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Reaching new heights



KCNA

North Korea launches a Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile in this image released by the Korean Central News Agency on Thursday.

N. Korea says recent ICBM flew 74 minutes, set record

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea on Thursday said the intercontinental ballistic missile it tested the previous day flew 74 minutes, a new record for the regime's missile program.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw the test of a Hwasong-18, which "fully demonstrated the might" of the regime, said the state-run Korean Central News Agency. The North last fired a Hwasong-18 on April 13.

Kim said the political climate on the Korean Peninsula was unstable and called for North

Korea to bolster its nuclear war deterrent, according to KCNA.

He has called the Hwasong-18 the most powerful weapon of his nuclear forces.

North Korea will not break from its series of weapon tests, the KCNA report said, and Kim ordered the government "to steadily accelerate the development of more ... effective and reliable weapon [systems]."

The missile's built-in solid propellant makes it more difficult for opponents to detect launches in advance and can be fired quicker compared to liquid-fueled missiles.

The North has been developing solid-fuel

missiles since 2019 to replace its older, liquid-fueled inventory, South Korea's Ministry of National Defense said in its annual readiness report in February.

The ICBM was launched just before 10 a.m. Wednesday from the Pyongyang area and flew about 620 miles before splashing down in the Sea of Japan, or the East Sea, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Japan's military said the missile was fired at 9:59 a.m. and flew 74 minutes before splashing down 155 miles west of Okushiri Island, out-

SEE HEIGHTS ON PAGE 6

Biden says NATO 'never stronger' as he touts Finland

By SEUNG MIN KIM, CHRIS MEGERIAN AND JARI TANNER
Associated Press

HELSINKI — President Joe Biden said he and other NATO leaders showed the world that the military alliance remains "more united than ever," as he on Thursday capped off a trip in Europe meant to demonstrate the force of the international coalition against Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The allies "understand that this fight is not only a fight for the future of Ukraine," Biden said, noting that it's also about sovereignty and security.

"At this critical moment in history, this inflection point, the world watching to see, will we do the hard work that matters to forge a better future? Will we stand together, will we stand with one another? Will we stay committed to our course?" Biden said. He said the answer was a "resounding yes."

Earlier Thursday, Biden met with the leaders of other Nordic nations including Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. Sweden is poised to be admitted as

SEE NATO ON PAGE 7



SUSAN WALSH/AP

President Joe Biden stands for a photo with other world leaders, including Finland's President Sauli Niinistö, right, at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki on Thursday.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	Change in price	Turkey	Change in price
Germany	\$3.928	\$4.463	\$4.787	\$4.188	..	..	\$4.676	..
Change in price	+1.9 cents	+2.7 cents	+2.6 cents	+3.9 cents	..	..	+2.6 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.658	\$4.937	\$4.658	..	..	\$4.475	\$4.421*
Change in price	..	+11.4 cents	+12.1 cents	+14.7 cents	..	..	+2.6 cents	No change
U.K.	..	\$4.399	\$4.723	\$4.124	..	..	..	..
Change in price	..	+2.7 cents	+2.6 cents	+3.9 cents	..	..	..	..

Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective July 14. The change in price is from July 7.

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	Change in price	Guam	Change in price
Japan	..	\$4.449	..	\$3.849	\$3.619	..	\$4.139	..
Change in price	..	+2.0 cents	..	+3.0 cents	+2.0 cents	..	+3.0 cents	+4.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.589	..	..	\$3.849	\$3.609**	..	\$4.459	..
Change in price	+1.0 cents	..	..	+3.0 cents	+2.0 cents	+3.0 cents	+2.0 cents	..

*DieselEFD **Midgrade
Paific prices for the week of July 14-20

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (July 14)	\$1.09	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound (July 14)	\$1.27	Britain (Pound)	1.3109
Japanese yen (July 14)	136.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3129
South Korean won (July 14)	1245.00	China (Yuan)	7.1609
		Denmark (Krone)	6.6578
		Egypt (Pound)	30.9000
		Euro	0.8964
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8226
		Hungary (Forint)	334.22
		Israel (Shekel)	3.6057
		Japan (Yen)	138.16
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3062
		Norway (Krone)	10.0089
		Philippines (Peso)	54.37
		Poland (Zloty)	3.96
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7511
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3234
		South Korea (Won)	1267.43
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8598		
Thailand (Baht)	34.54		
Turkey (NewLira)	26.1339		

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

INTEREST RATES

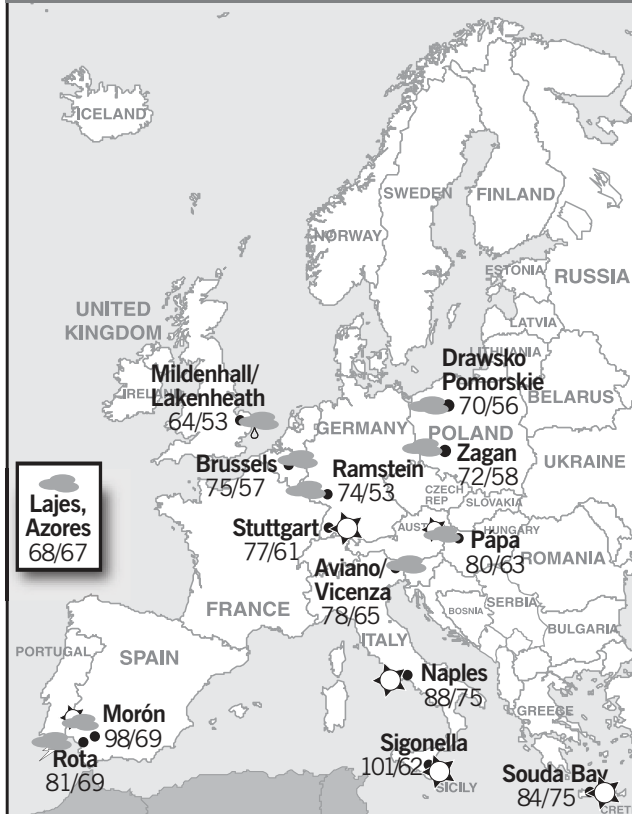
Prime rate	8.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	5.75
Federal funds market rate	5.08
3-month bill	5.40
30-year bond	3.96

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

Army chief pick: Fix perception to boost rolls

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Gen. Randy George, the Army vice chief of staff who is slated to become the service's top officer, said Wednesday that he will promote the value of serving as the Army faces another recruiting shortfall.

The service is expected to miss its recruitment goal by 30% this year, continuing a worrying trend that George told the Senate Armed Services Committee he would strive to reverse if confirmed to the Army's highest-ranking post.

"We have to get after perception," George said. "The Army is a great place to serve, I know that, I believe that with all of my heart, and we've got to get that out there."

George said he joined the Army out of high school as a junior enlisted soldier to earn money for college but stayed "because of the mission and people." In 1988, he commissioned from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., as an infantry officer.

A Korean War veteran helped inspire George's military career, and the general said such influence was needed for the next generation of soldiers. He said teachers and coaches need to emphasize to young people that the Army

is a "life accelerator."

An Army survey released in February showed the top reason Americans declined to enlist is the fear that they would be putting their life on hold. About 13% cited a belief that women and racial and ethnic minorities are discriminated against in the service.

George said that perception necessitates the diversity and inclusion training that many Republican lawmakers deride as unnecessary liberal initiatives that weaken the force.

"[It's] part of building a cohesive team and bringing everybody together," George said in defense of the training. "We absolutely have to do that."

Republicans have placed some of the blame for the military's recruiting crisis on what they say is a preoccupation with race, gender and other "woke" issues that marginalize potential recruits with conservative beliefs. But the Army poll indicated only 5% of respondents cited "wokeism" as a reason they did not want to serve.

George said he wanted to focus on the Army's marketing efforts, which aim to appeal to a broad array of prospective applicants but must also include messaging tailored to individual communities.

"We're [all] different," he said.



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Army Gen. Randy George answers questions on Wednesday during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in Washington, D.C., to consider his nomination to be the service's next chief of staff.

"We want to come from across society."

The potential recruiting pool will be limited, nonetheless. Most young people, about 77%, are not qualified to serve due to physical or academic deficiencies.

George said that number is dropping, however, partly due to the success of the Army's Future Soldier Preparatory Course. The program helps potential recruits become fitter and improve their test scores to meet Army requirements.

"We want people to meet our standard and we want them to know we're willing to help them meet that standard," George told senators.

The Army's ongoing struggle to fill its ranks is one of several challenges that George will have to contend with as Army chief of

staff. He also would be charged with overseeing the service's modernization to better counter threats posed by China and Russia.

George has served in his current job since August and previously worked as the senior military assistant to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. He has extensive combat experience, including service in the Gulf War, Iraq War and the war in Afghanistan.

He led a brigade of 4th Infantry Division soldiers in Afghanistan in 2009 and returned in 2017 to command the entire 4th Infantry Division.

As a brigadier general in 2015, George helped spearhead the Army's response to Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine by leading a new mission command overseeing soldiers on NATO's eastern

flank.

George is set to replace outgoing Gen. James McConville, who will retire in August as the Army chief of staff after a four-year term.

"Gen. George is the right man for this job," said Republican Sen. Joni Ernst, who represents George's home state of Iowa.

George's promotion likely will face delays as Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., continues to obstruct the confirmation of about 250 military officer nominees, including the commandant of the Marine Corps.

Tuberville began his blanket hold on military promotions in the spring as protest over the Pentagon's reproductive health policies.

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Navy plane travels Taiwan Strait as Chinese train around island

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

A Navy surveillance aircraft flew through the Taiwan Strait on Thursday, the U.S. 7th Fleet said, as Chinese forces moved into their third day of drills around Taiwan.

China since Tuesday has engaged in "long-range aerial reconnaissance training" around the island, with scores of aircraft and numerous warships, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said through several news releases and tweets.

A U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon flew through the contentious strait on Thursday to demonstrate "the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," the U.S. 7th Fleet announced that day. The plane moved south from the East China Sea to the South China Sea.

"By operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law, the United States upholds the navigational rights and freedoms of all nations," the command said in a news release.

The Navy routinely sends ships, usually guided-missile destroyers, through the strait. Aircraft such as the Poseidon make



GLENN SLAUGHTER/U.S. Navy

A U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon flew through the Taiwan Strait on Thursday.

the journey less often.

The Poseidon is a multirole, twin-engine aircraft based on Boeing's 737 Next Generation airliner, according to the manufacturer's website. Its missions include intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, patrol, search and rescue and anti-submarine warfare.

Beijing organized fighter jets to monitor the Poseidon's "publicly hyped" flight, Eastern Theater Command spokesman Shi Yijun said Thursday on the force's Weibo social media account.

"Theater troops maintain a high level of

alert at all times and resolutely defend national sovereignty and security as well as regional peace and stability," he wrote.

All interactions with Chinese military forces during the transit were "consistent with international norms and did not impact the operation," 7th Fleet spokeswoman Lt. Kristina Wiedemann told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

Taipei on Tuesday reported an increase in Chinese activity in waters around Taiwan, with 34 aircraft and four warships active in the area, according to a tweet by the Ministry of National Defense.

By Wednesday morning, 38 aircraft and nine vessels had drilled around the island; 32 of the aircraft crossed the strait's median line and entered Taiwan's southwest and east Air Defense Identification Zone, according to a ministry news release.

It reported similar numbers Thursday morning, with 33 aircraft and nine warships active around the island and 24 aircraft crossing the median line.

Taiwanese forces monitored the situation throughout the week, the ministry said.

China considers Taiwan, a functional de-

mocracy, to be a breakaway province that must be reunified with the mainland. Beijing also ships and aircraft toward Taiwan on a near-daily basis, but Taipei rarely identifies those actions as part of a larger exercise.

Among the aircraft involved in the Chinese exercise this week were J-10 and J-16 fighter jets, H-6 bombers, Y-8 EW transport jets, unmanned aerial vehicles and carrier-based aircraft, Taiwan's military said.

Beijing last launched major drills around the island on June 13, when it marked off three areas along its eastern coast for exercises that included live-fire training.

In mid-April, China launched a much larger series of drills around Taiwan in response to Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen's meeting with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California that month.

As many as 70 Chinese aircraft sortied daily during those exercises, which also included simulated strikes on Taiwanese targets and live-fire training.

