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WEEKEND
EDITION

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Fast starts
will be key
to awards in
short season
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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Layoffs remain at elevated level as states rethink reopening plans

BY CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 1.3 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, a historically high pace that shows that many employers are still laying people off in the face of a resurgent coronavirus.

The persistently elevated level of layoffs are occurring as a spike in virus cases has forced six states to reverse their move to reopen businesses. Those six — Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan and Texas — make up one-third of the U.S. economy. Fifteen other states have suspended their reopenings. Collectively, the pullback has stalled a tentative recovery in the job market and is likely triggering additional layoffs.

On Wednesday, the United States reported just short of the record 60,000 cases set a day earlier. In the U.S., the number of confirmed cases has passed 3 million — meaning nearly one in every 100 people has been confirmed as infected — and the death toll in the pandemic is more than 132,000.

In addition, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease official, is advising that some states seriously consider "shutting down" again if they are facing major resurgences of the virus, The Washington Post reported.

"I think any state that is having a serious problem, that state should seriously look at shutting down," Fauci said Wednesday. "It's not for me to say, because each state is different."

SEE LAYOFFS ON PAGE 9

■ Lawmakers balking at federal workers' return to offices

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Ready to go in harm's way

Long-derided littoral combat ships flex their muscles in Pacific

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — A standoff this spring between China and Malaysia in the South China Sea was a chance for the U.S. Navy's littoral combat ships to prove their mettle.

The USS Gabrielle Giffords and the USS Montgomery helped stave off Chinese intimidation of a Malaysian-contracted drillship — the West Capella — during April and May in disputed waters near Borneo.

The high-tech vessels were part of U.S. efforts to maintain a monthlong presence near the drillship, which had been approached by a flotilla of Chinese

coast guard and paramilitary vessels.

A few years ago, lightly armed and experimental littoral combat ships might not have been trusted for such a high-profile standoff.

"The story of this ship is one that makes me ashamed and embarrassed, as a former Navy person and as a person who's responsible to the taxpayers of my state," the late Arizona Sen. John McCain said of the vessels in 2010.

The ships were criticized for their cost, lighter armament and lower survivability standard than some larger ships. The first LCS's — the USS Freedom and USS Independence — had an expected

SEE READY ON PAGE 7

Lt. Mary Browning, assigned to the littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords, monitors the ship's radar while standing watch on the bridge July 2 in the South China Sea. Once criticized for their cost and light armaments, the ships are proving to be valuable in small ports and congested sea lanes that are problematic for larger ships.

BRENTON POYSER/U.S. Navy

■ USS Theodore Roosevelt heads home from fateful deployment **Page 8**

SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC

CHINA RUSSIA

N. KOREA

Seoul 81/66

S. KOREA

Osan 81/68 • Busan 73/69

Sasebo 76/73

Iwakuni 78/74

Sea of Japan

JAPAN

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Pacific Ocean

Guam 84/81

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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

First woman graduates as Army Green Beret

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

An Army National Guard soldier graduated Thursday from Special Forces training in North Carolina and became the service's first female Green Beret.

Or the second, depending on who's counting.

The woman received the Special Forces Tab and donned her green beret alongside fellow graduates of the 53-week Special Forces Qualification Course, U.S. Army Special Operations Command said in a statement.

"Thankfully, after today, our Green Beret Men and Women will forever stand in the hearts of free people everywhere," Army special operations commander Lt. Gen. Fran Beaudette, who presided over the graduation ceremony, said in the statement.

Rep. Elise Stefanik, a New York congresswoman who serves on

the House subcommittee overseeing special operations, had earlier announced the unidentified soldier's upcoming graduation and hailed it as "an important and hard-earned milestone."

"This achievement is a testament to this soldier's individual strength, courage and commitment," Stefanik said in a statement June 25, calling it "an important institutional milestone for U.S. Special Operations Command as it embraces the cultural change that will continue to make it the most successful and elite Special Operations Force in the world."

The woman, who wasn't named under command policy, is expected to be the first in history to serve in a Special Forces unit after completing the "Q-Course."

But an active-duty soldier, Capt. Kate Wilder, completed Special Forces training decades ago. The

intelligence officer wasn't allowed to graduate the course in 1980 after being told at the last minute she had failed a field exercise.

Wilder filed a sex discrimination complaint, and a general later determined she had been wrongly denied graduation and had qualified to serve in Special Forces. The Associated Press reported in February 1981.

Then 29, Wilder was attending a military intelligence course and no longer assigned to a Special Forces unit, making her ineligible to wear the beret.

"It isn't important that I wear the hat," she told the AP at the time. "I'm not at all hung up on a hat like a lot of the men are. What matters is that I'm officially qualified."

The beret signifies members of the Army's elite units that specialize in unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency and other

often secretive missions.

She did wear the Special Forces Tab for the remainder of her career, after the patch was created in 1983. The New York Times reported in February. She eventually transferred to the reserves and retired in 2003 as a lieutenant colonel.

After Wilder graduated, however, the Army began barring women from attending the qualification course, until the Pentagon opened all combat jobs to women in 2016.

In November 2018, a woman for the first time completed the three-week Special Forces selection, which is the beginning of the Green Beret pipeline. At least one other woman was in the qualification course earlier this year, the Times reported in February.

Women have long served alongside special operations units but not in the same capacity as their

male counterparts, who completed the grueling indoctrination courses and other specialized training.

"Congratulations to a trail blazing Green Beret, welcome to the Regiment!" said Joe Kent, on Twitter, responding to news Tuesday that the woman had earned her Special Forces tab.

Kent is a retired Green Beret and the husband of Shannon Kent, a senior Navy linguist who had spent years in special operations and was killed in a 2019 bombing in Syria while on a mission alongside a Special Forces soldier, a former Navy SEAL and a contract linguist, all of whom also died in the blast.

"I hope (the female graduate) is the first woman of many to wear the illustrious Green Beret," Stefanik said.

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USAF wants to turn Romanian base into NATO Black Sea hub

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A former Soviet airfield in central Romania could become a hub for U.S. Air Force operations in southeastern Europe, where the Pentagon is seeking added fighter plane rotations as part of a mission to deter Russian aggression.

The National Defense Authorization Act for 2021, which is working its way through Congress, includes \$130.5 million to renovate Campia Turzii Air Base in what would be the biggest overseas military construction project under the Pentagon's European Deterrence Initiative, which was initiated in June 2014, shortly after Russia annexed Crimea.

The Air Force has requested major upgrades at the base, including changing cargo loading methods, more parking aprons to support additional tactical fighter aircraft squadron rotations, fuel storage and a depot to support a deployable air base system.

"Campia Turzii Air Base is one of the primary sources for United States European Command and its Service Components' ability to respond to an evolving European security environment," the Air Force said in its 2021 budget request.

EUCOM has boosted missions in Romania over the years, but most of its efforts have centered on Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, which is used primarily by U.S. Army Europe and rotational ground forces.

But the Pentagon has gradually increased spending on Campia Turzii. Last year, USAFE sent MQ-9 Reaper drones, based in Poland, on a temporary rotation to the site, putting them closer to the Black Sea, where Russian military activity has grown steadily since a brief 2008 war with Georgia.

Air Force fighters also have made rotations to Campia Turzii, but improvements are needed if the U.S. and allies are to expand operations.



ANDREW LAYTON/U.S. Air Force

Airmen assigned to the 301st Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, prepare to launch F-16C Fighting Falcons at Campia Turzii, Romania, in May 2019.

"An adequate tactical fighter aircraft parking apron capable of supporting larger North Atlantic Treaty Organization weapon systems is not currently available at Campia Turzii Air Base," the Air Force said in its budget request.

Without the improvements, the Air Force would be limited in

what it can send to Campia Turzii, "impairing mission capability and readiness," it said.

NATO allies Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey all lie on the Black Sea, as do alliance partner states Georgia and Ukraine, and Russia.

Other EDI-funded projects

proposed in the NDAA are \$59 million to improve infrastructure at the Navy's base in Rota, Spain, and \$36 million and \$25 million, respectively, for upgrades to the Air Force bases at Ramstein and Spangdahlem in Germany.

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Contractor pleads guilty to role in theft ring at Kandahar Airfield

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

A U.S. military contractor pleaded guilty to federal fraud and theft charges after stealing vehicles, generators and other goods worth more than \$300,000 from a base in southern Afghanistan.

Larry J. Green, 43, of Chesapeake, Va., entered the plea Wednesday in U.S. District Court after pleading guilty to the government property from Kandahar

Airfield, the Justice Department said in a statement. His sentencing is slated for Nov. 19.

The complaint stated that Green stole military property in 2015, conspired to sell those goods locally and then helped falsify documents to move the goods off the base.

Green's "theft ring" compromised the security of troops and civilians at Kandahar Airfield, the statement said.

Among the items stolen were a Toyota Hilux pickup truck, a white Toyota van, vehicle parts, three generators and a refrigerator, court documents filed in the Justice Department's Eastern District of Virginia said.

Green negotiated sales of the items via text message through a middleman, who then found a buyer off base, a court document said.

On July 22, 2015, Green

reached an agreement via text to sell two stolen generators for \$17,000, court files said.

He then helped a security badging and escort pass supervisor, unnamed in court documents, create false paperwork that said the generators were being sent back to their vendors, allowing unvetted Afghan workers to enter the base and take the goods, the statement said.

Green also admitted that he

drove a truck off the military installation in order to sell it, the statement said.

Investigators included personnel from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, the 939th Military Police Detachment of the Indiana Army National Guard and the Army Criminal Investigation Command.

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MILITARY

Duckworth won't back down on promotions

By MARK SATTER
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON—Sen. Tammy Duckworth will keep her hold on over 1,100 military promotions in place despite Wednesday's announcement of the retirement of Lt. Col. Alex Vindman, a key witness in the impeachment of President Donald Trump.

The Illinois Democrat announced the hold July 2 amid concerns that Vindman would not

receive a promotion to the rank of colonel in retaliation for his testimony before the House last year.

Vindman, a former Ukraine expert to the National Security Council, was ousted from his White House job after his November testimony in which he validated many of the concerns raised by the whistleblower whose report sparked the impeachment inquiry.

Reports have suggested that Trump, who has publicly attacked

Vindman, pressured the Pentagon to block Vindman's promotion.

"Through a campaign of bullying, intimidation and retaliation, the President attempted to force LTC Vindman to choose: Between adhering to the law or pleasing a President. Vindman's patriotism has cost him his career," Vindman's attorney David Pressman said in a statement Wednesday.

The July 2 hold instituted by Duckworth, a retired Army officer who lost both legs while

serving in the Iraq War, applies to 1,123 scheduled promotions of officers to the rank of "O6"—colonel, Navy captain or above. Duckworth said last week she would lift the hold once Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper assured her, in writing, that Vindman would be shielded from retaliation.

Duckworth has still not received confirmation from Esper that the Army submitted a list of promotions to colonel that included Vindman, or that the list

was sent to the White House for review, she said in a statement Wednesday.

The hold will remain in place "until the secretary of defense provides a transparent accounting of this disgraceful situation," she said.

Exempted from the hold is Gen. Charles Perna, the chief operating officer of Operation Warp Speed, the federal government's program to develop a coronavirus vaccine by early next year.

New PACAF commander brings deep Asia ties to role

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii—Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach took command of U.S. Pacific Air Forces on Wednesday during a ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, marking his fourth time stationed in Hawaii.



Brown

Wilsbach, who received his fourth star shortly before the ceremony, was most recently commander of 7th Air Force and deputy commander of U.S. Forces Korea. He replaces Gen. Charles Brown Jr., who will become the 22nd Air Force chief of staff next month.

In a career spanning more than three decades, Wilsbach has spent about half that time stationed in the Indo-Pacific theater, he told the audience, which was kept small due to social distancing requirements from the coronavirus pandemic.

"Over that time, the theater has certainly matured," he said. "It's changed dramatically. It's become a lot more complex, and it's become, frankly, the strategic epicenter for our nation. I am very proud to lead the airman in this priority theater."

Gen. David Goldfein, the outgoing Air Force chief of staff, told the audience that Wilsbach was "one of the most seasoned, combat-proven leaders in our long blue line."

"I got to see him up close and personal when we served together in [U.S.] Central Command during some challenging times: calm, cool in a clutch, mature and



U.S. Air Force

Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach speaks after taking command of Pacific Air Forces at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, on Wednesday.

internationally savvy—the whole package," Goldfein said of the new combatant commander.

The command marks Wilsbach's ninth assignment in the Pacific, having had multiple tours at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa and stints at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska, Hawaii and South Korea, Goldfein said.

Wilsbach is an experienced aviator, primarily flying F-15C, F-22A, and F-16C fighter jets and the MC-12 twin-engine turboprop. He has logged more than 5,000 hours of flying time.

He flew 71 combat missions in operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch, which enforced no-fly zones in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's regime, and Enduring

Freedom in Afghanistan. He has commanded a fighter squadron, an operations group and two wings.

"You are precisely the experienced leader and proven warfighter best suited to take this extraordinary team of professionals to the next set of heights," Adm. Phil Davidson, commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, said during the ceremony.

"His warfighting experience here in the Indo-Pacific is noteworthy," Davidson said. "In fact, he has lived in this region for 10 of the last 12 years."

Davidson praised Brown's accomplishments during his two-year tenure, including the proliferation of fifth-generation fighters, not just under his command but added to the air force fleets of Australia and South Korea.

"His efforts paved the way for multiple airfield construction projects in strategic locations west of the International Date Line, enhancing our design and posture through the dispersal of combat air power in Oceania and in Southeast Asia," Davidson said.

Brown helped Pacific Air Forces usher in the "agile combat employment" concept, which shifts larger operations-level forces into leaner, more agile tactical forces.

"I'm proud that we've been able to move agile combat employment from a PACAF concept closer to an Air Force reality," Brown said.

Earlier this year, the Air Force discontinued its longtime routine of deploying bombers to Andersen Air Force Base on Guam for six-month rotations in favor of a suite of less predictable sorties that take off from locations around the world.

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Former Thunderbird pilot takes over 36th Wing on Guam

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A former Air Force Thunderbird and combat pilot assumed command of the 36th Wing at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, on Wednesday.

Brig. Gen. Jeremy Sloane, an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot with 2,500 flying hours, took command of the wing's five groups and 20 squadrons along with 14 joint tenant units from outgoing commander Brig. Gen. Gentry Boswell, the wing said in a statement Wednesday.

Sloane will oversee U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's Bomber Task

Force, theater security packages and contingency response, as well as humanitarian and disaster-relief operations.

At Andersen, he commands 7,900 troops and civilians and supports management of other bases in the area as deputy commander of Joint Region Marianas, according to information posted on Andersen's official website.

Sloane graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1992 with an engineering degree and qualified as an F-16 pilot. He served as the Thunderbirds' operations officer, commanded the 8th Fighter Wing at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea,

and served on the Joint Staff. He has 235 combat hours over Europe and Iraq.

His last assignment was as the commander of the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

Boswell is headed for the Pentagon, where he will become director of manpower, organization and resources for the deputy chief of staff at Air Force headquarters, according to the wing public affairs office.

During the change-of-command ceremony, Sloane accepted the wing's guidon from Boswell. He also received a swagger stick

bearing the wing's emblem that dates to 1940, when the unit was known as the 36th Pursuit Group, according to the Air Force statement.

"To the men and women of the 36th Wing, I am thrilled to be a part of this great wing, mission and culture, and I'm humbled to be your commander," Sloane said, according to the statement. "I'm excited and ready to get to work. I look forward to continuing to build relationships with [the territorial government of Guam] and our military partners, neighboring villages and mayors."

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Brig. Gen. Jeremy Sloane

MILITARY

Thais welcome Army chief with virus test

Associated Press

BANGKOK — A U.S. Army delegation led by chief of staff Gen. James McConville on Thursday became the first official visitors to Thailand since entry rules were eased as part of the lifting of coronavirus restrictions.

A photo released by the Thai Army shows a medical team wearing hazmat suits taking a nose swab from McConville on his arrival from Singapore. Thai officials had said they were told he also would be tested before departing Singapore.

The visit caused a mild brouhaha on local social media with claims the delegation was allowed to shortcut a required 14-day quarantine for foreign visitors.

The claims were false, because regulations for VIP guests of the government include provisions for skipping the quarantine at state facilities for short visits by delegations of 10 members or less.

VIPs must still observe other regulations, including holding certificates that they tested negative for the coronavirus, having Thai liaison officials accompany them, keeping to a fixed itinerary and utilizing only their own specially arranged transport.

McConville met Thai army chief Gen. Apirart Kongsompong on Thursday and is to meet Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha on Friday. He flies to Japan after his two-day visit.

Thai political activist Srisuwan Janya vowed earlier this week to file an official complaint charging the government with malfeasance for allowing the visit. He alleged, without producing evidence, that the VIP rules were established solely to facilitate the U.S. delegation's visit.

Thailand has long been one of the closest allies in Asia of the United States, though relations have been strained over Washington's statements of concern



ROYAL THAI ARMY/AP

A Thai health officer collects a nasal swab sample from Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Gen. James McConville to test for the coronavirus at the military airport in Bangkok, Thailand, on Thursday.

over the status of democracy in Thailand, particularly following military coups in 2006 and 2014.

The fuss over McConville's visit was the second this week involving the U.S. and the coronavirus. Photos of the U.S. Embassy's 4th of July reception showed U.S. Ambassador Michael George DeSombre posing for photos with guests including Thai Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul. None wore masks in the group photos, in which they stood side by side. Anutin was the main target of local criticism, as he is supposed to be a leader in the fight against COVID-19.

Thailand is proud of having largely contained the coronavirus, with 3,202 total coronavirus cases, including 58 deaths. There have been no local infections for 45 days, with the only new cases being Thais repatriated from abroad.

Travel restrictions end for Pentagon, 2 bases

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two naval bases and the Pentagon, the home of the Defense Department and the world's largest office building, have lifted travel restrictions put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Pentagon, the Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane Division in Crane, Ind., and the Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Conn., raises the number of major installations with lifted travel restrictions to 73 out of 231 major military installations, or 32% of installations, according to a Pentagon document published Wednesday. The update was an increase of three installations from the list issued last week.

The three installations had to meet criteria in order to have the travel restrictions lifted, including no local stay-at-home orders, a local decrease in cases and availability of essential services, according to the Pentagon document.

The list includes installations in the United States and host nations, with the Air Force still having the most installations that

have lifted travel restrictions at 35 as of Wednesday. The Army has 14 installations, the Navy now has 15 and the Marine Corps has eight with lifted restrictions. Eleven of the 73 installations are in countries that host American service members on bases, including South Korea and Japan.

The military cases have continued to rise this week. Last week, Thomas McCaffery, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said the Defense Department is seeing increases in military cases in places where there has been a rise in civilian cases.

"In Florida, Texas, and Arizona, some parts of California, so that wouldn't be a surprise that we're a part of the community and so where there are some upticks, we're seeing that as well," he said.

As of Wednesday, the Pentagon reported 15,445 service members have tested positive for the coronavirus. The Army has the highest number of cases at 4,817, and the Navy has the second-highest at 4,373. The Air Force has had 2,189 cases, and the Marine Corps has had 1,600 cases.

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MILITARY

'We are all angry' After death of Spc. Vanessa Guillen, female veterans take action to stop discrimination in the military

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — No justice, no enlistment.

That's the call from a group of female veterans in the wake of the slaying of Fort Hood soldier Spc. Vanessa Guillen, whose remains were found mutilated and buried at the hands of another soldier miles from the central Texas base where she served.

Guillen, 20, was killed April 22 during the workday in an arms room at the base. Her body was moved in a plastic box from the base and hidden near a river more than 20 miles away, according to federal court documents. One suspect, a fellow soldier, is dead, and another is in federal custody. Her remains were found June 30 and confirmed as hers by the Army on Monday.

We are all angry and we all want to see change," said Stephanie Gattas, a Navy veteran in San Antonio.

Gattas joined a group of 20 female veterans to write a letter outlining demands to improve the "systematic failures" that they claim led to a military in which victims of sexual harassment are afraid to report other service members and an Army in which a soldier can be murdered on duty and it takes more than two months to solve the crime.

"It is our job as women veterans to support our sister in arms at this time. Although her death was tragic, it's leading to change," Gattas said. "This is in the name of all those men and women who have not been able to come forward and detail their sexual assault. This is for the women of the past who've been murdered and raped who have not been able to tell their story. For all those women and men who are still not accounted for."

The women want an enlistment boycott until their demands are met. They are calling "for young Americans to refuse to enlist or accept a commission into any branch of the armed forces until these demands and circumstances of Guillen's disappearance and the firing of the soldier's entire chain of command, including the Fort Hood commander. They also want the sprawling Army base to be closed. More than 36,000 service members are assigned to the base, according to its public affairs office.

"For over two months, the disturbing circumstances surrounding Spc. Guillen's disappearance and the environment of sexual harassment she endured in her unit prior to her murder have gripped the attention of various communities across the country and incited a resounding need for



JAY JANNER, AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN/AP

Melissa Mendoza places white roses at a mural for Army Spc. Vanessa Guillen in Austin, Texas, on Monday.

the utmost accountability and attention," according to the letter, which is addressed to Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy and leadership in Congress.

Gattas said she knows the demands and the descriptions of gender and racial discrimination in the letter are controversial.

"We have to remove ourselves from our comfort to see change. We can't move the needle forever if we don't talk about it," she said.

More than 3,000 female veterans have signed the letter since it was released on June Saturday. The group continues to collect signatures and will send the letter after they have vetted each woman's military service, said retired Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Tristeza Ordex-Ramirez, another veteran behind the letter.

Service of Latinas

The League of United Latin American Citizens, known as LULAC, has made a similar call to boycott military enlistment. Domingo Garcia, national president of the group, issued "a predator alert for families" and he said they should not allow their "daughters to enlist in the Army, since we see they cannot be protected."

"I encourage every young girl out there who's thought about joining the military to stand up and say, 'You will not have me until [Guillen] gets justice,'" Ordex-Ramirez said.

It's a call she said she doesn't make lightly, because she is proud of her service and the life that it created for her. Similar to Guillen, she is the daughter of Mexican immigrants.

"Growing up, we worked in the fields," said Ordex-Ramirez, who lives in Orlando, Fla. "That's what my family did. I would see these older Mexicans out there picking berries in the freaking heat in the middle of the summer and it broke my heart."

It was then that she decided she had to do something in her life to pull her family out of poverty and provide for her parents. So she

enlisted in the Marines.

Hispanic women who join the military are more likely than other groups to use the resources afforded them through military service to move themselves from poverty into the middle class, said Harry Franqui-Rivera, an associate professor of history at Bloomfield College in New Jersey. An Army veteran, his research includes Hispanic military service. "I think it's really important to understand that Latinas, they actually move up through the ranks faster than Latino males," he said. "Even those that go through the Reserve or National Guard path, they improve their socioeconomic [standing] substantially."

Though that service isn't without a price.

"I have interviewed veterans from different wars. The majority of them say they experienced racism mostly because of accented English or having trouble speaking in English," Franqui-Rivera said, noting he also experienced racism in the Army. "All say it was difficult to navigate a different culture. Not just the military, but a military that is also white."

About 16% of soldiers in the active-duty Army identify as Hispanic, according to a 2019 report by the service on its demographics. About 15% of soldiers are women.

System fails victims

Ordex-Ramirez said when she reported her own sexual harassment in the Marine Corps, she had to tell her story to over and over to white men. The first man, her gunnery sergeant, said, "Maybe you shouldn't look so good."

"That is not a proper response," Ordex-Ramirez said. "That experience made me not ever want to say anything again."

The boycott is a "good way of recognizing, 'You need us. We've been serving and we need to be protected,'" Franqui-Rivera said.

Once the Army responds positively, he said he believes LULAC will go back to supporting military service.

The women behind the letter agree.

"We are going to witness a very pivotal turn in history for everything being brought to the forefront today," said Gattas, who has worked with victims of military sexual trauma through the non-profit that she founded, the Pink Berets. She's been disheartened during the years to see women who've fought for decades to change the systemic issues of the military that allow for sexual harassment to continue in the ranks. But Gattas said she's hopeful that this is the moment for change.

Despite years of increased training and awareness campaigns for the military's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention Program, the Pentagon reported there were 7,825 sexual assault reports involving service members as victims or subjects in 2019. That was a 3% rise from the previous year. The military received 1,021 formal sexual harassment complaints, a 10% increase from 2018, according to the Pentagon report on the subject released in April.

Some credit for the increase is given to victim confidence in reporting, military officials have said. But results of the most recent Defense Department Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members show the estimated prevalence of sexual assault rose in the Army to 6,500 soldiers in 2018, compared to 5,200 estimated in 2016. Because the report is conducted every other year, the increase cited in the 2019 report can't be characterized as an increase in assaults, according to the Pentagon.

Fort Hood commanders and investigators with the Army Criminal Investigation Command maintain they have found no credible evidence to link Guillen's death with sexual harassment. Vanessa Guillen's family said the soldier told her mother and sister that she faced sexual harassment in her unit.

To have an effective program that tackles sexual harassment and assault, there needs to be continuous evaluation and process improvement, said Nikki R. Wooten, an associate professor at the University of South Carolina College of Social Work and lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve. Her research work focuses on military behavioral health services and racial and gender differences.

"As a static program, SHARP will not be effective in the long term. As technology advances and the Army adapts to changing units, soldiers and social environments, SHARP must be adapted to remain military-relevant and effective," she said. "Hopefully, the Guillen case will result in the U.S. Army developing better methods of SHARP reporting that protects confidentiality and encourages reporting, which could include SHARP reporting mechanisms outside of the chain of command at the installation and at the levels and perhaps at [the] Defense Department level."

Sometimes it's not just a fear of

reprisal that keeps a soldier from reporting harassment, but the possible perception of betraying the Army family, Wooten said. For junior enlisted soldiers, the Army offers a sense of belonging and security they might not have experienced prior to military service.

"In military units, loyalty and emotional bonds are strong and intense and the sense of purpose to something greater than oneself is unlike any other life experience," Wooten said. "Just like in families of origin, when negative behaviors are perpetuated upon the young and/or lower ranking, the perception may be that there is less incentive to report and/or betray the familial group for fear of losing their support and approval."

Just contemplating a report can cause a soldier emotional distress, she said. That is compounded when a soldier is young, enlisted and a minority, both in race and gender.

#IAmVanessaGuillen

The demands within the female veterans' letter are bolstered by the hundreds of veterans who have taken to social media through the #IAmVanessaGuillen campaign to share their own stories of sexual harassment and assault while serving in the military.

The stories lay bare women's experiences with unwanted sexual advances, inappropriate comments, disregarded reports to their chain of command, rape, assault and male service members entering their barracks rooms uninvited. The posts come from women of all ages, ranks and backgrounds.

The Service Women's Action Network has also called on its members to "harness this momentum to demand institutional changes within our military."

Vanessa's disappearance highlights a multitude of systemic problems within the military's culture and the military justice system," according to a letter sent by the organization to its community.

Among its recommendations on how to generate change, was a call to contact the Senate and House Armed Services committees to request an independent investigation into the handling of Guillen's disappearance, full accountability of any military leaders found negligent in their handling of the case, and to pass the Military Justice Improvement Act, which replaces the role of the commander with a trial process, when it comes to determining whether to charge a service member with a crime.

"I want other young Latinas like me to [say], 'I want to serve my country and give everything,'" Ordex-Ramirez said. "I want that for them. But it's not going to happen unless this family gets justice."

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MILITARY

Ready: Littoral combat ships' ability to move in shallow water deemed a tactical advantage

FROM FRONT PAGE

price tag of about \$220 million but came in at \$637 million and \$704 million, respectively, according to The Baltimore Sun.

A decade later, the Navy says it has tweaked the vessels' design and honed the way it operates them during rotational deployments.

The Montgomery, for example, completed a 12-month rotation to Singapore and returned to its homeport of San Diego last month. Capt. Ann McCann, commodore of Destroyer Squadron 7, said in a statement emailed to Stars and Stripes on June 19.

The ship made numerous port calls and participated in the first maritime drill between the U.S. and the Association of South East Asian Nations alongside seven foreign navies, she said.

The Gabrielle Giffords is still on its maiden rotational deployment to Singapore, she said.

Since arriving in September, the ship has drilled with various foreign navies and participated in the Pacific Griffin exercise near Guam in October. Pacific Griffin, which included multiple live-fire missile drills, is the U.S. and Singapore's most complex naval exercise to date, McCann said.

"Both ships have also conducted specific freedom of navigation operations to include in vicinity of the Spratly Islands," she said, referring to contested territory that China has been militarizing in recent years.

Made by Austal

The Montgomery and the Gabrielle Giffords were built by Australian-owned shipbuilder Austal USA.

The company has delivered its ships on budget and on schedule for several years, Austal's customer affairs and business development director, Lawrence Ryder, said in a telephone interview June 8.

Austal has delivered 11 out of 19 contracted littoral combat ships with more on the way, he said. Lockheed Martin has delivered a dozen of 16 littoral combat ships it has contracted to build for the Navy.

"The Navy likes operating them," Ryder said. "They have done very well in freedom-of-navigation operations."

The ships' offensive capabilities have been boosted with organic weapons suites, including surface-to-surface, over-the-horizon naval strike missiles, he added.

"They can get somewhere fast, launch their missiles and reposition," he said.

The Navy can't afford to buy as many large ships as it needs, Ryder added.

"The alternative is to buy more small ships that give you a distributed force," he said, adding that the ships were never meant to replace destroyers but rather to free them up for other missions.

Littoral combat ships are fast and agile surface combatants, optimized for operating in shallow water as well as open ocean, McCann said.

"Mission packages allow for a tailored capability to meet specific mission needs, and provide flexibility for a wide array of missions," she said.

The Gabrielle Giffords is similar in size to ships operated by many other countries' navies and coast guards, making it easier to train, work alongside and build relationships with them, McCann said.

The ship deployed with the Naval Strike Missile and MQ-8B Fire Scout vertical takeoff drones.

"Those capabilities greatly increase both the [littoral combat ships] and U.S. Navy's lethality and capability," she said.

Littoral combat ships' ability to operate in shallow water provides a significant tactical advantage and access to vital choke points and ports where larger warships are unable to go, she said.

Congested areas

There are more than 50,000 islands between the Philippines and Sri Lanka with shallow water and small ports limiting traditional ship operations and access, McCann said.

"In that arc, less than fifty ports are accessible to larger ships, including destroyers," she said.

The littoral combat ships, with a top speed of more than 50 mph and a draft of less than 13 feet, are ideal for operations in dynamic and congested sea lanes, straits and archipelagos of South and Southeast Asia, she said.

The difficulty of navigating the waters was illustrated by the collision of the guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain with a Liberian-flagged tanker, the Alnic MC, in the Strait of Malacca near Singapore on Aug. 21, 2017.

Littoral combat ships' ability to dock in smaller ports makes it easy to conduct maintenance on the go, when required, McCann said.

The Navy has improved the way it operates the vessels over the years.

"We have optimized our logistics and maintenance methods based on lessons learned from previous [littoral combat ship] deployments," she said.

The Navy has added a maintenance team to provide 24/7 support for deployed ships in Singapore, McCann said.

"[Logistics Group Western Pacific] is able to provide the right maintenance, at the right time, and in the right port, enabling the [littoral combat ship] platform to meet tasking," she said.

The Navy has streamlined the way it crews the ships with sailors rotating every four to five months. When they're not on the



BRENTON POYSER/U.S. Navy

An MH-60S Seahawk helicopter prepares to land on the flight deck of the littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords in the South China Sea last month. "They can get somewhere fast, launch their missiles and reposition," said Lawrence Ryder, an official with shipbuilder Austal USA.

ship, crews train with other vessels or simulators back in San Diego, she said.

Naval Strike Missile

The Gabrielle Giffords was the first deployed littoral combat ship to successfully launch a Naval Strike Missile when it fired one during Pacific Griffin, she said.

The missile greatly increases the ships' lethality, McCann said.

"This precision strike weapon can find and destroy enemy ships at distances up to 100 nautical miles away, flies at sea-skimming altitude, has terrain-following capability and uses an advanced seeker for precise targeting in challenging conditions," she said.

The ships also have the 57-mm MK 110 medium-caliber gun, which can engage known surface threats, McCann said.

They carry the MH-60S Se-

ahawk helicopter equipped with the AGM-114N Hellfire missile. The Fire Scout drones can laser designate targets for the missiles, she said.

"Within the Indo-Pacific, in the coming years, we look forward to welcoming multiple rotationally deployed littoral combat ships to the region," she said.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Roosevelt nears end of mission rocked by virus

By CATLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt is returning home to San Diego after a fateful six-month deployment scarred by a coronavirus outbreak, a leadership crisis and the loss of two sailors.

Its commander, Capt. Carlos Sardiello, in a post on the ship's official Facebook page Wednesday, reflected on how far the warship has come in half that time.

"As we near the end of this deployment I can't help but smile a little with a feeling of serenity, reflecting on where we were three months ago and where we are now," he wrote. "When the world needed heroes, you stepped up and filled that place."

More than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors tested positive for the coronavirus and one died from the illness after an outbreak aboard the ship that started March 24, according to a Navy investigation published in May. The carrier then diverted to Guam, where it stayed for more than two months to sanitize the ship and disembark, isolate, test and treat sailors.

The lone fatality from the outbreak, Chief Petty Officer Charles Thacker Jr., 41, of Fort Smith, Ark., died April 13 and was buried Wednesday in Fort

Smith National Cemetery, according to the Southwest Times Record newspaper.

Though the patrol was marred by the outbreak, Sardiello in his Facebook post said his crew "fulfilled the promise," and that "hope and inspiration comes from you onboard here."

"You were my heroes before, you are my heroes now and your recovery in the face of adversity makes this arguably one of USS Theodore Roosevelt's finest hours of which you should be very proud," he wrote.

The Roosevelt returned to sea on June 4. Two weeks later, on June 18, one of its F/A-18F Super Hornets crashed into the Philippine Sea. The pilot and weapons officer were rescued by helicopter.

As the carrier steamed toward home, another sailor died on board, this time of an undisclosed medical emergency on July 2. The Navy identified him as Chief Petty Officer Justin Calderone, an aviation electronics technician, husband, father of three and Ohio native.

Before journeying home, the Roosevelt also trained with the USS Nimitz on June 21 in the Navy's first dual-carrier exercise in the Western Pacific since 2018.

Sardiello did not say exactly when the Roosevelt would pull



DYLAN LAVIN/U.S. Navy

An F/A-18F Super Hornet assigned to the Black Knights of Strike Fighter Squadron 154 launches, Tuesday, from the flight deck of the USS Theodore Roosevelt somewhere in the Pacific Ocean.

back into its homeport, Naval Base San Diego, but two ships from the strike group — guided-missile destroyer USS Russell and guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill — returned on Wednesday, according to a Navy statement.

The Navy as a policy does not discuss future ship movements, citing operational security.

Sardiello took over for Capt. Brett Crozier, the carrier's previous commander, when then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly removed Crozier from command in April. The move came after a letter Crozier sent to Navy higher-ups pleading for help for his crew was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle.

"The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating," he wrote March 30. "We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die."

The backlash against Modly from sailors and lawmakers for removing Crozier was swift. Video of thousands of Roosevelt sailors chanting Crozier's name as he walked off the carrier for the last time flooded social media.

Modly resigned about a week after removing Crozier when a recording of his speech to the Roosevelt's crew criticizing the former skipper and calling him "too naive or too stupid" was leaked to the public.

