreamed of having a gingerbread house like Hansel and Gretel? In the near future, edible houses may no longer just be found in fairy tales.

Tokyo University researchers Kota Machida and Yuya Sakai have developed a technology to transform food waste into potentially edible “cement” for construction use.

It’s the world’s first process for making cement entirely from food waste. The researchers say the tensile, or bending, strength of their product is nearly quadruple that of ordinary concrete.

Machida and Sakai say they hope to help reduce global warming, alleviating problems related to wasted food materials that emit methane when they rot while buried in landfills.

Sakai, an associate professor of Industrial Science, developed the technology while researching sustainable materials that could replace cement-based concrete. Cement production accounts for 8% of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions, according to the think tank Chatham House.

Sakai first developed a way to make concrete by subjecting pulverized wood particles to heat compression. The three-step process of drying, pulverization and compression was done using simple mixers and compressors the researchers say can be bought on Amazon.

Sakai, with his student Machida, decided to do the same thing with food waste. Previous trials using food waste to make cement required plastics to be mixed in to get the materials to stick together.

After months of failures, they realized they could get the cement to bind by adjusting the temperature and pressure used.

“The most challenging part was that each type of food waste requires different temperatures and pressure levels,” Sakai said.

Other experiments in using food waste in construction have mainly focused on using stuff such as coffee grounds or bio-waste ashes as filler in regular concrete.

Sakai and Machida say they have successfully made cement using tea leaves, orange and onion



Food cement made out of dried cabbage is on display at the laboratory of Tokyo University.

peels, coffee grounds, Chinese cabbage and even lunchbox leftovers.

They’ve adjusted flavors with different spices and found that the colors, scent and taste of the cement can be quite appealing. To be able to eat the material, a person would need to break it into pieces and boil it, Sakai said.

To make the cement waterproof and protect it from being eaten by rodents and other pests, it might be coated with Japanese lacquer.

Food waste is a huge problem in Japan and worldwide. Japan produced around 5.7 million tons of edible food waste in 2019 and the government aims to reduce that around 2.7 million tons by 2030.

Machida started a company called Fabula Inc. last year with two of his childhood friends. They are working with other companies to make cups, cutlery and furniture out of food cement.

Sakai says the process could be used to make edible makeshift housing for disasters.

“For example, if food cannot be delivered to evacuees, they could eat makeshift beds made out of food cement,” he said.

The food cement can be reused and is biodegradable, so it can be buried when it is no longer needed.

“Our ultimate hope is that this cement replaces plastic and cement products, which have worse environmental impacts,” said Machida.

GADGETS

Ezviz home security camera an easy choice

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Ezviz’s C6 2K+ smart home security camera is pretty darn smart.

Ideally, home security cameras as well as other use-at-home technology should be easy to set up and have working in minutes. The Ezviz C6 and the accompanying Ezviz app set up easily and work with a direct-wired Ethernet connection or with 2.4/5 GHz dual-band Wi-Fi.

What makes the camera so smart is its four-times zoom, which will detect, enact the zoom and follow any subjects. My dogs ran by the camera to a doorbell in the initial test, and the Ezviz C6 had them covered.

The baseball-sized AC-powered camera (3.93-by-3.93-by-3.80 inches) fits in the palm of your hand. One side of the 4-megapixel camera is flat, which acts as the base for the camera to sit and rotate on.

It monitors the surroundings with a 360-degree panoramic view. The built-in lens has a 92-degree viewing angle, but when you factor in the controls to move the lens sideways and up/down, you get the 360-degree viewing.

Captured videos are in a sharp and clear 2K resolution (2,560 by 1,440 pixels) at 25fps and stored in onboard MicroSD memory cards up to 256GB in size (not included). Or subscribe to EZVIZ CloudPlay for fully encrypted cloud storage.

The Ezviz mobile app (iOS and Android) is the security camera’s hub for viewing, settings and controls. Working it is straightforward, with an easy-to-read-and-understand dashboard. Within the app, notifications can be set up for when there’s an alert.

Among the features in the app is live view with audio, stored videos and up to 8-times zoom to view something specific.

The built-in fold-down privacy

dimmer lets you manually close the lens to temporarily shut down recordings until it’s reopened. Another option to halt recordings within the app is sleep mode. The IR night vision captures movement in low-light conditions.

With its AI-powered human shape detection, specific movements and sounds from as far as 32 feet can be tracked. The pet detection will send alerts when your four-legged furry friends run by the camera.

Moving the mechanical lens with the pan/tilt and viewing from the app’s virtual joystick was responsive and crystal clear. Wave to the camera, and waving-hand recognition will make a video call to a phone with the two-way talk feature. The C6 also has a built-in microphone and speaker.

The category of home security cameras is a crowded one with lots of choices. The C6 is a clear winner with its simple setup, easy-to-use app and a very crisp and clear video resolution. With the 92-degree lens and pan/tilt 360-degree viewing, the camera is best suited to be in the corner of a room, but that’s not a requirement.

After using it for a few days, the alerts of my dogs walking by got boring, and the notifications were annoying, even though the camera was doing what it was told to do. I changed the settings for only people detection, and turned the audio alerts off.

But the choices are there, and whatever settings I turned on, the camera responded perfectly.

Ezviz CloudPlay fully encrypted cloud storage plans start with a free 30-day trial. Standard plans have monthly and yearly options with three-day, seven-day and 30-day storage history for one camera support. The premium plan has monthly and yearly plans with up to four cameras and seven-day or 30-day storage choices.

Online: ezviz.com/us; \$129.99



Ezviz/TNS

Ezviz’s C6 2K+ smart home security camera can be set up quickly.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Let chaos reign

Jeff Goldblum takes last bite out of 'Jurassic World'

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

There is only one person who, in the middle of a massive dystopic dinosaur movie, can utter a line like “That’s bananas” with just the right timing and inflection.

For almost three decades, off and on, Jeff Goldblum has played Dr. Ian Malcolm with particular Goldblumian panache. As the stylish chaos theorist of the “Jurassic Park” and “Jurassic World” films, Goldblum is the voice of reason and comedy relief in one, an augur of nature’s unpredictability who can’t help marveling at seeing his theories in action, even if that poses immediate danger to himself.

It’s one of the 69-year-old actor’s best-known characters. Yet in even big movies like “Jurassic Park” and “Independence Day,” Goldblum has such a singular manner and much-intimated tempo that he’s never been particularly defined by those roles. It’s more that Goldblum, in putting his own idiosyncratic spin on them, marks the characters, rather than the other way around. Life finds a way in “Jurassic Park,” and so does Goldblum.

In Colin Trevorrow’s “Jurassic World Dominion,” now in theaters, Goldblum — along with original cast members Laura Dern and Sam Neill — returns to close out the franchise’s second trilogy of films in a sprawling adventure set in a near future where dinosaurs have spread across the world, as has ecological imbalance and a plague of giant locusts.

For Goldblum, the son of a doctor and host of the Disney+ series “The World According to Jeff Goldblum,” the subjects and themes of the movie dovetail with some of his own curiosities and interests in how we might, he says, “upgrade our stewardship of the planet.” What does Goldblum, the movies’ resident chaotician, think of our increasingly tumultuous times?

“I don’t know anything about what I’m talking about. But let’s utter the word ‘entropy’ and ‘systems’ and how things break down,” Goldblum says, speaking from London. “Before the butterfly comes out of the chrysalis, the caterpillar has some convulsions, chaotic convulsions. But it’s not death, necessarily. It’s the onset of transformation.”

Satisfied that he’s perhaps arrived at a kernel of truth, Goldblum concludes, “Hey, what about that?”

Chaos and harmony feature prominently in most conversations with Goldblum, an ever-riffing, cosmically attuned raconteur. He tends to speak as if narrating his brain’s inner workings in real time, arriving now and then at ideas worth pausing to savor and existential epiphanies that delight him.

One question, for example, about whether his sons’ names — River Joe and Charlie Ocean — suggest some ecological bent sends Goldblum on a jag about ocean environmental health, fundraising for Oceana, the song “Moon River” (which Goldblum, an accomplished pianist,

says his band might soon record), Carly Simon’s “Let the River Run,” the movie “Working Girl,” Mark Harris’ Mike Nichols biography and a whitewater rafting trip on the Kern River.

“Water is life, isn’t it?” says Goldblum. “If they ever wanted to drop the Goldblum and just go with River Joe, that sounds evocative to me, that sounds like a good character. Or Charlie Ocean. I like both of those. Nothing wrong with Goldblum, but if they want to change it, fine with me.”

Either through experience (Goldblum’s early films included two with the improvisational Robert Altman, “a dippy doodle of an artist,” he says), or practice (Goldblum credits acting teacher Sandy Meisner with instilling in him “a continuity of digging”), Goldblum has arrived at his unique cadence and perpetual state of curiosity.

“At the beginning of the day, I remind myself: free association, stream of consciousness, perceptual readiness and then openness,” says Goldblum. “This whole business of acting and music seems to be, if nothing else, an invitation toward opening up. Opening yourself up in both directions. Not only to what’s around you in reception but then in your giving back, reacting and offering something.”

After co-starring in “Jurassic Park” and its 1997 sequel, “The Lost World,” Goldblum returned to Ian Malcolm in 2018’s “Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom” during which his character testifies to the U.S. Congress. Malcolm recommends letting the exploding volcano determine the fate of the dinosaurs on Isla Nublar. Goldblum relished it.

“I was full of juice,” he says. “I was in this froth of fun, which I sometimes get in.”

Trevorrow, who has co-written the trilogy and directed the first and third installments, first worked with Gold-

blum on a “Jurassic World” Super Bowl ad for Jeep. Goldblum wasn’t what he expected.

“You think that he’s purely improvisational and maybe even a loose cannon,” says Trevorrow. “But on this movie, I’d just see him walking out on the garden at the hotel we were staying in going over his lines again and again and coming in and delivering a very precise, considered performance.”

Production on “Jurassic World Dominion” was halted in 2020 due to the pandemic. When shooting restarted, the studio rented out a hotel in England near Pinewood Studios for cast and crew. Goldblum would sometimes play the piano there with his castmates and Trevorrow — “musicales and hootenannys of one kind or another,” Goldblum says. Dern posted one video of her, Neill and Goldblum singing the Beatles’ “Blackbird.”

“He’s a beautiful man,” says Trevorrow. “We would have really thoughtful conversations about his perspective on where we’re at. There was a depth to it all, honestly, when it comes to the experience of making the film and going through pandemic together.”

For the “Jurassic World Dominion” cast and filmmakers, making a movie about nature’s resistance to humankind’s meddling during the pandemic took on real-world resonance. As in the movie, the world might be ending, but Goldblum is still there, keeping the spirits up.

“What else can we do?” says Goldblum. “Being a Sandy Meisner devotee, I’m a romantic about the ensemble credo and synergy and, like this movie depicts, what educated, smart and deeply caring people can do — even a few of them — together at a crucial moment. They can even sometimes defeat the forces of ignorance, corruption and greed, and keep the homo sapiens ball moving along a little more. Maybe.”

Jeff Goldblum poses for a portrait to promote the film “Jurassic World Dominion” on May 10 at the Universal Studios Lot in Los Angeles.

WILLY SANJUAN/AP

WEEKEND: MOVIES



PHOTOS BY UNIVERSAL PICTURES, AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT/AP

From left, Jeff Goldblum, Sam Neill, Laura Dern, Bryce Dallas Howard, Chris Pratt, Isabella Sermon and DeWanda Wise appear in "Jurassic World Dominion." Goldblum, Neill and Dern last appeared together in the original "Jurassic Park" series in the 1990s.

A new 'Dominion' for the dinos

'Jurassic World' trilogy ends with nostalgia-stuffed finale

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

It's the end of an era — the Jurassic Era. After six "Jurassic Park" and "Jurassic World" movies and almost 30 years, it's apparently the end of the line for the creature feature franchise that left an oversize footprint on pop culture. "Jurassic World" director Colin Trevorrow returns to helm "Jurassic World Dominion," the final film of the legacy trilogy, and a trio of favorite actors from the "Jurassic Park" movies have returned to bid adieu to the dinosaurs as well. It's laden with nostalgia, made up of nods to the original films and other action-adventure classics, and as a goodbye note to the franchise, it's heartfelt, if a bit limp, giving preference to references over storytelling.

If Steven Spielberg's "Jurassic Park" was a slasher movie where Michael Myers was a velociraptor, "Jurassic World Dominion" is a swashbuckling action-adventure picture in the style of "Indiana Jones," but with huge, murderous reptiles. After the dip into gothic haunted house horror that was J.A. Bayona's "Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom," the dinosaurs are officially free of the park and out into the world, and we've been promised a film about dinosaurs inhabiting the same space humans and other animals do: stampeding across the prairies, invading city parks, rampaging through the oceans.

There is some of that, to be sure, but "Dominion," written by Trevorrow, Derek Connolly and Emily Carmichael, quickly brings the story back into "Park" mode, after a couple of international detours in the style of Indy or James Bond or even



Chris Pratt in a scene from "Jurassic World Dominion." The film's best, and most innovative, set piece is a motorcycle chase through the streets of Malta with some weaponized murder-saurs.

Jason Bourne. Owen Grady (Chris Pratt) and Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard) find themselves plunged into the dinosaur black market in Malta while tracking down their adoptive daughter, Maisie (Isabella Sermon), a human clone of a brilliant genetic scientist who has been kidnapped for her very valuable DNA.

With the help of a swaggering pilot-for-hire, Kayla (DeWanda Wise), cut from the same cloth as Han Solo, Owen and Claire head for the the Dolomite Mountains in Italy, the headquarters of Biosyn, a genetics research company/dinosaur sanctuary headed up by oddball tech mogul Lewis Dodgson (Campbell Scott). Already at Biosyn are "Jurassic" fan favorites Dr. Ellie Sattler (Laura Dern), Dr. Alan Grant (Sam Neill) and Dr. Ian Malcolm (Jeff

Goldblum), who are looking to investigate a plague of locusts that suspiciously don't eat Biosyn crops. Yep, things are getting biblical.

The film's best, and most innovative, set piece is a motorcycle chase through the streets of Malta with some weaponized murder-saurs, but once things converge on the contained location of Biosyn, it starts to follow the "Jurassic" blueprint faithfully, and consciously, delivering what we all expect. The humans interface with the dinosaurs up close, Ripley and Xenomorph style, and enjoy a front row seat to the kaiju big battle that is T. rex vs. Giganotosaurus.

If it all sounds like a lot of references to a lot of other movies, well, that's exactly what "Jurassic World Dominion" is, and there are some pleasures to be found in remembering the greatest hits of the major action-adventure and monster movies of the past 40 years. But all of those other films were groundbreaking, inventive and original, while "Dominion" merely rides their coattails, or, perhaps, more nefariously, steals their valor, offering up a rewarmed version of "Jurassic Park" jazzed up with nods to "Godzilla," "Apocalypse Now" and "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

Sometimes leftovers can hit the spot — the cast is game, the new additions like Wise and Mamoudou Athie are great, and Howard gets a chance to shine. But while "Jurassic World Dominion" offers up some lightweight summer fun, it's not exactly satisfying, lacking in true suspense, tension and the kind of thrilling spectacle that Spielberg so effortlessly mastered in the first "Jurassic Park," a cinematic high that we'll be chasing forever.

"Jurassic World Dominion" is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of action, some violence and language. Running time: 146 minutes. Now playing in select AAFES theaters.

Director: An 'honor,' 'huge responsibility' reuniting stars

By PETER SBLENDORIO
New York Daily News

Life finds a way — and so did "Jurassic World Dominion" director Colin Trevorrow.

The filmmaker says it felt special to bring back actors Sam Neill, Laura Dern and Jeff Goldblum in their first movie together since Steven Spielberg's 1993 original "Jurassic Park."

"I remember taking a picture, just on my phone, of the three of them in a Jeep together. I sent it to Steven Spielberg and it really moved him," Trevorrow, 45, said. "It was surprisingly emotional seeing the three of them back together again, and that made me feel like we've done something meaningful for somebody who I respect and care about."

"Dominion" serves as the epic conclusion to Trevorrow's "Jurassic World" trilogy and is the sixth film overall in the "Jurassic Park" franchise.

The movie picks up with dangerous dinosaurs — including some genetically enhanced species — living in civilization among humans after their island home of Isla Nublar was destroyed.

"This is a very different kind of film," Trevorrow said. "It's about these creatures having to coexist with humans on the planet, and genetic power having been wielded in a way that has had dire consequences, that could destroy life as we know it. We might go extinct just like the dinosaurs."

"Dominion" was a long time in the making for Trevorrow, who directed 2015's "Jurassic World" and has been a writer on all three of the trilogy's films. He says he always had the final images of "Dominion" in his head as he worked on the franchise.

Shepherding the returns of Neill as paleontologist Dr. Alan Grant, Dern as paleobotanist Dr. Ellie Sattler and Goldblum as mathematician Dr. Ian Malcolm was "an honor," says Trevorrow, but also "a huge responsibility."

"I started by just having conversations with each of them, along with Emily Carmichael, my co-writer, and listening, and asking them where they felt these characters had been the past 28 years, how they feel about the new world that we've created since they've been gone from this franchise," Trevorrow said. "Then we built characters from there that reflected, in some cases, where they are in their lives."

Trevorrow doesn't expect to make another "Jurassic" movie, but that doesn't mean the beloved dinosaur franchise will go extinct.

"I think I've said what I have to say, but I would never want to be the one to say that a younger filmmaker who also grew up on dinosaurs, who has their own imagination they can apply to this, shouldn't have the opportunity to do it," Trevorrow said. "We'll never stop being fascinated by dinosaurs. ... I'm sure there's more stories to be told."

WEEKEND: MOVIES



Warner Bros. Pictures

Austin Butler appears in a scene from “Elvis,” which is being screened for free June 11, two weeks before its U.S. release, at Air Force and Army bases worldwide.

Bases to see ‘Elvis’ early

Air Force, Army hosting free screenings of Luhrmann biopic on June 11

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is offering free exclusive military screenings of “Elvis” at Air Force and Army bases worldwide Saturday, nearly two weeks before the new release hits theaters stateside.

The film captures the life and career of Elvis Presley, the king of rock ‘n’ roll, including his brief stint in the Army. Presley was stationed at Ray Barracks in Friedberg, Germany, from October 1958 to March 1960.

AAFES is partnering with Warner Bros. to screen the film at more than 20 Army and Air Force bases, including Ramstein Air Base, Germany, where the free showing starts at 11:30 a.m. at the Exchange Reel Time Theater. Doors open at 10:30 a.m., and seats will be available on a first-come basis.

Elsewhere in Europe, it will be shown at Wiesbaden and Vilseck in Germany, Aviano in Italy and SHAPE in Belgium.

In the Pacific, “Elvis” will be available at Kadena Air Base

on Okinawa, at Yokota in Japan and at U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys Family and Troop locations in South Korea.

“The King’ is likely the most famous singer to have served our nation, so this free screening should be especially meaningful,” Tom Shull, director and CEO of AAFES, said in a statement.

Directed by Baz Luhrmann, the film stars Austin Butler as Elvis, Tom Hanks as Elvis’ longtime manager Col. Tom Parker and Olivia DeJonge as Elvis’ ex-wife, Priscilla Presley.

Elvis met Priscilla while stationed in Germany, where her stepfather was serving in the Air Force.

Early reviews by film critics have been mostly favorable. “Elvis” currently scores at 81% on Rotten Tomatoes based on 42 reviews. The U.S. release date for it is June 24.

The free showings will take place at the following exchange theater locations:

- Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar
- Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait

- Aviano Air Base, Italy
- F.E. Warren Air Force

Base, Wyo.

- Fort Huachuca, Ariz.
- Fort Irwin, Calif.
- Fort Jackson, S.C.
- Fort Knox, Ky.
- Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.
- Fort Polk, La.
- Fort Rucker, Ala.
- Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas
- Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D.
- Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan
- Kaiserslautern Military Community, Germany
- West Point U.S. Military Academy, N.Y.
- Lackland Air Force Base, Texas
- Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.
- Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Belgium
- U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys Family and Troop locations, South Korea
- U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden, Germany
- Vilseck (Rose Barracks), Germany
- Yokota, Japan

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Sandler’s ‘Hustle’ has good handle, feel for basketball

BY JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

By now you’d think you know what you’re getting with an Adam Sandler sports movie. “Happy Gilmore” and “The Waterboy” have conditioned us to expect silly voices and left hooks from irritated game show hosts.

But in “Hustle,” Sandler’s new basketball movie on Netflix, he pulls a crossover. The film, directed by Jeremiah Zagar, isn’t the farce you might expect. Rather, it’s one of the most textured and affectionate films about basketball that’s come along in a long time. Starring Sandler as a road-weary NBA scout and with several teams’ worth of all-stars in cameos, “Hustle” has a surprisingly good handle and feel for the game.

A longtime Knicks fan and pickup player, it’s probably inevitable that Sandler would eventually find his way to a hoops movie. “Uncut Gems,” one of his most recent leading roles, as a gambling-addicted jeweler with a big bet on a Boston Celtics game, veered closer to the sport and co-starred Kevin Garnett. The LeBron James-produced “Hustle” isn’t as distinctive or (thankfully) as stress-inducing as Josh and Benny Safdie’s film, but it’s likewise rich in atmosphere and finds Sandler in fine dramatic form.

Sandler plays Stanley Sugarman, a talent scout for the Philadelphia 76ers, who spends his days circling the globe looking for the next Dirk Nowitzki. Life on the road has beaten him down — his wife,



NETFLIX/AP

Juancho Hernangómez and Adam Sandler appear in a scene from “Hustle.” In the film, talent scout Stanley Sugarman (Sandler) devotes himself to getting construction worker Bo Cruz (Hernangómez), a skillful player, into the NBA draft.

Teresa (Queen Latifah) and daughter (Jordan Hull) are accustomed to his absences — and Stanley harbors dreams of transitioning to the coaching ranks. Or not dreams, exactly.

“Guys in their 50s don’t have dreams,” he says. “They have nightmares and eczema.”

Stanley’s opportunity finally comes when the team’s longtime owner, Rex

Merrick (Robert Duvall), promotes him to assistant coach. But after Merrick dies, the team is taken over by the owner’s brash son Vince (Ben Foster), who has feuded before with Stanley over the potential of a German prospect. Vince puts Stanley back on the road.

“You’re valuable as a coach,” he tells him. “You’re indispensable as a scout.” Back on the road, Stanley is in Spain

when he notices a crowd gathering outside a gym, on the blacktop. There he sees a construction worker named Bo Cruz (played by NBAer Juancho Hernangómez) whose talent is off the charts. Stanley, agog for Bo’s defensive and shooting prowess, trails Bo to his home to recruit him to the Sixers. After a fallout with Vince, Stanley devotes himself to getting Bo into the NBA draft. Along the way, Sandler gets to put his own spin on that fabled sports movie type, the hard-training coach. “Hustle” doesn’t veer wildly from the “Rocky” formula, but it does capture something fresh about the bond between player and coach. It’s also a clever twist that Bo’s greatest talent is his defense, and his biggest hurdle to success is keeping his cool.

Some might say “Hustle” verges close to NBA advertisement, but Zagar, a South Philly native who emerged with the 2018 indie “We the Animals,” frames the pros who populate his film like people and players, rather than stars. And Sandler imbues Sugarman with not just genuine basketball obsession but the common mid-life struggle of finding only ingratitude from an employer after half a life of tireless service.

After some less strenuous workouts for Netflix, Sandler works hard to give “Hustle” the full-court press — even if his wardrobe of jerseys and mesh shorts might have come right out of his closet.

“Hustle” is rated R for language. Running time: 117 minutes. Now streaming on Netflix.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Rebellion photos

Sniper Elite 5 sends OSS operative Karl Fairburne to France during the run-up to D-Day. Along the way, he uncovers a Nazi plot.

Only slightly off the mark

Sniper Elite 5 expands its WWII-set formula, but could use more polish

BY GIESON CACHO
Bay Area News Group

Sniper Elite is a franchise with an unusual history. It's a World War II-set franchise that didn't feel like it started until the third game, which was a prequel in Africa. That's when the developer, Rebellion, established a viable foundation.

Since then, the studio has taken OSS operative Karl Fairburne and players through a variety of European WWII theaters. Along the way, the team has expanded the formula that has made the series such a compelling game.

The "X-ray cam" that shows how Fairburne's bullets pierce Nazi skulls and organs is a gimmick that made the franchise stand out from the crowd, but with each sequel, Rebellion has added substance.

A mission in occupied France

With Sniper Elite 5, the team takes Fairburne to France during the run-up to D-Day. The OSS operative has to help the French resistance prepare for the invasion, and during the process, he stumbles upon Operation Kraken. Over the course of the game's eight main missions and an epilogue, players will try to foil the plans of Abelard Möller, a top Nazi leader.

The Fairburne whom players meet in this fifth chapter is already experienced. Players have access to mines, grenades and decoys that can be used to kill patrolling foes or set booby traps in dead bodies. Is that an ethical thing to do? Probably not, but then again, Fairburne is fighting Nazi Germany.

The fact that the protagonist is already so skilled and has so many tools at his disposal means that Rebellion had to look at alternative ways to improve its formula. Those tweaks come in the form of level design, flexibility and evolving gameplay.

Different play styles

Sniper Elite 5 caters to several play styles. Players can customize their weapons and push the limits of raw firepower. They can then go loud into the fray tossing grenades while blasting enemies with a submachine gun. It's

a viable strategy, though the game is harder this way as the Nazis will call for reinforcements, and players will need to know the maps well in order to escape when they're overwhelmed.