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MILITARY

Service members pitch in at Djibouti school

BY ROBERT STEWART
Stars and Stripes

American service members deployed to Camp Lemonnier repaired desks and delivered picnic tables at a primary school last month in Ali Oune, Djibouti.

The 450th Civil Affairs Battalion, which led the renovation project, works with the Djiboutian minister of education to build libraries in schools across the African nation, according to a news release from the battalion. The team worked in tandem with the 294th Engineering Support Company, which provides force and general engineering support to the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

The two units were delivering libraries when they noticed students needed more desks.

"We're trying to make their educational experience a bit better," said U.S. Army Maj. David Ewing, Civil-Military Operations Center chief of the 450th Civil Af-



RION CODRINGTON/U.S. Navy

U.S. service members deployed to Camp Lemonnier repaired desks and delivered picnic tables in support of the 450th Civil Affairs Battalion project at a primary school in Ali Oune, Djibouti, last month.

fairs Battalion.

Volunteers played games and practiced English and French with children during the table de-

livery, Ewing said in the release.

Abdichakour Robleh, an English teacher at the school in Ali Oune, said in the release that three

or four students had to sit in the same chairs because there were not enough prior to the volunteers' work.

"When all the students came here and noticed that all the chairs were fixed, they were happy, and it made me happy for them," Robleh said.

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Joshua Guevara, assigned to the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 364, said he knows the students will appreciate the work the volunteers did for them, motivating them to pursue both their educational and life goals.

The Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid funds projects led by the 450th CAB in Djibouti, and both the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Africa Command have to approve the projects.

To save time and money, the team gets creative with resources, Ewing said in the release. The 294th ESC used repurposed wood and metals from Camp Lemon-

nier and personal funds to finish the project.

"This project gave us the opportunity to see our work make an impact at the personal level here within our host nation of Djibouti," said U.S. Army Capt. Trey Maevers, 294th ESC commanding officer. "It also gave our soldiers more awareness of the culture of Djibouti, specifically the educational environment. We built it, we delivered it, we installed it, and with the help of Civil Affairs, it became a tangible product that our soldiers can be proud of."

Next up, the units will work on providing the Ali Oune school with a clean water source, and also combat flash flooding in the region, the release said. Ewing said the team hopes to support sustainability for the children.

"My goal is to provide something for the kids to have," Ewing said. "They are the next generation and we care about the people of the community."

Marines help save choking victim

BY JEREMY STILLWAGNER
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Two Marines who helped save a choking victim's life have received letters of appreciation from officials in Gotemba, a city near Combined Arms Training Center-Camp Fuji.

Sgts. William Carroll, of Canyon City, Colo., and Jarret Fuqua, of Ringgold, Ga., were recognized on June 21 for helping a fellow diner at a Korean barbecue restaurant on May 26. The 56-year-old man was choking on food and suffering a heart attack.

The Marines administered the Heimlich maneuver to dislodge a piece of meat from the man's throat and administered CPR while restaurant employee Ami Amemiya called emergency services, according to a June 21 Marine news release and a spokesman for the Gotemba Fire Department. Amemiya was honored

alongside the Marines.

"What you are capable of doing and what you actually do are two different things," the spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone June 27. "It's difficult to actually take action, so their act was outstanding."

Some government spokespeople in Japan are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

The letters Carroll and Fuqua received say their actions were "meaningful to the Japan-U.S. friendship."

"We are extremely proud and appreciative of Sergeants Carroll and Fuqua for their actions which helped save the life of a local man," Col. Neil Owens, Camp Fuji's commander, told Stars and Stripes in an email Wednesday. "The quick thinking and professionalism which they exhibited while in a liberty period should serve as an example for all of us."

The actions taken by Carroll, the storage chief for the ammunition supply point office, and Fuqua, a logistics platoon sergeant, inspired an interest in CPR classes at Camp Fuji, according to a Tuesday post on the base's Facebook page.

The two Marines are the latest in a string of good Samaritans among U.S. service members in Japan.

In April, three Marines from Camp Pendleton, temporarily stationed in Japan, performed emergency first aid on a young Japanese snowboarder while on a skiing trip in Nagano. The young man had fallen and sliced his head open on his snowboard.

The Marines controlled the bleeding and called ski patrol while keeping the boy and his friends calm. The Marines were not officially recognized, but the snowboarder's parents treated them to dinner at a local restau-



EMILY WEISS/Marine Corps

Marine Corps Sgt. William Carroll, left, restaurant worker Ami Amemiya, center, and Sgt. Jarrett Fuqua pose with letters of appreciation from the city of Gotemba, Japan, on June 21.

rant.

In March, two sailors from Naval Air Facility Misawa were awarded certificates of commendation from Oirase Mayor Takashi Narita. The sailors in April 2022 responded to a car crash and

helped the driver from the vehicle as it filled with smoke.

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Prosecutors say soldier inappropriately touched two teens on flights

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

An Army chief warrant officer stationed in Alaska is accused of inappropriately touching two teens during flights on commercial airliners this spring according to a federal complaint unsealed this week.

James Benecke, 41, faces two counts of abusive sexual contact while on board an aircraft, Tessa Gorman, acting U.S. attorney for the western district of Washington, said in a statement Wednesday.

Prosecutors say he inappropriately touched a 16-year-old girl seated next to him on a flight in April and an 18-year-old woman who was beside him on a flight two months later.

Benecke was arrested last week at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, near Anchorage, the statement said.

Benecke denied the allegations, saying he is a "big guy" who spreads out on planes and that any contact was accidental, court records said.

The first instance occurred on a red-eye flight from Anchorage to Seattle on April 12, the U.S. attorney for Alaska said in court filings.

Prosecutors say Benecke put his hand on the 16-year-old girl's thigh. After she threw his hand back and pulled her knees to her chest, Benecke put his hand on her buttocks, they allege.

Then on June 12, during a flight from Dallas to Seattle, Benecke touched a woman's leg with his leg and later with his pinky, then slid his hand up her thigh, prosecutors

said.

When the woman tried to speak to flight attendants, Benecke pretended to be asleep and did not get up to let her leave, prosecutors alleged in court filings.

The woman said she was forced to jump over him to get out, and when she did, she felt his hand on her buttocks.

After the teen and her boyfriend, who was sitting nearby, reported Benecke to the cabin crew, he was moved to a seat at the rear of the plane, according to the statement

from the U.S. attorney's office for the western district of Washington.

Prosecutors described Benecke as a decorated soldier who is recently divorced.

Benecke appeared in federal court in Alaska on Wednesday for an initial appearance, court records said.

His next court appearance is scheduled for July 20 in Washington.

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PACIFIC

Report: Engine issue led pilot to drop fuel tank

By **SETH ROBSON**
AND **KEISHI KOJA**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet that dropped its fuel tank off Okinawa last year was experiencing engine problems at the time, according to a Japanese newspaper report.

The pilot dropped the plane's external fuel tank May 29, 2022, about 15 nautical miles off Okinawa in international waters as a safety measure before landing at Kadena Air Base, the Navy said at the time.

However, the Navy didn't ex-

plain why the fighter, assigned to Carrier Air Wing 5 aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, diverted to Kadena.

The Okinawa Times, citing a Navy incident report obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, reported Monday that the plane had engine troubles before dropping the tank. The fighter was expected to land on the Ronald Reagan but the pilot diverted to Kadena due to a fire aboard the carrier, the newspaper reported. The Super Hornet lost power in its right engine before its left engine caught fire. Then the

pilot jettisoned the fuel tank and landed at Kadena, according to the report.

The accident cost the U.S. government approximately \$23,664, according to Naval Safety Command, the newspaper reported.

The 16-foot-long fuel tank washed ashore near Higashi Village, Okinawa, and was found by a resident. It was retrieved by the Navy on June 1, 2022, according to a spokesman for the Okinawa Defense Bureau.

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GRAY GIBSON/U.S. Navy

A Japanese newspaper reported Monday a Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet was experiencing engine problems when it dropped its fuel tank off Okinawa last year.

Sailor charged with attacking people at beach faces lawsuit

By **ALEX WILSON**
AND **HANA KUSUMOTO**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A U.S. sailor facing a criminal trial in Japan on charges he attacked and injured four people at a popular beach south of Tokyo now faces a civil lawsuit from the same incident.

The plaintiffs — a 59-year-old woman, a 26-year-old woman and two 34-year-old men — filed a lawsuit on Monday against the sailor, Daniel Krieger, in Yokohama District Court in Yokosuka, according to their lawyer, Masahiko Goto. They seek 20 million yen, or about \$143,000, in compensation.

"It's been a year, but there has not been any apology or compensation," Goto told Stars and Stripes by phone Wednesday. The plaintiffs have had to pay their own medical bills, and some have ongoing issues related to their injuries, he said.

Japanese authorities allege that Krieger, assigned to Yokosuka, homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet about 37 miles south of Tokyo, charged into five people and knocked them down at Zushi Beach on July 9, 2022. Several sustained severe injuries.

The Kanagawa Prefectural Police, the Yokohama District Public Prosecutor's Office and the naval base have all declined to specify Krieger's assigned unit or rank.

Base spokesman Randall Baucom declined again Wednesday to provide that information and to comment on the civil lawsuit.

"As a matter of policy, we do not make comments on ongoing legal cases," he said by phone.

Kanagawa police on Oct. 21

recommended charging Krieger with the bodily injury of all five people, but prosecutors indicted him on four counts on Nov. 11. Prosecutors, not police, decide formal charges under Japan's criminal justice system.

They allege Krieger slammed into the group and kicked one of the men in the back, spraining two vertebrae.

Krieger also slammed into a second man, who fell backward into the 26-year-old woman, who suffered an abrasion to her right hand, according to prosecutors, who said Krieger kicked the second man in the face.

The 59-year-old woman suffered a broken upper jaw, a broken nasal bone and other facial injuries, according to prosecutors.

No criminal trial date has been set for Krieger, a spokesperson for the Yokohama District Court said by phone Wednesday. The lengthy wait is one of the victims' complaints, Goto said.

"It looks like the criminal trial is not starting any time soon," he said, adding that the plaintiffs hope Krieger admits what he did and apologizes.

Three from the group — the two men and the younger woman — in written statements provided by Goto, emphasized the trauma they've suffered and said they want Krieger to face severe punishment.

Goto declined to identify his clients by name, citing privacy concerns.

It's customary in Japan for some government officials to speak to the media while remaining anonymous.

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South Korea-based airman accused of stealing vehicle, drunken driving

By **DAVID CHOI**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Police in South Korea arrested a U.S. airman from Osan Air Base on suspicion of car theft and drunken driving after finding him sleeping in the vehicle on Sunday.

Police said the unidentified airman stole an unlocked car from in front of a hotel in Pyeongtaek, about 30 miles south of Seoul, at 1:14 a.m., a city police investigator said Wednesday.

South Korean officials regularly speak to the media on the customary condition of anonymity and do not reveal identifiable information of criminal suspects, including their name, age and military rank.

A technical sergeant from Osan

was arrested Sunday by Pyeongtaek police, 7th Air Force spokeswoman Maj. Rachel Buitrago confirmed by email Thursday. "Any type of service member misconduct is unacceptable and is taken very seriously," she said.

Buitrago declined to provide further information, citing the command's ongoing investigation.

The airman drove erratically for roughly 550 yards before a wheel came off the car, the investigator said. The wheel was found on a farm next to the road.

Reports of a drunken driver brought Pyeongtaek police, who found the airman asleep in the driver's seat, according to the investigator. The airman's blood alcohol level exceeded 0.03%, the legal limit for drivers in South Korea, although the investigator re-

fused to disclose the exact result. By comparison, all 50 U.S. states have set 0.08% as the legal limit for driving under the influence or while impaired. A drunken driving conviction in South Korea brings a potential two-year prison term and loss of a driver's license, according to the Road Traffic Act.

The airman was promptly released to U.S. military police, the investigator said. U.S. Forces Korea maintains custody of its personnel in criminal matters unless they are accused of serious crimes like homicide.

The investigator said Pyeongtaek police plan to question the service member at a later date.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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FOREIGN SERVICE BENEFIT PLAN

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MILITARY

Oh baby!: USAF dependent new face of Gerber

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The face of Gerber baby food for 2023 is the infant daughter of an Air Force family from Colorado, linking the U.S. military with a beloved American advertising icon.