The episode spurred Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday to order a full investigation into the outbreak's handling. While Gilday initially said he would reinstate Crozier as commander, the investigative report revealed Crozier had mishandled parts of the response.

"Had I known then what I know today, I would have not made that

recommendation to reinstate Capt. Crozier," Gilday told reporters on June 19. "Moreover, if Capt. Crozier were still in command today, I would be relieving him."

For example, Crozier kept sailors on board the ship longer than necessary when he would not release them to cots made available in warehouses and storerooms ashore because they "were not single occupancy," according to the report. Instead, thousands of sailors remained in cramped conditions aboard the carrier until hotel rooms were secured.

Gilday told the reporters that Crozier's "determination that on-board quarantine was ineffective should have led to an acceleration of sailors to ashore accommodations. It did not."

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Marine, Navy bases in Japan fight new cases amid surge

By DAVE ORNAUER
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Navy and Marine Corps in Japan moved Thursday to isolate and track coronavirus cases that have popped up on their installations on Okinawa and just outside Tokyo.

Meanwhile, the governor of Tokyo reported 224 new infections in the metro area Thursday, a surge that exceeded the previous high of 206 on April 17.

For a second time this week, an undisclosed number of people associated with the Marine Corps on Okinawa tested positive for the virus, adding to the number of cases there, according to a Thursday news release from Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

Naval Air Facility Atsugi, south of Tokyo in Kanagawa prefecture, also "discovered some cases" of the coronavirus Thursday, prompting base commander Capt. Lloyd Mack to order a lockdown at 2:45 p.m., a Navy spokesman said by phone Thursday.

"Just to protect the community and make sure that we prevent the spread, the skipper elected to go to shelter-in-place while it is investigated," said spokesman Howard

Samuelson.

In Tokyo, the 224 new cases are the highest daily number since the outbreak began, Gov. Yuriko Koike said during a meeting of the city's coronavirus response headquarters. Tokyo has been generally off-limits to U.S. troops, Defense Department civilian employees and their families.

On Okinawa, the Marines on Thursday would not specify how many people tested positive, only that they fell under the status of forces agreement and were on installations that comprise the widespread Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper on March 27 ordered commanders to stop reporting new coronavirus cases on their installations, citing security concerns. The policy is not uniformly adhered to.

Camp Hansen was on lockdown overnight from 10:43 p.m. Wednesday to 9:22 a.m. Thursday to allow contact tracing and cleaning, according to the Marine release Thursday.

It did not specifically tie Hansen to the new coronavirus cases. The infected individuals were quarantined, the release said.

However, the Okinawa Defense Bureau

is gathering information on Japanese employees at Hansen and Marine Corps Air Station Futenma who may have had contact with the affected U.S. personnel, according to a bureau spokesman. Government spokespeople in Japan frequently speak anonymously as a condition of their employment.

The latest cases' movements are being traced to determine if they had contact with locals, an Okinawa prefectural spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

MCAS Futenma was locked down for four hours Tuesday after "several" people there tested positive for the coronavirus; those individuals were also isolated, according to the Marines.

"These measures are put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of our forces, families and our Okinawa neighbors," Thursday's release stated. "We are taking all measures to prevent the further spread of COVID-19," the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

For the moment, U.S. bases on Okinawa remain under Health Protection Condition Bravo, which signals a "moderate" risk of the coronavirus spreading, Marine spokesman 1st Lt. Tim Hayes told Stars

and Stripes by phone Thursday.

The Marines will make no further statements about new coronavirus cases to the media, Thursday's release stated, in keeping with Esper's instructions "and to protect the privacy of those affected by COVID-19."

As of Wednesday, the Japan Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has tallied 20,371 cases of the coronavirus and 981 deaths.

On Wednesday, Okinawa confirmed its first positive coronavirus case in its population since April 30, a man in his 40s who had traveled to Japan's main islands.

The Okinawa Times reported that the island confirmed another off-base case Thursday. A woman in her 20s from Tokyo tested positive while traveling on Okinawa.

The prefectural government reported two cases Wednesday, each contracting the virus outside of Okinawa, the newspaper reported.

Stars and Stripes reporters Hana Kusumoto and Seth Robson contributed to this report.
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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Layoffs: Job market slowly making gains amid spike in cases

FROM FRONT PAGE

Thursday's report from the Labor Department showed that the number of applications for unemployment aid fell from 1.4 million in the previous week. The figure has now topped 1 million for 16 straight weeks. Before the pandemic, the record high for weekly unemployment applications was fewer than 700,000.

The total number of people who are receiving jobless benefits dropped 700,000 to 48 million. That suggests that some companies are continuing to rehire workers despite job cuts by other employers.

An additional 1 million people sought benefits last week under a separate program for self-employed and gig workers that has made them eligible for aid for the first time. These figures aren't adjusted for seasonal variations, so the government doesn't include them in the official count.

"A full recovery in the labor market is going to be a multi-year process, and we think the resurgence in COVID-19 infections raises the risk that there will be a pause in the progress," said Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics.

The Organization for Economic Development, a research organization, projected that the U.S. unemployment rate would stay above 10% during the final three months of the year.

Americans are seeking unemployment aid against the backdrop of a disturbing surge in confirmed viral cases, with increases reported in 38 states. Case counts have especially accelerated in four states that now account for more than half of reported new U.S. cases: Arizona, California, Florida and Texas.

Applications for unemployment aid dropped last week in Califor-

nia and Florida, though they remained high in California, with more than 267,000 claims. That is more people than were applying each week for unemployment benefits in the entire country before the pandemic hit. Jobless claims also declined in Michigan and Colorado.

Still, applications for benefits spiked in Texas, Nevada, Tennessee and Louisiana — states where confirmed cases of the virus are intensifying. They also jumped in New Jersey and New York, where the pandemic is mostly under control.

The intensifying outbreaks and more stringent government restrictions have slowed economic activity in much of the country and may weigh on hiring. The government's jobs report for June showed a solid gain of 4.8 million jobs and an unemployment rate that fell to 11.1% from 13.3%.

Yet even so, the economy has regained only about one-third of the jobs that vanished in March and April. And one June jobs report reflected surveys of Americans that were conducted in the middle of that month — before the pandemic flared up again.

More recent data are worrisome. Spending on credit and debit cards issued by Bank of America fell in the week that ended June 27 compared with the previous week, the bank said.

Restaurant visits have also leveled off nationally, including in states that haven't begun to close down again, according to data from OpenTable, the reservations website.

"This suggests that renewed fears about the virus, rather than government restrictions, are driving the pullback in activity," said Andrew Hunter, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics, a forecasting firm.

Oxfam: Pandemic pushing millions toward starvation

Associated Press

LONDON — The coronavirus outbreak has worsened the hunger crisis in the world's poorest corners and up to 12,000 people could die each day from hunger linked to the social and economic effects of the pandemic, the humanitarian group Oxfam warned Thursday.

Its report said mass unemployment, disruption to food production and declining aid as a result of the pandemic could push an estimated 122 million people to the brink of starvation by the end of this year.

"The knock-on impacts of COVID-19 are far more widespread than the virus itself, pushing millions of the world's poorest people deeper into hunger and poverty," said the group's chief executive, Danny Sriskandarajah. "It is vital governments contain the spread of this deadly disease, but they must also prevent it kill-

ing as many — if not more — people from hunger."

The charity said that in some of the world's worst hunger "hot spots," including Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and South Sudan, the food crisis is worsening because of border and supply route closures or a huge drop in remittances as result of the pandemic. In middle-income countries like India, South Africa and Brazil, millions of people who had been tipped over the edge.

Even in developed countries like the United Kingdom, the report said, up to 3.7 million adults sought charity food or used a food bank during the first weeks of lockdown restrictions.

Oxfam cited the World Food Program in estimating that the number of people experiencing crisis-level hunger will rise to 270 million before the end of this year, a jump from 149 million in 2019.



LM OTERO/AP

Jose Lopez cooks meals for unemployed restaurant workers in downtown Dallas on Wednesday.

Data from Kronos, which produces work-scheduling software for small businesses, reinforces evidence that the recovery of the job market is faltering.

In the week that ended July 4, layoffs among Kronos' clients actually rose and hirings declined. Companies are now laying off an average of nearly three workers for every new hire, the company's data shows. Those job cuts reflect permanent job losses, rather than temporary layoffs or furloughs. That suggests that even as many companies recall workers from furloughs, they are reducing their permanent payrolls.

And in the retail industry, the number of shifts worked changed little last week after steady increases in previous weeks. David Gilbertson, a vice president at Kronos, said this indicates that consumer demand in many cases hasn't picked up enough to justify

more employees.

"Everything that's going to be open is open," Gilbertson said. "Now, we just need more people to come in and start spending money before things can pick up again."

Several companies have warned in recent days that more layoffs are coming. Levi's, the iconic jeans maker, said it will cut 700 corporate jobs. United Airlines has warned 36,000 of its employees — nearly half its workforce — that they could lose their jobs in October. (Airlines aren't allowed to cut jobs until then as a condition of accepting billions of dollars in government rescue aid.)

The renewed threat of job losses is arising just as a federal program that provides \$600 a week in unemployment benefits, on top of whatever jobless aid each state provides, is to expire at the end of

this month. Congressional leaders have said they will take up some form of a new rescue package when lawmakers return later this month from a two-week recess.

Administration officials have expressed support for additional stimulus. But Senate Republicans have opposed extending the \$600 a week in unemployment benefits, mainly on the ground that it discourages laid-off people from returning to work. House Democrats have pushed to extend the \$600 a week through January.

In an interview Thursday on CNBC, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin suggested that the administration might support an extension of supplemental unemployment aid, but at a reduced level.

"We're going to make sure people are (incentivized) to go back to jobs," Mnuchin said.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Lawmakers balking at federal workers' return to offices

From wire reports

With the number of coronavirus cases increasing across much of the country, leading members of Congress on civil service issues are challenging orders by federal agencies for teleworking federal employees to return to their regular worksites.

Sensors representing Maryland and Virginia sent a letter Thursday to the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management warning against premature reopenings that could lead to new coronavirus cases.

About 85% of the 2.1 million federal employees work outside of the D.C. metro area. The Trump administration, which has let agencies decide when and how their workforce would return to the office, says workers can safely return with the proper precautions.

The number of coronavirus cases reported in a single day in the United States surpassed 60,000 for the first time on Wednesday. The District reported 73 new cases, the highest number in about a month, but it was unclear if it was a blip or a change in trajectory.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — The coronavirus outbreak in Alabama is headed in a "bad direction," Dr. Don Williamson, the head of the Alabama Hospital Association, said Wednesday as the state reached a new high for people hospitalized with COVID-19 and a new low for available intensive care beds.

On Wednesday, 1,110 people were hospitalized because of the coronavirus across the state, according to the Alabama Department of Public Health. That is the highest number since the pandemic began. Doctors have expressed concern about the sharp rise in hospitalizations. The state had 683 hospitalized patients two weeks ago, on June 24.

Since the pandemic began, more than 46,000 people in Alabama have tested positive for COVID-19 with about 30% of infections being reported in the past two weeks.

The state also hit a new low for available intensive care beds. Williamson said 88% of ICU beds are full, leaving 20 beds available statewide.

California

SACRAMENTO — The California Senate will delay its work because of a coronavirus outbreak at the Capitol and an increasing number of new cases at the state.

The Senate had been scheduled to return from its summer recess on Monday. But a memo from Secretary of the Senate Erika Contreras says it won't be in session next week because of the virus.

The state Assembly has already announced an indefinite hiatus after six people who work there tested positive for the virus. They include Assemblywoman Autumn Burke, a Democrat from Inglewood, who was exposed to the virus on the Assembly floor last month while wearing a mask.

And Wednesday, Assemblyman Tom Lackey's office confirmed the Republican lawmaker has been hospitalized since Sunday for COVID-19 complications.

Missouri

BRANSON — A surge in coronavirus cases is proving worrisome in the popular southwestern Missouri tourist destination of Branson.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, have more than doubled in less than two weeks in Taney County, where Branson is located, the Kansas City Star reported. On June 26, the county had recorded just 43 confirmed cases since the start of the pandemic. That figure has more than doubled since then, standing at 107 cases and two COVID-19 deaths as of Wednesday.

Branson, with its wide array of shows and attractions, is among the most popular tourist destinations in the Midwest. Community leaders are now stressing the need for face coverings, though they have stopped short of requiring people to wear them.

North Carolina

RALEIGH — A "Top Chef" contestant's restaurant in North Carolina has permanently closed down due to revenue losses amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Katsuji Tanabe told The News & Observer on Wednesday that his business partner decided to shut down Raleigh's High Horse restaurant due to the money losses the restaurant had opened in North Carolina's capital city in November 2019.

Tanabe told the newspaper High Horse tried offering takeout, but discovered that wasn't what diners wanted from a restaurant known for its live experiences.

He said he doesn't have a project in mind for another restaurant, but has plans to stay in the Raleigh area.

Nevada

RENO — The first coronavirus antibody study conducted in Nevada suggests COVID-19 test



SEAN D. ELLIOT, THE (NEW LONDON, CONN.) DAY/AP

Second class cadets Lily Maranto, left, and Mary Tran take the height measurement of Nicholas Torres as members of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Class of 2024 report Wednesday for Swab Summer in New London, Conn. The 275 prospective cadets arrived by platoon throughout the day, and after checking in and swearing-in, started a 14-day restriction of movement consisting of online and classroom training. The traditional physical training, haircuts and uniform issue will take place after the quarantine period.

results dramatically underestimate the number of people who actually have been infected by the disease, health officials said Wednesday.

The joint study by the Washoe County Health District and researchers at the University of Nevada, Reno, concludes that four to five times more people have likely been infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 than have been formally confirmed as positive cases to date in the Reno-Sparks area.

Based on blood tests for antibodies, the study conducted last month indicates 2.3% of adults in Washoe County had an infection or exposure resulting in an immune response to the virus.

That means that while only about 1,800 cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed as positive in Washoe County as of June 10 based on nasal swab testing, the real number of adult infections in the county was probably closer to 8,200.

Texas

AUSTIN — Texas reported its deadliest day of the pandemic with nearly 100 new deaths on

Wednesday as newly confirmed cases continued soaring and Austin began preparations to turn the downtown convention center into a field hospital.

The 98 reported deaths in Texas set a record one-day high, surpassing the record 60 deaths reported a day earlier. Texas is now reporting a total of 2,813 deaths.

The state also reported 9,979 new coronavirus cases Wednesday after hitting a record-high 10,028 new cases the day before. Hospitalizations of people with the virus also continued to climb Wednesday, with 9,610 patients in hospitals across the state.

On Wednesday, officials in Houston canceled the Texas Republican Party's in-person convention, saying the spread of the coronavirus made it impossible to hold the event as scheduled. The move by Houston officials came after Republican activists had resolved to press forward with the indoor three-day convention this month.

Wisconsin

MADISON — The Wisconsin Capitol building will not reopen

next week, as had been planned, and state employees will have to wear masks whenever they're working indoors to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. Gov. Tony Evers' administration announced Wednesday.

The Capitol building has been closed to the public since Evers issued a stay-at-home order in March. The state Supreme Court struck down that order in May and Evers' administration had planned to reopen the building Monday. But infection rates have been climbing in Wisconsin over the last two weeks and the administration announced that the Capitol will remain closed indefinitely.

The administration also announced that starting Monday, all state employees must wear masks whenever they're inside a state facility, including offices, parking garages, elevators and bathrooms, or waiting in line to enter a state facility. They also must wear one whenever they're inside any enclosed building on state business.

Dane County officials on Tuesday ordered all residents to wear masks when indoors starting Monday.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Opening schools may mean hard choices

By MICHELLE R. SMITH
AND CARLA K. JOHNSON
Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — President Donald Trump insists that schools reopen this fall. Many parents, educators, doctors and economists want the same thing. But getting children back to school safely could mean keeping high-risk spots like bars and gyms closed.

A growing chorus of public health experts is urging federal, state and local officials to reconsider how they are reopening the broader economy, and to prioritize K-12 schools — an effort that will likely require closing some other establishments to help curb the virus spread and give children the best shot at returning to classrooms.

“We need to think about what our priorities are as a society, and some other things may just have to wait,” said Helen Jenkins, an infectious disease epidemiologist at Boston University. “I think there are hard choices having to be made by decision makers.”

Schools are crucial to communities in ways that go beyond basic learning. They also provide children with friends, food and other support systems. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports children physically returning to classrooms. Schools are also a key part of getting the economy going, said David Rothschild, an economist at Microsoft Research.

“It’s what allows so many adults, especially people without much means, to get back to work,” Rothschild said. “There’s this huge downstream effect in the short run of getting people back into school, which you may not be able to say in the same sort of way for bars and restaurants.”

But if a community has a high level of infection, public health experts say reopening classrooms will be risky, even if schools try to reduce masks and follow social distancing guidelines.

Hundreds of children and staff



Des Moines Public Schools custodian Tracy Harris cleans chairs in a classroom at Brubaker Elementary School, on Wednesday, in Des Moines, Iowa.

have been infected in COVID-19 outbreaks tied to graduation ceremonies and summer camps, including in Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, New York and Florida. Organizers of at least one of the camps said they were following guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That’s why it’s so important, experts say, to consider the wider community and not think of schools as closed systems, unaffected by what the virus is doing outside their walls.

Children are less likely to become seriously ill than adults, and there’s not much evidence that children are driving transmission, said Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University’s COVID-19 Testing Insights Initiative. Still, there is a risk they could transmit the virus to others, including teachers or

vulnerable people they live with.

“That is a reason to think about how to improve safety and to reduce the risk in school environments,” Nuzzo said. “Those measures and the move to reopen schools should proceed before the higher risk environments” like bars, restaurants, gyms and other indoor spaces “where adults are packed together and they have a hard time social distancing.”

If transmission can be reduced in the wider community, she said, it will make it safer for schools to reconvene.

“We should be prioritizing the reopening of those public spaces that have known benefits and low risks,” Nuzzo said. “And we think that schools are one of those.”

Even before Trump’s push this week, Democrats and public health experts were already talking about how important it is for children to return to classrooms.

When Democratic Kansas

Gov. Laura Kelly issued an executive order last week requiring masks, she told legislative leaders it was because she wanted to reopen classrooms. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, made similar remarks when she shut down indoor seating in bars in some areas after outbreaks.

And Democratic New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham cited schools when she said there would be more aggressive enforcement and fines for people who flout the state’s mask requirement.

“The children of this state and the students deserve a chance to go back to school,” Grisham said.

Republicans have also been talking about it. Vice President Mike Pence, visiting Arizona last week, praised Republican Gov. Doug Ducey’s closure of bars, gyms and movie theaters. Pence tied the steps to economic growth and getting “kids back to school.”

White House adviser Kelly-ann Conway told Fox News last week that schools are essential to getting people back to work.

“Do you want to open the bars now or do you want to open the schools and the day care centers in a few short weeks? I vote for the latter,” Conway said.

On Twitter and at a White House event, the president this week claimed without evidence that Democrats want to keep schools closed for political reasons and not health reasons.

In a call with governors Tuesday, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said the nation’s schools must “fully reopen and fully operate.” A recording of the call was obtained by The Associated Press.

But school leaders and teachers’ groups said that message is not helpful without thoughtful reopening plans and federal support, including additional money to pay for extra cleaning, masks and social spacing. So far, schools are not getting what they need, said Dan Domenech, executive director of AASA, The School Superintendents Association.

“What we’re hearing — it’s almost like a setup to open schools at all costs,” Domenech said of DeVos’ remarks. “When children are sick and when children die, I hope that she can reconcile her guidance with that.”

Public health experts hope the conversation can stay focused on the mechanics of opening schools. Some of them are parents who have seen their children struggle with online education.

Nuzzo was able to buy her 7-year-old son a laptop. Her mother, who has a doctorate in child development, talked him through his assignments.

“We are incredibly lucky compared to many other people,” Nuzzo said. “And I really do worry about families who don’t have the ability to be involved with their kids’ education at the level that remote education requires.”

Conway said, “I’m an epidemiologist, but I’m a mom, too.”

Serbia eyes restrictions; virus spreads in US, Brazil, India

Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia — The European nation of Serbia mulled how to curb accelerating coronavirus infections following two nights of clashes involving anti-lockdown demonstrators, while the virus showed no sign of slowing Thursday in the countries with the highest case loads — the United States, India and Brazil.

The three nations on separate continents are accounting for more than 60% of new confirmed cases, according to recent tallies from Johns Hopkins University. India on Thursday reported 25,000 new cases; the United States on Wednesday reported just short of the record 60,000 cases set a day earlier, and Brazil reported nearly 45,000.

Much of Europe appeared to have put the worst of the crisis behind it, at least for

now. But Serbia has emerged as a new focus of concern — and of unrest. The country’s crisis team was expected to reimpose a ban gatherings in the capital, Belgrade and to limit the cafe and night club operations following a spike in infections that officials say threatens the Serbian health system.

It wasn’t clear whether officials would reintroduce a weekend curfew, the initial announcement of which triggered violent protests in Belgrade and other cities. Critics accuse President Aleksandar Vucic of letting the crisis spin out of control by lifting an earlier lockdown to allow for an election that tightened his grip on power.

Rock-throwing demonstrators this week fought hours-long running battles with special police forces who used tear gas to disperse them. Vucic said in an Instagram post on Thursday that the government would control the unrest.

Flare-ups of new virus cases are causing concern in several parts of the world, and in some cases leading to the reintroduction of restrictions on public activity.

In France and Greece, officials warned that residents were too frequently ignoring safety guidance. The French government’s leading coronavirus adviser, Jean-Francois Delfraissy, lamented that “the French, in general, have abandoned protective measures.”

“Everyone must understand that we are at the mercy of a return (of the virus) in France,” Delfraissy said. “It suffices to have one super-spreader in a gathering and it will take off again.”

Greek government spokesman Stelios Petsas said authorities were “determined to protect the majority from the frivolous few.” He said the government may announce new restrictions, if needed, Monday.

Petsas said authorities were focused on the rising number of cases in nearby Balkan countries and tourists who traveled to Greece over the land border with Bulgaria.

In Australia, which had initial success containing the outbreak, authorities on Thursday reported 179 new cases, most in Melbourne, where authorities are battling a resurgence and have imposed a new six-week lockdown.

Victoria state Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton said six new cases were from a Melbourne high school which has become the state’s largest known cluster, with 113 people infected. More than 2,000 students and hundreds of staff are in quarantine.

Tokyo confirmed more than 220 new cases Thursday, exceeding its record daily increase from April and prompting concerns of widening of the infections.

NATION

Court curbs access to free birth control

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled broadly Wednesday in favor of the religious rights of employers in two cases that could leave more than 70,000 women without free contraception and tens of thousands of people with no way to sue for job discrimination.

In both cases the court ruled 7-2, with two liberal justices joining conservatives in favor of the Trump administration and religious employers.

In the more prominent of the two cases, involving President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, the justices greenlighted changes the Trump administration had sought. The administration announced in

2017 that it would allow more employers to opt out of providing the no-cost birth control coverage required under the law, but lower courts had blocked the changes.

The ruling is a significant election-year win for President Donald Trump, who counts on heavy support from evangelicals and other Christian groups for votes and policy backing. It was also good news for the administration, which in recent weeks has seen headline-making Supreme Court decisions go against its positions.

In one of those earlier cases, the court rejected Trump's effort to end legal protections for 650,000 young immigrants. In another, the justices said a landmark civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from dis-

crimination in employment.

In its second big ruling on Wednesday, the court sided with two Catholic schools in California in a decision underscoring that certain employees of religious schools can't sue for employment discrimination.

Lay teachers whose contracts had not been renewed had sued their schools. But Justice Samuel Alito wrote in his majority opinion: "When a school with a religious mission entrusts a teacher with the responsibility of educating and forming students in the faith, judicial intervention into disputes between the school and the teacher threatens the school's independence in a way that the First Amendment does not allow."

The court's birth-control decision was cheered by conservative groups, and White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany joined in. "Today's Supreme Court ruling is a big win for religious freedom and freedom of conscience," she said in a statement.

Liberal groups and Democrats, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, decried the decision, which she called a "fundamental misreading" of the health care law. Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said the decision will make it "easier for the Trump-Pence Administration to continue to strip health care from women."

The Trump administration is still seeking to overturn Obama's Affordable Care Act in its entirety.

It has joined Texas and other Republican-led states in calling on the justices to do just that. The case is scheduled to be argued in the court term that begins in October.

Justice Clarence Thomas, writing for the majority of the court, said in Wednesday's decision that the administration has the authority to make its birth-control coverage changes and followed appropriate procedures in doing so.

The government has estimated that the rule changes would cause between 70,000 women and 126,000 women to lose contraception coverage in one year.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg cited those numbers in dissenting.



STEVE HELBER/AP

Monument removal

Crews work to remove the Confederate Soldiers & Sailors Monument in Libby Hill Park on Wednesday in Richmond, Va. The 17-foot statue stands on a 73-foot pedestal overlooking downtown. The statue is one of several that will be removed by the city as part of a reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement.

'Strike for Black Lives' to highlight racism

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A national coalition of labor unions, along with racial and social justice organizations, will stage a mass walkout from work this month, as part of an ongoing reckoning on systemic racism and police brutality in the U.S.

Dubbed the "Strike for Black Lives," tens of thousands of fast food, ride-share, nursing home and airport workers in more than 25 cities are expected to walk off the job July 20 for a full day strike. Those who can't strike for a full day will walk out for about eight minutes — the amount of time prosecutors say a white Minneapolis police officer held his knee on George Floyd's neck — in remembrance of Black men and women who died recently at the hands of police.

The national strike will also include worker-led marches through participating cities, organizers said Wednesday.

According to details shared exclusively with The

Associated Press, organizers are demanding sweeping action by corporations and government to confront systemic racism in an economy that chokes off economic mobility and career opportunities for many Black and Hispanic workers, who make up a disproportionate number of those earning less than a living wage. They also stress the need for guaranteed sick pay, affordable health care coverage and better safety measures for low-wage workers who never had the option of working from home during the coronavirus pandemic.

"We have to link these fights in a new and deeper way than ever before," said Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union, which represents over 2 million workers in the U.S. and Canada.

"Our members have been on a journey ... to understanding why we cannot win economic justice without racial justice. This strike for Black lives is a way to take our members' understanding about that into the streets," Henry told the AP.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the Manhattan district attorney's demand for President Donald Trump's tax returns, but kept a hold on Trump's financial records that Congress has been seeking for more than a year.

The outcome in the two cases is at least a short-term victory for Trump, who has strenuously sought to keep his financial records private.

But the justices rejected arguments by Trump's lawyers and the Justice Department that the president is immune from investigation while he holds office or that a prosecutor must show a greater need than normal to obtain the records. The tax returns are being sought as part of a grand jury investigation.

Because the grand jury process is confidential, the rulings make it likely that none of Trump's financial records will become public soon.

Trump's two high court appointees, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, joined the majority in both cases along with Chief Justice John Roberts and the four liberal justices. Roberts wrote both opinions.

"Congressional subpoenas for information from the President, however, implicate special concerns regarding the separation of powers. The court below did not take adequate account of those concerns," Roberts wrote in the congressional case.

The ruling returns the case to lower courts, with no clear prospect for when the case might ultimately be resolved. The tax returns case also is headed back to a lower court. The case was argued by telephone in May because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Supreme Court rules prosecutor can see Trump's tax records

The fight over the congressional subpoenas has significant implications regarding a president's power to refuse a formal request from Congress. In a separate fight at the federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., over a congressional demand for the testimony of former White House counsel Don McGahn, the administration is making broad arguments that the president's close advisers are "absolutely immune" from having to appear.

In two earlier cases over presidential power, the Supreme Court acted unanimously in requiring President Richard Nixon to turn over White House tapes to the Watergate special prosecutor and in allowing a sexual harassment lawsuit against Clinton to go forward.

In those cases, three Nixon appointees and two Clinton appointees, respectively, voted against the president who chose them for the high court. A fourth Nixon appointee, William Rehnquist, sat out the tapes case because he had worked closely as a Justice Department official with some of the Watergate conspirators whose upcoming trial spurred the subpoena for the Oval Office records.

The subpoenas are not directed at Trump himself. Instead, House committees want records from Deutsche Bank, Capital One and the Mazars USA accounting firm. Mazars also is the recipient of a Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance's subpoena.

Appellate courts in Washington, D.C., and New York brushed aside the president's arguments in decisions that focused on the fact that the subpoenas were addressed to third parties asking for records of Trump's business and financial dealings as a private citizen, not as president.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Dad finds son who went missing on family hike

UT SALT LAKE CITY — An Idaho father was reunited with his 9-year-old son after conducting his own search for the boy, who went missing during a hike with extended family in Utah.

Summit County Sheriff Justin Martinez said the dad drove to Utah where his son, Stratton Joshua Wright, became separated from his uncle, cousins and siblings Wednesday around 8 p.m. during a hike near Bear Lake, KSL-TV reported.

Stratton was found by his dad in an open field Thursday, authorities said. Stratton was slightly dehydrated and tired, but otherwise healthy.

"I guess that's a testament to a father-son bond, because he was able to find him faster than we were as the professionals," Martinez said, adding that helicopters, trained search and rescue crews and horses had also been searching for him.

Police: Man mistook pen for bullet, detained kids

NM HOBBS — A New Mexico man is facing charges after police said he held a group of children against their will when he thought one of them had a .50-caliber round.

Police say the boy had a pen. The Hobbs News-Sun reported Danny Billington was arrested last week after he waved down a police officer in Hobbs and told the officer a juvenile had a .50-caliber round on him. According to a criminal complaint, Billington, 41, took the supposed round from the child and laid it on the ground before talking to the officer. The child told police the instrument was a pen for writing.

The complaint says Billington told the officer that he lined up the juvenile with the pen and the children he was playing with to question the group of five. Billington was charged with robbery, false imprisonment and battery.

Authorities dismantle homemade pipe bomb

IA BOONE — Authorities dismantled a homemade pipe bomb that was set to explode and that had been examined by the Boone County Sheriff's Office said in a Facebook post that two deputies responded Monday after receiving a report about the device that was found on the lid of a container in the area.

The post said the Iowa State Fire Marshal's Office was called and that the device was examined and dismantled.

The post said the device was "set to explode in a delayed manner and without any supervision."

Town's water system goes extend to prison

IN CARLISLE — Some 2,000 inmates were being provided with bottled water at a southwestern Indiana prison after a foul odor was issued for the town water system that ser-



CHRISTIAN SNYDER, PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE/AP

Slippery slope

People ride the natural waterslides Tuesday in Ohio, Pa.

ices the facility, a prison official said Tuesday.

Water was available for showers and toilets at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in Carlisle, but not yet for drinking.

The problem started Sunday when a computer system failure occurred at the town's water treatment plant, Carlisle officials said. The water system lost pressure, resulting in a loss of water availability throughout the Sullivan County town about 30 miles south of Terre Haute.

Customers were warned to only drink the water after boiling it until test results confirmed it was safe to drink from the tap, officials said.

Black bear tranquilized, then moved from suburb

MO ST. LOUIS — Wildlife officials have relocated a black bear that had wandered into a St. Louis suburb and drew a crowd of hundreds curious to see the out-of-place animal.

The bear has been popular on social media pages for weeks as it plodded hundreds of miles from Wisconsin, through Illinois and briefly into Iowa before wandering into Missouri. Wildlife officials said they were spurred to take action over the weekend when the bear—dubbed "Bruno" on social media—found itself in the Wentzville city limits and cornered between interstates 70

THE CENSUS

\$10M

charged with conspiracy to commit bank fraud in a criminal complaint that was unsealed when they made their initial court appearances Monday in New Jersey. Last year, prosecutors said, Singh and Afridi opened bank accounts that received \$776,900 in deposits from Al Madina Kabob restaurant that the bank ultimately rejected as fraudulent. But the two men withdrew or transferred approximately \$232,000 before the funds were returned, according to prosecutors.

and 40, and a crowd of about 400 people gathered to see it.

Fearing for the safety of the bear and the public, conservation officers decided Sunday to tranquilize the bear and moved it to an undisclosed area.

Sheriff's car broken into outside his home

FL SARASOTA — A Florida sheriff's department-issued vehicle was broken into outside his home late Sunday or early Monday morning, officials said.

The vehicle was parked outside the home of Sarasota County Sheriff Tom Knight's home in Venice, the Sarasota Herald-Tribune reported. Sheriff's spokeswoman Megan Krahe didn't say what was taken from the vehicle.

"I can confirm that no weapons or Tasers were taken," Krahe said. "There was forced entry.

The amount of losses from hundreds of credit and debit card transactions federal prosecutors in Baltimore allege are a result of a bank fraud scheme. Dogar Singh, 67, of Carteret, N.J.; and Rehan Afridi, 36, of West Deptford, N.J. were charged with conspiracy to commit bank fraud in a criminal complaint that was unsealed when they made their initial court appearances Monday in New Jersey. Last year, prosecutors said, Singh and Afridi opened bank accounts that received \$776,900 in deposits from Al Madina Kabob restaurant that the bank ultimately rejected as fraudulent. But the two men withdrew or transferred approximately \$232,000 before the funds were returned, according to prosecutors.

Other than that we're waiting on further details. It was not left unlocked."

Bellagio error may be record sportsbook loss

NV LAS VEGAS — The nearly quarter-million dollars in winning wagers reportedly placed at MGM Resorts last Sunday might be the largest sportsbook loss in Las Vegas history on bets made after an event has started.

Seven longtime Las Vegas bookmakers can't recall a larger loss, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported. But each oddsmaker has taken hits on past posts and said it's a fairly common occurrence at books.

According to an ESPN report, Sunday's bets were allowed to be placed because incorrect start times were posted on some Korean and Chinese baseball games

due to a manual entry error.

Nearly all of the approximately 50 wagers were placed on self-serve kiosks at the Bellagio between 1:30 a.m. and 3 a.m. when the games in question started at 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. Among the bets was a \$250, 10-leg parlay that paid more than \$137,100.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board is reportedly investigating the matter. Anytime there is a dispute in excess of \$500, the state's books are required to contact the board, which conducts an investigation and makes a ruling the books must abide by.

Summons is issued to man who had machete

CO BOULDER — A machete was taken from a Colorado man police said was seen waving the knife at cars and climbing on apartment balconies.

The Boulder Police Department responded to calls last Friday around 10 a.m. near downtown Boulder, reporting a man yelling at cars and swinging a machete, KMGH-TV reported. Police said that he cooperated after they made contact with him.

Authorities retrieved the knife from the man before issuing him a summons and releasing him from custody. The man was referred to a program with resources for mental health concerns, police said.

From wire reports

PACIFIC

Heavy rainfall floods scenic central Japan

Associated Press

TOKYO — Flooding and mudslides have stranded hundreds of people in scenic hot springs and hiking areas in central Japan, while rescue workers searched Thursday for more people missing in the disaster that already has killed nearly 60 people in a southern region.

Parts of Nagano and Gifu, including areas known for scenic mountain trails and hot springs, have been flooded by massive downpours.

More than 300 people, including hotel employees and visitors, were trapped in Kamikochi, as floods and mudslides hit a main road connecting the town to Matsumoto, another tourist destination in Nagano. All of the stranded people were safe, prefectural officials said.

In neighboring Gifu, hundreds were also isolated in the hot spring towns of Gero and Ontake.

As of Thursday morning, the death toll from the heavy rains that started over the weekend had risen to 59, most of them from hardest-hit Kumamoto prefecture on Japan's third largest island of Kyushu. Searching continued for a dozen still missing in Kumamoto and several others elsewhere on the island.