Although it can be tempting to go Rambo through the campaign, the series is actually geared more toward methodical stealth gameplay. It's better for Fairburne to scout with his binoculars and tag enemies before exploring the map. When they venture along dirt paths and corridors, it's better to crouch and creep slowly instead of running through because the Germans will pick up on Fairburne's footsteps and investigate.

In Sniper Elite 5, the enemies seem more sensitive to sounds compared to previous versions, and that makes sound masking even more important. One of the signature elements of the franchise, this tactic requires players to time their gunfire to loud sounds in the area. Those can include a plane buzzing overhead or a generator that's on the fritz. It hides a player's location and keeps them undetected while they snipe adversaries from afar.

Hitman-type elements

In each level, there's a special mark whom players can terminate with bullets or explosives, but to earn special weapons, players have to go through a Hitman-like sequence. They'll have to set up a condition where targets are eliminated via a V2 rocket or by having a foe fall into a pit of cement. The influence of IO Interactive's Hitman franchise seems to be growing. The big difference, though, is that the Hitman games fill their levels with dozens of NPCs in a condensed space while Rebellion creates massive levels in Sniper Elite 5 with a majority of them geared toward long-range combat.

Diving deeper into this design aspect, the wide-open levels reward exploration and that comes in the form of optional objectives that Fairburne uncovers. It also leads players to hidden workbenches that unlock gun upgrades. Players will have to adjust their routes or change their loadouts for each task or collectible, but these side missions are well worth the trouble because they reward players with more experience points and they add depth and lore to the levels.



Sniper Elite 5 rewards methodical stealth gameplay.



The Sniper Elite games' "X-ray cam" shows how bullets pierce enemies' skulls and organs.

The big flaw

The scope and breadth of each Sniper Elite 5 level is ambitious, but there are notable flaws. One of the big problems is the artificial intelligence, which feels too robotic and sluggish at times. It sometimes takes a while for characters to notice distractions. Other times they have laughable blind spots that players can abuse. Side missions sometimes glitch out and players won't be able to finish them properly.

Regardless, Rebellion should be praised for trying to introduce more online elements into Sniper Elite 5. Being able to invade another player's game creates some heart-stopping tension. The opportunity for co-op is welcome, and it's more integrated this time around. These online additions and the collectibles give players more reasons to stick with an imperfect but enjoyable game.

Platforms: PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Xbox Series X and Series S, Xbox One, PC

Online: rebellion.com/games/sniper-elite-5

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Padua: Students, saints and scarpette

Nicknamed “the Brain of Veneto,” Padua is home to the prestigious university, founded in 1222, that hosted Galileo, Copernicus, Dante and Petrarch. Pilgrims know this city for the Basilica of St. Anthony, where the faithful assemble to touch his tomb and marvel at his holy relics. It’s a great place to experience Italy: to make some new friends, get chummy with the winds of its past and connect with the delights of its now.

I start my visit with a ramble around the old town center. It’s a colonnaded, time-travel experience through some of Italy’s most inviting squares, perfect for lingering over an aperitivo. But it’s not stodgy — this university town has 60,000 students and a youthful spirit.

Since the students can graduate whenever they defend their thesis, little graduation parties erupt on the streets throughout the year. Graduates are given a green laurel wreath. Then formal group photos are taken. It’s a sweet, multigenerational scene.

Then, once grandma goes home, the craziness takes over. Sober, scholarly clothing is replaced by raunchy wear as gangs of friends gather around the new grad in front of the university, and the roast begins. A litany of “This Is Your Life” photos is presented to the new graduate. The happy grad reads the funny text out loud while various embarrassing pranks are pulled.

Eventually I tear myself away to seek

out Padua’s sacred sights: the Basilica of St. Anthony and the Scrovegni Chapel. Buried in the basilica is Friar Anthony of Padua. Construction of this impressive Romanesque/Gothic church, with its Byzantine-style domes, started immediately after Anthony’s death in 1231. As a mark of his universal appeal and importance in the medieval Church, he was sainted within a year of his death. And for nearly 800 years, his remains and this glorious church have attracted a steady stream of pilgrims.



Rick Steves

Going with the flow of the pilgrim groups, I enter the church. Gazing through the incense haze, I see Donatello’s glorious crucifix rising from the altar. Following the pilgrims into the Chapel of the Reliquaries, I stand before the basilica’s most prized relic: Anthony’s tongue. When the saint’s remains were exhumed 32 years after his death, his body had decayed to dust, but his tongue was found miraculously unspoiled, still red in color. How appropriate for the great preacher who, so full of the Spirit, couldn’t stop talking about God.

My next stop is across town at the glorious Scrovegni Chapel. It’s wallpapered with Giotto’s beautiful cycle of nearly 40 frescoes depicting the lives of Jesus and Mary. Painted by Giotto and his assistants from 1303 to 1305, it’s considered to be the first piece of post-medieval art. These



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI/Rick Steves' Europe

Giotto’s glorious Scrovegni Chapel displays many frescoes depicting Jesus and Mary.

frescoes were radical not only for their three-dimensional effects, lively colors, and light sources, but also for their humanism.

In the early evening, after the museums and churches have closed, Padua’s squares become open-air student parties, dotted with drinks of rosy spritzes that glow with the light of the setting sun. I cap my day by joining the festivities. I befriend a table of college students and buy a round of drinks. Diving headlong into a vigorous political discussion, I partake in the Italian ritual of the bread and oil. I pour some fine olive oil on a dish, season it

with salt and pepper, rip a long strip from our bread, dip it, and bite. A student, nodding with approval, explains that in doing so I am making the scarpette: the “little shoes.”

Soaking up the oil along with the conversation, I’m also thinking about my whole day, witnessing the sacred and the profane here in Padua. I realize that travelers can become human scarpette — sopping up culture — wherever we venture.

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

Volksmarch season has fans of nature walking hot to trot

In the depths of the COVID-19 crisis, many individuals discovered the joys of taking long walks; for others, covering impressive distances by foot has always seemed to make up part of their DNA. In many countries of northern Europe, taking part in a Volksmarch — an organized, non-competitive event in which the goal is to complete the circuit — is a popular weekend pastime. This convivial sport is also practiced by countless members of clubs



Karen Bradbury

formed to promote this low-impact, close-to-nature pursuit. Those up for the challenge of racking up an impressive tally of kilometers within a given time frame are likely to enjoy some of the following events slated for the next few months:

European March of Memory and Friendship: Each year in June, the Marche Européenne du Souvenir et de l’Amitié, or MESA for short, sees more than 10,000 walkers take to the paths of the Ardennes mountain range in the south of Belgium. The event, organized by the Belgian Defense and its partner cities in the Province of Luxembourg, remembers the victims of the two World Wars and the heroic actions of ordinary people who lived in the affected cities and villages.

The walk’s 55th edition, slated for June 21-24, offers four days of walking along routes of 8, 16, 24 or 36 kilometers. Cities hosting a course in 2022 include Martelange, Arlon, Vielsalm and Houffalize, respectively. The MESA TRAIL, organized on June 22, offers trail runners a 24-km course to tackle as well.

Those wishing to take part have until June 13 to register online. The cost of participation in a single day’s march is 6 euros. Online: marche-mesa.com

Megamarsch: The Megamarsch is a series of walking events organized throughout Germany, as well as Vienna, Austria and the Spanish island of Mallorca. First held in Cologne in 2016, the event of either 50 or 100 km has



iStock

Many Volksmarches take place in Germany each summer.

grown in popularity and is slated to take place in more than a dozen cities in 2022. The 100-km course is to be finished within 24 hours, and the 50-km course must be completed within 12 hours. Stations offering drinks and snacks are located at every 20 km on the 100-km stretches, and at every 10 km along the 50-km routes.

Places in which Megamarsch events will take place in 2022 include Bremen (50 km, June 11); Düsseldorf (50 km, July 2); Erfurt (50 km, July 9); Ruhrgebiet (100 km, July 23); Hamburg (50 km, Aug. 13-14); Berlin (50 km, Aug. 27); Stuttgart (100 km, Sept. 10); Cologne, (100 km, Sept. 17); Freiburg (50 km, Oct. 1); Frankfurt (100 km, Oct. 8); Sylt (100 km, Oct. 22) and Nuremberg (50 km, Nov. 5). Marches, with the exception of the Hamburg one, begin in the early morning. Participation in a 50-km march costs around 65 euros, and the 100-km marches cost about 75 euros. Online: megamarsch.de

Sahratal Trail: On July 2, the Sahratal Trail will challenge walkers with its 60-km route through mountainous ter-

rain in the northern reaches of the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate. The walk is organized as an alternative to the 100-km Rhein-Ahr-Marsch, a race that remains canceled following the disastrous floods that hit several stretches of the Ahr River last July.

The march, which must be completed within 14 hours, challenges with 1,600 meters (5,250 feet) of ascent, and organizers note that participants should be sure of foot and not be prone to dizziness. The trail leads through three valleys and benefits from significant tree cover. The start and end point is the village of Rheinbach, some 15 miles southwest of Bonn. Participation in the march costs 40 euros. Online: rhein-ahr-marsch.com/sahratal-trail

Stoaberg March: This 24-hour, 48-km hike between Tyrol and Salzburg, Austria, is made extra special due to the night on which it occurs. On the night of June 18, the mountains in this region come alive as bonfires are set alight, a longstanding tradition to mark the shortest nights of the year. Hikers pass through the Steinberge and Grasberge mountain ranges on challenging routes that vary from year to year.

The walk begins at 9 a.m. in Weissbach, near Lofer. New this year is a shorter, 12-hour hike offered between Weissbach bei Lofer to Fieberbrunn. The last day to register is June 10. Online: tinyurl.com/2p9cbakb

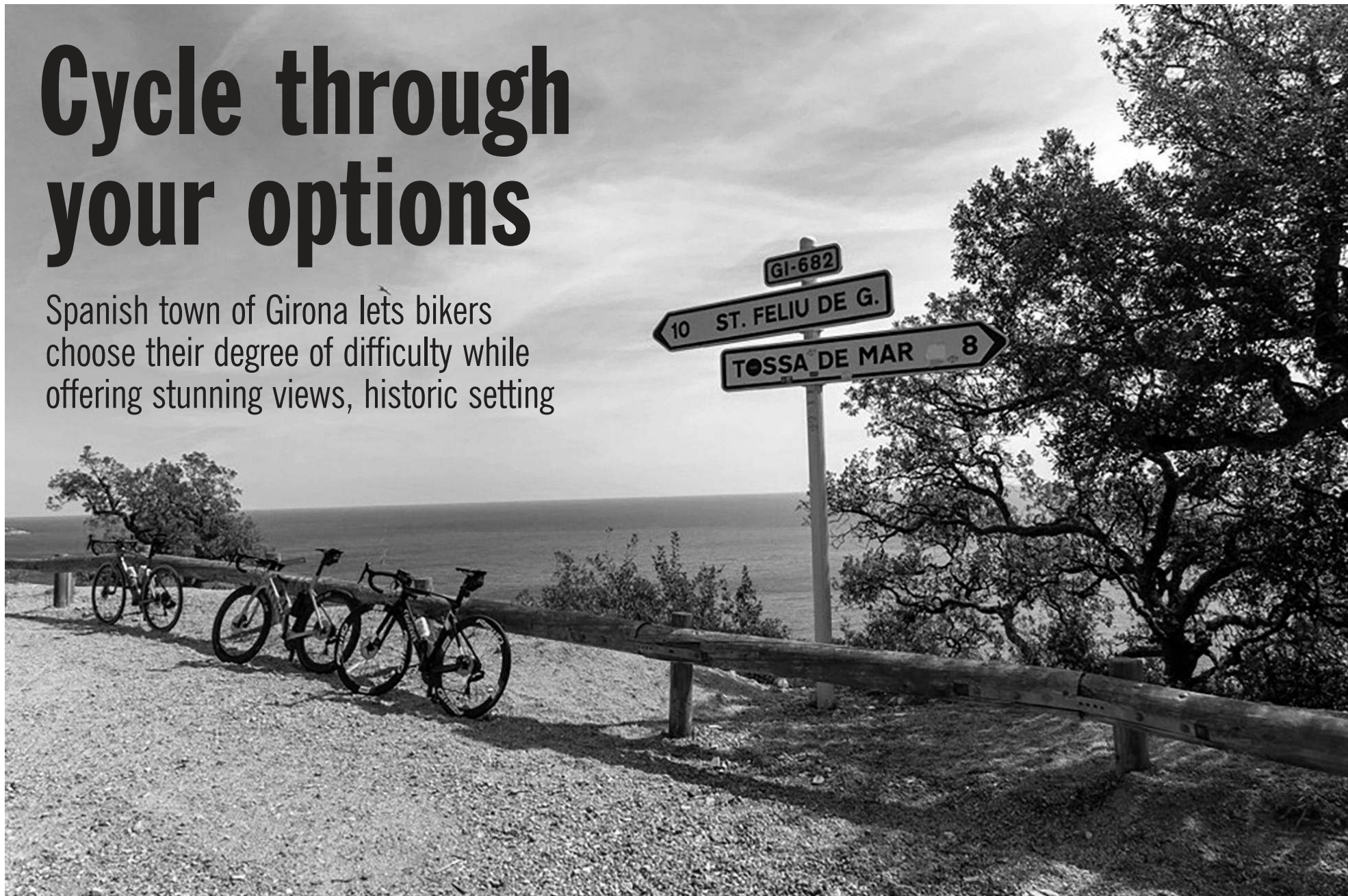
AdventureWalk Pfälzerwald: The stunning Palatinate Forest — Germany’s largest contiguous forest — is the backdrop against which these 30 km and 50 km challenges are staged. The routes run along narrow paths through dramatic landscapes including vineyards, castles and historical sites and promise significant gains in altitude.

The 50 km walk begins between 6 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. in the town of Grünstadt and the 30 km must be started between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. The finish line is found in Hertlingshausen. Participation in the 30 km walk costs 44 euros; the entry fee for the 50 km walk is 54 euros. Online: adventurewalk.de

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Cycle through your options

Spanish town of Girona lets bikers choose their degree of difficulty while offering stunning views, historic setting



PHOTOS BY DINA MISHEV/For The Washington Post

The outrageously photogenic GI-682, nicknamed the “Road of 1,000 Bends,” runs along the Costa Brava and Mediterranean Sea in northern Spain.

BY DINA MISHEV

Special to The Washington Post

I didn't think physics and the laws of gravity allowed this, but it is possible to go 3 mph — slower than a motivated pedestrian — on a bicycle without falling over. Had someone told me this before I started riding up the nearby mountain, Rocacorba, a classic and amazingly steep road near the northern Spanish city of Girona, I would not have believed them. But, grinding my way up the mountain, both my Garmin watch and cycling computer mounted on my rental bike's handlebars — I'm so incredulous, I have to check both — agree that my riding speed is, in fact, apace with a sleepwalking snail.

My trajectory up the road, which ascends approximately 2,600 vertical feet over about seven miles, is far from straight. To keep myself from tipping over, I'm constantly adjusting my steering and body position, which results in a path that “wobbly” barely begins to describe. About four miles into the climb, shortly after the road goes from steep to stupidly steep, I think toppling over onto the pitted pavement might be less painful than grinding up it.

Even in the granniest of granny gears, it's impossible for me to pedal smoothly up pitches with grades approaching, and sometimes exceeding, 13%. I feel sharp, stabby pains in both knees. Road rash seems preferable.

In early April, on the first day of a week-long cycling vacation, there is no partic-

ular reason beyond curiosity that I decide to ride from Girona to Rocacorba via Lake Banyoles, the cattail-ringed lake that was the site of the rowing events during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

I'm curious about Rocacorba, because it is easily seen from pretty much everywhere in Girona, a city with about 100,000 residents and near both the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean Sea, with a medieval old town that was used as a filming location for HBO's “Game of Thrones.” Also, I'm curious because Rocacorba is one of the Rihannas of road riding in Europe, a ride so famous among cyclists that it needs only a single name, such as Stelvio in northern Italy, Tourmalet and Ventoux in France, and Sa Calobra on the Spanish island of Mallorca.

Halfway up the climb, I decide that curiosity might kill me — or at least make my knees so sore they won't want to ride the rest of the week. I turn around. After all, Girona today is recognized as one of Europe's greatest cycling destinations and has a diversity of roads and rides. If I'm not enjoying grinding up a steep climb, there is no need to grind up a steep climb.

Christian Meier, a Canadian retired professional cyclist who raced the 2014 Tour de France on the Orica-GreenEdge team and who has lived in Girona since 2008, agrees. “One of the things Girona has going for it really is that you've got all kinds of rides,” he says over espresso at La Fabrica, a cafe in Girona's old town that he and his wife, Amber, founded in



Diners enjoy a meal at La Fabrica, a cafe in Girona, Spain, founded by retired cyclist Christian Meier and his wife, Amber. Meier, and other professional cyclists, made Girona his home because the historic city offers a variety of biking experiences.

2015. “The high Pyrenees aren't far away, the coast road is pretty spectacular, and you've got climbs from Rocacorba to Els Angels, which is right behind the city and has a nice grade.” It brings me more than a little satisfaction to hear that Meier him-

self doesn't enjoy the ride up Rocacorba. “It's super steep and impossible to get into a rhythm, and the road surface isn't in great shape. There are so many other, better climbs in the area,” he says.

SEE GIRONA ON PAGE 21

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Girona: Area offers a variety of different riding experiences

FROM PAGE 20

Meier was part of the second generation of professionals to make Girona their home. Among the first English-speaking pros to move to Girona were George Hincapie (in 1997) and Lance Armstrong (in 2001), who decided they liked it more than Nice, France, their former base. In the following years, a handful of Armstrong's and Hincapie's teammates followed. Meier says Girona was still a "sleepy town" when he arrived, but that in the early 2010s, the city really caught on with pro riders. "At one point, there were more than 100 of us," he says.

It's been in the past five years that Girona has caught on as a cycling destination for nonprofessionals. "There might be prettier places to ride — like Tuscany or the Dolomites — but Girona is the perfect storm for a biking holiday," Meier says. "You can choose how hard you want to make your riding, and you're in an amazing, historic European city with art, culture and great restaurants, and there's also hiking and trail running."

And, not that I timed this, but for about one month in early spring, there are neon-yellow fields of blooming canola. On the ride to Lake Banyoles and Rocacorba, the skies are overcast, but I have to wear sunglasses, because the fields are so luminous.

Meier tells me I should definitely ride to the Mediterranean Sea, east of Girona. The 160 miles of Spanish coastline between the mouth of the River Tordera northeast of Barcelona, into the province of Girona and up to the French border, is called the Costa Brava. The morning after Rocacorba, though, I return to the shop I rented my road bike from, Cycle Tours Catalonia, and ask for GPS routes for rides that maximize canola viewing opportunities. I can't imagine scenery — even the craggy Costa Brava — beating the blooming canola.

Canola fields are not the only criteria I give Carlos, the shop's manager, though. I ask for rides between 40 and 65 miles and with climbs no steeper than 8 percent in grade.

"So, flat rides?" he asks. I say no before he finishes his question. I love descending. Tearing downhill on a bicycle at speeds between 30 and 60 mph — speeds that, yes, can be terrifying, and that took me a long time to be comfortable doing — is as close as I'll ever get to flight. I'll happily pedal uphill for several hours to enjoy this feeling, but not if it causes sharp pains in my knees. Also, steep roads are difficult to ascend, and descending them is often less satisfying than descending a moderately pitched road. Steeper roads usually require more braking, which means less feeling as if you're flying.

Carlos has a library of more than 100 GPS tracks, and he quickly finds five that meet my criteria and gets them downloaded onto the Garmin bike computer I brought from home. (If you don't have your own computer, the shop rents those, too.)

I start with a 62-mile loop ride that includes canola fields, a moderate climb about 1,500 feet up a mountain in the Catalan Coastal Range, a giggling-with-glee descent down to the Mediterranean and, on the way back to Girona, more canola fields. Along the way, there are also churches that date to the 17th century, forests of cork, oak and chestnut trees, and more cyclists — speaking German, French, Catalan, Spanish, Swedish and English with an Australian accent — than cars.

At the bottom of the descent from Sant Grau d'Ardenya, where GIP-6821 ends and I turn north on GI-682, nicknamed the "Road of 1,000 Bends," I stop atop a snaggy cliff that crumbles down into the Mediterranean to take photos. I stop again at least every quarter-mile for the next 10 miles. The canola fields are not the best scenery the area has to offer.

At Sant Feliu de Guíxols, the northern terminus of the impossibly photogenic Road of 1,000 Bends, I am tempted to lunch at one of the many outdoor restaurants overlooking the town's beach and harbor. But I have a reservation for a late-afternoon chocolate-themed brunch on



PHOTOS BY DINA MISHEV/For The Washington Post

Cyclists ride along a field of blooming canola. The bright neon-yellow flowers bloom for about a month in early spring and are a sight to behold as they light up the Spanish landscape.



The Mediterranean Sea can be seen in the distance from the church of Santa Pellaia in Girona, Spain.

the rooftop terrace of a hotel back in Girona, about 25 miles away. So instead, I snack on the xuixo, a regional pastry that is deep-fried, sugarcoated and stuffed with crema Catalana, that I bought that morning at the bakery down the street from my apartment and get back into the saddle.

Over the week, I do not do all five of the rides Carlos downloaded onto my Garmin. One on them — the "Hincapie Loop," so named because it was a favorite of Hincapie's — has two such perfectly pitched climbs (and descents), blindingly blooming canola fields, villages with cobblestone streets and expansive vistas of the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean that I do it twice.

Another day, with Meier's words that riding is only part of Girona's appeal in my head, I leave my bike in my apartment. Instead, I hike about 90 minutes from Girona's old town to the ruins of an ancient castle on the summit of a mountain in the nature preserve, Les Gavarres, southeast of the city. I also walk stone walls dating from the 9th century that have helped protect (or not) the city from invading Visigoths, Moors and French. At a gelateria offshoot of a nearby Michelin three-star restaurant, I try violet and coconut sorbet. Several hours later, because violet, a new flavor for me, turned out to be pretty tasty, I have the confidence to return to try another unusual ice cream flavor, Parmesan, which, it turns out, I prefer on pasta. An evening soak in thermal baths washes the last of the residual Rocacorba pain from my knees.

If you go

Where to stay

Hotel Ciutat de Girona
Address: Carrer Nord, 2, Girona
Phone: 011-34-972-48-30-38
Online: hotelciutatdegirona.com/en
Near the Plaça de la Independència and a short walk from the old town, this hotel offers spin classes and massages. Bakeries, cafes and restaurants are right out the front door. Rooms from about \$105 per night.

Rocacorba Cycling
Address: Can Campolier, Porqueres
Phone: 011-34-627-76-24-91
Online: rocacorbacycling.cc

Olympic cyclist Ashleigh Moolman Pasio transformed a 17th-century estate between Rocacorba and Lake Banyoles into a retreat for cyclists with suites, apartments and villas available, as well as bike rentals, guides, massage therapists and mechanics. Single suites from about \$122, doubles from about \$155, and villa rental from about \$267 per night with a two-night minimum.

Where to eat

La Fabrica
Address: Carrer de la Llebre, 3, Girona
Phone: 011-34-872-00-02-73
Online: lafabricagirona.com
Founded by former professional cyclist Christian Meier and his wife, Amber, this cafe serves freshly roasted coffee and brunch. Open daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Coffee from about \$2. Food from about \$4.

What to do

Cycle Tours Catalonia
Address: Carrer de Santa Eugènia, 11, Girona
Phone: 011-34-972-22-10-47
Online: cycletourscatalonia.com
Bike rentals and self-guided and guided bike tours starting from a bike shop close to the Girona train station. Road bike rentals from about \$53 for the first day, \$26 for additional days. GPS tracks for self-guided rides about \$16; private guided rides from about \$200.

Hincapie Loop
A 38.6-mile ride that starts and ends in Girona
Online: ridewithgps.com/routes/29198988
This ride on little-trafficked roads includes about 3,100 feet of gentle climbing and descending and passes Els Àngels, the medieval villages of Madremanya and Monells, and Santa Pellaia before returning to Girona. Free.

Information: spain.info/en

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

Negombo Park on the island of Ischia near Naples, Italy, offers a private beach on San Montano Bay.

Budget-friendly self-care

A spa day at Ischia's Negombo is refreshing and easy on the wallet

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The largest island in the Bay of Naples, Ischia is renowned for its mineral-rich thermal waters, which attract Italians and tourists looking for rest, relaxation and rejuvenation.

That makes Ischia home to dozens of hotels and water parks offering access to the hot springs along with amenities such as pools, beaches and spa treatments.

But unlike its tonier cousin Capri, a spa day in Ischia doesn't have to be pricey, especially if you visit Negombo Park.

Pack a lunch, a liter of water and your own beach towel, and a visit to Negombo can be had for about 80 euros, including a round-trip ferry ticket from Naples.

Just a few miles out of the town of Ischia, Negombo is a favorite with Italians fond of its lush gardens, meandering pathways leading to secluded thermal and marine, or saltwater, pools, private beaches and delicious dining options.

The 22-acre park is situated on San Montano Bay with breathtaking views of the Tyrrhenian Sea from a heated Olympic-sized pool and several locations throughout the park.

Getting there requires a 50-minute ferry ride across the Bay of Naples that includes views of the city and Mount Vesuvius as you sail past the islands of Capri and Procida.

A one-way ticket from Molo Beverello port in Naples costs about 21 euros, and ferries depart several times a day starting about 9 a.m. If you're not staying the night, keep in mind that the last ferry for Naples leaves Ischia just before 7 p.m., so plan accordingly.