Colorado Springs 10-month-old Madison "Maddie" Mendoza was named the winner of Gerber's 13th annual photo search, the company announced Wednesday.

The contest was inspired by countless photos sent by parents who see their little one in Gerber's famous baby logo.

As the company's "spokesbaby," Maddie will be featured on Gerber's social media channels and marketing campaigns throughout the year. Gerber did not say how soon Maddie's image will appear on their products.

The little girl, "along with her remarkable parents, captured the attention of the judges with a standout throwback submission



Madison Mendoza, left, and her mother, Crystal, are shown in a side-by-side throwback image submitted to Gerber. Madison, an Air Force dependent, was selected as the Gerber baby for 2023.

and story full of love and resilience," Gerber said in a statement.

Her father, Lt. Col. Jun Mendoza, is an allergist and immunologist at the Air Force Academy in

Colorado Springs, according to his Uniformed Services University biography. He's an academy graduate and has served in the Air Force for 16 years.

Mom Crystal Mendoza is a dentist. In her baby photo submitted to the contest, she looks like Maddie's twin, with the same jet-black hair, big eyes and tiny ponytail.

Both parents are from first-generation immigrant families from the Philippines. Maddie's grandfathers served in the Navy and came to the United States with very little, Gerber said in the statement.

The Mendozas have moved five times with the military and traveled to more than 30 countries and 20 states, according to the statement.

Her parents say their daughter, a "rainbow baby," is playful, outgoing and adventurous. The term "rainbow baby" refers to a child born after a miscarriage, stillbirth or the death of an infant from nat-

ural causes.

"Maddie has brought us immeasurable joy with every milestone, snuggle and moment spent with her enriching our lives and making every day more meaningful and beautiful," Crystal Mendoza is quoted in the statement as saying.

"We look forward to witnessing her grow into a kind, compassionate, strong, independent and worldly individual as we hope to be stationed overseas again to teach Maddie about all the different parts of the world."

Maddie and her family also received a \$25,000 cash prize and free Gerber products for up to one year, among other winnings.

Gerber will also match Maddie's cash prize with a donation to support the March of Dimes' maternal and infant health programs.

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Key roles filled at Stars and Stripes

Stars and Stripes

Stars and Stripes has a new editor-in-chief and, for the first time, women serving as commanders overseeing both its Europe and Pacific business operations.

Robert H. Reid replaced Terry Leonard as the top editor, taking up the position after nine years as the media organization's senior managing editor.

Leonard, an Army veteran who was a longtime Associated Press foreign correspondent, retired after 15 years on the job at Stars and Stripes.

Reid brings extensive experience to the position, having also served for decades as an AP foreign correspondent and editor before joining the organization. Prior to his journalism career, Reid served as an Army intelligence officer.

Meanwhile, the new military commanders took up their positions at Stars and Stripes' overseas headquarters in Germany and Japan.

Air Force Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, who has led business operations in Europe and the Middle East since 2020 from the newspaper's headquarters in Kaiserslautern, recently assumed command in the Pacific.

Hoffman is an Air Force Academy graduate and previously served as a C-130 instructor pilot. She replaces Lt. Col. Michael Kerschbaum at Stripes' Pacific headquarters in Tokyo.

On Wednesday, Army Lt. Col. Katie Fidler replaced Hoffman as commander of Stars and Stripes Europe and Expeditionary. Fidler is a U.S. Military Academy graduate and engineer who previously served as a chief of plans, operations

and exercises at U.S. Army Europe and Africa headquarters in Wiesbaden.

Fidler first appeared in a Stars and Stripes story in 2004 as a West Point cadet, when she instructed South Korean soldiers on how to build a bridge.

"The unique aspects of the two commanders are exciting symbols of the diverse nature of the Stars and Stripes leadership," said publisher Max Lederer, noting that this is also the first time two service academy graduates are in command at the same time.

Stars and Stripes first published a newspaper in 1863 and has done so continuously in Europe and the Pacific theaters since World War II. It now operates as a newspaper and a multimedia news organization.

While part of the Defense Depart-



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Outgoing commander of Stars and Stripes Europe and Expeditionary, Air Force Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, right, incoming commander Army Lt. Col. Katie Fidler, center, and publisher Max Lederer sing at the conclusion of a change of command ceremony Wednesday, in Kaiserslautern, Germany. Hoffman is the new Pacific commander.

ment, Stars and Stripes is editorially independent by an act of Congress. Its editorial chain of command is solely responsible for its news con-

tent. Its military commanders oversee logistics, marketing and other operations but are not involved in news decisions.

Heights: Unclear if missile was carrying a simulated payload, researcher says

FROM PAGE 1

side the country's exclusive economic zone, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said Wednesday.

The missile flew at a maximum altitude of 3,730 miles, Matsuno said. No damage was reported.

Wednesday's test is a "significant" indication that the Hwasong-18 could theoretically reach the United States, according to Yang Uk, an associated research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul.

But it is still unclear whether the missile was carrying a simulated payload, a crucial factor in

determining an ICBM's capability, Yang told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

"In this [KCNA] announcement, there's no comment on the payload," Yang said. "You can call it a success, but that doesn't mean that the whole system is operational."

The ICBM was fired nearly 1½ months after North Korea attempted on May 31 to launch what it called a surveillance satellite. The rocket failed and the vehicle fell into the Yellow Sea, where it was recovered by South Korea. The regime promised another attempt soon.

North Korea's latest test was a

response to its belief that the U.S. and South Korea violated the country's airspace on multiple occasions, according to KCNA's report on Thursday.

Pyongyang alleged that the U.S.'s crewed RC-135 and unmanned RQ-Global Hawk aircraft violated its maritime airspace between July 2 and Friday, and threatened it may shoot down the aircraft in the future, KCNA reported Monday.

South Korea's military and the U.S. State Department denied its joint aerial surveillance operations had violated the North's airspace.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff from

the U.S., Japan and South Korea had a discussion immediately following Wednesday's launch, South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesman Lee Sung-jun told reporters during a news briefing in Seoul on Thursday.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who were in Vilnius, Lithuania, for a NATO summit on Wednesday, released a joint statement with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins condemning the North's launch that day.

"The four countries solely oppose North Korea's unlawful

provocation and urge it to fully comply with all of its obligations under the relevant U.N. Security Council resolution," the statement said.

"Even if North Korea continues to develop its nuclear and missile programs and threaten the use of nuclear weapons, it will only bolster the international community's resolve to achieve [the] complete denuclearization of North Korea."

The U.N. Security Council has banned ballistic missile tests by North Korea since 2006.

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EUROPE

Ukraine repels missile, drone attack on Kyiv

By HANNA ARHIROVA
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian officials said air defenses shot down 20 Iranian-made drones fired by Russia mostly at the Kyiv region early Thursday, but wreckage fell on four districts of the capital, wounding two people and destroying several homes.

The latest barrage by the Kremlin's forces began shortly after midnight, and explosions shook different parts of the city. Two people were hospitalized with shrapnel wounds, authorities said.

In the capital, rescuers extinguished a fire in a 16-story building, as well as in a non-residential building, the Interior Ministry said. Debris also smashed into the front of a 25-story apartment building, it said.

Russian strikes have become a grim part of everyday life in Uk-

raine over the almost 17 months of the war.

Meanwhile, a senior officer leading Russian forces against Kyiv's recent counteroffensive in southern Ukraine, Lt. Gen. Oleg Tsokov, was reportedly killed by a Ukrainian missile strike.

Tsokov died when the Ukrainian military struck the city of Berdyansk on Tuesday with U.K.-supplied Storm Shadow missiles, according to retired Gen. Andrei Gurulev, who commanded the 58th Army in the past and currently serves as a lawmaker.

Russia's Defense Ministry hasn't reported Tsokov's death.

In the aftermath of the nighttime attack on Kyiv, Volodymyr Motus, a 22-year-old resident of the 25-story building, carefully picked his way across the floor of a destroyed apartment, his footsteps crunching shattered glass. The mangled furniture was coat-



ROMAN CHOP/AP

Ukrainian soldiers prepare a Grad multiple rocket launcher to fire rockets at the Russian positions in the frontline near Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Wednesday.

ed in a thick layer of dust.

"I was in my apartment and suddenly I heard a boom, that's all. Then the alarm went off and I went down to the shelter."

He said that some people were injured, but they were all alive.

In May, Russia launched dozens of drones and missiles at Kyiv almost every night, forcing its residents to spend their nights in shelters. During the summer, attacks came less frequently, but they still strike unpredictably across the country.

Ukraine's human rights chief Dmytro Lubinets wrote on Telegram, "It should be explained that each 'air alarm' in Ukraine is like

playing Russian roulette... It's unknown the number of people who could be affected, and it is uncertain from which part of Ukraine bad news about the strike of an enemy drone or missile will come."

The Ukrainian military said it also intercepted two Russian cruise missiles. The statement said one ballistic missile wasn't intercepted, although it didn't explain what damage the missile caused.

The government of the region of Khmelnytskyi in western Ukraine reported that a cruise missile was intercepted over the region, and reported no casualties.

Top Russian general in southern area dismissed

MOSCOW — A Russian general in charge of forces fighting in southern Ukraine has been relieved of his duties after speaking out about problems faced by his troops, a move that reflected new fissures in the military command following a brief rebellion by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin.

Maj. Gen. Ivan Popov, the commander of the 58th army in the Zaporizhzhia region, which is a focal point in Ukraine's counteroffensive, said in an audio statement to his troops released Wednesday that he was dismissed after a meeting with the military brass in what he described as a "treacherous" stab in the back to Russian forces in Ukraine.

Many military bloggers argued that Popov's dismissal eroded troop morale at a time of relentless Ukrainian attacks. One blogger, Vladislav Shurygin, said it has dealt a "terrible blow to the entire army," while another, Roman Saponkov, described it as a "monstrous terror attack against the army's morale."

Suspect arrested in killing of ex-sub captain

A 64-year-old man has been arrested in southern Russia for the shooting death of a former submarine commander who is alleged by some in Ukraine to have killed more than 20 civilians in a long-range missile strike last year.

Sergei Denisenko was detained on suspicion of shooting former 2nd Capt. Stanislav Rzhitsky, reportedly during a morning jog in the city of Krasnodar on July 10.

Denisenko was found in possession of a pistol and silencer, officials said. Some Russian media outlets identified him as a native of Sumy, a city in Ukraine.

Ukrainian media reported that Rzhitsky was one of six submarine commanders able to launch long-range missiles that hit the Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia in July 2022, killing 23 people and wounding more than 100.

Wagner mercenaries surrendering weapons

MOSCOW — Wagner Group mercenaries are completing the handover of weapons to the Russian military, the Defense Ministry said Wednesday, a move that follows the private army's brief rebellion last month that challenged the Kremlin's authority.

The disarming of Wagner reflects efforts by authorities to defuse the threat it posed and also appears to herald an end to the mercenary group's operations on the battlefield in Ukraine.

Among the weapons turned over were more than 2,000 pieces of equipment, such as tanks, rocket launchers and heavy artillery.

NATO: Biden says meetings 'guarantee the future'

FROM PAGE 1

NATO's 32nd member country after it pledged more cooperation with Turkey on counterterrorism efforts while backing Ankara's bid to join the European Union. Finland gained NATO membership earlier this year.

Both Finland and Sweden abandoned a history of military non-alignment and sought to join NATO alliance after Russia invaded Ukraine last year.

Biden's brief stop in the shoreline Finnish capital is the coda to a tour that was carefully sketched to highlight the growth of a military alliance that the president says has fortified itself since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Finland's admittance to NATO effectively doubled the alliance's border with Russia.

Biden arrived in Helsinki after what he deemed a successful NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, where allies agreed to language that would further pave the way for Ukraine to also become a future member. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the summit's outcome "a significant security victory" for his country but nonetheless expressed disappointment at not getting an outright invitation to

join. Biden and other administration officials also held what aides said were pivotal conversations with Turkey before that country dropped its objections to Sweden joining NATO.

Biden said he felt good about the trip. "We accomplished every goal we set out to accomplish," he told reporters Wednesday before the flight to Finland.

And despite Zelenskyy's expressed frustrations, Biden — who met with the Ukrainian leader Wednesday in Vilnius — said Thursday that Zelenskyy "ended up being very happy."