In Oita prefecture, a family of four running an inn in the famous hot spring town of Yufuin was missing.

Floodwaters also ravaged local vegetables and fish almost ready for shipment to consumers. An

eel culturing farm in Kagoshima was hit by rains just before Japan's "unagi" season later this month. "I can't ship them, or even go near the place to feed them or change the water," eel grower Kazuya Kusuda told TBS television.

In the Kurume city of Fukuoka, farmer Masatoshi Inayoshi said his mustard spinach, almost ready for harvest, was destroyed by the floods.

The disaster is a further blow to the local economy already hit by the coronavirus measures, just as Japan was returning to business as usual.

Kumamoto on Thursday started accepting dozens of volunteers to help residents clean their homes, but they could only be from within the prefecture and temperature checks and masks were required due to coronavirus concerns.

Hundreds of thousands of people were in areas under evacuation advisories, but leaving wasn't mandatory and the number who sought shelter was not known.

Japan is at high risk of heavy rain in early summer when wet and warm air from the East China Sea flows into a seasonal rain front above the country. In July 2018, more than 200 people, about half of them in Hiroshima, died from heavy rain and flooding in southwestern Japan.

Meteorological Agency officials said the seasonal rain front has stayed above Japan longer than usual, prompting heavy rain to persist.



MIYUKI SAITO, KYODO NEWS/AP

People try to remove debris that broke through the window of a building near a river during heavy rains in Hita, Oita prefecture, southern Japan, on Thursday

South Korea asks senior US envoy to try to revive North Korea talks

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea on Thursday asked a visiting senior U.S. envoy to try to revive stalled nuclear diplomacy with North Korea, which has refused to resume talks because of what it calls hostile U.S. policies.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, the top U.S. official on North Korea, has been in Seoul for talks since Tuesday.

He was scheduled to travel on to Japan later Thursday.

During a meeting with South Korea's newly appointed presidential national security adviser, Suh Hoon, Biegun stressed the importance of a resumption of talks between Washington and Pyongyang and agreed to maintain close coordination with Seoul, the presidential Blue House said in a statement.

Suh appraised Biegun's efforts to restart the U.S.-North Korean diplomacy and asked him to continue those efforts, the statement said.

After meeting with other Seoul officials on Wednesday, Biegun suggested that Washington remains open to talks with Pyongyang. But he also accused a senior North Korean nuclear negotiator who had blamed the deadlocked talks on American hostility of being "locked in an old way of thinking." This indicated that Washington won't likely make concessions to resume the talks despite the North's pressure.

North Korea has previously demanded the U.S. lift international sanctions and provide security guarantee if it's truly committed to talks.

The nuclear diplomacy has yielded little progress since the breakdown of a second summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in early 2019.

Missing Seoul mayor's body found after massive search

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Police say the body of the missing mayor of South Korea's capital, Seoul, has been found. They say Park Won-soon's body was located in hills in northern Seoul early Friday, more than seven hours after they launched a massive search for him.

Park's daughter had called police on Thursday afternoon to report him missing, saying he had given her a "will-like" message before leaving home.

A police officer said Park's body was found near a traditional restaurant and banquet hall located in the hills.

He spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

News reports say one of Park's secretaries had lodged a complaint with police on Wednesday night over alleged sexual harassment.

Kim Ji-hyeong, a Seoul Metropolitan Government official, said Park did not come to work on Thursday for unspecified reasons and had canceled all of his schedule, including a meeting with a presidential official at his Seoul City Hall office.

Park, 64, a longtime civic activist and human rights lawyer, was elected Seoul mayor in 2011.



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WEEKEND

Sorting through
summer songs

Music, Page 32



Time is on their side

Hulu's intriguing 'Palm Springs,' a movie about being stuck in an endless loop, feels made for this moment

Movies, Page 20

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

The light of day

UV plane-disinfecting invention gets boost from virus

By HUGO MARTIN
Los Angeles Times

Seven years before the coronavirus pandemic hit, Arthur Kreitenberg, a Los Angeles orthopedic surgeon, came up with an invention in his basement to quickly disinfect an airplane cabin using ultraviolet light.

He even bought airplane seats from the airline graveyard in the Mojave desert to test his idea.

But the idea did not catch on quickly. His wife joked that Kreitenberg's tinkering in the basement was "cheaper than having a girlfriend." At the many aviation trade shows and conferences he attended to pitch his invention, few showed interest. COVID-19 changed all of that.

Honeywell International, the multinational conglomerate with \$37 billion in annual sales, announced recently that it is teaming up with Kreitenberg to build the UV invention and distribute it to the world's airlines. The company plans to build more than 100 units by the end of July, with production increasing in the following months.

The invention, originally named the GermFalcon, looks like an airline beverage cart equipped with two mechanical arms that stretch out over the plane's seats like a pair of wings. The arms emit UV light as the cart is pushed down the aisle.

Kreitenberg's son, Elliot, who gave up his basement battling cage for his dad's invention, has teamed with his father to get the GermFalcon off the ground.

The contraption can disinfect a cabin in about 10 minutes at a cost of about \$10 per plane, according to Honeywell, which is marketing the device as the Honeywell UV Cabin System.

It's not a novel concept. The U.S. Patent

and Trademark Office's database shows more than 30 patents filed since 1995 that propose using UV light to disinfect water, air, surgical equipment, cellphone screens and catheters, among other things.

Medical experts note that UV light is already used to disinfect hospital operating rooms, and two of Southern California's swankiest hotels, the Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills and the Beverly Hilton, recently announced plans to use UV light to disinfect their rooms in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

But experts point out that once an airplane cabin has been disinfected, a passenger infected with COVID-19 can sit down and jeopardize the health of many of the fliers.

The biggest risk of being infected is from close contact with another person, said Peter Chin-Hong, a professor of medicine and an infectious disease specialist at UC San Francisco. Using UV light to disinfect an airplane cabin "could possibly help," he said. "But UV light is not the end-all and be-all."

Philip Barruel, the biosafety program manager for laboratory research at UC Davis, agrees, saying UV light may not reach far enough into creases and corners of an airplane cabin to kill the virus.

"There are a lot of unknowns about this virus," he said.

Kreitenberg acknowledges that his invention will only reduce the chances of getting infected by germs left on the surfaces of an airline cabin and won't make flying entirely safe.

Still, he points out that UV light can kill several kinds of germs, with the potential to help stem the spread of influenza and other diseases.

Honeywell began in early June to meet with airlines and demonstrate the UV cabin system but has yet to get a commit-



GEORGE SAYAN/Lunch Break Productions for Dimer LLC

ment from any carrier.

Orthopedic surgeon Arthur Kreitenberg, right, invented the plane-disinfecting device he named the GermFalcon, and his son Elliot helped get it to market.

"The initial reaction from airlines has been very positive," said Honeywell spokesman Adam Kress. "We believe this product has great potential at airlines worldwide, but we're starting in-person demonstrations with domestic carriers."

It all began with a volleyball.

While attending his daughter Zoe's college volleyball matches, Kreitenberg noticed that during the H1N1 outbreak of 2009 the players didn't shake hands to reduce the chances of spreading the virus. But all the players touched the same volleyball.

Inspired by the use of UV light to disinfect operating rooms, Kreitenberg invented a device — dubbed the Germ Ninja — to quickly disinfect the balls by passing UV light over them. The invention was so successful it was used in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

Not long after that, Elliot Kreitenberg flew home from college, trying to sleep

with his face resting on the fold-down tray. A fellow flier warned Elliot about the germs on the tray, reminding him that it was flu season. Elliot relayed the story to his father, and the idea for using UV light to disinfect commercial planes was hatched.

Once the coronavirus pandemic reached the U.S. early this year, the Kreitenbergs offered to donate the use of the GermFalcon to disinfect planes that were flying passengers in from overseas. A handful of airlines at Los Angeles International Airport accepted the offer, which drew the attention of a few cable television news outlets. It also got the attention of several potential business partners, including Honeywell.

The father-son team is not done yet. They are now working on a version of the GermFalcon that can be used in classrooms, offices, buses and train stations, among other locations. They call it the UV Hammer.

GADGET WATCH

Better hearing through technology

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

I've never seen anyone go around showing off their new hearing aid. But I often see people bragging about their new earbuds. The Olive Smart Ear has the appearance and style of a single earbud, but does the job of a hearing aid.

The parent company, Olive Union, states that 48 million Americans have trouble hearing, yet only 1 in 5 will need one use an assisted hearing device to correct for their impairment. Most often, hearing loss begins in just one ear. First comes little things like talking louder than you normally would, keeping the TV at a higher volume, or cupping your ear to hear better during a meeting.

The Olive Smart Ear is built with state-of-the-art design and

technology, patented sound technology for outstanding, clear and balanced sounds and is designed to work with those with hearing impairment of less than 50 dB. They are designed for people who aren't quite ready for hearing aids, which cost anywhere from \$2,000 to \$5,000, compared to \$299 for the Olive Smart Ear.

A companion app (iOS and Android) offers a hearing test for recommended settings, and the user-friendly dashboard gives you instant adjustments from the basic default mode to TV watching and conversations. Feedback can be altered and other controls can easily be customized based on the user and the environment. Crowded restaurants need different adjustments than talking at the breakfast table.

What makes it stand out is the amplified sound. I don't have hearing loss, so I enlisted a

friend who does. We put ourselves in a normal environment with the TV in the surround sound, but not on deafening levels.

With the Olive Smart Ear in one ear away from me, she definitely felt improvement on hearing the TV while still able to hear my occasional conversation.

Olive Union states that the product's Wide Dynamic Range Compression algorithm is tuned to capture 99.8 percent of the sounds within our hearing range without distortion.

Alone it gives seven hours of charge, and when combined with the included portable recharging case, it's good for more than 20 hours.

It's not something you would wear all day, but it's so small and portable, when it's needed it can be useful.

Oliveunion.com; \$299, available in white and black



OLIVE UNION/TNS

The Olive Smart Ear has the appearance and style of a single earbud but does the job of a hearing aid.

The new EGGTronic Power Bar portable battery is a handy, efficient, all-in-one product — it's one of the most versatile portable batteries I've ever seen.

It has two 7.5 watt Qi wireless charging spots, a single 5 watt Apple Watch wireless charging spot and a USB-C powered port with 30 watts of power to deliver.

The 3-in-1 Apple MFi-certified multi-device can simultaneously charge an iPhone, Apple Watch

and AirPods with its 10,000 mAh of portable battery power. The USB-C port can be used with your charging cable to power and charge a MacBook, iPad or iPhone. The same port is used for recharging the battery itself.

The package includes a 3-foot USB-C to USB-C cable, a 3-foot USB-C to Lightning cable and a handy USB-C to USB-A adapter tip.

Online: eggtronic.com; \$149.99

ON THE COVER: Andy Samberg, left, and Cristin Milioti are stuck in a time warp in "Palm Springs."

Hulu

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Still fighting the good fight

'Old Guard' director Prince-Bythewood on what film means for Black women in Hollywood

BY LINDSEY BAHR

Associated Press

Gina Prince-Bythewood knows what good fighting looks like. The "Love & Basketball" director has been an athlete her entire life, but she also just loves action movies. So when she started dreaming up the template for a bare-knuckle clash between Charlize Theron and KiKi Layne in the new Netflix film "The Old Guard," her bar was high: the bathroom fight from "Mission: Impossible — Fallout."

"It's a perfect fight scene. I wanted ours to be as dope as that," Prince-Bythewood said. "We wanted the audience to feel like they were in the fight, to feel the slams into the wall."

For her, that meant not cheating by having "flyaway walls" in the aircraft that would make it easier to move the camera around or relying too heavily on stunt doubles when she'd have to cut away from.

The pressure was enormous. It was the first scene she shot on her first-ever big-budget action pic, which was more than 10 times the budget of her last film. She only had five days to do it, where the Mission: Impossible team had a month. And it was an historic moment: Before "The Old Guard," a Black woman had never directed a comic book film. She was acutely aware of the milestone.

"The fact that we're still having firsts is ridiculous," Prince-Bythewood said in a phone interview last week. "I knew I could do it. Hollywood just hasn't caught up to me yet."

On Friday, she's going to get the biggest audience of her career when "The Old Guard" debuts on Netflix to subscribers in 190 countries. And she can't wait to know what that feels like. Although "Love & Basketball" and "Beyond the Lights" are beloved by critics and audiences, neither have exactly been runaway hits at the box office, hampered by limited distribution plans informed by incorrect assumptions about the reach of films with Black leads. Her biggest to date, "The Secret Life of Bees," from 2008, made just under \$40 million. The Netflix scope feels like a victory that's been a long time coming.

"After all these years of fighting for any sort of distribution and being told these stories, these characters don't travel? And now, 190 countries? I can't get over that," she said.

Skydance Media approached Prince-Bythewood to direct "The Old Guard," an adaptation of Greg Rucka's comic book about a group of mercenary immortals. She's picky about her projects and writes most of them. In her over 20 years in the business, she's only directed five films. But this struck a chord with her: It was an action-drama, the leads were women and one was Black. And she was being asked to infuse the action—even the plane fight—with character-driven drama.

"She was still able to bring that deeper emotional work that she shows in her films," Layne said of her director. "It was nice to see that blossom here."

Prince-Bythewood is used to fighting for herself. It goes all the way back to childhood when she wanted to play sports.

"There were no girls' leagues," she said. "Boys often didn't want me and my sisters out there."

She was undaunted though, and became the first girl to play kickball at her school.

"I was real good at kickball," she added with a laugh.

Not taking an initial "no" is how she got into UCLA's prestigious directing program, landed her first writing gig on the television show "A Different World" and the only reason "Love & Basketball" and "Beyond the Lights" exist. Her drive, she thinks, stems from being an athlete.

"It's so much about ambition and stamina and outwork-



NETFLIX/AP photos

Director Gina Prince-Bythewood, right, appears with actress KiKi Layne on the set of the action film "The Old Guard."

ing everybody," she said. "That mentality drives who I am as a director. And this industry early on was constantly telling me that my stories weren't worthy or valid. I kept having to fight for my space."

She feels like she's finally in a good place, however, thanks in part to the enduring affection for "Love & Basketball" and "Beyond the Lights," which often get mentioned in meetings. Her next two projects focus on Black women and, she said, for the first time she didn't have to fight for them.

But she still feels immense pressure to succeed with "The Old Guard." Opportunities are rare for female directors on the blockbuster level, and even rarer for women of color. Only a few years ago, Ava DuVernay became the first woman of color to direct a live-action film with a budget over \$100 million. (DuVernay is also joining the superhero club with the DC film "The New Gods").

To ease her nerves, Prince-Bythewood met with a fellow trailblazer, "Wonder Woman" director Patty Jenkins, before shooting. She said Jenkins was helpful.

"What she achieved under that pressure was really a beacon of light for me," Prince-Bythewood said. "It is really hard making a film like this. It's 63 days of shooting and nine and a half months overseas in hard prep. And you're reminded every day that

you cannot fail.

"Because if I fail, I kill it for the next group of Black women who want this opportunity."

■ Review of "The Old Guard" on Page 21

"The fact that we're still having firsts is ridiculous. I knew I could do it. Hollywood just hasn't caught up to me yet."

Gina Prince-Bythewood

"The Old Guard" director, on being the first Black woman to direct a comic book film



WEEKEND: MOVIES

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

Though most of the films that have debuted during the pandemic never got to screen for packed movie houses, "Palm Springs" had the kind of premiere filmmakers dream of.

At the Sundance Film Festival in January, the time-loop romantic comedy, starring Andy Samberg and Cristin Milioti, drew big laughs, enthusiastic reviews and a record deal for the festival. Hulu and the indie distributor Neon acquired "Palm Springs" for \$17,500,000.69. The extra cents were suggested after negotiations stretched deep into



Barbakow

the night by Samberg's Lonely Island partner Akiva Schaffer, a producer on the film. "We've been saying Hulu insisted. It was either Akiva or Hulu," says Samberg, chuckling. "It might have been Akiva at, like, 5 a.m. after staying up all night making a deal and having been drinking earlier in the night. Or it was Hulu. I can't quite recall."

That memory may be distant and from another lifetime entirely. But "Palm Springs," which premieres Friday on Hulu and in drive-in theaters, has found itself oddly suited to right now.

The film, the feature debut of director Max Barbakow and screenwriter Andy Siara, is about a bridesmaid, Sarah (Milioti), who, after an encounter with a guest, Nyles (Samberg), at her sister's wedding, falls into a time loop. She begins reliving the day over and over again, a cycle that Nyles has already been stuck in for so long he can't remember.

When other movies were postponing their releases, "Palm Springs" opted to essentially stay put. "We people in some state of lockdown across the country, a movie about the comedy of reliving the same day became weirdly appropriate. A time loop opened, and "Palm Springs" dove in.

When Siara and Barbakow started on "Palm Springs," they didn't intend to wade into "Groundhog Day" territory. The two met in film school and, after making a few shorts together, decided to set their feature debut in Palm Springs after a weekend in the Southern California desert oasis.

Siara had just gotten married in Palm Springs, and they gravitated toward a nihilistic character who had long tired of standard wedding chitchat.

That the film started character first, not with the high concept, the two say was key. Still, encroaching on any such storyline risked breaching the sacred comedy territory of Harold Ramis' "Groundhog Day."

"I was in thinking, 'The all-time of that is done.' And I don't think this changes that in the

Unexpectedly timely

'Palm Springs' arrives for the Groundhog Days of coronavirus quarantine



Cristin Milioti, left, and Andy Samberg pose for a portrait to promote the film "Palm Springs" during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, on Jan. 25. The film will premiere Friday on Hulu.

Taylor Jewell, Invision/AP

slightest," says Samberg. "The thing about it that made me want to do it anyway is, to me, it feels like it very intentionally picks up where 'Groundhog Day' leaves off."

"Palm Springs" uses its daily reset to dig into the emotional lives of Sarah and Nyles, both of whom who have shrugged off maturity in various ways. It's a relationship comedy where the starts and stops of personal and romantic growth happen through surreal science-fiction reruns.

"It was dark and weird in ways that I'm extremely drawn to while also making me laugh and also moving me," Milioti says. "I just thought it was so delightful and nuts."

Lonely Island, the trio of Samberg, Schaffer and Jorma Taccone, helped develop the project with Barbakow and Siara. But if "Groundhog Day" was initially an impediment, time-loop tales — like the acclaimed Netflix series "Russian Doll" — proliferated while they worked on "Palm Springs."

"We were like, (Expletive)."

'If you're stuck with yourself, there's a lot of opportunity for introspection and connection with whoever you're stuck with.'

Max Barbakow
"Palm Springs" director

We talked about bailing on it a few times," says Samberg. "It sort of morphed into feeling like 'We shouldn't do this because there are so many' — like it was just a genre now."

"Palm Springs," the filmmakers realized, hung on the relationship between Sarah and Nyles, and it would be difficult to overstate how much Milioti ("Pargo," "Black Mirror") brings to the movie. Her performance, while equally goofball, grounds the film in genuine

self-reproach.

"When I watch it, I feel like she just absolutely murders it," Samberg says.

Over the past month, they have all wondered about whether "Palm Springs" really does fit the moment. While protests around the death of George

Floyd forced a national reckoning on ingrained racism, it became clear the pandemic hasn't been "Groundhog Day." It's also been a time of tragedy and reckoning and self-examination.

"We've all been asked to sit with ourselves, and that can be really difficult. That's what happens in the film for Sarah for the first time, and it's a nightmare," says Milioti. "The silver lining of that is that we, white people, had to sit in the discomfort of 'Oh, my God.' We had to watch things. We had to sit in the horror of it all and there was no distraction."

Samberg calls it "an interesting moment to be putting out a comedy."

"The last thing you want is to feel like you're distracting from what's going on right now.

I think it's a moment of wanting to stay vigilant and focused and engaged," he says. "As someone who is trying to be that way, I also find that at the end of the day, when I put the kid to bed, we want to put on something light half the time to give ourselves a momentary break."

They've all found themselves living a strange version of the movie they created. But there are some positives. The main upside, says Samberg, is spending more time with his wife, musician Joanna Newsom, and young daughter. Siara, who with his wife is soon expecting the birth of their second child, hasn't minded the repetitive days. "I'm cool with being stuck in the monotony," he says chipperly.

But no one can compete with Barbakow in terms of syncing with their film. He proposed to his girlfriend during quarantine.

"If you're stuck with yourself, there's a lot of opportunity for introspection and connection with whoever you're stuck with," says Barbakow. "I'm happy to be stuck with my now fiancée."

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Inventive take on a familiar genre

Unlikely pair can't escape time loop in romantic comedy 'Palm Springs'

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

We've probably all been to a wedding that felt like it would never end. For Sarah (Cristin Milioti), that wedding is her younger sister's, where she's drowning herself in red wine and extremely unprepared to give a speech. Now imagine living that nightmarish day again, and again, and again. This is a vision of a sun-drenched, perfectly Pinterest hell that co-writers Andy Siara and Max Barbakow, who also directs, have conjured as the setting for their cerebral "Groundhog Day"-inspired rom-com, "Palm Springs."

Sarah is saved from the speech by a beer-swilling character in a Hawaiian shirt, Nyles (Andy Samberg), who seems to have perfected his wedding routine, anticipating every dance move, predicting every hookup. He's either really, really intuitive, or he's been here before. When Sarah follows him into the desert at night, she discovers that Nyles is trapped in an infinite time loop, like Bill Murray in "Groundhog Day" or Natasha Lyonne in "Russian Doll," and now she is, too.

Against the expansive desert backdrop and a repeating ritual of love, Sarah and Nyles will

reckon with what it means to never grow old, never die. How will you live your life when there are no consequences for anything you do? Hit by a car? Wake up in the morning. Hook up with the bartender? Wake up in the morning. Perform an elaborate dance routine wearing matching denim jackets in the local dive bar? Wake up in the morning. It's the power of an infinitely clean slate, which Nyles uses to test the boundaries of polite behavior and enjoy a perpetual vacation, sipping cervezas on a pool floaty. Sarah, on the other hand, craves more: more meaning, more weight to her actions, more redemption.

These are the questions that drive the curious existence of Nyles and Sarah in "Palm Springs," which is as high-concept as it is low-key. Barbakow achieves a chill and stylish vibe for what is fundamentally a hangout movie that begs the question: How weird can you get? What Nyles and Sarah find in the weirdness is the deep human connection they've been lacking. Nyles coasting in a rapid relationship with bridesmaid Misty (Meredith Hagner, who absolutely owns the niche she's carved out for herself playing absurd ditzes), Sarah stuck in the broken divorce rut.

Barbakow and Siara build



Hulu/PT

When carefree Nyles (Andy Samberg, left) and reluctant maid of honor Sarah (Cristin Milioti) have a chance encounter at a wedding, they find themselves unable to escape the venue, themselves or each other, in "Palm Springs," now on Hulu.

a world around a fantastical premise, but one that feels real and natural. The infinite time loop is outlandish enough, so there's no need to mug for cheap laughs, and the laugh-out-loud moments are organically earned. It offers the actors a sense of freedom to be as real or as kooky as they want to be. It's nice to see Samberg in a romantic leading role that plays on his strengths of sweet silliness, but "Palm Springs" belongs to Milioti, in a

breakout performance. Although she's had an enormously successful career on stage and in TV, this feels like the first leading film role for Milioti that allows her to show new shades of her range. She's darker, funnier, wackier than she's been before, but still grounded.

The canon of infinite time loop texts is often about finding serenity in the insanity, their neurotic protagonists learning to surrender to the scenario. That

message is even more poignant now, as we all seem to be trapped in the never-ending sameness of quarantine. But "Palm Springs" takes it one step further: It's not just about accepting, but finding connection in the madness. Maybe that's the only way to find salvation within, and possibly escape the loop.

"Palm Springs" is rated R for sexual content, language throughout, drug use and some violence. Running time: 90 minutes.

Action-packed 'Old Guard' elevated by exploring morality of immortality

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

The new Netflix sci-fi action film "The Old Guard," starring Charlize Theron and KiKi Layne, is a slick actioner with a supernatural twist. It has a great concept, cast and script, and it's executed crisply by Gina Prince-Bythewood, the director of "Love & Basketball" and "Beyond the Lights." This film makes her the first Black woman to direct a big-budget, star-driven action movie, which already makes it worth the watch, and Prince-Bythewood's assured direction makes it a worthy one, too.

"The Old Guard" refers to a group of immortals, an "army" of sorts, or at least a sleeper cell of four warriors, led by Andy (Theron), who have been around for centuries. They're moral mercenaries, fighting for what they believe in. Andy, the oldest of the guard, has led the life of a mysterious, legendary warrior, keeping a low profile in the modern world while saddling up for special missions. When a rescue op turns out to be a setup and a new warrior of her kind (KIKI Layne) pops up in Afghanistan, Andy has to scramble for her team's survival, even though survival, for them, is the easy part. Captivity for an immortal is the very, very hard part.

Greg Rucka adapts his own graphic novel series for the screen, and he delivers a fantastic script, one that is modern but rich in mythology. Prince-Bythewood gives just enough flashback material to



NETFLIX/PT

Four undying warriors who have secretly protected humanity for centuries become targeted for their mysterious powers just as they discover a new immortal in "The Old Guard," starring Charlize Theron. It's now playing on Netflix.

offer a taste of the vastness of the tale, but it never overwhelms the story at hand. This supernatural-ish concept is grounded and deeply human, wrestling with love, loss, destiny, betrayal and the question of what we're fighting for here on Earth is worth it.

Since Theron always seems somewhat superhuman anyway, this is an easy role for her to slip into. She delivers a capti-

vating performance that isn't in any way showy, but subtle and sensitive. She's a tremendously gifted physical actor, and as Andy, she moves with a confident efficiency, not a movement wasted, honed by centuries of practice. When that confidence and power starts to slip in her gait and posture, you take notice.

Andy, jaded after centuries of this life, is grappling with ethical and existen-

tial questions when Nile (Layne) shows up, perhaps to show her the possibilities again. Nile, a Marine, embodies the grounded, human questions of it all: Why her? How? What about her family? As Nile progresses from scared to rebellious to accepting, Layne capably conveys the weight of the new reality for her character, and Prince-Bythewood gives those moments time to breathe.

What makes "The Old Guard" fascinating is not necessarily the fight scenes or action sequences (though those are a necessary part of building out this unique world), but the conversations the characters have about what they've chosen to do with the immortality they never chose for themselves. Rucka's script carefully weaves these moments into organic conversation so it never feels like an exposition dump, and Prince-Bythewood is so skilled at balancing the emotional discussions about the morality of immortality with adrenaline-pounding fight scenes. The villain is a bit of an underdeveloped stereotype, but he gets the job done.

All too often, the human aspect gets lost in the spectacle of an action movie. But Rucka and Prince-Bythewood foreground that element of the story to create something with stakes, intrigue and philosophical weight. They make sure this cool concept and cast are given their due, and set up a sequel too. With any luck, we'll see this world again.

"The Old Guard" is rated R for sequences of graphic violence, and language. Running time: 118 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

More to explore

Isle of Armor expansion outshines base game

By GENE PARK

The Washington Post

Last year's Pokémon Sword and Shield games had flashes of brilliance, marred by technological barriers. The game's Wild Areas—free-roam landscapes populated by wandering Pokémon—hinted at the seemingly unattainable dream of a fully online Pokémon game. As implemented, though, Sword and Shield had fewer monsters than prior games and didn't look as good as they could, especially compared with other Nintendo Switch titles.

Enter Isle of Armor. The expansion is the first piece of downloadable content (DLC) to drop for the Switch era of Pokémon. It features the titular isle and a new legendary monster, Kubfu, as well as more than 100 other creatures, including several returning favorites. Most impressively, the new content is all Wild Area, and it feels more cohesive and true to the world than the Wild Areas in the base game. For one, the desert isn't just a patch of sand in the middle of a valley. The erratic weather patterns also gone replaced with distinct named areas with their own weather patterns, such as the Forest of Focus and Challenge Beach.

There are separate forest areas, wetlands, an entire sea of islands to explore, as well as an intricate web of caves, all filled

with endless amounts of Pokémon and items. The things you do in the Wild Area remain the same: catch monsters, get items and do raids. But the context of a more cohesive map makes it all a bit more fun to find.

It's a delight to see old Pokémon favorites return. The "National Dex" controversy (dubbed "Dexit") started because Game Freak had to cut several old monsters in favor of new ones for Sword and Shield. In the end, the controversy did little to blunt the game's sales (more than 17 million sold by March). But the game feels a lot more like home once you see recognizable marquee monsters such as Jigglypuff and Marill roaming the fields.

There are a few caveats here. The story campaign is short, which is to be expected. The narrative revolves around getting and evolving Kubfu, all done via "hardcore training" disguised as a series of menial tasks.

Most of the quests are boring. One of them has you taking Kubfu around to see the sights and...that's it. But it's how these missions are structured that makes the DLC interesting. The missions and story all play out in the open world. Witcher 3 this game is not, but it's encouraging to see developer Game Freak experiment with mission structure outside of narrow corridors.

Game Freak is a famously

conservative studio, and the slow evolution of the Pokémon series is a reflection of that. But more importantly, it's not a studio experienced in playing around with genres outside of what's familiar in Pokémon. Only last year, the studio admitted to shifting focus to other projects to grow the staff's experience in game creation.

The Isle's Wild Area still has many of the same flaws as the base game. Going online is a pain. It's still hard to connect with other random players for Pokémon raids. The fields might still show other Pokémon trainers running around, but it's not actual players, just avatars representing them. And every second of online play in the Wild Area is weighed down by framerate dips as the game needlessly streams in these "shadow" trainers to populate the field. Nintendo's developers famously struggle with adding online features. Game Freak is trying, but the result is still a far cry from the desired outcome.

And for all its interesting design choices, the game's main methods of engagement are still limited to what was in the base game: raids, catching monsters and finding items.

Dedicated trainers will love a number of upgrades, including a new soup recipe that lets your monsters reach Gigantamax



Nintendo

Isle of Armor, the first set of downloadable content for Pokémon Sword and Pokémon Shield video games, launched on June 17. The second, The Crown Tundra, will launch in the fall.

level much easier, as well as Appearances to trade for rare items.

If the base Sword and Shield games didn't excite you, chances are that forking over an extra \$40 isn't worth it. But if you're intrigued by the future of the series, Isle of Armor is worth a

glimpse. It lays a decent outline for where the series could go next. And this fall's The Crown Tundra DLC should be bigger. You can always wait until then to see whether the \$40 is worth it.

Platform: Nintendo Switch
Online: tinyurl.com/y8z3jq6j

Little Orpheus: A cheeky homage to the golden age of science fiction

By CHRISTOPHER BYRD

Special to The Washington Post

Little Orpheus is quite a departure for The Chinese Room, the small British development team known for its brooding narrative-focused games Dear Esther (2008) and Everybody's Gone to the Rapture (2015). Rather than tackling weighty themes like remorse and death, the game channels the spirit of mid-20th century sci-fi and matinee adventures to spin an outlandish tale, full of vim, about a cosmonaut who travels to the center of the Earth. Divided into eight episodes, roughly a half-hour each, Little Orpheus is suited for gaming on the go.

At the start, we meet Comrade Ivan Ivanovich, a trim man with a pompadour haircut, seated at a small table in an interrogation room before the much larger, intimidating General Yurkov. The General is there to debrief Ivan about his mission to the center of the Earth for the purposes of assessing its suitability for colonization. After descending into the Earth via a defunct volcano, Ivan becomes separated



The Chinese Room

Little Orpheus is a visually stunning romp to the center of the earth with cosmonaut Ivan Ivanovich.

from Little Orpheus, the atomic powered rocket drill entrusted to him by the "Great" Soviet state, in a crash. (Throughout the story, Ivan constantly tries to impress the General with his patriotism.)

Under threat of execution, Ivan must give an account of his whereabouts for the past three years and explain to the skeptical general how he managed to

return to the Earth's surface without the atomic bomb that powered his ship. (Erp, the parallel with the Orpheus myth.)

The story Ivan tells is utterly fantastical. After parachuting from the vehicle, he finds himself in a lush, sun-dappled jungle patrolled by dinosaurs. From there he discovers a city filled with giant blue creatures, many of whom are either caged or en-

slaved by mind-controlling helmets that mysteriously resemble the Soviet-issued helmets with which Ivan is acquainted.

In his efforts to puzzle out how the creatures came to be subjugated and to track down the stolen power source of his ship, Ivan sets off on a wide-ranging adventure that sees him get swallowed by a whale, travel through a musical city full of large bells and crumbling masonry, visit a moon, meet a famous dog and square off against a czarist general who has gone mad.

Anchoring these wild adventures is the sharp banter between the incredulous general and the questionably credible Ivan, who has a habit of tripping over his words. In gameplay terms, Little Orpheus hews to the familiar tropes of platforming games. Running is accomplished by sliding your finger across the screen of your iPhone or iPad.

To climb, you slide your finger up or down. Jumping is accomplished by double-tapping on the screen while the manipulation of objects is done by pressing down onto the screen. The developers clearly wanted their game to offer a brisk experience, as none

of the puzzles or platforming sequences are that taxing.

Although I did not find the platforming sequences especially tricky, I did mutter in frustration over the controls from time to time when it seemed to me that the game failed to register a jump or a quick change of direction. It is certainly possible, though, that the controls may not be as finicky for others as they were for someone like me, who is partial to playing games on console or computer.

Besides the sprightly dialogue between the General and Ivan, what I enjoyed most about Little Orpheus, were the game's crisp visuals which made me feel like I was watching an animated series on my phone. (The art style pays homage to the covers of Amazing Stories and other art from the Golden Age of science fiction.)

The Chinese Room's latest caters to a longing for childlike, wide-eyed wonder. Its humor, coupled with moderately challenging platforming sequences, should appeal to players of all ages who are fond of light escapism.

Platform: Apple Arcade
Online: littleorpheus.com

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

ON THE QT

TIMES

9 a.m.-7:30 p.m. daily

COSTS

Entrance to the bridge and treetop line is 9 euros for adults and 7 euros for children between 6 and 14.

FOOD

There are snack bars near the sites and a wide range of restaurants downtown.

INFORMATION

There is a paid parking lot near the bridge and treetop walk at the Sommerberg section of Bad Wildbad. Call 07081-10280; Email: touristik@bad-wildbad.de

— John Vandiver



Top: The suspended cable bridge offers spectacular views of the Black Forest.

Far left: The cable bridge in Bad Wildbad shakes in the breeze, but it is nonetheless safe and a highlight during walks through the town's nature trails.

Left: Bad Wildbad, a small Black Forest town known for wellness spas, is a great place for exploring the outdoors and offers walking trails with great views.

PHOTOS BY JOHN VANDIVER/Stars and Stripes

Keep your shirt on

Bad Wildbad has more to offer than public nude bathing

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The Black Forest town of Bad Wildbad is well known as a wellness getaway, and it's where I experienced firsthand the German tradition of getting naked with strangers.

My first trip there (in pre-coronavirus times) was to visit one of their indoor baths, the Palais Thermal.

There were the fat and the skinny. The well-endowed and the lacking. And everyone in between, who sauntered in and out of the various pools and saunas, undaunted by the parade of flesh.

For more prudish Americans, such experiences can bring discomfort. I found it horrifying and swore off Bad Wildbad for the longest time.

But one recent weekend, we decided it was safe to return, albeit steering clear of the nudist getaway, which I suspect has stumbled on hard times thanks to the pandemic.

Luckily, Bad Wildbad has a lot more to offer than public baths. Walking trails abound in the Sommerberg section of town and feature attractions for young and old alike.