Once at Porto d'Ischia, you can take a bus for about 1.30 euros or hire a taxi for about 25 euros to get to Negombo. If you take the bus, be certain to get off at the San Montano stop in Lacco Ameno. From there, it's about a 10- to 15-minute walk to the park.

It's a bit hard to find, but Google maps and step-by-step directions should get you there. Hint: About a third of a block from the bus stop, there are stairs on the right side of the road that will cut your walking time.

Stepping into Negombo is transformative.

The crowded, chaotic streets of Naples are replaced by

quiet, peaceful curving paths surrounded by the dense foliage of trees, flowering shrubs and vines. The landscape includes liberal use of volcanic rock and contemporary art.

As you walk to the park's changing rooms, you'll see waterfalls, intimate seating areas and some of the park's thermal baths and pools, carefully designed to appear as if they are in natural settings.

Entry to the park is based on how many hours you'll be there. If you arrive early in the day, expect to pay about 105 euros for three adults. The price includes private beach access, an umbrella, two lounge chairs and a deck chair.

Prices are lower for half-day and evening sessions and children's admission.

Reservations aren't required but are recommended, especially if you visit during the summer months, when the park is typically full.

With your swimsuit on, you can choose one of any of several plazas outfitted with lounge and deck chairs or have an attendant help you stake out a spot on the beach.

Then it's time to explore Negombo's more than a dozen themed pools scattered throughout the park. There's a Japanese-inspired attraction featuring cool and warm pools to wade through, and the Templare has several stone pillars with cascading waterfalls that gently massage you with 86-degree water.

Other pools, including the Buco Nero (Black Hole) and the Tuff grotto, feature walk-through rain paths, waterfalls and seating areas with water temperatures ranging from cool to nearly 90 degrees. The water is rich in minerals, salty and non-acidic.

While Negombo is affordable, amenities such as towel rental are costly. If you forget your towel, expect to pay about 5 euros for rental and a 10-euro deposit, which you'll get back provided you return the towel in good condition.

The spa also offers pedicures, massages, facials and other services. But they'll add substantially to the cost of your visit. For example, a basic pedicure without colored nail polish costs about 55 euros, not including a tip.

Negombo has several dining options with traditional Neapolitan menus, but care also is taken to offer salads,

Negombo Park

How to get there: Take the ferry from Molo Beverello port in Naples to Ischia. You also can take the ferry from other locations in Naples or from Pozzuoli. Alilauro, Caremar SNAV and Medmar offer ferries to Ischia. At the port in Ischia, take a bus or taxi to the water park, which is about 4 miles away.

Cost: There are full-day, half-day and afternoon options. A full-day fee for an adult is about 35 euros. Prices are lower for children.

Hours: 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m. daily (holidays may affect hours or opening)

Information: Online: negombo.it/en

Alison Bath



There are more than a dozen themed thermal and marine pools at Negombo Park on the island of Ischia.



Visitors can choose from more than a dozen themed thermal and marine pools, including this one with a walk-through rain shower, at Negombo Park.



Views of San Montano Bay are visible from several locations throughout Negombo Park.

juices and other "clean eating" options. There is a full-service restaurant, cafe, outdoor self-service cafeteria and two bars.

Lunch for three at Negombo's self-service restaurant cost us about 105 euros and included four pasta dishes, two salads, several drinks and a fruit dessert.

Negombo isn't a place to be seen or heard. If you're looking for a partylike atmosphere, it's probably not for you.

But if you want to step away from Naples' hectic pace and indulge in some affordable self-care, it's the spot to be.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Neapolitan favorites reimagined

Cavoli Nostri gets creative and serves up high-class vegan, vegetarian dishes

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

In a southern Italian city renowned for its rich meat and seafood dishes, it may surprise some people to know that Naples also is home to an astonishing number of vegan and vegetarian restaurants.

Those options run the gamut from juice bars to food stalls, cafes and restaurants dishing up salads, sandwiches, burgers and pastas. But few offer the upscale dining experience of Cavoli Nostri.

Situated in the Santa Lucia neighborhood, Cavoli Nostri offers a carefully sourced, organic menu featuring vegan and vegetarian interpretations of Neapolitan favorites such as pasta alla Genovese and experimental fare such as baked purple potatoes and friarielli broccoli.

Emphasis is placed not only on the use of fresh in-season vegetables and fruits, whole grains, seeds, legumes and meat substitutes but also on skillful combination of the ingredients into sophisticated dishes presented with artistic flair.

On a recent visit, two friends and I started our meal with a selection from Cavoli Nostri's tapas and starter menus. The Spanish patatas bravas, or spicy potatoes, proved to be deep-fried potato chips served with a creamy rossa dip.

The chips were warm, lightly salted and plentiful. The dip had a mayonnaise-like consistency and flavoring and color reminiscent of Thousand Island dressing.

Spiciness fans would be disappointed, as there was no heat to the dip, but the appetizer was a crowd-pleaser at our table.

We also ordered bite-size, deep-fried rice balls, called arancini in Italian, which arrived sitting on individual pools of a velvety mushroom sauce and sprinkled with sesame seeds.

The moist and lightly seasoned arancini provided a good base for the sauce, which packed a flavor punch.

On another visit, I'd be tempted to order each appetizer again but probably would experiment with alternatives, such as polenta squares with wild mushroom pate.

For our first course, we selected pappardelle with mushrooms, lasagna Neapolitan and the Ceylon sliders, a barbecued jackfruit sandwich.

It was here that Cavoli Nostri let us down. Despite the beautiful serving plates and generous portions, the food was too cold to enjoy.

To be fair, we were there on a Sunday, when Italian families follow a time-honored tradition and gather for lunch, so it's likely one of the busiest and most hectic days of the week for restaurants.

It also seemed that there was just one server for more than a dozen tables. We therefore didn't bring the faux pas to our harried waiter's attention, choosing instead to soldier on.

The lasagna featured wide noodles, vegan ricotta cheese and sausage and beef



PHOTOS BY ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

Ceylon sliders at Cavoli Nostri in Naples, Italy, feature barbecued jackfruit, a tangy dressing and lettuce.



Cavoli Nostri

Address: Via Palepoli, 32, Naples, Italy
Hours: Monday through Saturday, noon-3:30 p.m. (lunch); 7-11:45 p.m. (dinner); Sunday, noon-4:30 p.m. (lunch); 7-11:45 p.m. (dinner)
Prices: Appetizers and tapas, 5-13 euros; pastas, 9-10 euros; second courses, 9-14 euros; soups and salads, 7-8 euros; desserts, 4-6 euros. Organic wine and juices also are available.
Information: Online: cavolinostriveg.com; Phone: +39 081 1948 5739

Alison Bath

meat substitutes. The marinara was rich and flavorful, but one of my friends found the meat substitutes unappealing and wished that the restaurant offered a simple cheese-only version.

The pappardelle was perfectly cooked with a creamy sauce brimming with mushrooms, but because the dish arrived nearly cold, the sauce had congealed, making it inedible.

The jackfruit sandwich was chewy with a lightly spiced, tangy sauce. While it was also served lukewarm, one of my friends said she'd order it again, especially if the bun were whole-grain. In all, she pronounced it a "delight."

Cavoli Nostri redeemed itself with our second course, which featured legume balls with a "revisited" ragu and friarielli.



Second courses at Cavoli Nostri include legume balls with a rich tomato sauce and friarielli. The bitterness of the friarielli contrasts nicely with the sweet tomato sauce.

I found myself wishing that I'd ordered this dish first. It arrived piping hot. The legume balls were covered in a rich tomato sauce, while the friarielli was well-cooked, its bitterness contrasting nicely with the sweetness of the tomato sauce.

We were enticed by the vegan tiramisu but ultimately decided to skip dessert because we were too full after the appetizers and entrees.

While the cold food was disappointing, the rest of our meal was enjoyable. I'd go back for tapas and a glass of organic wine.

Cavoli Nostri's commitment to fresh, fun and experimental cuisine makes it a standout and a must-try for vegans and vegetarians looking to scale up their dining experience.

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Behind the creation of Middle-earth

Weta Workshop Experience in New Zealand takes fans to the backrooms of a fantasy realm

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Now that New Zealand has loosened its pandemic travel restrictions to admit tourists from select nations again, a visit to the workshops that brought Middle-earth to life is no longer a far-off fantasy.

The armor, weapons and costumes for the “Lord of the Rings” films were made at facilities just outside the New Zealand capital and make a great day trip for those visiting the country.

The trilogy adapted from J.R.R. Tolkien’s fantasy novels was filmed in New Zealand from 1999-2000.

The movies are among the most popular of all time and won 17 Academy Awards. The series’ final installment — “Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King” — won best picture while filmmaker Peter Jackson took the best director prize at the 2004 Oscars.

Visitors to New Zealand are surrounded by the spectacular scenery that stood in for Middle-earth in the films, but if they want an in-depth look at the physical effects that transformed actors and landscapes into a fantasy world, the Weta Workshop is the place.

The facility fills several warehouses a stone’s throw from the capital’s airport in the suburb of Miramar.

The first clues that you’re somewhere special are a pair of armored dwarf statues guarding the entrance to a parking garage. A giant ogre-like creature stands over a mock-up of a Hobbit house near the workshop’s front door. It’s the perfect spot to snap some photos before heading inside.

If you want a souvenir, there’s a Weta Cave gift shop with hundreds of “Lord of the Rings,” science fiction and fantasy figurines, T-shirts, hats, books and jewelry, including rings, on sale. There are even replicas of weapons used in the films. A large broadsword can be purchased for just over \$600.

A tour guide will escort your group into backrooms where screens show special effects scenes from the movies.

A wall features posters for dozens of films and TV shows that Weta has worked on. The earliest are Peter Jackson movies such as “Meet the Feebles” (1989) and “Brain Dead” (1992). The workshop helped out on television shows such as “Xena: Warrior Princess” and big-budget movies such as “Blade Runner 2049,” “Dune” and “Thor: Ragnarok” as well as “The Hobbit” prequels to “Lord of the Rings.”

Props such as rubber masks, fake guns, bows and arrows, helmets, space suits and robots that featured in some of the films are on display.

The largest item is a dune buggy built for a live-action version of the video game Halo that never made it to screen. A mannequin resembling “Jurassic Park” star Sam Neill sits in the driver’s seat.

The tour guide shows you how artists fashion plastic armor from foam molds before applying multiple paint layers and scuffing it up to make it look battle-worn. Visitors are allowed to hold and even wear plastic helmets — human-sized versions of those worn by Middle-earth dwarf warriors.

A hands-on section allows visitors to touch everything



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Visitors to New Zealand are surrounded by the spectacular scenery that stood in for Middle-earth in the “Lord of the Rings” films, but if they want an in-depth look at the physical effects that transformed actors and landscapes into a fantasy world, the Weta Workshop is the place.



A life-sized Gandalf sculpture greets visitors to the Weta Workshop. Visitors can tour backrooms that show how the films’ special effects were created.

from mechanical heads and arms to fake eyeballs and random parts used to make movie props.

You can peer through windows into work areas where a swordsmith is crafting weapons and a machine is cutting molds to make plastic props.

Visitors can wield the fake weapons. Some swords are made of rubber or aluminum to make them safer for mock combat, according to the tour guide.

A demonstration by a craftsman shows visitors how to make all kinds of realistic props, from shells to skulls, using cardboard and tinfoil.

Part of the tour happens in a separate warehouse filled with sets used in a 2015-2020 reboot of the 1966 “Thunderbirds Are Go” television puppet series.

The sets include the Thunderbirds’ island base and various buildings and spaceship launch facilities crafted from household items such as lemon squeezers and computer circuit boards.

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On the QT

Directions: Camperdown Road and Weka Street, Miramar, Wellington, New Zealand 6022

Times: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every day except Tuesday

Costs: The Weta Workshop Experience costs \$31. For another \$25, ride to and from central Wellington, a shuttle bus stop opposite the Amora Hotel, 145 Wakefield St. The Full Experience (\$92) gets you a workshop tour and lunch at the Karaka café on Wellington’s waterfront.

Dress: Casual

Information: tours.wetaworkshop.com/wellington/tours

Seth Robson



Check out a life-sized Orc statue and concept art from “The Hobbit” films at Weta Workshop.



Dr. Tinfoil shows off his movie prop-making skills during a tour of the Weta Workshop.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN SNYDER/Stars and Stripes

The seafood gumbo from Gator's Cajun Kitchen in Hiroshima, Japan, includes a good amount of shrimp and sausage with an assortment of hot sauces for added heat.

A nod to New Orleans

Gator's Cajun Kitchen brings the taste of the Big Easy to Hiroshima

BY JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

A Cajun-style restaurant situated conveniently near a Hiroshima train station is a surprising piece of Louisiana in the heart of Japan.

Gator's Cajun Kitchen, on the second floor of a building just around the corner from Miyajimaguchi Station, serves up hearty portions of gumbo, jambalaya, po-boys and alligator.

Owner and chef Ryan Tanaka, born and raised in California, opened the restaurant in 2016

after a friend from Louisiana recommended he consider Cajun-style cuisine.

Americans will feel right at home at Gator's, which displays an American flag and New Orleans décor and also provides English menus for easy ordering.

For an appetizer I ordered the gator bites, available as fried or sautéed chunks of alligator tail for 1,600 yen (about \$12.25).

For an entrée, I had the seafood gumbo for 1,100 yen, which included a good amount of shrimp and sausage with an assortment of American hot sauces available for added heat.

Alcoholic drinks and select appetizers are discounted during happy hour from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

I recommend the house sweet tea for 350 yen, which includes free refills.

If you feel adventurous, Gator's for a limited time offers an alligator claw dinner starting at 2,100 yen. The upper part of the claw is breaded and fried; the bottom portion I found to be more decorative than edible. If the claw dinner grabs your attention, call



For adventurous eaters, the restaurant for a limited time offers an alligator claw dinner for 2,100 yen.

Gator's Cajun Kitchen

Location: 3-31-201, 1 Chome Miyajimaguchi Hatsukaichi City Hiroshima Prefecture 739-0411

Directions: From the main gate, turn right and proceed to Route 2 toward Hiroshima; drive time is about 40 minutes to Miyajimaguchi.

Hours: Open for lunch 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and for dinner 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday. Closed on Monday.

Prices: Appetizers range from about \$2.40 to about \$8; main dishes will cost about \$7 to about \$16.

Dress: Casual

Information: gatorscajunkitchen.jimdofree.com

Jonathan Snyder

ahead to order because preparation takes about 40 minutes.

Seating is limited, so weekend reservations are advised. Paid parking is available nearby.

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Thai chicken stir-fry piles on the basil by the fistful

BY CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL
For The Associated Press

Western cooks too often go too light on fresh herbs, treating them more as garnish than flavoring. The cooks at Christopher Kimball's Milk Street prefer the Thai approach, which uses ingredients such as basil, mint and cilantro by the fistful.

Take Thailand's chicken-and-basil stir-fry — gai pad krapow — which piles on basil, adding sweetness balanced by just a touch of herbal bitterness. We loved the simplicity of this popular street food, which sometimes is served with an egg on top.

In our version, we double down on the basil, using it at two different times for two different flavors. Since this recipe calls for a skillet rather than a wok, the cooking is broken into two steps.

Chopped basil leaves are added to the freshly cooked chicken, which mellows the herb's flavor as the leaves gently wilt while we cook sugar snap peas. Then after mixing everything together, 3 cups of lightly torn basil go into the dish to add peppery flavor that stays fresh.

A quick marinade of fish sauce, soy sauce and white pepper seasons the chicken and helps brown the meat. And scallion whites and greens, also added at different stages in the stir-fry, contribute an allium bite.

To prepare the chicken, cut each breast lengthwise into ½-inch strips, then cut the strips crosswise into 1-inch pieces. And be sure all ingredients are prepared before starting to cook. The stir-fry comes together quickly, so everything should be ready and close at hand.

STIR-FRIED CHICKEN WITH SNAP PEAS AND BASIL

Ingredients

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 tablespoon soy sauce

3 tablespoons fish sauce, divided

Ground white pepper

3 tablespoons peanut oil, divided

¼ cup chopped fresh basil

leaves, plus 3 cups torn and lightly packed

2 tablespoons white vinegar

4 ounces sugar snap peas, strings removed, halved on the bias

8 scallions, white and light green parts finely chopped, dark green tops cut into 1-inch pieces

2 or 3 serrano chilies, stemmed and thinly sliced

4 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 tablespoon white sugar

Directions

In a medium bowl, stir together the chicken, soy sauce, 1 tablespoon of the fish sauce and ½ teaspoon white pepper. Let sit for 15 minutes, then drain and pat dry with paper towels.

In a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil until just smoking. Add the chicken in an even layer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until well browned and cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a clean bowl, then stir in the chopped basil and vinegar. Set aside.

Add the remaining 2 tablespoons oil to the skillet and heat over medium-high until barely smoking. Add the snap peas, scallion whites/light greens and chilies. Cook, stirring, until the peas are lightly browned, about 3 minutes.

Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the sugar. Add the scallion tops and the chicken with any accumulated juices and cook, stirring, until most of the juices have evaporated, about 1 minute.

Off heat, add the remaining 2 tablespoons fish sauce and the torn basil. Stir until the basil is wilted. Taste and season with white pepper.

Serves 4.



MILK STREET/AP

Stir-Fried Chicken With Snap Peas And Basil piles on the basil.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Popeye is getting a makeover at age 93

Cartoonist Randy Milholland taking over for Hy Eisman, who has written and rendered the Sailor Man strip since 1994

By MICHAEL CAVNA
The Washington Post

Popeye may be famous for the confident credo “I yam what I yam,” but that doesn’t mean the Sailor Man says no to a good makeover.

The spinach-gulping and bottle-armed comics hero turned 93 in January. Now, he’ll get a fresh look.

King Features Syndicate is turning over the helm of its weekly Sunday “Popeye” comic to Randy Milholland, a 46-year-old Texas cartoonist and a true student of the character who launched his career as a webcomic creator two decades ago. King says its new “Popeye” will roll out to dozens of newspapers and is also available via its Comics Kingdom site.

Popeye as pop-comic icon was at his peak at mid-century, when he was read daily in hundreds of newspapers. Today, Milholland knows he has a mission: Put his inventive mark on the comic while respecting why Popeye endures as both a character and an idea. The squinting sailor, ever the underdog, still musters his can-do moxie and flexes his belief in helping others with a timeless relatability.

“What we really respond to is that the character has such a good heart,” says Andrew Farago, curator of the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco. “How Popeye goes about it, that’s up for update, but his motives are always pure and he’s always looking out for those in need of help. There’s something appealing about that.”

Milholland inherits the “Popeye” strip from the esteemed Hy Eisman, who wrote and rendered it since 1994. Eisman has spent seven decades as a writer and artist, including more than a half-century at King, where he also once worked on “The Katzenjammer Kids.”

“I had read Popeye since I was young, and it was always one of my favorite strips,” Eisman, 95, says by email. “It meant a lot to me to be creating Popeye stories myself.”

Adds Eisman: “I’m glad the strip is continuing.”

Now, as Milholland takes over from his “legendary” predecessor, he says, he will “try not to break the toys.”

The younger cartoonist first caught the eye of “Popeye” readers in 2019. To celebrate the character’s 90th birthday, King Features Syndicate invited top artists to draw their takes on the swaggering sailor and his colorful village. This bonus feature was called “Popeye’s Cartoon Club” — a title from the comic’s early days, when Popeye’s creator, Elzie “E.C.” Segar, would share fan art in his strip.

Milholland embraced the opportunity so much that he was asked to offer more strips in 2020. Online readers began posting such comments as: “You heard the people

King Features, give this man the key to the Popeye strips.”

The cartoonist is attracted to the fact that Popeye — despite the trusty “strong to the finish” strength he derives from eating spinach — is forever “punching up,” taking on large and menacing foes such as Bluto. Popeye is fallible but has long lived by his own moral code — a consistent trait that dates back to Segar’s creation.

One aspect of Segar’s run that Milholland cherishes is that Popeye would say: I will protect any child I meet. Oh, you’re down on your luck? I will be here to help you.

“Coming out of the Depression,” Milholland says, “that really was a lot.”

A decade after Segar created his “Thimble Theater” comic, Popeye made his supporting-role debut in that

“[Milholland] is also focused on reminding readers that in addition to the tough guy and defender of underdogs they know and love, Popeye is also sentimental and kind — the type of guy we all want on our side.”

Tea Fougner

editorial director of comics, King Features

strip in 1929 — four years before he first appeared in animated form, in the Fleischer Studios’ popular “Popeye the Sailor.” Segar guided “Thimble Theater” until his death in 1938, and his former assistant Bud Sagendorf steered the Popeye comic for decades, beginning in 1959.

Generations of writers and artists have brought their creative flourishes to Popeye, whether he was becoming more or less pugnacious, embracing domestic life or setting off on extended adventures.

Milholland’s own lively style has the visual pop of children’s animation.

“We love Randy’s bold lines, quirky character designs and bright colors,” says Tea Fougner, the editorial director of comics at King Features.

The cartoonist also arrives forearmed with an enthusiastic knowledge of Popeye’s history.

“He’s bringing back characters who haven’t been seen in [nearly] a century, like Olive’s sister-in-law, Cyllinda

Oyl,” Fougner says. “He’s also focused on reminding readers that in addition to the tough guy and defender of underdogs they know and love, Popeye is also sentimental and kind — the type of guy we all want on our side.”

Milholland, speaking by Zoom from the San Antonio area, laughs when considering why King chose him: “Probably because I’m an obsessive! I do love the characters a lot.”

He and syndicate leadership talked at length about where to steer possible “Popeye” plots — should they bring back more monsters? — as well as at what ages to place these characters today.

“Olive Oyl is a millennial at this point,” he says of the sailor’s forever love interest. “And Popeye is a tail-end Gen-X’er.”

Milholland, who attended art school in North Texas, was working in data entry two decades ago when he decided to launch his own online comic, “Something Positive” — an “angsty, angry” feature focusing on 20-something life after college. His gift with character development helped build a devoted fan base — donations from whom allowed him to quit his day job in Boston and begin creating comics full time.

Now, he and his librarian spouse, Steph Noell, live with their 4-year-old Velma back in Texas, the state where Milholland also grew up watching Popeye cartoons on TV and later reading vintage Popeye strips (and where his own diet these days leans more to spinach than hamburgers, that staple of the layabout food-scheming character, Wimpy). He also watched Robert Altman’s 1980 film “Popeye,” starring Robin Williams and Shelley Duvall.

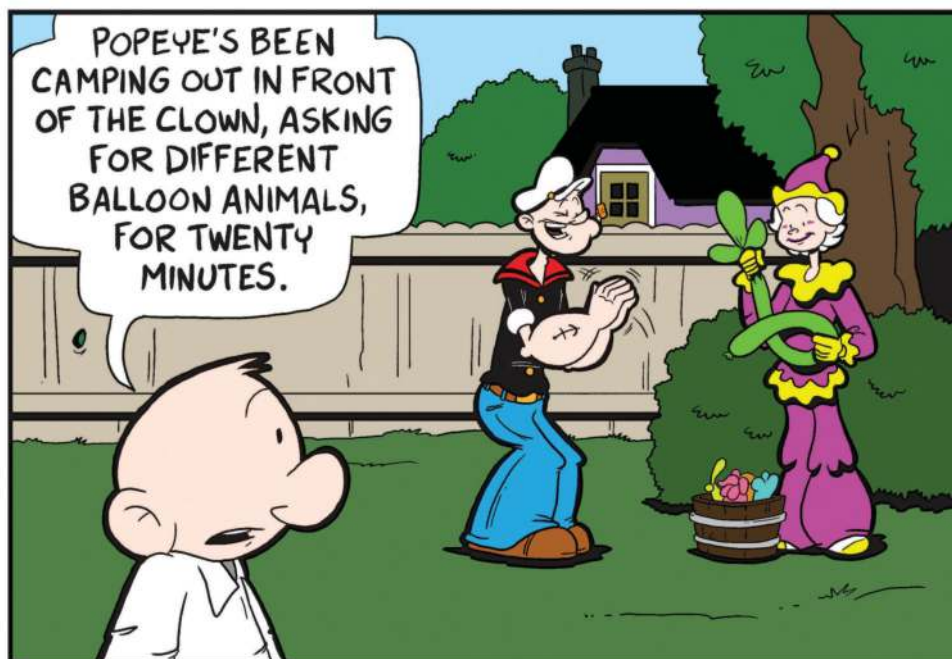
Today, he thinks characters like Olive Oyl, as shaped long ago by Segar and writer Tom Sims, can speak to modern audiences. He notes that their Olive was outspoken and in your face.

“She was never the damsel in distress in the comics.” He says her stance was: “I’m here and I will fight either at Popeye’s side or I will get in front of him.”

All these characters have flaws — and Popeye’s father, Poopdeck Pappy, “is a flaw on his own,” Milholland notes with a grin — but Popeye and Olive are the types to “find their moral centers” when needed.

Milholland likes to play with character faces and shapes, including the antagonistic witch the Sea Hag and the magical pet Eugene the Jeep. He enjoys designing the ballet of fisticuffs that flows across the page. Yet for all the enduring dynamics of “Popeye,” Milholland comes back to valuing the familial heart that beats at the center of the strip.

“They may bicker and fistfight,” he says, “but they still care about each other.”



RANDY MILHOLLAND/King Features Syndicate

These panels are a sneak peek at the first “Popeye” comic by its new cartoonist, Randy Milholland, who inherited the syndicated strip June 5.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

From the heart

The Moth: a storytelling movement with a new book on narrative skills

By **BO EMERSON**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

One day Catherine Burns was sitting in the passenger seat of her friend Alex's car, parked at a mini-mart, waiting for him to emerge with a cup of coffee.