The U.S. president's trip this week — a meticulously choreographed endeavor meant to showcase international opposition to Russian leader Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine — played out nearly five years to the day since then-President Donald Trump infamously stood alongside Putin in Helsinki and cast doubt on his own intelligence apparatus. That was just days after Trump tore through a NATO summit where he disparaged the alliance and from which he threatened to withdraw the United States.

In contrast, Biden has heartily embraced the tenets of multilateralism that Trump shunned, speak-

ing repeatedly of having to rebuild international coalitions after four tumultuous years led by his predecessor. The garrulous former Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman is in his element at summits abroad, and speaks of how his background in international policy is proof positive that decades of experience on the world stage has mattered for the presidency.

Opening the broader meeting, Niinistö said his Nordic counterparts had one overriding objective: "guarantee the future — security-wise, environmental-wise and technology-wise."

Biden added that the "nations around the table not only share common history, but we share common challenges, and I would add presumptuously, common values."

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, who saw Biden in the Oval Office last week, lightheartedly remarked to Biden that "I have met you more than I've met my own family."

The talks at the seaside Presidential Palace in the heart of Helsinki were to focus on closer cooperation between the Nordic countries and the United States on security, environment and

technology issues, Niinistö's office said. Biden also scheduled a news conference with Niinistö before departing for Washington.

Biden is the sixth U.S. president to visit Finland, a country of 5.5 million that has hosted several U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Russia summits. The first involved President Gerald Ford, who would sign the so-called Helsinki Accords with more than 30 other nations in 1975.

But Charly Salenius-Pasternak, senior researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, noted that Biden's visit marked the first time a sitting U.S. president came to Finland to honor the country itself, rather than as a neutral location for meeting Russian leaders or other similar reasons.

"The fact that Biden has chosen to go specifically to Finland for Finland is symbolic and, in some ways, very concrete," he said. "It's a kind of deterrence messaging that only the United States can do."

In the Cold War era, Finland acted as a neutral buffer between Moscow and Washington, and its leaders played a balancing act between the East and West, maintaining good relations with both superpowers.

NATION

Heat wave baking 111M in Southwest

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — After a historically wet winter and a cloudy spring, California's summer was in full swing Thursday as a heat wave that's been scorching much of the Southwest brings triple digit temperatures and an increased risk of wildfires.

Blistering conditions will build Friday and throughout the weekend in the central and southern parts of California, where many residents should prepare for the hottest weather of the year, the National Weather Service warned.

Midday highs were mostly expected to be above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and desert areas could reach 120 F, forecasters said. Little relief was expected overnight, when temperatures could remain in the 80s. An excessive heat watch was in effect through Sunday for interior Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

"Please plan accordingly, this is not the time to be hiking or be outside for long durations," the weather service's LA office said on Twitter. "If you need to work outside, shift hours to the early morning, take frequent breaks and hydrate!"

Employers were reminded to adhere to regulations that require outdoor workers are given water, shade and regular breaks to cool off. The state will be performing



MATT YORK/AP

Francisca Corral gives water to a man at The Salvation Army's Valley Heat Relief Station, on Tuesday, in Phoenix. In Arizona, temperatures have hit 110 degrees for more than a dozen consecutive days.

spot checks at work sites to make sure the rules are being followed, said Jeff Killip with the Division of Occupational Safety & Health.

Across the U.S., more than 111 million people were under extreme heat advisories, watches and warnings, mostly in the Southwest, the National Weather Ser-

vice reported Wednesday.

Forecasters said the long-duration heat wave is extremely dangerous, especially for elderly people, homeless residents and other vulnerable populations. The heat could persist into next week as a high pressure dome moves west from Texas. In Arizona, temper-

atures have hit 110 degrees for more than a dozen consecutive days.

Horse racing events were canceled at the California State Fair near the state capital over concerns for animal safety.

Meanwhile, California's wildfire season was ramping up amid

the hot, dry conditions with a series of blazes erupting across the state this week, said Secretary Wade Crowfoot of the Natural Resources Agency.

"As we get deeper into the summer and vegetation that grew up during the wet spring dries out, we are seeing an uptick in wildfire activity," Crowfoot said Wednesday during a state media briefing.

Crowfoot said global climate change was "supercharging" heat waves. California has instituted a \$400 million extreme heat action plan to protect workers, help vulnerable communities and assist local communities in opening cooling centers.

Officials said the state's power system, which was strained to the point of widespread blackouts in recent years, has been fortified and should be able to withstand the latest heat wave. The California Independent System Operator, which runs the electricity grid, said battery storage capacity reached 5,600 megawatts on July 1 — enough to power more than 3.8 million homes for up to four hours before recharging.

"The batteries being added to the grid are charged during the day, when solar power is abundant, and dispatched primarily in the evening hours when demand is still high and the sun is setting and solar capacity diminishing," Cal ISO said in a statement.

Damage surveyed after suspected tornadoes hit Chicago, suburbs

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A National Weather Service team will survey damage Thursday in northeast Illinois, where fierce winds from suspected tornadoes ripped roofs from buildings, downed trees and sent residents scrambling for safety as sirens sounded.

The weather service warned Wednesday evening that a confirmed tornado was on the ground near Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. Passengers took shelter and the storm disrupted hundreds of flights, but there were no immediate reports of injuries. A short time later, the weather service said the Chicago forecast area was "currently tornado warning free."

The storm moved into Michigan before passing through the state and into Canada early Thursday. Tornado watches that were in effect for parts of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio all expired.

Ty Carr, a resident of the Skyline Motel in McCook, Ill., said a tornado tore off the roof.

"Just chaos," Carr said, cradling a toddler as he spoke to reporters. "It was really fast, and the noises and the crackling and the wind — it was just something I've never seen

or been through, you know?"

Rajan Patel, whose family owns the motel, said his family came to the Chicago area in the 1990s with nothing, and now their motel is severely damaged.

"The entire place is ruined," Patel said. "I don't know, man. I don't know how to recover anything. I don't know."

The weather service posted a map on social media highlighting several areas where tornadoes are suspected to have touched down, noting that they were spawned by rotating thunderstorms known as supercells. A team will survey damage Thursday to determine an official count of the tornadoes, their tracks and intensity ratings.

Hillary Timpe in Countryside, Ill., a suburb southwest of Chicago, who was with her husband, Greg Timpe, said a tornado damaged homes in the neighborhood, but luckily no one was hurt. It also ripped their 100-year-old tree out of the ground.

"When the winds kicked up really hard, really fast, and I'm like, 'Basement — now! Grab the dog, let's go!' And it wasn't more than a couple seconds after that, that got really crazy."



NAM Y. HUH/AP

Damage is seen to the Sinnott Tree Service building in McCook, Ill., on Wednesday. A tornado touched down Wednesday evening near Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, prompting passengers to take shelter and disrupting hundreds of flights.

The storm moved through quickly, Greg Timpe said.

"It really left as quick as it came," he said. "It was maybe 10, 20 seconds, and it was out of here, and all this."

Video from TV stations showed hundreds of people taking shelter in an O'Hare concourse. Some 173 flights departing the airport were canceled and more than 500 were delayed, according to the flight

tracking service FlightAware.

Kevin Bargnes, director of communications for O'Hare and Chicago Midway International Airport, told WGN-TV Wednesday night that no damage was reported at either airport.

Lynn Becker, a longtime Chicago resident, posted video to Twitter with tornado sirens blaring across the city's iconic skyline.

"I'm in a 60 story apartment

building so my options are somewhat limited," he said. "We have to, I assume, go into the core of the building."

The weather service quoted an unidentified emergency manager as saying a roof was blown off in the community of Huntley in McHenry County northwest of Chicago. Huntley Battalion Chief Mike Pierce told ABC-7-TV that firefighters and other emergency services were responding to downed power lines, trees and tree branches, and that power outages had been reported. Building damage appeared to be concentrated around two apartment buildings, he said.

More than 10,000 customers lost power in the region, but power was mostly restored by Thursday morning, according to poweroutage.us.

In southern Michigan, a team from the weather service and local emergency management will survey damage Thursday from a possible tornado that was reported Wednesday night near the village of Colon, about 30 miles southeast of Kalamazoo. Kyle Brown, a meteorologist with the weather service's Syracuse, Ind., office, said the survey results would be available later Thursday.

NATION



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

FBI Director Christopher Wray testifies before a House Committee on the Judiciary oversight hearing, Wednesday on Capitol Hill in Washington.

FBI Director defends 'real FBI' against criticism from House GOP

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — FBI Director Chris Wray defended the “real FBI” during a contentious congressional hearing Wednesday, rejecting a litany of grievances from angry Republicans who are harshly critical of the bureau, threatening to defund some operations and claiming the Justice Department is unfair to political conservatives, including Donald Trump.

Wray refused to engage in specific questions about ongoing federal investigations, including those involving former President Trump and Hunter Biden. The son of President Joe Biden recently reached an agreement to plead guilty to misdemeanor federal tax charges; Republicans have derided that as a sweetheart deal.

In testy exchanges with Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee, Wray rejected the GOP assertion that the bureau was favoring the Biden family and said the notion that the bureau was involved in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on

the Capitol was “ludicrous.” Referring to his own background, he said the idea that he harbors bias against conservatives is “insane.”

“The work the men and women of the FBI do to protect the American people goes way beyond one or two investigations that seem to capture all the headlines,” said Wray, a registered Republican whom Trump nominated to lead the FBI after firing James Comey in 2017.

The director spelled out the bureau’s crime-fighting work breaking up drug cartels, taking some 60 suspected criminals off the streets each day and protecting Americans from “a staggering array of threats.”

He said, “That is the real FBI.”

It’s the latest display of the new normal on Capitol Hill, where Republicans who have long billed themselves as the champions of police and “law and order” are deeply at odds with federal law enforcement and the FBI, accusing the bureau of bias dating to investigations of Trump when he was

president.

This new dynamic has forced Democrats into a position of defending law enforcement agencies they have long criticized. Wray testified for nearly six hours.

The committee chairman, Republican Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, said he is trying to stop what Republicans call the “weaponization” of the federal justice system, which they say is tilted against conservatives, including Trump and his allies.

Jordan opened the hearing reciting a federal judge’s recent ruling against the government’s efforts to halt misinformation on social media and listed other grievances over the FBI’s treatment of conservatives.

But the top Democrat on the committee, Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, said the hearing was “little more than performance art” by Republicans who are undertaking what he called baseless investigations too far-fetched to be true.

Chinese hackers breached emails of US agencies

By FRANK BAJAK
AND MATTHEW LEE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — State-backed Chinese hackers foiled Microsoft’s cloud-based security in hacking the email accounts of officials at multiple U.S. agencies that deal with China ahead of Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s trip to Beijing last month, officials said Wednesday.

The surgical, targeted espionage accessed the email of a small number of individuals at an unspecified number of U.S. agencies and was discovered in mid-June by the State Department, U.S. officials said. They said none of the breached systems were classified, nor was any of the stolen data.

The hacked officials included Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, The Washington Post reported, citing anonymous U.S. officials. Export controls imposed by her agency have stung multiple Chinese companies.

One person familiar with the investigation said U.S. military and intelligence agencies were not among the agencies impacted in the monthlong spying campaign, which also affected unnamed foreign governments.

The officials spoke on condition they not be further identified.

In a technical advisory Wednesday and a call with reporters, the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the FBI said Microsoft determined the hackers gained access by impersonating authorized users.

Officials did not specify the nature of the stolen data. But one U.S. official said the intrusion was “directly targeted” at diplomats and others who deal with the China portfolio at the State Department

and other agencies. The official added that it was not yet clear if there had been any significant compromise of information.

The Blinken trip went ahead as planned, although with customary information security procedures in place, which required his delegation to use “burner” phones and computers in China.

The hack was disclosed late Tuesday by Microsoft in a blog post. It said it was alerted to the breach, which it blamed on a state-backed, espionage-focused Chinese hacking group “known to target government agencies in Western Europe,” on June 16. Microsoft said the group, which it calls Storm-0558, had gained access to email accounts affecting about 25 organizations, including government agencies, since mid-May as well as to consumer accounts of individuals likely associated with those agencies.

Neither Microsoft nor U.S. officials would identify the agencies or governments impacted. A senior CISA official told reporters in a press call that the number of affected organizations in the United States is in the single digits.

While the official declined to say whether U.S. officials are displeased with Microsoft over the breach, U.S. National Security Council spokesman Adam Hodge noted that it was “government safeguards” that detected the intrusion and added, “We continue to hold the procurement providers of the U.S. Government to a high security threshold.”