On our visit, traffic was backed up as people headed to a hilltop, where trails lead to a high suspension walking bridge that

runs over a valley. Also at the site is a treetop trail that offers a panoramic view of the Black Forest. Along the way there is information about local fossils and the environment, balconies and a 180-foot tunnel slide.

It was one of the first weekends when Germans started to loosen up after the coronavirus lockdown, and people were heading out in droves. We were eager to give the treetop walk a try, but the line was daunting, so we headed first for the 1,200-foot-long cable bridge that's 200 feet above ground.

The walk across was a thrill. The bridge swayed with the wind, but my trust in German engineering kept any anxiety about a sudden plummet in check. The view of the sprawling landscape added a sense of calm. We went back and forth a couple times before heading out on a trail walk.

Along the way, we kept an eye out for mountain bikers racing by on trails. The area is a hot spot for riders doing high-speed descents down the hillsides.

Eventually, we made our way back to where we started — the treetop walk. Unfortunately, the line had grown and the social distancing wasn't so distant.

Putting safety first, we headed for the car, satisfied with what we saw and planning a return in the future — minus the nude bathers.

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A 1,200-foot-long cable bridge stretches over a valley at Bad Wildbad, making it one of the Black Forest town's biggest attractions.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Europe's timeless traditions: 4 favorites

As we've had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. Here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe at the other end of this crisis.

Europe is a continent of long-lived cultures, with countless treasured traditions that have survived into modern times. While some of Europe's customs live on only as clichés or tacky stage shows for tourists, others — like the four of my favorites described here — are worth going out your way to take part in.

One of the most well-known European traditions — and something that I absolutely love doing — is gliding through Venice in a gondola.

In the early Middle Ages, hundreds of horses traversed Venice's narrow bridges and alleyways. You can imagine the downside. In the 14th century the beasts were banned, and the noble class embraced watercraft as a more respectable form of transportation. The realities of navigating over the lagoon's shifting sandbars led to the use of uniquely designed flat-bottom gondolas, with captains who stood up in order to see better. By the 1800s, there were 10,000 boats floating through Venice's canals.

Today, hopping aboard one of the city's gondolas is a great way to escape the crowds and enter a parallel world of dreamy tranquility, as your vessel slices through your own private Venice, one filled with lonely bridges, canals without sidewalks and reflections of once-upon-a-time grandeur. Wait until your evening, when the crowds have lessened and the

light is right, and you'll experience a full dose of Venice's charm from your boat.

In Spain, you can feel the pulse of the Andalusia region through its fast-paced flamenco performances. With flamenco, the intricate rhythms are set by castanets and handclapping.



Rick Steves

The men do most of the machine-gun footwork, while the women concentrate on graceful turns and a smooth, dramatic step. The accompanying guitarists, with their lightning-fast strumming, are considered some of the best in the world.

Flamenco is a visual reminder of Andalusia's vibrant mix of cultures. In the singers' raspy voices, you'll hear echoes of the Muslim call to prayer — evocative of the centuries of Moorish rule. The colorful costumes and sultry, swirling dance moves are courtesy of the Roma people who settled in Spain.

Sevilla is considered by Spaniards to be the art form's epicenter. While it's easy to find tourist-friendly performances on Sevilla's main drag, I find that experiencing flamenco culture celebrated by and for the locals beats any tourist show. Wander the city's backstreets, looking for a neighborhood bar where locals break out into impromptu performances.

Just across the border from Spain is another late-night musical tradition: Portugal's fado music. Fado, which means "fate," is a uniquely Portuguese style of music, with soulful songs that reflect the country's bittersweet relationship with



Rick Steves

Take in London's sights, such as Westminster Abbey, atop an iconic double-decker bus.

the sea. Many of these bluesy ballads tell of sailors who never returned to port, told (or, more accurately, wailed) by their black-clad widows.

Lisbon's Bairro Alto and Mouraria districts are two great areas where you can catch some informal singing. Coimbra, north of Lisbon, is another great city for fado. While most fado is sung by women, in Coimbra, it's mainly performed by men. Their songs are serenades of love — usually sad, unanswered love. I prefer the free shows you can find in the characteristic and rough-edged neighborhoods. I've stumbled across some of the best fado performances in local bars.

When I'm in London, I find that enjoying the view from the upper level of a double-decker bus is one of the treats of the city. Along with Big Ben, the Queen's Guard and the red (but now mostly defunct) phone booths, the buses are widely recognized as symbols of London.

This iconic mode of transportation started out in the late 19th century as two-story horse-drawn buggies. Two hundred years later, the buses are still a fun and efficient way to get around London.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

City sites or beach bumming? Why not go for both

It's the long-awaited summer holiday season, we're aching to get away, and for those already in Europe, travel restrictions have been loosened up. With the newfound freedom comes a dilemma as old as the ages: a vacation full of culture and architectural wonders, or lazy days on the shore, sand between the toes? Choose your city break wisely and yes, both can be yours. Here are four of Europe's great capital cities from which a beach favored by locals can be reached by means of a quick ride on public transportation, and an even more gorgeous stretch of shore beckons one to travel slightly further.

Lisbon

Once you've hopped a ride on an old-fashioned, yellow "Remodelado" tram along route 28, listened to Fado music in the Bairro Alto and indulged in Pesteis de Santa Custard treats to your heart's delight, head to:

Nearby beach: Although you're spoiled for choice in terms of coastlines, a solid choice is the Costa de Caparica, a sandy beach stretching ten miles that's dotted with beach bars and stretches where you can watch surfers in action. A fun way to get to the less populated stretches of sand is by means of a mini-train, which runs in beach season only, June 1 through Sept. 30, from 9:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. A round-trip ticket to its ultimate spot, the village of Fonte da Telha, costs about 8 euros.

Getting there: Travel on bus 161 from Praça do Areeiro in the city center. The journey costs around 3 euros and takes about half an hour.

Farther out but worth the trip: With a rental car at your disposal, head south to the Serra da Arrabida Natural Park, where pristine sands and crystalline waters await. You might have to park up and hike to reach the Praia Galapinhos, a cove surrounded by rocks, but one look at this picture-perfect hidden gem makes all the effort worth it.



Karen Bradbury



EMILIO MORENATTI/AP

There are several spots in Europe — such as Barcelona — where cities and beaches are in close proximity.

Rome

Now that you've marveled at the Colosseum, tossed a coin into the Trevi Fountain and conquered the Spanish Steps, it's time to kick back at:

Nearby beach: The Ostia Lido is the quick and easy solution for sun-seeking Romans. Although it's a bit cloying and dotted with members-only clubs, there are a few stretches of public beach here as well.

Getting there: From the Piramide metro station along line B, follow the signage leading to the Roma Porto San Paolo station, where you can catch a train heading to Roma-Lido. Disembark at Lido Centro, and from there it's a walk of just a few blocks. As Ostia's technically part of Rome, the train ride out there is dirt cheap.

Farther out but worth the trip: Anzio Beach offers sun, sand and history too: here you'll find remains of a villa that once belonged to Emperor Nero and the Anzio Beachhead Museum, which tells of the Allied beach landings in World War II. Gelato and fresh seafood will make a good day out a great one. No car is necessary to reach Anzio. Take the train from Termini to Anzio Colonia and anticipate a moderate walk from there.

Amsterdam

Once you've visited the Rijksmuseum, taken a boat cruise through the canals and sampled the notorious nightlife scene firsthand, there's time to chill at:

Nearby beach: About 25 miles west of Amsterdam you'll find the seaside resort town of Zandvoort aan Zee, a cheery place where sun-seekers of all ages frolic in the frigid waters. Just to the north is found Bloemendaal Aan Zee, another white-sand beach famed for its parties.

Getting there: More than 50 trains depart Amsterdam's Central station at regular intervals throughout the day. The ride takes about 36 minutes.

Farther out but worth the trip: For a gorgeous untouched stretch of beach surrounded by dunes and trees, make way to the shoreline by the town of Wassenaar. This long stretch of beach a few miles north of The Hague is just right for those looking for space. The trails around the Duinrell Holiday Park make for a scenic bike ride.

Copenhagen

You've strolled along the Stroget walking street, seen the diminutive Little Mermaid statue and had a go on the rides at Tivoli Park. Now kick back and relax at:

Nearby beach: The Amager Strandpark has sand, surf and snacks galore. Toss around a Frisbee, or sit back and enjoy the sight of seafaring vessels chugging past. A 20-minute ride on bus 31 from Copenhagen Central Station or the M2 metro line get you there.

Farther out but worth the trip: The scenery doesn't get much prettier than the found in Tissvildeleje, a squeaky-clean, golden sand beach surrounded by pines. Its shallow waters make the place a hit with families. If time permits, walk or cycle through the Troldeskoven, or Trolls Forest, full of trees with twisted limbs. This beach in North Zealand is 45 miles northwest of Copenhagen.

Other culturally rich cities where beaches aren't far off include Helsinki, Finland; Tallinn, Estonia; Riga, Latvia; Gdansk, Poland; Hamburg, Germany; Bruges, Belgium; Barcelona, Spain; Porto, Portugal; Naples, Italy; and Marseille, France, to name just a few.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY NORMAN LLAMAS/Stars and Stripes

Boom Brasil's gran grillata mista, a large mixed grill dish containing beef, a pork chop, two types of sausages, chicken drumsticks and fried polenta. Boom Brasil opened at the beginning of June and is located about 11 miles from Aviano Air Base.

Variety is on the menu

Diners hungry for Brazilian barbecue can find it at Boom Brasil in Sacile

BY NORMAN LLAMAS
Stars and Stripes

Many Americans know Brazilian food primarily from churrascarias, the all-you-can-eat steakhouses that fill diners up on numerous preparations of freshly cut meats.

A good churrascaria that keeps the food coming is a treasure, but it's not the only way to enjoy Brazilian cuisine. Boom Brasil, Ristorante Barbecue in Sacile, not far from Aviano Air Base in Italy, offers plentiful entrees in a traditional meat setting.

This restaurant's specialty is grilled meats cooked over firewood, but they also offer a great cocktail bar and many appetizers, side dishes and desserts.

Boom Brasil opened at the beginning of June and it's usually very busy during dinner service. It's located within a few minutes' walk from the Sacile train station, making it easily accessible.

It's recommended that you call ahead and make a reservation. I took my family there on a Friday night and we didn't have one, so we ordered drinks while waiting about 15 minutes for a table to become available.

My wife started off with a tasty margarita and I had a Brahma, which is a pretty standard Brazilian lager. They also serve the caipirinha, Brazil's national cocktail. It's made with cachaca, a distilled spirit made from fermented sugarcane juice, as well as sugar and lime.

To accompany the drinks, we ordered some delicious coxinha de frango, which are fried, shredded chicken-filled dumplings. The pastelinho di carne, a type of meat-filled empanada, was also very tasty.

For a main entree, the gran grillata



Boom Brasil is a new Brazilian restaurant that opened for business at the beginning of June in Sacile, Italy.

mista should satisfy a hearty appetite. The mixed grill included beef, a pork chop, two types of sausages, chicken drumsticks and fried polenta. All the main dishes come with white rice and black beans. Cassava flour and salsa are used to dress up the meats. It's 20 euros but well worth it — we'll get it again.

I wouldn't say the same for the vegetarian meal we ordered, which included basmati rice, black beans, fried cassava, salsa and cassava flour. For what we got,

BOOM BRASIL, RISTORANTE BARBECUE

Address: Via Virgilio Fasan, 13, 33077 Sacile PN, Italy

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 5 p.m.-1 a.m.; Sunday 12 p.m.-midnight

Food: Grilled meats, salads, appetizers

Drinks: Imported and local bottled beer, draft beer, wine and a full bar, including caipirinhas

Prices: 17-30 euros (\$19 to \$34) for a complete meal with appetizer, main entree, beverage and dessert

Dress: Casual

Menu: Italian, Portuguese and English. Most of the workers speak enough English to take your order.

Phone: +39 348 8957815. Please call to make a reservation.

— Norman Llamas

it wasn't worth the price.

Although they don't have a kids' menu, they do offer a hot dog in their appetizer menu, which satisfied my son. This restaurant isn't very big — it has roughly 10-12 tables, with distance built in for coronavirus safety. There's also some limited seating at the bar.

Whether you've had Brazilian food before or it's new to you, I feel comfortable saying that most people will like Boom Brasil. We plan on being return customers.

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Spatchcock for a more evenly cooked chicken

BY GRETCHEN MCKAY
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Chicken is a family favorite during summer, especially when it's cooked on the grill. But it can be kind of a pain to prepare because the white and dark parts cook at different temperatures.

There's an easy solution to this — remove the bird's backbone so that it lays flat on a roasting sheet or grill grate.

The technique is called spatchcocking, or butterflying, and it's so simple that you can master the process in just one try. All that's required is a strong pair of kitchen scissors and the confidence to crunch through the chicken's rib cage on either side of the backbone without being grossed out.

You'll want to make sure the chicken is very, very dry (I use paper towels) and be sure to tuck the wing tips behind the breasts. This will keep them from burning while the bird cooks.

But why spatchcock a chicken? Well, it allows for even and faster cooking — around 45 minutes — and it makes for a really crunchy skin.

SPATCHCOCKED SPICE-RUBBED CHICKEN

Ingredients

For chicken:

1 (4-pound) whole roasting chicken

1 tablespoon olive oil

For rub:

1 tablespoon coarsely ground black pepper

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 tablespoon smoked or sweet paprika

1 tablespoon coarse salt

1 tablespoon chili powder

1 teaspoon cayenne pepper or to taste

For white sauce:

1 cup mayonnaise (preferably Duke's)

¼ cup apple cider vinegar

1 tablespoon spicy brown mustard

1 tablespoon horseradish

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

½ teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon garlic powder

½ teaspoon onion powder

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

per

¼ teaspoon hot sauce, or to taste

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Using poultry shears, cut along each side of the chicken backbone and remove it. (Save the backbone for a stock.) Turn the chicken breast side up and press on the breastbone to flatten the bird. You may also want to cut the cartilage at the top of breastbone with a sharp knife to open it up more easily.

Rub the chicken all over with the olive oil.

Make rub by combining all ingredients in a small bowl. Then rub a generous amount of rub into the skin.

Transfer the chicken to a large rimmed baking sheet, skin side up.

Roast for 40 minutes or until the skin is browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted in an inner thigh registers 160 degrees.

While chicken is roasting, make the barbecue sauce by stirring together all the ingredients in a small bowl.

When chicken is done, transfer to a cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes before cutting into pieces and serving with the barbecue sauce.

Serves 4.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Making certain accommodations

Rome is ready for visitors, but things will be a little different

By ERICA FIRPO
Special to The Washington Post

As Italy opens up to its residents, Europe and eventually the rest of the world, businesses in Rome are trying to figure out how to navigate an Eternal City without the daily traffic of tourists and full offices. The centro storico, Rome's historic center, has long relied on tourism to support many of its restaurant and food services.

Opening doors again isn't easy; restaurants are experiencing a new atmosphere thanks to changed personalities and limited tourism. Some are investing in invigorating the local community, while others are simply trying to move forward. As Rome slowly acquaints itself with the city's new landscape, these restaurants, cafes and markets are doing their best to evolve in the city's new landscape.

Community minded

RetroBottega, one of the city's innovators for its focus on materie prime (locally sourced, raw and organic fruit and vegetables), closed its restaurant, wine bar and pasta lab along with the rest of the country on March 8. Owners Giuseppe Lo Iudice and Alessandro Miocchi quickly pivoted to support the team that supports them, i.e., its staff and its farmers, and to support the historic center's community.

"We reached out to the community that wasn't able (or didn't want) to shop in the supermarket, that wanted quality," says RetroBottega's Lo Iudice. Reconfiguring into RetroDelivery, service akin to community-supported agriculture (CSA), RetroBottega reached out to local residents to offer fresh produce delivery coordinated on WhatsApp.

It wasn't easy at first, but the neighborhood quickly caught on and loved the personalized grocery service with the RetroBottega vibe. Miocchi, the pasta brain, expanded the repertoire to include fresh bread, and now RetroDelivery delivers gourmet products, meat, fish, and freshly made pasta and breads thanks to a collaboration with Roscioli, as well as a local butcher and local fish vendor.

The Roscioli family, four generations of bakers, is one of the cornerstones of the Campo de' Fiori neighborhood. Roscioli is now a local empire with a coffee shop, bakery and restaurant/gourmet delicatessen.

During the lockdown, while the closed-to-public cafe organized coffee deliveries, the bakery kept its doors open and provided home deliveries of such items as homemade yeast and



PHOTOS BY GINEVRA SAMMARTINO/The Washington Post

Customers shop for gelato at Giolitti in Rome on June 6. When the coronavirus locked down Rome, Giolitti immediately shifted to delivering its 57 flavors to customers around the city.

pizza dough.

"Bread has a social weight; we have to provide it," explains baker PierLuigi Roscioli. In fact, he personally delivered bread to his patrons, which inspired the community and showed that there was some normalcy in a surreal situation.

Aligning with RetroBottega was a natural fit for Roscioli, as both are dedicated to providing top-quality products and investing and supporting the local community by continuing to cater, in all senses of the word, to its needs.

"We are rooted in this neighborhood; we can't abandon it. We grew up here. It was unfathomable to think that we wouldn't stay open. For us, it's not about economics, but it's a duty to our community," says PierLuigi.

Your table awaits

All'aperto (alfresco dining) is one of every Roman's favorite expressions. They love eating outside, but not every restaurant has that option, and the new social distancing regulations and personal hesitations make indoor dining an afterthought at best.

RetroBottega reopened its restaurant, wine bar and pasta lab, but not quite as it was before. Lo Iudice and Miocchi refocused their menus by creating pizzas — inventive and made with prime materie and antipasti. Roscioli Salumeria, the brothers' tiny restaurant, restructured its tables and, like everyone else, requires advance reservations.

It's not an ideal situation, and not helped by the fact that Romans are not as active as tourists in dining out. To some, this is the perfect time to experience restaurants whose wait lists are weeks long, but to restaurant owners, the next few months are a precarious tightrope.

One establishment that intensely feels the effects of the

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Lines of customers have returned to Pizzeria Remo a Testaccio.

'We are rooted in this neighborhood; we can't abandon it. We grew up here. It was unfathomable to think that we wouldn't stay open. For us, it's not about economics, but it's a duty to our community.'

PierLuigi Roscioli



Less morning foot traffic means shorter lines at a popular Roman meeting spots like Bar del Cappuccino.



Roscioli in Rome coordinated with RetroBottega to provide personalized delivery of fresh bread, pasta and local produce to customers around the city.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

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pandemic's full stop is Pizzeria Remo a Testaccio, an inexpensive, cult-favorite pizzeria in the Testaccio neighborhood. Right now, the usually busy pizzeria is quiet. Regular clients are not interested in sitting inside, whether scared of being too close or offset by the summer heat, and for those who potentially want to return, they are dissuaded by social distancing settings that make dining a lot less fun.

"Unfortunately, most people come to the pizzeria as a group of friends and family, and now would have to sit distanced from each other. Are they going to tell jokes using WhatsApp?" asks partner Antonio Amato.

Giving gelato wheels

Rome is not Rome without gelato, and during the lockdown, many gelaterie teamed up with delivery services to provide the treat to homes all over the city. Giolitti, the 120-year-old gelateria best known for its 57 flavors as well as its crowds, was a go-to delivery source during the shutdown.

Closing its doors completely was not an option, describes Nazareno Giolitti.

"Giolitti has only been closed only a half-day when my grandfather passed away and another half-day when my father passed away. Why? Because my grandparents always said we are public service. Our feelings come second to that of the people," he says. Giolitti maintained its staff by alternating hours, and immediately focused on delivery.

When Italy slowly opened, Giolitti was prepared with take-away coffee drinks, pastries and gelato.

"We are a tradition. A line will return, and it's our responsibility to keep it organized," Giolitti says, but as a heritage establishment that owns its space, the gelateria is luckier than most other businesses struggling to pay rents and salaries.

The gelateria is now fully reopened, and the line has returned.

Traditional cafes are the staple of any Italian city. They are where people meet and greet in the morning for a quick chat and fast counter service. Although bars and cafes have been open for nearly two months, the normal routine is nothing like before. Along with social distancing protocols, which reduce the amount of people at the counter, Rome updated business hours to three time slots during May and June, when non-food-related shops (such as retail) open at 11 a.m., which means less morning traffic from incoming staff.

Bar del Cappuccino, a beloved hole-in-the-wall spot on Via Arenula, is waiting for the foot traffic to return, like every other bar in the city center.

"Our faithful clientele has returned. And since tourists aren't traveling, we are reaching out to local businesses," says owner Adriano Santoro, who keeps in touch with the local community with Facebook posts and offering home delivery as well as take-away service. "We're all waiting to see how this moves forward."

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL



PHOTOS BY ALEX PULASKI/The Washington Post

Natalee Green of Boulder, Colo., photographs sons Wyatt Strimenos, 6, and Grant Strimenos, 3, in front of Old Faithful as dad Orion Strimenos looks on.

Reliably magnificent

In a wildly unpredictable world, visitors can count on the predictability of Old Faithful and the beauty of Yellowstone

By ALEX PULASKI
Special to The Washington Post

We arrived at the Old Faithful Lodge 10 minutes too early. As the front desk scrambled June 8 to open for Yellowstone National Park's 2020 summer season, the list of predictable geyser eruptions wasn't quite ready.

In this summer of COVID-19, not much is running as usual. Yellowstone closed in response to the pandemic March 24 and began reopening May 18. All entrances opened June 1, and visitor numbers stood at just over half of normal over the next week.

How many visitors will hit the road to the United States' sixth-most-visited national park is anyone's guess, a National Park Service spokesman said.

Perched over a hot spot in the Earth's crust (mostly in Wyoming), Yellowstone is the product of three mammoth volcanic eruptions. It was established as the first U.S. national park in 1872 because of its unique geothermal activity, and still contains the world's highest concentration of geysers and hot springs — more than 10,000 in all.

The park's natural beauty is complemented by an abundance of wildlife — free-ranging bison, trumpeter swans, elk, bears and (since their reintroduction to the park 25 years ago) even wolves.

Some of the West's early frontiersmen, among them John Colter and Jim Bridger, first passed through here in the early 1800s. Colter's descriptions of "hidden fires, smoking pits" and a pervasive sulfur smell along the Shoshone River near Cody, Wyo., were later broadly applied to Yellowstone, leading early historians to mistakenly label it "Colter's Hell."

Closer to heaven, it turns out. We stopped in Cody this June and the summer before to experience the Old West's flavor before joining Yellowstone's annual stream of 4 million visitors.

It's wild, unpredictable country. Turn a corner, and a new surprise reveals itself: bison stopping traffic, plumes of steam, the inescapable smell of sulfur.

The Crow, long before the fur trappers came along, simply referred to the Shoshone River as "Stinking Water."

Rounding a turn last June at Mammoth Hot Springs, one of the park's myriad bubbling wonders, I found myself wondering how to corral the words to describe it.

Luckily, two youngsters bailed me out, distilling the mild sulfur smell and a gleaming staircase of pinks, oranges and browns into a two-word debate.

"Stinky," said the boy, Nate Rauenhorst, 9, of Incline Village, Nev.

"Purty," countered his sister, Sophia, 12. This continued for some time until the boy yielded.

"It is stinky, but it sure is purty," Nate conceded. William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody died more than a century ago, but his influence looms large in the city that bears his name. For starters, there's chuck wagon cook Ron Reed tending to biscuits in front of the city's biggest tourist attraction.

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West is actually five museums wrapped into one. Get there about noon, as we did, and you can munch on a golden-brown biscuit and listen to Reed recite cowboy poetry around his fire.

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Steam rises off the surface of the Grand Prismatic Pool, one of Yellowstone's best-known sights. The temperature of the water in the pool is 180 degrees at the center and cools as it reaches the edge. The colors are formed by bacteria that can live in the environments created by the different temperatures.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

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"This is a taste of the past," he told us.

Inside the museum, exhibits trace the story of Buffalo Bill himself, from chief of scouts for the Army's Fifth Cavalry to a legendary Western showman, from making millions to bankruptcy. The Plains Indian Museum holds artifacts of breathtaking beauty, as well as telling the recent Native American history of betrayal and renewal. Other center museums feature Western art, a renovated firearms collection that reopened in 2019 and a kid-friendly look at natural history. On our most recent visit we saw masked staff members and plentiful sanitizing stations; it was a weekday afternoon, and sparse crowds made distancing easy.

Cody (population 10,000) was designed as a way station for tourists to and from Yellowstone, just over 50 miles east. Its compact downtown of Western storefronts can be explored in a leisurely afternoon.

We found only slight changes this June from our visit the summer before. Few people were using face coverings. Social distancing measures were in place at restaurants and attractions. Two major attractions — a mock street gunfight and the Cody Nite Rodeo — delayed their seasonal openings to June 15 and June 20, respectively.

Business owners are anxious to see what the next few months will bring.

"Cody relies on summer tourism to Yellowstone to get us through the winter," said Rodney Mearns, co-owner of the Station by Cody Coffee Roaster. "What will happen this summer? That's a big question mark."

Cody's townspeople are friendly. They ask how you are doing and wait for a reply. Sidewalk rows of U.S. flags snap in the breeze, and the smell of leather drifts from Wayne's Boot Shop. You can grab a cup of coffee and curl up with a book at Legends Bookstore.

Window displays at the Custom Cowboy Shop whispered to me of distant days when I had my own horse and saddle. I listened, walking out with a bagful of goodies and a new Stetson on my head.

We stayed at the comfortable Western-themed Cody Hotel, where employees were masked and behind plexiglass, and we ran into no other guests on the elevators or in common areas. It's near the weathered boardwalks of Old Trail Town, a collection of historical cabins and artifacts, from arrowheads to barbed wire to furnishings.

We rode bikes along the green, frothy Shoshone River to near the base of the Buffalo Bill Dam one afternoon. Last year we rafted the river through red-rock canyons with Wyoming River Trips; this year they are using new hygiene protocols, including limiting rafts to six participants.

One evening in Cody found us listening to fiddles and guitars at Dan Miller's Cowboy Music Revue, a tribute to a time when, as Miller sang, "a hoss and a rope and a gun ... tamed the West."

Yellowstone is gigantic, more than 3,400 square miles of mountains, rivers and meadows, and just a half-hour north of another majestic national park, Grand Teton.

Yet Yellowstone is not so big that you can't enjoy the range of its beauty, and not so busy that you can't experience nature in peace — provided you're willing and able to hike away from the crowds.

This summer, social distancing signs have joined the standard warnings against wandering into dangerous geothermal areas. Rangers and concessions staff donned face coverings, but most visitors we saw did not.

Everyone huddles around Old Faithful — the fairly predictable, world-renowned geyser near the west entrance.

Last summer we joined that thousands-strong throng, which stood at a mere 200 or so during our most recent visit in early June. Truth be told, we prefer the leisurely drives past meadows and streams and the plentiful hiking opportunities.

The drives took us past Mount Washburn, where snowbanks held stubborn reminders of winter, but wildflowers valiantly pushed their purples and yellows toward the June sun. We saw a black bear cub rolling in a meadow, a bald eagle angrily chasing an osprey in flight, elk in brush, bighorn sheep clinging to a slope and too many grayish bison to count.

Last year in Hayden Valley, one of the park's best wildlife-viewing spots, we stopped near twilight and joined a knot of visitors excitedly whispering, hunched over their spotting scopes.

"There he is,"

"There's two ... no, three."

And so on, but despite my best efforts and a huge telephoto lens, I saw only shadows, not the elusive wolves flitting in the distance.

We also fished for cutthroat trout last summer on Yellowstone Lake and this year took a five-mile round-trip hike to ethereal Fairy Falls. That hike also offers the best views of the Grand Prismatic Spring, the otherworldly hot spring that is among the park's biggest draws.

Such a hike is the perfect way to escape the park's



PHOTOS BY ALEX PULASKI/The Washington Post

The walls of the Grand Canyon in this part of Yellowstone are pink and yellowish. Trails along the ridge offer several vantage points to view the Yellowstone River below.



The desolate landscape around Mammoth Hot Springs. The travertine springs were formed over thousands of years.

more-crowded areas.

We took the guidebooks' warnings on grizzlies seriously, toting a canister of bear spray on a six-mile round-trip hike from Artist Point, with its sublime view of the 308-foot Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River, along the rim of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone to secluded Ribbon Lake. There, we shared the lovely view of pond lilies and meadows with only some curious gray jays.

Park accommodations run the gamut from tent camping to historic hotels such as the Old Faithful Inn and the Lake Yellowstone Hotel. At this time it is unclear when those landmarks will reopen.

"We're hoping for sometime in July," said Mike Keller, general manager of Yellowstone National Park Lodges, operated by the Xanterra Travel Collection, the park's concessionaire. "We're answering to seven different health agencies, and obviously safety is our foremost consideration."

A phased campground reopening began June 15, but already two-thirds of summer campground reservations are taken.

Yellowstone's potential is constantly waiting below the surface, revealing itself in colorful pools, bubbling mud pots and angry torrents of heated water.

Last summer we saw dozens of people waiting for unpredictable Steamboat Geyser to erupt, and I listened as

one man asked seasonal park ranger Laura Bueter when it might blow.

"I don't know," she answered. "If I knew for sure, I would probably be God."

For predictable, you park the car at the Old Faithful visitor center, bike the Upper Geyser Basin's paved trail and take in the majestic beauty of Castle Geyser, colorful Morning Glory Pool and more. Then join the crowds at Old Faithful, which spouts every hour or two within time windows predicted by naturalists.

Among the Old Faithful morning crowd this June were Orion Strimenos and Natalie Green of Boulder, Colo., and their sons Wyatt, 6, and Grant, 3. All were wearing face coverings, and Green said avoiding COVID-19 risks had played into the family's decision to visit Yellowstone.

"With a national park, you don't have to interact with a lot of people — you are in your car a lot," she said.

As they waited for the geyser, Wyatt rapid-fired questions about the nature of steam and how high the fountain was likely to reach. The answers arrived on schedule.

Old Faithful starts with a fitful series of hiccups, then shoots water up to 180 feet high. At this unpredictable time and in this wildly unpredictable place, it's comforting to have something to count on.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

SAVE OUR SHOPS

Talkeetna residents hope their Alaskan neighbors can help revive local tourism

By MARK THIESSEN
Associated Press

In one quirky Alaska town, small sightseeing planes sit idle, the grand fireplace is dark at the usually bustling lodge, and the general store is stocked with ice cream for tourists who are nowhere to be seen.

It's almost "ghost town-esque," said Fernando Salvador, a hotel manager in Talkeetna, which lies about halfway between Anchorage and Denali National Park.

By late May, Main Street should be jammed with meandering tourists slurping ice cream cones and stopping at gift shops alongside original cabins built in this community of about 800. But the coronavirus has upended everything.

Communities across Alaska are feeling the financial squeeze, from cruise ship ports where major lines have canceled summer sailings, to Talkeetna, which bills itself as the Gateway to Denali and where the ship passengers arrive on buses for inland excursions. Nearly half of the state's 2.2 million annual visitors usually arrive on those vessels.

Salvador, vice president and general manager of the Alaska Collection by Pursuit, which includes the Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge, estimates a decline in business of 75%, and says staffing will be less than half of last year.

One resident recalls that this is what the town looked like before tourism became the driving economic force. "This is a peek back into the Talkeetna of the '80s," Serena Berkowitz said. "People are going to lose money. It's going to be a bad, bad summer."

Along with oil and fishing, tourism is a pillar of Alaska's economy, accounting for about \$2.8 billion in direct visitor spending, according to a state-commissioned 2017 report. One of 10 jobs result from the tourism industry, it said.

Many Talkeetna businesses and employees make their yearly salary between May and September. "March and April is our point of lowest cash flow," said Sassan Mossanen, the founding partner of Denali Brewing Co., which is located off the main highway between Anchorage and Fairbanks. It also operates a brewpub restaurant on Talkeetna's Main Street.

By April, most businesses have made it six months with little or negative cash flow. That's when the coronavirus pandemic took hold this year, as events began being canceled.



Business owners in Talkeetna, Alaska, hope in-state residents like Donna Knight of Wasilla (left), who visited the town June 2 for lunch and shopping, will help boost the sagging local tourism business in the absence of cruise ship crowds.

Photos by Mark Thiessen/AP

Denali's climbing season had already been called off, meaning hundreds of climbers who descend on Talkeetna before making their way to base camp didn't arrive. By May, all of the larger cruise ship companies had postponed or fully canceled their seasons.

"Roughly about 30 to 40% of our draft business in the summer is gone," Mossanen said. "On the retail front, that number is probably closer to 40 or 50%."

The brewery switched gears and made sanitizer to help buffer the downturn, but a handful of people were still laid off.

The businesses that make most of their money over the summer may not be able to build up cash reserves to make it through the winter.

Talkeetna has long been rumored to be the inspiration for the town of Cicely, Alaska, in the 1990s TV show "Northern Exposure."

"Normally when we are talking about summer business, we have an influx of people," said Berkowitz, a full-time clerk at Nagley's General Store, where the resident cat was the town's mayor until its death a few years ago. "It is a situation to where we will see bus after bus after bus, day in and day out."

"This is the Alaskan summer for Alaskans to actually see their state."

Fernando Salvador
Talkeetna hotel manager

In a normal year, Berkowitz bounces between two registers almost nonstop when she's not scooping ice cream and making espressos.

"I found myself having gaps where I'm not really doing something or I have to go find something to do, which is weird for this sort of time of year," she said.

Retailers hope state residents will pick up the slack.

"This is the Alaskan summer for Alaskans to actually see their state," Salvador said. The lodge began opening on weekends to accommodate in-state travelers and plans to be open daily. The state also has provided testing options so out-of-state travelers can avoid a 14-day quarantine if the results are negative. Joe McAneney, the founder of The High Expedition Co., a downtown Talkeetna marijuana store, said out-of-town Alaskans have been visiting and spending money.



A man walks in front of a business on a nearly deserted Main Street June 2 in Talkeetna, Alaska. Normally a bustling tourist town, things this summer are pretty quiet in Talkeetna. With cruise ships grounded, nearly half of Alaska's annual 2.2 million visitors won't be visiting the nation's northernmost state.

He said on Memorial Day, he took in 85% of his highest record sales and sold as much in apparel as he did in cannabis.

Cruise ship passengers can't take marijuana products back to hotels or on the ships with them so if they purchase anything in the store, it's in very small amounts and maybe a T-shirt, McAneney said.

But he's seeing state residents purchasing larger amounts of cannabis. While he may have fewer transactions, people are spending more per transaction.

"It's Alaskans recreating with Alaskans, and they're very eager to support Alaska small businesses," he said. "And I know you not only are you seeing it at the cash register, but you're hearing them talk about it."

Donna Knight of Wasilla drove with friends to Talkeetna to have lunch at one specific restaurant, but was disappointed to find it was closed. They ate elsewhere and then went shopping.

Her summer plans were to visit Alaska communities, to help out local businesses, but began to have second thoughts after the number of coronavirus cases began to spike.

"I'm nervous," she said.

Alaska was one of the first states to allow businesses to reopen, and lifted stay-at-home restrictions in May. Even



Denali Brewing Co. founding partner Sassan Mossanen, left, and his daughter, Maya, cork bottles of coffee whiskey. The brewery and distillery are among those feeling the pinch of a precipitous drop in customers this summer.

though cases are trending upward again, the state still has relatively few, with 1,401 cases involving residents as of July 3, and 14 deaths.