Bored, she wanted to listen to the radio. The keys were in the ignition. She reached over and gave them a twist.

Mistake. Alex's car was a standard shift. He'd left it in first gear. The starter motor drove the car over a small concrete curb and off the 10-foot cliff at the edge of the parking lot.

The police officer who arrived at the nose-down vehicle shortly thereafter asked the question, "Who was driving the car at the time of the accident?" leading Burns, who was uninjured, to answer: "No one, sir."

That story (and that innocent but droll exchange), delivered to a small audience at a New York Moth StorySLAM back in the year 2000, helped Burns tie

for first place in her first competition.

It also propelled her into the Moth organization, where she volunteered to help the nonprofit with communications and education, and where she eventually became The Moth's artistic director.

This year Burns, a native of rural Alabama, has co-authored a book, "How to Tell a Story: The Essential Guide to Memorable Storytelling from The Moth." The publication is one of several events celebrating The Moth's silver anniversary this year.

What is The Moth? It is the brain-child of Georgia native and novelist George Dawes Green, who, after moving to Brooklyn, meditated on a favorite childhood experience: sitting up late at his St. Simons home, listening to his older relatives spin tales. (Later on, when Green was a young adult in Brunswick, story-time included flying nocturnal insects, that gave The Moth its name.)

Green somehow transplanted that experience to his New York City apartment and created a regular get-together of storytellers.

"That first Moth was a gorgeous mess," recalls founding board member Melvin Estrella in the new book. "The stories were so long, we ran out of wine!"

Green tinkered with the ground rules. Each Moth meet-

ing would have a curator, a different theme and sometimes an exotic locale. Participants would adhere to a time limit. The stories would be true. There would be no notes and no interruptions.

In 25 years, The Moth has grown exponentially. It hosts StorySLAMS in 28 cities including London; Melbourne, Australia; and Atlanta. Those are open-mic invitationals where anyone can put their name in the hat to be selected at random to tell a story on a specific theme.

There is also The Moth Mainstage, a touring show that has hosted such storytellers as Mike Birbiglia, Rosanne Cash, Elizabeth Gilbert, Malcolm Gladwell, Amanda Gorman, Lin Manuel Miranda, Molly Ringwald, John Turturro and many others.

The Moth Radio Hour, presented weekly by PRX on more than 575 radio stations, and The Moth Podcast, downloaded 90 million times a year, reach a huge audience. And there are Moth storytelling workshops for high school and college students and for adults.

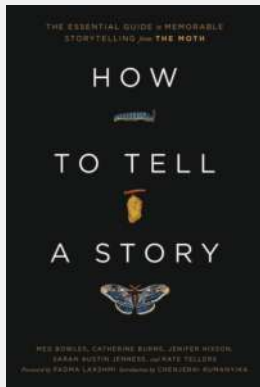
At The Moth, it is an article of faith that learning how to tell a story is a critical skill, a tool of self-discovery, and that stories can rewrite the way a community, or even a nation, sees itself.

Most of all, telling a personal tale, in a room of attentive listeners, is a pathway to a unique union. "Some of the best nights at The Moth can seem as though the storyteller and everyone in the audience are breathing the same breath," the authors write.

Moth stories that are heard on the Mainstage or on the radio show and podcast come from the heart of the teller, but are cultivated with the help of a Moth director. Moth staffers pepper the storyteller with questions, they help find the emotion behind anecdotes and help the teller distill meaning from the events of his or her own life.



iStock



Moth guidelines

For those of us at home, the writers of "How to Tell a Story" suggest using the book itself as a guide to unearthing and polishing the personal story inside each of us. Here are a few of the guidelines:

Time yourself

Mainstage stories are limited to 10 to 12 minutes. StorySLAM participants get only five minutes.

Practice out loud

Speak your story to a sympathetic listener before bringing it out at the next dinner party.

Don't try to be the hero

"We teach in the book: Be willing to tell on yourself," said author and Moth StorySLAM participant Catherine Burns. Focus on "not the time you saved the day, but the time you maybe messed up. People relate to you much more."

Don't memorize

"The only people at The Moth who have ever stopped their story and not gone on are people who have memorized their talk," said Burns. "If you have it memorized, you have to remember the words. If you haven't memorized it, you only have to remember the beats."

Exception: DO memorize your first and last lines

The intro and dismount are crucial.

Your story needs to be true

"But there are always embellishments along the way," said Moth founder and novelist George Dawes Green. "We don't have a police force, we don't have the Moth Investigative Agency," so The Moth depends on its speakers to hew, more or less, to the facts.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

WEEKEND: MUSIC

A shredder swings



Chuck Brueckmann

Guitarist Mark Tremonti, best known as a metal hero who co-founded Creed, also has a soft spot for Ol' Blue Eyes.

A metalhead takes on the Sinatra songbook, and even Slash approves

BY GEOFF EDGERS
The Washington Post

There he was, sitting in his wife's Escalade at his son's soccer practice, singing "Luck Be a Lady" at concert volume. Mark Tremonti, the metal hero proclaimed "Riff Lord" and co-founder of Creed, had the windows rolled up, but that didn't seem to help. After practice, his teenage son, Pearson, walked over with a report.

"Dad, I can hear you across the street," he said.

"So from that point on, I had to park across the street at another parking lot," Tremonti says. "I don't want to embarrass my kid."

But now, three years later, Tremonti isn't keeping Frank Sinatra to himself. The guitarist, considered one of the few modern-day guitar heroes, has released an album of Sinatra covers — and he's not playing a single monster lick. Instead, he's at the mic to sing 14 Sinatra standards, including "Luck Be a Lady," "My Way" and "Fly Me to the Moon." What's more, Tremonti is backed by several members of Sinatra's final band. The album, "Mark Tremonti Sings Frank Sinatra," surprised those who have heard him shredding on his PRS guitar.

"It blew my mind," says Slash, the Guns N' Roses guitarist. "It just sounded so authentic. And it's Mark from Alter Bridge, a metal guy, so I'm not expecting it at all. But all the vocal inflections, the personality, the Frank-centric feel of it, went way beyond any expectations I had."

Genre-bending records can, of course, go terribly wrong, whether it's Pat Boone doing metal or the Beach Boys trying country.

Tremonti never saw Sinatra as a marketing opportunity. The new record emerged as a series of chance conversations, life circumstances — and connections. There also was his genuine love for the music.

Before the pandemic, Tremonti and his wife, Victoria, decided to have a third child. There was a miscarriage and then, in 2020, Victoria got pregnant again. This time, the doctor determined the baby had Down syndrome, which occurs in about 6,000 newborns in the U.S. each year.

SEE SWINGS ON PAGE 29

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Swings: Tremonti emulates Sinatra with charity, too

FROM PAGE 28

At first, Tremonti, 48, fell into a funk. He wondered how the diagnosis would affect his family and work. That's when he talked to his manager, Tim Tournier, whose older brother has Down syndrome and is high-functioning, with a job and girlfriend.

"Breathe," Tournier recalls telling Tremonti. "I know it's scary, but it's going to be awesome. And I remember telling him that, and he was just kind of like, 'You know, I believe it.'"

Stella Tremonti was born in March 2021.

"After she was born, I remember thinking to myself, 'I've never smiled this much in my life,'" Tremonti says, pointing to a photo of Stella in his studio as he talks over Zoom. "This little thing, this little girl, makes me smile still."

Before Stella's birth, there were other anxieties as well. The pandemic had shut down touring, and Tremonti, a prolific performer, was antsy. Hearing this, Tournier thought of one of the guitarist's great loves, the music of Sinatra. Tournier has a personal connection to the crooner: As a young guitarist in Chicago, he was mentored by guitarist Dan McIntyre, who had been in Frank Sinatra Jr.'s band. So, wanting to cheer up his friend, Tournier called McIntyre to ask whether it might be possible to round up some musicians to do a few Sinatra songs with Tremonti.

Saxophonist Mike Smith, who toured with Sinatra from 1981 to 1994, got the call and went on YouTube to check out Tremonti.

"I could tell right away that he was a phenomenal musician, even though the genre and everything was different," Smith says. "And like Duke Ellington said, there's only two kinds of music, good and bad."

Carey Deadman, who worked on Sinatra's tours as an arranger, was more skeptical. He figured he had heard this tune before: Someone wants to live out his fantasy through Frank.

"We're all kind of rolling our eyes like, 'Oh, another Sinatra wannabe,'" Deadman says. "Like, 'How many are there? When will the stream end?'"

Tremonti didn't grow up dreaming of smoky barrooms and a glass of Jack. He decided to play guitar after hearing the powerful barre chords that drove the J. Geils Band's "Love Stinks." He got into harder stuff through his Black Flag and Metallica tapes. At Florida State University, he got to know singer Scott Stapp and they formed Creed, a partnership that led to four albums that sold more than 50 million copies. Creed eventually dissolved over tensions with Stapp, but Tremonti and his other bandmates, bassist Brian Marshall and drummer Scott Phillips, went on to form Alter Bridge with singer Myles Kennedy.

Tremonti was never known as a singer, serving on backup vocals with Creed and Alter Bridge before taking lead for his namesake band's records. (He has made five Tremonti albums since 2012.)

"Initially, when we started working



Chuck Brueckmann

Mark Tremonti sings selections from Frank Sinatra's catalog with members of Sinatra's orchestra and local musicians at the Abbey in Orlando, Fla., on May 14.

"A lot of people are like, 'Yeah, it's great how you took Frank Sinatra and made it your own.' I'm like, 'The only way I made it my own is because I couldn't make it exactly like Frank Sinatra.'"

Mark Tremonti

together, he seemed strangely hesitant to sing when we would write together," Kennedy says. "And I thought, 'Well, he's got a wonderful voice, a rich baritone.'"

Tremonti has a habit of getting into mini-obsessions, whether pinball or science fiction. He remembers stumbling across Sinatra YouTube clips about four years ago and being mesmerized.

He bought a plastic binder like a star-struck schoolkid and slid a photo of Frank from a recording session on the cover. He put song lyrics inside and marked up the sheets. The scribbles told him when there was a drop in pitch or a dose of vibrato, a pause or a snap of the fingers.

"I think one of the cool things about Sinatra is he didn't just sing it straight on the beat," Tremonti says. "And he never sang the same song the same way twice. I picked my favorite version and tried to sing it as close to that and then naturally put my own thing on it. A lot of people are like, 'Yeah, it's great how you took Frank Sinatra and made it your own.' I'm like, 'The only way I made it my own is because I couldn't make it exactly like Frank Sinatra.'"

In Chicago in May 2021, the musicians gathered for the cheer-up jam session. It went well. Tremonti showed up with his notebook, and the others in the room, including Smith and Deadman, were impressed.

"He came early and I said, 'Let's go upstairs, just you and me,' and so he started singing and I was like, 'Oh, my God, you did a lot of homework here,'" Smith says. "I thought it was going to be good, but not as good as it was."

"He went to school on Sinatra," says Deadman. "You can tell he listened to him a lot, but he is singing it in his own voice. And he's bringing in his own phrasing. But he particularly seemed to listen to the earlier crooner days. And you know, I think that's the vibe he was going for. It's a really beautiful sound."

After those sessions, Tremonti and Tournier talked about Sinatra — the musician and the man. They knew he had raised millions for charity. Then the idea came to Tremonti. What if he put out a Sinatra album and donated the proceeds to the National Down Syndrome Society? Medical procedures are often required — Stella had a heart operation just nine months after her birth — and there is a constant need for physical therapy.

And more than a one-time fundraiser, Tremonti also decided to launch Take a Chance for Charity, a venture meant to inspire others. He's already heard of interest from a couple of buddies, comedian Larry the Cable Guy and the wrestler Edge.

But Tremonti isn't ready to give up Frank. In May, he performed with a 17-piece band that included Smith, Deadman and McIntyre in Orlando, Fla., where he lives, to launch the album. The show raised \$150,000. He's hoping to take it on tour later in the year.

"It was good to see these people that I've seen for 20-plus years coming to rock concerts and black T-shirts in their suits and cocktail dresses," he says. "Except for one guy. He was like, 'You'll never see me dressed up like this again.'"

REVIEWS

Mary Gauthier

Dark Enough to See the Stars (Thirty Tigers)

Mary Gauthier's weekly Sunday afternoon live-streams at the pandemic's peak were a lot like church, with confessions, contemplations and a welcome spirit of communion.

The gatherings offered balm for believers in the power of song, and Gauthier's new album does the same, showcasing tunes that came to life during lockdown and were featured on those shows. As the title might suggest, love prevails over death on "Dark Enough to See the Stars," though not without a struggle.

Gauthier's scarred alto is the ideal instrument for her candid, thoughtful musings on loss, healing and the need for hope. Her voice quivers, wobbles and slides, as if never sure where the next note will land, but it's always someplace compelling. Among those contributing to the soulful, smart arrangements are keyboardist Danny Mitchell, fiddler Michele Gazich and singer-guitarist Jaimee Harris, Gauthier's partner.

Highlights include "Thank God for You," a gospel-tinged celebration of love's restorative qualities, and "How Could You Be Gone," a wrenching slice of life and death. But from start to finish, Gauthier masterfully makes the personal universal. On "Truckers and Troubadours," she affectionately draws a connection among those "just passing through," which would be all of us.

— Steven Wine
Associated Press



Ella Mai

Heart on My Sleeve (10 Summers/Interscope)

British singer Ella Mai is back with even more R&B bridges on her second album, "Heart on My Sleeve."

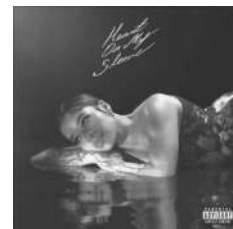
The album radiates Mai's finger-snapping tracks and smooth melodies, but it's also more passionate and sung by someone who's older and wiser. Mai's debut, released in 2018, went double platinum and her hit single "Boo'd Up" won a Grammy for best R&B song. Now, at 27, this album proves who she is as an artist and that she knows love isn't clear cut.

Mai has never shied away from love songs, but this sophomore album shows more sides of Mai. The tracks highlight all the sides to falling in love, the healthy sides and even the toxic relationships. "Leave U Alone" shows the uncontrollable nature of being in love, while "Hide" is a ballad finding vulnerability.

The album also features collaborations with Latto, Lucky Daye and Roddy Ricch. "A Mess," featuring Daye, really highlights finding love at the wrong times.

Mai truly has her heart on her sleeve in this album. "Heart on My Sleeve" proves that there's still room for love songs and romance in R&B.

— Karena Phan
Associated Press



WEEKEND: TELEVISION



HBO/TNS

From left, Clarke Peters, Sonja Sohn and Dominic West appear in a scene from "The Wire." The five-season show first aired 20 years ago. In the show, which is set in Baltimore, the city functions as a microcosm of the problems afflicting urban America.

20 years later, 'Wire' still reverberates

Here's a look at how critical Baltimore institutions explored on the show over its 5 seasons have fared

BY MARY CAROLE MCCAULEY
Baltimore Sun

In the summer of 2004, actor Jamie Hector was filming an episode from the third season of "The Wire" late at night on a rundown street in East Baltimore when shots rang out. He knew instantly that these were real bullets coming from a real gun, not the blank-firing pistols used on set.

"A guy sitting on his stoop at the other end of the block had been watching us film the scene," said Hector, 46, "and someone drove by and shot him."

The actor realized the shooting might have been carried out by someone not unlike his character on "The Wire," the ruthless young drug kingpin Marlo Stanfield.

"On the set, we were somewhat protected and isolated," Hector said, "but this still happened. I thought: 'This is the show we were putting together to try to address those ills.'"

Twenty years ago, on June 2, 2002, few people outside of Baltimore noticed when "The Wire" debuted on HBO. Though critics applauded, "The Wire" struggled initially to find its audience and narrowly avoided cancellation.

But over the years, the show gained traction. Now, "The Wire" is a cultural phenomenon. It routinely makes lists of the greatest TV shows of all time.

"The Wire" became those things in large part because creators David Simon, a former police reporter for *The Baltimore Sun*, and Ed Burns, a former Baltimore homicide detective and middle school teacher, aimed to do more than just tell a riveting human story.

The unforgettable characters they created — Stringer Bell, who ran meetings of his drug cartel based on procedures set forth in Robert's Rules of Order; Omar Little, the stickup man with a strict moral code; Bubbles, the heartbreakingly gentle heroin addict — were the conduit for a larger message.

Burns summarized it like this: "The war on drugs and the disinterest in this country in people who are poor is a Holocaust in slow motion, and it burns through generation after generation."

In the show, Baltimore functions as a microcosm of the problems afflicting urban America.

"We set the series in Baltimore because that's what we knew," Simon said. "But we were addressing issues that are national in nature. We could have told similar stories in Philadelphia or Chicago."

Each season took an in-depth look at what the creators believed to be the fractures, fault lines and failures of key institutions from police policy to the schools.

"We had the sense that our institutions in many cases were measuring the wrong things and attending to problems that weren't actual problems," Simon said. "When Ed was in the school system, he saw how the metrics they were using to measure progress were flawed. In the police department, the metrics of success were guns and dope on the table. If we arrest everybody, we make the city safer. That kind of logic was rewarded politically."

Simon and Burns acknowledge that many people have disagreed — some vehemently — with their analysis of Baltimore's social ills, including former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, who also served two terms as the city's mayor. "The Wire" is a work of fiction that represents the point of view of two white, middle-aged men.

Nonetheless, from 2002 to 2008, "The Wire" painted a portrait of Baltimore that for better or worse, stuck in a lot of people's minds, not just in Maryland but internationally. So on the series' anniversary, it makes sense to take a look at how the critical Baltimore institutions that the series illuminated are faring in 2022.

What has changed?

Season 1 (2002), Baltimore police

It's difficult to interpret the headlines about the Baltimore Police Department during the past two decades in any way that isn't unrelentingly grim.

In 2002, the year "The Wire" debuted, Baltimore recorded 254 homicides. There were 338 homicides in 2021, the seventh year in a row that slayings have topped 300. And violence in the city is trending to hit that figure again this year.

During the past two decades, relations between police officers and the community hit their lowest point during the unrest that followed the death of Freddie Gray in 2015.

And just two years later, federal racketeering charges were filed against members of the police department's elite Gun Trace Task Force, who stole drugs and money while searching the homes and cars of drug dealers and innocent civilians. Numerous officers either were convicted or pleaded guilty to crimes. The case gave rise to another HBO series, "We Own This City," which debuted in April.

University of Baltimore President Kurt Schmoke said these issues have the same root cause: treating drug addiction as a crime instead of a public health crisis. As Baltimore's mayor from 1987 to 1999, Schmoke was vilified when he urged Congress to decriminalize drugs. Now, he believes the national conversation is starting to change.

"More people are starting to talk about taking a public health approach to drugs," he said. "Because of opioids, they know individuals like themselves who have become addicted. Their response is 'Don't lock up my neighbor. He or she has a medical problem.' I believe that ultimately is going to lead to significant changes."

Season 2 (2003), Decline of working class

The series explored the hardships endured by blue-collar workers in Rust Belt cities like Baltimore as manufacturing declined. As their paychecks shrink, the dockworkers in "The Wire" turn to dealing drugs.

"In the late '60s, early '70s, when the industries that were the backbone of a city like Baltimore got up and left, the solutions offered by the government were unemployment insurance and welfare," Burns said. "That's when drugs began spreading out of the ghettos."

Last November, President Joe Biden toured the Port of Baltimore to tout the passage of his \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill. Maryland expects to see an influx of funds over the next five years for projects ranging from bridge replacement to public transit improvements. Biden predicted that would result in the creation of well-paying union jobs.

Joshua Harris, vice president of the Baltimore chapter of the NAACP, would like to see some of the federal funds

SEE 'THE WIRE' ON PAGE 31

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

She 'looked like me'

'Ms. Marvel' star shares culture, religion, interests with character

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

Iman Vellani, who stars as Kamala Khan in the new Disney+ series "Ms. Marvel," has a conundrum. Now that she's a part of the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe), does she remove the Marvel posters from the walls of her childhood bedroom or leave them up?

"Brie (Larson) is on my wall and she's in my phone book. So, like, that's weird," said Vellani.

"Ms. Marvel," which debuted Wednesday, is 19-year-old Vellani's first professional acting job. Already an avid reader of the comics, Vellani learned of the open audition from her aunt. Lo and behold, Vellani got the job.

The first month on set was spent in prep, rehearsing and stunt training. She had to give up her high school diet of McDonald's and Oreos and build stamina, but Vellani wasn't interested in changing her shape too much.

"I was 17. Kamala was 16. I wanted her to look like a normal high school kid," she said.

"My first proper day of filming — that was intense," Vellani said. "It was all of the stunts that I had to do in the real Captain Marvel suit. The one that Brie gets to wear. It was an extremely uncomfortable day. That suit is not made to move in. You're just supposed to stand and walk like a mannequin, and that's what it's made for. There's so many pieces and it's just really uncomfortable, and the scenes were pretty intense. So I came home with all these bruises and everything. My mom was like, 'Oh my God, what happened?' And I'm like, 'I'm a superhero. That's what happened.'"

Vellani just may be the first Marvel actor who is also a massive fan. She especially loves Robert Downey Jr. and has proudly re-watched "Iron Man" "more than the average person."

"They really are just a projection of real life and make you feel like you're a part of something. Isn't that what we all kind of want, to feel like we belong? And I know it sounds super cheesy, but for the Marvel fandom, it's comfortable. It's what we know.

We can recite everything under the sun about the MCU," said Vellani.

Sana Amanat, the co-creator of "Ms. Marvel," jokes that having an actor who is a stan (really big fan), as they say, has its challenges.

"Sometimes she would just pull up in the producer's chair next to me and just give lots of thoughts and opinions on, you know, either the show or the rest of the MCU. And I'd be like, 'That's cool, but I need you to just act right now,' she said, laughing, and added, "Iman brought so much life and love to the character and it just made the entire process so much easier."

Vellani was browsing a local comic book store when she discovered the "Ms. Marvel" comics and immediately felt represented in a way that is not common in mainstream media:

"I saw a girl who looked like me. She was Muslim and Pakistani and a superhero fanatic and I was Muslim, Pakistani and a superhero fanatic, so it worked out quite well. And I think my favorite part about the comic books was that it wasn't about her religion or her culture or her ethnicity, it was about a fanfic-writing nerd, who just so happened to be Pakistani and just so happened to be Muslim. Those parts of her life motivated her and drove her as a character. She used her religion as a moral code. ... She never neglected her culture. It was something that kind of uplifted her journey."

One of the things about South Asian culture that Vellani says "Ms. Marvel" gets right, is the importance of family. Kamala's parents and brother feature prominently in the series.

"Showing those close, tight-knit family relationships, showing parents that are alive in the MCU, how rare is that?" Vellani said. "We wanted to hopefully get the ball rolling on Muslim representation in the media because there's 2 billion Muslims and South Asians in the world, and we cannot represent every single one of them. But I do hope that people find some sort of comfort in Kamala's character or through her brother or her parents or anyone in her community."



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Iman Vellani, star of the Disney+ series "Ms. Marvel," was already a huge fan of the Marvel universe, but the role is her first acting job.

'The Wire': Biggest impact of the series might be an increase in empathy

FROM PAGE 30

dedicated to improving the city's water and sewer lines and housing stock.

"We could create apprenticeships and work to renovate and rehab our housing stock," said Harris, a former Green Party candidate for mayor in 2016 and for the state legislature in 2018. "This is an opportunity to create jobs and to put a city of blue-collar employees back to work."

Season 3 (2004), City Hall

During the past two decades, one scandal after another has roiled Baltimore City Hall. In this season, "The Wire" followed the career trajectory of a young politician who sacrificed his ideals to his ambitions as he became Baltimore's mayor and, later, governor of Maryland.

Since 2004, two former Baltimore mayors — Sheila Dixon and Catherine Pugh — have been convicted of financial crimes.

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott thinks that politicians will stay out of trouble if they devote their energies to their current job instead of plotting their next career move.

"That's a lesson I preach to young elected officials across the country," said Scott, who worked as a young legislative aide in City Hall during "The Wire's" final season. "I tell them, you will only get where you want to go if you focus on the job you have today. We need officials who will do the right thing, not the popular thing, even if it means that they get unelected."

Season 4 (2006), Baltimore City schools

This season — in many ways the heart of the series — reflected Burns' experience as a teacher at Hamilton Middle School from 1994 to 2001. It follows four eighth-grade boys at the Tench Tilghman Middle School as they make decisions that will determine whether they go to college or end up dealing drugs.

"The Wire" contended that kids were being failed by federal laws that tied funding for schools to student outcomes on standardized tests. That forced educators to "teach to the test" instead of allowing them to align their approach to students' needs.

Mayor Scott thinks the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which will become law this year, has the potential to be a game-changer. The law will provide \$4 billion more in education funding statewide over a decade and launch programs intended to make Maryland schools some of the best in the nation.

Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Sonja Santelises declined an interview request. In an email, a district spokesman said he doesn't think "The Wire's" depiction of city schools is wholly accurate.

The television series "used drama and characters to illustrate some authentic challenges we continue to face as a school district and a community," schools spokesman Andre Riley wrote in an email, "including the historic underfunding of education in Baltimore City, health and safety, student wellness, and equity."

But Riley said the show did not offer a "holistic" picture of city schools, past or present.

Season 5 (2008), The news media

By 2008, when the final season of "The Wire" debuted and took a hard look at the news media, the loss of journalism jobs nationwide was accelerating.

Newsroom employment in the U.S. dropped by 26% between 2008 and 2020, according to a 2021 report by the Pew Research Center. That represented not just a loss of 30,000 jobs, but all the stories those reporters would have covered.