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, called the U.S. accusation of hacking “disinformation” aimed at diverting attention from U.S. cyberespionage against China.

VP ties 191-year-old record for breaking Senate ties

By AVERY ROE
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris has tied the record for tie-breaking votes in the Senate that was set nearly 191 years ago by John C. Calhoun.

Harris on Wednesday voted in favor of ending debate on the nomination of Kalpana Kotagal to be a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, her 31st tie-breaker vote since entering office with President Joe Biden two and a half years ago.



Harris

“This is a history-making moment for the United States Senate,” Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said after the motion was agreed to on a 51-50 vote. “When it’s mattered most, Vice President Harris has provided the decisive vote on some of the most historic bills of modern times ... to so many federal judges who now

preside and provide balance on the federal bench.”

With two years of a 50-50 Senate, Harris’ tie-breaking ability proved especially crucial for Democrats in getting their priority legislation passed, including COVID-19 relief measures and their fiscal 2022 reconciliation package. While Democrats have taken a very slight 51-49 majority, her vote has been necessary to confirm controversial Biden nominees through attendance issues and Democratic no votes.

Calhoun, a staunch defender of slavery who represented South Carolina in the House and Senate, set the record in almost eight years as vice president between 1825 and 1832 when he served under John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Calhoun’s tie-breaking votes have gained additional attention, as he is known for having gone against Jackson on two occasions, when voting on confirmation of future President Martin Van Buren to be minister to England.

While Harris needs one more vote to break the overall record, she already has set a few tie-breaking records of her own.

She currently holds the record for tie-breaking votes in a single day — she cast four on May 11, 2022 — and the record for most votes cast in the first year of a vice presidency, with 15. The next highest on that list is former Vice President Mike Pence, who only cast seven. Harris and Pence are the only two in the overall top 10 who served after 1873.

NATION

US states, city ask for census corrections

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**
Associated Press

A misplaced naval ship in California. Overlooked college students in New York City. Missed inmates in Texas.

These are some of the reasons why the two most populous states and the largest city in the U.S. filed last-minute requests for corrections to their 2020 census figures right before the deadline at the end of last month. California, Texas and New York City were joined by a dozen and a half other stragglers, including Illinois and New Orleans, that made down-to-the-deadline appeals over the numbers that help determine political power and the annual distribution of \$2.8 trillion in federal funding.

In total, nearly 200 requests for corrections were filed by local, state and tribal governments through two programs started by the U.S. Census Bureau to give governments opportunities to have their population totals reviewed and corrected if need be.

If successful, any corrections will be applied only to future population estimates used for the rest of the decade in determining federal funding. They can't be used to change how many congressional seats each state was allotted during the apportionment process, nor for the data used for redrawing political districts. That's too bad for some cities and states — not to mention the two major polit-



K.C. ALFRED, THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE/AP

Sailors and Marines line the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln as it deploys from San Diego in January 2022.

ical parties fighting over every foot of territory in a closely divided nation.

If the Democratic-leaning state of New York had counted 89 more residents — the equivalent of a small apartment building's tenants in New York City — during the 2020 census, it wouldn't have lost a congressional seat. Among Republican-controlled states, Texas had been expected to gain three additional congressional seats instead of the two it gained after the 2020 census.

In one of the most unusual reasons given for a correction request, sailors on an aircraft carrier in Southern California may have been assigned to the wrong city's population because of the location of the ship's slip.

Here's a look at some of the last-minute requests for corrections made by states and cities:

■ **California:** The slip-up, so to speak, reportedly took place on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. California officials believe its more than 5,000 crew members were wrongly assigned to San Diego's population total instead of neighboring National City's figures. Although part of the ship is located in San Diego, officials said what matters is where crew members get off and on the ship: the part of Naval Base San Diego in National City.

"Kansas doesn't have this problem," said H.D. Palmer, deputy director of external affairs for the Department of Finance in California, the most populated U.S. state

with 39 million residents.

California officials also contend that almost 10,000 college students and inmates were overlooked during the census. They were among the most difficult to count as campuses closed and prisons were locked down at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which coincided with the beginning of the head count. The Census Bureau created a separate program to handle these challenges.

California officials said they waited until the deadline to make their filings because they wanted to first see if local municipalities would file requests.

■ **Illinois:** The sixth most populous U.S. state with 12.5 million residents, Illinois was one of six states that had undercounts of its population, according to the Census Bureau. In his correction request, Gov. JB Pritzker didn't specify how many people he believes were missed but cited the bureau's estimate of almost 2% of the population. Among the omissions were residents in nursing homes, dorms, homeless shelters, residential treatment facilities and jails, Pritzker said in one of two letters submitted to the Census Bureau.

"Because of an inaccurate census count, the state of Illinois received inadequate federal funding for Medicare, affordable housing, homeland security and a number of other essential programs," said

Alex Gough, a spokesperson for the governor's office.

■ **New Orleans:** Mayor LaToya Cantrell said in a letter to the Census Bureau that 1,061 students living in dorms at Tulane University and Southern University appeared to have been missed as campuses emptied out due to the pandemic.

■ **New York City:** Officials believe 1,300 residents were overlooked. The head count may have missed an 800-bed jail and omitted or undercounted students living in dorms at Hunter College, Pace University and Wagner College, officials in the city's planning department said in a letter to the Census Bureau. The city waited until the deadline to file its challenge so it could conduct a thorough evaluation of the figures, said officials in the most populous U.S. city, with 8.3 million residents.

■ **Texas:** The state is asking the Census Bureau to review whether the count missed more than 41,000 residents living in prisons, nursing facilities, psychiatric hospitals and student housing. Texas officials said they waited until the deadline to file requests because of the number of institutions they needed to contact to confirm what they believed were the correct totals and the complexities of the bureau's requirements. Texas is the second most populous state in the U.S. with 30 million residents.

House majority in play next year

By **JONATHAN J. COOPER**
Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Republican Rep. David Schweikert used to win his wealthy, suburban Phoenix congressional district by nearly 30 points. Then Donald Trump was elected president, and his victories started shrinking.

Schweikert, who won his last election by just 3,200 votes, is now among the top 2024 targets for Democrats, who sense better-than-expected odds of retaking the House majority they lost last year.

After an anemic showing in the midterms, Republicans have virtually no cushion in their quest to retain control of the House, which was made all the more complicated by a surprise U.S. Supreme Court decision last month that will likely bring two new safely Democratic districts. Democrats need to pick up just five seats to control the House.

Republicans are counting on a strong showing from incumbents like Schweikert, one of 18 GOP lawmakers representing districts that supported Democrat Joe Biden for president in 2020. Many are in upscale suburbs like Scottsdale that lean conservative but have reject-

ed Trump and the party he now dominates.

In contrast, only five Democrats represent districts that Trump won.

"I've been Republican since JFK," said Roy Ross, a 74-year-old retired oil company manager who registered as an independent when he moved to Schweikert's district from Tennessee two years ago. "But the last two elections, I just said, 'I can't do that.'"

Still, he said, "I can't say that I'm hearing a lot from Democrats, either."

Schweikert's fate in Arizona, and that of the GOP's House majority, will come down to the decisions of voters like Ross.

Other factors make for a volatile 2024 House landscape and point to terrain much more favorable to Democrats than what they faced in last year's midterms.

Trump is the early front-runner for the GOP presidential nomination, which could drive up turnout among his critics and force vulnerable Republicans to take uncomfortable positions. And abortion, which helped power Democratic victories in the midterms, remains salient a year after the conserva-

tive majority on the Supreme Court eliminated the constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy.

Democrats are already targeting key Republicans over abortion and looking to tie them to GOP figures like Trump who are unpopular with swing voters.

"Between overturning state-level protections for reproductive freedoms to prioritizing tax breaks for the wealthiest few and big corporations, vulnerable Republicans are signing their own pink slips ahead of next November's election," said Courtney Rice, a spokesperson for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the House Democrats' campaign arm.

Republicans see plenty of reasons for optimism. Looking to expand the playing field beyond the 18 districts that voted for Biden, Republicans are targeting 37 other districts where they believe a Democratic incumbent is vulnerable.

Two Democrats from swing districts — Reps. Elissa Slotkin in Michigan and Katie Porter in California — are leaving their House seats to run for the Senate, improving the odds for Republicans who



JONATHAN J. COOPER/AP

Rep. David Schweikert, R-Ariz., hands out candy and flags at an Independence Day parade on July 4 in Phoenix.

won't have to run against an incumbent. Biden's lackluster popularity could be a drain on his party, and prices for gas, food and housing remain high.

"Democrats are reminding voters why they took away the Democrats' gavels in the first place — extreme, unreasonable, and out of touch," said Rep. Richard Hudson, chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee, the GOP's House race arm.

After Trump's 2016 election, Schweikert's district started trend-

ing toward the center as some voters who historically backed Republicans reluctantly voted for Democrats or left their ballots blank. Redistricting ahead of the 2022 midterms accelerated the trend.

Schweikert eked out a victory of less than 1 percentage point last year against a relatively unknown rival who got minimal support from national Democrats. Neither party will be ignoring the district this time around. Democrats have already started attacking Schweikert over abortion.

NATION

Falling jobless claims defy Fed moves to cool market

Associated Press

The number of Americans applying for jobless benefits fell again last week as the labor market continues to defy the Federal Reserve's attempt to cool it through higher interest rates.

U.S. applications for jobless claims fell by 12,000 to 237,000 for the week ending July 8, from 249,000 previous week, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The four-week moving average of claims fell by 6,750 to 246,750.

Overall, 1.73 million people were collecting unemployment benefits the week that ended July 1, 11,000 fewer than the previous week.

The U.S. economy has been resilient in the face of the Federal Reserve's aggressive rate-hiking campaign in its effort to extinguish persistent inflation.

Suspect: Nassar made lewd remark

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A prisoner suspected of stabbing Larry Nassar at a federal penitentiary in Florida said the disgraced former sports doctor provoked the attack by making a lewd comment while they were watching a Wimbledon tennis match on TV, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

The inmate, identified as Shane McMillan, was previously convicted of assaulting a correctional officer at a federal penitentiary in Louisiana in 2006 and attempting to stab another inmate to death at

the federal Supermax prison in Florence, Colo., in 2011, court records show.

McMillan attacked Nassar in his cell Sunday with a makeshift weapon, stabbing him multiple times in the neck, chest and back before four inmates rushed in and pulled him off, according to the person familiar with the matter.

McMillan, 49, told prison workers that he attacked Nassar after the ex-U.S. gymnastics team doctor made a comment about wanting to see girls playing in the Wimbledon women's match, the person said.

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NATION

No fingerprints, DNA from cocaine found at the White House

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — No fingerprints or DNA turned up on the baggie of cocaine found in a lobby at the White House last week despite a sophisticated FBI crime lab analysis, and surveillance footage of the area didn't identify a suspect, according to a summary of the Secret Service investigation obtained by The Associated Press. There are no leads on who brought the drugs into the building.

U.S. Secret Service agents found the white powder during a routine White House sweep on July 2, in a heavily trafficked West Wing lobby where staff go in and out, and tour groups gather to drop their phones and other belongings.

“Without physical evidence, the investigation will not be able to single out a person of interest from the hundreds of individuals who passed through the vestibule

where the cocaine was discovered,” Secret Service officials said in the summary.

It's most likely the bag was left behind by one of the hundreds of visitors who traveled in and out of the building over the weekend, according to a person familiar with the investigation who was not authorized to talk about an ongoing probe and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The presence of cocaine at the White House prompted a flurry of criticism and questions from Republicans, who requested a briefing Thursday on the probe. White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said President Joe Biden believed it was “incredibly important” for the Secret Service to get to the bottom of how the drugs ended up in the White House. The Secret Service is responsible for securing the White House and led the investigation.