"The worst thing I think that could happen for tourism for us right now is to have a second wave come through and have to shut down again," Salvador said, "because that would really, really cripple the tourism economy here, not only for this season, but you can also see for seasons, you know, further on."

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

no touch required

Virtual hugs and handshakes aren't perfect substitutions but can help fill a void

By LILA SEIDMAN
Los Angeles Times

Lying in a fetal position next to my laptop on a lazy Saturday afternoon, a soothing voice wafts over Zoom and asks me if my body parts are "saying anything."

The voice belongs to Jean Franzblau, a slim woman with graying hair and a warm presence who is a professional cuddler. She began offering virtual sessions in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, when she realized the core of her service — to offer platonic touch outside of the scope of sex and romance — now comes with serious health risk.

"The business" "whose purpose is to help people to connect people, and this virus is basically saying that's not going to be a safe thing for most people," said Franzblau, the founder of Cuddle Sanctuary in Los Angeles. "And I had to face that and say, 'Is there anything I can do?'"

What can any of us do? Social and physical distancing are the mantras of the moment. Public health guidelines advise people to stay at least six feet away from those outside of their household — too far for a hug, cuddle or handshake.

For some — like the happily partnered or the content recluse — the directive might not be difficult to follow. But for those living alone who thrive on physical connection, all that distance can be lonely.

And humans do need touch. Dr. Steven Siegel, who chairs USC's psychiatry department, said that several studies show that pleasant, situationally appropriate touch increases activity in parts of the brain associated with pleasure and enjoyment, as well as social interactions.

"If that's part of someone's normal way of being ... the deprivation of that is going to be experienced as a psychological loss," Siegel said.

But there are alternatives. Hug curtains exist. And there are some guidelines that can mitigate risk. But for the risk-averse — or the experientially curious — there are methods that don't involve touch in the traditional sense at all:

Use your imagination

To "hug" your grandma or immunosuppressed friend, you don't necessarily need to get out of your chair. Imagery exercises — thinking about a pleasant physical or social experience — can have similar psychological benefits as the activity itself. They are frequently used in therapy, according to Dr. Emanuel Maidenberg, head of UCLA Health's cognitive behavioral therapy program.

However, it requires two key qualities to be effective: vividness and specificity.

"If you just close your eyes and spend some time with a friend, that's not likely to do it," Maidenberg said. "But if you start thinking about very specific circumstances" — including where it will take place, the time of day, what you look like, what your partner looks like — "that's it. That's likely to produce an emotional response that is likely to be close to what one would want."

Go virtual

Virtual reality holds an inherent promise to allow users to transcend physical space, to see — and potentially touch — who and what's not really there in front of them. But can a virtual hug from a friend or an AI entity offer the same warmth as

an IRL embrace?

Jeremy Bailenson, founder of the Virtual Human Interaction Lab at Stanford, thinks there's potential.

"Technologically and psychologically, it's possible to convey emotion over virtual touch," Bailenson said.

Bailenson pointed to a 2007 study he cited that showed participants were able to identify, above chance, the intended emotions in a virtual handshake from other human participants. He noted that this was achieved through limited movements — mostly up and down, left and right — "meaning not as fancy as your hand is, with all the angles and the forces."

The pandemic has inspired Bailenson to develop an app that will allow users to transmit virtual handshakes through a smartphone. For Bailenson, the tech would offer personal relief: He and his wife have become close with neighbors they met during stay-at-home orders.

"And now I've spent 100 hours with them, and haven't shook their hands," he said.

As envisioned, one user will shake his phone while standing at least six feet away from the intended recipient, who will feel the movement as vibrations through her own phone.

Hug an avatar

Good news for "Animal Crossing" enthusiasts: Online interactions can offer social and emotional support at a safe distance, according to Dmitri Williams, a USC professor specializing in games and communities.

Pre-pandemic, Williams said he wouldn't recommend people seek out needed support in video games. He'd suggest those needs be fulfilled by "people in

real space." With greatly reduced offline social opportunities, online interactions could at least temporarily fill the void.

"Is it still a net positive to go online and hang out to get social and emotional support from people as opposed to nothing? And the answer there, I can tell you without any research, is yes," Williams said. "Something is better than nothing. These are not negative experiences."

Games that involve building long-term teams are most likely to lead to what researchers refer to as bonding. Those type of relationships can outlast a single game and sometimes evolve into deep relationships. (Think Second Life marriages.)

If you need "to learn to trust each other and cooperate and coordinate, then you really are forced to get to know each other to win the game," Williams said. "The 'getting to know each other' is the really valuable side effect."

It's still not the same

Experts agree there is no perfect substitution for human touch.

That's why Franzblau, the professional cuddler, was at first hesitant to attempt a virtual simulation.

"There's something deeply moving about human touch," Franzblau said. "The human element, the human attunement, cannot be duplicated."

She's since found creative ways to translate sensations and presence, while acknowledging it's "apples and oranges."

During our session, she asked if it would be comforting to know she was watching as I drifted into a relaxed state. It was far from a hug, but it was something only human eyes — even mediated by a screen — could achieve.



First-grade teacher Caitlin Hicks gives a virtual hug to Sid Solomon, 6, as she greets her students one final time June 3 at Center Street Elementary in El Segundo, Calif. The students were able to see their teacher in person for the first time in months due to the coronavirus pandemic as they came to the school to pick up their work.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

CHOOSING A SONG
OF THE SUMMER
LIKE NO OTHER

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

Anointing the song of the summer was going to be a challenge even before once-in-a-generation protests roared to life last month in response to George Floyd's killing by Minneapolis police.

By shutting down so many of the activities that make a song of the summer happen — concerts, sporting events, pool parties involving people beyond your immediate family — the COVID-19 pandemic had already interrupted the annual process that led tunes like Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road" and Luis Fonsi's "Despacito" to warm-weather cultural ubiquity.

But the explosive widening of the Black Lives Matter movement only deepened the task at hand: Suddenly, the established hallmarks of the song of the summer — a casually flirty lyric or a groove to inspire a night without cares — felt insufficient to soundtrack a season of such righteous discontent.

The Times asked 17 arts and music journalists and industry insiders to pick the song that best embodies the spirit of a summer defined by contradictory imperatives: to stay inside or to take to the streets? That so little consensus materialized says plenty about the different needs listeners count on music to meet.

Ideally, one song could exult, could object, could mourn, could reassure. And indeed, just such a tune appeared two weeks ago from Beyoncé, whose exuberant "Black Parade" — released with no advance notice but plenty of symbolic significance on Juneteenth — celebrates Blackness in its many glories, even as it acknowledges the persistent threats of racism and police violence.

Over a swaggering beat brightened with wind instruments redolent of an outdoor march, Beyoncé

boasts of looking "pandemic fly on the runway" and of having "made a picket sign off your picket fence." She's rapping and singing with equal command in another display of her mastery of synthesis.

Yet as good as the track is — and in spite of Beyoncé's authority as pop's most clear-eyed thought leader — "Black Parade" is unlikely to end up as 2020's song of the summer, if only because it came out late in a season that typically starts heating up in the spring.

Often the songs competing in a given year are well known by Memorial Day, which means you can think of the actual summer as the home stretch of a longer race. (Last year, "Old Town Road" began its record-breaking 19-week run atop Billboard's Hot 100 in early April.)

This summer, the Weeknd's gleaming "Blinding Lights" and Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage" — the latter best heard in a remix featuring fellow Houston native Beyoncé — are among

the tunes that softened the ground well in advance; ditto "Toosie Slide" by Drake, who claimed the song of the summer in 2018 with the similarly sleek "In My Feelings."

But these songs spent a relatively short time at No. 1 — just a week each for "Toosie Slide" and "Savage," and four nonconsecutive weeks for "Blinding Lights."

In fact, as nine chart-toppers emerged over the past three months — including "Rain on Me," Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande's club jam for an era with no clubs, and DaBaby and Roddy Ricch's "Rockstar," with its references to abusive cops — the top of the Hot 100 has experienced more churn, according to Billboard, than at any point since 1990.

That's another sign, along with our poll responses, that this fraught moment has splintered listeners' desires. (Also: that TikTok, where many a smash first catches on these days, is chewing through new songs with increasing speed.)

One upside of this fragmentation is that it's created a window for viral hits from outside the pop machine — see the irrepressible "Lose Yo Job," with vocals sourced from a Facebook video shot in a parking lot. No longer do listeners need giant record companies to tell them what's happening; no longer do folks with something to say need those companies to help them say it.

At a time when it feels like anything might happen, we should be on the lookout for major statements from anywhere.

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WEEKEND: MUSIC

REVIEW

Young's long-shelved album links catalog classics

By SCOTT BAUER

Associated Press

Neil Young's "Homegrown," finished 45 years ago but not released until now, is the missing link during one of his most productive and creative periods.

If it had been released as originally planned, "Homegrown" would have come out after his smash "Harvest" that includes two of his most-loved songs, "Heart of Gold" and "Old Man." In the decades that followed, five of the 12 songs that are on "Homegrown" were released, in one form or another, but never as Young originally intended.

The legend and mystique around "Home-



Neil Young

Homegrown (Reprise)

grown," much like the lost Beach Boys record "Smile," only grew.

Now, nearly 50 years later, Young is unleashing what he describes as "the one that got away." As any Young fan knows, there is far more than just "one" that got away from the artist known for his mercurial ways, recording and then shelving projects numerous times over his career.

But what to make of "Homegrown"?

It's Young's breakup record, coincidentally recorded the same year as one of the most famous breakup records of all-time, Bob Dylan's "Blood on the Tracks."

"Homegrown" also features backup players closely associated with Dylan. There's Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm from The Band,

along with Emmylou Harris on one song. Longtime Young collaborators Ben Keith, Tim Drummond and Stan Szlezak are also on board.

That all combines for a familiar mid-1970s sound for Young, with acoustic guitar and harmonica dominating.

There are songs long familiar to Young fans, most notably "Love is a Rose," one of five songs that would appear in different versions on subsequent Young records. There's also the out-of-left-marijuana-field "Florida," one of seven previously unreleased tracks, which is less of a song and more of a stoned stream-of-consciousness ramble.

"Homegrown" stands up nearly 50 years later as both a work of art and as filling a gap in Young's storied career.

FROM PAGE 32

"The Bigger Picture," Lil Baby. Scott Plagenhoef, Apple Music's global head of music programming: While "Rockstar" and "Rain on Me" battle for the title of the summer's biggest song, Lil Baby has turned in the season's most crucial record. The Atlanta rapper's socially conscious turn lives up to its title's promise, channeling the mood of the moment as much of the country comes to grips with the magnitude of systemic racism and recognizes the opportunity to finally take it on and create lasting change.

"Lose Yo Job," Johnniqua Charles, iMarkkay x DJ Suede The Remix God. Jenn Pelly, Pitchfork contributing editor: When Johnniqua Charles was being detained outside a South Carolina strip club in February, she knew it was wrong, and she quickly spoke truth to power. "You about to lose yo job / Get this dance!" Charles sang at a security guard. "You about to lose yo job / cause you are detaining me for nothing!" Two producers — Atlanta's DJ Suede the Remix God and Brooklyn's DJ iMarkkay — turned Charles' statement of conviction into a bona fide rap banger. "Lose Yo Job" is a protest anthem for 2020 brought to life online and in the streets as protesters around the country are calling to defend the police.

"Gagarin," Moses Sumney. Makeda Easter, Los Angeles Times staff writer: I'm not sure what it is about "Gagarin" — the feeling of time slowing down to almost nothing, its sense of otherworldliness and profound sadness — but I've been hooked on this song lately. There's something about Sumney's voice that allows me to give in to the weight of my feelings instead of trying to pretend that everything is OK.

"Toosie Slide," Drake. Andrew Unterberger, Billboard deputy editor: Leave it to Drake to go to No. 1 with a dance-craze instructional when there isn't an open dance floor in North America. But it's not like the low-energy "Toosie Slide" was really intended for the club anyway: Like all of Drake's frostiest and most insidious jams, it was meant for the internet and the bedroom — a muted smash for a muted season.

"Blinding Lights," The Weeknd. Clinton Yates, The Undefeated columnist: With its themes of loneliness and the importance of touch and escapism, paired with the adventurous old-school synth beat, "Blinding Lights" evokes the perfect feeling that all of us can relate to either because we're doing it or because we can't: drowning in the night.

"Change," Moor Mother featuring Sham-e-Ali Naveed, Brandon Stotely, the Creative Independent co-founder: It



Megan Thee Stallion, above, already had a contender for song of the summer with "Savage," but the song shifted to a higher gear with a remix featuring Beyoncé.

feels like a piece of Miles Davis' "Bitches Brew" broken off like communion. The words swirl and overlap within a broken-glass landscape of keyboards, drums and bass; it could go on for days without losing its energy. We're always looking for a way into something better, and "Change" is a reminder that while new futures are possible, now and then we need someone to tell us to keep going.

"Rain on Me," Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande. Eve Barlow, freelance writer: A show of solidarity and love proves that demonstrates the life lesson we're hoping a pandemic has served us: that we're only going to get through this together. "Rain on Me" is successful because of its directness and its simplicity. The lyrics are open to multiple interpretations — a metaphor of being caught in a storm, a possible nod to struggles with sobriety — but at the heart of the matter is survival. It exists as a memory of what has been and what will be again — of silliness, of ecstasy, of oneness.

"The Crime Rate Jingle," Devon Malone, freelance writer: TikTok user Rynstar's viral smash — it has no name, but we'll call it "The Crime Rate Jingle" — started as a blithe-but-deadly riff another TikTok user identified only as EC rattled off on her porch one afternoon in response to manipulated "statistics" about crime rates in Black neighborhoods. Then it shot into the stratosphere when a third user, Alex Engelberg, added virtual three-part barbershop harmony. Since then, the jingle has been remixed, choreographed

and passive-aggressively shared with racist family members all over the country.

"Yo Perreo Sola," Bad Bunny, Maria Sherman, author of "Larger Than Life: A History of Boy Bands from NKTOT to BTS": While I'm stuck inside my Brooklyn apartment, there's no song I hear more frequently than Bad Bunny's dembow ode to gender-fluid autonomy on the dance floor, blasted from passing cars and teens' backpacks between sirens and the distant cadence of political protest. In that way, the song is both a soundtrack to isolation and collective action. When Bad Bunny sings, "Yo perreo sola" (I twerk alone), the sentiment reverberates. This summer, between moments of combating inequality, everyone twerks alone.

"Clorox Wipes," Chromeo, Vanessa Franko, Southern California News Group digital director of entertainment: Chromeo turned its weekly coronavirus-themed Instagram jams into an real EP, and this sexy, funky ode to the elusive cleaning product outsells 99.9% of lockdown-inspired songs.

"Pig Feet," Terrace Martin featuring Denzel Curry, Kamasi Washington, G Perico and Dayli. Philip Cosores, Uproxx managing editor, music: Of the many anthems to emerge during the protests, L.A.'s own Terrace Martin delivered what might be the most immediate. Released with a video depicting moments that have defined the recent demonstrations and a list of Black people killed by police officers, Martin's track recaptures the magic of Kendrick Lamar's "To Pimp

a Butterfly" (which he and Washington both worked on), while Curry and Dayli let their collective minds with searing verses that could melt skin.

"Desole," Gorillaz featuring Fatoumata Diawara. Aidin Vaziri, San Francisco Chronicle staff writer: With its fidgety disco rhythms, jangly guitars and soaring vocals from the French-based Malian singer Fatoumata Diawara, this may be the closest most of us get to summer vacation. The incessantly creative Damon Albarn serves as captain of the ship, not only in wrangling together his eclectic influences in a song that was built for repeated plays but also quite literally in its accompanying video that sees him and Diawara cruising around Italy's Lake Como with assorted animated band members in the holiday afternoon of our dreams.

"Comfortable," H.E.R. Nelson George, writer and filmmaker: The most important young female R&B artist of this era, H.E.R. has made a song about intimacy in a year when our ideas about connection, personal space and human touch are being transformed by COVID-19.

"Simmer," Hayley Williams. Ilana Kaplan, freelance writer: The ominous harmonies blend gradually, rebelling against what a song of the summer should sound like. But this isn't a typical summer, and perhaps its anthem needs to be dark and defiant — a way for us to confront reality, find catharsis and plan for a different future.

"Hate for Sale," the Pretenders. Holly Gleason, writer and artist development consultant: I'd forgotten how good furious, stripped-down rock and roll can be. In 2 minutes and 32 seconds of pure combustion, Chrissie Hynde reminds us of punk raw, gutting capabilities. The song is an indictment of the win-at-all-costs ethos for today's Gordon Gekkos who bleed the systems dry, step on the bones and don't look back as they move on to the next.

"Watermelon Sugar," Harry Styles. Sean Ross, Ross on Radio newsletter: It's genuinely good, different from everything else on the radio — and already a proven hit elsewhere in the world. I was sorry in December when Columbia Records went with Styles' "Adore You," which sounded more like everything else on the radio, as the American single. But "Watermelon Sugar" is certainly tied up as a result.

"Savage," Megan Thee Stallion featuring Beyoncé. Leah Greenblatt, Entertainment Weekly critic at large: "Sassy, moody, nasty / Acting stupid, what happens next" is pretty much my entire emotional color wheel for this quarantine.

WEEKEND: BOOKS



Jim Carrey's new book, "Memoirs and Misinformation," is a strange work of autofiction, satirizing Hollywood's self-absorption. At right, Carrey is photographed remotely via FaceTime on an iPad from his home on June 16.

JAY L. CLENDENIN/Los Angeles Times



ANYTHING BUT TYPICAL

In semi-autobiographical novel, Jim Carrey fashions a wild story about acting, Hollywood and privilege

By GLENN WHIPP
Los Angeles Times

Jim Carrey's new semi-autobiographical novel, "Memoirs and Misinformation," features flying saucers and a fire-bombing on Rodeo Drive, apocalyptic fires devouring Malibu and a mega-budget Hungry Hungry Hippos movie written by Kenneth Lonergan. One moment, "Carrey" dreams of strangling his late mother; the next, he pines for Renee Zellweger ("his last great love") and challenges Nicolas Cage, a man "whose artistic bravery had always given him courage," to a jujitsu duel. (Warning: Cage fights dirty.)

Cowritten with novelist Dana Vachon in the third person to capture what Carrey calls the "wholeness that has an infinite knowledge of all of its parts," "Memoirs and Misinformation" is, like the twisted political drawings Carrey posts on Twitter, entirely its own thing. A satire of Hollywood's self-absorption coinciding with the end of the planet, none of it is real ... except when it is. And given the extreme circumstances that have marked Carrey's life, it's sometimes difficult to sort out fact from fiction.

When Sonny Mehta, Alfred A. Knopf's late publisher, bought the book several years ago, he wrote Carrey a note, congratulating him for steering clear of "There is a town in North Ontario" bull, referencing the opening line from Neil Young's autobiographical song "Helpless."

"Memoirs and Misinformation" is a deconstruction of the standard-issue show biz chronicle. There aren't any fun anecdotes about the making of "Dumb and Dumber" or "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective." Instead, there is a wholly strange work of autofiction, laden with symbolism and metaphor, sometimes beautiful, sometimes tragic, often inscrutable.

In a recent FaceTime call — with Vachon first joining, followed by another good hour one-on-one — Carrey, 58, says he didn't want to write a memoir that dryly cataloged his life. "You can tell a lot about somebody through their fictional choices," he says, with Vachon adding that they wanted to use heightened reality to create a "super-position of truth."

That reality, as you might expect from Carrey's career of infiltrating films, clowns and sad men trying to stave off loneliness, naturally tilts toward the surreal — a tone consistent with the experience of speaking with Carrey himself. For instance, when the conversation turns to Las Vegas, a place the book's "Jim Carrey" fears he'll wind up "when he's old, jowly with bleached teeth and hair plugs, whoring for the bingo crowds," Carrey describes his own visits to Sin City in feverish prose that surpasses the book.

"Whenever I go to Vegas, I go crazy," Carrey says. "The only way I can live there is if I put all the faucets on scalding hot so the room becomes some sort of terrarium for tropical plants where literally you can't see out the windows after awhile. They're just bleeding with sweat. It's what I imagine living on Mars is going to be like. 'I don't give a damn how you think you're controlling my environment! I'm going tropical!' I might have to break a window at some point to stick my head out."

"Memoirs and Misinformation," which Carrey describes as "burning myself to the ground and telling you that's not who I was anyway," began its life eight years ago when Vachon walked into Carrey's West Village artist workspace, checked out his paintings and thought, "There's a story here." In one corner, there was a depiction of Malibu engulfed in flames. In another, a self-portrait had been slashed. Vachon told Carrey that the scene reminded him of Aeneas standing in Juno's temple, lamenting the hardships of his life.

Instantly, a friendship was born. Early in the collaboration, Carrey spilled his life story — his family's financial struggles, his mother's pain-medication addiction, his eight-hour shifts at a tire factory, his father's "sweet, incredible soul," his stand-up days in Toronto and his meteoric rise to fame — so that Vachon could upload those memories before composing the fictionalized "Carrey." They Skyped constantly. Carrey spewing ideas, Vachon struggling to turn them into cohesive prose. That process continued regularly for nearly a decade, ending only in February with a final draft. The book was originally set for a May release with an accompanying promotional tour, but the COVID-19 pandemic scuttled those plans. Its new release date was July 7.

Writing, Carrey says, felt like "somebody opened the doors of an ancient temple for me." What he saw inside — and what he wished to convey — can be glimpsed in the image on the book's cover. The painting, by Carrey, incorporates a photo accidentally taken of him in Maui in 2018 when an emergency alert warned, by mistake, of an

incoming ballistic missile attack.

"My assistant, Linda, called me and said, 'Chief, we have 10 minutes,' and I said, 'What do you mean?' And she said, 'The missiles are coming.' And she was squeezing the phone and accidentally took a screen shot," Carrey says. "That's the cover of the book, my actual face after being told I had 10 minutes to live."

After initially trying to reach his daughter from Maui, Carrey walked outside, sat on the lanai and spent eight minutes going through a "gratitude list." Staggered by the bounty of his life, he reached a state of grace, closed his eyes and waited for the missiles.

"Now, I walk around the world knowing what that is for me, and if that should happen, where my head's going to be," Carrey says haltingly, wiping away tears. "I'll sit and thank God for the blessings in my life. If I was anybody, who was I? And I don't really believe that I'm anybody. I believe there's nothing that isn't you."

"Memoirs and Misinformation" features a comparable apocalyptic accounting, with similar results. Yet the real Carrey has been anticipating oblivion for most of his life. In the book's sixth chapter, our hero goes to the Saharan Motor Hotel to meet screenwriter Charlie Kaufman to discuss playing Mao Zedong in a biopic that "Carrey" believes "will be his 'Raging Bull.'" It's the same steady Sunset Boulevard lodge Carrey checked into in 1982, freshly arrived from Toronto with just a suitcase of clothes and a secondhand copy of Hal Lindsey's doomsday bestseller, "The Late Great Planet Earth."

"I walked through a parade of hookers and took my little green ass to some motel room that would make Barretta jealous," Carrey says. "And I'm reading this book saying the world is going to end soon and I'm like, 'But I just got here. I gotta make it before I die.' So, literally, I've been making it before I die for almost 40 years. But we all have the sword of Damocles over our heads. That mushroom cloud is a character in our lives. And we have to learn how to dance and smile and do all the proper and appropriate things."

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“Body Cam”: After a suspension and while grieving her young son’s accidental death, police officer Renee Lomito-Smith (Mary J. Blige) is back at work with a new partner, the green, easily affected Danny Holledge (Nat Wolff). While on patrol, the pair discover the gruesome remains of another colleague who’d been on a seemingly routine traffic stop, kicking off a disturbing series of deadly attacks. Amid the killings, reckless Renee and reluctant Danny set off to investigate, with supernatural pieces to the puzzle not so neatly dropped along the way.

It’s an intriguing tale, though a tad too on the nose. As Blige begins to unravel a web of corruption in the department, her character development remains flat, and despite a disturbingly devastating twist amid the gore, the stakes remain relatively low. There’s just something that feels off about the tone — despite all the blood and guts, it ends up feeling less like a horror movie and more like a meditation on grief, rage and revenge, in more ways than one.

Also available on DVD:

“Castle in the Ground”: Dealing with grief, a teenage boy (Alex Wolff) makes friends with a troubled neighbor (Imogen Poots) amid the opioid epidemic.

“Enter the Fat Dragon”: A remake of the 1978 film, a cop (Donnie Yen) who’d been sentenced to the evidence room searches for answers after a suspect dies in his custody in this action comedy. In Japanese and Chinese.

“The Magicians: Season Five”: The Syfy series following a group of 20-somethings who have discovered the wonders and dangers of the magical world comes to a close.

“The Red Shadows”: A police officer (Claudia Fursu) becomes fixated with finding her abducted sister decades after the kidnapping in this series. In French.

“The Swing of Things”: A groom (Chord Overstreet) unintentionally hosts his wedding and honeymoon at a destination venue for swingers.

“VHS”: A heist records talk shows and infomercials on a VHS tape, inadvertently recording over footage of his parents’ wedding.

Available on digital July 14: **“The Carer”:** A sick, legendary actor (Brian Cox) is forced to live with a full-time caregiver (Kerry Condon), co-writer of his daughter (Emilia Fox).

“Dateline-Saigon”: This documentary follows the dark truths that a group of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists uncovered about United States involvement in the Vietnam War.

Available on digital July 17: **“The Painted Bird”:** A Jewish boy seeks help wandering through Eastern Europe during World War II. In Czech, German, Russian and Latin.

“Two Ways to Go West”: A recovering addict (James Liddell) is tested in a Vegas strip hotel room.

— Katie Foran-McHale/TNS



Netflix

Characters from the “Baby-Sitters Club” book series like (from left to right) Stacey (Shay Rudolph), Claudia (Momona Tanada), Mary Anne (Malia Baker) and Kristy (Sophie Grace) appear in Netflix’s version, which aims to preserve and update the franchise’s appeal.

Timeless life lessons

Netflix adds Gen-Z twists to beloved book series ‘The Baby-Sitters Club’

BY HANK STUEVER
The Washington Post

If you were attempting to tell a story in these dreary days about the rewards of believing in the best of people, you could do no better than the smart, affirmative joy that’s found in Netflix’s fresh take on “The Baby-Sitters Club,” a 10-episode drama aimed squarely at the teenage-girl set but willing to share its goodwill with anyone who needs a lift.

I’m about as far from the show’s intended demographic as a person can get, but “The Baby-Sitters Club” is yet another reminder of the lucky life of a critic, who gets to watch everything and discover the unexpected trope of kindness and spirit seen here. The women in my life — especially those friends who grew up in the 1980s and ‘90s reading the 200-plus novels in the original book series conceived by Ann M. Martin — are way, way ahead of me on this: “The Baby-Sitters Club,” which has sold more than 180 million paperbacks and was previously adapted into a short-lived TV series and a 1995 movie, was never only about babysitting.

It’s an entire ethic, impressively built on the tenet that each of us becomes a better and more responsible person every day. How the books and now this series are able to do this without seeming saccharine, preachy or otherwise Disneyfied is part of why “The Baby-Sitters Club” is such a watchable treat. Not only do things generally work out for these girls, it works out because they work it out.

Within its opening minutes, one cannot help but groove on the show’s welcoming nature, as a seventh-grader named Kristy Thomas (Sophie Grace) sees how desperate her single mom (Alicia Silverstone) is to find a last-minute sitter for her little brother.

Kristy hatches a plan to start a full-service babysitting partnership in idyllic Stonybrook, Conn. She recruits her best friend Mary Anne Spier (Malia Baker), their budding-artist friend, Claudia Kishi (Momona Tanada), and the new girl at school, Stacey McGill (Shay Rudolph). Later they are joined by another new girl, Dawn Schafer (Xochitl Gomez).

The characters all hew to the archetypes Martin originally set forth, in that Kristy is bossy and sometimes impetuous. Mary Anne is shy but wise. Claudia’s creativity is at odds with her parents’ expectations. And Stacey just wants a fresh start after a disastrous viral video incident at her old school in Manhattan.

Showrunner Rachel Shukert (whose TV work includes “GLOW”) and executive producer Lucia Aniello (“Broad City”) clearly want nothing more than to do right by the books they loved as girls, while carefully steering “Baby-Sitters Club” toward a thoughtfully conceived Gen-Z upgrade.

That naturally means a stronger emphasis on the club’s diversity — as well as that of their Stonybrook universe — not just in terms of color or ethnicity but a broader sense of community and dignity.

These babysitters, as well as the tykes they care for, are a new breed. When one client’s son prefers dresses over jeans, plays princess and refers to herself as a girl, this Baby-Sitters Club is not only equipped to relate to her, they are also more chill. That old “BSC” magic kicks in, as a viewer of any age finds characters to emulate.

And although they’re as wired and Instagram-dependent as their peers, these girls honor their predecessors by choosing an analog approach to business, circulating paper fliers in the neighborhood and directing all calls from clients to a landline phone in Claudia’s bedroom (it came free with the

family’s internet service, she explains).

It isn’t long before a rival group of high schoolers try to steal the club’s idea, availing themselves of social networks and online advertising campaigns. The show’s unambiguous response to this is also its only slightly-off note, conveying that these savvy teens are somehow more shallow — so tech-obsessed that they don’t pay enough attention to the children they’re supposed to be watching.

The neighbors eventually come to prefer Kristy’s club, but the show never quite reconciles its place in 2020. Is it just pure fantasy to imagine that 12- and 13-year-old girls are still available to babysit? That they so easily come and go between houses? And that today’s hypervigilant parents will hire them? Or has this notion lapsed into a fantasy that still includes paper routes and boys who mow lawns?

As their business takes off and expands, the girls are launched on the real objective here, which is to introduce them to life’s many lessons. Though they strive to be mature, they are as susceptible as anyone to hormonal crushes, rejection and tween angst.

Their parents are entering relationships (in Kristy’s mother’s case, headed toward marrying a wealthy neighbor, to her daughter’s chagrin) or grieving divorces and other losses. Peers at school can sometimes be mean, and often there are conflicts within the Baby-Sitters Club itself.

None of this would be effective — or as worth watching — without the show’s remarkably talented cast of young actresses, all of whom either never learned the kid-show style of overacting, or were never afflicted with it to begin with. They are wholly believable in the roles of these idealized youths, with especially good performances from Tanada and Baker.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

--- A new path FORWARD ---

With no races on the horizon, runners should focus less on metrics and more on attitude

By AMANDA LOUDIN
Special to
The Washington Post

Ann Marie Kirkpatrick had been on track to run a solid Boston Marathon in April. The same for Lou Serafini, who was not only training for Boston but also leading a high-performing group of runners with the same intent. Keira D'Amato was excited to line up at the World Athletics Half Marathon Championships in Poland at the end of March.

All three high-level runners, like people across the country, are now facing a much different scenario. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, races across the country and world have been canceled or postponed. For elite athletes who often spend nearly a year with their eyes on one big prize, this is a serious blow.

In this new reality, Kirkpatrick, Serafini, D'Amato and other elite runners must figure out a new path forward — with the mental-emotional part as significant as anything. Step one, says Denver-based sports psychologist Justin Ross, is allowing themselves to process the emotions that surround the loss of their “A” races.

“You have to give yourself permission to be sad,” he says. “Any major loss connected to a personal goal will have a big emotional impact.”

Justin Bosley, a board-certified sports medicine physician in the San Francisco Bay Area, concurs.

“Whenever I work with high-level athletes, I remind them that when an unforeseen circumstance arises that forces a change in plans, it’s OK to mourn,” he says. “You can’t move on until you process your emotions first.”

D’Amato, 35, a real estate agent from Midlothian, Va., is hoping she will have a chance to compete at her race at its new rescheduled date in October. Still, she says that her knee-jerk

reaction was to find another race near the original for which she could use her hard-earned fitness.

“I was excited for the opportunity and I was bummed when the situation changed,” she admits. “As I tried to find a replacement race, all those were canceling as well.”

In 38-year-old Kirkpatrick’s case, the vaunted Boston race had become a big goal after she ran a challenging Olympic marathon trials race in February.

“The trials were my ‘A’ race for a long time, but then I headed into them run-down and anemic,” she says. “I missed key workouts and took awhile to bounce back. I handled myself surprisingly well during the trials and felt strong, so I had confidence heading into Boston.”

Bosley recommends that once runners have had a chance to process the loss of all racing prospects, they choose the next best target.

“It doesn’t have to be another race to be motivating,” he says. “It can be measuring progress on a favorite route, for instance.”

This is something D’Amato has put into place. Recently she set a personal best in a solo effort 5K on the track.

“I’m focusing on the daily and the weekly, instead of a race,” she says.

Serafini, 28, the community manager at clothing brand Tracksmith who had been leading a training group preparing for Boston, has already changed his outlook.

“The message I’m trying to convey to my group is that right

now, running is one of the only constants in our lives,” he says. “We can use it as meditation. I’ve come to enjoy the fact that I don’t have to have the foot on the gas right now.”

This approach is an emotionally healthy one, Ross says.

“This is an opportunity to recognize that running provides so many other benefits beyond achieving race goals,” he says.

“It gives us freedom to explore the outdoors and connect back to the reasons it matters to us.”

Kirkpatrick, who lives in Colorado with plenty of outdoor space around her, is doing just that.

“I have no foreseeable races, so I’m just enjoying the beauty of Colorado and taking a break from structured training,” he says. “I love running, so I don’t necessarily need a race to get

me out the door. Racing is icing on the cake.”

Now is a good time to get more sleep, focus on nutrition and foster a recovery mindset, too.

“Athletes are very good at using the fight-or-flight mechanism for training and competition,” Bosley says. “But it’s important to cultivate a ... rest and recovery cycle, too.”

This might look like a string of easy runs, or one hard workout per week, for the time being. “Go slow, go fast, do whatever feels good right now, as long as it’s off a regimen,” Ross recommends. “It’s an opportunity to find that ‘flow state’ with running that’s not found when running for metrics.”

The danger comes when athletes ignore that right now is a stressful time for all, and try to push through it with hard training. Stress is stress to the body — adding in hard training on top of that can lead to a drop in immunity. Serafini, for his part, is giving easier right now.

“I want to maintain fitness, but not go over the top,” he says.

As summer progresses, along with the possibility of races getting rescheduled sometime

in the future, Ross encourages athletes to take their temperature on enthusiasm.

“Don’t race because you feel you must,” he says. “Race because you are excited and have renewed purpose after this break.”

For now, Kirkpatrick is considering signing up for December’s California International Marathon, but she says she won’t get her hopes up as she had for Boston. Instead, she’ll focus on a sure bet: The local “Firecracker 5K,” which will be an invitation-only, 20-person elite field (10 men/10 women).

“They’re doing an individual time trials for each runner and film[ing] each person running the course,” she says. “On July 4, they’ll release the video and announce the winners, paying out prize money. It will be really fun.”



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WEEKEND: FAMILY

A summertime alternative

In the COVID era, parents are organizing smaller 'camps' closer to home

BY CONSTANCE SOMMER
Special To The Washington Post

After months of seeing friends at Zoom school, on apps like Houseparty, and while playing video games like Minecraft, Kai Mizuno did something different in mid-June. The 12-year-old went to camp.

Or at least, that's what he and his friends called four afternoons of trailing one of the boys' older brothers around the bike trails in Minneapolis.

"We went to these cool places that I'd never been to before, and played games I'd never played before," he said. "And it was all my friends, so it was fun like that, too."