"I remember a time when Baltimore had The Sun and The Evening Sun and the Baltimore News-American," said Peter L. Beilenson, who was Baltimore City's Health Commissioner from 1992 to 2005 and now teaches a course on "The Wire" at Johns Hopkins University.

He thinks that decrease has had a negative impact on Baltimore. "It's like when a tree falls in a forest," he said. "If you don't know about it, you never know what you're missing."

But the biggest impact of "The Wire" might be the most difficult to measure. Across the U.S., viewers came to sympathize with and even root for characters who might terrify them in real life. That suggests that the show might have contributed, however incrementally, to the overall level of empathy in society.

"If 'The Wire' had a hand in that," Simon said, "that makes me proud."

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Night cap therapy

Researchers developing device to nudge brain into deeper sleep, boosting its waste cleaning process

By PETER KENDALL

Special to The Washington Post

As he gets ready for sleep each night, Don Tucker slips on an electrode cap and checks a little computer on his bedside table.

Many workers at the private lab, run by the professor emeritus at the University of Oregon, follow the same routine.

The experimental device monitors the nightly voyage through sleep. After sensing light sleep for a few minutes, it pulses electric current through the scalp and skull, nudging the brain into that nirvana known as deep sleep.

The goal is not just a more restful slumber. Groundbreaking discoveries made in the past decade have revealed that the brain has a power-washing system that switches into high gear during deep sleep, flushing away harmful waste. This nightly cleanup is part of the restorative power of sleep and revives concentration, memory and motor skills.

As we age, however, this cleansing system gets sloppier, and it can begin to leave behind some of the metabolic detritus of the day, including the amyloid beta proteins found in the plaque that characterize Alzheimer's disease and other devastating neurological disorders.

The stunning revelation in 2012 of this previously unknown brain infrastructure — dubbed the glymphatic system — has ushered in a new age of research and invention not only about sleep but also aging, dementia and brain injuries. Nearly 300 research papers were published last year on the glymphatic system.

One of those research paths leads to Tucker's lab and the invention on his bed stand, called AugNOD for Augmented Neural Oscillation Driver. In prototype, it looks like a particularly severe orthodontic apparatus with a toll-road transponder strapped to the top. Refined, slighter versions are in the works.

By stretching the length of deep sleep, Tucker's device aims to boost that overnight wash cycle. Someday soon, he hopes, something like it will be widely used by people to clear their heads — literally.

"It's a way of keeping the brain young," Tucker, 75, said.

The U.S. Army has taken interest. In October, the Department of Defense awarded Tucker, the University of North Carolina and several partner universities \$4.25 million to explore a possible military application of the device to restore mental sharpness to sleep-deprived soldiers on the battlefield.

Jeffrey Iliff, a member of the research

team from the University of Washington School of Medicine, said that, within five years, consumer devices may allow anyone to track their brain-cleansing deep sleep.

"And I think within the next seven years we are going to start to see approaches — like maybe this device, maybe some pharmacological approaches — that can begin to modulate it, that can maybe turn it up if you want to try to turn it up," Iliff said. "I think things are starting to move very quickly in this field as work starts to move out into human populations."

Iliff holds a significant place in the history of sleep science. He was lead author of several papers that in 2012 began describing the brain-scrubbing glymphatic system, based on work done at the University of Rochester with principal investigator Maiken Nedergaard.

"We think that this is relevant not just to Alzheimer's disease, but we actually think this is probably relevant to all sorts of neuroimmunological conditions like multiple sclerosis, and neurovascular disorders like traumatic brain injury and stroke," Iliff said.

"There is evidence that it is involved in headaches. There is evidence it may be involved in mood disorders and other neuropsychiatric conditions like depression or bipolar disorder."

Sleep — particularly the electrical score the brain plays through each night — is at the heart of the process.

Each kind of sleep — from the lighter stages,

through deep sleep, to rapid eye movement or REM — is marked by a distinct pattern of brain waves, which scientists have been eavesdropping on for almost a century with electroencephalography (EEG).

The deepest sleep, just before REM, produces slow brain waves that help organize and store away memories of the day and kicks the glymphatic washing cycle into high gear.

EEG tests show that as people age, they spend less time in deep sleep and more in lighter sleep.

"Many people, after age 30, their deep sleep goes to hell," Tucker said. "We think that can explain much of the memory decline in older people, and it starts at age 30 — it's not like you have to get old and decrepit."

Tucker has been working on these problems for decades, founding a company in 1992 that pioneered a high-definition EEG worn like a wired-up hairnet. That company, Electrical Geodesics, was bought for



PHOTOS BY LEAH NASH/For the Washington Post

Brain Electrophysiology Lab test research assistant Ander Hersh wears a prototype that monitors sleep and improves slumber by sending electrical impulses into the brain.

nearly \$37 million by Philips in 2017.

His new company, Brain Electrophysiology Lab, in Eugene, Ore., seeks not just to monitor the brain's electrical activity but also to influence it. The work emulates findings from labs around the world that have begun to coax the brain from one stage of sleep to another with minuscule doses of current.

These artificial impulses mimic the ones produced in the head during deep sleep, and the brain follows their lead and also begins producing these slower brain waves, plunging itself into the deepest realms of sleep.

"If you change the electrical current going through the head, the neurons naturally synchronize with that," Tucker said.

Tucker and others published last May a small, peer-reviewed study where by administering tiny pulses of electricity for five minutes at a time to snoozing test subjects, they increased time in deep sleep by an average of 13%. He said that is enough to begin making the brain more effective at organizing memory and clearing waste.

Applying small amounts of electricity to the brain, called transcranial electrical stimulation, is not new. A sweeping 2017 review determined that it appears to be safe, noting no serious side effects in more than 18,000 sessions included in the survey. It has been touted for providing a host of possible neurological benefits, many of which remain unproven.

"Given the amount of research and the amount of promise and the amount of media attention dedicated to transcranial electrical stimulation, that hasn't really translated into home devices that are FDA-approved for various indications," cautioned Anna Wexler, a bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania and one of the authors of the safety study.

For the DOD, "the glymphatic system presents an opportunity to understand how chronic stressors might build over



Shijing Zhou, research lab manager at the Brain Electrophysiology Lab, wears a geodesic head web device that does high-definition EEG collection.

time, but also may provide insight into more rapid recovery from some types of brain injuries," said Christopher Steele, a director at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command.

The Army is funding a parallel project that also is trying to develop a brain-clearing device, led by Rice University, Baylor College of Medicine and Houston Methodist Hospital.

As the military research project proceeds, a separate company founded by Tucker is working to begin a Food and Drug Administration trial of a consumer version of his cap to increase deep sleep. (Others on the research team have no financial interest in Tucker's device or his companies, they said.)

"I want to be a consumer of this sleep therapy device," Tucker said. "I want to be sure for the next decade I can maintain the best function I can for an increasingly old guy."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



TOM GRALISH, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

Liz and Matt Lockerman at home with Logan, 8 months, and Sophie, 3½, on May 31. Lockerman struggled to breastfeed Sophie and reluctantly switched to formula. When Logan also struggled, she switched with less guilt.

Breast not best for all

Parents who use infant formula shouldn't have to deal with stigma, shame

BY SARAH GANTZ
The Philadelphia Inquirer

First-time mom Liz Lockerman prepped to breastfeed by taking classes, reading books and practicing different baby-holding positions. She even bought a freezer for the basement, in anticipation of building a stash of frozen breast milk for when she returned to work.

But nothing went as planned after the birth of her daughter, Sophie. They struggled so much with feeding that Sophie eventually ended up in the hospital with dehydration. Finally, a therapist convinced the exhausted and stressed-out new mother that it was acceptable to feed her baby formula.

"Society puts this shame and stigma on formula," said Lockerman, 36, of Philadelphia. "There should not be any shame in how you choose to feed your baby."

New parents are inundated with messages about the importance of breastfeeding. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusively breastfeeding babies for the first six months of life, then transitioning to a combination of solid foods and breast milk until they are a year old. Hospitals earn a World Health Organization "baby-friendly" designation by encouraging parents to breastfeed as soon as possible after birth and limiting access to formula unless medically necessary.

Though well-intentioned, the "breast is best" campaign has put enormous pressure on parents — some say at the expense of their own emotional well-being — and contributed to the stigma of switching to formula "by choice." Now a national formula shortage is bombarding parents with new guilt from outsiders telling them they would have food for their baby if they'd just breastfeed.

"It's so unfair that parents are getting caught up in 'Which camp am I in?' and 'Did I do the right thing?'" said Katy Baker-Cohen, who makes free home visits to new parents as a lactation consultant and nurse for Philadelphia's Nurse-Family Partnership. "There is research to support that human milk is ideal for babies. But there's also research that parents who are mentally stable are also ideal for babies."

Breast milk is considered the "ideal food" for infants because it is loaded with the nutrients babies need to grow. The content of breast milk even changes from week to week to meet the baby's current needs, such as providing extra antibodies when the

baby is sick. For many parents, breastfeeding is a treasured bonding experience with their newborn.

Commercial infant formula, designed to mimic the vitamin and mineral content of breast milk, is regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Compared to breast milk, research has found formula is associated with a higher rate of infections and gastrointestinal issues, though other studies have concluded the differences are smaller than once believed.

Breastfeeding is difficult and time consuming — newborns need to eat every two to four hours around the clock. Doctors advise against giving babies bottles, even if they contain breast milk, until at least three weeks, to ensure sustainable breastfeeding practices.

This isn't always possible for parents who can't take extended parental leave and whose workplaces don't give time to pump or space to store milk. Same-sex couples, adoptive parents, people who have had cancer, or those with other underlying health conditions may not have the option of breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding a baby can also be overwhelming for a parent who is sleep-deprived, recovering from a major medical event and often trying to adjust to a new lifestyle.

When breastfeeding is not going well, a parent's mental health can suffer. They can feel inadequate if they don't think they're producing enough milk and be in pain if the baby cannot properly latch on. In more severe cases, nursing parents may experience severe and sudden negative feelings just before they breastfeed, a condition called dysmorphic milk ejection reflex.

At some point, parents struggling to breastfeed must decide whether the benefits of breast milk are worth any detriment to their own health, said Sara Kornfield, a clinical psychologist and assistant professor at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

"The benefit to a child of having a happy, healthy, well-adjusted mom may outweigh the small difference in infection rates," said Kornfield, who also works as director of the maternal wellness initiative at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

Last September, Lockerman's daughter, Sophie, now 3½ years old, became a big sister.

Lockerman decided to try breastfeeding again. But when her son, Logan, didn't take to it after several days, she bought some formula without guilt.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Death to teenage social life by a thousand cuts

Take 3½ acres of property, subtract one 1,500-square-foot brick ranch with a detached garage, then carry the seven, and you know what you're left with? A whole lot of grass to cut.

That painful fact of life significantly impacted my childhood. My father was raised on a boardwalk at the Jersey Shore, but he fancied himself a wannabe farmer. So in 1977, he and my mother bought a house with lots of land.

Everyone knows that large developed parcels require maintenance, but my father had two workers at the ready: My older brother and me. In the summertime, while our friends were gallivanting off to the community pool, my brother and I were doing forced labor.

With more than three acres of grass to cut, my father knew a riding mower wouldn't cut it (literally and figuratively), especially if his teenage children were going to have any semblance of a social life left. So he bought a legit tractor — orange paint job, long steering column and gear shift, little wheels in the front, big wheels in the back — and outfitted it with a twin-bladed mower deck. Before I could drive a car, tractor operation and grass cutting were added to my arguably abusive list of chores, which also included weeding my father's football-pitch-sized vegetable garden, trimming around trees with the push mower and various scullery and janitorial duties inside the house.

Until he became a midshipman at the Naval Academy, my older brother shouldered most of the tractor operating while I was relegated to cutting around trees with the push mower. But when I was in 9th grade, my brother left for Annapolis, and my adolescent summers changed drastically.

As soon as the spring rains coaxed those green blades from the earth like a snake charmer, I was on the tractor for hours on end. Speaking of snakes, several chore-related horrors were imprinted on my psyche, such as inadvertently chopping things up in the whirring mower blades, including countless snakes, and once, a nest of bunnies.

Some of my grass-cutting trauma was self-induced. Such as the time I got sleepy while mowing a particularly boring field, so I stopped, put my head on the steering wheel and snoozed. I was awakened by frantic shouting from a passerby on nearby Route 286. A driver saw me slumped over the tractor and was coming to rescue me from certain death by heat exhaustion. Thankfully cellphones hadn't been invented yet and I was able to convince the good Samaritan that I was alive and well before an ambulance was summoned.

Another summer day, I got lazy. To minimize my push-mowing responsibilities, I used the tractor to mow around the trees. I thought I was so clever, stooping low to avoid the branches, until a tree swing I'd tucked up into our apple tree fell as I was passing by and hooked itself over the steering wheel. I heard a "Crack!" before the swing broke loose. I knew I was in big trouble. Months of allowance was forfeited to replace that cracked steering column.

Somehow, I survived my teenage indentured servitude and escaped to college, law school and then military marriage. Free and on my own in the world, I found that I missed it. There was a certain pleasure in the mind-numbing repetition of cutting grass, the soothing vibrations of the motor, the yin and yang of battling and bonding with nature, the satisfaction of doing physical work.

I found opportunities to fiddle with flora and fauna even when we lived on base. I started a vegetable garden on Fort Ord. I planted flowers on either side of the stairwell stoop on Patch Barracks. I put plants in pots on our porch at NAS Mayport. I grew zucchinis behind Quarters C in Newport.

My Navy retiree husband cuts our lawn nowadays, and I look on with envy, because I know that, like many things in life, pain in the grass has its pleasures.

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com, and in Lisa's book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

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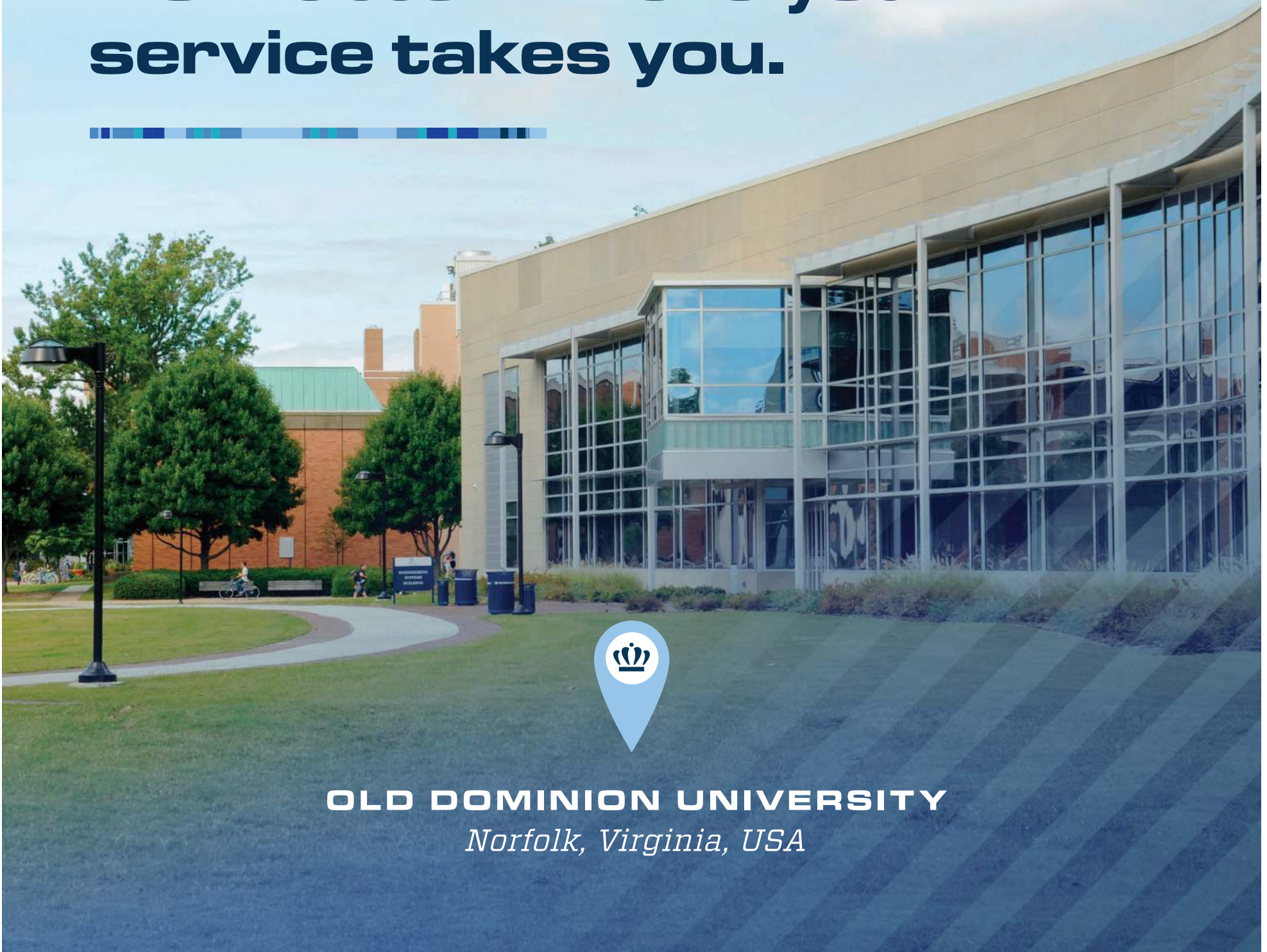
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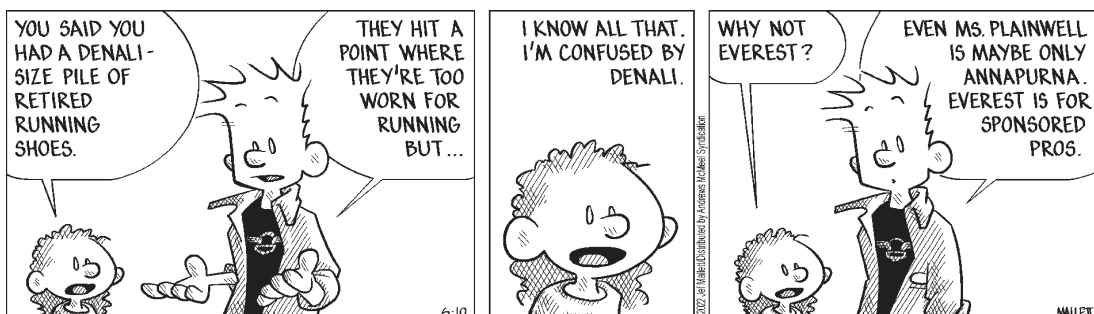
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Tom Shull
Director/CEO



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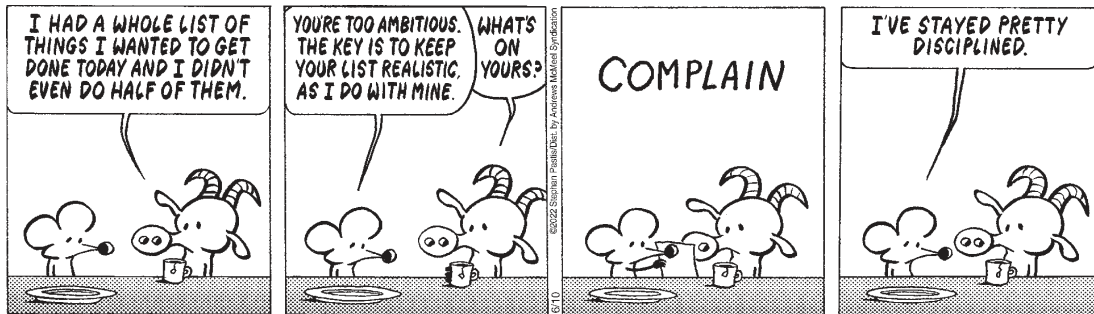
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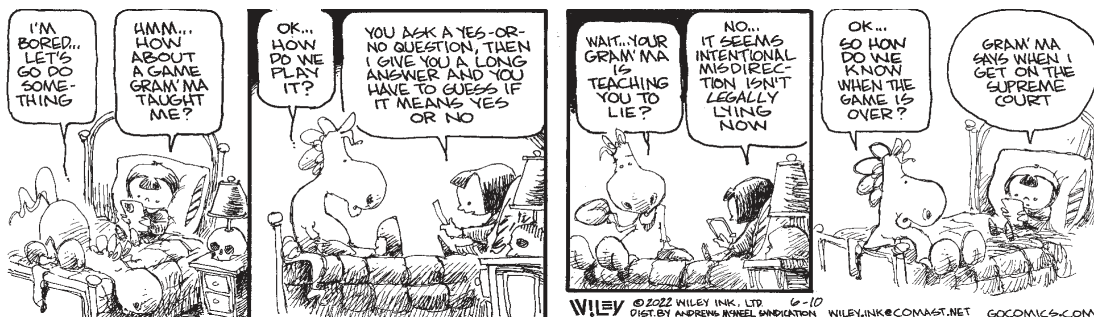
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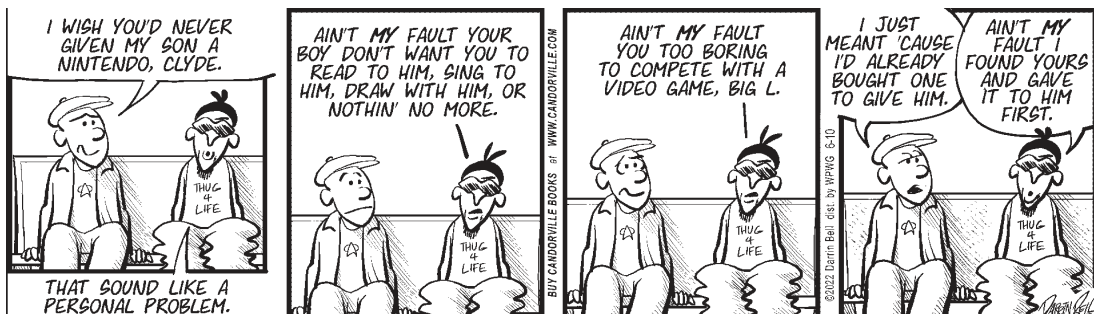
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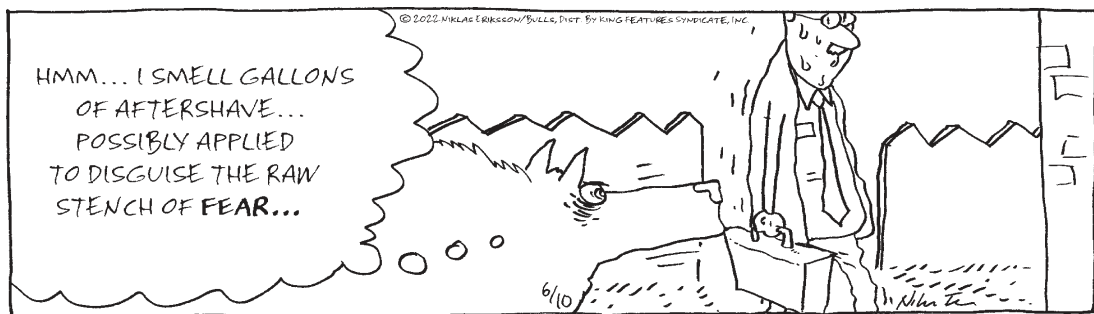
Non Sequitur



Candorville



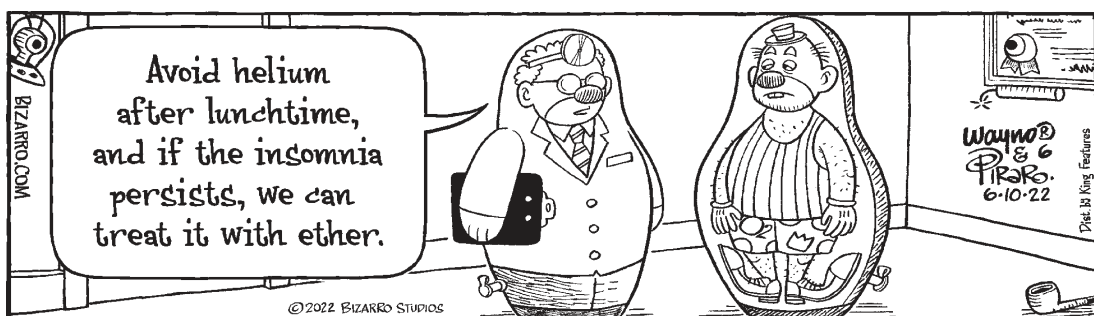
Carpe Diem



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				
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37			38				39					
			40				41			42	43	44
45	46	47				48	49					
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

ACROSS

- 1 Crow's cry
- 4 Untalkative one
- 8 "Be quiet ..."
- 12 "Love Story" actress MacGraw
- 13 Angelic light
- 14 Crunchy cookie
- 15 Helena resident
- 17 Squad
- 18 Arizona resort
- 19 Luggage tags, e.g.
- 21 Biol. or chem. borough
- 22 Big Apple
- 26 Pasta topper
- 29 Center
- 30 "Wham!"
- 31 Goya's duchess
- 32 One of the Stooges
- 33 1492 vessel
- 34 Fr. holy woman
- 35 Yule fuel
- 36 "Be silent," in music
- 37 Lend an ear
- 39 Wet dirt
- 40 Summer sign
- 41 "No One" singer Keys
- 45 iPhone voice
- 48 Large butterflies
- 50 Bard's river
- 51 Squared
- 52 Camp bed

DOWN

- 1 Engine parts compound
- 2 Skin soother
- 3 Kite flier's need
- 4 Opportunity
- 5 Island porch
- 6 Carte lead-in
- 7 "Precious" Oscar winner
- 8 Dwelling
- 9 Coffee vessel
- 10 Six, in Sicily
- 11 Sizzling
- 16 Puccini opera "— Harbor"
- 20 Name
- 23 Grand tale
- 24 Zilch
- 25 Whack
- 26 Obi
- 27 Utah ski resort
- 28 Cab alternative
- 29 Glutton
- 32 Chemical
- 33 Bottom
- 35 Director Spike
- 36 New Orleans campus
- 38 Actor Kevin
- 39 Lions' prides
- 42 Roman 301
- 43 Breakfast chain
- 44 Regarding
- 45 Colson
- 46 "— been had!"
- 47 Harry Potter pal
- 49 Egg (Pref.)