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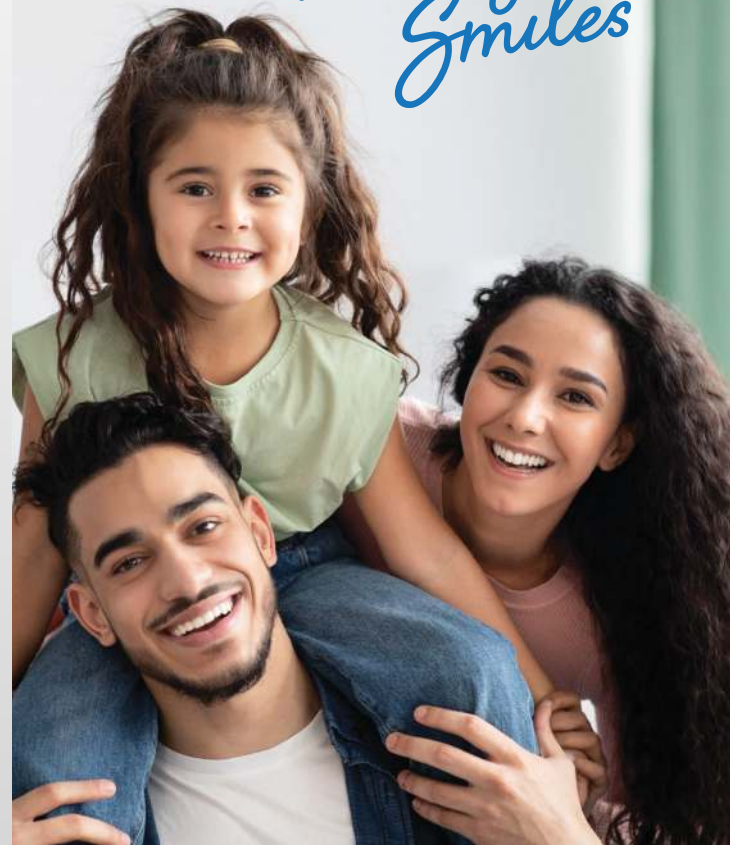
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WEEKEND

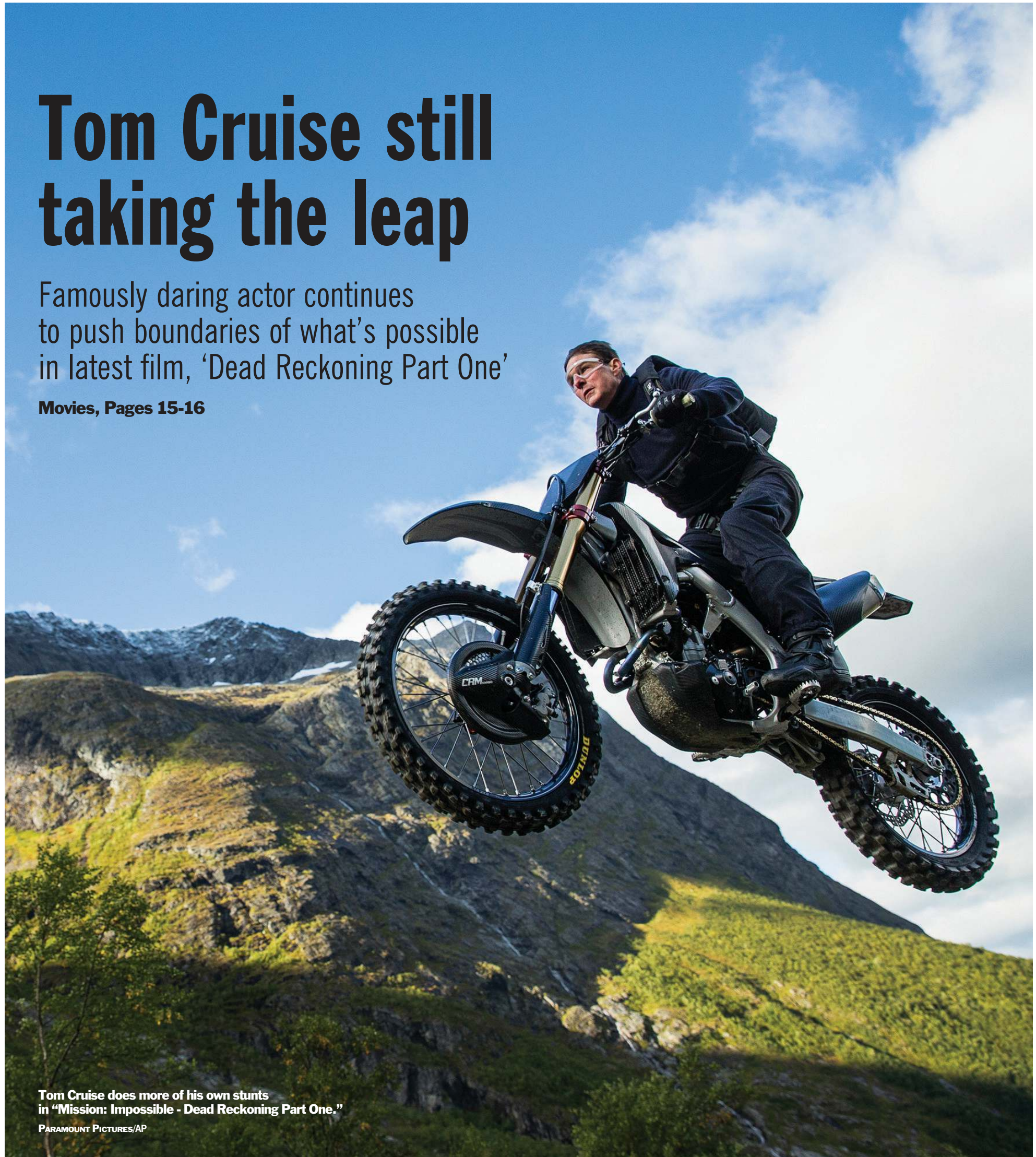


Swift's 'Speak Now' gets another go-round
Music, Pages 28-29

Tom Cruise still taking the leap

Famously daring actor continues to push boundaries of what's possible in latest film, 'Dead Reckoning Part One'

Movies, Pages 15-16



Tom Cruise does more of his own stunts in "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One."

PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

Tesla drivers bypass warnings using weights

Defeat devices, although not illegal, are discouraged because they allow owners to riskily take their hands off the wheel

By FAIZ SIDDIQUI
The Washington Post

The devices are marketed for a variety of innocuous uses — a cellphone holder, for instance, or a safety hammer. One promises to relieve shoulder pain. Others ditch the pretext and are listed simply as “wheel weights” or “wheel knobs.”

They all have a common purpose: To let Tesla drivers take their hands off the wheel.

Steering wheel weights have become a popular commodity as Tesla has expanded its “Full Self-Driving” technology from around 12,000 vehicles to more than 400,000 over the past year. While the electric car manufacturer has adopted measures to discourage their use, the devices have been involved in at least two recent traffic incidents.

In March, a Tesla plowed without slowing into a teenager getting off a school bus in North Carolina, police said, causing severe injuries. And in December, a driver in Germany fell asleep at the wheel while a Tesla in Autopilot led police on a chase at speeds reaching nearly 70 mph, Bavarian authorities said.

Tesla requires drivers to keep their hands on the steering wheel while using both of its driver-assistance systems — Autopilot, which can maneuver the cars from highway on-ramp to off-ramp, and Full Self-Driving, which can navigate city and residential streets without the driver’s physical input — and the systems are designed to issue periodic reminders. By replicating the pressure of a driver’s hands, the wheel weights silence the nagging.

“Elon Musk’s saying it’s supposed to drive itself. That’s what they’re going to



iStock

Tesla markets some of its models as having “Full Self-Driving” technology, but the company has designed the cars to require drivers to keep their hands on the wheel anyway. However, some drivers are finding ways to circumvent that security protocol.

hear,” said Carnegie Mellon University professor Philip Koopman, who has been studying autonomous vehicle safety for 25 years. “How do you think they’re going to behave?”

As recently as Monday, sellers were marketing the devices widely on online shopping sites, including Alibaba’s AliExpress and Amazon, where they could be obtained in as little as a day. Wheel

weights recently ranked as the top two releases in Amazon’s “automotive steering wheels” category. After The Washington Post flagged them, Amazon and Alibaba said they removed the listings, citing safety issues and violations of their policies.

The Post reported last month that the number of fatalities and serious injuries involving Tesla’s Autopilot has surged over the past year, likely due to wider

availability of the features. Among those incidents was the North Carolina crash.

It was not clear from the incident reports and summaries from that crash or the police chase in Germany how the drivers obtained the weights and what form they took. In both cases, police say the steering wheel weights were intended to trick Autopilot.

The weights are not illegal, although federal regulators have cracked down on one such device, deeming it “unsafe.”

Musk and Tesla did not respond to requests for comment.

Both Musk and his car company have touted the safety of Autopilot compared to that of normal driving, and Musk has called the technology “unequivocally safer.” Tesla tells drivers they must pay attention at all times while using the technology and be ready to intervene.

Last year, people began reporting that the software had been trained to sense the presence of defeat devices, issuing a message reading “Hands-on defeat device detected,” according to owners online and in Tesla forums who have been dinged — sometimes erroneously — by Tesla’s safety monitoring.

That warning came on top of Tesla’s standard alerts that sense when drivers are distracted: “an escalating series of visual and audio warnings, reminding you to place your hands on the wheel if insufficient torque is applied,” as the company’s website describes them. “If you repeatedly ignore these warnings, you will be locked out from using Autopilot during that trip.”

Tesla also has introduced camera-based driver monitoring to ensure drivers are paying attention — a long-standing request of safety advocates.

OneOdio OpenRock Pro earbuds’ design and features are great for active users

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

With perfect timing for the summer get-fit season, OneOdio has launched the OpenRock Pro true wireless (Bluetooth 5.2) sports open earbuds. OneOdio produced the earbuds, so you’ll hear great sound, but their design and style are just as important.

With the open-ear design, the user will still hear noises in the environment around them. This feature is great for cyclists on busy streets to hear oncoming traffic or emergency vehicles or even during bad weather with thunder. The OpenRock Pro true wireless sports earbuds are built for active users with resistance to sweat, dust and moisture and a design that stays put no matter what activity I tested them for.

This included a day of biking and a sweaty afternoon doing

yardwork for hours in the Texas heat. Despite the challenges in these environments, they performed flawlessly by staying in place, allowing me to hear some of the outside world and, most importantly, pumping my favorite playlists and an occasional cell call into my ears.

OneOdio is known for its design and production of professional-grade audio equipment, consistent with the new OpenRock Pro. The OpenRock Pro earbuds are built with features such as TubeBass technology, 360-degree, clear voice capture (CVC) 8.0 dual noise-canceling microphones and a comfortable fit.

I’m unfamiliar with the TubeBass terminology, so I looked to OneOdio for guidance. Their explanation: “With this, the low-frequency resonance of the sound can be increased to en-

hance the bass and rhythm of the music and make low frequencies solid, deeper and more enveloped as well as pianissimo details and vocals being bright and clear. The dual tubes not only enhance the bass, but also prevent any sound leakage.”

After using the earbuds with 16.2 mm dynamic drivers, the sound coming into my ears was fulfilling, with the right mix delivered into a 360-degree superior sound. They have dual-mark reduction with CVC 8.0 noise cancellation if you want to tune out the outside world more. And dual noise-canceling microphones will also allow crystal-clear cellphone calls to interrupt your music experience.

While they are designed for sports and have a reflective design as an added safety feature, they are not limited to active use. The adjustable ear hook desk

ensures they stay in place, and that can be poolside with their IPX5 waterproof rating, while doing house chores or just chilling on your sofa while playing music.

After a week of testing, the OpenRock Pro true wireless sports earbuds shined in all areas. They fit my need for the right amount of bass, more than packing a punch. I didn’t put them through rigorous workouts, but the bike rides and yardwork were great ways to test their durability and all-day comfort. The buttons to control them were also responsive and easy to access.

And most importantly: They stay in place on your ears thanks to their adjustable ergonomic ear hooks. I still hear that many people are nervous about wearing true wireless earbuds because they might easily fall out



ONEODIO/TNS

The OpenRock Pro earbuds are built with resistance to sweat, dust and moisture and a design that stays put.

and get lost. This is a valid complaint — I’ve been a victim. But ear hook design instantly solves this problem.

The battery life for the OpenRock Pro is rated to be 19 hours on its own and up to 46 hours with the included USB-C charging case. A full charge will take 1.5 hours, while a quick five-minute charge will produce an hour of playtime.

Online: oneodio.com; \$129.99

WEEKEND: MOVIES



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/Skydance

In "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One," Tom Cruise ups the ante on the high-flying stunts that have become a hallmark of the franchise.