Some parents this summer — fearing their kids will catch the coronavirus at a big day camp, worried about what isolation is doing to their children's mental health — are coming up with a compromise solution: hiring a teenager to run a "camp" that keeps their children busy and on the move for at least a few hours every day. This can also be a winning solution for teens and young adults, equally tired of screens and unable to get a job in this pandemic economy.

"I've been in this house for four months now," said Jordan Sachs-Amrami, 21, a senior at UC-Santa Cruz, who tried to organize a summer camp on his mom's driveway in San Rafael, Calif. "I'm desperate to do something."

But the idea is not without its risks. If someone hosts the camp at their own house, they may find homeowner's insurance doesn't cover them for claims arising from what is, after all, a day-care business.

And perhaps more concerning: All families involved are putting their collective health in the hands of adolescents.

"I absolutely believe that, in the absence of physical danger, camp is the best thing you can do for your kids," said Deborah Gilboa, a family practitioner in Pittsburgh and a frequent writer and speaker on parenting and youth resilience. "But this summer, I would say, if you can't find a day camp running near you that keeps kids safe enough, then a pop-up camp run by teenagers is not a safe substitute."

In the summer of 2020, a coun-

selor who offers a hug to a camper with a skinned knee may also transmit the coronavirus. Kids from different households who share art supplies or a hula hoop may spread COVID-19. A camper who feels feverish could be overheated — or have a dangerous, highly infectious illness.

"Educators with decades of experience are struggling with this," Gilboa said.

Some parents consider all that — and decide it's a risk they're willing to take. Rachel is a therapist

'We went to these cool places that I'd never been to before, and played games I'd never played before. And it was all my friends, so it was fun like that, too.'

Kai Mizuno

in Beverly Hills, Calif., and a mom to an 8-year-old son. She asked that her last name not be used because "there is so much judgment around adherence to social distancing!"

In May, after watching her son dissolve into tantrums "like I hadn't seen in years," and noticing he was growing weary of screens, Rachel sought out some parents of her son's school friends and suggested they start a camp for their boys. "I would rather do a smaller camp with families we know and expand our bubble," she said, "than deal with the unknown."

They hired a 17-year-old boy they all know, and paid him \$20 per hour to be the "counselor." The camp started the third week in June, running 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. five days a week, rotating daily among the backyards of the six families involved.

When the kids met up the first morning, she said, they were "euphoric" just to be back together again. She soon noticed her son seemed more relaxed and well-adjusted. He also began to go to bed at a more normal time.

Still, as the parents began to plan the camp's third week, "I second-guess myself a lot," she said. Are the other families as careful outside

camp as hers is? Some parents want to bring in coaches or other experts to turn up days that already have started to feel routine — but is that safe? "Even within this camp group, there are different comfort levels," she said.

The president of the American Camp Association, Tom Rosenberg, has navigated these waters for months. Many of his member camps derive their entire income from the summer season. This year, 20 percent of the day camps, and more than 80 percent of the overnight camps, don't plan to run at all, a revenue loss the ACA preliminarily estimates at \$16 billion. "We've been impacted in a terribly calamitous, unique way," he said.

Any parent hosting paid child monitoring on her property should contact her insurance company to see if she's got liability coverage, said Janet Ruiz, a spokeswoman with the Insurance Information Institute. If the insurance company also insures small businesses, coverage may be as simple as an inexpensive add-on to the existing policy. It can seem like an unnecessary added expense up front, but if an accident were to happen, "it would be worth every penny," she said.

As for coronavirus liability, that remains an unknown. Ruiz advises parents create some kind of liability waiver, cobbled together from information available online, as that may provide some degree of legal buffer.

Liability, screening of kids for illness, creating safe games for rowdy kids under a broiling sun — all these considerations and more began to alarm Sachs-Amrami as the college student dove deeper into the idea of running his own small camp. Still, he went ahead and advertised on Nextdoor, the social network for neighbors, which led to an unexpected offer: a job as a counselor at an official soccer day camp in his neighborhood. He started July 6.

Meanwhile, Kai continues to savor memories of the bike camp. The boy who runs the camp, Zach Marquardt, 17, is pretty busy with sports practices for high school, but says he thinks he can slot in at least one more week in mid-July.

Kai can hardly wait. "I wish I could do it again next week."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



A small moment when patriotism was easy

I don't recall exactly what I was doing that morning 37 years ago — probably at a home wrangling my big hair with a curling iron and applying frosted purple eye shadow — but I remember ending up on the courthouse steps at noon, dressed in a red robe. I was in the second row of my high school's choir, waiting for our cue to sing "America the Beautiful." Thousands of onlookers waved flags and welcome home banners. Jimmy Stewart, Hollywood actor and hometown hero, had returned to quaint Indiana, Pa., to celebrate his 75th birthday.

From my vantage point on that day — May 21, 1983 — I could see the townspeople crowded along Philadelphia Street, our main drag, propping kids on shoulders and snapping photos with Instamatic cameras. A volunteer fireman unveiled a nine-foot bronze statue of Jimmy on the courthouse lawn, and the crowd of thousands sang "Happy Birthday."

Taking the podium, Jimmy spoke in his iconic, stammering way. But his words were interrupted by the sound of a telephone ringing. Not a digital smartphone ringtone, but the jingling trill of a fully-wired telephone. Jimmy paused before realizing that the ring was coming from the podium itself. He stooped his lanky frame to take a peek, and there it was — a rotary phone blasting its brassy ting-a-ling from a shelf under the slanted top.

"Heh... Hello?" he stuttered, the handset held to his ear from a dangling spiral cord. "This is Jimmy Stewart." The fascinated crowd roared with laughter.

"Can you hear me, Jimmy?" the voice of U.S. President and fellow actor Ronald Reagan blared over the loudspeakers. "I've sent some of my boys to wish you a Happy Birthday," he said. The stunned crowd fell silent in disbelief. Not only was a huge Hollywood star standing, in the flesh, in front of our courthouse, but he was talking to the President of the United States.

Just when we all reached to pinch ourselves, believing it must be a dream, a sound like nothing we'd ever heard ripped through the atmosphere. We looked up to see a flash of massive, angular metal streaking 500 mph over Philadelphia Street, a split second ahead of the deafening blast of jet engines at close range.

Jimmy, a decorated Air Force veteran B-24 pilot, ducked instinctively before realizing it was the Thunderbirds, flying over Philadelphia Street on orders from his parents. Babies cried, women screamed, children clapped hands over ears. We'd never experienced this before. Fear and adrenaline pulsed in our veins until we could process what was happening.

The Thunderbirds did several loops, giving reality time to settle. This moment in our collective lives was, quite simply, awesome. We were in awe of the famous men on that telephone call, but also, of human ingenuity, of community, of God and country, and of the notion that any American, even those raised in small towns, can accomplish great things.

The festivities continued all weekend. There was a parade, a ribbon cutting, a fire station breakfast, a film festival, a dinner dance, a Boy Scout event, and even a "talent show" where superstar Jimmy and his wife Gloria sat in folding metal chairs at the skating rink for two hours, graciously applauding every lousy musical act in Indiana County, including mine.

Even though our town intended to honor Jimmy Stewart, clearly, he ended up honoring us. When asked if he thought much about Indiana while living in Beverly Hills, Jimmy replied, "Every day. This is where I sort of made up my mind about certain things, about hard work being worth it, about community spirit, about the importance of a family, about the importance of God and the church."

Today, as patriotism seems shrouded in turmoil, division and hatred, I want to remember what I felt on the courthouse steps that day in 1983. I hope, perhaps with small-town naivete, that soon, we will gather again — not in anger and protest, but in collective awe for all that is good and beautiful about the United States of America.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com



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With 80 percent of summer camps remaining closed this season because of the pandemic and children growing more restless, parents are organizing smaller neighborhood camps for their children.

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

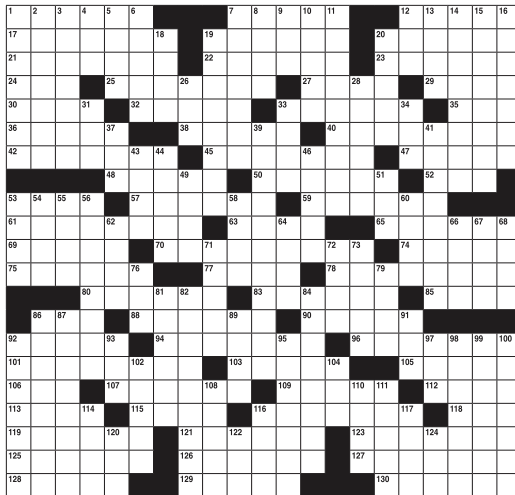
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

POWER-UPS

BY JON SCHNEIDER AND ANDERSON WANG / EDITED BY WILL SHOLTZ

Jon Schneider, of New York City, is a research scientist for Google, working on problems in machine learning and economics.
Anderson Wang, of Mountain View, Calif., is a software engineer currently between jobs. They met at MIT in the early 2010s, where they lived in the same hall. They've been making and solving puzzles together ever since. This is the first New York Times crossword for each of them. —W.S.

- ACROSS**
1 Not fine
7 Expedition
12 Savory jelly
17 Tacks on
19 Molluscoid
20 Sight on an English farm
21 Slacker role for Jeff Bridges in "The Big Lebowski"
22 Superenthusiastic
23 Spelman College graduate, e.g.
24 "___ is an emotion in motion"; Mae West
25 See 30-Across
27 Morning weather phenomenon
29 See 33-Across
30 With 25-Across, get as much approval from an audience as possible
32 Dalmatians, e.g.
33 With 29-Across, like a deer in headlights
35 N.Y.C.'s first subway line
36 Singer Mann
38 Michelangelo masterpiece
40 Sunset Boulevard sight
42 Utah mountain range
45 What people tend to do when a rush-hour subway train arrives
47 See 50-Across
48 See 53-Across
- DOWN**
50 With 47-Across, not change anyone's mind, say
52 Forest of Fangorn resident, in fiction
53 With 48-Across, stops wasting time
57 Dawn
59 Eternally damned
61 Promptness
63 Default consequence
65 Have an influence (on)
69 Inqui port city
70 Mathematical concepts suggested eight times in this puzzle
74 "I'm telling the truth!"
75 One of the Seven Dwarfs
77 Yeats's "The Lake ___ of Innisfree"
78 Bad place for a fly, in a saying
80 Showy shrub
83 Arch supporter
85 See 90-Across
86 Flat-topped cap
88 See 92-Across
90 With 45-Across, uncomfortably accurate
92 With 88-Across, sacrificed
94 Place that processes ore
96 Eponym of the world's largest church
101 Some team-bonding trips
103 State whose capital is Dispur
- ACROSS**
105 Drum that can be played with a brush
106 Hypotheticals
107 See 113-Across
109 Cleans, as a deck
112 See 116-Across
113 With 107-Across, bad sort of competition
115 "Freak on a Leash" metal band
116 With 112-Across, "Your misfortune is nothing special"
118 Jocular lead-in to "maccation"
119 List order
121 Abstract artist de Kooning known for her portraits
123 Obsessive cleaner, say
125 Important faculty for school
126 Brought home
127 Lively French dance popular in the Baroque era
128 Big name in nail polish
129 Rug rats
130 Brand whose sales skyrocketed after the release of "E.T."
131 Woo-shik, co-star of 2019's "Parasite"
132 ___ cuisine
133 Sanders who played in a World Series and two Super Bowls
134 Chuck's domain
135 Lead-in to self
137 They might be caught in the rain
138 ___ Bator
139 Star, in a way
140 Hard-hit line drive
141 One variety of love
- DOWN**
1 Person who's being used
2 Sister of Laertes
3 They're scored from 1 to 5
4 What's found at one end of a rainbow
5 Comfy-cowy
6 Sources of Norse mythology
7 More thrifty
8 Pale
9 Ukr., e.g., once
10 Spanish "I love you"
11 Kind of cuisine that's often eaten with one's hands
12 Tied, in scores
13 ___ vide (culinary technique)
14 Do some heavy lifting
15 "Don't pay attention to that"
16 Idle gossip
18 Convince
19 Cracks
20 Actor Dev of "Lion"
26 Lick (up)
28 Stop the flow of
31 House call?
33 Playful growl
34 Run-___ (chip-hop trio)
37 Alternative to an ellipsis
39 Some clickbait articles
41 Potentially risky thing to drop in a relationship
43 ___ Woo-shik, co-star of 2019's "Parasite"
44 ___ cuisine
46 Sanders who played in a World Series and two Super Bowls
49 Chuck's domain
51 Lead-in to self
53 They might be caught in the rain
54 ___ Bator
55 Star, in a way
56 Hard-hit line drive
58 One variety of love



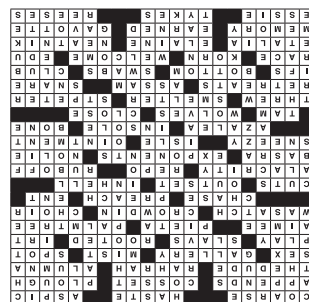
- ACROSS**
60 Broadway's ___-Fontanne Theater
62 Heckle
64 Part of a hammer
66 Butter alternative
67 "There wasn't no home like a raft..." speaker
68 Lavish celebration
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82 Title horror film locale
84 Wrote poorly
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87 They might involve impersonating a dealer
89 Kingdom east of Babylonia
91 Mini-albums, in brief
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97 Envelope abbr.
98 Juggling, singing, magic, etc.
99 Scholarly
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GUNSTON STREET



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FACES



RICHARD DREW/Associated Press

Shepard Smith will host a weeknight newscast at CNBC.

Shepard Smith heads to CNBC

By DAVID BAUDER
Associated Press

Shepard Smith, who abruptly quit Fox News Channel last October amid the ascendancy of opinionated programming, will bring a nightly newscast to CNBC this fall.

CNBC announced Wednesday that Smith will anchor a one-hour weeknight newscast at 7 p.m. Eastern, the time slot he held for many years at Fox before being shifted to the afternoon.

His show is expected to start in September.

"I know I found a great home for my newscast," Smith said in a news release. He was not made available for an interview on Wednesday.

CNBC Chairman Mark Hoffman said "The News with Shepard Smith" will feature "fact-based storytelling."

"We're thrilled that Shep, who's built a career on an honest fight to find and report the facts, will continue his pursuit of the truth at CNBC," Hoffman said. "We aim to deliver a nightly program that, in some small way, looks for the signal in all the noise."

Smith never explicitly said why he walked out on Fox a few months after signing a contract extension, but left enough signals along the way. He had been at Fox since the network's inception in 1996.

Smith, whose non-compete contract with Fox ended at the beginning of the month, was an attractive talent that drew interest throughout the industry. In CNBC he found a clean slate, a network not identified with a political viewpoint.

There were published reports earlier this spring that NBC management was considering establishing a political talk lineup in prime time for CNBC, conservative but more moderate than Fox News.

Smith's signing seems an indication that the opinionated talk lineup is less likely.

Superhero reborn

Javicia Leslie takes lead in season 2 of 'Batwoman'

By TRACY BROWN
Los Angeles Times

A new Batwoman is headed to Gotham. Warner Bros. Television, the CW and Berlanti Productions announced Wednesday that Javicia Leslie will be cast as the new series lead of "Batwoman."

Leslie will portray Ryan Wilder, described as "likable, messy, a little goofy and untamed," who in Season 2 of the superhero show will take over the Bat-mantle from Kate Kane.

Her casting makes her the first Black actress to portray Batwoman in a live-action production. Similarly, Ryan will be the first Black character to become the caped vigilante in any medium.

"I am extremely proud to be the first Black actress to play the iconic role of the first Black woman on television, and as a bi-

sexual woman, I am honored to join this groundbreaking show which has been such a trail-blazer for the LGBTQ+ community," Leslie said in a statement.

In May, just days after the first season finale of "Batwoman" aired, Ruby Rose announced she had "made the very difficult decision to not return to 'Batwoman' next season."

Rose made her debut as the vigilante hero in the Arrowverse's 2018 crossover event "Elseworlds." "It was the first-ever live-action

appearance of Kate Kane, Bruce Wayne's cousin who was revealed to have taken on the Bat suit in the billionaire's absence. When "Batwoman" premiered last fall, it became the first superhero series with a lesbian title character.

Ryan is also an out lesbian, but that's where her similarities with Kate appear to end. According to her official character description, Ryan has spent years as a drug-runner, dodging the Gotham police and masking her pain with bad habits. A highly skilled but undisciplined fighter, she now lives in a van with a plant.

Initially, Warner Bros. announced that the role would be recast. But in June it was reported that "Batwoman" had put out a casting call for a new character. Showrunner Caroline Dries later explained that after some reflection and out of respect for Rose and the show's audience, she chose to move forward with a new Batwoman.

In a June tweet, Dries further clarified that neither she nor the show had any plans to "erase" Kate.

"(Kate's) disappearance will be one of the mysteries of season two," said Dries. "I don't want to give away any of our surprises, but to all our devoted fans, please know that LGBTQ+ justice is at the very core of what Batwoman is, and we have no intention of abandoning that."

"Batwoman" Season 2 is slated to premiere in January.



Javicia Leslie

STANLEE B. MIRADOR
SIPA USA

Actress Naya Rivera missing at SoCal lake

Authorities say former "Glee" star Naya Rivera is missing and being searched for at a Southern California lake.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Department late Wednesday confirmed that Rivera, 33, is the person being searched for in the waters of Lake Piru, which is approximately 56 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles.

CNBC reported late Wednesday that Rivera rented a pontoon boat at the Lake Piru reservoir Wednesday and that her young son was found on the boat wearing a life vest. Rivera's identification was found on the boat. Sheriff's officials launched a boat and helicopter search Wednesday afternoon, but that had been suspended by nighttime. The search was continued early Thursday.

Lady A files suit against singer with same name

Country group Lady A, which dropped the word "Antebellum" from its name because of the word's ties to slavery, has filed a lawsuit against a Black singer who has performed as Lady A for years.

The Grammy-winning vocal group filed the lawsuit on Wednesday in federal court after negotiations with Anita White broke down in recent weeks. According to the lawsuit, the band is seeking a ruling that their use of the trademark "Lady A" does not infringe on White's alleged trademark rights of the same name. The band is not seeking monetary damages.

Charles Blow writing 'Black Power Manifesto'

New York Times columnist Charles M. Blow is working on a book he had not planned to write.

"The Devil You Know: A Black Power Manifesto" will be published in February, Harper announced Wednesday. Blow will combine political history and personal reflections for a "race book" he felt compelled to take on amid the coronavirus pandemic and Black Lives Matters protests.

Other news

■ Pete Buttigieg's next book has a unifying message. Liveright Publishing announced Wednesday that the former Democratic presidential candidate and South Bend, Ind., mayor had written "Trust: America's Best Chance," scheduled for release Oct. 6.

Oprah, Lionsgate help adapt 'The 1619 Project' for film, television

The Associated Press

Oprah Winfrey and Lionsgate are partnering with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones to adapt "The New York Times" recent project examining the legacy of slavery for film and television. Lionsgate said Wednesday that it will work alongside "The 1619 Project" architect Hannah-Jones to develop a multimedia history of slavery and its effects in

America for a worldwide audience.

"The 1619 Project" launched in August 2019 in an issue of The New York Times Magazine to mark the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to the American continent. The wide-ranging venture examined how the impact of slavery shaped and continues to permeate all aspects of American society. It was also made into a popular podcast.

"We took very seriously our duty to find TV and film partners that would respect and honor the work and mission of 'The 1619 Project,' that understood our vision and deep moral obligation to doing justice to these stories," Hannah-Jones said in a statement.

Hannah-Jones will be a creative leader and producer in developing films, TV series, documentaries and more inspired by

the reporting. Winfrey will serve as a producer as well.

"From the first moment I read 'The 1619 Project' and immersed myself in Nikole Hannah-Jones' transformative work, I was moved, deepened and strengthened by her empowering historical analysis," Winfrey said.

"The 1619 Project" is also being adapted into a series of books.

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OPINION

Going after Founders is politically negligent

By MATT BAI

Special to The Washington Post

I watched with a kind of horrified fascination last weekend as Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., pointedly refused twice — to answer a direct question from CNN's Dana Bash about whether statues of George Washington across the country should be torn down and replaced.

The interview certainly did not leave me with the impression — as it did the unhinged Tucker Carlson on Fox News — that Duckworth, who sacrificed both legs in service to her country, was someone who hated America.

It did leave me wondering why a party with a strong chance of winning back the White House in November would want to play such a reckless game when it comes to the nation's history.

This is not something my progressive friends want to hear right now. (I hesitate to use that word — “progressive” — since the father of progressivism, Theodore Roosevelt, is among those whose statues are being targeted.) They tell me it's just time to reassess all of the so-called white men, and that there's bound to be some excesses in the process, and that all of this is trivial when compared with how the country is suffering right now.

Well, all right. But if you want that suffering to continue, go ahead and wage war on the Founding Fathers. See where that gets you.

I've been thinking lately about the Taliban. (No, I'm not comparing liberals to Afghanistan's radical mullahs. Stay with me here.) For about five years, beginning in the mid-1990s, the Taliban went around terrorizing women and looting off-limits and basically behaving like the Khmer Rouge. In the West, most people yawned.

By ROBERT GEBELHOFF

The Washington Post

There was a time when President Donald Trump talked a lot about the opioid epidemic gripping the United States. “This scourge of drug addiction will stop,” he pledged in March 2018. “It will stop.”

Well, it hasn't. In fact, thanks in large part to the social and economic impact of the new coronavirus, 2020 might end up being the worst year on record for overdose deaths. Yet Trump — who once vowed that “we will not rest until the end” — has not been heard from on the topic.

Trump is not to blame for the recent surge in overdose deaths. Dealing with addiction is difficult in the midst of a pandemic. When services are harder to access and individuals are suffering from stress and loneliness. But it is fair to ask whether an administration that touted itself as “dedicated” to ending the opioid epidemic could have done more.

The numbers are still incomplete, but the available information is bleak. The White House drug policy office reported an 11.4% year-over-year increase in overdose deaths for the first four months of 2020. Data from the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program — a federal initiative that attempts to collect real-time data on overdoses — also show that suspected overdoses (including non-fatal overdoses) have accelerated this year. Overdoses in February were 16% higher than they were in February of last year. Since then, it has only gotten worse: March overdoses were up 18% compared with last year, April overdoses increased 29%, and May overdoses rose by another 42%.

Those sterile statistics don't capture

Then, in 2011, the Taliban decided to blow up the 1,500-year-old giant Buddha statues in the Bamiyan Valley, declaring them blasphemous idols. The world responded with revulsion and outrage, a kind of global gag reflex. Suddenly the horror of the Taliban was front-page news everywhere.

Why? Because, like it or not, the destruction of cultural artifacts often has a resonance that human tragedy, with its faceless statistics, does not. These historical symbols connect us to the flow of human history; erasing that history leaves us diminished and unmoved from any larger purpose.

In the United States, we don't raise up statues as shrines to be worshipped, or as instruments of oppression. We tend to erect them as markers of our progress, reminders that even flawed men and women can leave the nation less flawed than they found it. Memorials are sedimentary layers of the American bedrock, there to be excavated and reexamined by every succeeding generation.

Joe Biden gets this. His incisive comments on statues during a Q&A with reporters last week were a pretty good reminder of why Biden fits the moment. The presumptive Democratic nominee drew a wise distinction between statues of Confederate heroes who tried to destroy the Union, which should be removed from public plazas, and those of imperfect Americans who tried to improve it.

But the cultural left has a more declarative recasting of our history in mind, one that leaves no room for nuance. There's lately been a movement, for instance, to tear down the Emancipation Memorial in Washington, which depicts Abraham Lincoln and his meeting with the enslaved Douglass delivered one of the greatest

and most nuanced speeches in American history.

If activists can't acknowledge the intellectual perversion in going after statues of American statesmen, then they should at least consider the breathtaking political negligence.

As I wrote a few weeks ago, President Donald Trump now has one narrow (and ugly) path to reelection. His play is to try to persuade white, non-urban Americans that he's the only thing standing between them and a liberal establishment that would punish them just for being white. He wants to conjure an alternate reality where the leftist Taliban is coming to blow up all the cultural symbols of the republic.

Carlson offered a preview of that strategy in his tribute this week, when he vowed to “reverse our nation and even heritage and our culture” from leftists who think America is “horrible.” The preview was good enough that Trump himself promptly tweeted a link.

If you're the Democrats, why on earth would you go out of your way to make this thing worse? Our nation and even heritage and our culture? Why wouldn't an otherwise inspiring leader like Duckworth simply say, “No, I don't believe we need to dishonor Washington or Jefferson or any other American president in order to more fully realize their vision for the country?”

Duckworth didn't survive the conviction even to echo Biden's position on this, then she probably doesn't deserve to be on the ticket, and wouldn't do it much good in any event. The same goes for any other potential running mate.

Indiscriminate attacking the nation's memories is chilling. Letting Trump have a debate about it is just plain dumb.

Matt Bai, a Washington Post contributing columnist, is a journalist, author and screenwriter.

This isn't the promised response to the addiction crisis

the horror on the ground. Places where things seemed to be improving are starting to look like they did at the height of the epidemic just a few years ago. Coroners' facilities are overrun with bodies. Emergency responders are struggling to keep up. Families must navigate the trauma of needless death on top of planning a funeral during a pandemic.

Two factors are driving this crisis. The first is the persistence of dangerous synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, often mixed with other drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has yet to release final data for 2019, but preliminary data show that despite progress in reducing deaths in 2018, they began to inch upward again last year.

The second is the coronavirus, which has devastated the economy and caused a torrent of stress and social isolation that exacerbates substance abuse. Meanwhile, many treatment centers — starved of revenue because of social distancing and confronted with massive new costs for personal protective equipment — have had to close or pare back programs. Many teeter on the cusp of financial collapse.

The administration has taken some useful steps in response to the pandemic. It relaxed regulations to make it easier for patients to access medication that helps stave off withdrawal symptoms for opioid users. But the federal government's intervention came too late. Meanwhile, many mental health and addiction treatment centers received either too little aid from the federal aid package for health care providers or were left out of the package entirely, meaning they're desperately holding out for another round of money from Congress.

So where is the president? He hasn't de-

mandated that Congress do more to shore up treatment centers. He hasn't pushed his administration to draw attention to the surging deaths. Instead, his administration has too often used the spike in deaths as a political prop to argue that coronavirus lockdowns were unjustified. Lockdowns were always inevitable; the question is whether the government was prepared to deal with the fallout. Clearly, this administration was not.

The lack of leadership on the opioid crisis predates the pandemic. Public health experts regularly bemoan the administration's inability to secure any meaningful funding to address the problem. Treatment drugs remain far too difficult for people to access; the White House itself reported in February that almost 400,000 people with drug addiction attempted to get treatment in 2018 (the most recent data available) but failed to do so.

The administration has made much of its effort to curtail the flow of dangerous drugs from outside the country, casting China and drug dealers south of our borders as common political villains. But, given the ongoing threat of fentanyl, that, too, has been a failure.

Perhaps the president's rhetoric on the addiction epidemic was empty all along. Perhaps he hasn't called attention to the rise in overdoses because doing so would force a spotlight on his administration's efforts in court to dismantle the Affordable Care Act — and with it the expanded Medicaid coverage that so many people fighting addiction rely upon.

Or perhaps Trump isn't talking about these “forgotten men and women” because he has forgotten them, too.

Robert Gebelhoff is an assistant editor for The Washington Post's Opinions section.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

Facts before politics on claims that Russia paid bounties

The New York Times

There's a lot still missing from the reports that Russia paid for attacks on American and other coalition forces in Afghanistan. That's why it's critical that emotions and politics be kept at bay until the facts are in.

The charges are explosive, and the public — especially the families of fallen soldiers — deserves some honest answers. The reports cite intelligence findings that a Russian military intelligence unit rewarded fighters linked to the Taliban for targeting American troops, possibly disbursing money through a shadowy Afghan agent with the name of a Russian czar. The findings are said to have been relayed to the White House in a regular intelligence briefing that President Donald Trump says he never saw.

The logical next step for the president should have been to acknowledge the gravity of the intelligence and demand a full report. Instead, Trump dismissed the story in a tweet as “just another made up by Fake News tale that is told only to damage me and the Republican Party,” even as he acknowledged that the information was contained in intelligence reports. Inevitably, the response resulted in speculation that Trump’s “unexplained infinity” Vladimir Putin, most recently displayed in attempts to include the Russian leader in a meeting of the Group of 7.

Robert O'Brien, the national security adviser, said this month that the Justice Department was considering an investigation, but someone may have leaked the information.

The Trump administration's response to this story raises critical questions about whether it is focusing sufficient attention on the plight of American soldiers deployed far from their homeland and on dangerous areas. John Bolton's new book about his time as Trump's national security adviser is only the latest depiction of a president incapable of absorbing policy briefings.

But this issue is not solely a question of Trump's competence. From the various news accounts, others in the White House and across the government appear to have known about the claims, yet no one reacted until the allegations were made public.

Then there's the question of the motives behind the leaks and the solidity of the information. The Wall Street Journal, for one, reported that the National Security Agency, which has been open to electronic espionage — strongly dissented from other intelligence agencies over the strength of the intelligence. For agencies to differ in their assessments of intelligence is not unusual in the business of espionage, which by its nature often deals in circumstantial evidence. What the differences were in this case is not clear, but they provide a countervailing account for Trump's claim that the intelligence did not reach him because it “didn't rise to that level.”

Other questions abound: When did the reported payments begin? Were they payback for American support of Afghan forces against the Taliban in the 1980s, or something else? Were the payments a factor in the deaths of any American or other coalition troops? Was the intelligence tweaked by people seeking to hinder efforts to withdraw American troops?

A spokesman for the Taliban said the reports of any deal with Russian intelligence



British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell, driven by Britain's Prince Andrew, leaves the wedding of a former girlfriend of the prince, Aurelia Cecil, near Salisbury, England, in September 2000. Maxwell, who was accused by many women of helping procure underage sex partners for Jeffrey Epstein, was arrested this month in New Hampshire.

agencies were “baseless.” Russian officials have said they'll respond if and when they hear concrete accusations.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has declined to comment on the specifics of the intelligence reports on bounties, but he noted in a recent interview that Russia's involvement in Afghanistan was nothing new and was regularly raised with Russian officials. “There are many folks using the Taliban or who have used the Taliban over years and years and years as proxy forces,” he said, noting that Iran and Pakistan have also provided aid to the Taliban over the years.

Afghanistan is a forbidding country that has repeatedly confounded invaders. There is no question that the war there has been rife with atrocities, shifting alliances and dubious sources of funds and arms. Trump is right to try to put Americans after more than two decades of inconclusive fighting.

Yet the public anger aroused by the bounties story will not go away by claiming “hoax,” or dismissing the payments as collateral damage of a dirty war. Legislators from both parties are already demanding explanations, and the House Armed Services Committee voted by a large bipartisan majority for an amendment to the defense bill to make any further withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan contingent on an assessment of whether any country has offered incentives for the Taliban to attack American and other coalition troops.

It is unfortunate to connect the issue of possible Russian payoffs with the withdrawal of U.S. troops. The administration ought to provide more information to lawmakers. But whatever those investigations reveal, the war in Afghanistan needs to be brought to an end. Putin's intelligence services shouldn't get a say in what is in the best interests of the United States.

The threat to Trump's withdrawal deal alone should encourage the president to get to the bottom of the issue, and if necessary to confront Russia with the numerous tools of statecraft at his disposal.

Trump's Mount Rushmore speech was on point, ignored Boston Herald

Amid the thunderous July 4 celebrations, tucked between news stories of illegal fireworks in the streets and statue topplings in public squares, there was an other notable weekend event.

President Donald Trump spoke at South Dakota's 2020 Mount Rushmore Fireworks Celebration, delivering perhaps his best speech to date. His words drew a

sharp contrast to the cultural unraveling in which progressive activists and their media allies look to tear down history and engage in a full assault against our institutions and values.

“No nation has done more to advance the human condition than the United States of America,” declared Trump. “And no people have done more to promote human progress than the citizens of our great nation.”

Then the president addressed the shocking images Americans are seeing in the streets almost nightly.

“Angry mobs are trying to tear down statues of our Founders, deface our most sacred memorials, and unleash a wave of violent crime in our cities. Many of these people have no idea why they are doing this, but some know exactly what they are doing.”

Indeed, at this point no connection between the tragic killing of George Floyd and the actions of the mob can be made. Hyper-progressives have hijacked the original protest and fueled a movement based on destroying all symbols of history — whether they be abolitionists or proslavery or even monuments paid for by freed slaves themselves.

In Boston, the Robert Gould Shaw and the 45th Regiment Memorial was damaged by protesters. The monument recognizes the first all-volunteer black regiment of the Union Army. Over 2 million soldiers fought on the Union side during the Civil War. Their Commander in Chief was President Abraham Lincoln, also a target in the revisionist revolution of 2020.

At Mount Rushmore, Trump reestablished the truth about America's 16th president.

“Abraham Lincoln, the savior of our union, was a self-taught country lawyer who grew up in a log cabin on the American frontier. The first Republican president, he rose to high office from obscurity, based on a force and clarity of his anti-slavery convictions ... and he led the country through the darkest hours of American history, giving every ounce of strength that he had to ensure that government of the people, by the people and for the people did not perish from this Earth.”

The president reduced the threat to its core.

“The radical ideology attacking our country advances under the banner of social justice. But in truth, it would demolish both justice and society.”

Trump acknowledged that our education system bears some culpability in creating a culture in which young people are taught that America is a force for evil, from front to back.

“We must demand that our children are taught to resist the temptation to mirror himself in trivial matters while the country needs him. We hope this is his moment. We shall see.

Now, it is up to Trump to rise to a great cause and resist the temptation to mirror himself in trivial matters while the country needs him. We hope this is his moment. We shall see.

Maxwell owes it to Epstein's victims to be forthright

Miami Herald

Ghislaine Maxwell finally has been arrested. We've all been waiting for this shoe to drop.

The onetime girlfriend and alleged accomplice of late Palm Beach millionaire Jeffrey Epstein, Maxwell was arrested July 2 with six criminal counts including she aided Epstein in his sexual abuse of teenage girls.

New York prosecutors should keep digging in South Florida and other parts of Epstein's far-flung empire of perversion. We are convinced that he couldn't have pulled it off without many others enabling his depravity, and no one was closer to him than Maxwell.

The same prosecutors — and Epstein victims who spoke exclusively to Miami Herald reporter Julie Brown for the paper's award-winning “Perversion of Justice” investigation — should make sure they nab just Epstein's girlfriend. Between 1994 and 1997, they say she was a fixer, facilitator and participant in the scheme Epstein ran to keep Palm Beach high school girls visiting his home with the promise of \$200 for a massage, a ruse to sexually abuse them.

Maxwell's role in the sex abuse of girls housed this enterprise, and Maxwell was his accomplice, at times taking part in the sexual abuse of the girls she helped recruit, prosecutors alleged when they unsealed the indictment and arrested her in New Hampshire. They say she “normalized” the abuse by helping recruit girls at case during sex acts. If this is proved in court, she should get hard time.

The door into Epstein's dark world that closed when he was found dead in a New York jail last year while awaiting trial for new charges of trafficking girls could provide an open window for others. Prosecutors should make sure they have the knowledge of the extent of Epstein's human trafficking.

Maxwell knows names, times and places. If the feds squeeze her in exchange for some leniency, she might just talk about how, as prosecutors suspect, Epstein loaned out his mansion to other powerful men around in private jets. They are culpable, too, and should receive harsh punishment as well, if guilty.