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	O	S	H		F	L	A	P		G	U	M	
O	S	L	O		E	A	V	E		A	N	O	
S	H	A	R	P	E	N	E	R		R	D	S	
E	A	T	S	A	T				K	U	D	O	S
					E	L		T	H	Y	M	E	
M	O	M	S		M	A	I		A	N	E	W	
A	L	I			A	L	L			E	P	A	
P	E	C	S		I	L	L		B	R	I	G	
					H	O	L	L		M	A		
G	R	E	T	A				P	A	R	O	L	E
L	O	N			S	W	E	E	T	E	N	E	R
A	M	E			T	A	R	O		L	E	A	R
M	A	R			S	C	A	N		Y	I	P	S

6-10

CRYPTOQUIP

EHIPXTH U YPSH PCCHRKCHL
 HSHQG BKHDUDF IYHTT KJBG
 CYPC U'SH JHPQDHL, YPSH U
 QXD CYH FPREUC?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MY NEW ABRASIVE NAIL-FILING BOARD DEFINITELY WON'T LAST VERY LONG. I HAVE A SHORT-TERM EMERY.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals C

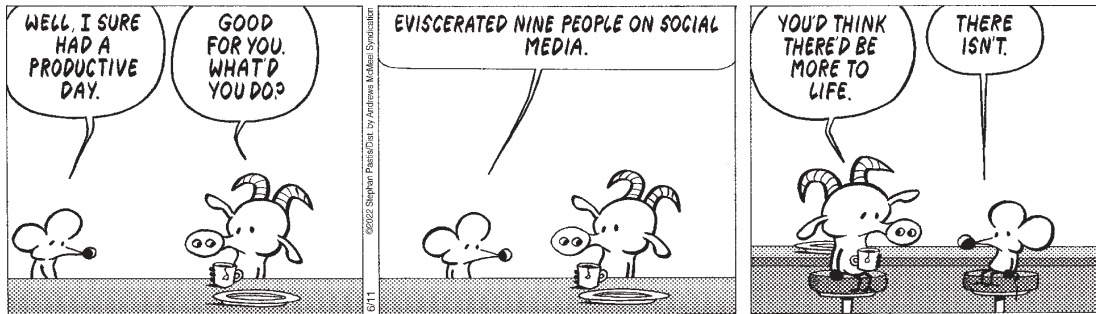
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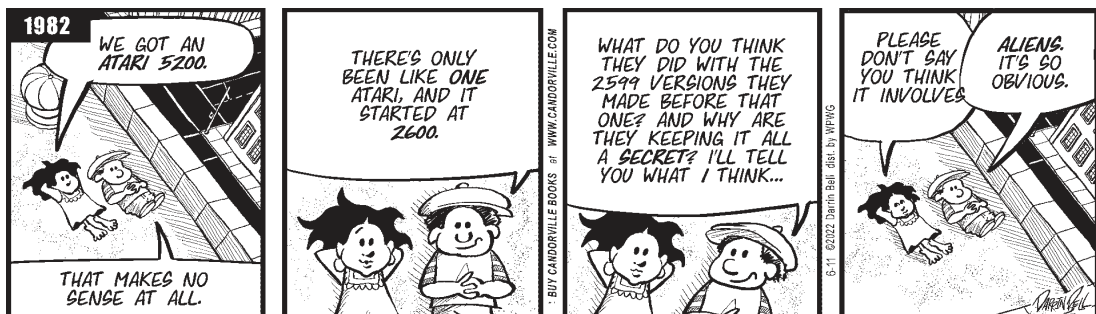
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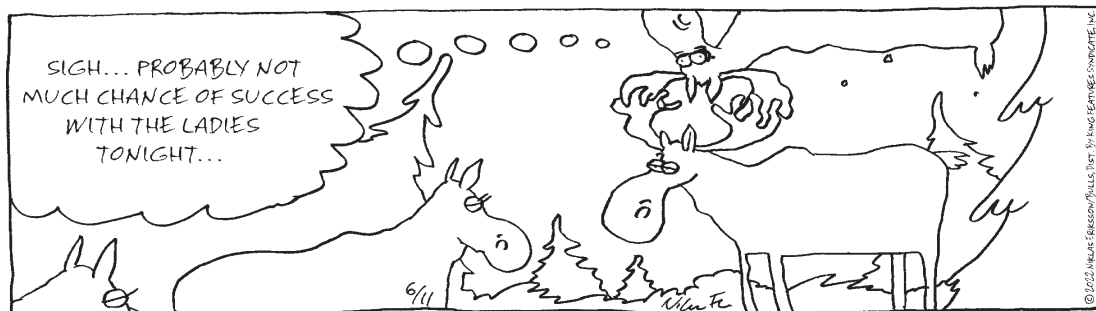
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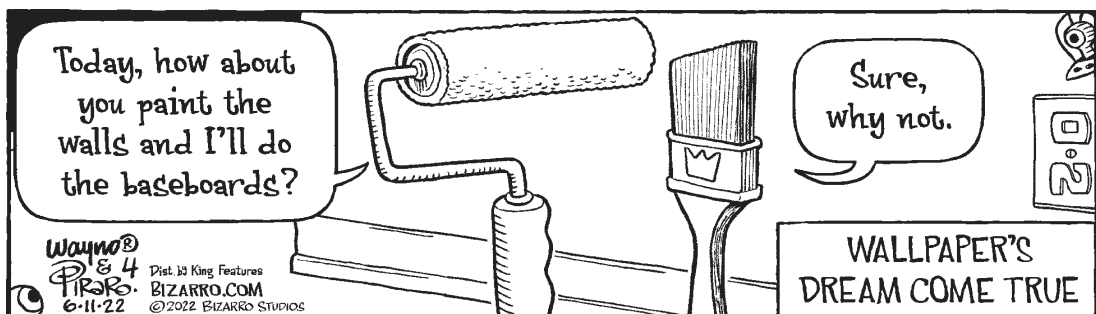
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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			20	21				22	23			
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		38		39		40			41			
42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50			51				52	53				
54							55					
56							57					

ACROSS

- 1 Gold or silver
- 6 Confuses
- 12 Alaskan capital
- 13 "Piece of cake!"
- 14 Like native llamas
- 15 Sikh headgear
- 16 Laugh-a-minute
- 17 Early bed
- 19 Rock's Ocasek
- 20 "Funny!"
- 22 La-la lead-in
- 24 Type squares
- 27 "Chocolat" actor
- 29 Dutch cheese
- 32 Body art facilities
- 35 Love god
- 36 Proboscis
- 37 Scooted
- 38 Corp. execs
- 40 Answer an invite
- 42 Employ
- 44 Bandleader Puente
- 46 Priority Mail org.
- 50 Aquarium favorites
- 52 Dale
- 54 Vain person
- 55 Broaden
- 56 Ancient Greek poet
- 57 Takes five

DOWN

- 1 City bond, for short
- 2 Within (Pref.)
- 3 Pearly whites
- 4 Bond rating
- 5 Noontime meal
- 6 Wine region
- 7 Uncertainty
- 8 Aachen article
- 9 Retriever variety
- 10 Morales of "Ozark"
- 11 Harmonization
- 12 Honey holder
- 18 Friendly relationship
- 21 Commotion
- 23 Seminary subj.
- 24 Tours season

- 25 Ruin the veneer
- 26 Burner locale
- 28 Seder time
- 30 Altar in the sky
- 31 AOL rival
- 33 Recipe abbr.
- 34 Speed (up)
- 39 Hide
- 41 Cheap novels
- 42 Salt Lake City squad
- 43 Video game giant
- 45 Analogy words
- 47 Venetian blind part
- 48 Ballpoints
- 49 Pink Floyd's Barrett
- 51 Shred
- 53 Chopper

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	A	W		C	L	A	M		H	U	S	H
A	L	I		H	A	L	O		O	R	E	O
M	O	N	T	A	N	A	N		U	N	I	T
S	E	D	O	N	A		I	D	S			
			S	C	I		Q	U	E	E	N	S
S	A	U	C	E		H	U	B		P	O	W
A	L	B	A		M	O	E		N	I	N	A
S	T	E		L	O	G		T	A	C	E	T
H	A	R	K	E	N		M	U	D			
			L	E	O		A	L	I	C	I	A
S	I	R	I		M	O	N	A	R	C	H	S
A	V	O	N		E	V	E	N		C	O	T
G	E	N	E		R	O	S	E		I	P	O

6-11

CRYPTOQUIP

QFAP U TGLLZA AUVJACP EGJU
 VUPLQGMF MSTEZGAV QGJF
 TNVZGT LGAJUCB MSLAV,
 GJ'V U ZUQKNZ KUZUKAZ.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE I HAVE ATTEMPTED EVERY OPENING CHESS PLOY THAT I'VE LEARNED, HAVE I RUN THE GAMBIT?
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals F

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

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When the pronoun police come for eighth-graders

BY GEORGE F. WILL

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON

If the pronoun police of Wisconsin's Kiel Area School District were just another woke excrescence on American education, they would be merely local embarrassments. These enforcers are, however, a national disgrace because they are a direct consequence of federal lawlessness with a progressive pedigree.

In April, the district lodged a complaint against three eighth-grade boys for the offense of "mispronouncing," referring to a classmate using the biologically correct pronoun "her" instead of the classmate's preferred "them." This, district officials — supposed educators — said, constitutes "sexual harassment," a Title IX violation.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was enacted long before Congress could have imagined today's progressive dogma that grammar should reflect, through pronouns, the most advanced thinking about gender fluidity. Title IX's operative language says no person "shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination" in education.

This language has been reasonably taken to encompass sexual violence, unwanted touching and such "unwelcome conduct" as persistent spoken sexual innuendo, stalking, etc. Now, however, the Wisconsin district, which is perhaps proud of its progressive improvising, has made this category of conduct elastic enough to encompass mispronouncing. The district's behavior is trickle-down lawlessness that stems from the arrogance and cynicism of the U.S. Education Department.

Making a mockery of Title IX illustrates what some progressive theorists call "dynamic statutory interpretation," meaning

law enforcement entirely untethered from congressional intent — actually, from law. In 2014, Catherine Lhamon, an Education Department assistant secretary for civil rights, sent an explanation of a 2011 "Dear Colleague" letter to people who are in no sense "colleagues" of federal bureaucrats: college administrators. She directed them to comply with 66 pages of "guidance" on sexual harassment policies. Many of the policies produced campus kangaroo courts in which persons — almost always young men — accused of sexual misbehavior are routinely denied due process.

Nationwide, accusers are identified, in the language of prejudgment, as "survivors." The accused are denied the right to question their accusers and can be convicted on a mere "preponderance of the evidence," not evidence beyond a reasonable doubt. By one recent count, there are more than 700 due-process lawsuits from victims of make-believe courts on campuses, seeking justice in real courts.

R. Shep Melnick, a Boston College professor and co-chair of the Harvard Program on Constitutional Government notes this: Lhamon breezily says she resorted to explicating the "Dear Colleague" letter, thereby evading the Administrative Procedure Act's rule-making requirements, because the 66 pages were, in her words, merely "an explanation of what Title IX means." Sixty-six pages of "explanations" that, if not adhered to, can result in federal compliance investigations and termination of the institutions' federal funding.

In 2014, Lamar Alexander, the Tennessee Republican who was a former university president and the senator most conversant with higher education, asked Lhamon who gave her the power to issue detailed, effectively mandatory "explanations." With smug

hauteur, she said: "You did when I was confirmed."

President Joe Biden has brought her back. Although a Senate committee refused to recommend her confirmation as head of the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights, the Senate confirmed her in a 51-50 party-line vote. Her progressive spirit — "social justice" righteousness unrestrained by law — is on display in Wisconsin's Kiel School District.

There, the regnant Lhamonism that has seeped into educational crevices from coast to coast, and from kindergarten through graduate school, has resulted in yet another progressive attempt to supplant free speech with compulsory speech. Fortunately, the three middle-school miscreants accused of "mispronouncing" seem to understand that the best defense is a good offense.

Represented by the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, the boys are arguing that their use of biologically correct, if politically incorrect, pronouns is speech protected by the First Amendment. The Constitution also forbids the district from compelling them to speak as district bureaucrats suddenly — how long ago did they embrace this orthodoxy? — prefer. Furthermore, the institute says it has spoken with another Kiel Area family "whose daughter was recently given an in-school suspension for 'sexual harassment' based on a single statement using an allegedly 'wrong' pronoun — and the statement was said to a *third party*, not even to the allegedly 'misgendered' student."

Perhaps Kiel Area schools can waste time trying to bully children into conformity to this or that fad because the schools have so splendidly accomplished their actual task: education. It might, however, be best if schools that are eager to engage in pronoun policing not even attempt education.

Crime needs to be more than just a gun issue for Biden

BY JENNIFER RUBIN

The Washington Post

The Biden administration has been resistant to pleas even from the president's own party to focus on crime. The moderate think tank Third Way has been stressing the issue as essential to responding to Republicans' cultural attacks. Yet President Joe Biden to date has only been reactive on the issue.

Other Democrats have shown it's better to tackle the issue head-on. Democrat Eric Adams won his hotly contested New York mayor's race almost entirely on the crime issue. As progressive Rep. Ritchie Torres proclaimed this year, "The defund police movement is dead in New York City — and good riddance. And any elected official who's advocating for the abolition and/or even the defunding of police is out of touch with reality and should not be taken seriously." Democrat Cavalier Johnson won the mayor's race in Milwaukee, also emphasizing crime.

But the issue remains a problem for Democrats. On Tuesday, progressive San Franciscans recalled progressive District Attorney Chesa Boudin by a 60% to 40% margin, largely due to the perception that he hasn't addressed crime in the city. The New York Times reports: "The city has been facing persistent property crimes, especially car break-ins and burglaries, but data from the police department showed that many other types of crime, including homicides, have been stable

or declined during the pandemic." Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, real estate tycoon Rick Caruso, relying on the crime and homelessness issue, spent millions to try to beat Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., in the city's mayoral primary. They will face off in the general election.

Biden, for his part, tried to squash the "defund the police" cry from far-left progressives. "We should all agree: The answer is not to defund the police," he said in the State of the Union address. "It's to fund the police." Indeed, his proposed budget includes generous funding for public safety.

Still, Biden talks almost solely about gun legislation when discussing crime. This isn't necessarily wrong; gun safety is a huge part of the crime problem. And Democrats on the ballot have the moral and political high ground on gun safety laws. USA Today reports: "Half of Republicans support stricter gun laws, an exclusive USA TODAY/Ipsos Poll finds, a double-digit increase after a series of horrific mass shootings at schools, stores, streets and houses of worship. The increase in GOP support — from 35% last year to 50% — could boost the prospects for Congress to tighten federal gun laws, an effort that has failed for decades." Second Amendment zealots don't even have Republican voters behind them: "Republicans are more likely to blame 'loose gun laws' for mass shootings in the USA: 43% in the new poll, compared with 27% a year ago." So Biden is

absolutely right to go all-in on gun safety regulations and hold Republicans entirely responsible if Congress fails to pass meaningful legislation.

But voters remain very skeptical that any meaningful reform will get done. Many will see Biden as focusing solely on something they think is virtually impossible and conclude he is not doing anything right now to address crime. Moreover, voters want to do more than just make it harder to get high-powered weaponry. They want more cops and fewer homeless people (which many associate with loss of physical safety), and they know property crimes are also up.

It's frankly political malpractice for the White House not to be leading on this issue, especially since the administration has pushed for public safety funding. While the federal government does not have a huge role in crime-fighting aside from funding, Biden can, at the very least, emphasize his budget requests, go after red-state governors who have made it easier for criminals to get guns and push anti-recidivism programs. If the election results on Tuesday don't push the White House toward a more aggressive stance on crime-fighting, Democrats should be prepared to get clobbered on the issue in November.

Jennifer Rubin writes reported opinion for The Washington Post. She is the author of "Resistance: How Women Saved Democracy from Donald Trump."

SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE SOFTBALL

PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
NYCFC	8	3	2	26	25	10
Philadelphia	6	1	7	25	19	10
CF Montréal	7	5	2	23	28	26
New York	6	3	5	23	24	15
Orlando City	6	5	3	21	17	20
Cincinnati	6	7	1	19	21	25
Inter Miami CF	5	6	3	18	15	22
Charlotte FC	5	8	1	16	13	18
Columbus	4	5	4	16	17	16
Atlanta	4	5	4	16	20	20
New England	4	5	4	16	22	23
Toronto FC	4	7	3	15	21	27
D.C. United	4	7	2	14	17	23
Chicago	2	7	5	11	13	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LAFC	9	3	2	29	29	16
FC Dallas	7	3	4	25	24	13
Real Salt Lake	7	4	4	25	18	19
Austin FC	7	4	3	24	28	18
LA Galaxy	7	5	2	23	17	15
Nashville	6	4	4	22	18	16
Houston	5	6	3	18	17	17
Minnesota	5	6	3	18	15	15
Colorado	5	6	3	18	16	17
Vancouver	5	7	2	17	16	24
Seattle	5	6	1	16	15	16
Portland	3	6	6	15	21	25
San Jose	3	6	5	14	25	32
Sporting KC	3	8	4	13	13	26

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday, June 4

Vancouver 2, Real Salt Lake 1

Saturday's games

New York at Charlotte FC
San Jose at Nashville

Sunday's game

New England at Sporting Kansas City

Tuesday's game

Vancouver at Seattle

Wednesday's game

Orlando City at New England

Saturday, June 18

Los Angeles FC at Seattle
Portland at LA Galaxy
Toronto FC at New York
Charlotte FC at Columbus
Austin FC at CF Montréal
Houston at Orlando City
Cincinnati at Philadelphia
D.C. United at Chicago
Vancouver at FC Dallas
San Jose at Real Salt Lake

Sunday, June 19

Miami at Atlanta
Colorado at New York City FC
Sporting Kansas City at Nashville
Minnesota at New England

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
SD Wave FC	4	2	2	14	12	7
Houston	3	1	3	12	11	3
Chicago	3	1	3	12	11	8
Portland	2	1	4	10	11	7
Angel City FC	3	3	1	10	4	6
Gotham FC	3	2	0	9	5	5
OL Reign	2	2	3	9	5	5
Washington	1	2	5	8	6	7
Louisville	2	3	2	8	6	9
Orlando	2	3	2	8	9	17
Kansas City	1	4	2	5	5	11
North Carolina	1	3	1	4	6	6

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday, June 4

Chicago 1, OL Reign 0
Gotham FC 1, Washington 0
North Carolina 3, Louisville 0
San Diego Wave FC 2, Kansas City 2, tie

Tuesday, June 7

Houston 0, Angel City FC 0, tie

Wednesday's games

Washington 0, Chicago 0, tie
Portland 2, San Diego Wave FC 2, tie

Saturday's games

North Carolina at Washington
Angel City FC at Louisville
Gotham FC at Kansas City

Sunday's games

OL Reign at San Diego Wave FC
Orlando at Chicago
Portland at Houston

Friday, June 17

Louisville at Washington

Saturday, June 18

Chicago at Kansas City
Angel City FC at OL Reign

Sunday, June 19

Orlando at Portland
San Diego Wave FC at Gotham FC
Houston at North Carolina

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Connecticut	10	3	.769	—
Chicago	7	4	.636	2
Washington	8	5	.615	2
Atlanta	7	5	.583	2½
New York	4	8	.333	5½
Indiana	3	11	.214	7½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Las Vegas	10	2	.833	—
Dallas	6	5	.545	3½
Seattle	6	5	.545	3½
Los Angeles	5	7	.417	5
Phoenix	3	8	.273	6½
Minnesota	3	9	.250	7

Wednesday's games

Connecticut 88, Indiana 69
Washington 84, Chicago 82

Thursday's games

No games scheduled.

Friday's games

Chicago at Connecticut
New York at Indiana
Seattle at Dallas
Washington at Minnesota
Atlanta at Phoenix

Saturday's games

Las Vegas at Los Angeles

TENNIS

Valencia International

Wednesday
At Club de Tennis Sporting Club de Tennis

Valencia, Spain
Purse: Euro 92,742
Surface: Red clay
Women's Singles

Round of 16
Julia Grabher, Austria, def. Anastasia Potapova (5), Russia, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4.
Mirjam Bjorklund, Sweden, def. Kristina Kucova (6), Slovakia, 1-6, 6-4, 7-5.
Wang Xiyu, China, def. Rebeka Masarova, Spain, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5.

Women's Doubles
Viktoriya Tomova, Bulgaria, def. Varvara Gracheva (2), Russia, 0-6, 6-3, 6-1.

Quarterfinals
Ekaterine Gorgodze, Georgia, and Irina Bara (1), Romania, def. Diane Parry, France, and Zheng Qinwen, China, 6-0, 6-4.
Aliona Bolsova, Spain, def. Rebeka Masarova, Spain, def. Angela Fita Boluda and Leyre Romero Gormaz, Spain, 6-2, 6-4.

Rothsay Open Nottingham

Wednesday
At Nottingham Tennis Centre

Nottingham, Great Britain
Purse: \$239,477
Surface: Grass
Women's Singles

Round of 16
Tereza Martincova, Czech Republic, def. Magda Linette (8), Poland, 6-2, 7-6 (3).
Zhang Shuai (4), China, def. Jodie Anna Burrage, Britain, 6-2, 7-6 (4).
Viktorija Golubic, Switzerland, def. Heather Watson, Britain, 7-5, 6-2.

Women's Doubles
Katarzyna Kawa, Poland, and Aldila Sutjiadi, Indonesia, def. Alicia Barnett and Olivia Nicholls, Britain, 3-6, 7-5, 10-4.
Sam Stosur, Australia, and Latisha Chan, Taiwan, def. Donna Vekic, Croatia, and Maria Sakkari, Greece, 6-3, 6-3.

Asia Muhammad, United States, and Ena Shibahara (2), Japan, def. Sabrina Santamaria and Catherine Harrison, United States, 6-3, 3-6, 10-3.

Astra Sharma, Australia, and Ingrid Neel, United States, def. Tereza Martincova, Czech Republic, and Magdalena Frech, Poland, 6-4, 6-4.

Monica Niculescu, Romania, and Caroline Dolehide (4), United States, def. Arina Rodionova, Australia, and Nadiia Kichenok, Ukraine, 6-1, 6-1.

Mercedes Cup

Wednesday
At Tennis Club Weissenhof

Stuttgart, Germany
Purse: Euro 692,235
Surface: Grass
Men's Singles

Round of 16
Benjamin Bonzi, France, def. Arthur Rinderknech, France, 7-6 (3), 6-2.
Matteo Berrettini (2), Italy, def. Radu Albot, Moldova, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3.

Men's Doubles
Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, Pakistan, and Aleksandr Nedovyesov, Kazakhstan, def. Filip Polasek, Slovakia, and John Peers (2), Australia, 7-6 (2), 6-4.
Arthur Rinderknech and Benjamin Bonzi, France, def. Gonzalo Escobar, Ecuador, and Ariel Behar, Uruguay, 7-6 (6), 6-7 (8), 10-8.

Quarterfinals
Fabrice Martin, France, and Andreas Mies (4), Germany, def. Nick Kyrgios, Australia, and Alexander Bublik, Kazakhstan, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (4).
Mate Pavic, Croatia, and Hubert Hurkacz (3), Poland, def. Stefanos Tsitsipas and Petros Tsitsipas, Greece, 4-6, 7-6 (3), 10-5.

COLLEGE BASEBALL

NCAA Super Regionals

Best-of-three; x-if necessary

Host school is Game 1 home team; visiting school is Game 2 home team; coin flip determines Game 3 home team

At Knoxville, Tenn.

Friday: Tennessee (56-7) vs. Notre Dame (38-14)

Saturday: Tennessee vs. Notre Dame

x-Sunday: Tennessee vs. Notre Dame

At Greenville, N.C.

Friday: East Carolina (45-19) vs. Texas (45-19)

Saturday: East Carolina vs. Texas

x-Sunday: Texas vs. East Carolina

At College Station, Texas

Friday: Texas A&M (40-18) vs. Louisville (42-19-1)

Saturday: Texas A&M vs. Louisville

x-Sunday: Texas A&M vs. Louisville

At Blacksburg, Va.

Friday: Virginia Tech (44-12) vs. Oklahoma (40-21)

Saturday: Virginia Tech vs. Oklahoma

x-Sunday: Oklahoma vs. Virginia Tech

At Stanford, Calif.

Friday: Stanford (45-15) vs. UConn (49-14)

Saturday: Stanford vs. UConn

x-Sunday: Stanford vs. UConn

At Chapel Hill, N.C.

Friday: North Carolina (42-20) vs. Arkansas

Saturday: North Carolina vs. Arkansas

x-Sunday: North Carolina vs. Arkansas

At Hattiesburg, Miss.