Taking 'Mission: Impossible' up a notch

Cruise, Director McQuarrie still flying by 'seat of our pants' on latest film in franchise, 'Dead Reckoning Part One'

BY JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

There are, as a rule, only so many places you can go as an action movie after leaving Tom Cruise clinging to the side of an Airbus A400M and flinging him out a cargo plane at 25,000 feet.

But in the kinetic, headlong world of "Mission: Impossible," the pressure to keep upping the ante — like the films' always-running star — never stops.

"Every time we finish a movie, the first thing Tom says to me is: We can do better," says Christopher McQuarrie.

McQuarrie, the writer-director of 2015's "Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation" and the 2018 franchise high point, "Mission: Impossible - Fallout," was working with Cruise on "Top Gun: Maverick" (which McQuarrie co-wrote and co-produced) when they started talking about their ambitions for the next iteration of "Mission: Impossible."

Their plan was to make not one but two sequels: Back-to-back blockbusters that would feature even bigger stunts — Cruise envisioned a motorcycle jump-slash-skydive — and a massive train sequence that McQuarrie pined to realize. The heady experience on "Maverick," a pop-culture juggernaut that grossed nearly \$1.5 billion worldwide, only further ratcheted up their aspirations.

"Top Gun: Maverick" really taught us a lot in terms of character dynamics and the emotional payoff of the movie overall," McQuarrie said in a recent interview. "To be making movies on this scale, you really



LEE JIN-MAN/AP

Director Christopher McQuarrie, right, and Cruise during a news conference for "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One" in Seoul on June 29.

need to think about, more than anything, the feeling that the audience is left with going away."

A year after the box-office dominance of "Maverick," McQuarrie and Cruise are back with another high-flying spectacle of derring-do. Similar to "Maverick," "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One" is a state-of-the-art action extravaganza of old-school technique, made with star power, practical effects and stunt work designed to prompt exclamations of "He did *what?*"

It was also their most nearly impossible mission yet — and not just because of, according to Paramount Pictures, the 500 skydives and 13,000 motocross jumps that Cruise did in preparation for his climactic stunt. "Dead Reckoning" was just days away from beginning production in Venice

when COVID-19 cases began skyrocketing in Italy, an early epicenter.

"Mission: Impossible" was one of the first major productions to be shut down by the pandemic. Months later, Cruise and "Dead Reckoning" — a globe-trotting \$290 million movie so logistically complicated that it prompted controversy for initial plans to blow up a century-old bridge in Poland — led an industry-wide effort to get movie business back on line during the pandemic. An already high-stress production became even more tense. In December 2020, an audio recording leaked of Cruise yelling at two crew members for not obeying COVID-19 protocols.

"We are the gold standard," Cruise said in the recording. "They're back there in Hollywood making movies right now because of us. Because they believe in us and what we're doing."

There were numerous delays and pivots along the way. But McQuarrie says he never thought "Dead Reckoning" wouldn't get finished.

"We just kept moving forward because if you stopped, if you were trying to find the end of the tunnel, you would just reach a place of such despair," McQuarrie said.

McQuarrie and Cruise first collaborated on the 2008 Hitler assassination drama "Valkyrie." McQuarrie, the famed screenwriter of "The Usual Suspects," was then in proverbial movie jail for his poorly received directorial debut, "The Way of the Gun."

"When I met Tom in 2006, I had not directed a film in seven years," McQuarrie says. "I wouldn't direct a film again for

another five years. I had really put any ambitions I had to direct out of my mind. I certainly never imagined being considered an action director, let alone directing four action films."

"In 'Dead Reckoning,' you're seeing the ghosts of all the movies that I was never allowed to make," he adds.

Unlikely as it may be, McQuarrie (who's also directing the already-shooting "Part Two" of "Dead Reckoning") has emerged as the architect of one of the most visceral action franchises.

In "Dead Reckoning," Ethan Hunt faces off with a rogue artificial intelligence, a prescient and well-suited antagonist for a movie universe built less on CGI than practical effects. McQuarrie told Cruise he wanted to take "Mission: Impossible" beyond the threat of a terrorist getting hold of a deadly weapon.

"Another lesson we took from 'Top Gun' was: What is the audience bringing to the movie? 'Top Gun' came out of Cold War anxieties. I said to Tom in 2019: What anxiety is it now?" McQuarrie says. "What we didn't anticipate was the level to which it would accelerate."

In "Mission: Impossible," what you see is rarely what you get. Hunt and his team of spies are masters of deception. At the same time, McQuarrie and his crew, including cinematographer Fraser Taggart, go to considerable lengths to ensure what the audience is watching feels authentic and immersive.

"The challenge normally is hiding the

SEE IMPOSSIBLE ON PAGE 16

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Impossible: Stunts were risky business

FROM PAGE 15

fact that it's not the actor doing it," McQuarrie says. "And here, the reverse is the case. You're actually going to great lengths to show that Tom's actually doing it."

Taggart, who had shot the helicopter sequence in "Fallout," says he's never worked with an actor so resistant to stunt doubles as Cruise — even in the most innocuous of shots.

"Tom won't do it. He just refuses, even to the extent of you'll do an insert of a hand," Taggart says. "It can't be anyone else doing it, as you would on other projects. Tom will insist that's him."

Just as "Top Gun: Maverick" strove to get as many cameras in the cockpits of fighter jets, the set-pieces of "Mission: Impossible" are choreographed to get cameras as close to Cruise and the cast — here that includes Hayley Atwell, Rebecca Ferguson and Vanessa Kirby — as possible.

For Taggart, that meant getting his head around often dizzying challenges like shooting a scene involving a train moving 60 miles an hour through a mountainous Scandinavian landscape with uncontrollable weather conditions. He didn't want just fixed cameras.

"So now we've got to get a whole camera crew involved and some lighting and we'll probably end up with 10 people strapped to the top of a train carriage, including an old-fashioned physical camera up there," Taggart says. "You think: Can we actually get 10 people on top of the train doing 60 miles an hour? That's the challenge, because you'd really like all of your crew and actors to survive the shoot."

In another sequence with characters inside a falling train cabin, they suspended a camera operator, Chunky Richmond, on stunt wires so he was hanging alongside the actors. For a nighttime chase through the byzantine passageways of Venice — for Taggart, one of the most complex tasks of "Dead Reckoning" because of the inherent darkness of the city — they knocked on doors everywhere along the route to get cameras on terraces and pointed out windows.

For an elaborate car chase in Rome, Taggart used robotic arms on vehicles that were mounted but could also move.

"We always try technology, but we usually break it all," he says.

McQuarrie has said he likes to write "Mission: Impossible" movies as they're shooting; sometimes they begin with just an outline. Production on "Part Two" has been paused during the promotion of "Part One," and it's unclear if the ongoing writers strike would threaten production on the sequel. But for McQuarrie and company, the only way to make a "Mission: Impossible" movie is full tilt.

"Everything we're doing is by the seat of our pants," McQuarrie says.

"We want you to come to the movie and experience it the same way the characters are, which is: I don't know what's going to happen next."



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

Tom Cruise in a scene from "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One." Cruise typically insists on doing his own stunts.

Cruising into pure escapism

First part of latest 'Mission: Impossible' delivers on-brand mix of action and humor

BY ANN HORNADAY

The Washington Post

The latest "Mission: Impossible," "Dead Reckoning Part One," is as busy and overstuffed as its title. After introducing the TV-based franchise in 1996, star and producer Tom Cruise has steadily upped the ante on spectacle and action; his stunts, which he famously insists on doing himself, have become part of worldwide marketing campaigns that wisely dispense with fiddly details like plot and dialogue and rely solely on the visual language of Cruise's body in space, doing amazing things.

That formula is executed with the chops and finesse we've come to expect from Cruise and director Christopher McQuarrie in "Dead Reckoning," which delivers bombastic set pieces, bonkers plot elements and some (maybe unintentional?) hilarious dialogue in reliably metronomic style. It wouldn't be accurate to say there are any big surprises in "Dead Reckoning" — it's too faithful to the series' fundamentals to be accused of novelty — but therein lies its chief virtue. Like "Top Gun: Maverick" last year, "Dead Reckoning" might be just what we need right now: a two-hour-plus session of cinematic self-care, wherein the chases, fights, mayhem, exegetical speeches and jaw-dropping derring-do knit together to form a comforting weighted blanket of pure escapism and reassurance.

The man doing the knitting, of course, is Cruise, who as Ethan Hunt brings a subdued sense of world-weariness to the coolest agent of the Impossible Mission Force. In "Dead Reckoning," Ethan is doing battle with an invisible, Oz-like blob called the Entity, an artificial intelligence program that is on the verge of going sentient and ending the world as we know it. Fans familiar with Cruise's fierce loyalty to the

big-screen experience will recognize the not-so-subtle digs that permeate "Dead Reckoning," which turns out to be a celebration of all things analog, including gravity-defying physical stunts that were performed with as little computerized gimmickry as possible. As Ethan fights the unseen force that might upend the world order, Cruise is fighting right along with him, against the algorithm that threatens to annihilate the very medium that made him a star.

Cruise and his alter ego do all this with their on-brand blend of insouciance and intensity; one of the best things about the "Mission: Impossible" movies is how Cruise and McQuarrie (who wrote the script with Erik Jendresen) know just when to pull back from the self-seriousness to deliver a conspiratorial wink at the audience. During the film's 30-minute cold open, we travel from a Russian submarine in the Bering Sea to a situation room in Washington, where intelligence officials deliver snippets of expository dialogue so dramatically that it has to be a joke. (The presence of Rob Delaney in the mix adds an amusing twist.) The humor in "Dead Reckoning" continues apace — not by way of snark or self-amused irony, but through stagecraft, as in a fabulous scene of multiple mistaken identities set in the Abu Dhabi airport, or when Ethan pops up speaking flawless Italian in a Rome police station.

The globe-trotting movie takes Ethan from the Arabian Desert, where he reunites with Rebecca Ferguson's Ilsa Faust, to parts east, west and in between. As always, Cruise has a superbly accomplished supporting cast: Not just the sleekly sophisticated Ferguson, but Vanessa Kirby, Ving Rhames and Simon Pegg all reprise characters from past installments. Esai Morales makes an impressively

handsome debut as a new-old foil. And Hayley Atwell delivers a game, bracingly alert portrayal of a silkily gifted pick-pocket who becomes Ethan's accomplice in saving the world from becoming an apocalyptic slough of deepfakes, misinformation and Orwellian surveillance.

But first — a car chase while handcuffed together driving a microscopic yellow Fiat, careering through the streets of Rome like a demented billiard ball. Or Ethan driving his motorcycle off a cliff in order to parachute down to save the day. "Dead Reckoning" is fast, furious and a lot of fun.

In fact, there are moments when viewers could be forgiven for thinking they're watching a "Fast & Furious" movie, or even "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny" — there are that many overlapping bits. It can all get silly and kind of speechy. But in "Dead Reckoning," the fun house distractions are deployed, not as a barrage of concussive, over-edited CGI fakery, but as graceful and exhilarating nods to a tradition that goes as far back as Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd.

Nowhere is that lineage more evident — and honored — than in "Dead Reckoning's" wowzer of a finale, a "Perils of Pauline" callback that makes that little trick on the motorcycle look like a kid popping a wheelie on his Sting-Ray. It's a deliciously old-school nod to the elements of cinematic style: runaway trains, ticking time bombs, improbably long-winded villains and damsels in distress. And Cruise is at the center of it all, with his singular focus and all-in commitment. The good news isn't just that "Dead Reckoning" lives up to its star's notoriously high standards; it's that it isn't even over yet.

"Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part One" is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence and action, some coarse language and suggestive material. 160 minutes.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

'Insidious' finds exit with 'Red Door'

Fifth, and potentially final, film in the franchise fails to scare up a winning formula with incoherent, meandering story

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

The "Insidious" franchise folds back on itself for the fifth installment, returning to its roots with the movie equivalent of getting the (traumatized) band back together.

Patrick Wilson, Ty Simpkins, Rose Byrne and Andrew Astor reunite for "Insidious: The Red Door," and whether or not you'll want to push this door open may depend on how much of a completist you are. For many, leaving it shut may be just fine.

The new movie takes place nine years after the events of 2013's "Insidious: Chapter 2," and the heroic Lambert family is not doing well. Dad (Wilson) and mom (Byrne) are divorced and their college-aged son, Dalton (Ty Simpkins), pretty much hates dad. "You really don't know me!" he wails.

