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EGYPT

6 Americans among 8 dead as peacekeeping copter crashes

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

At least eight people were killed, including six Americans, when a helicopter carrying members of an international peacekeeping force in Egypt crashed near the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula on Thursday.

"Six of the dead were American, one was French and one Czech," Ahmed Manduh, who works at the Cairo office of the Multinational Force and Observers, told Stars and Stripes by telephone. The U.S., France and Czech Republic are among 13 countries that provide military personnel to MFO, which since the early 1980s has monitored the Israeli-Egyptian peace accord signed in 1979.

Nine people were on board the helicopter, MFO said in a statement. One American survived the crash and was medically evacuated, but Manduh had no information about his condition.

The Army and Defense Department confirmed separately that six Americans had died in the crash.

"We are saddened by the loss of six U.S. and two partner nation service members," Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller said in a statement released by the Pentagon.

"Yesterday we recognized the sacrifice of millions who have defended our nation, and today we are reminded of the last full measure our warriors may pay for their service."

The crash happened near the Red Sea resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh during a routine mission, MFO said in a statement.

The organization's Egypt headquarters and logistical hub, South Camp, is located on a bluff near the town, overlooking the sea.

SEE EGYPT ON PAGE 5



A tense transition

Military wary that shakeup could upend its apolitical nature

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The words spoken by America's top military officer carried a familiar ring, but in the midst of a chaotic week at the Pentagon, they were particularly poignant.

"We are unique among militaries," said Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "We do not take an oath to a king or a queen, a tyrant or a dictator. We do not take an oath to an individual."

Milley was speaking Wednesday at the dedication of an Army museum during a week in which President Donald Trump fired Defense Secretary Mark Esper and installed three staunch loyalists to senior Pentagon policy positions. The abrupt changes raised fears about what Trump might try to do in his final two months of office — and whether the military's long held apolitical nature could be upended.

Milley's comments, made as he stood alongside Esper's successor, acting defense chief Christopher Miller, reflected a view he has

SEE TENSE ON PAGE 4

Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley attends a Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremony led by President Donald Trump at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., on Wednesday. Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller stands in the background.

PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Germany	\$2.371	\$2.792	\$3.046	\$2.658	Azores	--	--	\$2.946
Change in price	-1.6 cents	-1.6 cents	-1.5 cents	+1.1 cents	Change in price	--	--	-1.5 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.116	\$3.140	\$3.104	Belgium	--	\$2.377	\$2.423
Change in price	--	+31.1 cents	-2.3 cents	+0.4 cents	Change in price	--	No change	No change
U.K.	--	\$2.691	\$2.945	\$2.551	Turkey	--	\$2.840	\$3.354
Change in price	--	-1.6 cents	-1.5 cents	+1.2 cents	Change in price	--	--	-0.6 cents

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Japan	--	\$2.839	\$2.440	\$2.179	South Korea	\$2.179	--	\$2.849
Change in price	--	-1.0 cents	--	+1.0 cents	Change in price	-1.0 cents	--	-2.0 cents
Okinawa	\$2.159	--	\$2.449	\$2.169**	Guam	\$2.169**	\$2.589	\$2.849
Change in price	-2.0 cents	--	--	+1.0 cents	Change in price	-2.0 cents	-2.0 cents	-1.0 cents

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Nov. 13-19

EXCHANGE RATES

	Rate		Rate
Military rates		Switzerland (Franc)	0.9147
Euro costs (Nov. 13)	\$1.15	Thailand (Baht)	30.22
Dollar buys (Nov. 13)	60.8262	Turkey (Lira)	7.7036
British pound (Nov. 13)	\$1.28	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Japanese yen (Nov. 13)	102.03		
South Korean won (Nov. 13)	1,083.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771		
British pound	\$1.3154		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3135		
China (Yuan)	6.6193		
Denmark (Krone)	6.3121		
Egypt (Pound)	15.4008		
Euro	\$1.1798/0.8476		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7546		
Hungary (Forint)	300.35		
Israel (Shekel)	3.7143		
Japan (Yen)	105.29		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3059		
Norway (Krone)	9.0969		
Philippines (Peso)	48.45		
Poland (Zloty)	3.80		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7512		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3486		
South Korea (Won)	1,114.21		

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bond	0.10
30-year bond	1.76

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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EUROPE

KRISTI KIMMEL | CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

MIDDLE EAST

KRISTI KIMMEL | CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

PACIFIC

ICHIRO KATAYANAGI | PacificAdvertising@stripes.com | CML +81 (42) 552.2511 ext. 77313
DSN: 227.7313

PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES. RELOCATION GUIDE

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of Stars and Stripes AND online daily at
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MILITARY



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

A Patriot missile bursts out of its launcher at the NATO air missile firing installation outside Chania on the Greek island of Crete in 2015. U.S. soldiers will man German Patriot systems during live fire drills that kicked off Thursday.

US kicks off live-fire Patriot drills in Greece with three NATO allies

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. soldiers are operating German Patriot missile systems in Greece alongside three allied nations as part of a two-week exercise focused on defending NATO's eastern flank.

About 250 troops from the U.S., Germany, Greece and the Netherlands are taking part in the air defense operations at NATO's firing range on the Greek island of Crete, military officials said.

"This type of training ensures that U.S. (air and missile defense) forces and NATO forces are integrated, able to operate together and ready to respond to any threat from all directions," Col. Bruce Bredlow, 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command's

deputy commander, said in a statement Thursday as training got underway.

The 678th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, based out of South Carolina and on a nine-month rotation in Europe, is serving as the command and control element for the drills, which seek to "enhance the combined U.S. and European ability to control defensive fires in Eastern Europe," the Army said in a statement.

In a twist this year, troops with the 10th Army Air and Missile Command are using the German missile variant instead of their own familiar Patriot system.

The goal of the swap is to demonstrate flexibility, 10th AAMC spokeswoman Capt. Rachel Skalsky said in a statement.

Greece also deployed Patriots

for the drills, which are scheduled to continue until Nov. 27.

Bolstering air defense capabilities has been a key part of the Army's buildup on the Continent over the past few years. The service determined in 2017 that it needed to do more to enhance its long- and short-range air defense arsenal.

Reestablishing such weaponry, a mainstay during the Cold War, in Germany became a priority after Russia's 2014 military intervention in Ukraine.

Since then, USAREUR units have added systems such as M270A1 self-propelled multiple rocket launchers, which have a top range of more than 100 miles.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

Drill sergeant blasts trainees on cellphones

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

An Oklahoma-based drill sergeant found himself in hot water with superiors this week in the wake of a viral video in which he described his trainees as "[expletive] soft" and "[expletive] sickening."

The video, posted on TikTok by the drill sergeant at Fort Sill, was shared on Twitter by user Lethality Jane, who maintains a considerable following and often posts on military topics.

Army Times, which first reported on the video Tuesday, said it had identified the drill sergeant as Staff Sgt. Treyon Wallace after comparing his TikTok and Facebook profile photos. The TikTok account, @dstomcat92, which has nearly 10,000 followers and more than 49,000 "likes," is currently private.

In the video taken Sunday, Wallace films a scattered group of trainees sitting on the ground with cellphones to their ears. He harshly criticizes the Army policy that allows once-a-week use of cellphones by trainees.

"This is what the Army has turned into now," he says. "A bunch of soft-assed, [expletive] ...," he says, his words trailing off as he surveys the trainees. "I get to use my cellphone every [expletive] Sunday for 30 minutes because, why? Because we're [expletive] soft, that's why. [Expletive]

'This is what the Army has turned into now.'

Staff Sgt. Treyon Wallace
in his TikTok video

sickening. You're crying and you just got here and you ain't done [expletive].

"But hey, this is the new Army; I guess we gotta [expletive] change with 'em."

The Twitter post drew the attention of Lt. Gen. Ted Martin, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, who responded to one Twitter commenter by writing: "We heard him. Loud & clear." Martin tagged the command sergeant major in his response.

Wallace faces discipline for violating Army policy regarding online conduct. Jessica Tackenberg, a Fort Sill spokeswoman, told Army Times on Tuesday.

"Phone privileges have increased due to the global pandemic to ensure that families and loved ones know that their trainee is safe and doing well," she said.

She said the video "does not reflect the values or sentiments" of Fort Sill or its service members and that the 434th Field Artillery Brigade command "is addressing the issue" with the drill sergeant.

Unpopular tire shredders at Yokota base undergo maintenance

By THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — More construction on the security devices known as tire shredders is scheduled at Yokota's gates, along with accompanying traffic delays, the base announced this week.

"Its maintenance on the system and not necessarily a response to complaints that the recently updated shredders are playing havoc on the undercarriages of some vehicles exiting the gates."

"The tire shredders will undergo maintenance addressing wear that has occurred on the systems," 1st Lt. Stuart Thrift, a base spokesman, said in an email Tuesday. "The traffic control systems have been part of improving force protection capabilities."

Work was scheduled to start Thursday and last through Tuesday, according to a post on the

base Facebook page. Yokota, in western Japan, is home to the 374th Airlift Wing and headquarters for 5th Air Force and U.S. Forces Japan.

The new shredders, which impale automobile tires in the event a driver attempts to back up or enter through the exit lane, are not popular with some drivers on base.

"Anyone else tired of getting the bottom of your vehicle smashed to hell from these things," Robert Browning wrote in a post on Yokota Spouses & Families Facebook group on Nov. 2. "Surely, they can adjust the recoil, ridiculous!"

Another driver said the device damaged her car.

"We had to replace our tail pipe, [tire shredders] busted a hole in it," said military spouse Stacie Bowman via Facebook Messenger. "We heard a big bang after crossing, then the whole car started shaking bad."

Mechanics at a local garage found yellow paint covering the broken parts of her Nissan March, she said, the same color yellow on the new shredders' teeth.

Bowman said her family paid for the repairs out-of-pocket, roughly \$100. They'd heard that filing a claim through the base legal office was just too much trouble, she said.

That is the recourse that Thrift directed in response to a Stars and Stripes query.

"Anyone who has concerns/claims that government equipment has damaged their vehicle can contact the base legal office to file a claim," he wrote in the Tuesday email.

For more information about claims, contact the air base legal office at DSN (315) 225-8423 or 9935.

godbold.theron@stripes.com
Twitter: @GodboldTheron



THERON GODBOLD/Stars and Stripes

A van departs Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo while a recently installed tire shredder system that has received complaints undergoes maintenance, on Thursday.

MILITARY

GOP keeps quiet on DOD changes amid Ga. runoff

By KAROUN DEMIRJIAN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — There is widespread alarm among congressional Republicans at how President Donald Trump this week abruptly replaced Pentagon leaders with political allies, and sent signals he might do the same in the intelligence community, but for now lawmakers are refraining from overtly criticizing the moves for fear doing so could harm the party's chances of holding onto its two Senate seats in Georgia.

Republicans' response to the ouster of Mark Esper as defense secretary has been noticeably circumspect, especially when compared to the explosion of criticism hurled at Trump when he fired Esper's predecessor, Jim Mattis, two years ago. To date,

Republican lawmakers have offered praise for Esper's tenure and little else.

Congressional aides say the anodyne public expressions represent a concerted attempt to self-muzzle, as the political party that prides itself on being strong on national security grapples with its fear of antagonizing an erratic and impulsive lame-duck president while battling to keep control of the Senate.

"They see the extraordinarily high stakes in the Georgia Senate runoffs," American Enterprise Institute congressional expert Norm Ornstein said Wednesday. "Creating a deep internal division in the party right now could jeopardize those seats, and the calculus they've made is that sticking with Trump is a better course of action at this stage."

GOP leaders have set an "un-

spoken standard," as it was put by one of several congressional Republican aides who spoke on the condition of anonymity, not to "rock the boat too much before Georgia."

But the president's decision to replace Defense Department leaders with Trump loyalists — including one person previously deemed too controversial for Senate confirmation — nonetheless has grievously upset most Republican members, the aides explained, particularly as it appears clear that Trump fired Esper in retribution for their policy differences.

GOP aides described the sudden change in leadership as an "unwise" move that could cause "chaos" within the U.S. national security establishment as the country already is vulnerable to threats. Multiple GOP aides



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller attends a Veterans Day wreath laying ceremony led by President Donald Trump at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., on Wednesday

also surmised that the shake-up would hamper the incoming Biden administration if Trump's newly chosen leaders and senior staff withhold information from his opponent's transition team while the president contests the

election outcome.

To date, however, it is almost exclusively Democrats expressing such sentiments publicly, while Republicans — at least outwardly — seek to portray the changes as unwelcoming.

Tense: Milley rejects claims of Trump using military to keep him in office

FROM FRONT PAGE

long been passionate about: the military's unequivocal duty to protect and defend the Constitution — what he called the "moral north star" for everyone in uniform.

His message in a time of turmoil — Trump has refused to concede his election loss — was unmistakable: The military exists to defend democracy and is not to be used as a political pawn. "We take an oath to the Constitution," Milley said, adding that every service member "will protect and defend that document regardless of personal price."

Trump's motives for the Pentagon shake-up are unclear, but it has created a great deal of unease within the building. Was he simply striking out at Esper and others he deemed not loyal enough? Is there a broader plan to enact policy changes that Trump could tout in his final days as commander in chief? Or, in the most extreme scenario, would Trump try to get the military to help him stay in office beyond Inauguration Day?

Milley has pushed back against that last possibility, telling Congress in October that "in the event of a dispute over some aspect of the elections, by law U.S. courts and the U.S. Congress are required to resolve any disputes, not the U.S. military." He said service members must not get involved in the transfer of power after an election.

Trump had grown increasingly angry with Esper, who openly disagreed with

his desire to use the active-duty military during the civil unrest in June. Esper also had worked with military leaders to talk Trump out of complete troop withdrawals from Syria and Afghanistan.

If the motive is to hand Trump some quick policy changes, then filling top jobs with more amenable loyalists will help — particularly in any effort to impede the smooth transition of power to President-elect Joe Biden. Accelerating troop withdrawals might also be a goal — but there is a fairly limited pool of other options.

Swift and radical changes in Trump's final 10 weeks are unlikely in a building that prides itself on exhaustive planning. The Pentagon is a massive bureaucracy and doesn't turn on a dime. And while the department is rooted in the democratic bedrock of a civilian-controlled military, the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are powerful presidential advisers with decades of experience, and armed with documents detailing the potential consequences of national security actions.

As yet, military commanders have gotten no new orders. And top military leaders — including Milley — are counseling patience and stability. They are projecting an America that remains a strong and reliable world power, where things remain steady.

Most are watching Afghanistan as a possible bellwether. Trump has long talked about getting troops home for the holidays, while military leaders have urged

for a more methodical withdrawal that gives them time to get equipment out and to apply pressure on the Taliban during peace talks. Fulfilling the goal of pulling all troops out could be Trump's final fist pump as commander in chief.

Over nearly four years, Milley and his predecessor, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, have been able to curb or shape White House impulses in matters of war. They successfully argued against pulling all U.S. forces out of Syria, and they slowed troop withdrawals in Afghanistan to preserve America's negotiating status with the Taliban and keep an eye on resurging Islamic State militants. Milley joined Esper in persuading Trump not to use active-duty troops to quash civil unrest.

On other policy matters, Pentagon leaders saluted and marched forward. They found ways to use Defense Department money to help build Trump's promised wall on the southern border, created his much-wanted Space Force, sidestepped an explicit ban on the Confederate flag and backed away from changing bases named after Confederate generals. Esper also carried Trump's message on increasing defense spending to NATO allies, with modest success. The move for more allied spending was a continuation of a push by the Obama administration.

The abrupt personnel changes this week, however, have amped up the anxiety of civilian and military staff in the Penta-

gon. In addition to replacing Esper with former National Counterterrorism Center director Miller, Trump installed loyalists Anthony Tata in the undersecretary for policy job and Esra Cohen-Watnick as the acting intelligence undersecretary. James Anderson, who had been acting undersecretary for policy, and Joseph Kernan, who was undersecretary for intelligence, both resigned Tuesday.

Miller also brought in his own chief of staff, Kash Patel, who was among the small group of aides who traveled with Trump extensively during the final stretch of the campaign. And he has brought in Douglas MacGregor, a fervent voice for an Afghanistan withdrawal, as a senior adviser.

Milley has said little about his plans. During his first meetings with top defense leaders this week, he took time to lay out his biography — it includes his service as an Army Green Beret and a stint as the Pentagon's assistant secretary for special operations. He has joined video calls, including on the pandemic, and has spoken to combatant commanders.

Wednesday's opening of the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Va., was his first public event, and he used it to talk about his enlistment and pride in military service. Flanking him were Milley, Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy and Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville. All spoke and Trump's name and the election were never mentioned.

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MIDEAST/MILITARY

Egypt: Officials say all signs indicate crash was accident

FROM FRONT PAGE

The crash was apparently caused by a technical failure of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during a reconnaissance mission, an Egyptian official told The Associated Press.

The Americans on the helicopter were National Guardsmen, an Israeli official told The Washington Post.

The injured American was evacuated by the Egyptian military and transferred to an Israeli Defense Forces aircraft near Eilat, the Israeli official said. The soldier was taken to the Soroka University Medical Center in Beersheba, Israel, The New York Times reported.

The Israeli and Egyptian officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media on the matter.

MFO, which is based in Rome, said all indications were that the crash was an accident. An investigation is being launched, it said.

The Pentagon is in close contact with the force's leadership and is prepared to support the investigation, spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said on Twitter.

The U.S. Army provides about 450 troops to the MFO mission, including senior members of its leadership, the MFO website says. Known as Task Force Sinai and made up of active-duty, reserve and National Guard members, the American contingent is the largest of the force of around 1,150 troops.

garland.chad@stripes.com
Twitter: @chadgarland

Biden taps transgender veteran to join Department of Defense transition team

New York Daily News

President-elect Joe Biden has chosen a transgender veteran to be part of the transition team at the Department of Defense.

Shawn Skelly previously worked in the Obama administration in multiple defense and transportation roles, and became the first transgender veteran to be appointed by a president in 2013.

Skelly's appointment comes as the Trump administration has banned trans-

gender people from serving in the military under their self-identified gender.

The ban is still being battled in court, but Biden has signaled that he plans to overturn the executive order after he's sworn in as president on Jan. 20.

Skelly has worked as an acquisition analyst at CACI International Inc., an international IT consultancy firm, for the past two years, according to a LinkedIn bio.

The U.S. Navy veteran joined the

Obama administration in 2013, first as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics at the Department of Defense, then as the Director of the Office of the Executive Secretariat at the Department of Transportation, according to a LinkedIn bio.

Skelly is also vice president at Out in National Security, an advocacy organization for LGBTQ+ national security professionals, according to its website.

Afghan official: Bomb blast kills journalist

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A bomb attached to the vehicle of a radio journalist in southern Afghanistan exploded early Thursday, killing him, a provincial official said.

Omer Zwak, spokesman for the provincial governor in southern Helmand province, said a sticky bomb attached to Elias Dayee's vehicle killed Dayee and wounded three others, including Dayee's brother, a child and another man.

Sami Mahdi, Radio Azadi bureau chief, tweeted: "My colleague and dear friend, Elias Dayee, lost his life in a ter-

rorist attack this morning." The attack took place in Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital.

"He was a gentleman. Always had signature smile. This is terrible news. Elyas, you will be remembered dearly," Mahdi said in his tweet.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

The attack comes days after another sticky bomb blast killed a former presenter on Afghanistan's TOLO TV and two other civilians in the capital Kabul.

Violence and chaos have increased in Afghanistan in recent months even as government negotiators and the Taliban

are meeting in Qatar to find an end to decades of relentless war in Afghanistan. The two sides have made little progress.

Washington's peace envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, has been pressing for an agreement on a reduction in violence or a cease-fire, which the Taliban have refused, saying a permanent truce would be part of the negotiations.

The talks were part of a negotiated agreement between the United States and the Taliban to allow U.S. and NATO troops withdraw from Afghanistan, ending 19 years of military engagement.



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MILITARY

Pacific allies pledge to work with Biden

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — America's strongest Pacific allies have called to congratulate President-elect Joe Biden and pledged to work with him on issues ranging from the coronavirus pandemic to security and economic recovery.

The leaders of South Korea, Japan and Australia each released details of the calls Thursday with more information provided by Biden's official website, BuildBackBetter.com.

Biden told all three leaders that he wanted to work with them on challenges including the coronavirus, climate change, global economic recovery, strengthening democracy and security, according to the website.

In his call with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, Biden expressed his desire to strengthen the U.S.-South Korea alliance as the linchpin of security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, Biden's website stated. The president-elect praised Moon's leadership on the coronavirus and said he looks forward to cooperating with him on North Korea and other issues.

"We reaffirmed our firm commitment to a robust [South Korea]-U.S. alliance and peaceful and prosperous Korean Peninsula," Moon tweeted in Korean after the call.

Biden, during his call with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, underscored his commitment to the defense of Japan and expressed his desire to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance in new areas, Biden's website stated.

The two also agreed to meet face-to-face as soon as possible, according to a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Then-Vice President Joe Biden speaks to military personnel inside the Taiyo Community Center at Yokota Air Base, Japan, in 2011.

Suga congratulated Biden, stressed the importance of the Japan-U.S. security alliance and asked for support on the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea, the spokesman said.

Biden told Suga that the United States would defend the Senkaku Islands, which are administered by Japan but also claimed by China and Taiwan, and the leaders affirmed that they would cooperate on the coronavirus pandemic and climate change, according to the spokesman.

During his call with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, the president-elect committed to strengthening the U.S.-Australia alliance.

"The President-elect underscored that the United States and

Australia share both values and history, and noted that the United States and Australia have fought side-by-side in every conflict since World War I," Biden's website stated.

Morrison said in a tweet after the call: "There are no greater friends and no greater allies than Australia and the U.S."

The calls to Biden came amid signs of warming between the Japan and South Korea, which have been at odds in recent years over an island territorial dispute and efforts to gain compensation for Koreans who say they had been forced into labor or prostitution by Imperial Japan.

Seoul's spy chief told Suga on Tuesday that Moon wants to mend relations, according to Japan's Kyodo News agency.

Park Jie Won, director of South Korea's National Intelligence Service, relayed Moon's "courteous request," during a 25-minute meeting with the Japanese prime minister, Kyodo reported Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Wednesday that Japan and the U.S. began negotiations this week over the support that Japan provides for U.S. troops stationed in the country.

A Biden administration won't employ the hardball negotiating tactics of the Trump administration, predicted Jeff Kingston, director of Asian studies at Temple University's Tokyo campus.

"There may be some cause to renegotiate, but I think they will do it in a more constructive

way," he said in a phone interview Thursday.

A ministry spokesman declined to discuss the details of the negotiations as to not impair Japan's position.

Trump had demanded Japan pay \$8 billion a year, up from \$2.5 billion, toward the cost of hosting more than 50,000 American troops in the country. Former national security adviser John Bolton wrote in his memoir, "The Room Where It Happened," published in June.

A new U.S. administration will likely move quickly to resolve a parallel dispute with South Korea over the costs of supporting 28,500 American troops on the divided peninsula, defense experts said Tuesday.

Biden will revive U.S. commitment to multilateralism, which is far better for Japanese security than Trump's "America First" approach, Kingston said.

Japan, however, will likely increase its support for U.S. forces if asked, he added.

"Japan lives in a dangerous neighborhood and the security risks facing the country have increased," he said. "Japan can't afford to replace the security capacity that the U.S. brings to the table."

A Biden administration will likely encourage any warming between South Korea and Japan, Kingston said.

"From the U.S. perspective, they would rather their two allies in Asia cooperate and deal with contemporary security threats rather than fight over a war in the previous century," he said.

Stars and Stripes reporters Yoo Kyong Chang and Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.

robson@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @sethrobson1

Biden suspects toxic exposure in Iraq killed son, has plan for ill vets

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden, like many other families of service members diagnosed with illnesses from overseas deployments, suspects toxic exposure may have been behind his son Beau's brain cancer.

Beau Biden boarded a military aircraft for Iraq on Nov. 19, 2008, just days after his father became vice president-elect. He deployed with the Delaware Army National Guard to Balad Air Base, where the U.S. military burned an estimated 140 tons of waste a day in open-air burn pits.

When he died in 2015, Beau Biden was 46.

In a 2019 speech to the Service Employees International Union, Biden said because of Beau's "exposure to burn pits, in my view, I can't prove it yet, he came back with stage 4 glioblastoma. Eighteen months he lived, knowing he was going to die."

Thousands of veterans who have also been struck by cancer

after being exposed to the burn pits or other toxins while serving overseas, it's Joe Biden's personal loss that makes them hopeful they may finally get the help they need.

Biden's military and veterans issues campaign director Leo Cruz told McClatchy the president-elect is ready to help.

"President-elect Joe Biden has made clear that our nation's most sacred obligation is to take care of the members of our military and their families, when they're deployed and when they return home," Cruz said.

Biden's plan "includes expanding the list of presumptive conditions to include exposure to burn pits or other environmental toxins, and increasing research dollars by \$300 million to invest in better understanding the impact of (traumatic brain injury) and toxic exposures."

Despite years of data and more than 200,000 veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan and other bases throughout the Middle

East who have reported cancers, respiratory illnesses or neurological health problems to the Department of Veterans Affairs, many of their claims continue to be denied.

The VA still says there is not enough evidence to determine that the contaminants the service members were exposed to overseas are the cause of their illnesses when they return home.

Rosie Torres founded the toxic exposure advocacy group Burn Pits 360 after her husband, retired Army Capt. Le Roy Torres, came home with a debilitating lung disease after a deployment to Balad Air Base in Iraq from 2007 to 2008. The base, like hundreds of others in Afghanistan and Iraq, had multiple areas for disposal of metals, human waste, ammunition, trash that were burned with jet fuel.

Service members assigned to those bases were exposed to harmful particulates from the burn pit smoke on a daily basis.

Balad stopped using open-air

burn pits in 2009 over health concerns.

Torres and a coalition of veterans advocacy groups are pushing for the VA to approve the illnesses as presumptive conditions, which would take away the burden currently on veterans to prove their cancers or other conditions are connected to their military service to have their treatments covered by the VA health system.

"Biden lost his son who was deployed to a base where many others died from the same illness," Torres said. "I feel like this would be his way of honoring Beau."

But for years, including when Biden served as vice president in the Obama administration, help for those veterans has been pushed back as the VA has said it required more study to determine a service connection.

Former VA Secretary David Shulkin told McClatchy that the VA's current position "leaves many veterans just simply waiting."

Veterans have said they are done waiting.

"We are overdue," said Jeremy Butler, chief executive officer of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). "It's just like with K2, where it's been 20 years, and they've got nothing on health care, no response from the government."

K2, or Karshi-Khanabad, is a former Soviet base in Uzbekistan where U.S. special operations forces were sent just weeks after the 9/11 attacks.

Last year, McClatchy reported that the Pentagon knew as early as 2001 that the base had remnants of processed uranium and chemical weapons, as well as pools of fuel and solvents. Hundreds who served there have been diagnosed with cancer.

"Our goal is to get into 2021 with a renewed focus," Butler said. "The fact we now have President-elect Biden is going to make it a lot easier to get things done. He is someone who understands in a way few civilians do."

PACIFIC

Japanese forces pit service staples in popularity contest

By AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Trash talking on Twitter has reached the upper echelons of the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

In a tweet Oct. 29 by the Japan Air Self-Defense Force, the chief of staff, Gen. Shunji Izutsu, shared a photo collage with Adm. Hiroshi Yamamura, chief of staff of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

“Listen JMSDF, curry’s prime time is over,” says the caption next to Izutsu’s photo.

Curry is the favored dish among the sea-going force. The air wing prides itself on its outstanding fried chicken.

“Hey JASDF, we don’t think you have what it takes,” Yamamura tweeted in response.

The Twitter taunts over their respective dining specialties are part of the SDF’s use of social media to build morale and raise the services’ profiles among the public, according to a JASDF spokesman.

The public can weigh in another six days on a Twitter poll on the JMSDF or JASDF accounts. Of 9,000 votes already cast, the leading choice by a 60% margin is curry over fried chicken.

The battle for curry or chicken



Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force

Every Friday, the maritime bases around Japan post photos of their curries on social media.

unfolded Oct. 27 with a challenge from Yamamura on the JMSDF website that threw a hint of shade: “We heard that JASDF Chief of Staff Izutsu launched a ‘fried chicken’ campaign against our famous curry. We are not sure whether we should quietly support the campaign or not.”

The statement concluded with the Japanese character for “laugh.”

Laughing matter or not, the JASDF responded on its website with a statement from Izutsu with

the polite suggestion of you’re on. “We will do our best to promote our fried chicken,” according to Izutsu’s statement, “so please accept our challenge.”

The JMSDF website lists 33 curry recipes from various bases around Japan as well as original recipes from individual vessels.

At Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, home of the JMSDF Fleet Air Wing 31, the dining hall specialty is keema curry topped off with locally grown renkon, or lotus root.



Japan Air Self-Defense Force

Gen. Shunji Izutsu, chief of staff for the Japan Air Self-Defense Force, pretends to feed fried chicken to the service’s mascot.

At Naha Air Base on Okinawa, the favorite is curry with juicy rice, the locally famous rice mixed with seaweed and vegetables and cooked in a soy-sauce dashi broth. The curry is fruit-based and sweet, and topped with nankotsu soki, or mouth-watering, slow-cooked sparerib cartilage.

Curry was embedded in Japan’s navy from the start. The Imperial Japanese Navy was modeled at its founding in 1872 on the Royal Navy, according to the JMSDF website. The British fed their sailors curry because it’s tasty, rich in nutrition and easy to make in bulk.

The Japanese navy started serving curry on Saturdays but eventually switched to Fridays after the government closed for

business on the weekends. According to the JMSDF website, its troops consume about 45 tons of curry a year, about 2.25 million meals.

Every Friday, the maritime bases around Japan post photos of their curries on social media which elicit such comments as “Wow it looks delicious!” and “Makes me want to eat curry for lunch!”

On JASDF bases, the last Friday of the month is karaage, or fried chicken, day. Its website lists 66 recipes across its installations. Each air base adds local staples to spice up its signature dish, according to the website.

The air force uses a unique kanji character that represents “sky” and “rise” to describe its fried chicken because the JASDF, like its U.S. counterpart, aims higher, according to its website.

The JASDF has no plans to expand its fried chicken option beyond once a month, a spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone Nov. 3.

“We have been promoting our karaage since March 2018 and we are happy to get recognized by media lately,” the JASDF spokesman said. “Our goal is to get more popular than maritime curry.”

ichihashi.aya@stripes.com
Twitter: @ayaiichihashi



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VIRUS OUTBREAK

709K seek US jobless aid as infections rise

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits fell last week to 709,000, a still-high level but the lowest figure since March and a sign that the job market might be slowly healing.

The figures coincide with a sharp resurgence in confirmed coronavirus infections to an all-time high above 120,000 a day. Cases are rising in 49 states, and deaths are increasing in 39. The nation has now recorded 240,000 virus-related deaths and 10.3 million confirmed infections.

As colder weather sets in and fear of the virus escalates, consumers may turn more cautious about traveling, shopping, dining out and visiting gyms, barber shops and retailers. Companies in many sectors could cut jobs or workers' hours. In recent days, the virus' resurgence has triggered tighter restrictions on businesses, mostly restaurants and bars, in a range of states, includ-

ing Texas, New York, Maryland and Oregon.

Last week's new applications for unemployment benefits was down from 757,000 the previous week, the Labor Department said Thursday. The still-elevated figure shows that eight months after the pandemic flattened the economy, many employers are still slashing jobs.

The number of people who are continuing to receive traditional unemployment benefits fell to 6.8 million, the government said, from 7.2 million. That suggests that more Americans are finding jobs and no longer receiving unemployment aid. But it also indicates that many jobless people have used up their state unemployment aid — which typically expires after six months — and have transitioned to a federal extended benefits program that lasts 13 more weeks.

The viral outbreak threatens to upend the improvement in the job market in recent months. The unemployment rate plunged a full percentage point in October



A man wearing a mask walks under a Now Hiring sign at a CVS Pharmacy during the coronavirus outbreak in May in San Francisco. On Thursday, the Labor Department announced that the number of people seeking unemployment benefits fell last week to 709,000, the fourth straight drop.

to 6.9% while employers added a solid 600,000 new jobs.

Even so, weekly applications for jobless aid remain at historically high levels. The applications likely include some people who lost jobs weeks ago but who have had to wait for states to process their claims. Some of them might not have filed for benefits until last week even though they were laid off earlier.

Workers can also seek aid if

they're still working but have had their hours cut. Still others might have lost jobs more than once; when they file for benefits again, it can count as a new claim.

The job market remains severely damaged. The economy still has roughly 10 million fewer jobs than it had before the pandemic — a total that exceeds all the jobs that vanished in the 2008-2009 Great Recession. Government stimulus, in the form of federal

unemployment benefits, aid for small businesses and checks to most individuals has largely run out. Without further assistance, economists worry that more restaurants and other small businesses will close and the plight of the unemployed will worsen.

And unless Congress extends their benefits, millions of jobless people will run out of aid entirely by year's end.

12 new cases reported from cluster at Iwakuni

By JOSEPH DITZLER
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. military reported 20 new coronavirus cases in Japan and South Korea on Wednesday and Thursday, including 12 at a Marine base in western Japan.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni reported 11 new infections Thursday, all discovered during widespread testing on base after three people tested positive earlier in the week.

A 12th individual tested positive after arriving at MCAS Iwakuni on the Patriot Express, a U.S.-Japan passenger flight contracted by the military, and going straight into mandatory quarantine, according to a news release Wednesday.

The discovery of three cases Monday prompted the air station to temporarily confine Marines from one unit to their homes and barracks, along with their families and other contacts. Two more people tested positive the following day.

The base has not identified the source of the infections. MCAS Iwakuni is about 540 miles west of Tokyo and 30 miles southwest of Hiroshima.

The most recent cases were discovered during a testing campaign, according to a news release Thursday.

"These individuals, along with several hundred others, were tested as part of a large-scale testing initiative for those in proximity to the positive cases announced on" Monday and Tuesday, according to the air station. "That testing is now complete."

U.S. Forces Korea announced six new coro-



Aaron Kido/Stars and Stripes

A floor decal reminds patrons to practice social distancing at a Tokyo mall Sunday.

navirus infections Thursday among people who flew into Osan Air Base between Nov. 3 and Wednesday.

Five service members and one dependent arrived on flights from the United States on Nov. 3, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, according to a USFK news release. Five tested positive upon arrival and before going into quarantine; the sixth tested positive in quarantine.

Back in Japan, two people at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa tested positive after experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus, according to a post on the base Facebook page Thursday.

The two became ill Saturday and isolated themselves before being quarantined by base health authorities on Tuesday and Wednes-

day. Five of their close contacts tested negative but remain quarantined awaiting further tests, according to the post.

Anyone affiliated with the U.S. military must be tested for the coronavirus upon arrival in Japan and South Korea, spend a minimum 14 days in isolation and test free of the virus before leaving quarantine. The order covers service members, Defense Department civilian employees, contractors and family members.

The six in South Korea were moved into quarantine at Osan and the Army's Camp Humphreys, according to USFK.

The command has reported a pandemic total of 325 coronavirus cases in South Korea; only 27 individuals contracted the virus locally.

Okinawa prefecture on Thursday reported one new coronavirus infection at Camp Foster, a Marine Corps base, a prefectural public health official told Stars and Stripes by phone.

The Marine Corps, which experienced cluster outbreaks that totaled more than 300 individuals over the summer, stopped reporting individual cases in early November.

Most new infections reported by the U.S. military in Japan and South Korea originate with new arrivals from the U.S. or returning travelers.

While USFK specifies whether new patients are service members, civilian employees or family members, the U.S. military in Japan does not.

ditzler.joseph@stripes.com
Twitter: @josephditzler
ichihashi.aya@stripes.com
Twitter: @ayalichihashi

Navy's virus 'authorized departures' expire Dec. 9

Stars and Stripes

Navy family members who left duty stations under an authorized departure because of the coronavirus pandemic should return to their base by Dec. 9, the service announced.

In a Navy administrative memo, the service said it was ending a global authorized departure enacted in September that allowed family members and civilians to return to the United States because of the pandemic, particularly if they were at high risk for the virus.

Exceptions to the return order may be requested and will be considered on a case-by-case basis, the Navy said. All extensions must end prior to March 8, it said.

Family members who do not want to return to their permanent duty station because of health or security concerns may request an early return of dependents, the Navy said. Such requests should be routed as soon as possible to the relevant combatant command for consideration.

VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Calif. nears 1M confirmed cases

Associated Press

California will be the second state — behind Texas — to eclipse a million known coronavirus cases. The grim milestone in a state of 40 million comes as the United States has surpassed 10 million infections.