Friday: Southern Miss (47-17) vs. Mississippi (35-22)

Saturday: Southern Miss vs. Mississippi

x-Sunday: Mississippi vs. Southern Miss

At Corvallis, Ore.

Friday: Oregon St. (47-16) vs. Auburn (40-19)

Saturday: Oregon St. vs. Auburn

x-Sunday: Auburn vs. Oregon St.

DEALS

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball

American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Activated RHP Austin Voth. Designated INF Chris Owings for assignment. Reinstated RHP Spenser Watkins from the 15-day IL then optioned him to Norfolk (IL).

BOSTON RED SOX — Placed INF Kike Hernandez on the 10-day IL. Recalled INF Jonathan Arauz from Worcester (IL).

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Claimed RHP Parker Markel off waivers from Oakland then optioned him to Charlotte (IL).

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Recalled INF Jack Mayfield from Salt Lake (PCL). Selected the contract of OF Dillon Thomas from Salt Lake. Optioned LHP Jose Suarez to Salt Lake. Placed INF Luis Rengifo on paternity list. Designated RHP Ty Buttrey for assignment.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Selected the contract of LHP Jared Koenig from Las Vegas (PCL). Optioned RHP Domingo Tapia to Las Vegas.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Reinstated SS Carlos Correa from the COVID-19 IL. Selected the contract of RHP Jharel Cotton from St. Paul (IL).

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Recalled RHP Edwin Uceta from the taxi squad. Optioned LHP Tyler Gilbert to Reno (PCL). Transferred INF Nick Ahmed to the 60-day IL.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Reinstated SS Willy Adames from the 10-day IL. Optioned INF/OF Pablo Reyes to Nashville (IL).

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Acquired C Austin Wynns from Philadelphia in exchange for LHP Michael Plassmeyer and cash considerations. Optioned C Joey Bart to Sacramento (PCL).

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Recalled LHP Sam Clay from Rochester (IL). Optioned RHP Joan Adon to Rochester.

BASKETBALL

Women's National Basketball Association

ATLANTA DREAM — Acquired G Asia Durr from New York in exchange for F Megan Walker and exclusive draft rights to F Raquel Carrera.

LOS ANGELES SPARKS — Activated G Kristi Toliver.

NEW YORK LIBERTY — Signed G Marine Johannes to a remainder-of-season contract. Waived F Megan Walker.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

BUFFALO BILLS — Released OL Will Ulmer.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Signed TE Jake Ferguson.

DETROIT LIONS — Placed CB Jermaine Waller on the reserve/retired list.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Waived WR DaeSean Hamilton with an injury designation. Signed WR Chad Beebe.



SUE OGROCKI/AP

Oklahoma's Taylor Snow celebrates her home run against Texas during the first inning of Game 1 of the championship series Wednesday at the Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma whips Texas in Game 1

BY CLIFF BRUNT
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Jocelyn Alo and Tiare Jennings fueled Oklahoma's record-setting offensive burst to help the Sooners move a victory away from successfully defending their Women's College World Series title.

Each hit two home runs and topped seeded Texas 16-1 on Wednesday night in Game 1 of the best-of-three championship series.

"It was like an avalanche," Texas coach Mike White said. "Once it starts going, it starts gathering steam, and it's harder to get it to stop."

With former Oklahoma basketball star Trae Young and Sooners football coach Brent Venables present, Oklahoma (58-3) set a World Series record with six home runs and matched records for runs and victory margin.

A championship series-record crowd of 12,234 watched the show.

"People want to watch us play," Alo said. "They love to watch us play. They love to watch us dominate. I think it's super cool. It's only going to get better from here."

Alo set a single-game World Series mark with five runs and now has set the single-series record for runs scored with 11. She went 3-for-3 and increased her batting average to a nation-leading .527.

Alo and Jennings each have five home runs in the World Series, surpassing the single-series record of four set by several players, including Alo last year. Alo increased her career Division I homer record to 122, and Jennings drove in five runs to set a record for RBIs in a series with 14.

They had plenty of help — Oklahoma had 16 hits.

"They're really frickin' good,"

Scoreboard

World Series
At Oklahoma City
Championship Series
(Best-of-three; x-if necessary)
Oklahoma 1, Texas 0
Wednesday: Oklahoma 16, Texas 1
Thursday: Oklahoma vs. Texas
x-Friday: Oklahoma vs. Texas

Texas catcher Mary Iakopo said. "Hats off to their one through nine."

Alo's second homer was her 34th of the season, matching the Oklahoma school record she set last season. Oklahoma coach Patty Gasso said she now expects homers when Alo steps to the plate.

"It's ridiculous that I'm thinking that way," she said. "But I see her at practice every day. I see what she's capable of. It's just so tough to beat her. She's so strong."

Oklahoma escaped a bit of difficulty in the first and controlled the game from there. Hope Trautwein (22-1) gave up just two hits and a run in five innings, and Nicole May allowed just one hit in two shutout innings.

Bella Dayton had two doubles for Texas.

NFL

Run it back: Pats' Harris excited to return to the field

By GLEN FARLEY
Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Lining up at his customary position in the New England Patriots' backfield on Tuesday, Damien Harris felt a rush of adrenaline.

"It's a lot of fun just having the opportunity to come out here with this team, having all our guys back just brings all the more excitement," the 5-foot-11, 213-pound running back said following the Patriots' first practice at their mandatory mini-camp.

"Every time you touch the ball you want good results to happen, so you've got to practice good habits, practice good fundamentals, and let the rest take care of the rest. But, like I said, (it's a) really exciting time right now having all of our guys back, being able to come out here for the first time as a collective team, as a collective unit. So I'm really excited to be out here, and it was a good day."

Good things generally happened when Harris touched the ball last season as he gained a career-high 929 yards on 202 carries (an average of 4.6 yards per attempt) and scored 15 touchdowns while appearing in 15 regular-season games.

Harris and rookie running back Rhamondre Stevenson (133 carries for 606 yards and five TDs) formed a one-two punch that led a New England rushing game that ranked eighth in the NFL in 2021.

A third-round pick out of Alabama in the 2019 draft and in his fourth season with the team, Harris will be part of a Patriots offense that is undergoing major change.

Josh McDaniels, the team's long-time offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, is gone, having



Harris

left earlier this offseason to become the head coach of the Las Vegas Raiders.

While a new offensive coordinator hasn't been announced, head coach Bill Belichick, former Detroit Lions head coach Matt Patricia (officially listed as a senior football adviser by New England) and former New York Giants head coach Joe Judge (listed as an offensive assistant by the team) have all been seen taking hands-on approaches at the organized team activities that preceded the start of Tuesday's mini-camp.

With the changes in the coaching staff there has been a change in the terminology the team uses on offense.

"Every year things change and you've got new players, new coaches, new schemes sometimes, and every day I come in with the mentality to just learn and improve and do whatever I can," said Harris. "So whatever changes, whatever tweaks need to be made, that's up to the coaches. They make those decisions."

"As a player, it's my job to come in with that mentality, ready to learn, be able to adapt, be able to handle anything that they throw our way, so whatever adjustments they make they make. Whatever the game plan is, whatever they ask us to do out here during these OTA (and mini-camp) practices, that's what we've got to do."

For Harris, it's all the continuation of a learning process.

"You never know it all, so whether the schemes stay the same or change it doesn't really matter because you're always going to have to learn the day after the day after the day so it's just the mentality," he said. "Whether things change or stay the same, my job is to come in here and be my best and be ready to learn, be ready to adapt, just be ready to come out here and do my job."



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

New England Patriots running back Damien Harris takes part in drills at the team's practice facility in Foxborough, Mass. He led the team last season with 929 yards on 202 carries and had 15 touchdowns.



PHOTOS BY JOHN LOCHER/AP

Above: New Las Vegas Raiders head coach Josh McDaniels watches practice Tuesday in Henderson, Nev. Below: Quarterback Derek Carr and the rest of the team's offense are learning McDaniels' new offense.

McDaniels patient as Carr, offense learn new system

By W.G. RAMIREZ
Associated Press

HENDERSON, Nev. — First-year Las Vegas Raiders coach Josh McDaniels knows patience is the most important thing for him and his staff right now.

Especially with a ninth-year veteran leading a retooled offense.

"Our system is different than anything I've been in before," quarterback Derek Carr said Tuesday after the first day of mandatory minicamp. "I see why it was so successful."

Like everyone else who has spoken about the Raiders' new regime, Carr is back to square one in learning the unit he'll direct this fall when the team navigates one of the league's toughest schedules.

Carr's college wideout and close friend Davante Adams has joined the quarterback's leading targets from the past three seasons, Hunter Renfrow and Darren Waller, and now it's a matter of getting everyone on the same page in a new playbook.

And as patient as McDaniels may be, the pressure is on a little more than 13 weeks before Las Vegas opens the season at the Los Angeles Chargers.

"He's very demanding," Carr said.

The good thing for him, adapting is nothing new. Carr has had to learn from a new coach a few times during his tenure. From going through two head coaches his rookie season to three years with Jack Del Rio to Jon Gruden for four and a half seasons, to Rich Bisaccia midway through last year's tumultuous campaign.

This time around, he's appreciative of a system he's admired for quite some time.

"I was always a fan of (New England) coach (Bill) Belichick and I was very intrigued by the things that they would do schematically," Carr said. "Just being in it and learning it, the details of it. Having the OTAs to grind through, that has been huge, but drawing on past experiences helps me. ... We can move on faster to get to other things. Hopefully, that'll help us get everything in a speedy process, but I'm still learning like everybody else."

Like the entire offensive line, a unit that needs to



improve after struggling in 2021. The Raiders allowed the 11th-most sacks (44) and rushed for the fifth-fewest yards (1,617) last season. Their 3.9 yards per attempt were tied for fourth lowest in the NFL.

"There's a lot of new stuff to install and (offensive line coach Carmen Brucillo has) been doing a great job explaining it, getting us on the right page," Kolton Miller said. "Young guys, they're trying to absorb as much as they can. And our job as old guys is we're trying to show them the ropes."

McDaniels said there is no prioritization in terms of improvement and tweaking things in terms of the units within the offense. Not yet at least, as he wants to be able to add physical and mental aspects that will challenge each player so he can see their ability to withstand what's thrown their way during training camp.

Right now McDaniels said he's trying to learn the same way he expects his players to assimilate during spring ball with plenty of work to do before camp opens in mid-July.

"I think there's an overall priority to try and understand the foundation of our system, the techniques we would ask each of them to use," said McDaniels. "We'll know a lot more once spring is over and we'll have a chance to digest that information. Then we'll reprioritize certain things when we head into training camp."

NFL/GOLF



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp, left, talks with quarterback Matthew Stafford, right, and wide receiver Lance McCutcheon during minicamp on Wednesday. Los Angeles signed Kupp to an extension.

NFL BRIEFS

Rams give Super Bowl MVP Kupp extension

Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — Super Bowl MVP Cooper Kupp agreed to a three-year contract extension with the Los Angeles Rams on Wednesday after a spectacular season in which he led the NFL in every major receiving category.

The Rams announced the deal just two days after signing Aaron Donald to a massive extension. Kupp's new extension is worth \$75 million guaranteed, and it brings his total deal to \$110 million through 2026 when adding the two years remaining on his first extension, which was signed in September 2020.

Kupp had one of the greatest seasons in football history last year in his first pairing with new Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford. Kupp led the NFL with 145 receptions for 1,947 yards and 16 touchdowns for Los Angeles, earning the Associated Press' Offensive Player of the Year award as only the fourth player since the merger to lead the league in all three categories.

Duvernay-Tardif putting NFL career on hold again

MONTREAL — Laurent Duvernay-Tardif is putting his NFL career on hold — again.

The 31-year-old Canadian offensive lineman told The Canadian Press on Wednesday that he will begin a residency program at a Montreal-area hospital next month.

Laurent Duvernay-Tardif has been an unrestricted NFL free agent since March after finishing last season with the New York Jets. He said he's not retiring from football, just taking care of medical requirements needed to become a physician. The guard plans to reassess both his football interest as well as that of NFL clubs in September.

"I'm going to prioritize medicine ... and we'll see in September if there's a fit," Duvernay-Tardif said in a telephone interview. "Af-

ter eight years in the NFL, and I don't want to sound pretentious by saying this, but I think I've earned the right to do what's best for me and not just for football and kind of bet on myself a little bit."

Shortly after helping the Kansas City Chiefs win the Super Bowl in February 2020, Duvernay-Tardif became the first NFL player to opt out of the following season, leaving the team to battle the COVID-19 pandemic while working at a Montreal long-term care facility.

Browns excuse Mayfield, Watson situation expands

BEREA, Ohio — Deshaun Watson's complex legal situation has the Cleveland Browns in limbo and unclear about the quarterback's immediate future.

They have a better handle on Baker Mayfield's.

The team said Wednesday that Mayfield, who lost his job when the Browns traded for and signed Watson in March to a \$230 million contract, has been excused from next week's mandatory minicamp.

"Obviously that was a decision made between our organization, Baker and Baker's team," coach Kevin Stefanski said following an organized team activities practice. "Felt like that was the best decision for both sides."

Mayfield remains on the Browns' roster while the team tries to trade the No. 1 overall pick from 2018. Mayfield, who started 59 games over the past four seasons and led Cleveland to a playoff win in 2021, has been estranged from the team since the Browns publicly pursued Watson.

While Mayfield's situation is headed toward a resolution, Watson's continues to change.

Now facing 24 civil lawsuits — and potential NFL discipline — from massage therapists accusing him of sexual misconduct during sessions while he played for Houston, Watson practiced amid the release of new details contained in a report by The New York Times.

Saudi-paid players not eligible for PGA Tour

Commissioner's ban might not be permanent, won't affect US Open, other majors

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

Dustin Johnson, Phil Mickelson and other PGA Tour members who teed off in the Saudi-funded golf league Thursday are no longer eligible for PGA Tour events under penalties Commissioner Jay Monahan shared soon after the first tee shot was struck.

Still to be determined is whether those players are ever welcome back.

The ban includes participation in the Presidents Cup, which for the International team is determined by the world ranking.

The USGA already has said eligible players can still compete in the U.S. Open next week. The PGA Tour does not run the majors.

In a memo sent to tour members, Monahan said that even if players resigned from the tour ahead of the first LIV Golf Invitational outside London, they will not be allowed to play PGA Tour events as a nonmember by getting a sponsor exemption.

Ten players have resigned from the PGA Tour, a list that includes Johnson and Sergio Garcia. Mickelson, who earned lifetime membership with his 45 PGA Tour titles, has not.

"These players have made their choice for their own financial-based reasons," Monahan wrote. "But they can't demand the same PGA Tour membership benefits, considerations, opportunities and platform as you. The expectation disrespects you, our fans and our

partners."

LIV Golf, run by Greg Norman and funded by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, responded to the tour's decision by calling it vindictive and divisive.

"It's troubling that the tour, an organization dedicated to creating opportunities for golfers to play the game, is the entity blocking golfers from playing," LIV Golf said. "This certainly is not the last word on this topic. The era of free agency is beginning as we are proud to have a full field of players joining us in London, and beyond."

At issue is players competing without a conflicting event release from the PGA Tour.

Players typically receive three such releases a year for tournaments overseas, but Monahan denied releases for the LIV Golf Invitational because it is an eight-tournament series that has five events in the United States.

The tour does not allow releases for events in North America.

"We have followed the tournament regulations from start to finish in responding to those players who have decided to turn their backs on the PGA Tour by willfully violating a regulation," he wrote.

Monahan said the players who resigned will have their names removed from the PGA Tour standings — FedEx Cup and Presidents Cup — after this week. He said the tour will make sure those who haven't resigned will not affect rankings on various lists of tour

players.

Questions remain, however, such as whether players can ever return.

The first test figures to be the Travelers Championship in Connecticut, the week after the U.S. Open. Johnson was among those listed in the field.

The LIV Golf Invitational was being streamed on YouTube and Facebook. Before the opening round, Norman said he was thrilled to see an effort 30 years in the making come to fruition.

He tried to start a World Golf Tour in the 1990s for only the elite players and had a TV contract lined up until the PGA Tour quashed the moment with support from Arnold Palmer. Norman didn't realize until too late that he didn't have as much support from the players as he thought. That circuit never got off the ground.

This one did, with the backing of riches the likes of which golf has never seen. The Daily Telegraph reported that Johnson received \$150 million — more than Tiger Woods' career PGA Tour earnings — just for signing up. Mickelson did not deny reports that he got \$200 million.

Each tournament offers \$25 million in prize money, with \$4 million for the individual winner. The PGA Tour's richest event is The Players Championship at \$20 million. The Canadian Open this week, which has five of the top-10 players in the world, has an \$8.7 million purse.



ALASTAIR GRANT/AP

Dustin Johnson, left, and Phil Mickelson greet each other on the first tee Thursday during the first round of the inaugural LIV Golf Invitational at the Centurion Club in St. Albans, England.

HORSE RACING

Rich Strike highlights lack of diversity

Long-shot Derby winner shared stage with handler, one of few Black men remaining in sport

By GARY B. GRAVES
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — When Rich Strike bolted into horse racing's spotlight in a little over two minutes with his Kentucky Derby upset victory, he shared the stage with his handler, who has long toiled in the shadows constantly tending to the champion colt.

Rich Strike's attention stems from winning as a nearly 81-1 long shot, but groom Jerry Dixon Jr.'s newfound recognition comes from being one of few Black horsemen left in the sport once dominated by people who look like him.

"I totally understand it because I was looking at something about the Derby and I saw how there were Blacks in the beginning," said Dixon, 31 and a fourth-generation horseman who works with his father — trainer Jerry Sr. — for Eric Reed, who trains Rich Strike.

"And then years afterward, you can see the change, like we were slowly fading away."

A lack of diversity is one of the biggest obstacles to growth in horse racing, along with inconsistent safety and medication standards. The government stepped in to address safety and doping concerns, but there is no national program to increase diversity — by gender or race — in the industry.

That wasn't always the case for African-Americans, who were a key part of early Derby history and thoroughbred racing.

Black jockeys won 15 of the first 28 Derbys with Isaac Murphy winning the marquee race three times from 1884-91 before Willie Simms and Jimmy Winkfield each won twice between 1986 to 1902. Black people also owned and trained thoroughbreds through the early 20th century before segregation and Jim Crow laws in the South pushed many away from horse racing by restricting jockey licensing and ownership.

That history is fairly well known, but what's new is how the few members of the Black community still engaged in the sport seem to be shrinking.

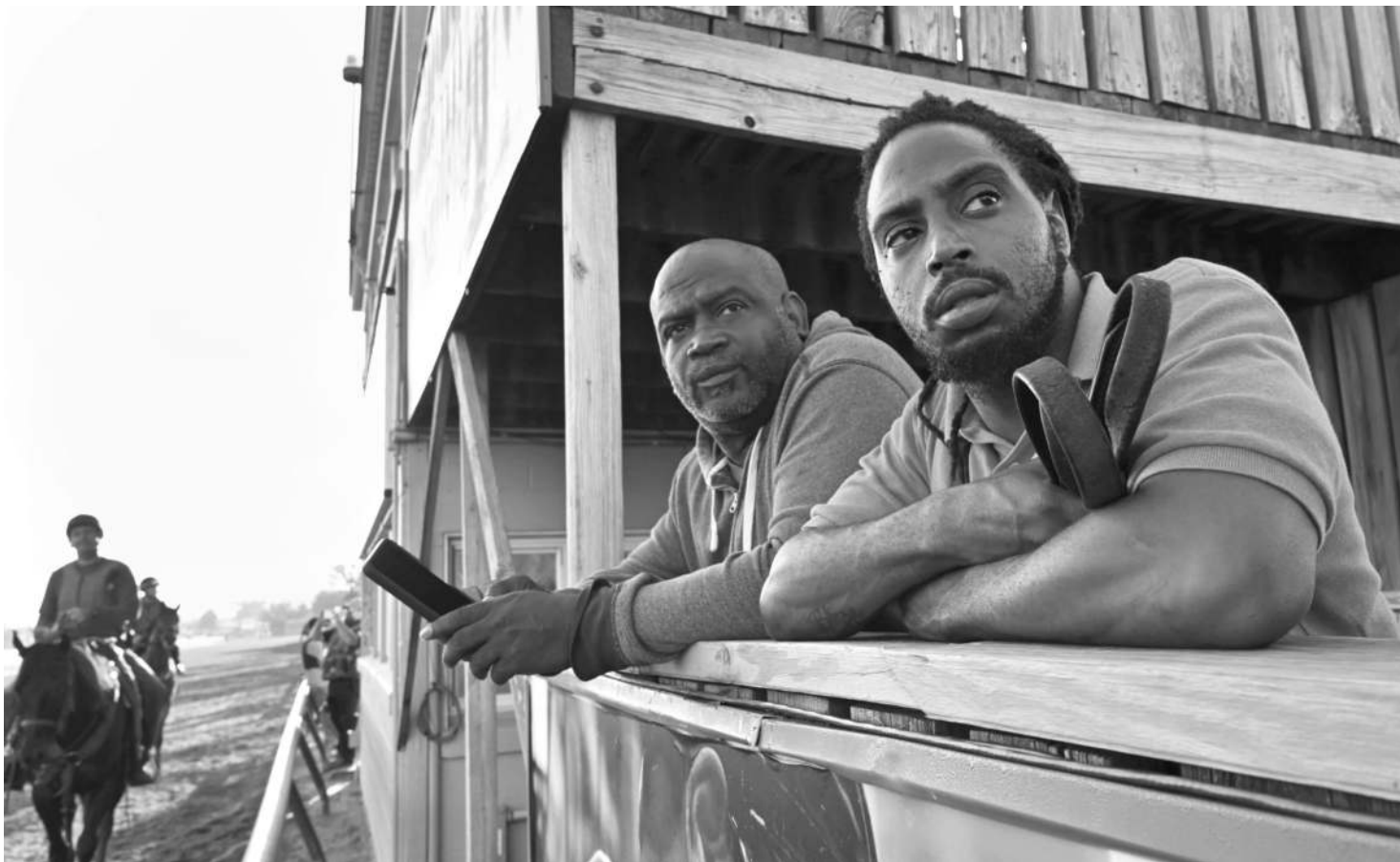
A handful of Black horsemen can be seen around the backside barns of tracks working as trainers, grooms and hot walkers, but their numbers are scarce compared to the overwhelming presence of Latino workers.

With no governing body in horse racing, exact numbers are not available. However, no one disputes the shift in demographics.

"What the racism did in America, Caucasian people didn't want to see Black people have stuff like that," said historian and horseman John Taylor Jr.

"And as time went by and Blacks stopped taking an interest in the sport and stopped working on the backside, that's when you started seeing the (Latinos) coming in. The jobs that they're doing now, we used to do."

Economics and the time demands of tending to horses are factors often cited in the low number of Black and white people working in the barns. But while Saturday's Belmont Stakes — the last leg of the Triple Crown — pays a prize purse of \$1.5 million, everyday races are much less lucrative with smaller payouts that must be divided multiple ways among owners, trainers and workers.



PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/AP

Jerry Dixon Jr., right, trainer of Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike, watches the horse as his father, Jerry Dixon Sr., times the workout around Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky., on May 29. Dixon Jr., a fourth-generation horseman who works with his father, is one of a handful of Black horsemen who can be seen around the barns of tracks working as trainers, grooms and hot walkers.

It does not make for a lavish lifestyle. Many backside workers at Churchill Downs live in dormitories near the barns or above them. Compared to other industries that pay higher wages and offer set hours with health benefits, horse racing is a daily job that requires getting up well before sunrise to train and care for horses. Then, coming back in the afternoon to do it again. Days off are hard to come by.

Horsemen interviewed for this story declined to discuss wage rates, pay scales and benefits — which can vary. They are quick to



Dixon walks Kentucky Derby winner Rich Strike around his barn with exercise rider Gabriel Lagunes up. The number of Black horsemen is scarce compared to the large presence of Latino workers.

"The horsemanship has not been passed down from generation to generation as it once was."

Greg Harbut

Third generation horseman

point out that horse racing is not for everybody.

Horsemen such as the Dixons and trainer Mark Simms Jr. say they do it for love of the animals and the sport. Not to mention, it's in their blood.

"My grandpa would have told you that I learned how to walk walking over towards the barn," said Simms, whose great-grandfather, grandfather and uncle are among several relatives in racing.

"You can go to Target and can probably make 15 bucks an hour or something like that. And you work for five days a week," Simms said. "This really is something that you have to have a passion for to do, to get up and do it every day."

The stables are an entry point into horse racing, but Greg Harbut is working to increase the involvement of Black people in all phases of the sport, including thoroughbred ownership and management.

The third-generation horseman and partner Ray Daniels comprise leadership of the Ed Brown Society and Living The Dream Stables, a thoroughbred syndicate comprised of minority ownership. The two partnered on colt Necker Island, who finished ninth in the 2020 Kentucky Derby.

EBS recently partnered with Churchill Downs for an internship program to follow up a previous pairing with the Stronach Group that owns Baltimore's Pimlico Race

Course and Santa Anita Park in California. The Society has two college interns currently working at Santa Anita and looks to introduce current and future generations to horse racing.

"When you look at a lot of minorities, they've got two to three generations removed where they couldn't even go to someone to get the history, the horsemanship or have a mentor to come up with," said Harbut, whose great-grandfather, Will Harbut, was a groom to legendary thoroughbred Man o'War.

"And that's really what's missing," Harbut said. "The horsemanship has not been passed down from generation to generation as it once was."

But the involvement of the Dixons, Harbut and Simms demonstrate it's still there. And they hope their dedication to the sport in different capacities helps raise awareness in the Black community.

Rich Strike's stunning Derby win has certainly provided a payoff for Jerry Dixon Jr. on many levels.