Already the association with Epstein, who used money and influence to move in heady social circles, including the current president, has embarrassed universities that accepted his donations, along with politicians, prominent attorneys and CEOs.

British socialite Maxwell started dating Epstein in the '90s and opened doors to people of influence for him. Britain's Prince Andrew, a former president of the Prince is also embroiled in the sex scandal, with one victim alleging she had sex with him at Epstein's request.

Epstein's victims still are navigating a winding road to restitution and justice. With Maxwell under arrest, prosecutors should make sure that whatever she knows gets the victims closer to that goal.

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Frazz



Dilbert



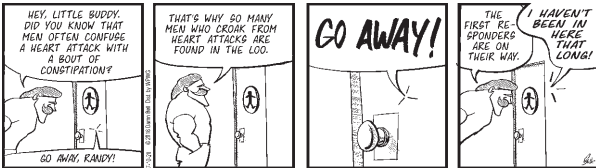
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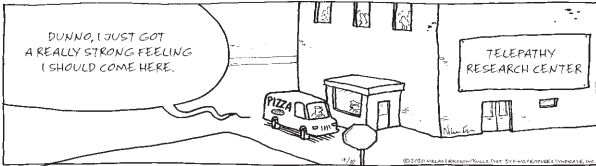
Non Sequitur



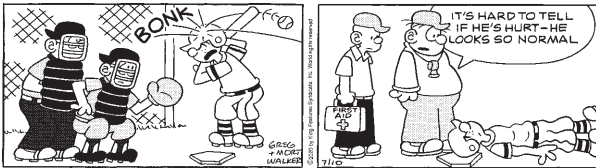
Candorville



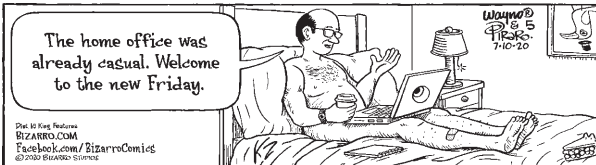
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18												
26	27	28										
31												
34												
37												
45	46	47										
50												
53												

ACROSS

- 1 — chi
- 4 Sports figure?
- 8 High cards
- 12 Patient's need, briefly
- 13 Spelling or Amos
- 14 Central point
- 15 "I'm stumped!"
- 17 Singer Feliciano
- 18 Caron of "Gigi"
- 19 "Cook-a-doodle-!"
- 21 Rm. coolers
- 22 "Sure thing!"
- 26 Molts
- 29 Sneaky chuckle
- 30 Raw mineral
- 31 Millinery
- 32 Help
- 33 Autograph
- 34 PC key
- 35 SSW opposite
- 36 Farm towers
- 37 "I give up!"
- 39 Skeddaddle
- 40 Kitchen gadget brand
- 41 Delphi figure
- 45 Speed
- 48 "I'll go second"
- 50 Sicilian resort
- 51 Deco artist
- 52 Nosh
- 53 Campus VIP
- 54 Harriet Beecher Stowe novel

DOWN

- 1 Texter's sign-off
- 2 Skin soother
- 3 Hosp. areas
- 4 Unemotional types
- 5 Carries
- 6 Branch
- 7 Like vintage
- 8 Pear variety
- 9 Bill's partner
- 10 Mag. staff
- 11 Observe
- 16 Iris relatives, for short
- 20 Reaction to fireworks
- 23 See the
- 24 Thus
- 25 Till bills
- 26 Horse-drawn carriage
- 27 Head light?
- 28 Words to Brutus
- 29 Hasten
- 32 Ticked off
- 33 Egyptian peninsula
- 35 Veto
- 36 Rode the waves
- 38 Female
- 39 Travel prairie
- 42 Manitoba tribe
- 43 Aspiring atty.'s exam
- 44 Jazzy James
- 45 Last letter in London
- 46 Single
- 47 Out — limb
- 49 Bobby of hockey

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	A	A	R	K	A	L	E	D	A	M	
A	C	M	E	I	D	O	L	A	L	E	
D	R	E	A	M	L	A	N	D	Y	A	M
S	E	N	T	I	N	E	D	D	I	E	
			A	X	F	U	R	O	R		
C	A	D	S	T	A	D	W	E	A	K	
H	E	R	O	V	O	A	P	O			
O	R	E	O	T	O	N	A	M	E	S	
			A	R	M	O	R	A	L		
S	I	M	B	A	G	I	A	N	T	S	
T	A	J	P	I	P	E	D	R	E	A	M
A	G	O	L	O	A	N	M	I	R	O	
B	O	B	E	N	Y	A	S	L	O	G	

7-10

CRYPTOQUIP

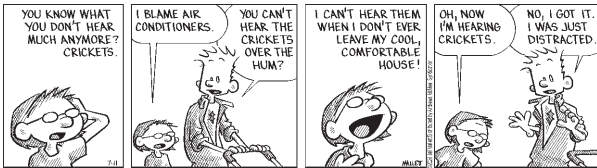
A E M C G E V L J A L P C Z R E Z X
G J G J A O W Q R N K E N K E F W N K W
W T N Q E H Q X C Z E Q D E O C V C N D N H

NEVP: FHGEV MHJQXR.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THAT RECORD-SPINNING EMCEE WILL ONLY ACCEPT TWILIGHT-TIME JOBS. HE MUST BE A DUSK JOCKEY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals K

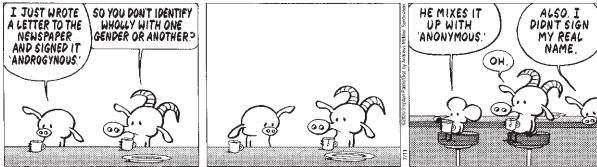
Frazz



Dilbert



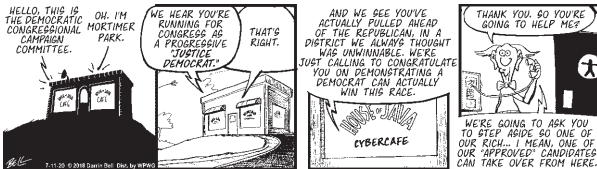
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



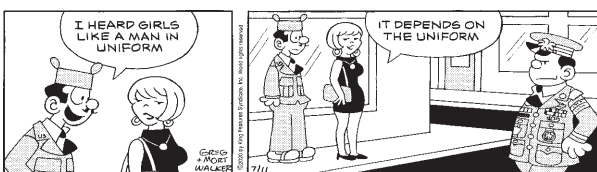
Candorville



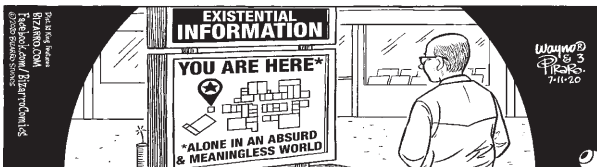
Carpe Diem



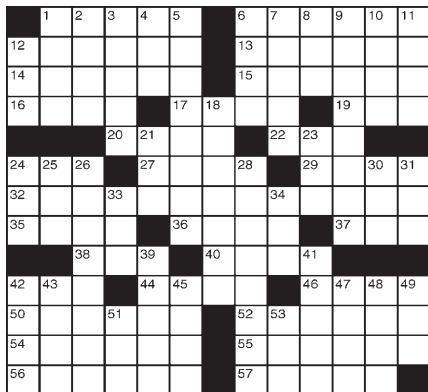
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Muslim woman's garment
- 2 Snake-haired woman of myth
- 3 Beat to the finish line
- 15 Stimulate
- 16 Faucet problem
- 17 Corn syrup brand
- 19 Naval letters
- 20 Phone voice
- 22 Hit hard
- 24 911 responder
- 27 It may get in the whey
- 29 Dalmatian feature
- 32 Four-time Super Bowl quarterback and Steeler great
- 35 "Zounds!"
- 36 Go yachting
- 37 Madrid Mrs.
- 38 '60s war zone
- 40 Eye part
- 42 Faux —
- 44 Tennis champ Murray
- 46 Intends
- 50 Syrian city
- 52 "Friday Night Lights" actress Britton
- 54 Kathmandu native

DOWN

- 55 Familiar adage
- 56 Leash
- 57 Dottie and Mae daughter
- 24 Tours season
- 25 "Family Guy" daughter
- 26 Nave crosser
- 28 Milk producer
- 30 Rowing tool
- 31 Delta's one-time rival
- 33 Vitamin stat
- 34 Roman 551
- 39 Syrup flavor
- 41 Smoothies, as wood
- 42 Huff and puff
- 43 Out of the storm
- 45 Dark film genre
- 47 "Meet Me — Louis"
- 48 Farrow and Hamm
- 49 Stitch
- 51 Oom —
- 53 Flamenco cry

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-11

CRYPTOQUIP

TAOB GMHAB PNGXNIX UODD O
UUMGMIOD TAN ODPN AOLLXIP
BN QX O UNIBNYBMNIMPB?

NCCXIVXY QXIVXY.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MAGICAL PUMPKINS AND CUCUMBERS THAT HAVE THE EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY TO TALK: VOCAL GOURDS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals M

SCOREBOARD/SOCCER/AUTO RACING

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.net

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Placed LHP Jose Quijada and OF Brandon Marsh on the 10-day IL. Claimed RHP Jacob Rhamé off waivers from the Mets.
NEW YORK YANKEES — Placed RHP Luis Cessa and 2B O'Leary on the 10-day IL.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Signed SS Austin Martin and RHP Nick Frasso to minor league contracts.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Placed RHP Edwin Encarnación and OF Zach Reks on the 10-day IL.
MIAMI MARLINS — Placed C Will Barfield on the 10-day IL.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Signed OF Garrett Mitchell to a minor league contract.

FOOTBALL
National Football League
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed QB Cam Newton to a four-year contract.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Signed WR Quincey Williams to a four-year contract.
DETROIT LIONS — Signed WR Quincey Williams to a four-year contract. Signed RB Jason Hurnley to a four-year deal.

Major League Soccer
LOS ANGELES FC — Signed D Tony Leon, D Christian Torres and F Erik Eriksen.

Pro soccer

WNBL Challenge Cup

At Herriman Utah
Sunday, July 5
North Carolina 1, Chicago 0
Portland 1, Washington 1
Wednesday, July 8
Utah 0, OL Reign 1
Sky Blue 2, Houston 0
Sunday, July 12
Washington vs. Houston
Chicago vs. Utah
Monday, July 13
OL Reign vs. Portland
Sky Blue vs. North Carolina
Quarterfinals
Friday, July 17
Teams TBD
Saturday, July 18
Teams TBD
Semifinals
Quarterfinal winners
Championship
Sunday, July 26
Semifinal winners

Auto racing

Quaker State Sanitizer 400 Lineup

Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series
Sunday
At Kentucky Speedway
Sprint
Lap length: 1.50 miles
(Car number in parentheses)
1. (3) Kevin Busch, Chevrolet.
2. (22) Joey Logano, Ford.
3. (4) Kevin Harvick, Ford.
4. (10) Aric Almirola, Ford.
5. (88) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet.
6. (2) Brad Keselowski, Ford.
7. (1) Kurt Busch, Chevrolet.
8. (33) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet.
9. (19) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota.
10. (21) Matt DiBenedetto, Ford.
11. (12) Ryan Blaney, Ford.
12. (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota.
13. (17) Chris Buescher, Ford.
14. (47) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet.
15. (14) Clint Bowyer, Ford.
16. (20) Erik Jones, Toyota.
17. (8) Tyler Reddick, Chevrolet.
18. (43) Bubba Wallace, Chevrolet.
19. (3) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet.
20. (49) Jimmy Johnson, Chevrolet.
21. (24) William Byron, Chevrolet.
22. (6) H. Nemecek, Ford.
23. (6) Ryan Newman, Ford.
24. (77) Rick Balford, Chevrolet.
25. (33) Garrett Smithley, Chevrolet.
26. (77) Rick Balford, Chevrolet.
27. (22) Corey LaJoie, Ford.
28. (60) Juan Houff, Chevrolet.
29. (1) Cole Custer, Ford.
30. (30) Michael McDowell, Ford.
31. (14) Christopher Bell, Toyota.
32. (37) Ryan Preece, Chevrolet.
33. (17) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet.
34. (14) Christopher Bell, Toyota.
35. (51) Joey Gase, Ford.
36. (14) Christopher Bell, Toyota.
37. (96) Dale Suarez, Toyota.
38. (66) Timmy Hill, Toyota.

MLS reopens with moment of silence

Orlando City holds off Inter Miami in first match since March

By MARK LONG
Associated Press

KISSIMMEE, Fla. — Nani called it beautiful and emotional.

He wasn't talking about either goal he played a part in during Orlando City's 2-1 victory over Inter Miami on Wednesday night.

Nearly 200 players took the field for an 8-minute, 46-second moment of silence to protest racial injustice before Major League Soccer's return to action. Players wore black T-shirts, black gloves and black facemasks emblazoned with Black Lives Matter. The shirts had varying slogans that included Black And Proud, Silence Is Violence and Black All The Time.

The players walked toward midfield, raised their right arms one at a time and held the pose so long that some could be seen stretching fatigued muscles afterward.

It was a poignant moment that put two of the nation's most prominent changes over the last four months — masks and movements — at the forefront of the sport's return.

"I felt for a couple of minutes," Nani said shortly

after scoring the go-ahead goal in the seventh minute of stoppage time. "We all want to change the world. We want a better world — no differences, no discrimination. ... Everyone in the world should stop for a couple of minutes and think about our children and teach them how to be a better person and create a better world."

The group setting the tone was formerly called the Black Players Coalition of MLS but changed its name this week to Black Players for Change. Originally announced on June 15, the group started in the wake of George Floyd's death with the hope of combating systemic racism both in soccer and the players' communities. The league and the players' union endorsed the organization.

Several other players from Orlando City and Inter Miami took a knee near midfield during the demonstration.

The two in-state teams delivered their own moment of silence by taking a knee along with the referee and the line judges just before the opening kick.

The national anthem was not played before or after the demonstration. MLS previously said it would not be played because no fans were in attendance.



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Orlando City players, left, raise their fists in the air in solidarity with other MLS teams before the start of Wednesday's match against Inter Miami FC in Kissimmee, Fla. The teams held an 8-minute, 46-second moment of silence in solidarity to combat systemic racism in soccer and in their communities.

Scoreboard

MLS is Back tournament

At Orlando, Fla.									
Group A — Eastern Conference									
	W	T	GF	GA	Pts		W	T	GF
Orlando City	1	0	2	1	3	Minnesota United	0	0	0
Inter Miami	0	1	1	2	0	Nashville	0	0	0
New England	0	0	0	0	0	Philadelphia	0	0	0
Group B — Western Conference									
	W	T	GF	GA	Pts		W	T	GF
San Jose	0	0	0	0	0	Seattle	0	0	0
Vancouver	0	0	0	0	0	D.C. United	0	0	0
Group C — Eastern Conference									
	W	T	GF	GA	Pts		W	T	GF
Montreal	0	0	0	0	0	Toronto	0	0	0
Group D — Western Conference									
	W	T	GF	GA	Pts		W	T	GF
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	Real Salt Lake	0	0	0
Spokane	0	0	0	0	0	Group E — Eastern Conference			
	W	T	GF	GA	Pts		W	T	GF
Atlanta United	0	0	0	0	0	Columbus	0	0	0
FC Cincinnati	0	0	0	0	0	New York Red Bulls	0	0	0
Group F — Western Conference									
	W	T	GF	GA	Pts		W	T	GF
Houston	0	0	0	0	0	LA Galaxy	0	0	0
Los Angeles FC	0	0	0	0	0	Portland	0	0	0

Wednesday, July 8
Orlando City 2, Inter Miami 1
Nashville SC vs. Chicago Fire, ppd.
Thursday, July 9
New York City FC vs. Philadelphia
Montreal vs. New England
Friday, July 10
Seattle vs. San Jose
Saturday, July 11
Atlanta vs. New York
Cincinnati vs. Columbus
Sunday, July 12
Toronto vs. D.C. United
Sporting KC vs. Minnesota United
Real Salt Lake vs. Colorado
Monday, July 13
Los Angeles FC vs. Houston
LA Galaxy vs. Portland
Tuesday, July 14
Inter Miami vs. Chicago
Philadelphia vs. Nashville
Orlando City vs. New York City FC
Wednesday, July 15
Montreal vs. Toronto
Vancouver vs. San Jose
Thursday, July 16
Atlanta vs. Cincinnati
D.C. United vs. New England
Columbus vs. New York
Friday, July 17
Sporting KC vs. Colorado
Real Salt Lake vs. Minnesota United
Saturday, July 18
Portland vs. Houston
Los Angeles FC vs. LA Galaxy
Sunday, July 19
New York FC vs. Chicago
Philadelphia vs. Inter Miami
Monday, July 20
Orlando City vs. Nashville
Seattle vs. Vancouver
Tuesday, July 21
Toronto FC vs. New England
Atlanta vs. Columbus
Montreal vs. D.C. United
Wednesday, July 22
Real Salt Lake vs. Sporting KC
Cincinnati vs. New York
Colorado vs. Minnesota United
Thursday, July 23
LA Galaxy vs. Houston
Los Angeles FC vs. Portland

NASCAR moving Watkins Glen race to Daytona

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — NASCAR will move its August road course race from Watkins Glen in upstate New York because of state health restrictions, and the event will shift instead to the road course at Daytona International Speedway.

The move means the Cup Series will make its debut on Daytona's road course, which is used by the IMSA sports car series and incorporates part of the famed 2.5-mile oval. The race on Aug. 16 was necessary to move from Watkins Glen because NASCAR cannot meet New York's quarantine requirements for out-of-state visitors.

"This is an unprecedented time in the his-

tory of our nation and Watkins Glen International," race track President Michael Printup said. "The dynamic situation we are all confronting is impacting our daily lives and activities in unimaginable ways."

NASCAR will return to Daytona two weeks later as scheduled for the regular-season finale on the oval. The Aug. 29 event is unchanged from the original 2020 schedule that has been patched back together following a 10-week shutdown because of the coronavirus pandemic.

NASCAR said Wednesday it will determine if fans are allowed at Cup races on a market-by-market basis, in accordance with local and state guidelines.

NASCAR is expected to run its Nov. 8 season finale as scheduled, barring changes to

health protocols during the 10-week playoff series.

The revisions announced Wednesday cover six Cup races at three tracks. Michigan International Speedway will host a doubleheader before NASCAR's debut on the Daytona road course. After that race, Dover International Speedway will host a doubleheader, and the playoff field will be finalized the next week at Daytona.

NASCAR was not scheduled to compete on the road course at Daytona until next February in the exhibition Busch Clash to kick off the season.

But many of the ideas for next year's schedule have been forced into the present as NASCAR attempts to complete its 38-race schedule.

GOLF/SOCCER

2 courses in 1?

Muirfield Village is gearing up for the first doubleheader on the PGA Tour in 63 years

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

Muirfield Village will look the same to those watching at home, minus the grandstands and thousands of spectators spread across the course Jack Nicklaus built.

The challenge for the PGA Tour is to make it feel different to the players who will be in Dublin, Ohio, the next two weeks.

For the first time in 63 years, two PGA Tour events are being held on the same golf course in consecutive weeks. First up is the Workday Charity Open, a tournament that didn't even exist six weeks ago until the John Deere Classic chose to cancel this year without fans and the tour plugged the gap in the schedule with a big assist from San Francisco-based Workday.

Then it's onto the Memorial. It's one thing to keep one of the elite courses on the PGA Tour from getting chewed up from 157 players this week and the 120-man field next week. It's another to present a different test to two tournaments meant to be entirely different.

The plan is for one to be a little more gentle, the other to be a little tougher.

"I think this week we're going to have to be a little bit cautious with the golf course, certainly out of respect to Mr. Nicklaus and the Memorial Tournament being next week," said Gary Young, the PGA Tour rules official overseeing the Workday Charity Open.

The rough that frames the generous fairways is to be topped off at 3½ inches, and then thicker and higher for the Memorial. The greens are to be running around 11 on the Stimpmeter this week before increasing to 13 and beyond for the Memorial, just the way Nicklaus likes it.

Tees will be moved around, especially on the par 3s, to keep the turf from being divot-filled. Slower greens should allow officials to use pin positions closer to some of the ridges, which would be impossible with faster green speeds.

One possibility is a front right pin position on the par-3 fourth, with a bunker to the right and a green that moves left.

Young also anticipates the tee being moved forward on the 14th hole — just as it was for one session in the 2013 Presidents Cup — allowing players to try to drive the green with water to the right, which also comes into play with anything left because the green slopes toward the water.

"I just think it's going to give us a chance to really highlight the golf course being played in two different ways," Young said.

Memorial has one of the strongest fields each year, largely out of respect for Nicklaus, an affinity for Muirfield Village and its place on the calendar. In nonpandemic years, the Memorial is two weeks before the U.S. Open.

The Workday Charity Open, a one-time event with the John Deere returning in 2021, didn't do too badly. The field features five of the top 10 in the world, with Jon Rahm at No. 2 and getting another chance to replace Rory McIlroy (not playing) atop the world ranking. Also playing is Brooks Koepka and Justin Thomas, Patrick Cantlay and Patrick Reed.

Cantlay is the defending champion at Muirfield Village, just not this tournament.

"The more weeks we can play at Muirfield Village, I'm in," Cantlay said. "I like the golf course, so we can play there every week as far as I'm concerned."

The last time the PGA Tour had back-to-back tournaments on the same golf course was in 1957, five years before Nicklaus turned pro. The All American Open and the World Championship of Golf was played at Tam O'Shanter in Illinois. That was the case for 10 straight years, while there was another instance of consecutive events at Preston Hollow in Dallas, a one-time deal to celebrate the centennial of Dallas.

More recently, Pinehurst No. 2 had tournaments in consecutive weeks in 2014, and not just any tournament. The U.S. Open was held one week, and the U.S. Women's Open was held the following week. That was one of the great performances by the USA, which used all its agronomic tools to set the tees and get the turf just the right firmness so the men and women experienced the same test.



RICK BOWMER/AP

North Carolina Courage defender Abby Erceg, center, controls the ball as Portland Thorns forward Morgan Weaver, left, defends during a NWSL Challenge Cup soccer match Saturday in Herriman, Utah. Coach Paul Riley calls defender Abby Erceg the bedrock of the Courage.

New Zealander Erceg keeps Courage's backline steady

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Coach Paul Riley calls defender Abby Erceg the bedrock of the North Carolina Courage.

A New Zealand native, Erceg is captain of the two-time National Women's Soccer League defending champions. Re-signed in March, she holds down a defense that allowed a league-low 23 goals last season.

"She reminds me of Virgil van Dijk almost, for Liverpool, she has that kind of charisma on the team. If she asked you to do something, you're gonna do it, no questions asked because Abby's asked you to do it," said Riley, who incidentally is from Liverpool.

Unsurprisingly, North Carolina leads the field at the NWSL's Challenge Cup, the league's restart in Utah after the coronavirus shut down sports in March.

The Courage are stacked with talent, including U.S. national team players Crystal Dunn and Samewis, but it's Erceg who steadies the squad from the backline.

She also provided a bit of offense last weekend when the Courage defeated the Chicago Red Stars. Erceg's header for a goal in the 81st minute gave North Carolina a 1-0 victory to preserve the team's three-game winning streak.

"I mean, I've had some good captains in my years of coaching but she's really, really top level," Riley said. "I would say she's obviously massive component for us and a huge influence on the club's culture in what she's been able to do. She's the bedrock with the whole club for me."

Overall, Erceg is pleased with how the Courage have fared at the Challenge Cup. They've scored



KARL B. DEBLAKER/AP

Abby Erceg, a New Zealand native, is captain of the Courage, the two-time defending NWSL champions.

five goals and allowed just one, and are in position to secure the top seed heading into the knock-out round.

"Things like finishing and relationships built between the players will come. That only comes with game time," she said. "From from game one to game two, there was definitely an improvement."

Erceg and the Courage are settling into life in the "bubble" in Utah, where they've been sequestered in facilities owned by Utah Royals and Real Salt Lake owner Del Loy Hansen. The group stage games are being played without fans at Zions Bank Stadium in Herriman.

"You know, at first it was tough being sort of restricted. You are literally going to training and straight back, not leaving the hotel. But at this point that's what we have to do to play, and if that's what we have to do, then we're going to do it," she said.

Erceg played professionally in Australia and Germany before being loaned to the Chicago Red Stars in 2013. She was traded to the Western New York Flash in 2015 and moved to North Carolina when the team was sold and became the Courage in 2017.

The 30-year-old is also a veteran of New Zealand's national team and has represented the Ferns at four World Cups. She is the first player for the country, male or female, to reach 100 international appearances.

She's thrilled that FIFA awarded the 2023 Women's World Cup to the joint bid by Australia and her home country.

"We needed something like this to bring attention to the sport in New Zealand. You know, it's not our main sport and to get such a big event is going to be huge for the game," she said. "Whether or not I can play in that? We'll see how the body holds up."

She couldn't go home to visit her family in New Zealand over the holidays because of the travel restriction for her green card application. Then she went into quarantine because of COVID-19. She posted workout videos on social media to help pass the time.

"I've got my family and they watch the games when they can. And, you know, you've got some diehard fans that stay up and watch the games, but the time difference sometimes can be a little bit difficult," she said. "Obviously with most of our national team overseas playing, and especially with the couple of girls in the NWSL, we would like a bigger fan base. We would like more attention on the players here. But like I said, it's not the main sport. And so having the World Cup is just going to help with that."



JAY PRETE/AP

The challenge for the PGA Tour is to make Muirfield Village Golf Club to feel different to the players who will be in Dublin, Ohio, two weeks in a row.

NBA/WNBA

Pandemic, protests and now, a playoff push

Blazers guard Lillard stayed busy when the NBA shut down, but says he's fit and ready for league's return

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Grieving the death of a cousin and missing his mother, Damian Lillard struggled emotionally after the NBA shut down because of the coronavirus.

But he also found inspiration in his activism for Black Lives Matter and his flourishing music career.

The Trail Blazers were just out of the playoff picture, sitting ninth in the Western Conference standings on March 11 when the league was shuttered. The team will be among 22 that will depart next week for Orlando as part of the restart.

Portland will have eight games to secure a playoff berth, starting on July 31 with Memphis.

"We don't have time to ease our way in, we don't have time to try and figure stuff out, we've got to come in assertive and aggressive and just go after it," he said. "And if we fail, we fail, but we did at least come out there with that mentality of we don't have time to kind of ease into it."

Lillard welcomes the chance to resume playing.

He admittedly had no idea how serious the virus was when the league closed down. He went to Phoenix with his family, intent on finding a gym to stay in shape during the layoff. But the NBA said players couldn't go to third-



Trail Blazers point guard Damian Lillard marches alongside protesters toward downtown Portland on the Morrison Bridge, on June 4. Lillard also released a rap, "Blacklist," during the pandemic.

BROOKE HERBERT, THE OREGONIAN/AP

party facilities or trainers because of health concerns.

While grateful that he had his fiancée and son with him, Lillard essentially sheltered in place once he got back to Portland. He didn't see his mom for more than a month. And then his cousin and personal chef, Brandon Johnson, suddenly passed away.

"It was tough, man. I think that was when I got to the point where I was like, if I was wak-

ing up and it wasn't a sunny day, it was messing with my mood. It was just tough," Lillard said. "I got through it just from having a lot of my family around. That really helped. So I can see why somebody who is with one person or by themselves would have a really hard time. Definitely a tough few months."

Always diligent about his fitness, Lillard found a way to train. Then George Floyd died in Min-

neapolis, touching off nationwide protests over police brutality. Lillard marched in Portland.

He also released a powerful rap "Blacklist," under his music persona, Dame D.O.L.L.A.

"I grew up with Oscar Grant, who was killed at a BART station while handcuffed face down. I've been racially profiled by cops, before I was in the NBA. So I have thoughts and feelings about this stuff. That's what Blacklist was

about," he said.

Lillard was averaging 29.9 points and 7.8 assists this season. In January he scored 61 points in a game against the Warriors and he had seven games with 40 or more points.

He'll be among those sequestered at Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex for games, but the resumption of the season comes as cases of COVID-19 are spiking in Florida. Some players have opted out, including Portland's Trevor Ariza and Caleb Swanigan.

But Portland will see the return of big men Jusuf Nurkic, now recovered from a broken leg last season, and Zach Collins, who was sidelined with a shoulder injury.

"They've been very diligent about taking care of themselves, both in the weight room and on the court, and treatment. So I've been very impressed with all of their conditioning," Blazers coach Terry Stotts said.

The NBA announced this week that nine additional players had tested positive for the virus, bringing the total of league players who have contracted it to 25.

"I feel like it's still a possibility for something to spread within that bubble, just with there been so many people and so many different things that we've got to follow to be safe, even though we're not exposed to the public," Lillard said.

Source: Leonard's arrival at Disney will be delayed

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

A person with knowledge of the situation says that Kawhi Leonard did not accompany the Los Angeles Clippers on their flight to Central Florida on Wednesday night for the restart of the NBA season.

Leonard's absence was excused and he

is expected to join the team at the Disney complex near Orlando sometime in the next few days, said the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team did not publicly disclose the matter.

Yahoo Sports first reported that Leonard was not on the flight to the Orlando area.

The Clippers are scheduled to spend

Thursday and part of Friday satisfying quarantine requirements, and are expected to practice for the first time at Disney on Friday night.

They will resume game play on July 30, matching up with the Los Angeles Lakers in the second game of a re-opening night doubleheader.

Leonard is averaging a team-best 26.9

points this season for the Clippers, who are currently second in the Western Conference behind only the Lakers. He is the reigning NBA Finals MVP, after helping Toronto win the title last season.

The Clippers are 38-13 when Leonard plays, 6-7 when he doesn't. They're also 17-3 in games where he scores at least 30 points this season.

Delle Donne, Charles await medical review

Associated Press

NEW YORK — WNBA MVP Elena Delle Donne is waiting to have her case heard by the league's independent panel of doctors to see if she'll be medically excused for the season, the Washington Mystics said Wednesday.

The Mystics star, who was the league's Most Valuable Player last year, has battled Lyme Disease since 2008 and would potentially be at a higher risk for serious illness if she contracted the new coronavirus.

Delle Donne tweeted Wednesday night that she was following protocol and waiting for the results from the panel.

"Missing my teammates but health and safety are the priority," she said.

Her new Washington teammate Tina Charles is also waiting for a decision from the panel. Neither player is in Florida with the team.

Charles was traded to the Mystics from the New York Liberty in the offseason. If Delle Donne and Charles miss the season, the Mystics would be down

to 10 players on the roster.

The panel of physicians decides whether a player would be medically excused and receive full salary for the upcoming season, which is scheduled to start at the end of the month at IMG Academy in Florida. Players can still opt out and skip the season if the panel does not grant them a medical waiver. They will not get paid if they opt out.

Delle Donne and Charles are two of a handful of cases that are waiting to hear from the league's independent panel of doctors.

If the two players' do have their cases approved by the panel, the Mystics won't be able to sign replacements as they would be over the salary cap.

Even if they could sign a player, it wouldn't be as easy as previous seasons. Any player that Washington or any other team would sign would have to get to Florida and be quarantined off campus for three days and then four additional days on campus. The player would be tested for COVID-19 each of those days. The Mystics arrived on Monday and training camp is slated to begin Friday.



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Washington Mystics forward Elena Delle Donne, center, is waiting to have her case heard by the league's independent panel of doctors to see if she'll be medically excused for the season. She has been battling Lyme Disease since 2008.

COLLEGES/NFL

Ivy league suspends fall sports

Elite academic conference impacted by coronavirus pandemic

By DOUG FEINBERG
AND JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

The Ivy League on Wednesday became the first Division I conference to suspend all fall sports, including football, leaving open the possibility of moving some seasons to the spring if the coronavirus pandemic is better controlled by then.

"We simply do not believe we can create and maintain an environment for intercollegiate athletic competition that meets our requirements for safety and acceptable levels of risk," the Ivy League Council of Presidents said in a statement.

"We are entrusted to create and maintain an educational environment that is guided by health and safety considerations. There can be no greater responsibility — and that is the basis for this difficult decision."

Though the coalition of eight academically elite schools does not grant athletic scholarships or compete for an NCAA football championship, the move could have ripple effects throughout the big business of college sports.

It was the Ivy League's March 10 decision to scale postseason play that preceded a cascade of cancellations. All major college and professional sports were halted within days.

Football players in the Power Five conferences have already begun workouts for a season that



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Harvard players, students and fans celebrate their 45-27 win over Yale on Nov. 17, 2018 at Fenway Park in Boston.

starts on Aug. 29, even as their schools weigh whether to open their campuses to students or continue classes remotely. More than a dozen prominent programs from Clemson to LSU to Oklahoma have reported positive tests among their athletes in the few weeks since voluntary workouts began. Some have temporarily shut down the workouts, including Ohio State and North Carolina on Wednesday alone.

Dr. Chris Kratochvil, the chair of the Big Ten's infectious disease task force, said there is no "hard deadline" for a decision on sports.

"Of course, we watch everything that's going on," said Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlsby, whose league has schools in five

states from West Virginia to Iowa and Texas. "But we're going to go forward and do our own evaluation, and so far our scientists and medical people are telling us that we should stay the course, and learn as we go and move slowly and evaluate as we go."

The Ivy League announcement affects not just football but soccer, field hockey, volleyball and cross country, as well as the fall portion of winter sports like basketball. Wednesday's decision means Harvard and Yale will not play football in 2020, interrupting a rivalry known as The Game for the first time since the two World Wars.

"This news is disappointing for all of us," Harvard athletic direc-

tor Erin McDermott said. "While the Fall 2020 experience will be unlike any other, I am confident that we will find positive opportunities in this challenging time. We will keep moving forward through this painful but temporary experience, together."

The league said it has not yet determined whether some seasons can be moved to the spring. But the conference noted that its schools already are limiting gatherings, visitors and travel for students and staff.

"As athletics is expected to operate consistent with campus policies, it will not be possible for Ivy League teams to participate in intercollegiate athletics competition prior to the end of the fall semester," the league said.

Ivy League schools are spread across seven Northeastern states that, as of mid-July, have seen some success at mitigating the spread of COVID-19. But most of those states still ban large gatherings, under the Massachusetts reopening plan, Harvard would not be allowed to have fans in the stands until a vaccine is developed.

Harvard has already announced that all classes for both semesters will be held virtually, dorms will be open only to freshmen and seniors. Yale said it would limit its dorms to 60% capacity and said most classes would be conducted remotely. Princeton will also do most of its teaching online, with dorms at half capacity.



TONY AVELAR/AP

San Francisco 49ers postseason breakout running back Raheem Mostert requested a trade from the team after not being able to renegotiate his contract. Agent Brett Tessler made the request public on Wednesday.

Mostert asks 49ers for trade

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

San Francisco 49ers postseason breakout star Raheem Mostert requested a trade from the team after being unable to renegotiate his contract.

Agent Brett Tessler made the request public on Wednesday after talks with the 49ers failed to lead to a new deal to replace the three-year contract Mostert signed in 2019 when he was still mostly a special teams standout.

"After months of unproductive talks with the 49ers about fairly adjusting Raheem Mostert's contract (which paid him for special teams) we have requested a trade," Tessler wrote on Twitter. "Disappointing that it would come to this for a guy who led all NFL RBs in YPC & helped lead them to the Super Bowl."

Mostert has a base salary of \$2,575,000 this season and \$2,875,000 next season as part of the deal he signed with the 49ers last year. Fellow running back Tevin Coleman is set to be paid \$4.55 million this season despite having more than six carries just once in the final five regular-season games and three playoff appearances after Mostert emerged as the team's top back.