The timeline of COVID-19 in America often comes back to California. It had some of the earliest known cases among travelers from China, where the outbreak began. The Feb. 6 death of a San Jose woman is the first known coronavirus fatality in the U.S. That same month, California recorded the first U.S. case not related to travel and the first infection spread within the community.

The virus has struck poor Californians and Latinos especially hard. Latinos make up 39% of the population but account for more than 60% of infections.

In working-class neighborhoods near downtown Los Angeles, one in five people tested positive at community clinics during the pandemic's early days, said Jim Mangia, president and chief executive of St. John's Well Child and Family Center.

Georgia

ATLANTA — A Catholic high school in Georgia switched to online learning this week after Atlanta's No student protests positive for the coronavirus, which they may have contracted at a Halloween party hosted by a student's family, officials said.

St. Pius X Catholic High School went fully virtual Monday and will remain so throughout the week with no extracurricular activities, news outlets reported Wednesday.

The DeKalb County school had nearly 50 positive cases as of Monday, an increase of 19 since last Friday, according to officials with the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Archdiocesan spokeswoman Maureen Smith said the school was performing contact tracing to determine who can return to school Monday.

Smith said the school is assuming a "bulk" of the cases came from the Halloween party.

Maryland

WESTMINSTER — A Maryland county's Board of Education has voted to allow hybrid learning at local high schools starting Thursday, although coronavirus cases in the area have increased steadily since October.

Carroll County's Board of Education unanimously voted on Wednesday to allow high school students to participate in a hybrid learning model starting Thursday, news outlets reported.

Students in an "A" cohort will attend class on Thursday and Friday. The "A" cohort will go Mon-

day and Tuesday.

At Wednesday's meeting, County health officer Ed Singer said that he wouldn't recommend bringing high schoolers back Thursday.

Michigan

DETROIT — Michigan's largest school district will suspend in-person classes next week, joining other districts that have shifted to online-only classes as coronavirus cases rise significantly around the state, officials said Thursday.

Detroit Superintendent Nikolai Vitti said he can't ignore a city infection rate that is climbing after reaching nearly 5% last week.

Vitti faced criticism from some teachers and activists for offering a face-to-face option for its roughly 50,000 students, but he said families deserved options.

The state reported 6,008 new infections Wednesday and 42 additional deaths.

North Dakota

BISMARCK — The North Dakota Nurses Association says it does not support a move to allow health care workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 but do not have symptoms to remain on the job.

Gov. Doug Burgum supports the idea as part of an effort to ease stress both on hospitals and medical personnel trying to keep up with skyrocketing coronavirus cases in North Dakota.

The governor said hospital administrators asked for the action to be taken, and interim State Health Officer Dirk Wilke amended an order to allow it to take effect.

The nurses association says guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the decision should be left to the COVID-19 positive nurse and their willingness to work.

If a nurse believes she or he is not well enough to provide safe patient care and chooses not to work under these circumstances, employers should not retaliate against the nurse for making this decision, the association said.

New Jersey

NEWARK — Residents in some parts of New Jersey's largest city are facing a 9 p.m. curfew for at least the rest of the month as officials seek to stop a surge in coronavirus infections.

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka imposed the new measures, which went into effect immediately, on Wednesday. They include a mandatory 9 p.m. weekday curfew and 10 p.m. weekend curfew for parts of three ZIP codes where virus cases have spiked recently.

Indoor and outdoor gatherings are limited to 10 people, and all



ROSELIO V. SOLIS/AP

A Target employee prepares to hand a customer a curbside pickup purchase in Jackson, Miss., last week. Retailers and carriers are preparing for a holiday shipping surge that could mean delays in holiday gifts. Stores are pushing their customers to buy early to smooth out the peaks in the weeks leading up to Christmas. And they're further expanding services like curbside pickup to minimize online shipping.

sports in the city are suspended for at least two weeks. The city is also banning visitation at long-term health care facilities for the same duration.

The new restrictions go beyond statewide measures announced earlier in the week by Gov. Phil Murphy, who ordered bars and restaurants to halt indoor dining between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. beginning Thursday.

Nonessential businesses in Newark must already close at 8 p.m. and restaurant and bars

must cease indoor service at 8 p.m., under an executive order signed by the mayor two weeks ago.

Vermont

BURLINGTON — The city of Burlington is setting up pop-up clinics in the New North End to test for the virus that causes COVID-19 after it was found in wastewater.

The free tests will be offered Thursday and Friday at the Rob-

ert Miller Community and Recreation Center.

City officials said wastewater monitoring shows the virus may be on the rise in the area. Detection of the virus in wastewater can occur as much as three to seven days before it is found in positive tests.

On Thursday, the tests will be offered from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. On Friday, they will be offered from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

While the tests are free, appointments are required.

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REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP

A postal worker collects mail from a mailbox Tuesday inside the protest pen, where a handful of supporters of President Donald Trump continue to demonstrate outside the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia.

Few legal wins so far as Trump's team hunts for proof of voter fraud

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — During a Pennsylvania court hearing this week on one of the many election lawsuits brought by President Donald Trump, a judge asked a campaign lawyer whether he had found any signs of fraud from among the 592 ballots challenged.

The answer was no. "Accusing people of fraud is a pretty big step," said the lawyer, Jonathan Goldstein. "We're all just trying to get an election done."

Trump has not been so cautious, insisting without evidence that the election was stolen from him even when election officials nationwide from both parties say there has been no conspiracy.

On Wednesday, Trump took aim at Philadelphia, the Democratic stronghold that helped push President-elect Joe Biden over the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the race. The president accused a local Republican election official, Al Schmidt, of ignoring "a mountain of corruption & dishonesty." Twitter added a label that said the election fraud claim is disputed.

Trump loyalists have filed at least 15 legal challenges in Pennsylvania alone in an effort to reclaim the state's 20 electoral votes. There is action, too, in Georgia, Arizona, Nevada and Michigan.

In court, his lawyers must walk a precarious line between advocating for their client and upholding their professional oath.

Legal ethicists and pro-democracy activists have questioned the participation of lawyers in this quest, as Trump elings to power and President-elect Joe Biden rolls out his agenda.

"This may be an attempt to appease the ego in chief, but there are real-world consequences for real people that come out of that,"

said Loyola Law School professor Justin Levitt, a former Justice Department elections official. "The attempt to soothe the president's ego is not a victimless crime."

Schmidt told CBS' "60 Minutes" that his office has received death threats simply for counting votes.

"From the inside looking out, it feels all very deranged," Schmidt said in an interview that aired Sunday. "Counting votes cast on or before Election Day by eligible voters is not corruption. It is not cheating. It is democracy."

Untold voters, however, are accepting Trump's claim about a rigged election and are donating to his legal fund.

A law firm involved in the election suits, Ohio-based Porter Wright Morris & Arthur, appeared to take down its Twitter feed Tuesday after it was inundated with attacks. The firm declined to address questions from The Associated Press about the feed in a statement issued Wednesday that said it had a long history of election work.

A second firm, Jones Day, said it was representing not the Trump campaign but the Pennsylvania GOP, in litigation before the U.S. Supreme Court over the three-day extension to accept mail-in ballots.

Nationally, the strategy is being run by Trump allies such as Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal attorney, political operative David Bossie, who is not an attorney, and Jay Sekulow, a lead lawyer during the president's impeachment trial this year. Bossie recently tested positive for COVID-19.

Election law expert Rick Hasen said he would expect to see top-drawer Supreme Court litigators involved, such as two former solicitors general, Paul Clement and Theodore Olson, if Trump had a strong case.

"There are certain names of

elite lawyers that signal to the Supreme Court that something is serious," said Hasen, a professor at the University of California, Irvine. Instead, "the campaign announced that it was putting Rudy Giuliani and David Bossie in charge."

In another head-scratching moment, as the campaign tried to stop the vote count in Philadelphia last week, a judge tried to get to the bottom of a Republican complaint over observer access in the room where election workers were processing mail-in ballots.

"I am asking you as a member of the bar of this court, are people representing the Donald J. Trump for president (campaign) ... in that room?" U.S. District Judge Paul S. Diamond asked.

"There's a nonzero number of people in the room," campaign lawyer Jerome Marcus replied.

Diamond made the two sides forge an agreement and threatened to charge them with contempt if they didn't keep the peace.

Some of the suits filed on Trump's behalf appear to be hastily thrown together, with spelling errors ("ballet" for "ballot"), procedural mistakes and little to back up their claims. Judges have been skeptical.

In Michigan, Judge Cynthia Stephens dismissed one filing as "inadmissible hearsay within hearsay." When Trump's lawyers appealed, the next court kicked the filing back as "defective."

The campaign has scored just one small victory, allowing their observers to stand a little closer to election workers processing the mail-in ballots in Philadelphia. But the litigation keeps coming, usually centered on accusations from partisan poll watchers, who have no auditing role in the election, that something untoward may have happened, without evidence to back it up.

GOP unveils \$1.4T spending bill amid turmoil of election

By ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans controlling the Senate unveiled a government-wide, \$1.4 trillion spending bill on Tuesday, a largely uncertain measure that faces uncertain odds during this period of post-election tumult in Washington.

The GOP-drafted measure contains funding for President Donald Trump's border wall and other provisions opposed by Democrats, but top leaders in both parties want to try to mount a drive to enact the unfinished spending bills — which, along with a separate COVID-19 relief effort and annual defense policy bill, represent the bulk of Capitol Hill's unfinished business for the year.

Success depends on getting the signature of Trump, however, whose unpredictability and toxic relationships with Democrats threaten to doom the effort. The recent history of lame-duck sessions conducted as the White House is turning over has been that unfinished spending bills get kicked into the next year, with existing funding simply left on autopilot.

"I've had this argument before and so far I've lost. I argued before 12 years ago, the Obama transition, that the best thing you could do to help the new president was to get this year's work done, and we didn't get it done," said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. "Four years ago I argued that ... and we didn't get it done."

Disuse is the roughly one-third of the federal budget that is written annually by Congress under a time-tested bipartisan process. The overall spending amount has been set in law by last year's bipartisan budget mini-deal, so any delay into next year won't likely result in more money for the federal administration. Current funding expires Dec. 12.

The 12 spending measures, released by Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby, R-Ala., have been stalled for months, trapped by fights over COVID relief and potential battles over police reform issues. But he has the backing of top panel Democrat Patrick Leahy of

Vermont. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York to at least pursue the effort. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., herself a long-ago veteran of the Appropriations Committee, would also like to wrap up the unfinished business.

"By and large, these bills are the product of bipartisan cooperation among members of the committee," Shelby said in a statement. "Time after time, we have demonstrated our willingness to work together and get the job done. We have before us the opportunity to deliver for the American people once again."

But Leahy carefully avoided endorsing the measure outright and instead criticized the legislation for shortchanging safety net programs and the environment, ignoring COVID-19 relief and wasting money on unused detention beds for immigrants entering the country illegally.

Large swaths of the measure are indeed bipartisan, including a \$696 billion defense budget that adds 96 F-35 fighters to the Pentagon's ranks, funds nine Navy ships and provides \$69 billion for overseas military operations. It adopts \$2 billion for 82 miles of border wall, certain to be fought by Democrats, along with \$8.8 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement that Democrats charge isn't needed because there are fewer apprehensions of illegal border-crossers.

NASA, health research and veterans' programs would all be rewarded with healthy increases, while foreign aid and education programs would get smaller increases.

If the catch-all bill is to advance, it would have to contain COVID relief such as funding to help schools reopen, vaccinate the country, help the jobless and boost the economy.

"This country is headed for a deadly winter and it is long past time for us to provide the resources the country needs to get this virus under control and our economy back open," Leahy said in a statement. "These bills do not provide any such relief. It is imperative that we do what is necessary to stop this pandemic from spreading."

‘Time after time, we have demonstrated our willingness to work together and get the job done. We have before us the opportunity to deliver for the American people once again.’

Sen. Richard Shelby
R-Ala., Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman

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NATION

Tropical Storm Eta dumps rain on Florida

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Tropical Storm Eta dumped torrents of blustery rain on Florida's west coast as it moved over Florida after making landfall north of the heavily populated Tampa Bay area Thursday morning.

The storm slogged ashore near Cedar Key, Fla., with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph. The National Hurricane Center in Miami predicted Eta would then move northeast across Florida as it loses strength. Eta briefly gained hurricane strength Wednesday morning, but forecasters said it later weakened to tropical storm status.

In Bradenton Beach, Mark Mixon stepped into his flooded garage as he was laying sandbags around his home on Wednesday evening and was electrocuted, said Jacob Saur, director of public safety for Manatee County. There were appliances plugged into the garage and when Mixon stepped into the water, he was killed, Saur said.

Rescue crews had to wait for Florida Power and Light, which was responding to power outages from the storm, to deenergize the grid for the neighborhood where Mixon lived before they could assist, Saur said.

There were no other immediate reports of any injuries or serious damage in the Tampa Bay area as the storm skirted past that region Wednesday afternoon. Several tornado warnings were issued, but there were no reports of one touching down.

On Thursday morning, much of the Tampa Bay area was under a storm surge warning. The storm forced officials to close some lanes on two of the three bridges that cross Tampa Bay, connecting the St. Petersburg area to Tampa, the Tampa Bay Times reported. The Sunshine Skyway Bridge, which links Pinellas and Manatee counties, also remained closed early Thursday.



LYNNE SLADKY/AP

People walk past boats on the beach in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Eta on Thursday in Gulfport, Fla.



DOUGLAS R. CLIFFORD, TAMPA BAY TIMES/AP

Kaden Mobley, 12, of New Port Richey, counts sandbags while helping load a truck Wednesday in New Port Richey, Fla.

Firefighters in Tampa rescued around a dozen people who got stuck in flooding on Bayshore Boulevard. On Thursday morning, there were still a few abandoned

vehicles on the flooded roadway, WFTS in Tampa reported.

Late Wednesday residents of Twin Cities Mobile Home Park in St. Petersburg were forced to

evacuate because of flooding, the television station reported.

The storm had meandered in the Gulf of Mexico since crossing over South Florida on Sunday. At 4:20 a.m. EST Thursday, Eta was centered about 5 miles north-northeast of Cedar Key and moving northeast near 13 mph.

Eta is forecast to dissipate over the western Atlantic Ocean by the weekend.

The Tampa Bay region is home to more than 3.5 million people across five coastal counties. No mandatory evacuations were ordered, but authorities opened shelters for anyone needing them. Local media reported only a handful of people showed up.

The forecast prompted school officials in Pasco and Pinellas counties, which include St. Petersburg, to send students home early Wednesday. Both counties announced schools would remain closed Thursday, while neighboring Hillsborough County planned

to keep schools closed through Friday.

Tampa International Airport suspended operations Wednesday afternoon, but was up and running early Thursday after the storm passed. Airport officials urged travelers to check flight statuses with their airlines.

Also in Tampa, the Busch Gardens theme park announced it was closed Wednesday, and several Veterans Day events in the area were canceled. A coronavirus testing site at Tropicana Field was also closed Wednesday.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis issued an expanded emergency declaration to include 13 counties along or near the Gulf coast, adding them to South Florida counties. DeSantis also asked for an early emergency order from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to free resources needed to tackle the storm. President Donald Trump granted the request Wednesday evening.

The hurricane center said "life-threatening storm surge" was possible early Thursday, and forecasters advised residents to heed warnings from local officials.

The storm first hit Nicaragua as a Category 4 hurricane and killed at least 120 people in Central America and Mexico, with scores more missing. It then moved into the Gulf of Mexico early Monday near where the Everglades meet the sea.

Eta hit land late Sunday as it blew over Lower Matecumbe Key, in the middle of the chain of small islands that form the Florida Keys, but the heavily populated areas of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties bore the brunt of the fury with heavy rainfall.

It was the 28th named storm of a busy Atlantic hurricane season, tying the 2005 record for named storms. And late Monday, it was followed by the 29th storm, Theta, located far out in the Atlantic Ocean hundreds of miles from the Azores.

New Yorker fires longtime writer Toobin following Zoom incident

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The New Yorker has fired longtime staff writer Jeffrey Toobin after he reportedly exposed himself during a Zoom conference last month.

He had already been on suspension and is also on leave from CNN, where he is chief legal analyst.

"I was fired today by @NewYorker after 27 years as a Staff Writer. I will always love the magazine, I will miss my colleagues, and I will look forward to reading their work," Toobin tweeted Wednesday.

In a company memo, Conde Nast Chief People Officer Stan Dunco wrote that his "investigation regarding Jeffrey Toobin is complete, and as a result, he is no longer affiliated with our company."

"I want to assure everyone that we take workplace matters seriously. We are commit-

ted to fostering an environment where everyone feels respected and upholds our standards of conduct," Duncan said.

Toobin, 60, is one of the country's most prominent legal authors and commentators.

He is a former associate counsel in the Department of Justice who for the New Yorker has written about everything from the O.J. Simpson murder trial to the impeachment hearings of President Donald Trump.

He has been with CNN since 2002 and is the author of several books, most recently "True Crimes and Misdemeanors: The Investigation of Donald Trump," published in August.



Toobin

Memoir by Sen. Duckworth set for March 30 release

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Sen. Tammy Duckworth has written a memoir, "Every Day Is a Gift," which comes out March 30.

Twelve, a Hachette Book Group imprint, announced the deal with Sen. Duckworth on Thursday, the 16th anniversary of the day she was shot down in a helicopter while serving in Iraq and lost both of her legs.

"I am grateful to be able to tell my personal American story with the help of Sean and Twelve," the Illinois Democrat said in a statement, referring to Twelve publisher Sean Desmond. "My life has been filled with unexpected challenges and painful experiences, but also with the rewards that come with service and perseverance."

The 52-year-old Duckworth will tell of her life from her childhood in Southeast Asia and Hawaii to her 23 years in the Army to her time in public service.

She was elected in 2016 to the U.S. Senate, where she became the first sitting Senator to give birth. Over the past year, she was mentioned as a possible running mate for Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, who ended up choosing Sen. Kamala Harris of California.

Financial terms for Duckworth's book were not disclosed.

She was represented by Robert Barnett, the Washington attorney who also has worked on deals for Biden, now president-elect, and for former President Barack Obama.

WORLD

Australian forces to be prosecuted for war crimes

By Rod McGuirk
Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia on Thursday announced a new investigative agency to build criminal cases against Australian special forces suspected of committing war crimes in Afghanistan.

The Office of the Special Investigator is to be formed after a four-year investigation into allegations and rumors surrounding behavior of some soldiers in Special Air Service and Commando Regiments in Afghanistan from 2005 and 2016.

Benjamin Roberts-Smith, Australia's most highly-decorated member of the armed services when he left the SAS in 2013, has been accused by former colleagues of unlawful treatment of prisoners including illegally killing prisoners. The former corporal, who was awarded the Victoria Cross and the Medal for Gallantry for his service in Afghanistan, has denied any misconduct.

Defense Force Chief Gen. Angus Campbell will make public a redacted report on the four-year investigation next week.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the new agency, headed by a retired judge or senior criminal lawyer, was needed because the workload would "seriously overwhelm" existing police resources.

"This report will be difficult news and all of our partners must be assured and those around the world who rightly hold the Australian Defense Forces in high regard," Morrison told reporters.

"In Australia, we deal with this stuff and we deal with it honestly, but in accordance through the rule of law and by following the justice practices and principles that makes Australia what it is," he added.

Two Australian Broadcasting

Corp. journalists until recently faced potential prison sentences for using leaked classified defense documents as a basis for a 2017 report that detailed allegations of Australian soldiers killing unarmed men and children.

Police raided ABC Sydney headquarters with search warrants last year but prosecutors decided that charging the journalists would not be in the public interest.

Prosecuting alleged Australian war criminals is expected to take years.

"These are incredibly complex events involving actions and conduct in another country, in a war," Morrison said.

"This is not a simple matter ... and so it will take as long as it needs to take to ensure we deal with our dual objectives of addressing the justice that is necessary in accordance with our laws and systems but also ensuring the integrity of our defense forces on which we all rely," he added.

Neil James, chief executive of the Australian Defense Association think tank, said the Australian military wanted soldiers to have their day in court to end a "continuous rumor mill."

"It's certainly the case that they're going to take a long time because we're talking about a complex investigation, witnesses will have to be interviewed under caution, in many cases those witnesses will be overseas, and in some cases it'll be hard to interview them because they are in enemy-held territory in a war zone," James said.

"So the complexity of this is going to be difficult, but it's got to be faced because ... Australia has to face up to this, that things did go wrong and we need to fix it," he added.

Around 39,000 Australians served in Afghanistan and 41 were killed.



Basilio Sere/AP

Rescuers assist trapped residents during a rescue operation in Providence village in Marikina City, east of Manila, Philippines, on Thursday.

Typhoon Vamco pummels already storm-beaten northeast Philippines

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — A typhoon swelled rivers and flooded low-lying areas as it passed over the storm-battered northeastern Philippines, where rescuers worked Thursday to help people flee the rising waters.

Rescue officials said at least three people had been killed — two in Camarines Norte province and another in the town of Tanay in Rizal province.

Typhoon Vamco passed north of Manila between Bulacan and Pampanga provinces, toppling trees and knocking out power. Officials said earlier that nearly 200,000 people had been evacuated, some forcibly, from vulnerable coastal and low-lying areas.

Officials said about 1.9 million households were without power in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Many electrical poles were toppled, power lines were knocked down and power transformers were damaged.

President Rodrigo Duterte took a break from an online summit of Southeast Asian leaders to fly by helicopter over the affected

areas.

"As president, I guarantee you that your government will do its best to provide assistance in the form of shelters, relief funds, financial aid and post-disaster counseling. Rest assured, the government will not leave anybody behind. We will get through this crisis," Duterte said in a televised address.

Rescue teams were deployed to flooded areas in Rizal province, coast guard chief Adm. George Ursabia told DZBB radio.

Marikina city Mayor Marcie Teodoro said fierce winds knocked down power lines overnight, leaving many areas without power and internet service. Heavy rains also flooded many areas and the Marikina River was swollen. Many people in Marikina city were waiting to be rescued from roofs.

"There are many areas that historically don't get flooded but now they are swamped, like city hall," he told DZBB radio.

Mark Timal, spokesman for the government's disaster response agency, said 363 rescue teams had been deployed consist-

ing of 1,000 rescuers with at least 40 rubber boats.

The typhoon had maximum sustained winds of 80 mph with stronger gusts Thursday morning. It was moving west-northwest at 19 mph and was headed for the South China Sea.

The government's main disaster-response agency had pleaded to the media to relay typhoon alerts in northeastern areas devastated by an earlier typhoon, Goni, saying the agency's messages could not be sent by cellphones due to damaged telecommunications systems.

Goni, one of the strongest typhoons in the world this year, left more than 30 people dead or missing and damaged or destroyed more than 270,000 houses, many in coastal villages. Tens of thousands of people remain displaced.

The Philippines is hit by about 20 typhoons and tropical storms each year. It is located on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," where earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are common, making it one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

Refugee tells his account of fleeing from conflict in Ethiopia

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — The sound of heavy weapons erupted across the Ethiopian border town, and immediately Fillmon, a police officer, started to run.

Now, shaken and scared, he pauses when asked about his wife and two small children, ages 5 and 2. "I don't know where my family is now," he said, unsure if they were left behind in the fighting or are somewhere in the growing crowd of thousands of new refugees just over the border in Sudan.

In an interview with The Associated Press by phone on Thursday, the 30-year-

old gave one of the first witness accounts from what experts warn is a brewing civil war with devastating humanitarian consequences. The conflict could draw in neighboring countries, too.

Fillmon, who gave only his first name, said those attacking the Tigray regional town of Humera last week were coming from the direction of nearby Eritrea, though it was impossible to know whether the attackers were Eritrean forces.

Tigray regional leaders have accused Eritrea of joining the weeklong conflict in the region at the request of Ethiopia's federal

government, which regards the Tigray government as illegal. Ethiopia has denied the involvement of Eritrean forces.

Fillmon's worries are far more immediate, though. After a four-day journey on foot with some 30 others fleeing, he has spent two days in Sudan, exposed to the sun and wind in a border town that is quickly becoming overwhelmed. Close to 10,000 refugees have fled into Sudan, where local authorities are preparing for up to 200,000.

Tensions over the deadly conflict in Ethiopia are spreading well beyond its cut-

off northern Tigray region, as the federal government on Thursday said some 150 suspected "operatives" accused of seeking to "strike fear and terror" throughout the country had been detained.

The statement said the suspects "happen to be ethnically diverse," but concerns remain high among ethnic Tigrayans amid reports of being singled out by authorities.

Ethiopia's parliament voted to remove immunity from prosecution for 39 top Tigray region officials, including its president, accusing them of revolting and "attacking the federal army."

WORLD

Japanese company busy making Biden masks

Associated Press

SAITAMA, Japan — While surgical masks have been highly sought after this year, Joe Biden rubber masks are also seeing some demand.

Ogawa Studios, a Japanese manufacturer, began producing masks resembling the U.S. president-elect in the middle of October, ahead of last week's election.

Workers in Saitama, a city north of Tokyo, mold rubber to form a likeness of Biden's face, while features including his pearly white teeth and blue eyes are hand-painted.

"Biden's keywords are dialogue and healing, so we created it with the image of a gentle expression," said Kouki Takahashi, from the administration department of

Ogawa Studios.

So far, around 1,000 masks have been sold.

The same manufacturer was flooded with orders for Trump masks before Trump's inauguration as president four years ago.

While sales of Trump and Biden masks were about the same last month, Takahashi said they are seeing more sales in November for the president-elect.

The manufacturer said making politicians' masks is good for business.

"Compared to character products, politicians are in office for a long time, so their total sales tend to grow significantly as their popularity continues to grow," Takahashi said.

Trump and Biden masks are both sold for \$23 apiece in Japan.



PHOTOS BY EUGENE HOSHIKA/AP

An employee prepares rubber masks depicting President-elect Joe Biden at the Ogawa Studios in Saitama, north of Tokyo, on Wednesday.



An employee adds details to the Biden rubber masks.



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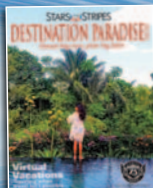


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STARS AND STRIPES

WORLD

St. Nicholas exempt from virus limits in Belgium

Associated Press

BUIZINGEN, Belgium — To ensure the merriment of millions of Belgian kids, the government is offering a special exemption from the stringent coronavirus measures to beloved St. Nicholas, who always delivers bountiful presents on the morning of Dec. 6.

In a tongue-in-cheek letter Thursday, the health and interior ministers soothed any worries for children fearing they might go without presents by saying the saint wouldn't have to stay in quarantine when arriving from red-zone Spain where he lives, and would be able to walk the rooftops to drop presents in chimneys even during curfew.

"Dear Saint, do what you do best: make every child happy. We are counting on you," Interior Minister Annelies Verindien and Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke said in the joint letter.

With Belgium one of the worst-hit countries in Europe, the government is enforcing a night curfew, tough quarantine rules and other measures to contain



VIRGINIA MAYO/AP

A statue of Saint Nicolas in front of the town hall of Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, on Nov. 13, 2014.

COVID-19

Despite the exemptions, the ministers did point out to St. Nicholas to "always respect distancing, wash hands regularly and wear a face mask," despite his long white beard.

The saint was supposed to get a big official welcome Saturday when his ship arrives in the port of Antwerp, but that event, usually attended by several hundred children, has been banned.

US envoy insists pressure on Iran will persist under Biden

By JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — The U.S. special representative for Iran insisted Thursday that a pressure campaign of sanctions targeting Iran would persist into the administration of Joe Biden, even as the president-elect has pledged to potentially return America to Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Elliot Abrams, who also serves as the U.S. special representative to Venezuela, said sanctions targeting Iran for human rights violations, its ballistic missile program and its regional influence would go on. That, as well as continued scrutiny by United Nations inspectors and American partners in the Mideast, would maintain that pressure, he said.

Iran now has far more uranium than allowed under the deal since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018. The Mideast also has been roiled by tensions between Tehran and Washington, which pushed the two countries to the

brink of war at the beginning of the year.

"Even if you went back to the (deal) and even if the Iranians were willing to return ... this newly enriched uranium, you would not have solved these really fundamental questions of whether Iran is going to be permitted to violate long-term commitments it has made to the world community," Abrams told The Associated Press in an interview at the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi.

Iran's politicians have increasingly discussed the possibility of the U.S. returning to the deal, which saw Iran limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Alireza Miryousefi, a spokesman for Iran's mission to the U.N., dismissed Abrams' comments.

"The policy of maximum pressure and sanctions against Iran has failed," Miryousefi told the AP. "The U.S. effort to abuse this corrupt policy is futile and will only lead to further isolation of the U.S. on the international stage."

Abrams replaced Brian Hook as America's envoy on Iran, who

announced he'd leave his post in August after serving as the face of Trump's maximum-pressure campaign. That effort has floundered internationally as the U.S. and its Gulf Arab allies failed to convince the U.N. to stop an arms embargo on Iran from expiring in October.

Iran's enriched uranium stockpile, which would have been under 660 pounds in the deal, now stands at over 5,380 pounds, according to the latest report by U.N. inspectors. That's potentially enough material to make at least two nuclear weapons, experts say, if Iran chose to pursue the bomb.

Iran also is enriching uranium to as much as 4.5% purity, higher than allowed under the accord but still far lower than weapons-grade levels of 90%. Tehran abandoned all limits on its enrichment months after Trump's pullout from the agreement, even as the deal's other international partners China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and Germany

have tried unsuccessfully to salvage it.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

School mascot dropped after complaints

HI HONOLULU — A Hawaii school plans to change its mascot after receiving complaints the name was disrespectful to Native Americans.

The Kahuku High and Intermediate School on Oahu will no longer be known as the Red Raiders, Hawaii News Now reported Monday.

Principal Donna Lindsey announced the change in a letter last week, which said the school received complaints that the nickname and use of a so-called tomahawk chop gesture by supporters were “disrespectful and potentially discriminatory toward Native Americans.”

DA: Store owners forced man to work every day

CA GILROY — A husband and wife have been charged with human trafficking for allegedly locking a man from India in a liquor store, where prosecutors said he worked 15-hour shifts seven days a week, slept in a storage room, bathed in a mop bucket and was never paid.

Amarjit and Balwinder Mann, both 66 and of Gilroy, are accused of threatening the alleged victim with deportation if he told the truth to law enforcement, Santa Clara County District Attorney’s office said in a statement Monday.

An investigation estimated that the couple, who own M&M Liquors in Gilroy and a nearby market, stole more than \$150,000 in wages from the victim and three other employees.

Boy escorted to last treatment for cancer

RI PROVIDENCE — A 9-year-old child arrived at Rhode Island Hospital for his last scheduled treatment for cancer flanked by a police escort, including more than half a dozen motorcycles, the police said.

Photos posted on the Warwick Police Department’s Facebook page on Monday show the Warwick boy, identified just as Cal, standing with officers, including two mounted on horseback.

The post said officers from Warwick, Bristol, Cranston, Portsmouth and Woonsocket Police Departments and the Cranston Fire Department were a part of the escort.

A Cranston police officer and her husband, who is a firefighter with the town, organized the effort, WPRI reported. Their son recovered from cancer last spring.

2021 Oklahoma City marathon postponed

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — Next year’s annual Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, run in honor of victims of the 1995 bombing that killed 168 and wounded many more, will again be postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic, race organizers announced Tuesday.

The 2021 event is set for the



GREG EANS, THE MESSENGER-INQUIRER/AP

Much to mulch

Bill Wathen works Tuesday at mulching leaves that have fallen from the maple tree in his front yard on Fawn Drive in Owensboro, Ky. “I’ve had to do this every other day for the past week,” Wathen said. “I decided to bag them rather than putting them on the curb.”

weekend of Oct. 2, in another reminder that the effects of COVID-19 — which the state says has killed more than 1,400 people in Oklahoma — won’t leave soon.

The 2020 event initially was pushed to October from April, when it is typically run. This year’s race — marking the 25th anniversary of the attack — was virtual to allow for social distancing.

“This is not just another marathon, this is one of Oklahoma City’s signature events that brings our whole community together,” said race director Kari Watkins. “If a few more months allows people to run together, it’s worth the delay.”

Experts still refer to the bombing on April 19, 1995, as the deadliest act of domestic terrorism on U.S. soil.

Nurses, front line workers getting a break

FL MIAMI — Over a dozen Miami nurses and front line health care workers are finally getting a well-deserved break. The group was scheduled for an upcoming mandatory, aka boring, 48-hour training, but were instead surprised with an island vacation to the Florida Keys.

Jackson Health System supervisors were asked to choose staff that went above and beyond during the pandemic. Many of the staff, including respiratory thera-

THE CENSUS

16

The number of cars towed after street racers took over multiple streets in Portland, Ore., on Sunday night. Portland police said more than 400 vehicles gathered for a speed racing event about 8 p.m. KOIN reported that some of the 14 people authorities say were arrested were from California and Washington state.

pists and lab techs, have not been able to take any time off during the pandemic to relax or spend time with their loved ones and have been working tirelessly during the pandemic treating COVID patients, the hospital said.

The 50 workers were told they had to attend a mandatory two-day, training, but when they gathered at the hospital Tuesday they were handed gift boxes with gift certificates.

Hawks Cay Resort in the Florida Keys donated two-night stays to their island on Duck Key, surrounded by sparkling waters and swaying palm trees as part of its Heroes Salute program.

Man indicted for threats over internet

MS JACKSON — An 18-year-old Mississippi man faces federal charges after posting multiple threats on the social media site Snapchat.

Christian Blake Bunyard, of Lauderdale County, was indicted Tuesday on two counts of making threats in interstate commerce

and one count of making an interstate transmission of an extortionate communication, said U.S. Attorney Mike Hurst and Special Agent in Charge Michelle A. Suthphin with the FBI in Mississippi.

According to the indictment, Bunyard used Snapchat in May and July to threaten a school shooting, to kill and rape African Americans in Oxford, Miss., and to rape another Snapchat user if she did not provide nude photos.

Police: Officer stole car from dealership

CA LOS ANGELES — A Los Angeles police officer was arrested Monday on suspicion of stealing a car from a Southern California dealership last year, authorities said.

LAPD Officer Matthew Calleros is accused of stealing a vehicle from a used car dealership in the city of Orange. The vehicle was reported stolen on Oct. 25, 2019, Orange police said in a Facebook post.

Calleros, 45, was booked into the Orange County jail Monday

night on suspicion of auto theft and possession of a stolen vehicle.

The LAPD assigned Calleros to home and suspended his police powers, according to a news release.

FBI: Man suspected of robbing banks arrested

AZ PHOENIX — A man suspected of robbing four Phoenix-area banks since September has been arrested, according to the FBI.

They said members of the FBI Phoenix Violent Crimes Task Force took William Cantrell, 29, into custody without incident following a bank robbery in Mesa last week.

FBI officials said Cantrell is being held on suspicion of four counts of bank robbery and one count of attempted bank robbery.

According to the FBI, the bank robberies occurred Sept. 18 in Glendale, Sept. 26 in Peoria, Oct. 2 in Avondale and Nov. 4 in Mesa with an attempted robbery Oct. 6 in Litchfield Park. FBI officials said the suspect approached a bank teller each time and presented a demand note.

The FBI didn’t disclose how much cash was taken in the robberies and if any of the money has been recovered.

From wire reports

WEEKEND



TV's orbit full of shows set in space

Page 34

GAME-CHANGER

PlayStation 5 console fulfills gamers' dreams of an immersive, sensory experience that pulls them deeper into virtual worlds

Overview of console, Page 20-21

Review of *Spider-Man: Miles Morales*, Page 21



WEEKEND: MOVIES



Focus Features

British actress Lesley Manville did some of her own stunt work in her role as an evil North Dakota matriarch in "Let Him Go."

Manville gives Western a shot

'Phantom Thread' actress playing against type in 'Let Him Go'

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Lesley Manville doesn't show up until about halfway through the slow-burn, '60s-set Western "Let Him Go," but the arrival of the platinum blonde Blanche Webo is worth the wait.

The matriarch of a North Dakota gang saunters into the frame in a haze of cigarette smoke and overcooked pork chops to greet her visitors, played by Kevin Costner and Diane Lane. It is anything but welcoming, and it's a true scene stealer.

The film, now playing in theaters state-side, is centered on a Montana couple (Lane and Costner), whose ex-daughter-in-law skips town with their grandson after marrying a new man. They set off to find them and get their 3-year-old grandson back. But Blanche, the mother of the new husband, has other plans.

"It's like Bette Davis embodied," Costner said of Manville. "She is a world-class actress and completely killed it in a very difficult, very difficult scene to pull off. She just kind of ran over that scene in such a beautiful way. We were lucky. We needed that kind of dynamic. She had to control the moment, and she did."