"I know it's big for our culture because we need a different way, a different view of things to try something that most people don't like to step out of the comfort zone for," said Dixon, who aims to be a trainer like his dad.

"Horse racing saved my life. I don't know where I would be without horse racing and to top it off, to be involved with a Derby winner is a dream come true."

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	40	16	.714	—
Tampa Bay	33	23	.589	7
Toronto	33	23	.589	7
Boston	30	27	.526	10½
Baltimore	24	33	.421	16½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	33	25	.569	—
Cleveland	26	26	.500	4
Chicago	26	28	.481	5
Detroit	23	33	.411	9
Kansas City	18	37	.327	13½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	36	21	.632	—
Los Angeles	27	31	.466	9½
Texas	26	30	.464	9½
Seattle	26	31	.456	10
Oakland	20	38	.345	16½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	38	21	.644	—
Atlanta	30	27	.526	7
Philadelphia	27	29	.482	9½
Miami	24	30	.444	11½
Washington	21	37	.362	16½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	33	25	.569	—
St. Louis	32	25	.561	½
Pittsburgh	24	30	.444	7
Chicago	23	33	.411	9
Cincinnati	20	36	.357	12
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	36	20	.643	—
San Diego	35	22	.614	1½
San Francisco	30	25	.545	5½
Arizona	27	31	.466	10
Colorado	24	32	.429	12

- Wednesday's games**
 Detroit 3, Pittsburgh 1
 Kansas City 8, Toronto 4
 Cleveland 4, Texas 0
 Seattle 6, Houston 3
 Atlanta 13, Oakland 2
 Tampa Bay 11, St. Louis 3
 Minnesota 8, N.Y. Yankees 1
 L.A. Dodgers 4, Chicago White Sox 1
 Boston 1, L.A. Angels 0
 Chicago Cubs at Baltimore, ppd.
 Arizona 7, Cincinnati 0
 Miami 2, Washington 1, 10 innings
 Philadelphia 10, Milwaukee 0
 San Francisco 2, Colorado 1, 10 innings
 San Diego 13, N.Y. Mets 2
- Thursday's games**
 St. Louis at Tampa Bay
 L.A. Dodgers at Chicago White Sox
 Oakland at Cleveland
 N.Y. Yankees at Minnesota
 Baltimore at Kansas City
 Boston at L.A. Angels
 Arizona at Cincinnati
 Philadelphia at Milwaukee
 Colorado at San Francisco
 Washington at Miami
 Pittsburgh at Atlanta
- Friday's games**
 Chicago Cubs (Miley 1-0) at N.Y. Yankees (Severino 4-1)
 Oakland (Blackburn 5-2) at Cleveland (McKenzie 3-5)
 Toronto (Berríos 4-2) at Detroit (Rodriguez 0-1)
 Baltimore (Zimmermann 2-4) at Kansas City (Heasley 0-3)
 Miami (López 4-2) at Houston (Garcia 3-4)
 Tampa Bay (Rasmussen 5-2) at Minnesota (Smeltzer 2-0)
 Texas (Otto 4-2) at Chicago White Sox (Martin 0-2)
 N.Y. Mets (Megill 4-2) at L.A. Angels (Lorenzen 5-3)
 Boston (Hill 2-3) at Seattle (Gonzales 3-6)
 Arizona (Gallen 4-1) at Philadelphia (Gibson 3-2)
 Milwaukee (Ashby 1-4) at Washington (Fedde 3-4)
 Pittsburgh (Contreras 1-0) at Atlanta (Strider 1-2)
 Cincinnati (Castillo 2-3) at St. Louis (Pallante 1-0)
 Colorado (Kuhl 4-2) at San Diego (Mugrove 6-0)
 L.A. Dodgers (Buehler 6-2) at San Francisco (TBD)

Calendar
July 17-19 — Amateur draft, Los Angeles.
July 19 — All-Star Game, Los Angeles.
July 24 — Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, Cooperstown, N.Y.

Pérez back in Texas in top form

11-year vet is the MLB leader with 1.56 ERA, has made nine consecutive quality starts

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS
 Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Martín Pérez was nearly a year from making his big league debut with the Texas Rangers and pitching in 2011 at Triple-A Round Rock, where one of the catchers was a future MLB manager.

“He was real young ... Very well-thought of by the Rangers and all of baseball. A big prospect, super talented,” said Tampa Bay manager Kevin Cash, who then was in his last season as a player. “I think what we saw in Round Rock was if this young kid can stay healthy, he’s going to have a pretty good career.”

Now in his 11th big-league season, and back in Texas after three seasons away, Pérez is having the best stretch of his career. The 31-year-old left-hander went into Thursday as the MLB leader with his 1.56 ERA. His nine consecutive quality starts have matched the longest in Rangers history, with the only longer active streak in the majors 10 in a row by San Diego’s Joe Musgrove.

Pérez was the American League pitcher of the month in May, when on the final day he threw seven scoreless innings against Tampa Bay. Pérez retired the last 16 Rays batters he faced after taking a 97 mph liner off his right leg.

In his only June start so far, Pérez gave up two runs over six innings in a no-decision against Seattle. He allowed his first homer of the season but worked out of an early bases-loaded jam without a run scoring and left with Sunday’s game tied at 2.

“The old Martin maybe would have gotten frustrated, and when it was bases loaded and one out, wouldn’t have been able to make pitches,” Rangers manager Chris Woodward said, calling it one of the lefty’s most impressive performances in a season full of them.

Before that, Pérez had gone at least six innings in eight consecutive starts while allowing no more than one earned run. He threw a complete-game shutout at Houston and also had seven scoreless innings at Philadelphia.

“I think maybe mentally I’m stronger and have more experience,” Pérez said.

Signed by the Rangers as a 16-year-old out of Venezuela in 2007, Pérez was 21 for his big league debut in June 2012. He was 43-49 with a 4.63 ERA in Texas, and had Tommy John surgery in 2014, before going to Minnesota in free agency for the 2019 season. He spent the past two seasons in Boston, where he was dropped from the Red Sox rotation in early August and finished last year with 14



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Texas Rangers starting pitcher Martin Pérez celebrates after a game against the Houston Astros on May 20 in Houston. The Rangers won 3-0.



DARREN YAMASHITA/AP

Pérez reacts after the seventh inning against the Oakland Athletics on May 26. Pérez is having the best stretch of his career in his return to Texas with an MLB-best 1.54 ERA.

relief appearances.

“From last year to this year, I’m not giving too much credit to the hitters. I just go out there and

throw my pitches where I want it,” he said. “And I think the focus that I have on my bullpens right now, I think has changed everything. Be-

cause what I’m doing in the bullpen, I’m just trying to bring into the game. ... I’m just trying to pitch like I’m in the game, same attitude, same adrenaline.”

The Rangers signed free agent Jon Gray to a \$56 million, four-year contract in December before the MLB lockout to be their No. 1 starter. Pérez got a \$4 million deal at the start of spring training, with the expectation that he could be a dependable starter in a rotation filled with young pitchers.

Pérez lost his first two starts while allowing seven runs over eight innings, but the team’s oldest starting pitcher has a 0.88 ERA (six earned runs in 61½ innings) in his nine starts since. His 1.56 ERA overall is the lowest in Washington Senators/Rangers franchise history for a pitcher in his first 11 starts of a season.

“He feels like he’s executing pitches at a more consistent rate so far this year,” Cash said. “He’s probably a little different pitcher than he was when he was 20 years old throwing 97, 98 miles an hour. There’s more pitchability there.”

Mariners manager Scott Servais was in player development for the Rangers when they were scouting the teenaged Pérez and signed him.

“So I’ve seen him from Day 1, good competitor, and he’s changed over time,” Servais said. “But his bread-and-butter pitch is his sinker and his changeup ... the command has probably been as good as it’s ever been for him right now, being able to move the ball to both sides of the plate.”

NHL PLAYOFF/AUTO RACING

Gritty Landeskog leads Avs back to final

Colorado leans on longtime captain to provide praise or kick in the rear

BY PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

DENVER — Gabriel Landeskog kept his patience even as everyone scattered in every direction at practice. Not exactly paying attention, the players were acting like a bunch of 2- and 3-year-olds — because they were.

Coach Gabe kept things calm while he was in charge of his young daughter's soccer team this spring. Captain Gabe radiates cool as the longtime leader of a Colorado Avalanche team headed to the Stanley Cup Final for the first time since 2001.

He's grown up with the "C" emblazoned on his jersey, taking over the responsibility at just 19 years, 286 days old. He's learned all about leadership in the decade he's been captain, most notably this: Just be himself, because his work ethic carries a lot of clout.

It's a style that served another longtime captain well in Joe Sakic, who led the Avalanche to a pair of Stanley Cup titles (1996, '01) and is now the team's general manager.

"If you're going to start faking things and trying to pretend to be something you're not, people will see right through that," said the 29-year-old Landeskog, whose team is waiting to face either two-time defending Stanley Cup champion Tampa Bay or the New York Rangers. "Be yourself and things will follow."

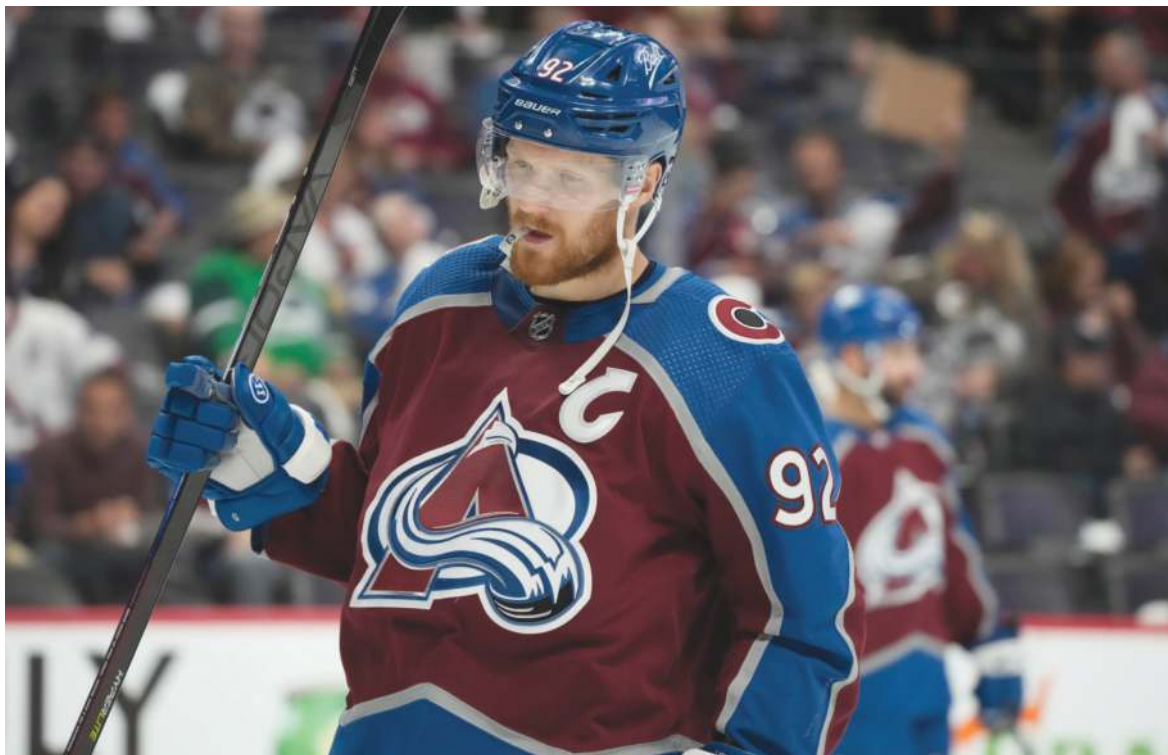
Even strong leaders, though, seek advice on complicated issues. Like this: About to be presented the Clarence S. Campbell Bowl for winning the Western Conference after a sweep of Edmonton, Landeskog turned to Sakic for guidance. Should players put their hands on this piece of hardware or steer clear in keeping with hockey superstition that it's bad luck when a more important trophy is still possible.

"He was like, 'Do whatever you want. Touch it. Don't touch it. It doesn't matter,'" recounted Landeskog, whose team posed with the trophy — and did touch it, for the record — but didn't bring it into the locker room. "It's important to enjoy the journey and important to enjoy the moment."

His responsibilities include providing grit on a line that features Nathan MacKinnon and Valeri Nichushkin. The left winger hangs out in the tough places, often in front of goaltenders, and he sticks up for his teammates on the ice and off.

"Probably the best captain I've played for," said defenseman Cale Makar, who filmed a comical commercial with the captain. "He's able to sneak in those right moments when we need his voice but at the same time he's consistent for us every night playing with that same physical force."

When Landeskog was appointed captain on Sept. 4, 2012, he was



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Left wing Gabriel Landeskog has been Colorado's captain since Sept. 4, 2012, when he was just 19. Now 29, he's helped lead the Avalanche to the Stanley Cup Final against Tampa Bay or the New York Rangers.

no more than a kid himself. At the time, the forward from Sweden was the youngest in the NHL to assume the role. That distinction was eclipsed in 2016 by Edmonton's promotion of Connor McDavid (19 years, 266 days).

No doubt, this season has been Landeskog's finest work. He was leading the team in goals (30) in the regular season when he underwent knee surgery on March 14. He wanted to be closer to full strength for a long postseason run. Back in time for the playoffs, he's scored eight goals, picked up

nine assists and is third on the team in hits.

"Very in tune with what we're trying to accomplish as a team," Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said of the player taken second overall by Colorado in 2011. "He understands all of the personalities and their tendencies in our locker room, attitudinally.

"He's in a position to help guys out and comfort them when they need it — and give them a kick in the (rear) when they need it, and give them a pat on the back when they need it."

NHL scoreboard

Conference finals

(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)

EASTERN CONFERENCE

N.Y. Rangers 2, Tampa Bay 2

N.Y. Rangers 6, Tampa Bay 2

N.Y. Rangers 3, Tampa Bay 2

Tampa Bay 3, N.Y. Rangers 2

Tampa Bay 4, N.Y. Rangers 1

Thursday: at N.Y. Rangers

Saturday: at Tampa Bay, AFN-Atlantic, 2

a.m. Sunday CET; 9 a.m. Sunday JKT

x-Tuesday, June 14: at N.Y. Rangers,

AFN-Sports2, 2 a.m. Wednesday CET; 9

a.m. Wednesday JKT

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Colorado 4, Edmonton 0

Colorado 8, Edmonton 6

Colorado 4, Edmonton 0

Colorado 4, Edmonton 2

Colorado 6, Edmonton 5, OT

Gregory ready to host full weekend at Sonoma

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

Kyle Larson took a swig of the winner's wine, tilted his head back and spit it in the air. He couldn't have predicted the wind catching hold of the vino and blowing it all over new track general manager Jill Gregory.

Some homecoming, eh?

Gregory, a Modesto native and graduate of California Polytechnic State, returned home in early 2021 to run Sonoma Raceway as executive vice president and general manager of the picturesque road course in wine country. She'd had a longtime career with NASCAR but couldn't pass up the opportunity to go home and run Sonoma when the job opened.

The track was mostly shuttered in 2020 because of the pandemic and Gregory was tasked with welcoming NASCAR back just four months after she picked up her keys to the track. Ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions in both California and Sonoma County meant Gregory was constantly having to adapt — from crowd restrictions to even holding the race at all — in the lead-up



KENT PORTER/AP

Modesto native Jill Gregory is the executive vice president and general manager of Sonoma Raceway.

to her first NASCAR weekend.

In the end, the only true hiccup was Larson's mouthful of wine that landed all over Gregory on the victory podium.

"I think I tried to jump out of the way, but then I was like, 'Gosh, Kyle, I'm wearing my nice suit, you just got wine all over me!'" Gregory said in an interview with The Asso-

ciated Press. "People asked me if I was offended, and I know Kyle, he was mortified. It was in victory lane, that's the wrap of the whole weekend, and at that moment, you are basically exhaling and things are over and fans are leaving, and the spray was quite impressive. But what actually landed on me was quite limited, so I just went about my day."

Gregory never got the red pantsuit cleaned — she joked she hopes it someday lands in the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame — and Larson sent her a bottle of wine from Abreu Vineyards as an apology. She's saving it for a special occasion.

That occasion could come Sunday night after Gregory concludes her second NASCAR race weekend as head of Sonoma. Unlike last year, the track is wide open to spectators and Gregory has a full slate of action: NASCAR's truck series will race Saturday afternoon, giving Sonoma added on-track activity to what has typically been a stand-alone weekend for the premiere Cup Series.

The preparation hit a speedbump last week when a grass fire burned over 15 acres on Sonoma's rolling property.

"In the whole scheme of things, it was not a large fire, and it was contained within an hour of the 911 call," Gregory said. "My thought was 'I'd rather it happen a week before the race than the week of the race.'"

Gregory still has challenges ahead. Sonoma was once the destination race on the NASCAR schedule because of its location, casual schedule and its hold as one of only two road courses in a series packed with ovals.

But since the pandemic, when Sonoma went a year without a race, NASCAR has made major changes to its schedule and this year has six road courses on the calendar. Fans now have multiple choices where to go to see right and left turns.

And, there's competition for the local audience: The Golden State Warriors don't return home for the NBA Finals until Monday, but the San Francisco Giants are on a nine-day homestand that conflicts all weekend with the NASCAR race.

Gregory still thinks Sonoma offers the best bang for the buck, between on-site amenities, intense racing and all that Napa Valley has to offer its visitors.

NBA FINALS



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Boston Celtics center Al Horford, center, and guard Marcus Smart, top, battle for a loose ball against Golden State Warriors guard Jordan Poole, right, and guard Stephen Curry during the fourth quarter of Game 3 of the NBA Finals on Wednesday in Boston. Curry injured his ankle during the play.

Defensive effort fuels Celtics' win in Game 3

BY KYLE HIGHTOWER
Associated Press

BOSTON — Throughout the postseason, the Boston Celtics had played their best basketball away from home.

Not anymore.

Jaylen Brown scored 27 points, Jayson Tatum added 26 and the Celtics rode the energy of a raucous TD Garden crowd to beat back another third-quarter onslaught by Golden State in a 116-100 victory Wednesday night that gave them a 2-1 lead in the NBA Finals.

Marcus Smart added 24 points and helped fuel a defensive effort that held the Warriors to 11 points in the fourth quarter — third-fewest in a Finals game in the shot clock era.

“Game 2, they brought the heat to us,” Smart said. “For us, that left a bad taste in our mouth because what we hang our hat on is effort on the defensive end and being a physical team. It definitely woke us up a little bit.”

Tatum said the fact the Celtics didn't hang their heads after the Warriors' third-quarter flourish is something they didn't always do in the regular season.

“I think that's when we are at our best when we respond to tough situations. We respond to teams going on runs and things like that,” he said. “I think we did that several times tonight.”

Boston improved to 6-4 at home, compared to 8-3 on the

Scoreboard

Finals	
(Best-of-seven)	
x-if necessary	
Boston 2, Golden State 1	
Boston	120, Golden State 108
Golden State	107, Boston 88
Wednesday: Boston 116, Golden State 100	
Friday: at Boston, AFN-Sports, 3 a.m. Saturday CET; 10 a.m. Saturday JKT	
Monday, June 13: at Golden State, AFN-Sports, 3 a.m. Tuesday CET; 10 a.m. Tuesday JKT	
x-Thursday, June 16: at Boston, AFN-Sports, 3 a.m. Friday CET; 10 a.m. Friday JKT	
x-Sunday, June 19: at Golden State, AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Monday CET; 9 a.m. Monday JKT	

road this postseason. The Celtics haven't lost two straight games since the end of March.

Stephen Curry led Golden State with 31 points and six three-pointers. He had 15 points in a 33-25 third quarter by the Warriors but was hurt late in the fourth after Al Horford rolled into his leg on a loose ball. Curry said it was similar to a play during the regular season in which Smart dove into Curry's legs while chasing a loose ball but “not as bad.”

“I got caught — obviously in some pain, but I'll be all right,” Curry said. “See how it feels tomorrow and get ready for Friday.”

Klay Thompson broke out of a Finals slump and finished with 25 points and five threes. But the Warriors' shooting couldn't save them on a night the more athletic Celtics outmuscled them for a 47-

31 rebounding advantage.

“When you allow a team to get comfortable, especially in their home — in front of the home crowd, then it's tough,” Warriors forward Draymond Green said.

Robert Williams III, who has been working his way back from knee surgery, finished with eight points, 10 rebounds and four blocks.

“We talked about it quite a bit, our group being resilient and being able to fight through a lot of things and at times when it's most needed being able to lock down on defense,” Celtics coach Ime Udoka said. “We did in the fourth quarter.”

Game 4 is Friday in Boston.

Despite Curry's noticeable limp after the play with Horford, Warriors coach Steve Kerr said it was not why he pulled him from the game in the closing minutes.

“The injury didn't force him out of the game, but I took him out down 14 with two minutes left because we weren't going to catch up,” Kerr said.

The previous 39 times teams have split the first two games of the Finals, the winner of Game 3 went on to win the series 82% of the time.

Feeding off the energy of a Garden crowd that jeered Green throughout his miserable night in the first NBA Finals game in Boston since 2010, the Celtics started fast and led by as many as 18 points in the first half.

Moment: Warriors can't win without healthy Curry

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ternative would mean.

“We need him,” Thompson said, “if we want to win this thing.”

It's more than just needing Curry. At this point, they might need him to be at his very best.

All, to be certain, is not lost. The Warriors have won six consecutive games after a loss. They've been here before. They've answered. The core of Curry, Thompson and Draymond Green were down 2-1 in the 2015 finals before rallying to win their first title together. They know how to turn things around.

They need to do it again Friday, or else a Celtics team that was 25-25 after 50 games this season is going to be on the brink of hanging an 18th championship banner.

“We'll be better,” Green said after finishing with two points, four rebounds, three assists and six fouls, plus after hearing an untold number of loud, profane chants from many in the Boston crowd. “I'll be better. Come out, win Game 4. Go back 2-2.”

The confidence is still there.

It's not shaken on the Boston side, either.

Celtic Pride was on full display in Game 3.

An 18-point first-half lead got completely erased in the third quarter, another disaster third for Boston, and the Warriors went up 83-82. This is where a team that has exactly zero players who had been in the NBA Finals before last

DID YOU KNOW?

The core of Stephen Curry, Klay Thompson and Draymond Green were down 2-1 to LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers in the 2015 NBA Finals before rallying to win the next three and their first title together. They won two more.

SOURCE: NBA.com

week could have panicked and folded. Instead, the Celtics recovered on the fly and outscored Golden State 34-17 the rest of the way.

“We found a way,” the Celtics' Marcus Smart said. “That's what makes us such a great team, because we still found a way to counterbalance that and come out with a victory or put ourselves in a good position to win at the end of the game.”

Now, it's Golden State's turn.

If Boston had let Game 3 slip away, it would have been incredibly tough for the Celtics to hoist the trophy. Along the same lines, the Warriors know what Game 4 means. It's not an elimination game, and a 3-1 deficit doesn't assure defeat — they learned that the hard way in 2016 against Cleveland — but it's basically a must win.

“We let one slip away,” Thompson said. “We have a beautiful opportunity Friday to even a series and do what we were supposed to do, and that was get one on the road.”



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

Celtics forward Jayson Tatum puts up a shot Wednesday against the Golden State Warriors during Game 3 of the NBA Finals in Boston.

SPORTS



Sooners lower boom

Alo, Oklahoma hammer Texas in Game 1 of title series » College softball, Page 41

ANALYSIS

Celtics meeting moment

Boston rising to occasion on big stage of NBA Finals

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Stephen Curry tried one of his patented floaters from the left side of the rim. Klay Thompson tried a layup from nearly the same spot a few minutes later.

Slightly different shots from the Golden State Warriors in the fourth quarter of Game 3 of the NBA Finals, with the exact same result: They were spiked out of bounds by the Boston Celtics.

Robert Williams III had the block on Curry, Jaylen Brown had the block on Thompson, and if there were any lingering questions about whether this stage — the biggest one the NBA has — is too big for the Celtics, they were answered in those sequences.

Thing is, the Celtics might be too big for the Warriors.

Boston has half the job done in these NBA Finals, now up 2-1 over Golden State after running out to a huge lead, wasting every bit of it and then closing strong to win 116-100 on Wednesday night. The Celtics, trailing late in the third quarter, faced pressure and stared it

down. The Warriors now must do the same in Game 4 on Friday night, or else.

“I don’t think at this point there’s any anxiety from the players,” Celtics coach Ime Udoka said. “It is what it is. We’ve been battle tested throughout the playoffs, and this far into a series, it should be on to the next. I think we’ve seen what makes us successful.”

Everybody has now.

Boston looks every bit the part of an NBA champion: The Celtics were bigger, stronger, faster and tougher in Game 3, and if all that wasn’t damning enough, the Warriors will wait to find out if Curry was simply shaken up after getting slammed into by Boston’s Al Horford in the final minutes while a bunch of players were diving for a loose ball, or if he’s re-sprained his left foot — the same injury he had late in the regular season, suffered, ironically, against the Celtics.

“I’ll be all right,” Curry insisted.

The Warriors know what the al-

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MICHAEL DWYER, ABOVE, AND SCOTT STRAZZANTE, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, LEFT/AP

Above: Celtics guard Jaylen Brown dunks against the Golden State Warriors during Game 3 of the NBA Finals on Wednesday in Boston. Left: The Warriors’ Otto Porter Jr., right, fouls the Celtics’ Al Horford.

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LIV Tour players no longer eligible for PGA » Golf, Page 43