The 49ers already traded running back Matt Breida to Miami earlier this offseason, leaving Mostert, Coleman, Jerick McKinnon and Jeff Wilson as the veteran halfbacks on the roster. McKinnon has missed the past two seasons with knee injuries.

After being cut by six teams and carrying the ball only eight times during his first three seasons in the NFL, Mostert was a key part of San Francisco's NFC championship in his fifth year in 2019.

He led the 49ers in rushing with 772 yards and ranked second in the NFL to Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson by averaging 5.64 yards per carry.

Stanford eliminates 11 athletic programs

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

Stanford was already facing some difficult financial choices as it tried to support one of the nation's largest athletics departments.

The coronavirus pandemic forced a dramatic and painful decision: Faced with a nearly \$25 million deficit next year, Stanford became the first known Power Five school to eliminate athletic programs because of the pandemic, announcing Wednesday that 11 of its 36 varsity sports will be shuttered next year.

The school will discontinue men's and women's fencing, field hockey, lightweight rowing, men's rowing, coed and women's sailing, squash, synchronized swimming, men's volleyball and wrestling after the 2020-21 academic year. Stanford also is eliminating 20 support staff positions.

"As you can imagine, this has been a heart-breaking day for all of us, especially with those student-athletes and coaches involved," athletic director Bernard Muir said. "We came to this decision only after exhausting all other viable alternatives. It recently became painfully clear we would not remain financially stable and support 36 varsity sports at a nationally competitive level, which is what we desire."

The pandemic shut down sports in March, including the Stanford revenue-generating NCAA basketball tournaments. With no March Madness, the NCAA was short \$375

million scheduled to be distributed to its member schools, which are already facing questions about enrollment levels and tuition shortfalls.

Fall sports such as football are still in question for some schools; the Ivy League, hours after Stanford's announcement, called off all fall sports. But some tough choices have already been made.

At least 171 sports programs from four-year schools have been cut since the pandemic began in the United States, according to research by The Associated Press. Of those disbanded teams, 51 are from Division I schools. One conference in Division II and one in Division III suspended fall sports competitions and at least 18 small colleges across Division III and the NAIA won't compete this fall.

Stanford's decision to drop sports is likely the first of many by Power Five schools across the country.

"If it can happen at Stanford, it can happen anywhere," Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby said. "They're the broadest, most successful program in the history of college athletics and so to see them drop a third of their program is a shocking thing."

Stanford originally projected a deficit of \$12 million for the 2021 fiscal year, a number that more than doubled as it faced fewer donations, sponsorships and ticket sales. Muir said the \$25 million deficit for 2021 would likely double if the football season is canceled.

The school projected a shortfall of nearly

\$70 million over the next three years due to the pandemic and estimated it would cost more than \$200 million to sustain the 11 sports that will be cut.

"We've been punching above our weight for quite some time," Muir said. "It just became more acute, and became such a large issue we had to take this measure."

Stanford has one of the nation's largest athletics departments, offering double the national average of 18 varsity sports.

Earlier this year, football coach David Shaw, basketball coach Jerod Haase and members of the athletics executive team took pay cuts to help defray some of the financial hit caused by the pandemic. Stanford also saved close to \$5 million with expense-cutting measures and asked some of its programs to limit long-distance travel in an attempt to shore up the budget shortfall.

"We had a structural deficit coming in, so I don't want to pin this all on COVID. That's not the case," Muir said. "When we realized coming off COVID, we knew we were going to take a financial hit. To blame this all on COVID would not be accurate, but it certainly contributed to the growing deficit."

The contracts of 24 coaches in the 11 sports will be honored, as will the scholarships for the more than 240 athletes affected. All support staff who have been let go will get severance pay.

AP sports writers Eric Olson in Omaha, Neb., and Stephen Hawkins in Dallas contributed to this report.

NFL

Stay-at-home order stiff-arms fading tradition

Traveling for training camp was already on the decline for teams before pandemic

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

Tim Flynn was looking forward to one final year as the mayoral host of training camp for the Dallas Cowboys in Oxnard, Calif.

So much for that.

The pandemic forced the NFL to abandon, at least for this year, the fading but still time-honored tradition of teams traveling to training camp.

The league's version of a stay-at-home order will end the latest California run for the Cowboys, stop the 54-year streak for the Pittsburgh Steelers in Latrobe, Pa., and keep the Carolina Panthers away from the only campsite the 25-year-old franchise has known.

And Flynn won't get that final, formal goodbye with Cowboys owner Jerry Jones. Camps are scheduled to start July 28.

"It's a little bit of a disappointment for me individually because I'm moving on," said Flynn, who is running for another office in Ventura County after 14 years on the Oxnard City Council, the last eight as mayor.

"But you know what? I'll still be able to see the practices. I just won't be mayor doing it. That's kind of like my own special relationship there."

Flynn is confident the Cowboys will be back after one year in Texas. Dallas will hold the entirety of camp in its home market for the first time. It will be in the sparkling facility that opened four years ago and can handle the logistics because of an indoor field that can keep players out of the Texas heat.

But even before the opening of the sprawling complex 30 minutes north of Dallas, Flynn said he never worried about whether Jones would quit bringing the Cowboys to California.

Likewise, Flynn isn't concerned that Jones & Co. will suddenly realize they have everything they need in the suburb of Frisco and don't have to make the NFL's longest trip for training camp: about 1,500 miles.



MICHAEL OWEN BAKER/AP

The Dallas Cowboys practice at the team's training camp in Oxnard, Calif., on July 29. The coronavirus pandemic forced the NFL to abandon, at least for 2020, the fading but still time-honored tradition of teams traveling to training camp.

Among the biggest assets about 60 miles north of Los Angeles are mild weather and two side-by-side outdoor grass fields next to a hotel that houses all players, coaches and staff members.

"There's just nothing that can replace it," Flynn said. "The lure of California will always be there. And if not just for the Cowboys, it is for many other teams. But we have a very special relationship with the Cowboys and we want that to continue."

Officials with Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C., are preparing for the permanent departure of the Panthers. The club is building a practice facility in Rock Hill, still in South Carolina but about 40 miles

'Getting away, I think, builds fellowship and camaraderie.'

Sean McDermott

Bills coach, on traveling for a training camp

closer to downtown Charlotte.

When the new building opens, training camp and everything else will be held there — as it is with the majority of NFL teams. For decades, most or all teams trained elsewhere in the summer. That number has dwindled to single digits.

Wofford, the alma mater of former owner Jerry Richardson, built locker rooms and facilities specifically for the expansion Panthers, who debuted in 1995.

"We've enjoyed hosting them, made a lot of friendships and learned a lot," said athletic director Richard Johnson, who was Wofford's men's basketball coach when the Panthers showed up.

"I think the ancillary benefit to hosting camps is you get kind of the side benefit, the expertise of that organization. We're going to miss that. It's always good to have visitors on campus. So we're gonna miss that as well."

Saint Vincent College in Latrobe hasn't seen a summer without the Steelers since 1965, when they trained in Kingston, R.I., before splitting the 1966 camp between the University of Rhode Island and Saint Vincent.

In a brief statement after the NFL announced that teams would stay home, Steelers President Art Rooney II said the club planned to return to Latrobe next year.

The Cowboys had a 27-year streak in Thousand Oaks, not far from Oxnard, that ended in 1990, a year after Jones bought the team and fired longtime coach Tom Landry. The club has bounced between

Texas and California since. The latest streak in Oxnard lasted eight years.

The Buffalo Bills have trained about a 90-minute drive from home at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, N.Y., since 2000, and their current deal covers next season.

Sean McDermott has preferred shorter stints away from home, and there's been speculation the fourth-year coach wants to spend the entire time at the Bills' facility. McDermott takes issue with such talk.

"I think there was some myth, for some reason, mixed messaging early," said McDermott, who has led the Bills to the playoffs twice in three seasons after Buffalo missed the postseason 17 straight years. "I just believe in that for a lot of reasons, one of which is getting away. I think, builds fellowship and camaraderie."

Super Bowl champion Kansas City has trained about an hour north in St. Joseph's, Mo., for the past decade, and coach Andy Reid prefers going away. Like the Cowboys, the Chiefs have two outdoor fields and one indoor field, so being at home won't be a huge issue.

It's not much of a blip for Indianapolis, either. The Colts have trained not far from home at a massive youth sports complex the past two years and are likely to return.

Washington has trained in Richmond, Va., since 2013, but was at team headquarters before that. The move to Richmond was mostly for fans, so it might be in play next year.

Flynn is sure the fans will be waiting if — he leans toward when — the Cowboys return to Southern California.

"The Cowboys being a national sports team, it broadens their fan base by coming to California," Flynn said. "I just always thought they'd be back."

AP sports writers John Wawrow in Buffalo, N.Y.; Dave Skerrett in Kansas City, Mo.; Steve Reed in Charlotte, N.C.; Michael Marot in Indianapolis; Stephen Whyne in Washington; and Will Graves in Pittsburgh contributed to this report.



KEITH SRANOCIC/AP

Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster talks with some young fans along the fence line after making a catch in drills during practice at training camp in Latrobe, Pa., on Aug. 15. This is the first time the Steelers won't train at Latrobe since 1965, though they say they will be back in 2021.

MLB



PHOTOS BY DUANE BURLESON/R/P

Tigers rookie Spencer Torkelson fields a ground ball during training camp at Comerica Park on Saturday in Detroit. Torkelson is making a strong positive impression already, putting on an impressive display of power in batting practice Monday.

Torkelson showing why he was No. 1

20-year-old top overall pick tantalizing Tigers with talent

BY LARRY LACE
Associated Press

DETROIT — Spencer Torkelson has quickly showed the Detroit Tigers why they drafted him No. 1 overall this year and gave him a \$8-plus million signing bonus to get in uniform for training camp.

Torkelson put his power on full display during his first batting practice.

“His first couple of rounds of batting practice have been pretty impressive,” Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire acknowledged Monday. “He could definitely do some things. You see why a guy goes number one — right away.”

Torkelson signed a minor league contract and is not expected to play in the majors during the pandemic-shortened season. Teams often are reluctant to put their top prospects in the majors until they’re fully ready to avoid starting the clock on how much time they have them under contract.

Gardenhire, though, did not want to rule out Torkelson playing in Detroit this season perhaps in part to not dampen his spirits.

“I’m not going to say, ‘No, he won’t make it to the big leagues this year,’ or anything like that,” Gardenhire said. “We’re just happy to have him in this organization, in this camp, where we get eyes on him. We’ll see how it all plays out here as we go. You don’t want to rush this kid too quick.”

“And, this is one of those years it’s a little bit different, but him being around all these major league guys is going to help.” The Tigers put Torkelson in their player pool for the abbreviated season.



The Tigers have been happy with what they’ve seen from No. 1 overall draft pick Torkelson, but don’t expect to see him in the big leagues this season.

Tigers slugger Miguel Cabrera has already let Torkelson know loud and clear that he wants him in the team’s major league clubhouse.

“Miggy told him we need him,” left-hander Matthew Boyd said.

Torkelson appreciated the gesture from Cabrera, who like the rest of the team, has warmly welcomed the highly touted prospect.

“It’s really cool to have guys like that

‘At the end of the day, it’s playing baseball. See ball. Hit ball.’

Spencer Torkelson
No. 1 overall draft pick for the Detroit Tigers

backing you up,” Torkelson said.

Undrafted out of high school, Torkelson hit 54 home runs at Arizona State. He finished two shy of the school record set by Bob Horner, who was drafted No. 1 overall in 1978.

The Tigers plan to convert Torkelson from first to third base and one of their former greats, shortstop Alan Trammell, is working with him as a special assistant to the general manager during camp.

The 20-year-old Californian acknowledged he really wasn’t sure who Trammell was initially, but his father filled him in.

“He’s like, ‘You know who you’re talking to, right?’” Torkelson recalled his father asking. “I’m like, ‘Yeah, I follow baseball and all, but I don’t know the name.’ And he’s like, ‘He’s a Hall of Fame shortstop.’”

“I guess it was good that I didn’t know that before I started talking to him because I would’ve got a little intimidated.”

The dimensions of spacious Comerica Park, which has a 420-foot marker in center, have not done anything to diminish Torkelson’s confidence. When he was on the field for the first time last weekend and looked around, doubt didn’t set in.

“It didn’t really faze me,” he said.

The hype his hitting has generated also has not gotten to his head.

“I don’t worry about it too much,” Torkelson said. “At the end of the day, it’s playing baseball. See ball. Hit ball.”

Award: Short season could skew statistics

FROM BACK PAGE

in 2006, though Ryan Howard won the MVP that season.

Only one Cy Young winner over the past 20 seasons has had more than the nine wins Verlander had after 60 games last year. Randy Johnson was 10-1 with 139 strikeouts through his first 13 starts over Arizona’s first 60 games in 2000, when he won the second of his four consecutive NL Cy Young Awards.

No losses: Only three Cy Young winners since 2000 have gotten through their team’s first 60 games, generally 12 or 13 starts, without losing a game. The last was Max Scherzer for the Tigers in 2013, when he was 8-0 with a 3.24 ERA and 100 strikeouts through 12 starts. He finished 21-3, matching the fewest losses overall for any Cy Young winner in that stretch.

Brandon Webb was 8-0 through 13 starts for Arizona on way to being the 2006 NL Cy Young winner, two years after Roger Clemens went 9-0 starting 12 of Houston’s first 60 games and won the NL award before the Astros switched leagues.

Varying twists: Justin Morneau likely wouldn’t have been the 2006 AL MVP if that season had ended after 60 games, when he was hitting .240 with 13 homers and 43 RBIs. That included his two homers and five RBIs in Minnesota’s 60th game, the first of five consecutive multi-hit games to start a year when he hit .364 the rest of the season to finish at .321 with 34 homers and 130 RBIs.

Three years later, Twins teammate Joe Mauer was hitting .415 through 60 games in his MVP season, when the Twins again had a losing record at that point before winning another AL Central title. Mauer ended at .365 with 28 homers and 96 RBIs.

Mauer and Morneau have the highest and lowest batting averages for any MVP through 60 games since 2000.

When Rod Carew was the AL MVP in 1977 with the Twins, the Hall of Fame left-handed hitter finished with a career-best .388. That was also his exact average after 60 games, though he peaked at .411 between then and the end of the season.

Chasing .400: Tony Gwynn would have been a .400 hitter had the 1997 season ended after the San Diego Padres played their 60th game, when he was at .403 — he finished with a .372 average. When the Hall of Fame outfielder and 15-time All-Star hit a career-best .394 in 1994, he was at .378 through 60 games.

In 2008, nine years after Chipper Jones was the NL MVP, he was hitting .409 through Atlanta’s first 60 games. The Hall of Fame third baseman hit a majors-best and career-high .364 that season.

Gwynn and Gregg Brett are the only players who have finished within 10 points of a .400 season since Ted Williams had the last one in 1941. Williams hit .406, only one point lower than he was through Boston’s first 60 games that season.

Brett was at .337 through 54 games for the Kansas City Royals in 1980 before missing a month because of an ankle injury. He returned to hit .421 over the last half of the season, and was at .400 overall on Sept. 19 before finishing at .390 for the AL champions.



Johnson

MLB



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

Red Sox pitcher Nathan Eovaldi walks through the seating area to the field for the beginning of summer training Monday at Fenway Park in Boston. All major league teams are training at their home stadiums.

A taste of luxury

Boston players enjoy retrofit at Fenway Park

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

BOSTON — A pitching mound in a picnic area. Exercise bicycles in the concourse. Lockers in the luxury suites.

Banished from their spring training complex in COVID-19-ravaged Florida to their historic but cozy home, the Red Sox are squeezing any space they can out of Fenway Park for the reboot of spring training that baseball is calling summer camp.

When players arrived last week, they found their lockers set up not in the traditional home clubhouse used since the days of Ted Williams and Carl Yastrzemski but in the upper-deck luxury suites along the first-base line.

"It's pretty cool eating breakfast in the suite looking out into the field," first baseman Mitch Moreland said on Monday. "I don't know if we'll move back."

Major league teams, including the Red Sox, have elaborate complexes at their spring training

homes to help them prepare for the season, with enough lockers for everyone still trying to make the team and extra fields for them all to get their work in.

But the century-old Fenway Park never had space for too many modern conveniences, let alone the social distancing demands of the coronavirus pandemic. So the Red Sox have had to find the room in unusual places.

The area under the first-base stands became a workout room, with artificial turf over the cement walkway usually trod by fans and a batting cage blocking the concession stands. A mound for pitchers to warm up is under the bleachers in what the team calls the "Big Concourse."

Part of the players' parking lot is being used for intake testing. According to manager Ron Roenicke, no players will be using the clubhouse to store their gear or change into and out of their uniforms. Coaches also needed to find a new space, because the room that traditionally

accommodates the entire staff only has room for two people under baseball's social distancing guidelines.

"You can tell they put a lot of thought and consideration into the way they set this up," outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr. said, adding that he had never been in the luxury boxes before. "It's nice. I get to watch my teammates from a different angle."

Usually filled by sponsors and other corporate swells, the suites rent for as much as \$14,300 per game; that includes tickets for 22 fans (food and drink are extra). With no fans expected at Fenway this season, though, they are suddenly available.

And the Red Sox say they're being put to good use.

Players arrived last week to find they had been assigned to the suites, in groups of two. Inside, lockers had been installed with the equipment they will need to prepare for the three-week ramp-up to the 60-game season baseball is hoping to pull off amid the pandemic.

In a video tour posted on social media by infielder Michael Chavis, boxes of bats leaned against the window between the areas marketed to fans as the "climate-controlled indoor space" and the "private seating perch." An equipment bag sat on one of the box's big leather chairs; a baseball glove rested on the granite countertop.

"I was so impressed with everything," said Chavis, who shares a suite with new outfielder Alex Verdugo. "We had an idea of what it would kind of look like. We got word of what they were doing. But then just seeing it in person and being in the room and everything like that, it was really cool. And then the beautiful view of Fenway. Everything about it."

Eyeing social change, Bucs' Bell finds voice

By WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Josh Bell wanted to make a statement with his actions, a way to channel the disgust the Pittsburgh Pirates first baseman felt in the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police in late May.

Yet as the crowds surged in downtown Pittsburgh last month during a planned peaceful protest, he fought the urge to join in.

He couldn't help but notice the helicopters buzzing. He checked the Internet and saw what began with a positive vibe had shifted to something darker. Wary of the optics and the fallout, Bell, who is Black, heeded the advice of his girlfriend.

"(She told me) 'You're going to make a lot more impact with your platform than going to this riot right now. That's how people get hurt. That's where the conversation turns bad,'" Bell said on Saturday.

"Josh Bell is at a protest is a good thing. But Josh Bell is at a riot is a terrible thing. That's something that could change your career in a heartbeat."

And not the kind of change the 27-year-old All-Star from Texas wants to impart. He watched what happened to former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick in 2017 when he chose to kneel during the national anthem to protest police brutality. Kaepernick's message got lost amid outcry over the method he chose to express it. It's something Bell wants desperately to avoid.

"In regards to where he wanted the conversation to go, that got shut down pretty much from the get go and his career was forever changed from that," Bell said. "So

that was where a lot of players felt silenced. A lot of players were like, 'Well, shoot.'"

This time things felt different. There is a groundswell of support across races and ages. And Bell is intent on being a part of it. Reticent by nature, Bell is growing more comfortable in his role as the face of a franchise whose history is filled with players of color that made a difference far beyond the field.

Roberto Clemente. Willie Stargell. Andrew McCutchen. Now, Bell believes it's his turn.

"I feel like social justice is something that a lot of people are learning right now."

Josh Bell Pirates 1B on the social unrest sweeping the country

express my opinions." "I feel like social justice is something that a lot of people are learning right now," Bell said. "For the most part, I'm trying to stay as politically correct as I can. I'm not trying to bring emotions into anything. You guys know me by now. I'm not trying to be the guy who has the headline for something negative. I'm doing my best to try to learn. That support from the Pirates has really allowed me to express my opinions."

His deeds, too. Bell started a book club with his teammates with the belief of opening a clear and honest dialogue. The titles so far have included "The New Jim Crow" and the fantasy novel "The Alchemist."

"It's kind of like who I am as well as books that I feel like everybody should read so everybody can be on the same page in regards to not only understanding what social justice looks like, but understanding what being a good human being looks like," Bell said. "I feel like if I promote that message, it's not going to be going up into a conversation like this, like one side or the other, like you're either right or you're wrong. We're all in this together."



COREY SIPKIN/AP

Pittsburgh Pirates first baseman Josh Bell is intent on being a part of the protests that have rocked the United States in the wake of the death of George Floyd. Reticent by nature, Bell is growing more comfortable in his role as the face of a franchise whose history is filled with players of color that made a difference beyond the field.



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

Red Sox manager Ron Roenicke, right, talks with Christian Vazquez.

MLB

Short on time

Free agents-to-be get 60 games in which to maximize their value

By DAVID BRANDT
Associated Press

Robbie Ray already knew 2020 would be a big season for his financial future because it's his last one before becoming a free agent.

Now the Arizona Diamondbacks left-hander has less time to make a strong impression.

Major League Baseball's coronavirus-delayed 60-game season is much shorter than the usual 162-game grind. That means pitchers like Ray will probably make about 11 or 12 starts instead of the typical 30-plus.

Because of the compressed calendar, the 28-year-old Ray made sure he kept in shape during the spring hiatus from baseball. In his first live work off the mound Sunday, he threw nearly 80 pitches and said he's very close to being ready for the regular season, which begins July 24 against the Padres.

The motivation is obvious: A bad start to the season could cost him millions of dollars in what's expected to be a tight free-agent market during the offseason. Conversely, two good months might lead to a big payoff this winter.

"I had the assumption that once everything got fired back up it would be quick," Ray said. "Show up in three or four days and then camp is 30 days or less. Being the year that it is, I didn't want to be behind and not able to go out and perform at my best day one."

Ray's best year came in 2017 when he made the All-Star team and finished 15-5 with a 2.89 ERA. He was 12-8 with a 4.34 ERA last year and had a career-high 235 strikeouts.

He's one of several players to watch as MLB prep for its strange season. This week's focus is on players in the NL West and AL West.

NL West

Colorado Rockies: OF David Dahl. The 26-year-old has been one of the game's best young hitters when he can stay in the lineup. He's been limited by various injuries throughout his career but was still an All-Star in 2019, when he batted .302 with 15 homers in 100 games.

Los Angeles Dodgers: RHP Walker Buehler. The 25-year-old made a big jump in his second full season, making the All-Star team and finishing 14-4 with a 3.26 ERA and 215 strikeouts in 182½ innings. Now that David Price has opted out of the 2020 season, it's even more vital that Buehler continues his upward



MARK J. TERRELL/AP

Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Walker Buehler made a huge jump in his second full season, making the All-Star team and finishing 14-4 with a 3.26 ERA and 215 strikeouts.

progression.

San Diego Padres: SS Fernando Tatis Jr. The rising young star was limited to 84 games last season because of injuries but still finished third in Rookie of the Year voting. The Padres were at their best when he was in the lineup and if he plays close to all 60 games this season, they could be surprise contenders in the NL West.

San Francisco Giants: RHP Johnny Cueto. The two-time All-Star missed a big chunk of the past two seasons because of Tommy John surgery but appears to be fully healthy for 2020. The Giants could definitely use his presence at the top of the rotation, and the shorter 60-game season might allow him to avoid any problems while coming back from the elbow injury.

AL West

Houston Astros: RHP Lance McCullers Jr. The 2017 All-Star is coming off Tommy John surgery and missed all of 2019. The Astros hope the 26-year-old can assume a bigger role in the rotation after they lost ace Gerrit Cole to the New York Yankees in free agency.

Los Angeles Angels: RHP/DH Shohei Ohtani. The big right-hander became one of the game's biggest stars two years ago as a rare two-way player. He was limited to DH duty last season — batting .286 with 18 homers — but is trying to bounce back from Tommy John surgery and contribute once again in the Angels' pitching rotation.

Oakland Athletics: LHP A.J. Puk. The 6-foot-7 left-hander showed tantalizing potential in 10 relief appearances last season, striking out 13 batters in 11½ innings. Now the Athletics hope the No. 6 overall pick from the 2016 draft is ready to compete for a spot in the starting rotation.

Seattle Mariners: 1B Evan White. The 24-year-old was set as Seattle's starting first baseman the second he signed a \$24 million, six-year contract last offseason without having played higher than Double-A. He's a whiz defensively and reminds scouts of J.T. Snow, who won six straight Gold Gloves from 1995 to 2000. He's part of young core that includes outfielders Kyle Lewis and Jake Fraley, and infielders J.P. Crawford and Shed Long Jr.

Texas Rangers: OF Joey Gallo. The 26-year-old's health is the biggest current concern after he tested positive for COVID-19. The good news is he's asymptomatic and the Rangers hope he can return soon to provide his usual punch in the middle of the lineup. He's hit 103 homers over the past three seasons and if he gets hot, his bat could carry the team through a big chunk of the shortened schedule.

AP sports writers Kristie Rieken, Bernie Wilson and Tim Booth contributed to this story.



ROSS D. FRANKLIN, ABOVE, AND TONY GUTIERREZ, BELOW/AP

Above: As a pending free agent, Arizona Diamondbacks left-handed starter Robbie Ray knows he could lose millions of dollars if he gets off to a poor start to the pandemic-delayed 60-game season.

Below: Texas Rangers outfielder Joey Gallo's health is the biggest concern after he tested positive for COVID-19. The good news is he's asymptomatic and can return soon to provide punch in the middle of the lineup. He hit 103 homers the past three seasons.



MLB



The Dodgers' Mookie Betts, right, gestures toward manager Dave Roberts after scoring during intrasquad play in the restart of baseball spring training Monday in Los Angeles.

MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Dodgers adjusting to a new backdrop

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles Dodgers were eager to show off \$100 million worth of stadium renovations to fans and a national audience at the All-Star Game this summer.

Turns out, it appears only players are going to see the changes up close this season because of the coronavirus pandemic, which will keep the public out of the ballpark for at least the early portion of a 60-game schedule that begins July 23. The Dodgers won't host the All-Star festivities until 2022.

The black tarp that served as the backdrop in center field is gone, replaced by a new center field plaza that may take some getting used to for hitters.

First baseman Max Muncy was hit by a pitch on his left ring finger during the team's intrasquad game Tuesday.

"I couldn't really see the ball," he said Wednesday on a video conference call. "I'm trying to adjust to some of the changes out there."

Muncy said he'll stop swinging a bat while his finger heals, but he expects to be ready for opening day.

The new batter's eye has a bar on top of it that is out of the hitters' view but where fans can watch the game—under normal circumstances. There's a new pedestrian walkway behind the speaker towers in center field that encircles the stadium.

"It's different from what we're used to," Muncy said. "Pitchers are pretty happy about the batter's eye out there."

Manager Dave Roberts said, "You don't want a player to not be able to see, to put him in harm's way. For Max to say he couldn't see the ball because of the backdrop, that's a little unsettling."

Meanwhile, closer Kenley Jansen, outfielder A.J. Pollock, infielder Gavin Lux, catching prospect Keibert Ruiz and pitchers Scott Alexander, Pedro Baez and Tony Gonsolin haven't reported to Dodger Stadium since summer camp began a week ago.

Roberts has said he can't comment on the reasons for the absences.

"I'm hopeful we'll get all those guys back soon," he said. Teams are prohibited from saying whether a player tested positive for COVID-19 unless the player gives permission. The COVID-19 injured list, which has been added during the pandemic, will be kept confidential.

Roberts and President of Baseball Operations Andrew Friedman have said there have been positive tests among players, but didn't reveal any names.

"Being late to summer camp certainly puts them behind the 8-ball because of the repetitions, getting your legs under you, getting the at-bats, the innings, building up, all that stuff. Certainly it makes it a little more difficult," Roberts said.

Each of the missing players figures to have a role in the team's push to return to the World Series after losing in back-to-back appearances in 2017 and 2018.

Jansen has been the team's closer since 2012 and earned his 300th career save last year. Pollock hit .266 with 15 home runs and 47 RBIs in 86 games last season, when he missed 2½ months because of an elbow injury. Pollock's wife gave birth to a girl three months prematurely in May.

"If there's any chance of putting her at risk, it gets to be a difficult decision," Pollock told SportsNetLA, the team's TV network, last month.

Cautiously moving ahead

More players, teams return to the field after testing

By DAVID GINSBURG
Associated Press

As Major League Baseball cautiously tiptoes closer toward beginning its delayed 2020 season, several teams welcomed back players who might have been exposed to the coronavirus, and the San Francisco Giants resumed workouts Wednesday after finally receiving the results of COVID-19 tests administered over the weekend.

The San Diego Padres, however, revealed that newly acquired infielder Jorge Mateo's intake test for coronavirus came back positive and he's experienced symptoms. Mateo was obtained last week from Oakland for a player to be named or cash in the first trade since the transaction freeze was lifted.

Padres manager Jayce Tingler said Mateo has not been back to the ballpark and is self-isolating.

San Diego announced last week that outfielder Tommy Pham tested positive for coronavirus and was asymptomatic. He has not yet rejoined the team.

In Boston, third baseman Rafael Devers practiced at Fenway Park for the first time since the Red Sox opened summer camp. Devers and an unspecified number of other players were working out at nearby Boston College and have since tested negative three times.

When tests reveal "pending" or inconclusive results, the Red Sox have decided to keep those players out of full-team workouts—even if a player hasn't had a positive test.

"We have to be overly cautious," manager Ron Roenicke said.

Devers batted .311 with a league-leading .544 doubles, 32 homers and 111 RBIs in 2019. He was scheduled to get a few at-bats when the Red Sox hold their first intrasquad scrimmage on Thursday.

The Giants, meanwhile, resumed workouts at Oracle Park after receiving test results from Saturday, all of which were negative for players and staff. A delay in receiving the outcome of those tests forced the club to cancel practice Tuesday.

Devers wasn't the only player in the big leagues to get a late start joining his team. Texas Rangers first baseman Ronald Guzman was on the field Wednesday after missing the first five days of workouts. Although he was at the facility, he wasn't cleared for workouts while still going through intake screening.

The only Texas players still not cleared to participate are right fielder Joey Gallo and left-hander Brett Martin, both of whom tested positive for coronavirus.

In Cleveland, outfielder Franmil Reyes was cleared by the team's medical staff to return to the field after being isolated for attending a party over the July 4 weekend.



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

Red Sox interim manager Ron Roenicke, left, gives a socially distant elbow greeting to Xander Bogaerts at training camp at Fenway Park.

The Indians kept Reyes away from Progressive Field after he attended a holiday gathering without wearing a mask. The Indians learned of Reyes' off-field actions on a social media posting.

Manager Terry Francona said Reyes was re-tested and can now participate in the team's training camp.

Also, Indians outfielder Delino DeShields Jr., who tested positive for COVID-19, is traveling to Cleveland after he had one negative test. He will be tested again when he arrives.

"He was obviously excited. Said he was planning on traveling like the Michelin Man today through the airport," Francona said.

DeShields is in his first season with the Indians, who acquired him in December from Texas in the trade involving ace Corey Kluber.

In Oakland, right-hander Mike Fiers returned to the field for workouts after being delayed by what manager Bob Melvin referred to as a "pending issue," which wasn't injury-related. Fiers pitched his second career no-hitter last season and was the whistleblower in the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scandal last fall.

The defending AL champion Astros were without infielder Alex Bregman on Wednesday because his test results were delayed.

"He's probably frustrated because I know how hard Alex works and how dedicated he is to getting off to a good start," manager Dusty Baker said. "There's nothing that we can do about it."

Pittsburgh Pirates reliever Hector Noesi has opted out of the season after speaking with his family. The 33-year-old, who pitched for Miami last year, was attempting to make the team as a nonroster invite.

The Cubs have thus far avoided any positive tests, a development outfielder Kyle Schwarber insists cannot be attributed to mere luck.

"You see some names around

the league who have got the virus and you're surprised, and to see the way that we haven't had any tests come back positive, I mean, that's unbelievable," Schwarber said. "I think it's just a testament to what our guys did off the field taking this serious, knowing that we can do something special here and we're going to need every single guy in it at the end of the day."

With the start of the season just more than two weeks away, several teams held intrasquad games as the next step in gearing up for the real thing.

Washington ace Max Scherzer threw 48 pitches at Nationals Park and made quite an impression on manager Dave Martinez.

"We wanted to keep him at 50, three full innings, but he looked good," Martinez said. "The key now is his turnaround. Let's see how he feels (Thursday)."

Carter Kieboom, the rookie who's the favorite to replace Anthony Rendon at third base for the defending World Series champions, said it was his first time facing Scherzer since spring training in 2018.

"Same outcome as today," Kieboom said. "I struck out."

Tampa Bay's Charlie Morton allowed two runs and four hits in four innings in a simulated game at Tropicana Field. Left-handers Blake Snell and Ryan Yarbrough and right-hander Trevor Richards also pitched.

"It was nice to get the guys in the box, get them some live looks and also try to ramp up the intensity," Morton said.

The Detroit Tigers had their first intrasquad scrimmage at Comerica Park with no fans in the stands.

"We're just happy we got back on the field," manager Ron Gardenhire said.

AP Sports Writers Bernice Wilson, Kyle Hightower, Tom Wither, Jamie McCauley, Jay Cohen, Kristie Rieken, Fred Goodall, Steve Wykins, Charles Odum, Stephen Hawkins and Larry Lage contributed.

SPORTS



From protests to playoffs
Blazers PG Lillard excited for return after busy shutdown » **NBA, Page 49**

MLB

Award tour

Short season could have dramatic effect on star players' statistics

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

Cody Bellinger was well on his way to becoming the National League MVP only 60 games into last season for the Los Angeles Dodgers, already with 20 homers in that stretch before his 24th birthday.

Over that same span for the Houston Astros last summer, Justin Verlander won nine games and struck out 103 batters on the way to his second AL Cy Young Award. The veteran right-hander had more wins and strikeouts through the first 60 games for the American League champions than he did just over one-third of the way into the 2011 season for the Detroit Tigers, when he finished 24-5 and was also the AL MVP.

After 60 games this year, it will already be time to determine who wins those awards. There will be no more games to be played in a regular season that's set to begin July 23 and is 102 games shorter than usual because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Bellinger was only the fifth MVP from either league over the past 20 seasons to have 20 homers in his team's first 60 games — Barry Bonds did it twice, and the last to do it had been Bryce Harper with the Washington Nationals in 2015. The Dodgers were 41-19 and already with a big lead in the NL West, with Bellinger hitting .376 with 52 RBIs. He finished at .305 with 47 homers and 115 RBIs two years after being the NL Rookie of the Year.

When Bonds set the single-season record with 73 homers in 2001, the first of his four consecutive MVP seasons, baseball's home run king also had the best 60-game start in the majors over the past 100 years with 32. The best such start for an active hitter was the 25 for three-time NL MVP Albert Pujols

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UP TO THE CHALLENGE



The last Cy Young winner to make it through the season's first 60 games without a loss was **Max Scherzer**, then of the Detroit Tigers, who was 8-0 with a 3.24 ERA and 100 Ks through 12 starts in 2013.



When the Twins' **Rod Carew** was 1977 AL MVP, the Hall of Fame left-handed hitter hit a career-best .388. That was also his average after 60 games, though he peaked at .411 between then and the season's end.



Tony Gwynn would have been a .400 hitter had the 1997 season ended after the San Diego Padres played their 60th game, when he was at .403 — he finished with a .372 average.

SOURCE: Associated Press