Blanche is the sort of role that doesn't come around very often. With more than 45 years of experience on stage and in film and television, Manville is one of the most versatile performers around and has the luxury to pick and choose roles in her home country. But even she

was "quite surprised" to get this script with an offer attached to play what she described in a recent interview as an unpleasant bad girl from North Dakota.

"Nothing gets me out of bed more excitedly in the morning than a character that's a million miles from me and not like the character that I have just played before or I'm going to play after," Manville said.

Plus, she'd get to share scenes with Costner and Lane.

"It was a no-brainer," she said. She got to work on the accent and figuring out the look of Blanche, who she imagined would have modeled herself on the blonde bombshells of the 1930s and 40s who were on screen when she was a little young.

"Even though she's in the middle of nowhere, those kinds of images would be very important to her. She still thinks she's got it. She still thinks she's fabulous and rocking this peroxide blond hair, even though she's got the telltale dark roots coming through," Manville said. "But I knew that you should also be able to kind of smell her. There's something a bit grubby about her."

Manville arrived for her scenes deep into production, and she was a little nervous to work with Costner and Lane whose careers she's watched for decades. "They're great actors, but they're also movie stars, and that can be intimidating," she said. "Although I say very, very quickly on the heels of that statement that neither of them play that role. They don't do the movie star thing. They are

workers like me."

The roll-your-sleeves-up mentality extended to the stunt work. When Manville saw that Costner was "throwing himself around" when things really start to escalate later in the film, she wanted to do it, too.

"I thought, yeah, I'm going to get down and dirty as well! If he can do it, I'm going to do it, too, having done none of it ever," Manville said, laughing. "I suddenly decided I was going to be the stunt girl. I was going to throw myself around. I was going to be handling that gun having never picked a gun up in my life. But I did have Kevin helping me. And I did it. And he said I did it really, really well, and that he was actually quite scared."

They didn't even need to use her stunt double, which she is particularly proud of.

"I got to flex muscles that I haven't really flexed before," she said. "It was just thrilling."

Credit for her casting, she said, goes to director Thomas Bezucha, who also wrote the adaptation of Larry Watson's 2013 novel. But he had to fight for her, and it's one fight she believes he wouldn't have won had she not gotten an Oscar nomination for Paul Thomas Anderson's "Phantom Thread." The 2017 film raised her profile in the U.S. and changed her career.

"Getting an Oscar nomination opens doors. It just does," she said. "And I'm enjoying the little door of America that's opened to me, but the criteria of what I choose to do will always be the same."

Actors bring soapy 'Let Him Go' to life

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Thomas Bezucha's adaptation of Larry Watson's 2013 novel, "Let Him Go," is at once spare and syrupy. Set in the American West in the early '60s, it's a soapy Western family noir, as one of the characters puts it, a "real blood feud," dampening the North Dakota soil upon which this war is fought.

Diane Lane and Kevin Costner star as Margaret and George Blackledge, a grieving Montana couple. Just a few short scenes set up their dilemma. George sings to their baby grandson Jimmy with their son and daughter-in-law. Then, a riderless horse; a body by the creek. Black clothing for a funeral, and then an uncomfortable wedding. Their grandson's new stepfather, Donny (Will Brittain), black-handing his mother, Lorna (Kayli Carter), on the street. A hastily vacated apartment. That's all we need to know to understand the quest on which Margaret sets, determined to go with or without her husband, to find Jimmy and bring him back. George joins her, of course.

In North Dakota, searching for their grandson and his new stepfamily, the Weboys, the Blackledges follow a trail of clues and small-town gossip that grows more and more ominous. The sunny yet steely Margaret leads with a forceful kindness, asserting "we're family" as a means of accessing her grandson. But at the end of a rural road, she finds a group of people she'd never want to be kin to.

The matriarch is Blanche Webo, an apt moniker for iconic English actress Lesley Manville's performance, which skews toward Blanche DuBois-style operatic. Chain-smoking, sporting a bleached blonde hairdo and Midwestern (?) accent, Manville is having some fun as the ultimate scary mommy. She rules her gang of violent, poorly-mannered boys with an iron fist, and she has no intention of giving up her new member, Jimmy.

Standing in opposition to the toxic Blanche is the equally determined Margaret, an eternal optimist. Although they are brutalized by the Weboys' intimidation tactics, the Blackledges won't stand down.

In addition to Lane, Costner and Manville, Jeffrey Donovan brings his signature brand of grinning menace to the role of Bill, Blanche's brother-in-law. And the cast is rounded out with a new generation of promising performers in Brittain, the excellent Carter, and Booboo Stewart as a young Native American man.

Bezucha's style is unshowy, using the beauty of the natural landscape. A score by Michael Giacchino lends the movie drama. In many ways, it feels like the midcentury pulp thrillers it emulates: well-plotted and grisly, but almost ephemeral. It's Lane's performance that lingers, daring to be uniquely hopeful about the future, and letting the old ways die.

"Let Him Go" is rated R for violence. Running time: 118 minutes.



Focus Features/AP

Diane Lane, left, and Kevin Costner star as a couple determined to rescue their grandson from trouble in "Let Him Go."

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Loren's
still got itGolden Age actress
nears her 100th filmBY ANN HORNADAY
The Washington Post

Sophia Loren has made more than 90 films since her first uncredited role in 1950. As one of the last remaining links to Hollywood's Golden Age, the statuesque beauty could easily retire and bask in the post-career honors that would come her way.

But what has made Loren one of the greatest movie stars of all time isn't just her astonishing beauty, her graceful bella figura or her easily underrated gifts as a serious actress. It's a work ethic that can be traced to her roots as the child of an unwed mother, coming of age amid the poverty and pervasive anxieties of World War II-era Naples.

So it's both amazing and completely unremarkable that Loren has a new movie coming out: "The Life Ahead," adapted by her son Edoardo Ponti from the novel "The Life Before Us," by French author Romain Gary.

Loren says she recognized the book's cinematic potential and immediately contacted her son, who wasn't familiar with the title. "I said, 'Read it, because there's a story there that maybe, who knows, we could do together,'" Loren, 86, recalled. "Because it's a wonderful story and a wonderful character that I think maybe I could be quite good with."

The fact that she's still in the hunt for juicy roles should surprise no one. Loren insists. "Of course, if you're an actress, you always care about looking for stories, because that's your work," she says with a shrug. "And if you find a good story, you just follow it, always (hoping) that nobody else is going to catch it. And if they don't, it's free for you to be able to do it."

That shrewdness and competitive spirit help explain Loren's impressive longev-



Netflix

Sophia Loren, right, and Ibrahim Gueye star in "The Life Ahead."

ity in a generally fickle business that's even harder on women who dare to get any older than 40. And her instincts were characteristically on point when it came to "The Life Ahead," in which Loren plays Madame Rosa, a former prostitute in the coastal city of Bari, Italy, who has become a caretaker for her successors' kids.

When a scrappy young boy named Momo (Ibrahim Gueye) comes into her life, the two form a bond forged by shared trauma and the will to survive: he as a Muslim immigrant, she as a former prisoner in Auschwitz. (Gary's novel was adapted in 1977 as "Madame Rosa," starring Simone Signoret.)

"The Life Ahead," now streaming on Netflix, "is a very good story for me because it has all the things a woman is looking for," Loren explains. "A house to live (in), children to take care of and, God (willing), to find the right time to be able to do all the things you can do for others." Although the book was published in the 1970s, she adds, Gary's themes — immigration, tolerance, overcoming tribal chauvinism and cultivating mutual understanding — have proven to be not just timeless but urgently relevant. "Along with Edoardo, I thought it was quite pos-

sible to do a film that would be very, very interesting in this moment," Loren says.

As Madame Rosa, Loren wears a trailing gray wig and a perpetual scowl, downplaying the natural beauty that made her famous and manages to stifle to this day.

It was Rita Hayworth who inspired Loren to become an actress. Growing up in Pozzuoli, just west of Naples, she saw "Gilda" in the little local theater and remain a dream.

After appearing in a number of forgettable films, she met with Vittorio De Sica, who was casting the 1954 anthology film "The Gold of Naples." He cast her as an adulterous pizza seller.

Loren and De Sica made more films together, including 1960's "Two Women," for which she won an Oscar.

In many ways, "The Life Ahead" brings Loren's career full circle, once again casting her in a story animated by De Sica's singular brand of humanism and compassion.

According to the website IMDb, it also marks Loren's 98th screen credit, inviting the inevitable question: Is she busy finding two more scripts to make it an even 100?

"I don't know, it depends on the stories," she says. "Maybe 110."

'The Life Ahead'
classic, yet newBY ANN HORNADAY
The Washington Post

Simone Signoret won a Cesar award for her performance in the 1977 film "Madame Rosa," which leads to an inevitable question when it comes to making "The Life Ahead": Why bother?

Unlike the earlier version, this one features Sophia Loren in the lead role. Which answers the "Why bother?" question. When Loren says she thinks she might be right for Madame Rosa, you listen to her. And you make the movie.

The story is a classic: Madame Rosa, now transplanted from La Pigalle in Paris to a seaside town in Italy, is a former prostitute who serves as a caretaker and mother figure for the children of her erstwhile colleagues in the sex-work industry. One day, she is asked to take on a particularly challenging case: A 12-year-old Senegalese immigrant named Momo (Ibrahim Gueye), with whom she has immediate, volatile chemistry. The two fight, tussle and argue, two wounded souls who, when they finally begin to let their guards down, are much more alike than different.

For Madame Rosa, this means disclosing a secret she's kept buried for decades, as well as another, more recent one that's obvious to anyone paying attention. At 86, Loren plays the role with both vulnerability and majesty.

A creeping sentimentality threatens "The Life Ahead" at nearly every turn, and some departures into magical realism don't always work. But as long as the film is focused on Madame Rosa and Momo and their unlikely friendship, it's on its rock-solid ground.

One of Loren's greatest strengths as a movie star has always been her generosity as a collaborator, and that's on full display from the moment Madame Rosa meets her antagonist-turned-protégé, with Loren and Gueye developing their own rhythms and rapport. Gueye makes an impressive debut as a man-child who is equal parts tough and heartbreakingly needy.

"The Life Ahead" might be a familiar story, but as a showcase for Loren's sensuality, star power and unflinching instincts, it feels both classic and exhilaratingly new.

"The Life Ahead" is rated PG-13 for mature thematic elements, drug material involving minors, some sexuality and strong language, in Italian with subtitles. Running time: 94 minutes. Available on Netflix.

'Come Away' a stylish mash-up of 'Peter Pan,' 'Alice in Wonderland'

BY ANN HORNADAY
The Washington Post

Imagine a mash-up of J.M. Barrie and Lewis Carroll, with a dash of Charles Dickens for Victorian miserabilism and an all-star cast including Angelina Jolie, David Oyelowo and Michael Caine, and you get the sense of "Come Away," a fitfully engaging reworking of "Peter Pan" and "Alice in Wonderland."

Here, screenwriter Marissa Kate Goodhill imagines that Peter and Alice are siblings, growing up in the idyllic country home of Rose and Jack Littleton (Jolie and Oyelowo), loving parents who rear Peter, Alice and their older brother, David, to be creative free spirits. The Littleton household is one of near-constant wonderment, as Alice (Keira Chansa) noshes tea parties for her beloved stuffed rabbit, her hand mirror usually at the ready, and as Peter and David (Jordan A. Nash, Reece Yates) stage imaginary raids on an abandoned boat they discover in a nearby river.

Rabbits, tea parties and fanciful pirate ships are just a few of the myriad callbacks that populate "Come Away," especially after a family tragedy sends Alice and Peter further into their dream worlds. Here, Goodhill posits that those journeys aren't born of childlike innocence as much as grief and abandonment. The uses of enchantment, by her lights, have much more to do with real-



Relativity Media

From left to right: Keira Chansa, David Oyelowo, Reece Yates and Jordan A. Nash star in "Come Away."

world pain than escapist adventure.

It's a smart conceit, and in the hands of director Brenda Chapman ("Brave"), it's executed with discerning taste and a rich visual palette. Echoing such recent films as "The Personal History of David Copperfield" and "Enola Holmes," "Come Away" takes place in a bracingly pluralistic 19th-century England, giving the story added

verve and resonance. (In addition to Caine and Derek Jacobi, who appear in too-brief cameos, the film is graced by a terrific performance by Clarke Peters as an extravagantly hatted character from Jack Littleton's enigmatic past.)

If the thematic material in "Come Away" can be difficult and draggy at times — the film addresses mortality, addiction and family dysfunction, among other anxieties — Chapman enlivens it with the handsome colors and textures of the era, from the floral William Morris patterns on the Littleton walls to the extravagant velvets and laces worn by Rose and her prim sister Eleanor (Anna Chancellor, at her most gloriously imperious).

There are moments when the fanciful speculations of "Come Away" feel too forced and downright cackamantic; the plot, probably inevitable, becomes schematic, and the near-constant state of magical thinking too sticky-sweet for words. But the enterprise is ennobled by Chapman's sense of style and a consistently strong set of performances, especially from Jolie and Oyelowo, the latter of whom is one of the film's producers.

"Come Away" may not hold a candle to the stories it references, but it shines with an illuminating and aspirational light all its own.

"Come Away" is rated PG for strong mature thematic elements, some violence, fantasy action and unsettling images. Running time: 134 minutes. Available on demand.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Performance

Power isn't everything in generational shifts — but it's a major aspect of gauging how big the leap is. With the PS5, that jump is profound. Load times are cut down significantly, and in many cases, removed entirely. Ray tracing allows for realistic graphics with crisp lighting and deep shadows, adding more color and depth to environments. Performance-wise, the PS5 is remarkable.

The biggest game changer is the PS5's SSD; the massive performance boost allows for lightning-quick loading. Fast travel in Marvel's Spider-Man on PS4 took approximately 15 seconds to complete from one side of the map to the other. That same game on PS5 saves the wait down by five seconds. In the new Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales, you won't hit load screens at all; even fast travel completes in as little as one second.

Games boot up instantly and run smoothly, though I did experience the occasional crash with Miles Morales. Even then, it didn't cause a long interruption, as games — and the console itself — reboot incredibly quick.

The SSD could end loading screens for good. At least, that's the hope. In Miles Morales, I became more absorbed in the game, without interruptions to action.

When I died, I could immediately hop back in. Returning to Xbox One or PS4 games afterward became jarring; I was no longer used to waiting.

At 825 GB of storage space, your library will quickly reach the limit, especially if you're filling your system with PS4 blockbuster games. This is problematic for users who hope to download PS4 games to their new console. Triple-A behemoths like Call of Duty: Modern Warfare (over 200 GB with all modes downloaded on PS5) and The Last of Us Part II (78 GB) will take up significant space. The size of future next-generation titles is unknown, but we have a starting idea with Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales (it's 39 GB, whereas its predecessor is 67 GB on PS5). It's hard to say how storage management will look later in the console's life cycle, but just like the previous generation, the frustration is somewhat alleviated with external hard drive support.

Graphical fidelity

Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales (viewing on page 18) is stunning, largely thanks to ray tracing. Even with this one game, I saw major improvements in comparison to what the PS4 is capable of on a graphical level. Puddles in alleyways reflect the skyline above. Even polished concrete flooring looks great, making drag supervillain labs beam with color and depth. Areas that would normally be dark and uninteresting now have life — rays of light peek through slits of ventilation shafts as Miles races inside.

Across a snow-blanketed Manhattan, ice and snow look different depending on how the sun strikes those surfaces during different times of day in the game. Particle effects explode and zoom past with default detail; they play at 30 frames per second and includes ray tracing, enhanced lighting and additional VFX. Performance mode, on the other hand, increases the frame rate to 60 frames per second and removes the aforementioned graphical enhancements. The two modes are crafted for different resolutions: For example, Fidelity mode is best played from a 4K resolution on better televisions. These options

Spider-Man: Miles Morales has two graphical modes. Fidelity mode is the default setting; it plays at 30 frames per second and includes ray tracing, enhanced lighting and additional VFX. Performance mode, on the other hand, increases the frame rate to 60 frames per second and removes the aforementioned graphical enhancements. The two modes are crafted for different resolutions: For example, Fidelity mode is best played from a 4K resolution on better televisions. These options



CAROLYN VAN HOUTEN/The Washington Post

PlayStation 5 HAS ARRIVED

New console is a sensory game-changer

By ELISE FAVIS ■ The Washington Post

As Sony and Microsoft unveiled their next-generation consoles to the world, the two mega-publishers raced in different directions. Microsoft boasted that the Xbox Series X would be the "most powerful" Xbox ever made. Sony, on the other hand, focused on exclusive titles, but more importantly, immersion. It's a concept games have flirted with through their entire existence, but the PlayStation 5 pushes the envelope.

The PS5 draws on your senses to pull you in. Rather than providing a window into another world, the PS5 actually places you into one that you can see, hear and feel like never before. Sure, you're used to the rumble of the controller as your character falls down a rocky hill or gets struck by an enemy's sword. But that was the old, blunt approach. Now you can feel the pitter patter of raindrops falling onto an umbrella through the palms of your hands. The whiz of a bullet shooting

past your left ear might make you instinctually turn in that direction. Combining finely-tuned haptic feedback moments with 3D audio makes the PS5 feel like a truly next-generation experience.

If the PS5 wasn't so massive (you may have trouble finding room for it on your shelf), I'd consider it a near-perfect console. It's quiet, powerful and quick. The system is a glimpse into the future, featuring 8K resolution gaming, 4K resolution at high frame rates, crazy-fast load times and ray tracing, previously only possible on high-end PCs that cost thousands of dollars. Console gaming, by comparison, is cheaper but still costly: The PS5 is \$499 with a disk drive and \$399 for the disk-less version — that's still \$100 more than the Xbox Series X's little brother, the Series S.

The PlayStation 5 places a major emphasis on the sensory experience, and we're excited to see how that performs in exploration-based and atmospheric games to come.

give the player more control to favor graphics or performance. In performance mode, for example, there's a smoother consistency for fast-paced animations during action sequences.

The PS5 reportedly supports 120 frames per second for specific titles, like Dirt 5 and Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War, but we didn't see these in action before publication.

DualSense controller

The DualSense controller (priced individually at \$69.99) is PlayStation's comfiest controller yet. It's slightly wider and larger than its predecessor, the DualShock 4, and has more weight to it. It fits in my small hands perfectly, and that extra weight gives the controller a comfortable heft. Button layout is nearly identical to the DualShock 4, though the light bar has moved from the back to the front, glowing on the edges of the touch pad. The controller's familiarity will have previous PlayStation users feeling right at home, though it has some new features.

The DualSense has been upgraded with specialized haptics for a wider range of sensations, letting you feel more precision such as the tickling of tall grass as you weave through a meadow. These moments can be subtle, and in other instances more notable, like the rumbling of a subway station. The level of variety is astounding. I loved when the DualSense controller haptics worked side by side with the sound design, like when the swoosh of Miles' web shooting out of his palm aligned with a finely-tuned rumble that shifts intensity depending on the arc of your swing. I'm curious how designers and audio engineers will take advantage of the new tech to best present a game's atmosphere.

The question is how often those elements will be implemented by third-party developers, launching titles on several platforms, who may invest their resources elsewhere. For example, the touch pad from the DualShock 4 controller remains one of the most unused PS4 innovations.

After spending hours upon hours with the PS5, one of my favorite moments is from the controller demo of Astro's Playroom, showcasing the motion sensor: As you move, shake or tilt the controller, haptics and sound activate to give the illusion that a crowd of little, yelling Astro Bots are stuck inside, and you can feel them tumble from one side to the other.

In Astro's Playroom, metal surfaces, gusts of wind or even walking on a fluffy cloud all feel different. A muddy hill astounded me: As I climbed up and slid down, it didn't just look like real mud, but felt like it, too. The controller feels connected not to the console, but to the game itself.

The adaptive triggers accomplish similar feats. Depending on different in-game tasks, the triggers become tense and more difficult to pull, almost as if they're fighting against your fingers. In Astro's Playroom, one instance requires you to pull a trigger to use a bow and arrow. There's a tightness to the trigger that resembles actually pulling back a bowstring.

Among the more standard features, the share button from the PS4 is no more. In its place on the top left of the controller, you'll find the create button. Just tap the share button, you're able to save, share or edit screenshots and gameplay clips. An improvement is you can now edit videos without leaving your game, and retroactively record footage in defined increments, such as 15 seconds, 30 seconds, 5 minutes and 15 minutes, giving video creators a wider range of control than they had on PS4 (for even more options, users can turn to the new-and-improved Share Factory app).

The DualSense has a built-in microphone and speaker, meaning you no longer need a headset for voice chat, but it's still best to use one. The controller microphone's sound quality is great, but the speakers are tinny.

The controller is the most "next gen" component to the PS5 — you can lose yourself in a game more than ever by feeling the world in your palms and fingertips. If you want to modify these features, you can adjust (or turn off) the vibration intensity, and trigger effects in the system settings.

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WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

FROM PAGE 20

3D Audio

Sony built its new audio engine, named Tempest, to help elevate the console's ambitious 3D sensory vision. When paired with the pulse 3D wireless headset (\$99.99), the results are impressive, introducing a sense of place as sound reaches your ears relative to your character's position or surrounding environment.

The PlayStation 5's audio uses object-based sound; it simulates and supports hundreds of sources in a 3D environment, coming from different directions and with varying levels of intensity.

The headset is comfortable, but the fit — at least on my small head — isn't snug. Washington Post reporter Gene Park, in comparison, feels it's too tight. The problem is it's barely adjustable, with just an inside strap that sits right atop your head. The leather padding for the ears is comfy, but can get warm after long use.

A variety of controls are situated outside the bottom of the left ear of the headset, including volume, muting the dual microphones embedded in the ears and prioritizing sound from party chat or your game. But there are a few too many buttons right next to each other. I often pressed the wrong function or had to take the headset off to adjust the volume, since you can't change it on-screen in PSS menus. The sound quality itself is pleasingly rich and bass-y.

User interface

At first glance, the PSS home screen resembles that of the PS4. Icons for games and applications are neatly arranged in a single row, but now they're smaller and nearer the top, giving more open space for the rest of the screen. The layout is clean and easy to navigate without surprising; Sony has long excelled at presenting user-friendly interfaces for its systems.

Custom themes are unavailable at launch, Sony confirmed to The Washington Post, but the option could come down the line. The best part of the UI is a consistent feeling of fluidity. Everything flows and feels connected. When apps like the PlayStation Store, PlayStation Now or PlayStation Plus are opened, they don't prompt a load screen to take you elsewhere. They become an extension of the home menu.

This philosophy of fluidity is felt elsewhere, too. While you're gaming, you can access a new function called the control center by pressing the PlayStation button on your DualSense controller. The customizable control center is a minimalist menu that appears at the bottom of your screen with several icons. You can easily multitask with the switcher to open up recently used applications and games. You can view your DataSense statistics, downloads status, adjust your sound or mic levels and return to the home screen. By clicking the PlayStation button, your game automatically pauses so you can fiddle through the menu without worry.

At the end of the day, excellent, with every action instantaneous,

no loading or stuttering.

One area of the control center cannot be customized. Cards, as Sony calls them, are large, game-centric icons that appear right above the control center. For trophy hunters, cards help keep track of progress in games such as how many collectibles or secrets you've found. For example, it tells me I've located 33% of all hidden tech cars in Spider-Man: Miles Morales.

The presentation of the cards is distracting. In practice, though, some are useful. By clicking a card about in-game challenges, I'm immediately transported to that exact mission starting point, rather than having to scour the in-game map for the location. In other instances, cards offer hints (if you're a PlayStation Plus subscriber) when you're stumped. *Demon's Souls*, for example, has around 180 video guides that pop up while you play.

Another new feature: With share screen, you can watch a friend as you play your own game. Their gameplay appears in a picture-in-picture frame that you can move, change size and pin to the side.

Streaming simultaneously with another user as you both play is a big deal. On PS4, you had to take turns. Share play returns, so you can take control of your friend's game or vice versa; this is great if you need a friend's help to get through a tough section or wish to have them experience a specific moment.

Backward compatibility

Thousands of PS4 games are compatible on the PSS. I have a library of 150 PS4 and PS5 games combined, and the majority are instantly playable on the PSS. For only a few, such as *Overwatch*, *Outlast II* and *The Division*, a prompt told me I'd need to purchase a playable version again and redirected me to the PlayStation Store.

What's more disappointing is that PSS backward compatibility only works with PS4 games, so games from older eras are not included (this excludes titles available via PlayStation Now).

Conclusion

The PSS is a beast in both its tech and its size. The former is its greatest strength, the latter its weakest. At 14 pounds, 15.4 inches tall, 10.2 inches deep and 4.09 inches wide, it's the biggest video game console in decades and simply takes up too much room. But most users likely won't be lugging it around.

The PSS launch lineup doesn't offer many new titles. It's not PS5s, but it does have a strong selection of games, including *Demon's Souls* and *Spider-Man: Miles Morales*. It also blows Microsoft out of the water on that front: the Xbox Series X/S have a tiny launch library with mostly cross-platform games. Game Pass and that console's power are the bigger selling points.

Witnessing the full potential of the PSS will take time as developers tinker with tools, crafting novelties or pushing the boundaries of the console's remarkable tech. Even just this game, one of the future feels promising.



Sony Interactive Entertainment

Marvel's *Spider-Man: Miles Morales* has Miles growing into the Spider-Man role on his own terms.

Powerful entertainment

Latest Spider-Man game a feel-good spectacle

By CHRISTOPHER BYRD
Special to The Washington Post

Although there still is a snub of weeks until 2020 finally (U) sinks into the annals of history, I'd wager that Marvel's *Spider-Man: Miles Morales* will be remembered as the year's most ingratiating family-friendly video game. It is a feel-good, unabashed spectacle that controls well, looks great and has a hyper-efficient story line that never tries to overdeliver.

Everyone knows Peter Parker, the guy from Queens who was bitten by a radioactive spider and became Spider-Man. But unless you've kept tabs on the comic book scene over the past decade or caught the visually ravishing animated film "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" (2018), it's likely you don't know much about Miles Morales, the Latino, African American kid from Brooklyn that was also bitten by a radioactive spider leading him to follow in the footsteps of his idol. In the context of the new game, Miles' journey is one of twofold acceptance built around convincing both the protagonist and the player that he isn't Peter Parker's understudy, but a bona fide Spider-Man in his own right.

Miles is nothing if not endearing. The game opens with him emerging from the New York subway tunnels out of Manhattan's 125th Street — Harlem, his new neighborhood. Miles hardly covers any ground on the sidewalk before he stops to help a man struggling to push a couch into the back of a trailer. Such thoughtfulness is a piece with his general bearing. As Miles bops down the street listening to music, he is perpetually on the lookout to deliver a kind word or a helping hand to his fellow New Yorkers. His strolling is interrupted when he receives a call from Peter Parker asking him to help supervise a prison convy. Slipping on his superhero threads, he swings down to midtown just in time to see prisoners and the supervillain Rhino make a break for it.

Following a quick on-the-job tutorial that teaches players how to dodge and use melee attacks against a bunch of low-level criminals, the game treats players to the first of a number of set pieces as Miles and Peter tail Rhino as he charges through the streets of Manhattan into a shopping mall. After Miles uses his web slinging to tether himself to Rhino's back, it's up to players — if they want to avoid health damage — to steer

Rhino from barreling into every conceivable piece of commercial property that stands between him and the mall's exit.

On the PlayStation 5, this scene is marked by a fury of shattered glass and masonry — details made all the more dazzling by the game's use of next-generation lighting techniques (ray tracing), which gives objects and surfaces a mesmerizing sheen. In terms of graphics, the other thing that immediately leaps out are the textures on the characters' — particularly Miles' — costumes. It's rare that I think about the subtleties of virtual fabrics while playing a video game, but I was tempted to look for individual stitches and threads at least a few times during my playthrough.

Peter and Miles continue to give chase after Rhino makes it back to the streets. Eventually they corner him, but Rhino gets the best of Peter, pummeling him until he's out of commission. Incensed at seeing his friend hurt, Miles steps to Rhino and discovers a latent preternatural ability in himself: bioelectricity/venom power.

By holding down the L1 shoulder button and pressing different face buttons, Miles can perform venom attacks. These strong, energy-charged attacks are essential against bosses and shielded enemies. After using this ability to defeat Rhino, the area is swarmed by the armed security units of Roxxon, an energy corporation looking to provide "clean energy" to Harlem. Of course, it turns out that the company is sketchy, but by the time Miles realizes it, Peter will be overseas.

As Miles grows into the shoes of being his own kind of Spider-Man, he'll see a couple of his relationships tested, but he is able to remain remarkably sunny and even-keeled throughout.

Later in the game, Miles adds another cool suite of moves to his repertoire when he learns how to briefly make himself invisible. This "camouflage skill" allows him to take on scores of enemies stealthily. Before the credits rolled, I'd grown quite comfortable using Miles' cloaking ability to surgically pick off enemies by dangling above their heads and sweeping them up in a web or knocking them out from behind.

Marvel's *Spider-Man: Miles Morales* delicately balances all-out combat sequences, stealth encounters and boss battles, which are particularly good. Boss fights are multiphase affairs, filled with destructible objects, that make for great eye candy. They're challenging, but rarely infuriating. This lighthearted romp is easy to embrace.

Platforms: PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5

Online: marvel.com/games/marvel-s-spider-man-miles-morales

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECH

Meet the new kid

The Solo, a 3-wheeled, 1-passenger electric vehicle, is coming to America

By ROB NIKOLEWSKI

The San Diego Union-Tribune

There's a new kid on the zero-emissions vehicle block — and it has three wheels.

The Solo, from Canadian designer and manufacturer ElectraMeccanica, is a single-passenger all-electric vehicle with a range of 100 miles and a top speed of 80 mph. It retails for \$18,500, and people in a select few U.S. cities on the West Coast and in Arizona can see it for themselves.

The car is slightly more than 10 feet long and 57.5 inches wide at the front wheels — considerably smaller than a typical passenger vehicle. For example, a 2020 Honda Accord sedan is 192.2 inches long and 73.3 inches wide.

"When you're driving it, you feel like you're sitting in the cockpit of a fighter jet or in a Formula One car," said Paul Rivera, CEO of ElectraMeccanica. "It's really cool and really different."

But a big part of the marketing strategy for the Solo is based on efficiency and practicality.

The company quotes statistics showing that each day, 119 million North Americans commute using personal vehicles — and 105 million of them commute alone.

The Solo looks to attract "early adopters" — consumers who are attracted to the latest technology — looking for an option in an urban environment.

"There are just so many things that you do solo," Rivera said. "You go get your coffee solo, you go to the gym solo, you go visit friends solo. This is a purpose-built vehicle and it fits beautifully between passenger cars on one end of the spectrum and micro-mobility (scooters, electric bikes, etc.) on the other end."

Powered by a 17.3 kWh battery that turns a single rear wheel, the Solo features a heated seat, Bluetooth stereo, rear-view camera, power steering, power brakes and air conditioning. For safety, it has front and rear crumple zones, side-impact protection, torque-limiting stability control and a roll bar.

ElectraMeccanica is based in Vancouver, B.C., but the Solo is manufactured in China by the Zongshen Industrial Group at a mammoth factory in Chongqing. The first production shipments of Solos arrived in the U.S. last month, with some of the vehicles sent to retail kiosks such as the Westfield UTC site.

"People can go see it, they can go feel it, touch it, schedule a test drive," Rivera said.

"Like Tesla, customers don't drive the vehicle off a lot but place a pre-order to have it delivered at a later date. The Solo requires a \$250 deposit, which is refundable.

Rivera would not say how many deposits have been made for the Solo but said "the waiting list is pretty long" and estimated an order placed today would probably get delivered "well into the middle of next year."



ELECTRAMECCANICA/TNS

The Solo is an electric, zero-emissions single-passenger vehicle with three wheels produced by Canadian designer and manufacturer ElectraMeccanica.

One potential drawback: While a conventional four-wheeled electric vehicle is eligible for a federal tax credit of up to \$7,500 and a rebate in California of up to \$2,000, the Solo receives no federal tax credit and a California rebate of just \$750 — the same as an electric motorcycle.

That's because the Solo is categorized as a motorcycle in the eyes of the U.S. government and the state of California.

Ivan Drury, who looks at automotive trends as senior manager at Edmunds.com, is skeptical about the single-seater's prospects.

"That's a hefty premium," Drury said of the Solo's smaller amount of government incentives, especially when cost-conscious drivers have plenty of used cars on the market that are priced at \$15,000 and lower.

"There's a lot there that makes

it a very tough sell," Drury said.

"If you're looking for cheap, reliable transportation, you're probably not set up to have an EV (electric vehicle) charging station in your house or apartment building so you've got that logistical nightmare to deal with. And if you're well-to-do, you probably already drive a Tesla."

Last year, Mercedes-Benz announced it would stop selling the all-electric Smart car, which had two seats, in North America, largely due to slow sales.

"Small doesn't sell in America," Drury said.

Rivera said he thinks the Smart car EV didn't cut it "because it didn't make enough of a statement" aesthetically. "I think we offer a uniquely styled vehicle and it's really cool-looking and different-looking." Plus, he said the Solo offers enough space to carry luggage or groceries.

In fact, ElectraMeccanica will soon come out with a fleet version of the Solo. It's the same size as the existing vehicle but the hatchback is removed to create more space for cargo to serve commercial customers for food delivery, security guards, mechanics going to job sites that don't require a lot of tools, etc.

"We think that's going to be a home run," Rivera said. "We also intend to create a sharing program for the vehicle as well, with partners. So there's three parts of our ecosystem."

ElectraMeccanica also plans to launch an assembly operation in either the Nashville, Tenn., or Phoenix, Ariz., area to serve the U.S. market while the facility in China will supply vehicles to Europe and Asia. "It just makes a lot of sense that we have a made-in-the-USA product," Rivera said.

GADGET WATCH

Block out the outside world with these noise-canceling headphones

By GREGG ELLMAN

Tribune News Service

I had never heard of Puro Sound Labs when they emailed me offering a tryout of the PuroPro wireless, volume-limiting, active noise-canceling headphones, so I figured, why not?

Right out of the box, without reading anything, I was impressed. With Bluetooth 5.0, they paired easily with my iPhone and in an hour's time, they passed my comfort test since they were still on my head. The comfort comes from what Puro calls protein leather ear cushions, which rotate and are attached to a folding headband (great for storage and traveling).

Each ear has a 40 mm dynamic driver, with Puro Balanced Response Curve providing a genuine studio-grade listening experience. The product is engineered to

Puro Sound Labs' PuroPro wireless, volume limiting, active noise-canceling headphones have Bluetooth 5.0.

Puro Sound Labs/TNS

deliver audio with clear, crisp vocals and full, dynamic bass all within the 85dB and 95dB volume limits.

After a few hours of listening, I finally read up on the PuroPro. What caught my attention was Puro Sound Labs' commitment to safe listening with a feature called volume limiting. It lets you choose

between the default 85dB and 95dB, to limit the maximum volume levels for protecting yourself from permanent hearing loss.

While you might not be familiar with these settings, Puro states it's recommended by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and World

Health Organization to

keep volume limits for safe listening at 85dB for up to eight hours or 50 minutes at the higher 95dB setting. There is a difference, and I'm sure at times everyone, just like I did, would try the higher levels. Both settings produced a well-balanced, clear, crisp sound along with full dynamic bass. There are two levels of active

noise cancellation to remove background noise and sounds. If you buy headphones with this feature, why not keep them on, which I would recommend. Puro Sound Labs says Level 1 provides a deep noise reduction of 32dB, while Level 2 will produce a general noise reduction of 15dB.

Controls for power, volume, music selections, answering calls, pairing and ANC are at the bottom of the right ear.

With a full charge, the battery life is listed as 28 hours of play with the ANC on and 32 hours with it off. On standby, they will stay charged for 300 hours.

Online: purosound.com; \$149.99

I've had the Anker Spirit X2 total wireless sport earphones sitting on my desk for a few months, and I'm glad I finally tried them. Aside from the great audio, they instantly solved a concern I have with my current true wireless earbuds. The sport style true wireless earbuds are built with extreme durability, which ensures they won't fall out, at least not easily.

But there's a whole lot more to like about the Spirit X2s. If you're a bass lover, these are for you. Each earbud has a 12 mm oversized driver and Anker BassTurbo. This is accomplished through

construction and technology — an acoustic chamber is built behind the driver, resulting in a powerful bass resonance. Anker's BassUp technology uses a custom algorithm to add more bass.

With SweatGuard technology and an iP68 sweat and dustproof rating, along with the secure fit, they are ideal with any active lifestyle.

Hands-free calls are crystal clear with noise reduction technology to remove background sound. And with Qualcomm aptX audio technology, the Spirit X2 delivers exceptional sound with the Bluetooth connection. A single charge will last for nine hours of play, with another 36 hours from the charging case.

Online: soundcore.com; \$79.99



The Anker Spirit X2

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe



PHOTOS BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL/Stars and Stripes

A woman walks a safe distance behind a couple Oct. 30 on a path that leads to France from the Alter Grenzweg trail, which crosses in and out of France, and starts and ends in Berus, Germany.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Putting Oranmastrasse 20, 66802 Ueberherrn (the town just below Berus) in your GPS will take you to the monument. From there, the trail is a few yards downhill to the right. There's a smaller lot a bit farther up the road on the right. The Alter Grenzweg is an hour from Kaiserslautern or Baumholder, 45 minutes from Ramstein and 90 minutes from Spangdahlem.

TIMES

Open year-round

COSTS

Free, including parking

FOOD

There are snack bars, cafes, restaurants and supermarkets in the town of Ueberherrn, and the Margaretenhof in Berus offers a full menu and cafe service — but takeout only until the end of November, at least.

INFORMATION

The Alter Grenzweg can be found on the All Trails app at alltrails.com/mobile

— Karin Zeitvogel

Stunning views with a side of history

Alter Grenzweg trail goes through land once disputed by France and Germany

BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

Hiking the Alter Grenzweg trail near the southwestern German village of Berus, it's hard to imagine that this border area was disputed for decades by the Germans and French and saw fierce fighting in World War II.

Gen. George Patton's Third Army crossed the Saar River near this spot. Some nearby villages and the city of Saarlorius — known during the war as Saarlautern — around 5 miles away, were destroyed by allied bombs in 1944.

Today, the trail offers fresh air, the opportunity to get exercise without running into a lot of people, and expansive views of France.

It was for those reasons and the resurging coronavirus, which ruled out going to an exhibition in Saarlorius of the works of Robert Capa, the only photographer to land with the first wave of U.S. forces on Omaha Beach on D-Day, that I came to the trail.

It was a rare sunny October day, although I was told by 85-year-old Edgar Becker, who ended up accompanying me on a 4.2-mile loop of the trail after I asked him where it started, that sun and warmth are not uncommon in Berus. The village of around 2,000 has a microclimate

that makes it the warmest place in Saarland, he said.

Becker, a widower since 2016, has walked and run the trail for years. That's one of the reasons, he said, that he's made it to 85 in such good shape.

Called the Chemin de la Frontiere in French, the trail starts just below the 50-foot-high Europe monument, made of two parallel concrete slabs, pierced at the top by metal poles. Dedicated 50 years ago, the monument symbolizes how "nationalist hostility" between Germany and France has been replaced with friendship, a plaque at its base reads.

There are binoculars on the viewing platform but I didn't use them after seeing a handful of people, some maskless, pressing their faces against them to get a close-up look at the surrounding scenery. On a clear day, you get spectacular views from the trail without the binoculars.

Becker and I headed downhill, past an old rail car that used to carry limestone from nearby quarries, along narrow-gauge rail tracks to steel mills in Saarlorius. The region was once highly industrialized and had a plentiful supply of limestone to make steel.

We took a fork to the right and headed uphill through a wooded section until we came to open farmland and another structure on the trail, a cross

of Lorraine. Charles de Gaulle, who led the Free French Forces during WWII and later became president of France, made the double-barred cross a symbol of resistance against the Nazis. It featured on the flags of Free French warships, the fuselages of their aircraft, and on the Order of Liberation medal, which was awarded to heroes of the liberation of France.

Becker and I stopped to chat with a mother and daughter who were taking the fork to the right, back to Bervilliers-en-Moselle, after getting the hour of exercise they were allowed under French coronavirus rules that had come into force a day earlier.

The French had to fill in a form, available on the internet, with the time they left home and their reason for being outdoors, and carry it with them, they said. Failure to do so could result in a fine of around \$150 if a gendarme happened to check them. And yes, there were gendarmes out checking, the women said.

Becker and I turned left and stayed in Germany. As we walked across more farmland and back into the woods, roaming messages on my phone told me we were crisscrossing in and out of France. Observation told me there were no gendarmes.

As we made our way down a steep, leaf-covered slope, before turning left to head back toward the monument, I asked Becker



Edgar Becker, 85, makes his way down a steep, slippery part of the Grenzweg, which begins and ends in Berus, Germany.

about his memories of WWII, which ended when he was 9.

He and his family were evacuated to a town near Nuremberg, he told me. In 1944, he remembered being on a train with his grandfather when they stopped in the middle of a forest and were told to take cover as American planes flew overhead.

"Right after the Americans, some crows flew by and my grandfather quipped, 'Those are Hitler's planes.'"



A monument to Europe in Berus, Germany, lies just above the starting point of a 4.2-mile trail that crisscrosses in and out of France, crossing farmland and cutting through forests.

The joke earned the grandfather a summons to the local police station, where, happily, he knew many of the officials, Becker said.

"Jakob," the chief of police told him, "You can't say that kind of thing. Be careful." Becker said his grandfather was told by the exasperated official, who let him go with a slap on the wrist.

Maybe a French gendarme would have done the same, but I'll wait until visa restrictions have been lifted before I take one of the other branches of the Alter Grenzweg and dip into France.

zeitvogel.karin@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripeszeit

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Gimmelwald puts the Swiss Alps in your lap

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.

Traffic-free Gimmelwald hangs nonchalantly on the edge of a cliff high above Switzerland's Lauterbrunnen Valley. This sleepy village has more cow troughs than mailboxes. To inhale the Alps and really hold it in, I sleep high, here in Gimmelwald. Poor but pleasantly stuck in the past, the village has a creaky hotel, happy hostel, decent pension and a couple of B&Bs.

Gimmelwald is an ignored station on the cable-car route up to the spectacular mountain peak called the Schithorn. The village should be built to the hilt. But, led by a visionary schoolmaster, the farming community managed to reclassify its land as an "avalanche zone" — too dangerous for serious building projects. So, while developers gnash their teeth, sturdy peasants continue to milk cows and make hay — enjoying a lifestyle that survives in a modern world only by the grace of a government that subsidizes such poor traditional industries.

Gimmelwald is a community in the rough. When I arrive, I take a quick "welcome back" walk — a tour of the whole town takes about 15 minutes. Its two streets, a 700-year-old zig and zag,

are decorated by drying laundry, hand-me-down tricycles and hollowed stumps bursting proudly with geraniums. Grandpas, like white-bearded elves, set aside hand-carved pipes to chop firewood. Children play "barn" instead of "house."

And a little boy parks his toy car next to his dad's tank-treaded mini tractor — necessary for taming this alpine environment. Stones sit like heavy checkers on old rooftops, awaiting nature's next move. While these stones protect the slate from the violent winter winds, in summer it's often so quiet that you can hear the cows ripping tufts of grass.

Traditional log-cabin homes line the lanes. Their numbers are not addresses, but fire insurance numbers. The troll-like hut aging near the cable-car station is filled with rounds of Alp cheese, also aging. Small as Gimmelwald is, it does have daily mail service. The postman drops down from neighboring Muerren each day (by golf cart in summer, sled in winter) to deliver mail and pick up letters at the communal mailbox. Most Gimmelwalders have one of two last names: von Allmen or Feuz. I'm told that to keep prescriptions and medical records straight, the doctor in nearby Lauterbrunnen goes by birthdate first, then the patient's name.



Rick Steves



Rick Steves

A farmer loads his tarp for a hayride to the barn in Switzerland's tiny Gimmelwald.

Watching two schoolboys kick a soccer ball just a few steps from the cliff's edge, I enjoy the thought that there's nothing but air between Gimmelwald and the rock face of the Jungfrau summit directly across the valley. Over there, small avalanches look and sound like distant waterfalls. Village kids have likely learned the hard way: Kick that ball wrong, and it ends up a mile below on the Lauterbrunnen Valley floor.

My Gimmelwald walk comes with the sweet smell of freshly cut hay. The townspersons systematically harvest the steep hillside, with entire families cutting and gathering every inch of hay. After harvesting what the scythe can reach, they pull hay from nooks and crannies by hand. Half a day is spent on steep rocks harvesting what a machine could cut in two minutes on a flat field. It's tradition. For locals, cutting the hay is like breath-

ing ... and there's one right way to do it. Climbing from zig to zag, I witness a first for me: A farmer at the top of town has filled his big blue tarp with a mountain of hay the size of a small car. Directly below him is his barn with a bridge leading to its loft — the door open like the mouth of a hungry child. Nonchalantly, as if he does this every day, the farmer climbs onto the hay and rides it like a sled steeply down the field to the little bridge where his son awaits. Together, they drag the load into the loft and close the door.

Surrounded by all that alpine glory, I think "if heaven isn't what it's cracked up to be, send me back to Gimmelwald."

This article was adapted from Rick's new book, "For the Love of Europe."

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

Alpine skiing delayed this season, but perhaps not denied

As the first snows of early winter begin to fall, skiers across Europe are wondering how soon they will be able to indulge in their favorite sport. While it's still too early to predict how the ski season of 2020-2021 will pan out, we can hope that through a mix of COVID-fighting measures such as caps on the numbers of skiers to the restriction of apres ski gatherings, a snowy day in the Alps might yet be yours.

Here's a look at the current regulations in three countries, and some of the new infrastructure to enjoy once resorts open to visitors.

Please bear in mind that travel restrictions can turn on a dime and might well be extended. Always check the latest guidance with both destination country and command before setting off.

Austria

Current travel restrictions: The country is currently under a partial lockdown. All hotels are closed to leisure travelers and tourists through at least Nov. 30, and no ski areas will open before that.

Skiing: First the bad news: There will be no season opening festivities this year, and apres-ski in its usual form will be prohibited throughout the winter. When things do open up, it will be possible to consume food and drink in the mountain bars and restaurants in both indoor and

outdoor areas, as long as the diner is seated. Face masks will be required while riding the lifts.

New on the slopes: Snow Space Salzburg is a ski resort linking up the villages of Flachau, Wagrain and St. Johann-Alpendorf. It makes up part of the Salzburger Sportwelt,

the largest of the five ski regions which in turn make up the Ski Amade, a network of 28 ski areas and towns that together make up the second-largest ski area in all Europe.

The new Panorama Link connection between Flachau/Wagrain and Flachauwinkl/Kleinarl effectively creates an even larger play space for skiers, with 120 miles of slopes now accessible with a single-day ticket. The 10-seat gondola lift traverses a nearly two-mile route between the towns of Wagrain and Kleinarl while providing scenic views of the Hohe and Niedere Tauern mountain ranges. Snowboarders and free riders can rejoice over the increased accessibility to the Absolut Park Flachauwinkl. Austria's largest snow park offers more than 100 obstacles designed to challenge all levels from beginners to pros. Online: snow-space.com



Karen Bradbury



At the 3 Valleees ski area in France, 370 miles of pistes await.

France

Current travel restrictions: While those arriving from EU Member States can enter metropolitan France without any COVID-19-related restrictions or paperwork, the country remains under lockdown until December 1, and movements outside one's residence are severely limited. Arrivals are subject to tests at ports of entry.

Skiing: Lifts and resorts will not be opening until the lockdown is lifted.

New on the slopes: Val Thorens, the highest ski town in Europe, forms part of the greater 3 Valleees ski area, and with some 370 miles of pistes, it's one of the largest linked ski

areas in the world. Two recent projects there promise to boost its fun factor. The Tyrolienne, a zip line for skiers, starts at the Orelle resort and crosses the Val Thorens crest at speeds of more than 60 miles an hour. A fabric cocoon keeps riders safe and warm during the 1-minute, 45-second journey. Access is via the Bouchet chairlift. A single ride costs 55 euros (\$64.50), and tickets can be purchased on-site. Non-skiers or those just after a new experience can also enjoy a turn on a new skating rink. La Patinoire, located in Place Peclot, offers natural ice, loads of space and a music and light show. A nearby chalet serves crepes and hot chocolate. Online: valthorens.com/en

Italy

Current travel restrictions: Rules for travelers vary depending upon their country of origin and destination, as well as their reasons for travel. A three-tier system of green, orange and red illustrates the level of risk in each of the country's 20 regions. There is also a curfew in place between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Skiing: Lifts and cable cars in ski areas will remain closed to amateur sportsmen until Nov. 24 at the earliest.

New on the slopes: Many ski areas in the Dolomites are upgrading or putting new lifts in operation in 2020, including Carezza Ski, Kronplatz, Alta Badia and Cortina d'Ampezzo. The Drei Zinnen (Three Peaks) ski resort is one of the 12 ski areas of Dolomiti Superski, which offers 745 miles of slopes accessible with a single ski pass. Drei Zinnen itself, with 65 miles of slopes for all levels of ability, is replacing its circa-1981 cable car with a 10-seater gondola lift and adding a new slope. The intermediate-level "Moon-Sexten" slope links Three Peaks up with Monte Elmo and Coda Rossa.

Wintering vistas in a UNESCO World Heritage site, meticulous grooming and the ski-in, ski-out Berghotel in the small village of Moso are other factors to recommend a ski holiday here. Online: berghotel.com/en/skiing

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe

A different kind of 'hot spot'

Vinocentral in Darmstadt is a popular place to grab coffee or meet up after work

BY MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

It was the last day of business before the November lockdown was to begin. On a balmy afternoon, Vinocentral was as crowded as it could be with social distancing rules in effect.

The place is a popular wine bar/shop/delicatessen in the shadow of Darmstadt, Germany's main train station.

Vinocentral started out 25 years ago as a coffee bar that offered espressos and cappuccinos made from a wide selection of beans and roasts. Its proximity to the station and nearby office buildings made it a well-visited spot for a morning or midday shot of java.

When a bar, wine shop and a deli that offered antipasti, ham, salami, cheese and even truffles when in season were added, the place became an after-work hot spot.



Then the pandemic hit and brought on some changes. Seating is outdoor only, and you order your glass of wine at a takeout window. The

store and the deli are for shoppers only, although you do order most of your food inside as well.

Appropriately for a wine bar, the drinks selection was ample and varied. There were reds, whites, roses and sparkling wines from Italy, France, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Portugal and Spain.

We chose a rose Cotes de Provence and a white grauburgunder from southern Germany. The rose was dry and tangy, while the grauburgunder — pinot grigio in Italy or pinot gris in France — was light and refreshing.

We found a bench with enough social distancing, sat back and people-watched as we enjoyed our drinks.

We ordered a mixed antipasti plate to accompany our next glasses of wine. We selected olives, fennel, grilled and marinated eggplant, an artichoke heart and goat cheese topped with balsamic cream and cranberries from the deli's glass display case.

It was all very tasty and went well with what we were sipping — a white Lugana and a red primitivo, from Italy's Lombardy and Puglia regions respectively.

We decided to get a bite to eat before heading home. To our dismay, all the paninis and focaccia were sold out.

To make up for it, the next week we headed back to Vinocentral and got the Sicilia focaccia with olive tapenade, grilled and marinated vegetables and Provolone cheese on a bed of arugula, and their panini classico with pastrami, jalapenos, barbecue sauce, honey-mustard cream cheese, fresh tomatoes and arugula, to go.

Everything was delicious. The ingredients in both sandwiches complemented each other well, making them a real treat for the taste buds.

We decided we'd have to do this all over again someday. Preferably sitting outside at Vinocentral. Without a coronavirus lockdown.

abrams.mike@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripes_photog



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

A glass of primitivo from the Puglia region of Italy at the Vinocentral in Darmstadt, Germany. In the background is the city's main train station.



Guests enjoy wine, cocktails and coffee at Vinocentral in Darmstadt, Germany, on the last day of business before the partial lockdown in November.

VINOCENTRAL

Location: Platz der Deutschen Einheit 21, 64293 Darmstadt. Across from the main train station.

(Hauptbahnhof)
Hours: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday; closed on Sundays and German holidays.

Dress: Casual

English menu: No, but most people working there speak English.

Prices: Not cheap, but most things are worth the price. Wines are from 6.50 euros to 10.90 euros for a 0.2-liter serving. An espresso costs 2 euros, a cappuccino 3.50 euros. Panini are 3.50 euros for a half or 6 euros for a whole roll. Focaccia starts at 5.50 euro. Antipasti prices vary.

Information: Website is in German at vinocentral.de, but the Facebook page can be read in English.

— Michael Abrams



A takeout focaccia Sicilia from Vinocentral includes olive tapenade, grilled, marinated vegetables and Provolone cheese on a bed of arugula. With the partial coronavirus lockdown in Germany, takeout is all that's available.



An antipasti plate with olives, fennel, grilled marinated eggplant, an artichoke heart and goat cheese topped with balsamic cream and cranberries from Vinocentral in Darmstadt, Germany.



A cappuccino at Vinocentral. The wine bar/delicatessen opened 25 years ago as a coffee bar across from the city's main train station and quickly became a popular spot to grab a coffee on the way to the office.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

A little place to disconnect



Rural cabin provides perfect environment to log out, recharge

By HEATHER BALOGH ROCHFORD
Special to The Washington Post

Winter may be coming, but pandemic-weary Americans still want to explore. The 2020 travel season had a rocky start, with virtually nonexistent bookings in March and April because of concerns and quarantines related to the coronavirus. But as travel bans lifted, Americans enthusiastically took to the roads this summer for outdoor-focused vacations away from urban centers, the better to social distance. Hosting giant Airbnb reported that rural hosts saw a 25 percent increase in bookings.

Shon't Savage, a public health program manager based in Seattle, is one of the many people who opted to flee the city with her family for a few quiet-yet-safe getaways.

"We need these breaks in the monotony," Savage says. "Part of the insanity of being home every day means we don't have the best work-life-personal boundaries anymore. These outings mean we can reconnect and recharge; a replenishment of sorts."

But as chillier temperatures move in and early signs of snow appear in the high country, cabin bookings are not showing any signs of slowing down. Dan DeBlasio, the family reservations manager for YMCA of the Rockies — Snow Mountain Ranch, located in Granby, Colo., notes that while the property cabins always sell out, he is observing a change in reservation patterns compared to previous years.

"Guests are tending to book last-minute cabin stays," DeBlasio says, indicating that folks are looking for opportunities to ditch the stir-crazy confinement at home.

As the pandemic forces people indoors this winter, cabin resorts are betting that business will continue to boom. While many close up for the colder months, there will still be plenty of winter cabins available for travelers who want a quick vacation or to simply move their daily routine to a safe-yet-scenic environment.

For potential visitors worried about winter conditions, however, there are a few basic criteria to consider when selecting a cozy winter getaway. First, make sure your cabin has a heat source so you are not stuck shivering through the night. Wood-burning stoves are quite popular in cabins, but baseboard and standard forced-air heating options are not uncommon, either.

It's also a good idea to investigate the kitchen before booking, so you aren't forced to eat in a communal dining situation that makes you uncomfortable.

Road conditions are a key element, too. For example, many cabins (including the majority on public land) sit on forest roads that are not plowed in the winter. This means visitors typically have to cover the last few miles via snowshoes, skis or snowmobiles. Be sure to clarify this before booking.

You could also check out cabins at any of the locations listed below. Each of these properties features heat, fully equipped kitchens or kitchenettes, accessible roads and pandemic-friendly procedures to keep you and yours safe and healthy.

REN FULLER/For The Washington Post

Cabin options at Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley, Calif., range from cozy one-bedrooms to those with two bunkrooms full of beds.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

FROM PAGE 26

Blue Moon Rising Cabins

Deep Creek Lake, Md.

Cost per night: Starts at \$199

While small in size (250 to 300 square feet), each of the 14 tiny cabins at the Blue Moon Rising Village in the northwest corner of Maryland is big in charm and individuality. The entire property was constructed with sustainability in mind. For example, removed trees were used elsewhere in trim or as firewood, and excavated dirt was mixed with clay, water and lime before finding new life as plaster on the interior walls. Kitchen and bathrooms fit within the tiny structures, too, so visitors can isolate while cozying up.

Candlewood Cabins

Richland Center, Wis.

Cost per night: Starts at \$135

The seven cabin options at Candlewood (2.5 hours west of Milwaukee) aren't exactly rustic, making them a great choice for travelers who prefer the finer things in life. Social distancing is easy since each cabin is secluded within the 80-acre property. Foot trails and wildlife abound at this southwestern Wisconsin retreat, and snowshoe rentals are available at the main house. And, since there is no lobby or any other social gathering area, you won't worry about getting too close to anyone besides those with whom you came.

Can-U-Canoe Cabins

Eureka Springs, Ark.

Cost per night: Starts at \$169

Settled on a bluff 550 feet above the White River amidst the rural Ozark Mountains near the Missouri state line, Can-U-Canoe's 17 cabins are practically built for privacy. Each offers a kitchenette with a microwave and mini-fridges, as well as secluded decks, wood-burning stoves and jetted hot tubs (emptied and cleaned after each visit). Social distancing is easy because the property sits 45 minutes from the nearest large town, but that does mean that some essentials like toilet paper and paper towels are limited; the owners ask guests to bring their own until the pandemic passes.

Fall Creek Cabins

Boone, N.C.

Cost per night: Starts at \$215

Advertised as the "perfect vacation to avoid crowds," the Fall Creek Cabin property is a 78-acre wonderland of woods, trails and social distancing-friendly activities. Situated two hours northeast of Asheville, each of the eight cabins is enhanced with screened-in porches with private hot tubs for guests to enjoy after hiking all day. A fully-stocked kitchen and washer and dryer are available at all cabins, so guests can stay for an entire week without needing to head into town. Contact-free check-in procedures are the norm at Fall Creek, but the owners have also intensified the sanitation routine to ensure utmost cleanliness.

Sorensen's Resort

Hope Valley, Calif.

Cost per night: Starts at \$150 plus a \$15 daily resort fee

With nearly 20 cabins available, Sorensen has something for every traveler, ranging from cozy one-bedrooms to larger family options that house two bunkrooms full of beds. Just over 40 minutes south of Lake Tahoe, the property is located in the least-populated county in California, but the resort established safety procedures for the pandemic. In addition to increased sanitation and contactless check-in procedures, the on-site cafe is offering meals delivered to each cabin to minimize outside contact.



LOGAN MARKS

THE "MOONSHADOW" CABIN AT BLUE MOON RISING CABINS.



YMCA OF THE ROCKIES/For The Washington Post

There are 53 cabins available for rent at YMCA of the Rockies — Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby, Colo.



YMCA OF THE ROCKIES/For The Washington Post

The living area is spacious in this heated cabin at YMCA of the Rockies. All cabins have multiple bedrooms.

The Suttle Lodge and Cabins

Sisters, Ore.

Cost Per Night: Starts at \$70

Suttle Lodge and its accompanying 16 cabins sit nestled against Suttle Lake (45 minutes from Bend) and its network of trails, offering visitors a welcome respite in the mossy glades of the Pacific Northwest. The cabins are split between two types: Rustic and deluxe, with the former offering bare-bones living without any bathroom or kitchen. Because of this, we recommend booking one of the deluxe cabins, which include a small kitchen, bathroom and a fireplace to take the chill off the evenings. To practice social distancing, guests are allowed minimal access to the lodge itself (including check-in and check-out), and cash is not accepted for payment.

YMCA of the Rockies — Snow Mountain Ranch

Granby, Colo.

Cost per night: Starts at \$179

Each of the 53 family cabins (2 to 5 bedrooms) and reunion cabins (6 to 8 bedrooms) boasts heat, a kitchen and plenty of space for a family looking to get away from the hustle of the city (the property is only 30 minutes from Rocky Mountain National Park in the north-central part of the state). Curbside check-in and email checkout are available for social distancing; takeout from the dining areas and grocery delivery are also options. Outdoor pass stations and socially distanced lessons with mask requirements are also available for visitors hoping to pick up Nordic skiing.



PETER GODSHALL/Candlewood Cabins

Exterior of the Woodland House at Candlewood Cabins has a modern industrial appearance.



PETER GODSHALL/Candlewood Cabins

The interior of the Woodland House at Candlewood Cabins is flooded with natural light.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Relics from the past

Zama museum preserves history of camp serving as US Army Japan headquarters

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

During World War II, the camp that serves as the modern-day headquarters for U.S. Army Japan was Japan's version of West Point.

The Imperial Japanese Army Academy, which operated on the site of Camp Zama in Kanagawa prefecture west of Tokyo, trained 22,000 officers from 1937-45. The history of the camp is being preserved by Japan Ground Self-Defense Force troops who serve there today alongside American soldiers.

A collection of relics housed in a small museum near the camp's gas station is curated by Warrant Officer Daisuke Chiba, 51. The history of the camp is for the camp for decades but moved to its current spot two years ago.

Mannequins in the museum wear World War II-era cadet clothing, including ceremonial uniforms. Weapons on display include a 7.62 mm machine gun used by the JGSDF in the 1960s and replicas of carbines used by Japanese troops in the 1930s and '40s.

A model of the camp as it was in the 1930s shows rows of barracks. There are photographs of troops training and of the academy's five commanders. There's also one of Hiroshi Nishimura, an ordinary cadet. Now 91, he's still a regular visitor, Chiba said.

Emperor Hirohito attended the graduation ceremony for some of the first troops to study there in 1937. There's still a photograph at the camp of him riding past troops on his white horse, Shirayuki.

One of the academy's most famous graduates was Park Chung-hee, who served as a general in the South Korean army during the Korean War and president of South Korea from 1962 to 1979.

There's a display of sake cups bearing the Imperial Japanese Army symbol — a star — and rising sun flag. A shelf holds medals, including one awarded to troops who served in Manchuria, which Japan invaded in 1931 and occupied until 1945.

The academy's curriculum included college-level courses, martial arts and horsemanship. Glass display cabinets hold old horse harnesses along with a radio that troops listened to, an antique range finder and paper money issued to troops.

There are old German military books about "Krieg" (war) on display, reminders of a time when Japan was one of the Axis powers along with Germany and Italy.

One cabinet includes relics from the battlefield at Iwo Jima, where a Japanese garrison of 21,000 defenders suffered at least 18,500 deaths from combat against U.S. Marines. It includes a bayonet, bullets, bomb fragments and a canteen.

A painting in the museum shows Hirohito and Japanese political and military leaders accepting the Potsdam declaration that set the terms of Japan's surrender in 1945.

Half of the Zama museum is devoted to Japan's modern-day military and includes a desert camouflage uniform worn by Japanese troops in Iraq and photographs of soldiers assisting during national disasters, including the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan's east coast in 2011.

The history of Camp Zama isn't all inside the museum. Graduation ceremonies were held inside the camp theater, which is still in use. Some of the manhole covers on the base date to World War II and still bear the Imperial Army star. There's a memorial that Hirohito dedicated beside the theater, and behind it a bunker



where the emperor could take shelter during an air raid.

The academy was abolished along with the Imperial Japanese Army at the end of 1945.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

On Camp Zama, the museum is on the ground floor of building J-14, across the road from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service gas station on Camp Zama.

TIMES

Open weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

COSTS

Entry is free for those with base access.

FOOD

None, but the exchange food court is a short walk away.

INFORMATION

The Google Plus code for the base is F9RW+RV Zama, Kanagawa.

— Seth Robson



Clockwise from top: Lt. Col. Akira Ozawa of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force poses with old Japanese Imperial Army uniforms and weapons inside a small museum at Camp Zama, Japan.

Like this one, some manhole covers at Camp Zama are emblazoned with the Imperial Japanese Army star.

Bullets and bomb fragments from the Battle of Iwo Jima are on display inside the Imperial Japanese Army Academy museum at Camp Zama.

This bunker at Camp Zama, home of U.S. Army Japan outside central Tokyo, was built to shelter Emperor Hirohito during World War II.

PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes



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STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Where was this taken?

The destinations behind the images on your login screen

BY RYAN BACIC
The Washington Post

Chuck O'Rear was driving through California wine country to visit his girlfriend, as he did every Friday, and scanning for possible pictures for his stock-photo service, as always. "We just never know," he and his business partner figured, and so O'Rear's camera went with him.

At some point on that trip in January 1996, O'Rear was struck by the scene of a rolling green hill and stopped the car. He snapped a shot. "Yeah, OK. That's an OK picture," he remembers thinking.

That "OK picture" went on to be acquired by Microsoft, named "Bliss" and beamed onto millions of computer screens in 2001, as the default background image for Windows XP. It is now, by a number of outlets' estimates, the most-viewed photograph of all time.

As "Bliss" nears the 20-year anniversary of its burst to fame, trapped remote workers are living with their screen images perhaps more than ever. And with travel still restricted, staring at that rolling green hill on your computer, or that mountain-nestled Austrian village on your

TV, is as close to seeing the world as most of us will get.

It's part of 2020's odd, new reality, and the people choosing those screen images recognize it. So, whether you've noticed or not, they have been adapting their words and visuals alike.

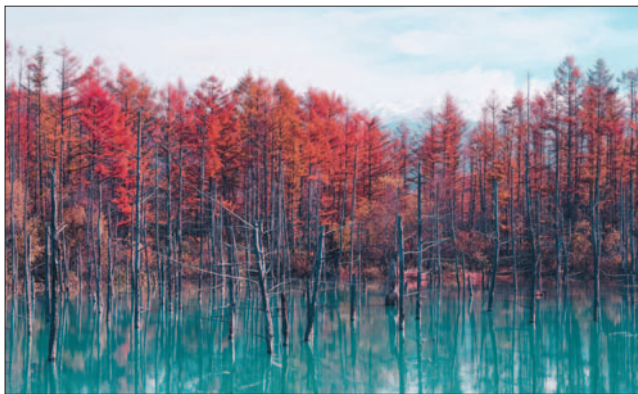
"Right as COVID was starting, we made sure we took down anything that talked about explicitly traveling," said Matt Hepler, Microsoft's director of product marketing. "We had to think about social distancing, and so we kind of have limited images that have groups of people together where they don't feel socially distanced. It wouldn't feel how the world is living today."

Hepler's team chooses images as a group, he said, and any negative visceral reactions in the room get a photo axed. Finding inspiration on Instagram, in National Geographic and in everyday life, Windows employees try "to keep it fresh" with varying desktop themes: Africa, Latin America, islands, Pride, photographs in black and white.

When Windows 10 launched, Hepler said, its lock screens had the images but didn't give locations. The biggest feedback they heard from users was: "We love your photos. Where are they?"



"Bliss": The photo that greeted users of Windows XP was shot in January 1996 during a drive through the rolling hills of California.



Microsoft photos

The photo for the "Blue Pond" login screen on Mac computers was shot in Hokkaido, Japan.

Some smart TVs and other devices have the same issue, prompting a slew of queries on Reddit and elsewhere about where, exactly, people's screen images are from. Apple computers, meanwhile, list locations for many wallpapers but also include generic descriptors (such as "Desert").

Windows' strategy may go the furthest. In response to that user feedback, Hepler's team started including on its lock screens, overlaid on its photographs, a teaser box of information on each location. If clicked, that "info tile" will send users to a Bing search upon logging in.

Sussing out the precise impact of screen images on a location's exposure and tourism is difficult. Asked about possible boosts from Mac computers' featuring of the "Blue Pond" in Hokkaido, Japan, Kay Allen, deputy manager of Japan's national tourism office in Los Angeles, called it "a little impossible to pinpoint."

But at least one travel destination attests to an observable bump. The use of an image of the Moraca Canyon for Windows 10 was "huge marketing for Montenegro as a tourist destination," said Nina Vukcevic, of the Balkan country's national tourism organization. At least one famous tourist appears to have visited as a result: Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Vukcevic said, came last year. He went zip-lining.

Sometimes a destination's screen status can even provide useful landmarks for other tourism spots nearby. That has been the impact of one Win-



This cave at Wharariki Beach, New Zealand, is a familiar site to Windows 10 users.

dows 10 image of a cave on New Zealand's Wharariki Beach, located at the northern tip of the country's main southern island.

"When people query where [our campgrounds] are, I ask them have they seen the start-up picture on Windows 10 of a beach ... yes ... well that is the beach [a 20-minute] walk from our park," wrote Glenda Kyle, the off-site booking and office manager for Wharariki Beach Holiday Park.

Part of why the shot of Wharariki Beach is so ubiquitous — and not just to locals — is that it ships with Windows 10 as the default first lock screen, Hepler said. Which means, in a sense, it's a direct successor to O'Rear's "Bliss."

For years, O'Rear said, people would contact him trying to find out where the California hill was. Some sleuths, he saw online, went so far as to deduce and post its coordinates.

But for those who may want to

see their screen images in live form, the search for "Bliss" offers a warning: Even in non-pandemic times, the landscape can change quickly.

So to speak. The California hill "changed from the time I took it, probably within a couple of years," O'Rear said. "It became a vineyard! So it didn't look the same anymore. It must have been a disappointment to a lot of people."

Hey: In 2020, we're used to disappointment.

And we're used to the images on our screens, too. To would-be travelers right now, that canyon photo might be a bit taunting. Looking at that beach cave isn't enough.

But maybe it's something. "I'm really hopeful that we are able to bring a little bit of joy to people, a little bit of a window to the outside world," Hepler said. "... That type of sentiment would feel really good to us."

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WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



Breaking barriers

Black biking groups ride through Baltimore with a message of freedom, inclusion

By TATYANA TURNER
The Baltimore Sun

They were a sight to behold: Every weekend, a fleet of 30 cyclists zipped on their bikes through the streets of Baltimore, their front lights illuminating the pavement as the sun set, with Michael Jackson's Thriller album booming out of mobile speakers. Onlookers cheered the party. Children ran up to the curbside, holding their hands out for high fives.

"Every now and then you get someone who wants to know the name of our group, and then we look at each other with a smirk, like to say, 'Who wants to answer that?'" said Shaka Pitts, the co-founder of the Baltimore club. One of the cyclists would proudly shout out: "Black People!" And then, in a call-and-response that announced their title, the rest would answer: "Ride Bikes!"

When COVID-19 struck, their "Soul-Food Saturday" rides came to a halt for a few months. But since May, the group Black People Ride Bikes has been getting people outside and socializing. The year-old team is also working on the bigger picture: encouraging newcomers, inspiring people who haven't biked in years to climb back on — and sending the message that African Americans embrace recreational biking. They are one of a few Black biking groups in the city that have been attracting large followings on social media, with African Americans in other cities and states joining in remotely and bonding over riding.

‘There are socioeconomic and racial divides where it feels as if Black people are not accepted to certain areas unless they are on a bike. A bike almost represents civility.’

Shaka Pitts

Co-founder of Baltimore's Black People Ride Bikes

A 2013 national study showed that the fastest growth in bicycling is among African Americans and other people of color. But Baltimore bikers and advocates say there have long been barriers to cycling in the Black community. They point to a limited number of resources, such as bike shops in Black neighborhoods, as well as the city's infrastructure, where protected bike lanes have tended to be in predominantly white neighborhoods. There's also been a lack of representation. When club members watch the Tour de France, they say they only see a handful of Black cyclists, and an even smaller number of Black women.

Pitts and his co-founder, Nia Reed-Jones, wanted to change that. After meeting at a bike party in 2019, they decided to launch an advocacy group that would educate beginner and intermediate riders, with mentorship from more seasoned cyclists. They would teach the importance of using the bike as a way to improve physical and mental health.

But first they needed to overcome misconceptions such as the idea that riding bikes is for children, Pitts says. He remembers riding his first bike, a red longhorn with plastic wheels and white

handlebars — a gift his blind uncle handcrafted for him. He would travel throughout his hometown of Brooklyn, N.Y., and ride across all five boroughs. He stopped at the age of 16.

"I thought that bikes were only for kids," said Pitts, 50, who lives in the BROMO Arts District. He finally got back on the bike in 2018, after three decades away. "Once I realized that it's not, it's freedom ... you're feeling the wind, you're hearing the birds, and it's a total connection with the earth."

The club has 15 core members, and two on each ride act as mentors. One of them, Gary Byrd, 50, teaches basics like how to change tires.

"I advised one young lady who didn't know how to use the gears," the East Baltimore man said. "Now she's a speed demon ... we have to try and catch up with her."

Malaika Lesesne, 42, from Northeast Baltimore, joined two weeks ago. She was glad to know there would be someone who could help her if she struggled.

"I'm not an experienced biker, but I ride at least three days a week for leisure," Lesesne said. "It's good to see people who look like you, compared to other (bike)

groups where you feel like an outcast."

They've cycled to York, Pa.; Washington D.C.; and more recently to Annapolis to the mural of Breonna Taylor.

"We've developed a family, and that was our goal," said Reed-Jones, 37, of Fells Point. They now have an active membership of more than 1,400 cyclists — most are local Black riders, though some are from as far away as Canada and different parts of the African continent. The Black riders post pictures of themselves on bikes as a form of solidarity.

For Pitts, the bike has given him an excuse to venture out to places in the city that he wouldn't have gone to otherwise, such as the Rawlings Conservatory.

"There are socioeconomic and racial divides where it feels as if Black people are not accepted to certain areas unless they are on a bike," Pitts said. "A bike almost represents civility."

The nonprofit advocacy group Bikemore is working on an initiative in Baltimore called the Big Jump. The aim is to create bike lanes, walkways and wheelchair-accessible areas to connect east and west parts of the city.

With the pandemic, Black People Ride Bikes has had to make changes to their recreational rides, like shrinking the number of cyclists to no more than 10 riders per trip. Yet they pedal on.

"Our mantra is 'ride that thang,'" co-founder Reed-Jones said. "When you feel like something is unattainable, you keep pushing forward, stay on that bike and ride up that hill."

Members of the group Black People Ride Bikes pedal up a bike path along West Franklin Street during a recent ride.

JERRY JACKSON, BALTIMORE SUN/TN15

WEEKEND: BOOKS

New books for November

10 new releases suggest month will be interesting and informative

BY BETHANNE PATRICK

Special to The Washington Post

WE can't guarantee much these days, but one thing we can guarantee is November will be interesting. So are each of the books on this list, which range from a much anticipated autobiography to an unsettling diary.

'The Best of Me'

David Sedaris

Sedaris selected the pieces for this collection spanning a career that started out snarky ("Jesus Shaves") and has turned, of late, somewhat sweet ("Now We Are Five"). Longtime fans and astute readers will understand that the title doesn't refer entirely to the author; he has chosen and arranged works to highlight his funny, often dysfunctional and always loving parents, siblings and partner, Hugh — the people he believes are the best of him.

'White Ivy'

Susie Yang

This month's most exciting debut fiction, longlisted for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize, centers on Chinese American Ivy Lin. Taught young by her grandmother to thieve and pilfer, Ivy's punishment when caught by her mother is to be sent back to China. Once Ivy returns to the U.S. as an adult, she ingratiates herself with a "golden boy" she admired years before — and her past catches up to her.

'Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man'

Emmanuel Acho

This book from the former NFL player and current Fox Sports analyst provides a new voice in the dialogue about racism. "You cannot fix a problem you do not know you have," writes Acho, acknowledging that racism in our nation is a problem that we all have to discuss, reduce or not, if we are going to repair its devastating effects.

'Dearly: New Poems'

Margaret Atwood

From the start of her inimitable career, Atwood has

been a poet, and she's one of the few contemporary writers whose poetry and prose receive equal amounts of praise. "Dearly," which collects her first new poems in 10 years, covers love and loss (Atwood's partner, writer Graeme Gibson, died in 2019), humanity and nature. Also: zombies. She's keeping us on our toes, as usual.

'We Keep the Dead Close: A Murder at Harvard and a Half Century of Silence'

Becky Cooper

Sometimes investigating a murder becomes about more than that murder. Cooper found that out while an undergraduate at Harvard University in 2009, after she heard about the 1969 death of a graduate student named Jane Britton. As Cooper unraveled Britton's story over the course of a decade, she discovered a great deal about misogyny and silence at one of our nation's most revered institutions.

'Office of Historical Corrections: A Novella and Stories'

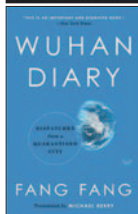
Danielle Evans

Evans' Gibson-coded short story collection "Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self" came out in 2010. Unlike some writers, who would follow a collection with a novel, Evans has chosen instead to release a novella and stories, showcasing her continued command of short fiction. The title novella manages to combine George Orwell's bureaucratic chill from "1984" with Toni Morrison's elegant judgments from "Beloved."

'Moonflower Murders'

Anthony Horowitz

Horowitz ("The Sentence Is Death"), whose writing always demonstrates historical curiosity, serves up a delicious novel in time for Thanksgiving weekend reading. "Moonflower Murders" starts in an English country



house-turned-hotel. When a fictional Golden Age classic holds a clue to the book's central crime, Horowitz winds up writing that entire book and including it, with delightful fair-play murder-mystery results.

'A Promised Land'

Barack Obama (Nov. 17)

The first volume of presidential memoirs from the 44th man to hold that office promises to boost book sales in November. At 768 pages and a list price of \$45, it will challenge your shelves and your wallet. Only a few people already know if this volume holds the "intimacy and introspection" claimed in its jacket copy, but given Obama's story, the book looks promising.

'Ready Player Two'

Ernest Cline (Nov. 24)

If like many of us, you started hoping for a sequel the minute you put down Cline's "Ready Player One" in 2011, you'll be thrilled with "Ready Player Two," which picks up the story of Wade Watts, the winner of OASIS founder James Halliday's fiendishly clever contest. Now Watts discovers another "Easter egg" from Halliday, a new puzzle and a new quest that might change the world — if Watts is up to the challenge.

'Wuhan Diary: Dispatches from a Quarantined City'

Fang Fang (Nov. 24)

With so much about COVID-19 still a mystery, this first-person account of how the coronavirus initially spread feels indispensable. The acclaimed poet and novelist blends a knowledge of the virus' ground-zero location — her hometown — with literary talent. Since the virus has already spread everywhere, Fang's book is less a cautionary tale than an important document for posterity.

Frampton reflects on his rise, fall and resurrection in new memoir

BY MARK KENNEDY

Associated Press

When Peter Frampton was a child, he busted his father on Christmas morning giving him an acoustic guitar dressed as Santa: "And from 3:30 in the morning on Christmas when I was 8 years old, I haven't stopped playing since."

So recalls the singer-songwriter and guitarist whose album "Frampton Comes Alive!" became a monster hit in the mid-1970s in his new memoir, "Do You Feel Like I Do?"

The breezy and polite look back follows an important musical figure's rise in the 1960s, triumph and fall in the '70s and resurrection in the '80s. It's a tale of talent, mismanagement, drugs, loss and redemption.

"Who else has had the career arc, the crazy ups and downs, that I've had?" he writes. "I've been to the moon and back without a rocket. But I've always managed to stay optimistic."

Frampton finds himself at fascinating moments in rock 'n' roll



Rolling Stones. He hung out with The Kinks and recorded with Small Faces.

He was dangled out a fourth-floor window by Keith Moon and John Entwistle from The Who. He was serenaded by Eddie Van Halen. He was friendly with Beatles.

"I have to say your knees do buckle a bit the first time you meet 'me,'" he writes.

A profile emerges of an earnest and perfectionist musician — "I'm my own worst critic" — who suffered long-term clinical depression and was a binge drinker. Frampton explains how

he came to champion the talk box and how he had three wives.

Frampton began his career as the lead singer and guitarist for the Herd at age 16 and then co-founded Humble Pie. His good looks turned him into a heartthrob. He calls his looks the "bane of my existence" and says they "always got in the way."

He was enjoying some modest success as a solo artist when he followed up his four studio albums with a double live album, buoyed by the hits "Show Me the Way" and "Baby, I Love Your Way." (He did his first bump of coke while making that live LP.)

Frampton's prose often suffers from an inability to recognize the wheat from the chaff, spending three times as much time on a few performances with the Cincinnati Ballet as it does on his times with Jagger.

He also has a odd lack of curiosity, often ending an anecdote with "I don't know what happened there" or "I don't know why."

Let inner guitar geek is on display as he peppers his memories

with references to gear — P90 type pickups, the Studer 2-track, the 3M M79 24-track analog machine.

He reveals that he wore satin pants because each pair sold helped fuel his girlfriend's drug habit. But he's remarkably diplomatic — bland, even — describing his contemporaries.

What was Keith Moon like? Frampton writes, "Keith was a lovely man — not when he was out of it, but the rest of the time he was a lovely guy, a very warm person."

And Jimi Hendrix: "He wasn't

just good, he was amazing."

Frampton was a compelling figure on the way down, when he was urged to push out an album too soon to capitalize on "Frampton Comes Alive!"

Writes Frampton: "It was so hurtful when everything crashed" and "I should have used the word 'no' a lot more."

He ends the book with his battle with inclusion body myositis, a progressive muscle disorder which threatens to weaken his fingers and, in turn, silence his guitar. But he faces it with the optimism he's always managed.



"Their departure is interrupted and in sudden recognition, Aurora's hands shoot to her mouth and she whispers, "Oh, my" as a black and white police car slowly advances toward them."

Read / Listen to Chapter 1 and her blog at LauraStrobelAuthor.com

Be inspired by this to true story of Aurora's journey from Shock and Denial to Acceptance of her own Accountability.

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WEEKEND: MUSIC

Q&A



TIME FOR REFLECTION

With the Stones' tour on hold, Keith Richards revisits a live set from his 1980s solo project, X-Pensive Winos

Keith Richards, pictured in 2015, and the rest of the Rolling Stones scored a timely hit in April with the lockdown-minded "Living in a Ghost Town."

TNS

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

Keith Richards has been in the rock 'n' roll business long enough to recognize hype.

On the phone recently from a recording studio in New York, the 76-year-old Rolling Stones guitarist recalled the formation of a side project, the X-Pensive Winos, as a "pivotal moment" in his half-century-and-then-some career. Then he interrupted himself, chuckling in his signature pirate-like rasp.

"Hmm, pivotal? I'm not so sure," he said. "But it was an important part of the development of ... whatever."

Richards has had time this year to ponder his journey while at home in Connecticut, where he rode out much of quarantine — "just ducking and diving, you know?" — with his wife, Patti Hansen, and their two adult daughters.

"It's sort of interesting in that it ain't happened to nobody before in the history of this planet," he said of the COVID-19 pandemic. "Weren't we the lucky ones?"

Yet he's been thinking about the Winos in particular ahead of the deluxe Nov. 13 reissue of "Live at the Hollywood Palladium" (inset), an oft-bootlegged concert set recorded in 1988. The Winos came together during what Richards has referred to as World War III in the Stones: the period between 1986's "Dirty Work" and 1989's "Steel Wheels" when Richards and Mick Jagger were famously fighting over the band's direction.



Miffed that Jagger decided to make a solo album instead of touring behind "Dirty Work," Richards cut his own solo record, "Talk Is Cheap," then hit the road with the Winos, which convened a wrecking crew of top-notch players: drummer Steve Jordan, guitarist Waddy Wachtel, bassist Charley Drayton, keyboardist Ivan Neville, singer Sarah Dash and saxophonist Bobby Keys.

"Live at the Hollywood Palladium" captures the next-to-last gig of a brief U.S. tour and features impeccably ragged renditions of every song from "Talk Is Cheap" — including "You Don't Move Me," widely understood as a Jagger diss track — along with assorted Stones tunes such as "Happy" and "Before They Make Me Run."

As Richards acknowledges, the music won't make you forget about the Rolling Stones. Yet it does reveal the guitarist expanding his vocabulary with heavy grooves from funk and R&B; one highlight from the live album is a slow-and-low "Make No Mistake" that showcases sultry duet vocals by Dash, known for her work with Patti LaBelle.

"The last thing we wanted the Winos to sound like was a Stones cover band," Jordan said in a separate phone call. And in an era when rock tours were super-sizing with ever flashier produc-

tion tricks, "Hollywood Palladium" documents a sweaty night that was "just about the playing," as the drummer put it.

"No trampolines, no laser lights," he said.

This year the Stones were forced to call off just such a high-tech outing due to the pandemic. But after releasing a new single, the lockdown-minded "Living in a Ghost Town," in April, the band has been slowly ramping up remote work on a new studio album, its first of original songs since "A Bigger Bang" in 2005. Richards, who's been writing in New York with Jordan and producer Don Was, said it's been "a bit of a relief to just do what you do."

"I was expecting to be on the road," he said. "You get all geared up for that, then — nope. So it's like energy transference."

What's the priority for the Stones: resuming the tour, or making the album?

I think at the moment it probably has to be getting a record done, because I don't see the possibility of people getting together in crowds in the foreseeable months. So I think we work on the record. We're just trying to figure out how and when — the end of this year, or January?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

FROM PAGE 32

The reaction to "Ghost Town" was strong. The song went top 5 on Billboard's rock chart.

It was a shot in the dark. We'd already recorded it almost a year before the pandemic, and we had it in the can along with several other tracks that we were working on. Eerily prophetic.

Your old friend Marianne Faithfull contracted COVID. Do you know how she's doing?

Marianne, my babe. She's good. You think I'm gonna be the one (surviving) with the roaches? That's Marianne. Made of stern stuff, that woman.

Have you feared catching it yourself?

I'm impervious. I'm like Donald Trump — immune (laughs). Note the hollow laugh.

How closely have you been following the election? Politics — I've seen too much of it to take much notice. Things can get a little hairy, but you're talking to the exiles on Main Street, man. We got thrown out of our own country for being too successful. Any nutty thing you can dream up, there it is. It's just another period now.

Brian Wilson and Mike Love of the Beach Boys have been bickering over Love's support of Trump. Did the Stones ever fight about politics?

We have no political differences because we're basically apolitical. We're just making music; we don't give a s--- about the rest of the world. And I'm English and I'm living in America, so I'm not gonna squeak hardly. I'll just squeak a little.

Are you a U.S. citizen?

Get the f--- out of here. I have a passport that says U.K. But I think globally.

A citizen of the world.

They don't have a passport for it yet.

So, the X-Pensive Winos. How'd you explain the concept when you called guys to ask them to be in the band?

We don't do concepts; we don't have plans. All we need is enthusiasm, and the rest will come.

If you were forming the band today, would you use the same name?

It was the X-Pensive Winos because they drank a whole crate of Lafite Rothschild that was sent to me. I had to leave 'em alone for one day, came back to the sessions and the whole goddamn case is gone. But I'd have given them another crate just to get the name.

At the top of the Palladium recording, you describe the stage as one you've been thrown off many times. Are you referring to when Chuck Berry booted you from playing with him in 1972?

Probably. But I only remember Chuck giving me a black eye in a dressing room — wasn't onstage, exactly. I was in Chuck's dressing room — he'd gone out to deal with some business — and his guitar case was open. I just wanted to have a look, see what he was playing those days. I picked it up, he walked back in, saw me touching his guitar and biffed me. Quite rightly, I thought — ax players don't do that to each other.

Why doesn't a guitarist want somebody else to touch his guitar?

I don't give a s--- who touches mine, quite honestly. But some guys get fussy. Chuck was like that about many things, not just his guitar.

Eddie Van Halen died last month. Do you remember when Van Halen opened for the Stones in Florida in 1981?

I don't remember a thing about Van Halen in those days. I appreciated the work later on and everything, but I'm not a virtuoso soloist. People that think the guitar player has to wail away somewhere on the top end — no. I'm a guitarist — I play chords, I play rhythm. I use the guitar to project a song. I've never been out there, like, Wally's Whistling Saw, and everybody's supposed to be impressed. I'm not impressed by that kind of guitar playing. You want to listen to a guitar player, listen to (Anne) Sextonia, for Christ's sake, or Django Reinhardt. The rock players, they're good and they've all got their little thing going. But it's never been my bag.

Do you think about playing in the Stones differently from playing in the Winos?

I just play Keith Richards. What I do appreciate is everyone that I've played with — from Brian Jones to Mick Taylor, Ronnie Wood, Waddy Wachtel and loads of others in between — how sympathetic they are to me. One guitar player don't make it for me — I need two or three guitars weaving in and out of each other. That's what gets me off. I'm not interested in listening to solos or anything like that. I've heard it all before, and it's a variation on a goddamn theme. What interests me is how two guitar players can play together — and how, with a bit of magic, they can sound like 15. It's cheap at half the price.

Neil Young

Return to Greendale (Reprise Records)

Think of Neil Young's 2003 record "Greendale" as the venerable rocker's take on "Our Town," with a heavy dose of weirdness, environmentalism and anti-war sentiment thrown in.

"Return to Greendale" gives listeners, and viewers, a chance to revisit the often overlooked Young record, tour and rock opera film. On the live album, Young and his longtime collaborators Crazy Horse deliver versions of the record's 10 songs that are largely faithful to the originals.

But the true gem of this release is the full-length concert from Toronto included in a box set on Blu-ray. It's by watching Young's vision play out onstage, with actors above, beside and intertwined with the band, while portions of Young's 2003 "Greendale" film are sometimes projected, that the storyline comes alive and is made more understandable.

The story follows multiple generations of the Green



family as their lives play out in a fictional California town.

Some of the acting is groanworthy, to be sure, but there's a certain appeal to the quirkiness and passion of the whole endeavor that draws you in. Plus, Young and Crazy Horse are at the top of their game, with Young strutting the stage and powerfully delivering the album from start to finish. Young fans looking for a passthrough of his greatest hits as part of the concert will be disappointed. This is nothing but "Greendale," so be forewarned: if you're not open to Young's esoteric side trips, this one may not be for you. But if that's just your thing, "Return to Greendale" is a welcome look back.

— Scott Bauer
Associated Press

Elvis Costello

Hey Clockface (Concord)

If Elvis Costello's 33rd studio album sounds a bit all over the place, that's because that's where it was recorded.

The studiously prolific English songwriter and former angry young man began work by cutting three solo songs in Helsinki in February. He recorded nine more in Paris, working with musicians anchored by his longtime pianist, Steve Nieve.

Finally, two tracks were written by trumpeter Michael Leonhart in New York and recorded with guitarists Bill Frisell and Nels Cline, before Costello completed them post-lockdown in Vancouver.

Unsurprisingly, "Hey Clockface" lacks the cohesion of "Look Now," 2018's excellent return to form with his band the Imposters. Instead, it plays out as a melange of styles, a sampler that relates to various stages in Costello's career.

"I Do (Zula's Song)" has a smoky jazz club vibe that recalls Cher Baker's heartbreaking turn on "Almost Blue." Elsewhere, the arrangements bang and clatter with a claustrophobic rage reminiscent of 1986's "Blood & Chocolate." "No Flag" bursts with bitterness and bile: "I've got a head full of idea and words that don't seem to belong to me," he spews. "No sign for the dark place that I live / No God for the damn I don't give."

The stylistic smorgasbord begins with "Revolution #49," a spoken-word piece that unspools like film noir narration ("Life beats a poor man to his grave, love makes a poor man from a dagger / Love is the one thing we can save").

The album hits a high point with the doomy, impressively realized "Newspaper Page," creating a dark, enveloping mood in which the jaunty New Orleans strut "Hey Clockface / How Can You Face Me" feels strangely out of place. This is not Costello's most consistent work, but he still does have a head full of ideas, with most worthy of exploring.

— Dan DeLuca
The Philadelphia Inquirer



Ray Di Pietro

Kylie Minogue

DISCO (BMG)

It's always a sure thing with Kylie Minogue — fun and great grooves, that is. What's more admirable is that even though she released one of the greatest pop albums of the century nearly 20 years ago ("Fever," for those pop heads out there), she keeps trying to outdo herself. Her 15th album moves her closer to that goal post than ever before. The 12-track set, simply titled "DISCO," is a cohesive playlist for an exceptional dance-heavy experience.

Three singles stand out from the dozen songs with their infectious hooks and synth-pop rhythms. "Say Something" has engaging electric guitar riffing; "Magic" brings on hot staccato keys and handclaps on top of a hopeful message; while "I Love It" is unabashed pure disco love. The rest of the tracks mix Def Punk-esque undertones like "Dance Floor Darling" and "Real Groove" with some



unusual Auto-Tune, play with speeds and even play offquely sample from '80s hits, as "Supernova" goes all out funk. Lyrically, Minogue — who is a co-writer on all the songs — swings from searching for cosmic love to looking for the light of the stars to wanting to dissolve the night away on the dance floor.

"DISCO" feels a bit like a fantasy electric blanket on a cold night — it will bring comfort, but also shock you into joy from time to time.

— Cristina Jaleru
Associated Press

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Check out these 5 TV shows about space when Earth loses its appeal

By SONIA RAO

The Washington Post

With everything burning on Earth, literally and figuratively, Hollywood has turned to space. This isn't by any means a new fascination, as any frequent consumer of Ben Affleck's cheeky "Armageddon" DVD commentary will tell you. (Just us? Cool.) Remember how enraptured we were by the ingenuity with which Matt Damon grew potatoes on Mars? Remember Matthew McConaughey and the bookshelf tesseract thing?

Of course, space movies are complicated and a separate entity from space television, now created by folks who appear to have taken the lull in time between those famous space movies as some sort of challenge to produce content.

When Showtime's "Moonbase 8" premiered Nov. 8, it became at least the fifth television series about astronauts to premiere this year. (That's not even counting other space-based shows such as HBO Max's "Raised by Wolves.")

"Moonbase 8" features Fred Armisen, Tim Heidecker and John C. Reilly as incompetent astronauts training for their first lunar mission at a NASA camp in the Arizona desert. The Showtime series is framed as a workplace comedy, with Michael "Skip" Henai (Armisen), Scott "Rook" Sloan (Heidecker) and Robert "Cap" Caputo (Reilly) having been stationed together in isolation for months. The humor is dry and subtle; much of its success hinges upon your feelings toward Armisen (who seems to be given more to do than Reilly).

The six episodes will be released weekly, meaning you

might experience intermittent cravings for more space content that even a random influx of moon news can't satiate. Not to worry! Remember all those other recent shows we mentioned? They're available to stream online. Here's a closer look at each one.

'Space Force'

Steve Carell co-created this series about the sixth branch of the U.S. armed forces with Greg Daniels, his boss from "The Office." Joining Carell's General Mark R. Naird on screen are Dr. Adrian Mallory (John Malkovich), the Space Force's chief scientist, and F. Tony Scarapuducci (Ben Schwartz), the social media director, among other characters played by Fred Willard and Lisa Kudrow. The show should've done gangbusters, right?

But "Space Force" didn't quite hit the mark, with critics referring to it as "a massive misfire" and "astonishingly bad." It's on this list, however, because of Mr. Malkovich and his "heroic efforts," as The Washington Post's Hank Stuever wrote.

"This is something of a revelation to those of us who run rather hot or cold on Malkovich; until the COVID-19 shutdown, I was still considering forming a support group of viewers agonized by his work in HBO's 'The New Pope,' Stuever continued. "Forget all that. Here, he's the real hero." (Streams on Netflix)

'Avenue 5'

"Avenue 5" is already the second show on this list to arrive from an acclaimed creator: Armando Iannucci, best known for the evergreen political satire "Veep." His second series for HBO takes on a similar tone,



Showtime

From left: Tim Heidecker, John C. Reilly and Fred Armisen star in "Moonbase 8," a workplace comedy about astronauts who are training in isolation at a NASA camp in Arizona for their first lunar mission.

lamprooning corporate culture and bureaucracies through the lens of an interplanetary cruise ship that, after accidentally veering off course, has a three-year journey back to Earth but only eight weeks' worth of supplies.

Hugh Laurie plays Ryan Clark, a British actor hired to pose as the Avenue 5's captain — the ship is actually helmed by an engineer who dies in the pilot — and is accompanied by Josh Gad portraying the ship's billionaire owner, Herman Judd. Zach Woods and Suzy Nakamura round out the cast as other Avenue 5 employees, all of whom bumble around while attempting to maintain order onboard. In February, HBO renewed the wacky series for a second season. (Streams on HBO Max)

'The Right Stuff'

Loosely based on Tom Wolfe's 1979 book of the same name, "The Right Stuff" takes viewers back to the early days of the space program and follows seven test pilots who will eventually become the first American astronauts. The series streams on Disney+, signaling a much tamer telling of the story than Philip Kaufman's 1983 feature adaptation (and, per Stuever, a more fictionalized version, too).

Among the show's leads are Jake McDormand (as Alan Shepard), Patrick J. Adams (as John Glenn) and Aaron Staton (as Wally Schirra) — a trio making this one of those "hey, I remember that guy!" kind of shows, depending on your consumption of "Greek," "Suits" and "Mad Men," respectively. Have fun, kids. (Streams on Disney+)

'Away'

A disclaimer to those who get easily invested in television: "Away" was recently canceled by Netflix, meaning the single season available to stream will also be its last. But the show might still be worth a watch for fans of the "Friday Night Lights" and "Parenthood" brand of familial emotional turmoil, as Jason Katims, a creative force behind



HBO Max

In "Avenue 5," Hugh Laurie is at the helm of an interplanetary cruise ship that veers off course and doesn't have enough supplies to last the three-year journey back to Earth.



Netflix

Steve Carell plays General Mark R. Naird in Space Force, a series about the newest branch of the armed forces co-created with Greg Daniels, Carell's boss from "The Office."

those two series, also served as an executive producer on the newest one.

Created by Andrew Hinderaker, "Away" stars Hilary Swank as former Navy pilot Emma Green, who is tasked with commanding a three-year space mission launching from the moon. As one might expect of a Katims show, it



Disney+

"The Right Stuff" is loosely based on Tom Wolfe's 1979 book about the early days of the space program and follows the seven test pilots who eventually became the first American astronauts.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“**The Broken Hearts Gallery**”: After a rough breakup, Lucy (Geraldine Viswanathan) drunkenly gets into Nick’s car (Dacre Montgomery), mistaking him for her ride-share app driver. Nick plans to open a boutique hotel.

Lucy has the idea to use part of the hotel as a museum dedicated to heartbreak, and the two begin a creative partnership.

Also available on DVD: “**Summerland**”: A writer (Gemma Arterton) takes a London Blitz evacuee (Lucas Bond) under her wing.

“**Unhinged**”: An unstable man (Russell Crowe) terrorizes a woman (Caren Pistorius) after a road rage incident.

“**The New Mutants**”: The 13th installment in the “X-Men” film series follows teenage mutants at the institution that seeks to “cure” them of their powers.

“**2067**”: A man (Kodi Smit-McPhee) journeys to another world to save Earth’s inhabitants as the planet becomes uninhabitable.

“**Death of Me**”: A couple (Maggie Q and Luke Hemsworth) must make sense of a video they find in which one is killing the other.

“**The Devil Has a Name**”: An oil executive (Kate Bosworth) attempts to take the land of a farmer (David Strathairn) who suspects the water has been contaminated.

“**Hammer Films: The Ultimate Collection**”: This set includes 20 cult classics from the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s, including “The Godfather Part II,” “Iron Mask”: A cartographer (Jason Flemyng) travels to China to face the Dragon Master. Also stars Jackie Chan and Arnold Schwarzenegger. In Russian and English.

“**A Wonderful Life**”: The 1946 Frank Capra classic is being released in 4K.

“**Mission: Impossible: The Original Series**”: The 1966-73 series is available on Blu-ray for the first time.

“**Monstrum**”: Rumors of a ruthless killer manifest its way around 1500s Korea spread as a plague rages through the country. In Korean.

“**Paydirt**”: An ex-con (Luke Goss) rejoins his former gang associates to find cash that was hidden during the DEA bust that put him in prison.

“**Pokémon the Movie: Mewtwo Strikes Back Evolution**”: Mewtwo wages war against humanity in this Japanese 3D computer-animated film.

“**Relic**”: After finding their missing mother in a nursing home (Robyn Nevlin), a mother (Emily Mortimer) and daughter (Bella Heathcote) notice the matriarch’s mind being possessed by an eerie presence.

“**Westworld: S3: The New World**”: The third season of the HBO critically acclaimed sci-fi series picks up with Dolores (Evan Rachel Wood) adapting to the real world in Los Angeles.

“**Words on Bathroom Walls**”: A high school senior (Charlie Phoenix) is ashamed by his mental health diagnosis and attempts to keep it a secret.

—Katie Foran-McHale/TNS



In the Netflix series “The Crown,” three actors portray Queen Elizabeth II: From left, Claire Foy, as the young queen, Olivia Colman as the queen in later years and Imelda Staunton, who will be the third and final actress to portray the British monarch on the show.

A royal relay race

Performers on ‘The Crown’ aren’t aged up, but swapped out

BY LYNN ELBER
Associated Press

For viewers, “The Crown” offers a peek into a modern royal family’s life and times, or at least an engaging dramatization. For the cast, it’s meant the lofty equivalent of gig work as the Netflix series ticks through the decades.

Claire Foy played Britain’s young Queen Elizabeth II for the first two seasons, with Olivia Colman stepping in to chart her middle years last season and in the 10 new episodes out Sunday. Imelda Staunton ascends to the throne for the final two chapters.

When Diana Spencer makes her pivotal entrance this season, largely set in the 1980s, it’s Emma Corrin in the part opposite Josh O’Connor’s Prince Charles. Corrin’s job is one and done: Elizabeth Debicki takes over in seasons five and six as the bound-for-tragedy Princess Diana, opposite a new, yet-to-be-announced Charles.

A role in “The Crown” is akin to a relay-race baton destined to be handed off, said Helena Bonham Carter, back for her second whirl as tempestuous Princess Margaret. The actor is sandwiched between Vanessa Kirby (seasons one and two) and Lesley Manville, who will take Margaret across the finish line.

“I’m very sad that it’s over, but it’s time that she was played by somebody else at some point... She’s just a great gift of a part,” Bonham Carter said during a joint interview with Colman and Tobias Menzies, returning as Prince Philip.

Colman called Staunton’s casting “amazing,” then suggested the newcomer could overshadow her. “It’s almost, ‘wish she wasn’t quite good,’” she said, smiling. That prompted Bonham Carter to predict a battle of the stars after the series ends.

“Rate your Margarets, rate your queens, rate your Philips,” she said, comparing it to “who wore it best” celebrity fashion critiques.

Colman was asked if she had any advice for her successor: Her terse reply: “Good luck. The wig’s itchy.”

“The crown” casting director Robert Sterne said swapping out actors wasn’t

‘If you play ‘Hamlet,’ you know that there’s 100 people who’ve played Hamlet before you; there’s going to be 100 people after you. And they’ll all do it differently, and that’s the joy.’

Josh O’Connor
Prince Charles in “The Crown”

preordained when he began working with series creator and writer Peter Morgan.

It was an open question “whether they aged up actors across their life span, or were bold and we cast each time,” Sterne said in an interview. Choosing the latter option meant a series of challenges and opportunities, for the show and its parade of actors.

“You spend a lot of time looking at the pictures and images of people at particular stages of their life” to find the right actor to portray them at a particular stage of their lives, he said. Then he invoked the relay-race analogy in citing another key stop.

“You also have to take into account the way that that previous actor portrayed it. Who do you think can take that baton and run with it?” he said, which he described as reinventing the role “but hopefully not in a jarring way.”

Every move, especially a major cast change, is a critical one for the popular series that reportedly cost more than \$100 million for its first two seasons alone.

Actors, including illustrious ones, have been happy to accept hand-me-downs. Colman came to “The Crown” after winning an Academy Award and other honors for 2018’s “The Favourite,” in which she played a far earlier British monarch, Queen Anne.

Staunton was an Oscar nominee for “Vera Drake”; Manville for “Phantom Thread”; Bonham Carter for “The King’s Speech” and “The Wings of the Dove”; and Jonathan Pryce, the future Prince Philip, for “The Two Popes.”

John Lithgow, another Oscar nominee and a rare American in the primarily British

cast, had the part of political leader Winston Churchill to himself and snared an Emmy Award for it.

All those playing the pivotal role of Elizabeth are able to convey “an ordinary woman put in extraordinary circumstances,” Sterne said of the queen as portrayed in “The Crown.”

It requires an actor “who can carry you along with that, and make you feel for them and believe in the reality of it. They’re all really extraordinary at that,” he said. Foy won a 2018 Emmy for her performance.

There’s also room on the royal family tree for younger, less familiar talent, including Corrin and Erin Doherty, who plays the queen’s feisty daughter, Princess Anne, and proved a revelation.

“Actors will have this incredible connection with this character that you don’t see coming,” Sterne said. When Doherty auditioned, “she just had such a connection with that character. She’d watched a lot of YouTube videos (of Anne) and said, ‘I just love this woman. I just know her; I think she’s great.’”

The casting veteran, who won three Emmys for his work on HBO’s “Game of Thrones” and a 2018 trophy for “The Crown,” found himself jumping into Corrin’s audition. She was put on the spot by acclaimed writer Morgan (“The Queen,” “Frost/Nixon”) to sing Andrew Lloyd Webber’s “All I Ask of You.”

Sterne called up a karaoke version on a computer and offered to sing alone. “She was blushing as she was doing it, and sang it completely beautifully,” Sterne recounted. “It was incredibly sweet and kind of encapsulated the spirit of Diana that we were looking for... I thought, ‘Well, this part isn’t going to go anywhere else now.’”

O’Connor said he relished his time on the series, including saying goodbye to a role he knew wasn’t for keeps — just as with Shakespeare’s works.

“If you play ‘Hamlet,’ you know that there’s 100 people who’ve played Hamlet before you; there’s going to be 100 people after you,” O’Connor said. “And they’ll all do it differently, and that’s the joy.”

WEEKEND: HEALTH AND FITNESS

iStock



BUNDLE UP

The right gear, attitude can help you embrace winter outdoors amid the pandemic

By **AMANDA LOUDIN**
Special to *The Washington Post*

If you have embraced being outdoors as a way to deal with pandemic stress and are dreading the arrival of winter, you might consider cultivating two things: a new attitude and a better cold-weather wardrobe.

The experience of Stacey Benzing, 47, an expat starting her third year in Norway, illustrates the importance of both. The Maryland native who “wouldn’t step a foot outside in winter if I didn’t have to” now walks, hikes and cross-country skis in the cold, wearing gear recommended by her Norwegian friends.

When Benzing moved to Oslo, she was surprised to see “moms pushing prams through snow and ice, or people riding bikes year-round,” she says. She had come face to face with the Norwegian concept of *friluftsliv*, which translates to open-air living and exemplifies the tradition of making time outdoors part of daily life — whatever the season.

Nate Axvig, a Colorado resident whose time in Norway inspired him to co-found Scandinavian-inspired sportswear company Aktiv (aktivstyle.com), looks at *friluftsliv* as “weaving the natural world into your everyday life.” For him, this has translated into riding his bike to work alongside a creek.

“If you are in a rural area, this might be foraging for mushrooms or simply having an autumn picnic outside,” he says. “Your clothing should allow you to comfortably enjoy the outdoors no matter what.”

After witnessing *friluftsliv*, Benzing was inspired to change her approach to cold weather to make the most of her time overseas.

“I knew I didn’t want to miss out, so I learned from the Norwegians,” she says.

Altering one’s mindset about winter, as Benzing did, is key to getting through it, says clinical psychologist Roseann Capanna-Hodge.

“The first part of managing stress and building resiliency in these trying times is changing how you view things,” she

says. “You are in control. Instead of saying you dread winter, shift the dialogue to, ‘I’m looking forward to winter.’”

To help create that shift, you can look forward to activities you enjoy during winter, determine how you might adapt outdoor activities to the colder weather or consider starting new activities.

“Think about an outdoor winter activity you’d like to try,” Capanna-Hodge says. “Maybe in the past, you’ve thought about snowshoeing, but never tried it.”

Of course, you’ll need to be comfortable doing those activities. “The Norwegians will tell you there’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing,” Benzing says. She invested in some key pieces, such as a long, heavy-duty parka, waterproof boots and layers of quick-dry merino wool.

Winter clothing has come a long way in the past couple of decades. Technical fabrics, wool and wool blends make getting into less bulky and more resistant to the elements.

With so many new options, we asked Axvig and Will Rochfort, a Colorado-based contributing gear editor for Backpacker Magazine, for advice on smart outfitting.

When determining where to spend your dollars, Rochfort says it’s important to prioritize your extremities.

“If they are cold, you will be miser-

able,” he says. This is particularly true in the Northeast, where wetter, more humid air amplifies the sensation of cold and makes staying dry a top priority.

“The first thing you want to look for are insulated, waterproof boots,” Rochfort continues. “Your feet are the first thing to get cold in snow or slush.”

You don’t have to break the bank for boots like these, either.

“Unless you’re going on super-technical, long adventures, you don’t have to spend \$300 for boots that will keep you warm in negative 40 degrees,” Rochfort adds. “You can find a decent pair for about half of that.”

Socks are also important.

“If you buy nice boots but wear regular cotton socks, you won’t stay as warm,” Rochfort says. “I’d recommend a good pair of wool socks in the \$25 range to pull moisture away from your feet.” He points to Smartwool’s mountaineering socks as a good choice.

Another worthwhile piece of gear is traction for your shoes, such as the popular Yaktrax cleats, which are around \$25 a pair.

“That’s much cheaper than paying for a broken bone,” Rochfort says.

Also invest in a decent pair of gloves or mittens, as well as a warm beanie for your head. Mittens tend to be warmer than gloves, but if you need the dexterity of your fingers while outdoors, pick gloves.

Hand and foot warmers are good additions, but they aren’t necessities.

“They are a nice luxury to keep in your pockets, especially if you need to retain your motor skills in your hands,” Rochfort says. “They can also be a hero if you’re with someone who might not have the right gear.”

To keep your core warm and dry, plan to layer.

“You need a base layer, an insulating layer and an outer shell,” Rochfort says. “Depending on where you live, the shell should be waterproof.”

Axvig recommends that your base layer be wool and wool blends, which take the prize for warmth, the ability to keep you dry and the fact that they don’t hold on to odors. Some people prefer something synthetic or a blend, which can be less itchy and come with a lower price tag.

A coat will probably be your big-ticket item, but you can cut down on that expense by choosing synthetics instead of down, for instance.

“It won’t be as breathable or compressible, but if you’re not spending extended time outside, that’s okay,” Rochfort says.

Axvig offers a warning about outerwear.

“One thing Americans sometimes get wrong is choosing an outer layer with significant insulation,” he says.

“While that is wise if you’re in a place like North Dakota, for most of the country, that will be too hot. I suggest a well-made shell that blocks the wind and rain.”

If you’re going to sacrifice warmth for one area of your body, Rochfort suggests choosing your legs.

“When you’re walking or running, they’re still generating heat,” he says, “and none of your internal organs are there.”

One final piece of gear not to overlook is lighting and reflective strips. With shorter days, you want to see — and be seen.

An affordable headlamp and clothing with reflection built-in will keep you safe in predawn or evening outdoor activities.

Benzing says her improved gear and new attitude have so thoroughly altered her approach to winter that she expects it to last beyond her return to the United States next year.

“Staying outside has become our pattern now,” she says. “I definitely want to continue this lifestyle when I come back.”

WEEKEND: FAMILY

Raising kind children

Pandemic changing parents' focus from career to compassion

By JILLIAN KRAMER
Special to The Washington Post

Alice Anderson and her 12-year-old daughter, Claire, walked maskless along an empty public sidewalk, headed home from a playground in Cheektowaga, N.Y. Without others nearby, they were following the state's mandate. But a passerby across the street yelled at them to put on their masks, breaking the silence of their otherwise quiet stroll and jarring Anderson's daughter.

The experience was "pretty shocking," she said. But it also created a teachable moment for Anderson: She used the opportunity to explain to her daughter why it is important to be kind to others — even those who might be rude to you.

While "raising kind children has always been a focus of mine," said Anderson, who also has a 6-year-old son, it has been even more front-of-mind during the pandemic.

"There is so much division and hate going on right now," she said, "and we each have to do our part to make this better."

Anderson isn't alone in her thinking. Several mothers interviewed for this article said they're more aware than ever that raising compassionate kids is important in the current climate.

Some mothers said they were concerned about raising and launching successful children into the world. But with day cares closed and babysitters unable to work, grade schools and colleges forced online, extracurriculars canceled and tests such as the SAT postponed, many mothers have been spending more high-quality time with their children — time that some said has led them to re-examine the personality traits they wanted to foster in their children: kindness and compassion over competition, and empathy for those who may be struggling.

And when the mothers interviewed expressed a desire for all their kids to be kind, some mothers said the urge is even stronger to raise kind daughters — a sentiment that experts say could stem from cultural beliefs that women should be more sensitive than men.

Christine Carter, a sociologist at the University of California at Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center and author of "The New Adolescence: Raising Happy and Successful Teens in an Age of Anxiety and Distraction," said that it makes sense that many mothers might be more focused on raising kind, empathetic daughters during a pandemic that is giving people "a sense of what really matters."

With so much shut down, postponed or temporarily changed, "all our focus is on what we can do to have one good outcome," success have gone out the window," Carter said, adding that "it's not even remotely surprising that we're turning toward what else we value in a void of these traditional measures of success."

Carter said she thinks moms' focus on kindness could be a relief to young women, who "tend to be



under a lot more pressure than boys because they're expected to be successful and beautiful and smart. It's probably a giant relief to be able to have these conversations: It doesn't matter if you make the varsity soccer team and look cute while doing it. What matters is that you're nice to your teammates and that you're reaching out to people who are struggling."

Renee Frojo, a single mother, said she and her ex-husband painstakingly chose the private school her 5-year-old daughter would attend not just for its academics but also to make sure its culture would help shape her daughter into a kind, compassionate person.

But during pandemic restrictions, Frojo watched as her daughter was removed from her social networks, and she grew concerned that her lack of connection was leading her to be unkind to her younger sister, who is 2.

"There was a lot of hair-pulling and scratching," Frojo, of Sausalito, Calif., said.

The experience put into sharper focus her desire to raise empathetic daughters, Frojo said.

"Our sense of community has been shattered by the pandemic," she said. "We have to fight this thing together but apart. There's some cognitive dissonance there. And not being able to interact with peers at such a critical age for social and emotional development could really impact how my daughters treat and react to others. It's critical that we teach kindness and work from there."

Cultural anthropologist Grant McCracken has been studying how the relationship between mothers and daughters is changing during the pandemic. He noticed that many mothers — some who have faced career setbacks during the outbreak — were questioning the importance of career success.

"Now they were thinking, 'maybe this means less for my daughters, too,'" he said.

Instead, "what I heard them say was, 'maybe it's important to raise a good person,'" McCracken said. The mothers frequently defined a "good"

person as someone who was empathetic, he said, "someone capable of understanding others' challenges and how they can help them meet those challenges — someone who is capable of being attentive, thoughtful, caring and compassionate."

McCracken said the mothers he spoke to also reported being concerned with rearing kind sons, but that it wasn't as easy to have heart-to-hearts with their boys.

"In our culture, I think young men are not as good as young women at describing what's happening in their emotional lives," McCracken said.

Lin Bian, a developmental psychologist at Cornell University whose research focuses on the consequences of stereotypes in social groups, said that people have different expectations for their daughters and sons, and they talk to their children in different ways: For example, they offer more explanations to their sons than daughters, which "may shape kids' ideas about who is really smart and who is really nice," Bian said. Parents also frequently introduce different activities to their sons and daughters, often encouraging girls to play with dolls, which can lead girls to believe they belong in caretaking, communal — in other words, kind — roles more than boys do.

This may in part explain why mothers are more focused on raising kind daughters during the pandemic, Bian said.

Carter added that, "It's definitely true that daughters tend to have a better line of communication with their mothers than sons do. It's a stereotype. It's not true universally."

It's unclear whether any parenting shifts that have come during the pandemic will outlast the outbreak, Carter said. But "I think this is an important correction," she added. "I think for a long time, kids have been struggling with undue pressure to succeed. And I think some parents and kids feel relieved to be able to articulate that their priorities are things that really matter — the things that make life really worth living."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Military kids seek level playing field

From the time I toddled around in droopy diapers, to the day I drove off to college in my VW Bug, I lived in one small Pennsylvania town. The kids who picked their noses next to me in Mrs. Rowley's kindergarten class were the same kids who walked across the stage with me at our high school graduation. I had one hometown, one high school, one brick house, one yellow bedroom, and one best friend whom I gabbed with nightly on one rotary telephone while draped across one mock-brass twin bed.

By contrast, as a military child, our oldest went to three high schools. He grew up in eight homes, in three states and two foreign countries. He has said goodbye to six best friends, six piano teachers and four Boy Scout troops. He played on three varsity football teams, and his academic transcripts are almost as complicated as the U.S. Tax Code.

I have often looked at my own children with worry and curious wonder: How do military kids cope with so many military moves? What effect do frequent school changes have on them? Does this instability leave them less prepared for life after high school?

A new survey provides some answers. The Military Child Education Coalition's Military Kids Now 2020 Survey identifies the greatest challenges to military children's education. Conducted over four months in early spring 2020, the survey polled more than 5,100 military-connected students (age 13 and over), parents with school-age children and educators. According to the Summary Report, the "responses were both heartening and heartbreaking," reflecting "the strength of their commitments to their country, their families and their education while also highlighting continuing gaps in services, bumpy school transitions and fears about student preparedness for life after high school."

The report states that 25% of military kids reported moving two or more times during high school, but the real eye-opener is how students responded to questions like "I wish my school/teachers understood ..." and "I wish my peers understood ..." Military children want educators and peers to be more cognizant of military lifestyle challenges such as transitioning schools, adjusting to curriculum differences, experiencing social disruptions, coping with deployments, being stereotyped and finding acceptance.

Military kids also expressed that, although they deserve the same educational opportunities as civilian students, they are not offered a level academic playing field. They reported frustration with changing graduation requirements, gaps in learning, disparities in school resources and constant reassessments. Military parents reported the need for support with everything from placement in gifted programs to state immunization requirements to IEPs and 504 plans to graduation waivers.

Moreover, although 97% of professionals believe that military children encounter more stress than their civilian peers, only 38% reported feeling confident "in managing behavioral and mental health issues related to transition, mobility, deployment and return from deployment."

The report contains a "Wish List" of resources parents believe would support their children's education, including standardized curriculum, a "buddy" system for the critical first days of a new school, military liaisons in schools, help navigating the college process, and "school choice for all military-connected students (e.g., public, private, charter, home, etc.)."

Senior military, government, education and thought leaders will offer an in-depth analysis of the Military Kids Now Survey and other issues affecting military-connected children at MCEC's Education Summit 2020 on Nov. 17 and 18. Military parents, professionals and educators are invited to attend the free webinar, titled "Mission Steady, Future Ready: Meeting the educational needs of military children in a changing environment."

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com, and in Lisa's book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

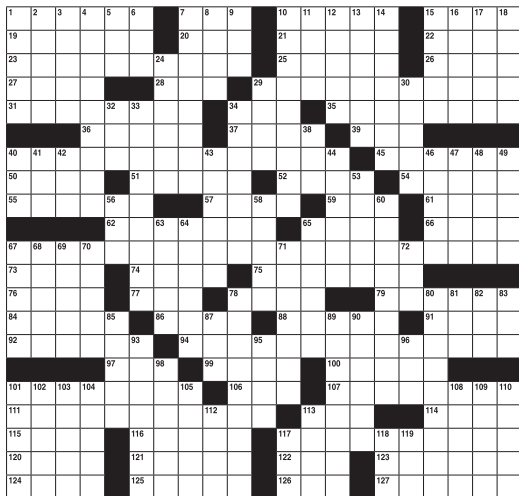
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

WEST-SOUTHWEST

BY JULIAN LIM / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Julian Lim, of Singapore, is an assistant professor at the School of Medicine at the National University of Singapore. He leads the school's Awake Lab, which studies the effects of mindfulness practice on sleep, wellbeing and cognition. He holds a B.S. from Duke and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Julian started solving British crosswords in high school, later getting hooked on American ones. He says he has solved every New York Times crossword since 2004. —W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Amenity in G.M. vehicles
 - 7 R.N.'s workplace
 - 10 "Awake in the Dark" author
 - 15 Down at the bar?
 - 19 Peace and quiet
 - 20 Tease constantly, with "on"
 - 21 Bottom lines?
 - 22 Spanish Steps city
 - 23 What an unsteady tightrope walker may do?
 - 25 Number cruncher, in Wall Street lingo
 - 26 Spelling clarification
 - 27 CPR experts
 - 28 "____ to My Family" (song by the Cranberries)
 - 29 "It's just too \$#@!@ but!," e.g.?
 - 31 Fasten again, as documents
 - 34 Dish cooked in an underground oven
 - 35 Bolshoi debut of 1877
 - 36 Thesis defenses, e.g.
 - 37 Thereabouts
 - 39 Me-day destination
 - 40 What a beekeeper receives at work?
 - 45 Pently punishes
 - 50 Dynamite
 - 51 Explode on Twitter, say
 - 52 "____ Ragnarok" (2017 blockbuster)
 - 54 Catty comments
 - 55 Unstapling person
 - 57 Flood protector
 - 59 Bird that carries Sinbad to safety
 - 61 "Little Fockers" actress Polo
 - 62 Little auk, by another name
 - 65 Japanese audio brand
 - 66 Cousin of a clarinet
 - 67 Why the knight went "thopping"?
 - 73 Letters no longer seen on most phones
 - 74 Inedible in une quiche
 - 75 Source of the words "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy! It is the green-ey'd monster . . ."
 - 76 Bohemian
 - 77 "Hate Me Now" rapper, 1999
 - 78 2019 award for "What the Constitution Means to Me"
 - 79 "Magnifico!"
 - 84 Fully grown fillets
 - 86 Statistician's calculation
 - 88 Cruz known as the Queen of Salsa
 - 91 Regenerist skin-care brand
 - 92 Unprompt?
 - 94 Hogs, after being scrubbed clean?
 - 95 Even a little bit
 - 99 Take ____ from (follow)
 - 100 Thrill
 - 101 Resident of the lowest circle of hell, in Dante's "Inferno"
 - 106 Spring setting in San Antonio: Abbr.
 - 107 Border of a lagoon, say
 - 111 What the ecstatic janitor did?
 - 113 Porcine pad
 - 114 Paul of "There Will Be Blood"
 - 115 Access Taylor
 - 116 "Stop, I'm blushing!"
 - 117 "Michael Jordan's Top 10 Free Throws" and others?
 - 120 Rental units: Abbr.
 - 121 Ballet shoe application
 - 122 Shakespearean prince
 - 123 Cuts off
 - 124 Interlock
 - 125 Coral composition
 - 126 N.F.C. South city: Abbr.
 - 127 Kids' camp crafts project
 - 2 "Yuck!"
 - 10 Sublime
 - 11 Toto's creator
 - 12 They're full of questions
 - 13 Holds on to one's Essence, say?
 - 14 Fasteners of some heels
 - 15 Go at a glacial pace
 - 16 Book before Joel
 - 17 Boat sometimes built around a whalebone frame
 - 18 Sool, e.g.
 - 24 Give a shout
 - 29 Nothing of the ____
 - 30 Digital sounds?
 - 32 Something up one's sleeve
 - 33 Original site of the Elgin Marbles
 - 34 Beyoncé, for one
 - 38 "How neat!"
 - 40 Uncle ____
 - 41 Heartbreak
 - 42 Martin who wrote the "Baby-Sitters Club" series
 - 43 Conclude (with)
 - 44 Coarsegrained igneous rock
 - 46 Tagging along
 - 47 Martial-arts-based workout
 - 48 Trial's partner
 - 49 Went cross-country, say
 - 53 Spiked wheel on a boot spur
 - 56 Farm-to-table program, in brief
 - 58 Shish ____



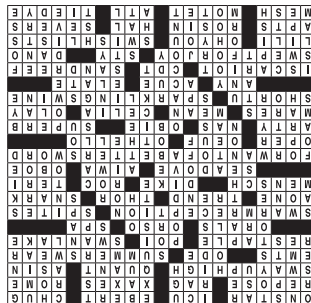
- 60 Scientist who said, "The cosmos is also within us. We're made of star-stuff!"
- 63 First string
- 64 Puts out
- 65 How obedient dogs walk
- 67 Gets a head?
- 68 Host of an Apple TV+ book club
- 69 In again
- 70 More sardonic
- 71 Paperless airplane reservation
- 72 Trifling amount
- 78 Because (of)
- 80 Sky fall?
- 81 Whitney of cotton gin fame
- 82 Heated
- 83 "Later!"
- 85 Button on an old video game controller
- 87 Org. that publishes the journal Emotion
- 89 Prepare for a guided meditation, perhaps
- 90 Cavity fillers
- 93 Homogeneous
- 95 ____ Gobert, 2018 and 2019 N.B.A. Defensive Player of the Year
- 96 Benchmark: Abbr.
- 98 "Over here!"
- 101 Religion symbolized by a moon and star
- 102 Make a choice on Tinder
- 103 Isle of Man men, e.g.
- 104 Goralitlike
- 105 Suite meet?
- 108 Made lighter
- 109 One might begin "Dear Diary . . ."
- 110 "All That Jazz" director
- 112 Screenwriter Lee, sister of Spike
- 113 De-bug?
- 117 ____ cha beef (Chinese entrée)
- 118 V-J Day prez
- 119 Ni'ihau necklace

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

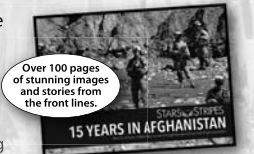
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FACES

Embracing who she is

Songwriter Ingrid Andress finds her voice on 'Lady Like'

By MESFIN FEKADU
Associated Press

In a songwriting session with a group of rappers, which Ingrid Andress was attending to help write a hook, the conversation turned to immature guy talk about “all the different girls they had.”

Uncomfortable and over it, Andress left. The musician with a publishing deal in Nashville wanted to some of her industry friends, popped open a bottle of wine and turned her frustration into songwriting gold.

She began writing “Boys,” a pop boy which later became an international hit for British singer Charli XCX. Rolling Stone, Pitchfork, Entertainment Weekly and others named “Boys” one of the best songs of 2017.

The experience of being in rooms with all kinds of artists — pop, rap, R&B, country, rock — helped Andress build her songwriting skills, and now she’s being praised for lyrical prowess on her own album, “Lady Like.” It’s not her most commercial best albums, but one of the year’s strongest debuts.

Andress said she’s learned to write honest lyrics and stay true to herself — even if that means being an outsider.

“You’re not just born with the gift of songwriting. It takes time, just like any sport or learning a language. You have to practice it,” she said. “I feel like I can adapt to any situation now. To me, it’s about making a good song that makes you feel something. That can be in any genre.”

She added that sometimes “people think it’s not too specific, you’re alienating yourself and not as relatable. I just kind of went for it.”

“Lady Like” is filled with lyrical gems that reflect the budding star’s maturity and knack for one-liners.

Andress, 29, has also written songs for Bebe Rexha, Halsey, Lauren Jauregui, FLETCHER, Why Don’t We and Boyz Cameron. She’s had writing sessions with Alicia Keys and Sam Hunt, though those songs haven’t been released, and she co-wrote (and even co-produced) every song on her debut album.

It might seem she was destined to be a songwriter, but it was a happy accident.

The young girl from Colorado who madly played sports also sang in choir, wrote jingles, played piano and appeared in musicals. But she didn’t think music would make a career. That changed one day when she went to see the Colorado Rockies take on the Boston Red Sox in the World Series, and on her way to Fenway Park she heard loud, beautiful music blasting from a building. She headed over, not realizing she was walking into the Berklee College of Music.

“All these musicians just jamming out together — I was like, ‘This is a school? This is a college?’ I was like, ‘What? What have I been doing this whole time?’” she recalled. The junior high school student “dropped every sport. When we got home, I was like, ‘I quit.’ I need to get my resumé up for Berklee.”

In college, she took poetry and songwriting classes, eventually meeting songwriter and music executive Kara DioGuardi, who has written hits for Kelly Clarkson, Christina Aguilera and Pink, appeared as a judge on “American Idol” and signed Jason Derulo to a deal.

DioGuardi was impressed with a song Andress wrote at Berklee, and signed her to a publishing deal in Nashville after Andress left school early.

“When you live in Nashville and you’re writing down here, you’re working with some of the best lyricists, perhaps, in the world. She was mentored up with that sort of writing style — making every line count and every word count. Every word was an opportunity to tell a story.” DioGuardi said.

“I’ve known Ingrid for a long time now... She was my student, and now I see her on late-night shows,” DioGuardi said, yet she “still is the Ingrid I know.”

Andress enjoyed writing for others, but then began “writing songs that I didn’t want to give away.” One song, in particular, “pushed me over the edge, for sure. It was personal. I said, I didn’t want to give it to anybody unless they were really awesome. They weren’t. That made me mad and rebel.”

So she began to focus on her own album, eventually crafting “Lady Like,” a pop-leaning country record about the different stages of a rollercoaster relationship she had been in. On album opener “Bad



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Musician Ingrid Andress, shown Oct. 1, has written songs for many other artists. She’s now issuing her own debut album, “Lady Like,” filled with lyrical gems.

Advice,” she’s drunk on merlot in hopes of getting over her man; she’s starting a relationship over on “The Stranger”; and she’s dealing with her lover playing two sides on “Both,” singing: “You can tell me to stay, you can push me away / Have space or get close, but you can’t do both.”

The standout track, “More Hearts Than Mine,” came to life as Andress panicked about whether to bring the boy she was dating home for the holidays.

“I was like, ‘Why am I so worried about that?’ I’m like, ‘Oh, it’s because I care about my family so much.’ The last time I brought somebody home, they still ask about him to this day. Even though this was forever ago, and he hates me now, they still are like, ‘Well he was our favorite,’” she said.

“More Hearts Than Mine” resonated with listeners and country radio — it reached No. 5 on Billboard’s Hot country songs chart and crossed over to the pop world, reaching the Top 40. It was nominated for song of the year at Wednesday’s Country Music Association Awards, losing to Maren Morris’ “The Bones.” She was also nominated for new artist of the year, won by Morgan Wallen.

Andress also received nominations at this year’s Academy of Country Music Awards and CMT Music Awards.

It’s a 180-degree turn from March, when Andress released her album — the same month the coronavirus pandemic hit.

“I was like, ‘This could be a terrible

The CMA Awards

The CMA Awards were not covered by wire services, but the winners are online at cmawards.com/nominees-winners.

idea,” she recalled. “Then I realized ... we still need music. Music always gets through my stuff, so let’s hope it helps everyone else, too.”

The accolades are also a far cry from what Andress felt when she first moved to Nashville.

“I was told all the time that I wasn’t lady-like,” she said. “If I was recording a demo and I’d mess up, I’d yell, ‘(Expletive).’ All everybody would just be like, ‘Uh, OK, calm down.’ Everybody was very shocked by my behavior and how I spoke and even how I dressed. People would make comments. It just really confused me because I grew up not really thinking about that stuff.”

So — like Andress typically does — she wrote a song about it. And named her album after it.

“I tried playing the whole sweet girl game for probably a little bit, but I just ended up imploding. It didn’t work for me,” she said. “It’s so much work and it’s exhausting to be something you’re not — so let’s embrace who we are.”

Gotham Awards
posthumously
honor Boseman

Associated Press

Awards season, such as it is this year, got formally underway Thursday with the first notable film nominations yet announced in a pandemic-marred movie year. The Gotham Awards, presented by the Independent FilmMaker Project, put forward five films, all directed by women, for best feature film, and a posthumous acting nod for Chadwick Boseman.

Kelly Reichardt’s “First Cow” led all films in nominations for the 30th annual Gotham Awards with four nods, including best film, best screenplay, best actor for John Magaro and breakthrough actor for Orion Lee.

The other nominees for best film are: Eliza Hittman’s “Never Rarely Sometimes Always,” Chloe Zhao’s “Nomadland,” Kitty Green’s “The Assistant” and Natalie Erika James’ “Relic.”



JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

Chadwick Boseman at the 2018 MTV Movie and TV Awards in Santa Monica, Calif.

Boseman, who died in August at 43 from colon cancer, was nominated for his performance in the upcoming Netflix adaptation of August Wilson’s 1982 play, “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.” He is expected to land a posthumous Academy Award nomination for the film.

The Gothams, which honor independent film, are typically held in late autumn but, like most awards this year, have been pushed back. The ceremony is set for January 11, with what organizers called a hybrid format of virtual interactive tables.

Netflix says ‘Oui’ to second
season of ‘Emily in Paris’

Los Angeles Times

Like it or not, “Emily in Paris” is getting its work visa extended for a second season, star Lily Collins and streaming service Netflix announced Wednesday.

“Deux is better than one. I’m freaking out and beyond thrilled (much to Sylvie’s dismay) to announce #EmilyinParis will be returning to @netflix for Season 2!” Collins tweeted, while Netflix took on the voice of Sylvie Grateau, the fictional Emily Cooper’s disapproving French boss.

“Nous sommes desolees! We are writing to regrettably inform you that Emily Cooper will need to remain in Paris for an extended period of time,” said the release, written as a letter from Grateau to her firm’s corporate overlords

in America.

“Despite her overconfident manner and lack of prior experience in luxury goods marketing, she has nonetheless managed to charm some of our hard-to-impress clients during her short time at Savor. Call it bonnie chance, or American ingenuity — I’m leaning towards the former — her results are impressive.”

“We love having ‘Emily in Paris!’ the note concluded. “But please don’t let her know that.”

The show, created by “Sex and the City” mastermind Darren Star, follows the American 20-something as she Instagrams her way around Paris while working at a marketing agency that’s not thrilled about her assignment there.

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EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stripes.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com
Tina Crowley, Managing Editor for Content
crowley.tina@stripes.com
Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com
Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
gromelski.joe@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast
Erik Slavik, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavik.erik@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9390, DSN (314)583.9350
Pacific
Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81-42.552.2511 ext. 88380, DSN (315)277.380
Washington
Joseph Cacioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacioli.joseph@stripes.com
(+1)202/886-0033
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
Robert Reisman, Mideast Circulation Manager
robert.l.reisman.naf@gmail.com
reisman.circulation@stripes.com
DSN (314)583-9111
Europe
Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager
lewis.karen@stripes.com
memberservices@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9390, DSN (314)583.9030
Pacific
Mar Mori, customer-help@stripes.com
+81-3-6385.3171, DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington
202.886.0003
633 3rd St. NW, Suite 116, Washington, DC 20001-3050
Reader letters
letters@stripes.com
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OPINION

Peace in the Caucasus favors the peacemakers

By CLARA FERREIRA MARQUES
Bloomberg Opinion

Few thrive in chaos like Russia does. A trilateral agreement between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia looks likely to mark the end of a 44-day war over mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh. It's been the theater for brutal clashes that displaced tens of thousands and raised the threat of a wider regional conflict. The deal is a propaganda coup for Azerbaijan's leader, Ilham Aliyev. It's a decent outcome for Moscow, too.

With winter approaching and the coronavirus taking its toll, the truce is a humanitarian blessing. For the Kremlin, it's also a diplomatic one. After months of watching crisis after crisis in its post-Soviet sphere of influence, President Vladimir Putin has reassured Russia as regional guarantor of stability, with nearly 2,000 peacekeepers to prove the point. Turkey's backing was certainly vital, given its vocal support for Baku, but there is no formal role for Ankara in the deal that came into effect Tuesday. It was still Moscow that brokered the deal, in time to avoid a full Azeri takeover of the enclave. Europe and the U.S. are entirely absent.

The current dispute over the largely Armenian-populated sliver of land dates back to its establishment as an autonomous province within Soviet Azerbaijan in the early 1920s. The Soviet Union's collapse reawakened the question of Nagorno-Karabakh's fate, and a war followed that killed 30,000 and displaced a million before a Russian-brokered truce was struck in 1994. Without a permanent peace deal,

the conflict simmered with occasional skirmishes until the fighting that started in late September.

Backed by Turkey, Azerbaijan notched up significant military successes and over the weekend took the fortress city of Shusha, known as Shushi in Armenian, a strategic stronghold. That proved a turning point.

Armenia had little choice but to make the "unspeakably painful" concessions laid out by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. "There's no defeat unless you consider yourself to be a loser," he said, but this was no victory. The country will withdraw from districts around Karabakh held since the 1990s. An angry mob stormed the government building in the country's capital, Yerevan.

Aliyev, meanwhile, has triumphantly wrapped himself in the flag. He has long-desired concessions, including Russian-protected access to Nakhchivan, a geographically separated district. With even Azerbaijan's political opposition behind his campaign, it's a helpful boost at a time when falling crude is squeezing an oil- and gas-dependent economy.

For Russia, the peace dividend doesn't look bad either.

It's possible to argue that Turkey's presence alone points to fading Caucasus clout, and Moscow is certainly stretched, as I've written before. The agreement is still the best available outcome for the Kremlin. As Alex Melnikishvili of IHS Markit told me, Turkey's role reflects Moscow's pragmatism. It would have been difficult to end hostilities without offering Ankara a stake. But it remains secondary, and outside the conflict zone.

In a year when little has gone Putin's way because of the oil crash and pandemic, he clinched an agreement based on terms largely brushed aside before. Moscow is now a literal watchman in the region, with retreating Armenian forces giving way to Russian peacekeeping troops, on a renewable five-year mission.

The success is not unalloyed. There's a lot yet to consolidate here, not least the long-term status of Karabakh. There's no disputing that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has muscled into the Caucasus, and possibly secured access to the Caspian Sea and ultimately Central Asia through Azerbaijan. Turkish peacekeepers, mentioned by Baku but not the official statement, are a coup for Ankara and a headache for the Kremlin — even if they remain in a cease-fire monitoring center outside the enclave. It's an unprecedented complication, as Maximilian Hess of the Foreign Policy Research Institute points out, and Russia will be reluctant to have a NATO member's troops anywhere in the former Soviet Union.

Moscow has lost hearts and minds in Armenia too, an unhelpful development after it antagonized the Russia-friendly population of Belaruk by supporting President Alexander Lukashenko following August's disputed election. Larger aims prevailed.

Russia is reactive. Having failed to prevent a war in its sphere of influence, it was nevertheless able to take the lead and pull out a win of sorts. In 2020, that count was success.

Clara Ferreira Marques is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering commodities and environmental, social and governance issues.

Trump can't handle losing. So he won't concede.

By TONY SCHWARTZ
Special to The Washington Post

I imagine that you are forever gasping for air because you can't get enough oxygen. For Donald Trump, oxygen comes from winning, whatever it takes, including declaring victory in defeat. There are only two outcomes in life for Trump: You win or you lose, you dominate or you submit.

That's what makes Trump's refusal to accept the results of this year's election, no matter how preposterous his case may be, so predictable. I spent hundreds of hours with him to write "The Art of the Deal" in 1987, and I've observed him in public life since, especially as president. Other than winning the 2016 election, Trump has never done anything that surprised me. He is who he is and has always been. He will never admit defeat, because he can't.

Trump is the prisoner of the fictional world he has created. He can't step outside it to acknowledge the results because if he did, he would be left with the emptiness that he has spent his life furiously trying to fill. "Don't you dare feel sorry for me," he insists from his bunker. "I am not a loser."

Instead, Trump will continue to insist that he will not let until bad people took it away from him. Once Joe Biden is sworn in as president in January, Trump will race around making speeches to earn big fees and feel relevant, and above all, to keep up his doomed effort to prove his worthiness to himself. He will fight off his depression and grief with rage and blame.

It's possible that Trump will run for president again in 2024, still falsely insisting that he was cheated. His singular skill is convincing people that what they are observing with their own eyes isn't true. We've seen that vividly around his decades-long claims of success as a business

executive despite his myriad failures and then, as president, in his insistence that we're "rounding the corner" as coronavirus cases soar and his false proclamations of innocence as he was impeached. If Trump should finally be convicted of crimes he has committed and sent to prison, he will rail until his last breath that he was the victim of injustice. He can run, but he cannot hide, because wherever he goes, there he will be. His primary legacy is the virus that he spread so ruthlessly — call it the Trump virus — grounded in hatred and deceit, which infected nearly half of Americans.

The truth will never set Trump free; it's too inditing. But it does have the potential to set the rest of us free. One of the primary lessons of the past four years, underscored most vividly during the pandemic, is the severe limits of self-interest in a deeply interdependent world. To advance what Trump perceived as his self-interest, he has been willing to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives, including those who most avidly support him. It is telling that Trump won a majority of votes in 93% of the 376 counties with the highest number of new coronavirus cases per capita.

Wearing a mask and socially distancing undeniably save lives, but since March, Trump has been more concerned with saving face. He wasn't going to let the virus, or scientists — or anyone else, for that matter — tell him what to do. Trying to prove that he could control even self-interest, he became the willing superspreader in chief.

Trump has used the presidency as a literal bully pulpit, stirring fear and anger in his base by appealing to their most primitive instincts, and encouraging them to do whatever they feel like doing, no matter the cost to others, or themselves. This is possible only because Trump lacks a conscience, and any capacity for care and

empathy.

The opposite of the fear Trump spreads is love, and it begins with the capacity to embrace all of ourselves, the best and the worst of who we are, without assuming we're only one or the other. The worst things people have said about us, and that we've said about ourselves, are all true — but they're not all that is true. We can't change what we don't notice, but the more we can acknowledge, the less we have to defend. Trump has nothing but disdain for weakness and vulnerability. He owns it. Turns. What he notices about those moments — and what seems to come naturally to Biden — is comfort and compassion, including for ourselves.

For four years, along with millions of other Americans, I have marinated in the toxic emotions that Trump inspired and perpetuated: outrage and fear, helplessness and grief. They're exhausting, and debilitating. How much better would it be to live in a world in which we spend less energy defending ourselves against disaster and fighting with our fellow human beings — and more of our energy on learning, growing and adding value to others and to the world?

I need to believe that the calamity Trump has visited on America, and the world, also provides an opportunity for transformation — and for a reckoning with ourselves. How do each of us take more personal responsibility and hold ourselves more accountable, including for social justice? How do we anticipate not feeling good enough is being good enough. It's not about standing down and standing by. It's about standing up and stepping forward. Trump won't learn, or move on, but we can. Let the healing begin.

Tony Schwartz is chief executive of the New York Project. He is the author of the forthcoming book "The War Between My Selves."

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

US, EU should finally settle trade war, focus on China

The Washington Post

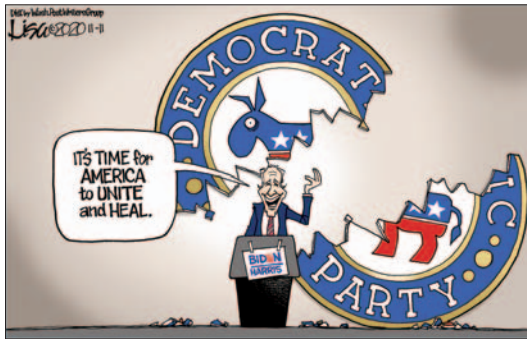
When is a setback for U.S.-European trade not necessarily a setback for U.S.-European trade? When it's Monday's European Union announcement of \$4 billion in new tariffs on U.S. goods, in retaliation for the Trump administration's imposition of tariffs on \$7.5 billion in European goods, raising the trade aircraft to wileky, last year. This latest round of tit-for-tat levies so clearly demonstrates the mutually destructive nature of trans-Atlantic trade conflict that it may finally prompt both sides to negotiate a permanent settlement.

At issue is the United States' 16-year-old battle at the World Trade Organization, initiated last year by George W. Bush administration, to punish Europe for subsidizing Airbus, the Franco-Anglo-German-Spanish consortium that competes for global commercial aircraft sales with the U.S. national champion, Boeing. The EU, in effect, countered, and the WTO — confirming its usefulness as an impartial arbiter in such matters — has ruled correctly, that both sides are right. Each is guilty: illegally subsidizing aircraft exports, Europe via subsidized loans, and the United States through state-level tax breaks.

Therefore, unlike many other tariffs enacted under the Trump administration, the ones it imposed on Europe last year were actually soundly based under international law. Alas for the United States: the same can be said about the tariffs the EU just imposed. Collateral damage may soon pile up on the various non-aircraft industries each side is punishing to gain leverage on the other.

The obvious solution for the United States and Europe is to negotiate mutual elimination of unlawful subsidies, as indeed both sides claim already to be doing. The end of tariffs and subsidized competition would be especially beneficial for Boeing, which is in deep crisis, and dependent on federal aid, due to the pandemic and problems with its troubled 737 MAX aircraft, sales of which have been all but paralyzed since two fatal crashes of the new model in late 2018 and early 2019. Yet Airbus, too, has much to gain from a truce since, while the United States and the EU have been fighting over the past decade-and-a-half, China has been building its own commercial aircraft manufacturer, COMAC, into a potentially potent competitor, both in the huge Chinese market and beyond. The pandemic may have shrunk the air travel business permanently, or at least for the medium term; if the United States and Europe want to prevent China from subsidizing its way to a larger share of that market, they jointly practicing lawful trade could help.

The Trump administration has gratuitously provoked Europeans with ill-conceived tariffs on steel and other imports, as well as threats against the European automotive industry. By contrast, peace in the U.S.-EU aircraft war could be a predicate for establishing the united front of democratic capitalist countries against Chinese mercantilism that the Biden campaign promised. In fact, maximizing free trade with high-wage, environmentally conscious Europe presents few of the problems trade opponents often attribute to deals with low-wage countries such as Mexico. Chances are that the end of wars of the Trump years, and needing new sources of



growth to recover from the pandemic, both Europe's leaders and President-elect Joe Biden have every reason to get to yes.

Runoff from Ga.'s US senators questioning elections is toxic

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Even in an election year where standards of fair play seem to plummet with each passing day, Monday's attack by Georgia's U.S. senators marked a new low.

Sens. Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue called on Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to resign, alleging that he had "failed the people of Georgia" and "failed to deliver honest and transparent elections."

Those are shocking charges for this pair to level at the person — and the office — responsible for overseeing elections here. They're even more stunning, given that Perdue and Loeffler fired their broadside against a fellow Republican — not that party affiliation should count when the integrity of a core democratic institution is under attack.

Perdue and Loeffler offered no specifics, at least not for the record. And that is what should make their campaign-speak attack message so unacceptable to fair-minded Georgians.

Specific, actionable allegations based even somewhat loosely in fact can be assessed and investigated. Which is appropriate.

Hyperbole and silly accusations cannot. Reckless barely gets to touch on what Perdue and Loeffler have done. Without presenting reasons, they have assaulted Georgia's election system. That is dangerous behavior in this tense moment, both for this state and for the nation that is watching this risky sidestep.

In past editorials, this newspaper has at times been critical of Raffensperger's management of aspects of the elections system. He is charged with overseeing. Too many election hardware glitches is one thing. It's improperly far beyond that to allege that, under Raffensperger, Georgia "has failed to deliver honest" elections.

We've seen no evidence of that. In an AJC interview Monday, Raffensperger said, "What people really want at the end of the day — I think both sides should desire honest, fair elections. That's what we've been working for."

We've also weighed in on issues around Georgia's 2018 election that we believe helped get us to this present place. In a contest that saw the closest vote for governor in half a century in Georgia, Brian Kemp's opponent, Stacey Abrams, refused to concede in a race narrowly decided by about 55,000 votes.

It's not hard to see in hindsight that Abrams' decision around the election's result is now a tactic being applied from the White House on down.

As we've said before, too, the governor

left us open to this result. Kemp would not step down from his job as secretary of state while running for higher office in 2018. That meant he oversaw an election in which his name was also on the ballot.

That decision had the expected effect. As we wrote in an editorial after that 2018 election, "It's not hard to see why Democrats see this as an unacceptable conflict of interest. At the very least, candidate Kemp's staying put during the race contributed to significant doubts about the fairness of the election he was charged with conducting. Georgia could have done without this problem."

The 2018 voting tally stood in Georgia, despite assertions of voter suppression. Since then, Georgia has rolled out new electronic voting machines that produce paper ballots which are scanned to tabulate results. The new system seems to have, tacitly at least, acknowledged some of Democrats' concerns about the integrity and security of ballots.

We have also offered our opinions on problems in getting the new vote-counting system up to speed, including serious malfunctions in too many places during the June primary.

Since then, state and local election officials appear to have fixed the most-serious deficiencies. From all appearances, the November election — and its record turnout — appears to have proceeded far more smoothly and competently. And no verified instances of widespread fraud have surfaced so far.

Today's incessant partisan fighting has weakened our democracy's systems and fed a now-rampant and corrosive distrust of government — and of each other. The latest low blows further erode the constitutional foundations of self-governance.

It's frightening for freedom to envision a Georgia or America in which such stunts are quickly absorbed by many as near-gospel truth.

Meek acceptance of charges without facts should be unacceptable for a country of proudly stubborn, liberty-loving people, many of whom have fought or even died for freedoms that include the right to make up our own minds in choosing our elected officials.

Loeffler and Perdue are far from alone in this season of rock-throwing at American civic norms and common decency. Their attack seems directly crafted to appeal to core supporters of President Donald Trump who has, so far, refused to acknowledge the reported results of this month's election. And too many other political leaders, in Georgia and elsewhere, have joined in this wrongheaded campaign to cast accusations against election results they dislike.

We realize Perdue and Loeffler now find themselves beginning the next, sure-to-be brutal rounds of political battles that will continue until January's runoff election. Given that Georgia is now a state in play, it

is to be expected that both Democratic and Republican candidates will be much more aggressive in their bids for office.

Even so, there must be standards of ethical behavior that dictate lines of appropriateness — and those lines should not be breached.

Throughout America's history, many hard-fought political battles have been conducted without trampling boundaries of acceptable conduct.

As we've said many times before, Georgia is an influential state. Our economic strengths have long been recognized by the rest of the nation and world. Our political importance is likewise gaining prominence, especially as Republicans and Democrats fight hard for dominance here.

Politics is about nothing if not vigorous competition. Done ethically, a robust pursuit of votes can help citizens make choices. The latest inappropriate lobbing of thin accusations at election officials is nowhere near that.

Perdue, Loeffler and others should know that. We believe fair-minded Georgians already do.

These small steps can show Biden's resolve to heal nation

The Wall Street Journal

Joe Biden said Saturday night that after the election "this is the time to heal in America." In that spirit, and to be constructive, we thought we offer a couple of suggestions for what you might call the healing agenda. These aren't major policy concessions, but they would have symbolic political significance.

The former vice president could start by ending government harassment of the Little Sisters of the Poor. That's the order of nuns who have objected for a decade to being asked to cover contraception and abortifacients in their health care plan under "Obamacare."

In July the Supreme Court upheld a Trump administration rule granting the nuns a religious exemption to the mandate, but Biden criticized the ruling and vowed to restore the "Obama-Biden policy that existed before the (2014 Supreme Court) Hobby Lobby ruling." Dropping the attempt to coerce these nuns against their beliefs wouldn't threaten Obamacare. But it would be an important gesture to religious Americans that Biden is going to lower the temperature in the culture war.

Next we'd suggest ending Biden's opposition to the Opportunity Scholarships in the District of Columbia that provide a lifeline for thousands of low-income children trying to attend public schools. The teachers unions hate this program because it challenges their education monopoly and, under Barack Obama, Democrats killed it for a while. But especially when COVID-19 has exposed the need for more options for public-school families, declaring peace over the scholarships would help thousands of poor parents and send a message that Biden's priority is children rather than unions.

For a triple play, Biden could also speak up against those on the left who want to stigmatize and purge from civil society anyone who has worked in the Trump administration. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is one of the instigators of the purge campaign. Biden doesn't have to admire the Trump administration to say that most of the people who have served in it did so honorably.

This would anger some on the left, but if Biden intends to drive his administration rather than have it driven from the left, better to send such a signal early. It won't reconcile all Trump voters, but it might persuade many that Biden's call for unity is more than Beltway virtue-signaling. We hope we can hear suggestions if Biden wants to hear them.

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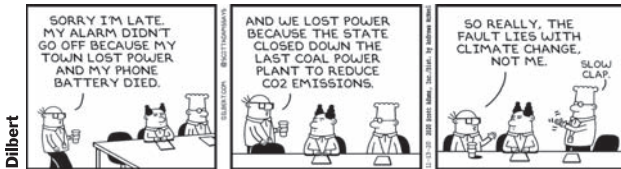
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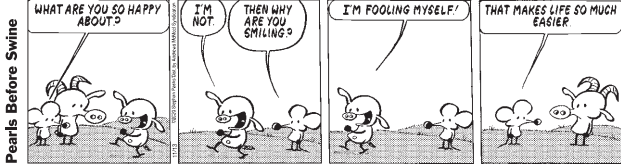
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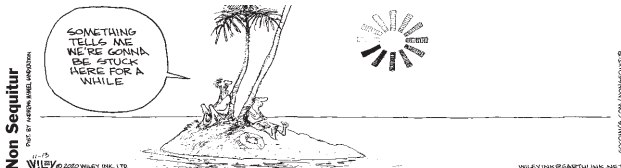
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



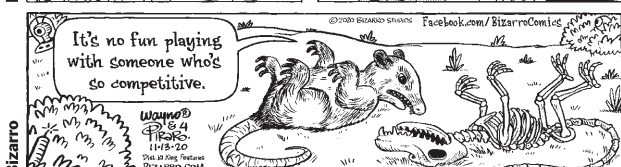
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11	
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48	49	50	51									52	
53								54				55	
56								57				58	

ACROSS

- 1 Small batteries
- 4 PC key
- 7 Shame
- 12 TV schedule abbr.
- 13 Standard
- 14 Factions
- 15 100 percent
- 16 Minimize
- 18 Sleep acronym
- 19 Squelched
- 20 Persian Gulf land
- 22 Jo's sister
- 23 And others (Lat.)
- 27 Half of bi-
- 29 Chevy model
- 31 Praline nut
- 34 Smidgens
- 35 Office machine
- 37 Prohibit
- 38 Navy commando
- 39 Past
- 41 Oxen's burden
- 45 Delta deposits
- 47 Spacecraft compartment
- 48 Makes light of
- 52 Geological period
- 53 Suspect's excuse
- 54 Lion's home
- 55 Arias
- 56 Started

DOWN

- 1 Arcade pioneer
- 2 More skilled
- 3 Hayek of "Frida"
- 4 Actor Omar
- 5 Deli meat
- 6 Wooden box
- 7 Org.
- 8 Auction action
- 9 Commotion
- 10 Stitch
- 11 QVC alternative
- 17 Boo-Boo's buddy
- 21 Partridge's kin
- 23 Strong adhesive
- 24 Make lace
- 25 Pie — mode
- 26 Scale notes
- 28 Compass dir.
- 30 Roman 1002
- 31 Mac alternatives
- 32 Fair hier, in ads
- 33 Tax pro
- 36 Bar
- 37 Answer to "Are we there?"
- 40 Iris relatives, for short
- 42 Puccini work
- 43 Imam's holy book
- 44 Dutch treats?
- 45 Whirl
- 46 Taxpayer IDs
- 48 Wee dollop
- 49 Flamenco cheer
- 50 Peruke
- 51 Cagers' gp.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

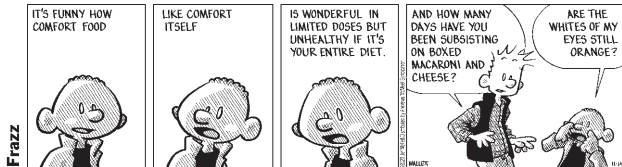
A	H	A	S	T	A	R	H	O	L	T	
V	I	P	L	O	R	I	O	P	U	S	
A	P	E	R	I	T	I	F	T	E	A	K
R	A	D	A	L	U	M	N	N	U	S	
V	E	T	T	E	D	E	K	E			
E	D	U	S	I	N	R	A	D	I	O	
E	I	R	E	P	O	D	L	E	G	O	
S	T	E	N	O	T	A	R	M	O	P	
D	A	B	S	A	V	A	I	O	R	S	
T	O	Y	O	T	A	S	M	A	T		
A	V	O	W	S	E	A	S	C	A	P	E
R	A	G	E	I	L	T	E	P	U	G	
A	L	A	R	L	A	D	S	E	N	O	

11-13

CRYPTOQUIP

V F C H T H M R R E P C
 N C P Y C J T Y X ' N Q Y T V C Y P T H ' J
 F M D Q T H M J F C Y O T O C Y , E ' Q
 N T X E J ' N R E D C Q J M P T O T P E J X .
 Yesterday's Cryptiquip: WEBSITE FULL OF CROWDSOURCED REVIEWS OF BUSINESSES LOCATED ALONG AN INDIAN RIVER: GANGES LIST.

Today's Cryptiquip Clue: R equals F



Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine

Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12				13					14				
15				16					17				
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					36				37				
38	39	40						41			42	43	44
45								46			47		
48								49			50		
51								52			53		

ACROSS

- 1 Mountain pass
- 4 Daniels of "The Newsroom"
- 8 Carpet type
- 12 Ms. Thurman
- 13 Medley
- 14 Own
- 15 "You've got mail" co.
- 16 Stephen King pooch
- 17 Sheltered
- 18 #1 hit by Elton John
- 21 Enzyme suffix
- 22 Sort
- 23 Ouzo flavor
- 26 Request
- 27 Aries
- 30 Sprint
- 31 Köln cry
- 32 Office note
- 33 iPhone download
- 34 Triage ctrs.
- 35 Bulgaria's capital
- 36 Shade tree
- 37 "Caught ya!"
- 38 Geologic wonder
- 45 Leer at
- 46 Debtors' notes
- 47 Scott's denial
- 48 Bedouin
- 49 Oxidation result
- 50 Dance syllable

DOWN

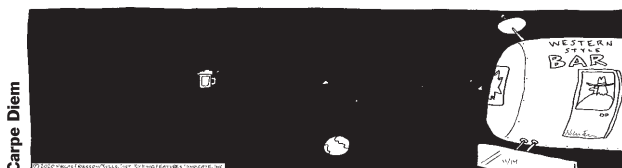
- 1 Avocado dip, for short
- 2 Cupid's specialty
- 3 — Alto
- 4 Humorous
- 5 Dodge
- 6 South Pacific nation
- 7 Inane
- 8 "Jaws" villain
- 9 Angelic ring
- 10 With (Fr.)
- 11 Nerd's kin
- 19 Moolah
- 20 Caribou's kin
- 23 Oklahoma city
- 24 Snooze
- 25 WWW access enabler
- 26 Rm. coolers
- 27 Ump
- 28 Paris pal
- 29 Extinct bird
- 31 Large wardrobe
- 32 Castle defense
- 34 Sprite
- 35 California peak
- 36 Barely manage
- 37 Something not to be missed
- 38 Street
- 39 Monster
- 40 Family
- 41 Lopsided win
- 42 Foot fraction
- 43 Waikiki's island
- 44 Close



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	A	S		E	S	C		A	B	A	S	H
T	B	A		P	A	R		S	I	D	E	S
A	L	L		P	L	A		S	L	A	S	D
R	E	M		S	A	T		O	N			
I	R	A		Q	M	E		G	E	T	A	L
				U	N	I		I	M	P	A	L
P	E	C		A	N			I	O	T	A	S
C	O	P		I	E	R		N	I	X		
S	E	A		L	A	G		O	Y	O	K	E
				S	I	L		T	S	P	O	D
D	O	W		N	P	L		A	S	E	R	A
A	L	I		B	I	D		E	N	R	A	M
B	E	G		A	N	S		T	S		A	N

11-14

CRYPTOQUIP

Z O Q D E Q M S K Y D A R W Q K

T Z D V Q Q S R Q S D O W X O R R A

Z Y T S Z J R Q Y R Q R O R P R O U M Z U

D C Z X D V Z J Y R : X Z C C Z C K E R E .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN AN OFFICE SECRETARY'S DRAWER CAN'T HOLD ANOTHER PAPER, I'D SAY IT'S FILED TO CAPACITY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals T

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College football

Georgia Tech's scores

MIDWEST		
Ball St.	38-5	
Cent. Michigan	40, N. Illinois	10
W. Michigan	41, Toledo	30

SCHEDULE

Friday's games	
Washington	vs. Iowa (1) at FUII (3)
Dallas	vs. NC State (1) at FUII (3)

MIDWEST

FAU (1-2)	at Minnesota (1-2)
East Carolina (1-5)	at Cincinnati (6-0)

SCHEDULE

Saturday	
TCU (3-3)	at West Virginia (1-3)
Illinois (0-3)	at Rutgers (2-3)
Middle Tennessee (2-5)	at Marshall (6-0)
North Dakota (0-7)	at Boston College (5-0)
Ohio St. (3-0)	at Maryland (2-1), cod.
West Virginia (1-2)	at Navy (3-4), cod.
Morphis (4-2)	at North Carolina (5-2)
Army (6-1)	at Tulane (2-4)
Virginia Tech (1-7)	at Wake Forest (2-4)
Wake Forest (4-2)	at Virginia Tech (2-4)
South Alabama (3-4)	at Louisiana-Lafayette (6-1)
Georgia Tech (3-3)	at Appalachian St. (5-1)
Alabama (6-0)	at LSU (2-3)
Louisville (2-5)	at Virginia (2-4)
North Carolina (1-6)	at Louisiana (2-3)
Southwestern Miss. (2-5)	at W. Kentucky (2-3)
Arkansas State (2-4)	at Middle Tennessee (2-5)
Arkansas State (2-4)	at Middle Tennessee (2-5)
Arkansas State (2-4)	at Middle Tennessee (2-5)

SCHEDULE

Sunday	
Wake Forest (4-2)	at North Carolina (5-2)
Army (6-1)	at Tulane (2-4)
Virginia Tech (1-7)	at Wake Forest (2-4)
Wake Forest (4-2)	at Virginia Tech (2-4)
South Alabama (3-4)	at Louisiana-Lafayette (6-1)
Georgia Tech (3-3)	at Appalachian St. (5-1)
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Arkansas State (2-4)	at Middle Tennessee (2-5)
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Pro football

NFL AMERICAN CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Buffalo	7	2	0	778	242	263
Miami	5	2	0	625	222	131
N. England	9	1	0	625	116	142
N.Y. Jets	6	2	0	600	201	126

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Pittsburgh	8	0	0	1,000	235	161
Pack	5	0	0	625	219	229
Cleveland	5	0	0	625	206	237
Cincinnati	5	0	0	313	194	214

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Kansas City	5	1	0	889	296	183
Las Vegas	4	0	0	625	119	229
Denver	3	0	0	375	174	217
L.A. Chargers	2	0	0	295	205	216

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Philadelphia	4	1	0	438	186	205
Washington	6	0	0	250	153	188
Dallas	2	0	0	222	204	290
N. Giants	2	0	0	222	168	211

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
New Orleans	2	0	0	750	244	203
Tampa Bay	6	0	0	667	250	203
Atlanta	3	0	0	333	243	251

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Green Bay	4	0	0	750	253	204
Chicago	4	0	0	556	178	190
Detroit	1	0	0	222	168	211
Minnesota	3	0	0	575	217	234

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Seattle	5	0	0	750	274	243
Arizona	3	0	0	625	234	180
San Francisco	4	0	0	444	225	207

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Indianapolis	3	0	0	500	194	217
Houston	2	0	0	222	168	211
Jacksonville	1	0	0	222	168	211
Buffalo	1	0	0	222	168	211
Tampa Bay	1	0	0	222	168	211
Washington	1	0	0	222	168	211
Buffalo	1	0	0	222	168	211
Arizona	1	0	0	222	168	211
Denver	1	0	0	222	168	211
Las Vegas	1	0	0	222	168	211
Las Vegas	1	0	0	222	168	211
Seattle	1	0	0	222	168	211
Baltimore	1	0	0	222	168	211
Minnesota	1	0	0	222	168	211
Chicago	1	0	0	222	168	211
W. Va.	1	0	0	222	168	211
Jets	1	0	0	222	168	211
Atlanta	1	0	0	222	168	211
Dallas	1	0	0	222	168	211

NFL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

W	L	Pct	Pf	Pf	PA	
Atlanta	1	0	0	222	168	211
Atlanta	1	0	0			

THE MASTERS

Big sendoff

Tournament goes from season opener to finale

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Any optimism that the next Masters will be restored to its full glory of spring blooms and the endless chorus of cheers was dampened only by the reality of the calendar and the recent spikes in coronavirus cases.

It has been eight months since Augusta National said it was postponing the Masters because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and seven months since the club targeted two weeks before Thanksgiving as the most practical time to play this year.

"I'm hopeful that we will see improved conditions regarding this virus, but April is less than five months away, so there's no assurance of that," Masters Chairman Fred Ridley said. "But we do have hopes that the tournament in April will be closer to normal than it is right now."

There is very little normal about the 84th Masters, starting with the opening tee shots from both the first and the 10th tees. That has never happened on a Thursday morning.

Abraham Ancer of Mexico, one of 26 newcomers to the Masters, was playing his final practice round on Wednesday at about the time he would have been taking part in the Par 3 Contest, which was canceled. The Par 3 is en-

tertainment for the patrons, and there are no patrons this year.

On Tuesday, Jon Rahm skipped a tee shot across the pond, onto the 16th green, and watched it roll the length of the green, down the slope and into the cup. He raised his arms in celebration. There was video. And that was about it.

"Just imagine the roars that would have created in a normal year," Rory McIlroy said. "It's a different look. It's November, and I think everybody just has to embrace that we're here and we're playing and that's a great thing."

In some respects, this Masters is a celebration of what golf has done and a sendoff the sport has never had.

Except for World War II and the one time in 1971 when the PGA Championship moved to February in Florida, the Masters always has been the first major of the year. That rite of spring was about more than azaleas, dogwoods and the pursuit of a green jacket. For many, it signaled the start of golf season, whether that meant playing or watching.

"All the Masters I've watched over the years in Ireland, the golfing season started normally the weekend of the Masters," British Open champion Shane Lowry said. "That's when everyone gets the clubs out of the garage and dusts off the cobwebs and gets out and starts playing. That's when the weather starts



The gallery cheers as Jordan Spieth celebrates winning the Masters on April 12, 2015 in Augusta, Ga. This year the winner won't have a gallery celebrating his victory. Will normally return next year?

MATT SLOCUM/AP

to go from 6 degrees to about 12 (low 40s to low 50s Fahrenheit). And it only rains a little bit rather than loads."

In November, it's more like the grand finale.

Golf, like so many other sports, needs a feel-good finish. The sport was shut down for three months on March 13. One of the majors, the British Open, was canceled. Golf resumed in June with a hectic schedule of only one week off — Thanksgiving — and no assurances of safe health for anyone in the traveling circuit.

"I think when The Open Championship was canceled, I had serious doubts we'd play a Masters this year in 2020," McIlroy said.

"I think the R&A were in a tough situation, the fact that if they pushed it back, the daylight in the U.K. just isn't there to hold a field of 156. One of the nice things about the Masters is its limited field."

Fifteen players on the PGA Tour have tested positive for the coronavirus, including Dustin Johnson, the No. 1 player in the world. One player had to miss the PGA Championship in August, two withdrew from the U.S. Open in September and two more — including former Masters champion Sergio Garcia — tested positive ahead of the Masters.

But golf played on. And now it's at the finish line with no gal-

lery. Imagine the final turn onto Boylston Street in the Boston Marathon with no one lining the streets to cheer runners on.

"They've done a great job of giving us a golf course that's similar to what we're used to, but obviously a few months earlier than when we normally are here," Webb Simpson said.

Earlier than next April. Later than last April. Whatever. It's the Masters, and it's here. And after Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player hit the honorary tee shots, starters on the first and 10th tee will introduce each player with that familiar phrase.

Fore, please. Finally.

Commentary

Quiet course, quiet confidence for McIlroy

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Ga. — Phil Mickelson was either speaking from experience or ignoring a big part of his history.

The topic was Rory McIlroy and his quest for the career Grand Slam, the most exclusive club in golf. McIlroy only needs to win the Masters to make it a clean sweep of the majors.

Mickelson is not part of that club, either, lacking only the U.S. Open but not effort. He holds the record with his six runner-up finishes. And so he was asked Tuesday if he had any advice for McIlroy as he embarked on his sixth attempt to complete the Grand Slam at Augusta National.

"First of all, there's not much advice I can give him," Mickelson said. "The guy is as complete a player as there comes."

Lefty liked what he saw Tuesday. They played a nine-hole match Tuesday, the San Diego squad of Mickelson and Xander Schauffele losing to McIlroy and Dustin Johnson.

"He's playing beautifully," Mickelson

said. "I would be shocked if he wasn't in contention with a great chance on Sunday, whether it's this year, whether it's a few months from now, whether it's a few years. I remember when I was trying to win a major — any major — and I struggled for many years. But I always believed it would happen."

It did in 2004 at age 33 at the Masters. And then Mickelson won a major each of the next two years, followed by another Masters, and then a mild surprise at Muirfield with one of the greatest closing rounds to win the British Open.

But still no U.S. Open.

"He has so many majors already and such a strong game that winning a Masters will happen," Mickelson continued. "And when it does, I think he's going to win a few."

If only it were that simple.

Greg Norman surely felt he would win the Masters and perhaps a few more when he threw away his first good chance in 1986 with a bogey on the final hole. The Shark never won a green jacket. Neither did Ken Venturi, Tom Kite, Johnny Miller,

Tom Weiskopf, Ernie Els nor David Duval. It's a long list.

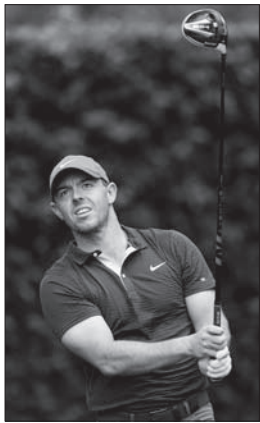
McIlroy can appreciate Mickelson's belief as it relates to the Masters. But this is about more than the Masters. It's the final link to the career Grand Slam, achieved only by Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods.

"Nothing is given in this game," McIlroy said.

Mickelson didn't seriously contend on the final day of any major until the 1999 U.S. Open. And those six silver medals came before he got the third leg of the Grand Slam. He won the British Open when he was 43.

McIlroy is 31. He captured the third leg, the British Open, when he was 25, his entire career ahead of him. And it still is. There is no reason to believe he can't be fitted for a green jacket in November or April, or even a few years down the line.

"I've always felt like I had the game to do well around here," McIlroy said. "It's just a matter of getting out of my own way and letting it happen. But as I said, you have to go out and earn it."



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Northern Ireland's **Rory McIlroy** needs only a Masters championship to complete golf's career grand slam.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Howard hauls in No. 1 recruiting class for Michigan

By JOHN MARSHALL

Associated Press

Juan Howard's coaching acumen was never in doubt when he took over as Michigan's coach in 2019.

He played 19 NBA seasons, winning two titles with Miami, and spent six seasons as a Heat assistant under Erik Spoelstra.

The biggest question in Howard's return to his alma mater was whether he would be able to recruit at a high level to keep up in the Big Ten and nationally.

Howard's 2021 class, rated No. 1 in the 247Sports composite, leaves no doubt.

"I just go after guys that fit our culture and it's great to see those who have chosen Michigan embrace the vision we have moving forward," Howard said. "Yes, every coach in a pandemic world at the collegiate level has pivoted in a way where you had to figure it out. Our staff, we didn't make any excuses. We had to figure it out as well and see what was the best way to go out there and recruit."



Howard

They clearly handled it well.

The first day of the early signing period was Wednesday, but Michigan won't officially announce its 2021 recruiting class until the last player in it has signed on Friday.

The six-player class is headlined by Caleb Houston, a 6-foot-8 Canadian forward, the No. 8 overall recruit in the country. He will be joined by another five-star recruit, Moussa Diabate, a 6-10 French forward who's rated No. 20 nationally.

The class also includes guard Frankie Collins, Kobe Bufkin and forward Isaiah Barnes, all four-star recruits. Three-star forward Will Tschetter rounds out the class.

Shifting dynamic

Villanova coach Jay Wright has been pulling in some of the nation's top recruiting classes the past few years and this year was no different, despite recruiting in a pandemic.

Villanova has the No. 4 overall recruiting class, topped by Trey Patterson, a 6-7 forward from Somerset, N.J., rated No. 30 nationally.

"It was really bizarre. I do feel like doing zooms with players, you're able to watch film with them," Wright said. "I felt like you developed, maybe not as good a personal relationship, but

a much better understanding of their basketball aspirations and their basketball IQ. Much better. We'll probably all do that going forward now. We just didn't do that in the past."

Top classes

Kentucky coach John Calipari has been one of the nation's best recruiters since arriving in Lexington and has another stellar class going.

Kentucky's 2021 class, headlined by five-star forward Daimon Collins (No. 19 overall) is ranked No. 3 nationally and could get better with Calipari pursuing two other top-rated recruits.

Florida State announced one signing Wednesday, 7-1 center John Butler (No. 55 nationally) from South Carolina. Coach Leonard Hamilton and the Seminoles will have three more commits expected to sign soon, including five-star players Matthew Cleveland and Jalen Warley, in a class rated No. 2 overall.

Izzo's touch

Michigan State coach Tom Izzo has shown a knack for recruiting elite-level recruits throughout the years and showed Wednesday he's still got it.

Izzo's latest class is rated No. 6 nationally, with all three players ranking in the top 75 nationally.

Max Christie, a five-star 6-6 shooting guard from Rolling Meadows, Ill., was the highest-rated of the group at No. 15 nationally. He'll be joined by 6-3 point guard Jaden Atkins (No. 65) and 6-5 guard Pierre Brooks (68), ensuring Michigan State will be loaded with talent next season and beyond.

"In summing these three players up, you've got great student-athletes, you've got great size for their positions and people who can play both ends of the court," Izzo said. "I think a really interesting thing is they are guys that can shoot the ball, but I think they are guys that want to win and guys that want to be here. That, to me, is more valuable than anything."

Red raiding

Texas Tech made a run to the 2019 national title game with a group of position-less players. Red Raiders coach Chris Beard added another in Jaylon Tyson, a 6-7 guard from Allen, Texas, who's rated No. 51 nationally.

"He deserves all of the attention he's been getting as of late," Beard said. "He's a position-less player, he's going to stay all over the floor, he'll have a chance to be an NBA guard one day with his length and athleticism."

AP sports writers Noah Trister, Larry Lage, Stephen Hawkins, Teresa Walker and Dan Gelston contributed to this story.



MATT CASHORE/AP

Notre Dame safety Shaun Crawford celebrates after the Fighting Irish defeated perennial ACC champion Clemson 47-40 in two overtimes Saturday in South Bend, Ind.

One and done for the Irish?

Jury is still out on Notre Dame's experiment as an ACC member

By HANK KURZ JR.

Associated Press

Notre Dame's overtime victory against Clemson put the No. 2 Fighting Irish atop the Atlantic Coast Conference standings and gave the league two teams in the top four of the Top 25.

Not everyone is thrilled, however, that Notre Dame is just dipping its toe in ACC waters in this season of the coronavirus pandemic and not taking the full plunge.

Many coaches celebrate the Irish's presence at the top of the league that is routinely maligned as having Clemson at one level and everyone else a notch below. Others, however, are lamenting that Notre Dame's commitment is just for this season.

Clemson coach Dabo Swinney would welcome them as a permanent member.

"Notre Dame's a great program. I think any conference, you'd be crazy as a conference if you didn't want Notre Dame," said Swinney, whose team (7-1, 6-1 ACC) had won 28 consecutive conference games before the 47-40 double-overtime loss on Saturday. "So, I'd love to have Notre Dame in the conference. It'd be awesome."

Pittsburgh coach Pat Narduzzi doesn't disagree. It's just the others and done aspect of it that bothers him. So much in fact, he is hoping for the Irish to lose this year.

Narduzzi, whose team absorbed a 45-3 drubbing by the Irish in late October, is advocating that the ACC do away with its arrangement to have five of its teams play traditionally independent Notre Dame every season.

His objection, he said, would be crossed if Notre Dame decided to join the league.

'To me, you either play with us or don't play with us. You'd almost like to boycott them. But if you want to play in the ACC, come play in the ACC.'

Pat Narduzzi

Pitt football coach, on Notre Dame's arrangement this year with the ACC

"To me, you either play with us or don't play with us. You'd almost like to boycott them. But if you want to play in the ACC, come play in the ACC," Narduzzi said this week. "... And if you don't want to play, let's not give them five games; let them go play BYU and whoever else they want to play. But we shouldn't give them a game.

"But they're talented and we'd love to have them in the ACC for sure."

North Carolina will host Notre Dame (7-0, 6-0) on Nov. 27, and Tar Heels coach Mack Brown said he wouldn't mind having them regularly be on the schedule. North Carolina (5-2, 5-2) climbed to No. 5 in the Top 25 early this season, but losses at Florida State and Virginia knocked them out of the poll.

Brown said the competitive upgrade in the ACC with the Irish in the league this year is a positive.

"We're lucky to have them associated with us this year. They are really good, and good for them," Brown said. "And I think everybody that loves the ACC would like to see them join."

The North Carolina coach added that it would "raise the standard in our league, like they have this year, and make the rest of us fight to get to them and get to where Clemson is. And those two right now seem to be better than

the rest of us."

Virginia's Bronco Mendenhall was off last Saturday after the Cavaliers' game against Louisville was postponed because of COVID-19 concerns among the Cardinals. Mendenhall typically spends those days doing outside activities but said he watched some football, including all of Clemson's nail-biter at Notre Dame Stadium.

"I think parity is valuable. And I think that change is necessary. And I think growth happens through both of those things," said Mendenhall, who also would like to have Notre Dame join the ACC on a permanent basis. But he's also well aware that the Irish have mitigating factors because of the benefits of their independent status, including long-standing rivalries and a lucrative television contract.

"I think it would be powerful for the ACC" if Notre Dame joined the league, Mendenhall said.

If the Irish were added to the Coastal Division, he said, the intrigue surrounding the ACC could increase higher than what it already is "with the league that I think is growing, maturing, expanding and becoming more and more representative of elite-level college football."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wake-up call: Early starts have fans, critics in Pac-12

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Before the start of the abbreviated Pac-12 season, there was a lot of talk about early morning starts, some positive, some negative.

Turns out, just one game through the conference's first three weeks has been scheduled for a morning start — USC's come-from-behind 28-27 win over Arizona State last weekend. It kicked off at 9 a.m. Pacific.

The league's earliest start this weekend, and next, is 12:30 p.m. local time. As it stands, those Pac-12 After Dark games are more prevalent, with three set to start at 7:30 p.m. or later this weekend.

The prospect of early start times was raised last year to take advantage of the 12 p.m. Eastern TV window, which would increase the league's exposure. There have long been concerns that night games, with a more limited national audience, have hurt the Pac-12's teams and players when it comes to rankings and postseason awards.

Because there are no fans in the stands so far this season to grouse about early morning

wake-up calls, it gave the league an opportunity to experiment with start times. The season's November start amid the pandemic also meant there were fewer national TV windows available.

USC coach Clay Helton embraced the early start and the widespread audience it afforded.

"That's what you want. You want to be able to play on the biggest stage with the brightest lights," he said. "To be able to have that national scene be able to see us right off the bat, you've got to take that. That's an advantage for you."

The game had 2.3 million viewers on Fox, which was down for the timeslot, but it also took place soon after networks called the presidential race, sending many potential viewers to the cable news channels. It still beat the ABC broadcast of the game between Stanford and Oregon that started at 7:30 p.m. Eastern and drew 1.7 million viewers.

Utah coach Kyle Whittingham was among the Pac-12 coaches who embraced the early starts.

"As willing as we could possibly be, so whatever the maximum willingness level is, that's where we're at," Whittingham



Southern California players celebrate on the sideline during their come-from-behind 28-27 defeat of Arizona State on Saturday in Los Angeles. The game began at 9 a.m. Pacific time.

ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

said about the prospect of morning games. "It doesn't bother us a bit. Our opinion has always been the sooner we get on the field, the better. It provides no advantage for either team, they're both kicking off at the same time."

But some of the Pac-12's coaches questioned the impact morning games might have on the players. Cardinal coach David Shaw

said he had gotten to know William Dement, a prominent sleep researcher at Stanford who passed away in June, and understands college students need proper sleep for maximum performance.

"College kids don't go to bed at 9 o'clock at night. They're just not built that way. They need their sleep, and sleep enhances perfor-

mance." Shaw said. "A 9 a.m. kickoff is not getting up at 8 o'clock and rolling into the stadium to go. A 9 a.m. kickoff is a 6 a.m., 6:30 a.m. wakeup call. We've got to get the pregame meal in, we've got to get them moving around, we've got to get them taped and activated to warm up an hour before the game."

"So, I'm not a fan"

After 8-0 start, No. 8 BYU plans low-key bye week

By PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

This is plenty of reason to celebrate: Zach Wilson and the eighth-ranked BYU Cougars are off to an 8-0 start for just the fourth time in school history.

And this is plenty of reason for BYU to be cautious over a bye week — surging COVID-19 cases around Utah.

The Cougars don't want anything to spoil this party. So any sort of social scene remains out-of-bounds for fear of derailing one of their top seasons.

BYU already missed a game in September due to a small number of cases on campus. The Cougars don't want to miss another — not if they can prevent it.

"You see there are parties all over campus but we're trying to stay away from that. We're trying to keep this thing going," said tight end Isaac Rex, whose team returns to action Nov. 21 by hosting North Alabama. "We're 8-0. We're a top-10 team. We don't want any chances of getting the virus. We could still get it and it may happen, but we're going to take every precaution possible that we don't get it."

With cases spiking around the state, Utah Gov. Gary Herbert recently declared a state of emer-



STEVE CONNER/AP

BYU quarterback Zach Wilson, right, and the Cougars are 8-0 heading into this week's bye week, a reason for the team to be cautious about coronavirus protocols.

gency. Among the measures implemented were a statewide mask mandate and more testing.

The new rules call for a two-week pause on extracurricular activities including athletic events, except for high school championship games and intercollegiate athletic events — as long as testing and social distancing guidelines are adhered to.

Still, anything can happen. Up the road from Provo in Salt

Lake City, a rise in positive cases at Utah forced the Pac-12 Conference to cancel the Utes' season-opening game against Arizona last Saturday. The Utes' game at UCLA also was pushed back from Friday to Saturday.

It's all part of navigating through a challenging season. It's why BYU coach Kalani Sitake stresses over and over to savor each moment.

"The emotions are magnified

because of the threat of not having it," Sitake said. "You don't take things for granted."

The Cougars attempted to schedule a game for this week, but it didn't pan out. So they plan to get plenty of rest and review film before facing North Alabama at LaVell Edwards Stadium, where there may or may not be some fans, depending on protocols.

They'll try to extend their record to 9-0 and join the 2001, 1984 and 1979 teams in achieving a rare start.

On Nov. 24, the College Football Playoff rankings will be released for the first time this season. BYU, which plays as an independent, could be in line at the end of the season for a New Year's Six bowl matchup. And if things really break right, maybe even among the four semifinalists.

The thing holding it back is its strength of schedule, with its best win so far on the road over a then-ranked Boise State squad last weekend. The Cougars' game at Army on Sept. 19 was postponed due to the virus.

After North Alabama, the Cougars have another layoff before hosting San Diego State on Dec. 12. They're still hoping to work in another opponent, maybe a top-notch program to boost their profile for the playoff committee.

"We want to compete with anybody we can and get as many opportunities as we can," receiver Gunner Romney said.

Plus, it's a chance to showcase an offense led by Wilson, who's being hyped for the Heisman Trophy. He's currently tied for No. 1 in passing TDs (22) and second in yards passing (2,512).

"He's leading us to an amazing year," Rex said. "Everyone wants Zach to win the Heisman. We're going to help him get there along the way."

Wilson and the BYU offense rank in the top 10 in everything from first downs to total offense.

"We try to be the most reliable team out there and also the most violent team out there," said left tackle Brady Christensen, who has been added to the Outland Trophy watch list. "The fact we have both right now is a huge contributor to our success."

To keep the success rolling, Sitake is preaching to his team to remain hyper-vigilant. "You can wear a mask, you can social distance, you can do everything right and this virus has shown it doesn't really matter sometimes. You can still pick it up and still test positive," Sitake said. "In the world of college football right now, you have to deal with a lot of different things."

NFL

Washington's Smith set for 1st start since 2018

By STEPHEN WHYNO

Associated Press

The last time Alex Smith practiced as a starting quarterback, Washington wasn't just known as "Football Team," Jay Gruden was the coach, and the world had not been plunged into a pandemic.

That was November 2018, before his right leg bent the wrong way and snapped, breaking the tibia and fibula in gruesome fashion. Smith endured 17 surgeries, survived a life-threatening infection and progressed far enough to get back on the field in two relief appearances earlier this season.

Smith is poised to start an NFL game for the first time in two years when Washington visits Detroit on Sunday, another step in his remarkable journey from an injury that put his career in jeopardy.

"It's an amazing feeling, and I love the challenge," Smith said Wednesday. "It's been a long time, even just driving into work with that feeling of knowing that the ball's in your hands."

Smith had the ball and control of his own life ripped out of his hands Nov. 18, 2018, and this milestone comes almost two years to the day later. He has amazed observers near and far unsure he could play again, let alone look a lot like his pre-injury self.

The 36-year-old Smith got Washington back into its last game with 325 yards and his first touchdown pass in 748 days, but also threw three costly interceptions in a 23-30 loss to the New York Giants. Green Bay Packers QB Aaron Rodgers was watching when Smith entered in place of injured starter Kyle Allen and roted for the fellow 2005 first-

round pick to lead Washington to a comeback victory.

"Not having an idea what it took but just watching from afar, what he put his body through to get back on the field is incredible," Rodgers said. "I don't know how you can't root and pull for a guy like that and hope he continues to go out and ball out. So that's what I'll be hoping for every single week with him as a starter."

Former teammates and even those with no prior relationship with Smith are pulling for him. Kansas City starter Patrick Mahomes called Smith "truly a special human" for what he has accomplished, and another former Chiefs teammate is looking forward to seeing him Sunday before the game.

"Definitely looking to catch up," said Lions backup Chase Daniel, who called Smith a top-

five teammate after playing with him for three years. "It's easy to root for him. You want to see him do good."

Smith, chosen by coach Ron Rivera to start over 2019 first-round pick Dwayne Haskins, is inspiring plenty of people inside Washington's organization. Offensive coordinator Scott Turner acknowledged he wasn't sure this was possible, and Smith's example is rubbing off on younger players.

"When you see a guy like him working, still working to this day, that makes you want to work, too, because you see the blueprint from him," receiver Cam Sims said. "He comes in early, leaves late, (he's) friendly. He teaches you, he gives you advice and stuff like that. One day I hope I can be like him."

By the numbers

17

Surgeries Alex Smith had to repair the tibia and fibula he broke in a game in November 2018.

728

Days between Alex Smith's last start and Sunday's scheduled start at Detroit.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Halfway: Uncertainty, injuries have been two constant themes so far

FROM BACK PAGE

"...it's a crazy time right now and every day I say a prayer for this team and for every player on every team around the league. Everybody has families and things like that. This is a serious disease and pray that everybody can stay healthy, but we're all grown men and you've got to be careful."

Coronavirus outbreaks, readjusted schedules, losing records for home teams — 155-67-1 thus far — tons of major injuries marked the first half of the NFL season.

Uncertainty about what's ahead for November and December, not to mention for the playoffs and Super Bowl during an ongoing pandemic, could overshadow the on-field product.

That product has been offensive — in a good way. Through nine weeks, 2020 marks the highest-scoring season in NFL history: 6,737 points, 778 total touchdowns and 745 offensive touchdowns, all the most at this point in a schedule. There's been an average of 50.7 points scored per game, the most through Week 9 since 1970.

Injuries

The pandemic hasn't drawn attention from the ever-expanding injured reserve collection because so many big names have landed on that list.

It began in preseason with Denver linebacker Von Miller (ankle), and has not slowed. Blaming the lack of offseason and preseason in-person preparation could account for some of the injuries, particularly soft tissue problems such as hamstrings. But the stream of stars sidelined has been dizzying.

Quarterback Dak Prescott. Running backs Christian McCaffrey and Saquon Barkley. Receivers Michael Thomas and Odell Beckham Jr. Tight ends George Kittle and Zach Ertz. Tackles Taylor Lewan and Tyrion Smith. You could do a lot of damage offensively with those guys. Miller and linebackers Chandler Jones and Devin Bush. Pass rushers Nick Bosa and Danielle Hunter. Inside D-linemen Kawann Short, Vita Vita and Sheldon Rankins. Cornerbacks Stephane Gilmore and Rardian Sherman. Safeties Landon Collins and Derwin James.

Powerful division

The way injuries have destroyed the 49ers is a shame, because otherwise all four NFC West teams had a shot at the expanded playoff field. Last week was a bad one for the division, losing three times (the Rams were on bye), but there's no denying the base of NFC power is out west.



MICHAEL AINSWORTH/AP

Pittsburgh Steelers celebrate Julu Smith's victory. Left, and Eric Ebron celebrate a win over the Dallas Cowboys. From the unbeaten Steelers at the top to the winless Jets at the bottom, predictability has taken a hike halfway through NFL 2020.

"It's exciting to see the division come back around like this," Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said. "We've seen it go kind of up and down over the years, and it always seems to keep coming back strong, and we're strong again — everybody can play football."

Awful division

Among the difficult realities of 2020 is this: Barring a stunning turnaround, the winner of the NFC East, uh, East, will have a losing record. Probably deservedly so.

The NFL likely won't mind simply dropping this sector from the standings it posts. Philadelphia, among the most undermanned clubs because of injuries, is on top at 3-4-1, followed by Dallas (2-6), Washington and the New York Giants, both 2-7.

Yet any of these pretenders could limp off with the division crown. The secret seems to be winning within the division because they are a total of 2-10 outside the NFC East.

Brady/Belichick

So Tom Brady is 6-3 and seemingly headed for the playoffs in his first season in Tampa. Meanwhile, the franchise he led to six Super Bowl titles in two decades at quarterback, the Patriots, are 3-5 under the coach Brady left behind, Bill Belichick. The Patriots jets to the limit to beat the aforementioned abysmal Jets on Monday night.

Enough said.

Young QBs

Heading into April's draft, the spotlight was on Joe Burrow, Tua Tagovailoa and Justin Herbert. Rightfully so, it appears. Burrow has the Bengals on the rise, Herbert has been outstanding despite the Chargers' inability to finish games, and Tagovailoa is 2-0 as a starter.

Rodgers sees double standards in safety protocols

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers said he sees double standards in the safety protocols the NFL has instituted as it tries to complete a season amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"You can dap up a guy after a game, but you can't eat at the same lunch table as a teammate," Rodgers said Tuesday on SiriusXM's "The Pat McAfee Show."

"You can go down to practice and hit each other and be in close contact, but you have to have Plexiglas between you and the guy next to you in the locker room. I just think some of those things to me really don't add up."

Rodgers added that "some of it is definitely for the optics of it, some of it probably based on science, but it's definitely changed the season for sure."

The two-time MVP also noted that the protocols in place may have impacted team unity because it has prevented get-togethers such as weekly dinners or Halloween parties.

"I know a lot of people don't give any credence or don't (care) about chemistry, but I think it's really important," Rodgers said.

Packers wide receiver Davante Adams agreed Wednesday that the protocols limiting team get-togethers have been a hindrance. "Obviously in the past we've been able to have a lot of gatherings — Halloween stuff, Christmas stuff, going bowling, doing different events some of the players put on — so it's gotten in the

way a little bit," Adams said. "But we spread try to strengthen our connection in the building and at practice through football as much as possible."

During his Zoom session with Green Bay reporters Wednesday, Rodgers was asked what has stood out the most about dealing with COVID-19 protocols now that the season has reached its midway point. Rodgers noted how the

"I just think some of those things to me really don't add up."

Aaron Rodgers
Packers QB

Packers have played all their home games without fans thus far and then noted other moves the league has made to help the season continue.

"There obviously was talk about the protocols and the amount of testing we were going to do," Rodgers said.

"I think the (players' association) and the owners agreed that keeping it every single day was important to making sure we had the right updates on the health of our players. I think that's been good. I think it's been a change, but I think we've done as well as we can in Green Bay. We've had a couple guys test positive, haven't had the widespread stuff that so many people prognosticated about, that we weren't going to get to this point. I think maybe some people even were hoping we wouldn't get to this point."

"I think have done a nice job of setting good guidelines on how we can try to get to the end of the season. Obviously, we had some games moved and canceled but that we got eight games in, I think, is a win. Now we've got to get to the end of the season."

NFL

Opposite ends

NFC has best and worst divisions

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

The race for the No. 1 seed in the NFC is wide open. The only certainty is the conference leader won't come from the East.

New Orleans (6-2), Green Bay (6-2), Seattle (6-2), Tampa Bay (6-3), Arizona (5-3) and the Los Angeles Rams (5-3) are all in the mix at the halfway point of the season. Chicago (5-4) is the only other team in the NFC with a winning record but the Bears are fading.

The Saints seem to have the best shot at this point. They're riding a five-game winning streak and coming off a 38-3 beatdown of Tom Brady and the Buccaneers.

"This is a funny league. Things can go well, and we know week to week how fortunes can change," Saints coach Sean Payton said. "Obviously, one of our better games as a team. We'll enjoy it and then get ready to work."

New Orleans has only one game left against an opponent that currently has a winning record. The other six-win teams have shown more holes.

The Packers have lost two of their past four games, including a 38-10 rout at Tampa in Week 6. The Seahawks have allowed 81 points in two losses over the past three games. The Bucs were crushed by the Saints at home.

The top seed matters more now because only one team gets a bye under the league's new playoff format. But that may not happen if any games are canceled because of COVID-19. Owners voted Tuesday to expand the playoffs to 16 teams with no byes if meaningful games can't be played because of the coronavirus.

Philadelphia leads the East at 3-4-1 and is likely to become the third team with a losing record to win a division since 2010.

East

The Eagles are a clear front-runner in the NFL's worst division ahead of Washington (2-6), Dallas (2-7) and the New York Giants (2-7). Philadelphia has a difficult schedule in the second half, facing nondivision opponents currently 28-12. But the Eagles probably won't need more than six wins to finish first. Injuries have forced Philly to use 21 different starters on offense. Only quarterback Carson Wentz and center Jason Kelce have played every game. Wentz has struggled with consistency. He has 16 turnovers, including 12 interceptions.

The Cowboys have also been hurt by injuries, losing Dak Prescott and tackles Tyrion Smith and La'el Collins for the season.

Washington is turning to Alex Smith after backup quarterback



RICH SCHULTZ/AP

Carson Wentz and the Philadelphia Eagles lead the league's worst division with a 3-4-1 record.

Kyle Allen went down for the season. Dwayne Haskins already was benched in Week 5.

The Giants have improved under first-year coach Joe Judge. They nearly beat Philadelphia and Tampa before defeating Washington last week.

North

Aaron Rodgers is off to one of the best starts of his career and the Packers haven't lost consecutive games since coach Matt LaFleur took over in 2019. The Packers are averaging 31.6 points per game. If the defense holds up, Green Bay could go deep into the postseason.

The Bears switched quarterbacks, handing the job to Super Bowl 52 MVP Nick Foles. But the offense has been stagnant and the Bears have lost three in a row.

Minnesota (3-5) and Detroit (3-5) are among the teams that will be jockeying for draft positioning.

South

The Saints proved they're still the class of the division with a dominant win over the Buccaneers. The offense led by Drew Brees remains potent and the No. 3 defense gives the team a shot to play another game in Tampa — the Super Bowl.

Brady has the Bucs off to their best start since 2002, when they won 12 of their first 14 and went on to win their only Super Bowl title. But questions arose after Brady suffered the most lopsided loss of his career. Antonio Brown's first game was a dud. However, Brady has enough talent around him that perhaps he just needs more

time to build more chemistry. Atlanta (3-6) and Carolina (3-6) are playing out the string.

West

This is easily the best division in the league. The Seahawks keep a powerful offense capable of carrying the team. Russell Wilson, despite seven turnovers in the two losses, is an MVP candidate. But the defense is allowing the most yards and third-most points in the NFL.

Kyler Murray and DeAndre Hopkins have turned the Cardinals into one of the most consistent offenses in the NFL, putting Arizona ahead of schedule in its rebuild. The defense has to play better to give the Cardinals a real shot in January.

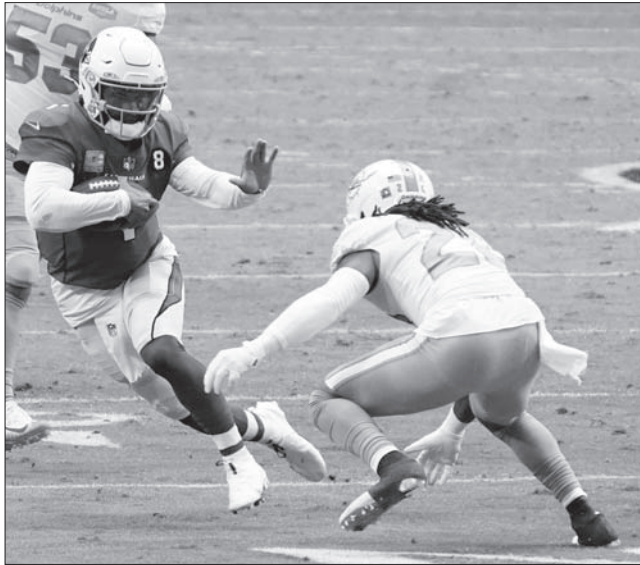
Here's a switch. The Rams are relying more on defense than Sean McVay's offense. Los Angeles has the No. 2 defense in the league while Jared Goff and the offense are 21st in scoring.

Injuries ruined San Francisco's chances to compete for the division title. The 49ers (4-5) are missing quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo, 2019 All-Pro tight end George Kittle, 2019 Defensive Rookie of the Year Nick Bosa, starting cornerback Richard Sherman, leading rusher Raheem Mostert, and No. 1 receiver Deebo Samuel.



JEFF HAYNES, IMAGES FOR PANINI, ABOVE, AND RICK SCUTERI, BELOW/AP

Above: Drew Brees and the New Orleans Saints lead the NFL South and the entire conference in the race for the postseason's one berth that includes a bye. Below: Kyler Murray, left, has the Arizona Cardinals' offense ahead of schedule in its rebuilding plan.



NFL

Plenty of star power without Brady

AFC still stocked with talent despite loss of 6-time champ

By ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

The AFC doesn't lack for drama or star power even though Tom Brady has taken his talents to Davis Beach.

The six-time champion with New England is tearing up the NFC at age 43 although the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' new (old) quarterback is realizing Drew Brees is every bit the nemesis Peyton Manning was.

In the wake of his departure, the Patriots have crashed like a meteorite, Tua Tagovailoa looks like the answer in Miami and the Bills are chasing their first AFC East crown in a quarter century.

Lamar Jackson again leads a potent Ravens team, Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs have suffered no hangover from their first Super Bowl title in half a century and the AFC South-leading Titans have weathered the worst coronavirus outbreak of this pandemic season.

But the biggest story is in Pittsburgh, where the unbeaten Steelers (8-0) are off to the best start in the storied franchise's

87-year history but were hit with the news Tuesday that battered quarterback Ben Roethlisberger has been placed on the COVID-19/reserve list along with three teammates.

This disturbing development came a day after Steelers tight end Vance McDonald went on the list after testing positive following a closer-than-expected 24-19 win at Dallas, which came down to the final snap just as Pittsburgh's two previous games did.

The NFL's last unbeaten team isn't overpowering opponents as much as they are outlasting them, and heading into the second half of the season, the Steelers are the hunted.

"We have a target on our back," tight end Eric Ebron said. "We're undefeated."

Plenty of teams believe they can supplant Pittsburgh on their way to hoisting the Lamar Hunt Trophy in this most unusual of seasons:

East

After winning the division 11 consecutive years, the Patriots (3-5) needed a last-second field



GENE J. PUSKAR, ABOVE, AND JEFFREY T. BARNES, BELOW/AP

Above: Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Julu Smith-Schuster, bottom, spins wide receiver James Washington on his shoulders in celebration after Washington caught a touchdown pass. Smith-Schuster and the Steelers are the only undefeated team left in the NFL. **Below:** Quarterback Josh Allen and the Buffalo Bills are trying to break the New England Patriots' 11-year championship streak in the AFC East.

goal just to beat the winless Jets. Bill Belichick finds himself looking up at the improving Bills (7-2) and the long-suffering Dolphins (5-3), who have their best record at the season's midpoint since 2001 and have won four straight, including both of Tagovailoa's starts.

Tagovailoa outdueled Kyle Murray last weekend in a big win at Arizona, suggesting coach Brian Flores' timing was right in making the widely scrutinized switch at quarterback from Ryan Fitzpatrick. Even the Jets (0-9) could be big winners by prevailing in the Trevor Lawrence sweepstakes.

North

The Steelers have already matched their eight wins from last season, but the Ravens (6-2) remain a stout challenge despite Jackson, the reigning NFL MVP, not running or passing as efficiently as he did a year ago when he led Baltimore to an NFL-best 14-2 record.

The Browns (5-3) are in position to end the league's longest playoff absence at 18 years after bouncing back from an awful opener in Baltimore in which they were completely outclassed in a 38-6 blowout. The Bengals (2-5-1) are more competitive with No. 1 pick Joe Burrow under center and have already matched last year's win total.

South

After weathering the NFL's worst coronavirus outbreak, the Titans (6-2), behind Ryan Tannehill and Derrick Henry, are off to their best start since 2008, the



previous time they won the AFC South. They're one game ahead of the Colts (5-3), who love having landed veteran QB Philip Rivers.

Houston stars J.J. Watt and Will Fuller were both the subject of trade speculation after the team's terrible start cost coach Bill O'Brien his job.

But the Texans (2-6) kept both and trust they can help turn things around. The Jaguars (1-7) have a fan base already focused on the future, an all-too-familiar feeling in Jacksonville.

West

The Chiefs (8-1) are still the class of the conference despite

a hiccup against the resurgent Raiders (5-3), who won 40-32 at Arrowhead Stadium on Oct. 11. Mahomes became the fastest quarterback in NFL history to reach 100 TD passes, doing it in 40 games, four fewer than Dan Marino.

The Broncos (3-5) have been waylaid by injuries and COVID-19 opt-outs, exposures and infections and Drew Lock went 45 drives without a TD pass. He did rally Denver from a 21-point deficit to beat the Chargers (2-6), who have lost five times on the final play but are thrilled with rookie Justin Herbert's four 300-yard games and 17 TD throws in seven starts.



REED HOFFMANN/AP

There's been no Super Bowl hangover for Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs, who are 8-1 this season and lead the AFC West.

NFL



ALEX GALLARDO/AP

Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert is among the high draft picks making a huge impact around the league, especially on offense.

Rookie class shining despite virus limitations

By DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

If ever there was a year in the NFL when newcomers could be forgiven for a lack of progress, this virus-altered season would be it.

Spring practices vanished, making rookie development across the league more difficult. Plenty of first-year players had growth that was stunted by the lack of in-person learning and exhibition games.

"We had a virtual draft, virtual offseason. Virtual is for the birds," Las Vegas Raiders coach Jon Gruden said. "I think it doesn't help get these young guys ready as it did in years past."

Talent is talent, though. Midway through the 2020 season, numerous newbies are making significant impacts. Pandemic or not, these guys can play — and right away.

"A guy that's played in every game is pretty well caught up at this point," said Dolphins offensive coordinator Chan Gailey, whose team has won both games since turning the quarterback job over to Tua Tagovailoa after Ryan Fitzpatrick allowed him to ease in.

The level of skill coming from the major college programs, particularly in the passing game, has never been more apparent. With this salary cap system that magnifies the value of rookie-level contracts, the demand for young stars has also never been higher.

Three of the first six picks in the draft were quarterbacks, and Joe Burrow (Cincinnati Bengals), Tagovailoa and Justin Herbert (Los Angeles Chargers) can count as instant success. Burrow has five games with 300-plus passing yards, one short of Andrew Luck's record for Indianapolis in 2012.

For Burrow, the first overall selection from national champion LSU, the progress was palpable by the final drive of an otherwise-uninspiring debut in a three-point defeat by the Chargers on Sept. 13.

"That really calmed my nerves and let me know that I could play at this level," Burrow said.

Herbert will square off against Tagovailoa on Sunday when the Chargers visit the Dolphins, just the seventh NFL game since 1967 pitting two rookie starters at quarterback who were both taken in the top six picks of the draft. Herbert has passed for 2,146 yards for the second-highest total in league history over a player's first seven games, and the Chargers are second in the NFL in total yards.

The wide receiver class has largely delivered on its promise, too, with Jerry Jeudy (Denver Broncos), CeeDee Lamb (Dallas Cowboys), Justin Jefferson (Minnesota Vikings), Tee Higgins (Bengals) and Chase Claypool (Pittsburgh Steelers) the standouts

of the 11 pass-catchers taken in the top 50 picks.

"I've never really looked at it as me being the rookie, the new guy. I always try to take everything like a veteran takes it," said Jefferson, who leads all first-year players with 627 receiving yards. "Not trying to have that rookie mindset. Not waiting for somebody to lead me in the right direction."

Claypool, who has 444 yards and five touchdowns for the NFL's only undrafted team, recently theorized that the absence of a normal preseason might have actually helped more than hurt.

"The urgency increases when you're getting ready for a regular-season game," Claypool said. "I knew I had to have the playbook down before the first game, so that forced me to study more."

Kansas City's Clyde Edwards-Helaire, a college teammate of Burrow and Jefferson, was the only running back taken in the first round. He's on pace for a 1,000-yard season on the ground. Fellow ball carriers D'Andre Swift (Detroit Lions), Jonathan Taylor (Indianapolis Colts) and Antonio Gibson (Washington Football Team) have each been integral parts of their respective offenses, as has the undrafted king of the 2020 class, James Robinson of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Offensive linemen lately have had a steeper climb to NFL success because of the prevalence of spread schemes in college that keep them in two-point stances, but the Dolphins are starting three rookies up front for the first time in team history. Tristan Wirfs has been a bulwark at tackle for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, as has Mekhi Becton for the winless New York Jets.

Cornerback is probably the toughest position to master, and the Vikings have felt this pain as much as any team with two rookies — Jeff Gladney and Cameron Dantzler — in the starting lineup. Safeties are better positioned for quicker impacts, and two second-round picks in the NFC South have been instant hits: Antoine Winfield Jr. for the Buccaneers and Jeremy Chinn for the Carolina Panthers.

Washington defensive end Chase Young, the second overall pick, has come as advertised as a pass rusher, applying plenty of pressure and drawing frequent double teams. He has 3½ sacks, a decent total but hardly satisfactory for a certain someone expecting him to lead the league.

"My mom, she gave me like a C-plus," Young said last week. "Take that on the chin and keep moving. Got to respect what she says."

There's still time to make a stronger impression.

"I feel like in all phases of my game, I can get better: run, pass, play recognition, hand usage — just everything," Young said. "I hope people don't go to sleep this second half."

Saints' D-Line gaining steam at season's midpoint

By BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

METAIRIE, La. — One week after battering Tampa Bay's Tom Brady into one of the worst games of his career, a New Orleans Saints pass rush led by previously unheralded reserve Trey Hendrickson aims to muster a similar effort against San Francisco backup Nick Mullen.

"The work's not done. We're only eight games in. So I'm hungry," Hendrickson said when asked about his career-best 7½ sacks this season, which ranks third in the NFL. "I don't think anybody in a race wants to take third. But, that's why I'm fortunate enough to have an opportunity to keep getting these next eight games."

Halfway through the season, the Saints have had nine players combine for 22 sacks — with eight of those sacks coming in just the past two games. That leaves them slightly off the pace of last season, when they had 50 sacks. But New Orleans also had to play its first four games without starting Eric Marcus Davenport because of his elbow and toe injuries.

Former Cal star Cameron Jordan, who has led the Saints in sacks for the past five seasons, has been limited to 2½ sacks by opposing offensive fronts that are scheming to stop him with double teams. But increasingly, the Saints are finding ways to make opponents pay for that.

Defensive tackle David Onyemata has three sacks, while line-backer Demario Davis and safety Malcolm Jenkins have taken down QBs on blitzes a couple of times apiece.

The 49ers' beat-up offensive line has allowed 23 sacks. Mullen, who has appeared in five games and started three because of injuries to Jimmy Garoppolo, has been taken down nine times.

It hasn't helped that a few top 49ers skill players have been injured lately, with running back Raheem Mostert (ankle) missing the past three games and star tight end George Kittle (foot) going out for possibly the rest of the season two games ago.

"Each week gets more and more important to protect and to continue to get better, whether it's technique, communication, scheme, whatever it is," Niners offensive tackle Mike McGlinchey said. "But there's not more pressure to protect Nick. He'll be fine and he does his job as good as anybody."

The Saints' defensive front also has been getting better, and when it doesn't get sacks, it can still make QBs less effective as passers.

In a 38-3 demolition of the Buccaneers last Sunday night, Brady, who was sacked three times in the game, often looked uncomfortable throwing the ball. He was intercepted three times, including once by Onyemata on a ball batted



San Francisco 49ers (4-5)
at New Orleans Saints (6-2)

AFN-Atlantic
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT

at the line of scrimmage by both Davenport and Jordan.

Brady completed less than 60% of his passes, releasing numerous throws as he was about to get knocked down.

"We were fortunate enough to be a part of the keys to victory, getting after the quarterback and affecting Tom, getting them off the spot," Hendrickson said. "So, when you're doing something like that, and being successful at it, and the team's winning, it feels good when we're rolling and it's a huge help in the secondary, too."

Jenkins said another factor contributing to the Saints' pass rush is improved coverage of opposing receivers in their routes.

"Pass rush and coverage always go hand in hand; you show me a great D-line that can get a rush on the quarterback, I'm going to show you a secondary that doesn't give a quarterback quick options," Jenkins said. "When we play well as a secondary, our D-line can win."

Saints coach Sean Payton credits his defensive line coach Ryan Nielsen for the unit's ability to work in sync even as substitutions are made to keep players fresh. Last weekend, the line thrived despite the absence of starting tackle Sheldon Rankins, who is out several weeks with a knee sprain.

The Saints' defensive front also has often been able to stifle opponents' running games, ranking second in the NFL against the rush (allowing 80.3 yards per game).

"We've got a good rotation going," Payton said. "When you look at the total snap counts they're playing, it requires a lot of energy."

While Hendrickson is having a breakout year professionally, he had also put up eye-catching numbers in college at Florida Atlantic, most notably his school-record 14½ sacks as a junior in 2015.

"Sacking the quarterback is something special at any level of playing. But doing it in the NFL is completely different," said Hendrickson, a third-round draft choice in 2015.

"There's a lot more that goes into it. And I've been fortunate enough to learn from the guys like Cam and (former teammate) Alex Okafor on how to study film and dissect things. You didn't have to do that at FAU, but as far as just getting after the quarterback, this is something I was born to do."

MLB



CHARLIE RIEDEL, LEFT, AND GENE J. PUSKAR, RIGHT/AP

Indians starter Shane Bieber, left, was a unanimous choice for the AL Cy Young. Reds starter Trevor Bauer, right, got all but three first-place votes for the NL Cy Young.

Ohio sweep: Bieber, Bauer win Cy Youngs

By JAY COHEN
Associated Press

Shane Bieber and Trevor Bauer love to talk pitching. They bonded as teammates with the Cleveland Indians, and stayed in touch after Bauer was traded to the Cincinnati Reds last year.

Bieber got a text from Bauer before this season started. The right-handers had the same Las Vegas odds for the Cy Young Award.

"I said ... why don't we go 2-for-2, or something like that?" Bieber said.

Why not, indeed?

Bieber was a unanimous winner in the American League on Wednesday night, and Bauer became the first pitcher to take home the NL honor for the majors' oldest franchise.

"Nobody's more deserving of it than him and he knows what he wants and he knows how to go out and get it," Bieber said. "And we keep in touch. I was truly pulling for him and you know, so is my family. And I know he feels the same way, so it's special."

Bieber and Bauer, two California natives, made it an Ohio sweep on the mound in 2020. They are the third pair of former teammates to win Cy Young Awards in the same season, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Greg Maddux and Dennis

Eckersley in 1992 and Max Scherzer and Rick Porcello in 2016 also accomplished the feat.

Bieber and Bauer had neighboring lockers in Cleveland.

"We've had a close relationship since then," Bauer said. "I think he's one of the best human beings that I've had the pleasure of meeting in professional baseball."

"We talked a little bit throughout the year about how cool would it be to have ex-teammates win the award together, and here we are. So I'm really happy for him."

Using a versatile repertoire that includes a looping curveball and wipeout slider, Bieber went 8-1 with a 1.63 ERA and 122 strikeouts in 77 1/3 innings during the pandemic-shortened season, leading the majors in ERA and strikeouts and tying Chicago Cubs right-hander Yu Darvish for the most wins.

Bieber became the second player in Indians history to win the AL's pitching Triple Crown, joining Hall of Famer Bob Feller in 1940. He also was the first pitcher to lead the majors in all three categories since Johan Santana for Minnesota in 2006.

Bauer went 5-4 with an NL-best 1.73 ERA in 11 starts, helping the Reds reach the playoffs for the first time since 2013. Animated on the field and outspoken off

it, the 29-year-old right-hander struck out 100 in 73 innings and led the majors with two shutouts, a pair of seven-inning performances on doubleheader days.

He became a free agent after the season and turned down the Reds' qualifying offer, but left the door open for a return.

"I haven't thought about free agency very much yet, to be honest," said Bauer, known for some unusual and progressive training methods that have helped turn him into one of baseball's best pitchers. "I have had a lot of stuff that I've been doing trying to get my offseason underway, trying to get better at baseball."

Darvish finished second in NL voting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

New York Mets ace Jacob deGrom was third, falling short in his bid for a third consecutive Cy Young Award.

Bieber was the first unanimous American League winner since Justin Verlander for the Detroit Tigers in 2011.

It was the 10th time an AL pitcher was listed first on every ballot.

Minnesota Twins right-hander Kenta Maeda was the AL runner-up.

"Today's a good day regardless," Bieber said. "It just makes it that much better that we were able to take this thing home and

Voting

Player	Total points on a 7-4-3-2-1 basis					Tot
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
Shane Bieber, Indians	30	—	—	—	—	210
Kenta Maeda, Twins	—	18	4	2	—	44
Hyun-Jin Ryu, Blue Jays	—	4	7	—	—	45
Gerrit Cole, Yankees	—	2	6	10	4	50
Dallas Keuchel, White Sox	—	5	4	5	—	46
Lance Lynn, Rangers	—	1	3	4	1	23
Lucas Giolito, White Sox	—	3	2	2	—	18
Chris Bassett, Athletics	—	—	2	1	—	10
Dylan Bundy, Angels	—	—	1	—	—	5
Liam Hendriks, Athletics	—	—	—	1	—	3
Framber Valdez, Astros	—	—	—	—	1	1

Player	Total points on a 7-4-3-2-1 basis					Tot
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
Trevor Bauer, Reds	27	3	—	—	—	201
Yu Darvish, Cubs	—	3	24	—	—	123
Jacob deGrom, Mets	—	3	23	4	—	89
Dinelson Lamet, Padres	—	—	—	20	—	57
Max Fried, Braves	—	—	—	4	7	15
Aaron Nola, Phillies	—	—	—	1	10	12
Corbin Burnes, Brewers	—	—	—	—	1	3
Devin Williams, Brewers	—	—	—	—	3	3
Kyle Hendricks, Cubs	—	—	—	—	2	2
Zac Gallen, Diamondbacks	—	—	—	—	1	1
Glayton Kershaw, Dodgers	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zack Wheeler, Phillies	—	—	—	—	1	1

that it was unanimous." The 25-year-old Bieber, a former walk-on at UC Santa Barbara, was selected by Cleveland in the fourth round of the 2016 amateur draft.

Stroman, Gausman take \$18.9M; Springer, LeMahieu reject offers

Associated Press



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Mets pitcher Marcus Stroman accepted an \$18.9 million qualifying offer Wednesday, receiving a one-year deal to stay with the Mets. Stroman missed the 2020 season but was 10-13 with a 3.22 earned-run average in 2019, making the All-Star team.

NEW YORK — Mets pitcher Marcus Stroman and San Francisco starter Kevin Gausman accepted \$18.9 million qualifying offers Wednesday, receiving one-year deals to stay with their teams rather than test what they could get in free agency.

Four players declined qualifying offers at the 5 p.m. EST deadline: right-hander Trevor Bauer from Cincinnati, outfielder George Springer from Houston, second baseman DJ LeMahieu from the New York Yankees and catcher J.T. Realmuto from Philadelphia.

If any of those players sign with a new team, his former club would receive a draft pick as compensation at the end of the first round of next year's amateur draft or at the end of competitive balance round B. The placement depends on whether the new contract is worth \$50 million or more and the revenue-sharing and luxury tax status of the team losing the player.

A team signing the player would give up either its third-highest draft pick, its second-highest pick and \$500,000 of international signing bonus allotment or its second- and fifth-highest selections and \$1 million of international signing bonus allotment, depending on revenue-sharing and the luxury tax status of the signing club.

Qualifying offers began after the 2012 season, and only 10 of 96 offers have been accepted.

Stroman, a 29-year-old right-hander, did not play this year. He missed the start of the shortened season in late July due to a torn left calf muscle, then said on Aug. 10 he had opted out because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Gausman, also a 29-year-old right-hander, signed a \$9 million, one-year contract with San Francisco as a free agent last December and earned \$5,333,333 in prorated pay while going 3-3 with a 3.62 ERA in 10 starts and two relief appearances.



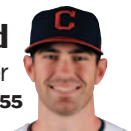
JACK DEMPSEY/AP

San Francisco Giants starting pitcher Kevin Gausman accepted his team's \$18.9 million qualifying offer rather than test what he could get in free agency. He was 3-3 with a 3.62 earned-run average this past season.

SPORTS



Building a stronger bond
Former teammates Bauer, Bieber
win Cy Young Awards » **MLB, Page 55**



NFL

Disruptive, and tough to defend



WADE PAYNE/AP

Tennessee Titans running back Derrick Henry wears a face mask while leaving the field after a game against the Chicago Bears on Nov. 8 in Nashville, Tenn. The Titans had the major coronavirus outbreak of the first half of the season, when the pandemic kept key personnel out of games and forced schedule shuffling.

Halfway through season, COVID-19 keeping things unpredictable

By **BARRY WILNER**
Associated Press

From the unbeaten Steelers at the top to the winless Jets at the bottom, predictability has taken a hike halfway through NFL 2020. There's one main reason, of course: COVID-19.

We can discuss the magnificence of Russell Wilson and Patrick Mahomes, of Aaron Donald and T.J. Watt. We can laud the legwork of Justin Tucker and Jason Sanders, and brag about the brilliant coaching of Brian Flores and Kliff Kingsbury in bring-

ing also-rans to playoff contention.

The overriding fact, however, is that the pandemic has determined much of what we've seen, and that almost certainly will continue with predicted spikes in the coronavirus as we head toward winter.

Everyone would love to turn attention to the on-field product — well, maybe not Jets fans, though even their team's hapless start is beyond their followers' most pessimistic projections. Of course, "Tanking for Trevor" doesn't seem so farfetched these days, does it?

But having already seen significant ad-

justments of the schedule because of COVID-19 outbreaks, plus key people missing games because of the virus, well, the daily questions have become not how is a player performing, but how is he feeling?

"You got to make sure that you're doing the right thing so you can be healthy for your team, and your team's able to play week after week," said running back Derrick Henry, whose Titans had the major outbreak of COVID-19 during the first half of the season.

SEE HALFWAY ON PAGE 51

OFFENSIVE EXPLOSION

The NFL's on-field product has been offensive — in a good way. Through nine weeks, 2020 marks the highest-scoring season in league history: 6,737 points, 778 total touchdowns and 745 offensive touchdowns (passing and rushing combined), all the most at this point in a schedule. There's been an average of 50.7 points scored per game, the most through Week 9 since 1970.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Jury out on Notre Dame's ACC deal » College football, Page 49