The push-pull of fathers and sons is a prominent theme here, but the roots of this particular father-son unhappiness may have to do with the fact that they have suppressed memories of wrestling with demons in a twilight realm called The Further.

The Further — a sort of Upside Down, but long before "Stranger Things" — is described as "a world far beyond our own, yet it's all around us, a place without time as we know it, a dark realm filled with the tortured souls of the dead, a place not



SONY PICTURES/AP

Ty Simpkins, who plays a now college-aged Dalton, returns to The Further in "Insidious: The Red Door," the fifth installment in the horror franchise.

meant for the living." So like Hollywood?

Dad and son share a special gift — the ability to astral project, or leave their bodies and drift into other worlds. But the cost is high — the son was in a coma for a year, and the dad became demon possessed and then tried to slaughter the family. Memories of that were supposed to be wiped away.

Dad and son in the new installment gradually unlock The Further and return

to navigate it, but the movie gradually falls apart into incoherence and the use of jumpscare images of shocking images, like creepy dolls in a birdcage, a demon vomiting or circus contortionists emerging from sofas.

It's a pity because Wilson not only acts but also makes a strong directorial debut and even sings over the end credits, joining the very appropriate Swedish rock band Ghost for "Stay."

The screenplay by franchise newcomer Scott Teems feels more like fan fiction, with its loving nods to items associated with the franchise — the camper light, a scary version of "Tiptoe Through the Tulips" and a box of old photos of dad. The story mostly just meanders.

In reality, Byrne and Astor have very little screen time and it is Wilson and Simpkins who are the stars, as dad tries to come to grips with why he feels "foggy" and Dalton's memories are triggered by a swashbuckling art teacher who challenges her class with this motto: "You must let go of your past."

There are some nifty new touches, most notably a fright-fest in an MRI machine, an already very intimate procedure in a tight place. Chunks of "Insidious: Chapter 2" — the final scene and a crucial fight — are reused liberally, and actor Sinclair Daniel adds comic relief and some sanity as the son's college friend, but her story is abandoned unsatisfactorily at the end. Too many bows are attached to the movie's final moments as well, such as reunions not earned or coherent.

If the "Insidious" franchise is your jam, by all means go and see the original Fab Four of the Lambert family battle hollow-eyed demons for perhaps the last time. But for everyone else, why not let the past stay in the past?

"Insidious: The Red Door" is rated PG-13 for violence, terror, frightening images, strong language and suggestive references. Running time: 107 minutes. Now playing at select AAFES theaters.

Mockumentary 'Theater Camp' a fine-cut, madcap comedic gem

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Pitch-perfect mockumentary "Theater Camp" opens with some cute archival footage that lets the audience in on the personal history of the film's creators and stars — and their theater bona fides. Molly Gordon and Ben Platt grew up together in Los Angeles doing children's theater, as we see in the VHS footage of the pair performing in such productions as "Fiddler on the Roof" and "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" at the tender ages of 4 and 5.

Gordon and Platt wrote "Theater Camp" with Platt's partner, the actor Noah Galvin, who co-stars, and Nick Lieberman, who directed the film with Gordon, based on a short film he made. This collective has brought to life one of the funniest, most specific comedies of the year: a savvy but loving satire of young theater geeks informed by the comic sensibility of "Wet Hot American Summer," with the real-world tales of the famed musical theater camp Stagedoor Manor, captured in the 2005 documentary

"Stagedoor," the 2003 film "Camp" and the book "Theater Geek" by Mickey Rapkin.

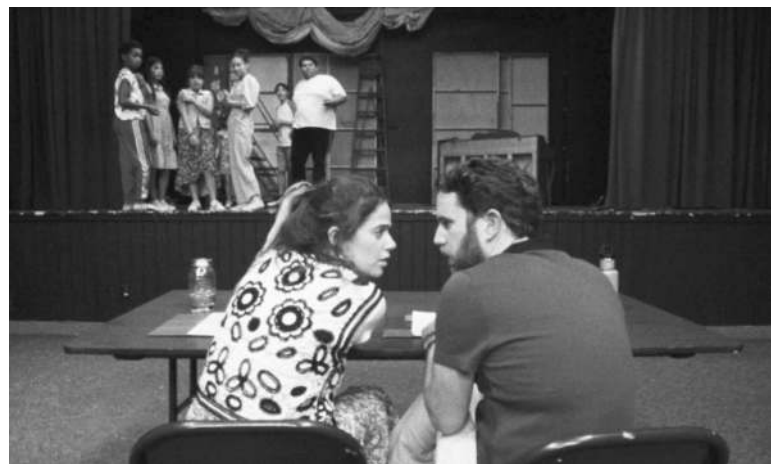
These collaborators know theater, love theater and have the references, deep cuts and anthropological knowledge of the children's theater world to make "Theater Camp" such an authentic and hilarious piece — it comes from a place of appreciation, and a willingness to make fun of themselves and this world with clear eyes and full hearts.

Gordon and Platt star as pre-tenacious, codependent besties Rebecca-Diane and Amos, alumni and teachers at AdirondACTS. The community — and the "documentary" — is in crisis after camp director Joan Rubinsky (Amy Sedaris) suffers a seizure and falls into a coma during a middle school production of "Bye Bye Birdie." Her son, Troy (Jimmy Tatro), a clueless "business vlogger," is now tasked with running the camp in his mother's stead, though he hasn't the foggiest idea of what he's doing. He's the perfect mark for the predatory Caroline Krauss (Patti Harrison), a representative from a

hedge fund affiliated with the ritzy Camp Lakeview next door.

While Troy is fumbling the business end of camp, Amos and Rebecca-Diane are creatively floundering, attempting to stage their half-written original musical "Joan, Still," about the life of their beloved, ailing Joan, though the production is foiled by Rebecca-Diane's odd disappearances. Harried technical director Glenn (Noah Galvin) is the only person keeping everything running behind the scenes, though his innate performance talents threaten to burst forth at any moment.

This madcap mockumentary works beautifully because Gordon, Lieberman, Platt and Galvin have taken care to imbue this setting with a real sense of culture and place, populated with wonderfully eccentric characters. The joy of "Theater Camp" is simply swimming around in this world, so perfectly rendered, down to every detail of costume design and dense, referential dialogue. There's enough conflict to keep the 92-minute comedy stretched taut, though it's not too complex that it can't all be re-



SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES/AP

Molly Gordon, left, and Ben Platt play besties Rebecca-Diane and Amos, who are teachers at AdirondACTS in "Theater Camp."

solved with a rousing climactic song. When the cast finally performs "Joan, Still," you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll be shocked and delighted.

Every scene feels snatched from a real moment; the editing is swift, propulsive and surgical in its precision. Gordon and Lieberman have skillfully staged every scene like a real documentary, no easy feat with this many child actors.

However, these kids are extraordinary talents, belting out Sondheim with the fervor and passion of seasoned stage actors, while bringing a childlike innocence and glee to the proceed-

ings. The joke is, of course, that the material is too advanced for them, and that the teachers treat them like little adults in this strange and special environment. At the end, a tiny moppet hugs Amos and thanks him for being hard on them. For anyone who's ever had a demanding theater teacher, it rings as clear as a bell, as does every other aspect of "Theater Camp," a fine-cut comedic gem engineered with a distinct sensibility and the chops to become a beloved camp classic.

"Theater Camp" is rated PG-13 for some strong language and suggestive/drug references. Running time: 92 minutes.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



Hulu/AP photos

Photos of Gerald Daniel Blanchard in a scene from "The Jewel Thief." The Hulu documentary traces his evolution into a criminal mastermind using archival footage and interviews.

Always 10 moves ahead of the police

Hulu documentary on the 'world's most ingenious thief,' Gerald Daniel Blanchard, hopes to steal viewers

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

It's hard not to feel grudging respect for Gerald Daniel Blanchard's long résumé of crime — no matter what side of the law you're on.

He once stole half a million dollars from a bank before it officially opened by using a concealed pinhole camera inside the branch. He escaped from a police interrogation room by hiding in the ceiling tiles. Then there was the time he swapped a priceless jewel from an alarm-equipped museum display case with a gift shop replica, Indiana Jones-style.

"It's like a chess game. You need to know 10 moves ahead of what the police are doing," Blanchard said in a recent Zoom interview. "I was more into it for the thrill and the excitement."

Wired magazine called Blanchard the "world's most ingenious thief," and The Globe and Mail newspaper described him as "Canada's most sophisticated bank robber and fraud artist." Audiences can get into his head on Hulu, which is now streaming the documentary feature "The Jewel Thief."

Director Landon Van Soest traces Blanchard's evolution into a criminal mastermind, going from shoplifting at an Iowa RadioShack as a teen to stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars while disguised in a burqa in Cairo. He often taunted police to try and catch him.

"For me, it's really a film about obsession and ambition and addiction that kept driving him to something bigger," Van Soest said. "He always had to outdo himself. He always had to outsmart someone."

A portrait emerges of a creative, calculating and patient man with a strong engineering bent despite a learning disability and borderline dyslexia. But Blanchard is not always a reliable narrator, with some of his embellishments knocked down in the documentary.

"There were a lot of different versions of many of these stories," Van Soest said. "We just kind of chose to lean into that. We were going to present many different versions of some of these stories and let the viewers walk away and make up their own minds."

The movie uses footage from Blanchard's own extensive archives as well as interviews with him and with his mother, accomplices and the police who chased him. It's enlivened by a soundtrack that includes songs like Jane's Addiction's "Been Caught Stealing."

Blanchard was a thin, nerdy-looking kid who grew up



Blanchard says he committed his crimes more for the challenges and the thrill than from financial need.

poor in Omaha, Neb., with a single mom who worked two jobs, and he developed a grudge against banks.

"I like stealing from the banks and corporations," he tells the AP. "The reason why I don't like stealing from people is because they work hard for the money. I remember my mom crying on the phone when I was younger saying, 'We don't have the money to turn the lights on. Our food is going to go bad.'"

Early petty shoplifting emboldened him to disconnect a RadioShack's alarm system and take the entire inventory one Easter Sunday. He sold it all to friends and teachers. His home was soon visited by a SWAT team.

Blanchard later figured out how to scam stores by crafting fake receipts for shoplifted goods and returning them for a refund, a skill he used when he found himself penniless at the Canada border after serving 4½ years behind bars.

A customs agent gave him \$10 to take the bus. He instead bought a \$9 disposable camera and stole another, photocopied the sales receipt at a Staples for 10 cents, and returned both. With the money, he did the same thing with more expensive items — a rechargeable battery and a computer program. By the end of the day, he had a couple hundred dollars.

"The Jewel Thief" would likely not have been made — or at least the tone would be vastly different — if Blanchard's crimes had caused bloodshed or death. His honor code, or his criminal calculations, didn't include anyone getting hurt.

"I would always scale my crimes," he explained. "If you use a gun, what's the consequences? If you don't use a

gun, what's the consequence? Could somebody be hurt? And so I put a scale and I basically thought in my mind, what's the least amount of prison time I could get if I got caught?"

The crime that would put Blanchard in prison for a long time started when he walked into a Canadian bank under construction wearing a hardhat and safety vest bought at a Home Depot. He installed a \$50 Toys R Us baby monitor into a wall and messed with the motion detector so he could shut it off. Blanchard watched remotely as money was put into ATM machines, and struck that night.

As you might guess, Blanchard is not much of a fan of TV crime shows.

"It frustrates me. And I can't watch it because it's so fake. I always analyze it saying, 'They should have did it this way or that way' or 'You can't do it this way.' I'm always analyzing and thinking things many steps ahead."

Blanchard's list of crimes — including, as a prisoner, breaking into the commissary of the Anamosa State Penitentiary in Iowa — includes the 1998 theft of one of Sisi's stars, a jewel once belonging to a 19th century Austrian empress. He had replaced it with a fake, a ruse which went unnoticed for several days.

The piece was only recovered when Blanchard — looking for a deal from prosecutors — took police to his grandmother's Winnipeg house, where the jewel had been carefully stashed. In fact, Blanchard still had much of the cash he stole. He wasn't a big spender.

"I had lots of money and I never just blew it away or threw it away like most people do. I would always save it. If I could steal something, that's what I would do," he says.

It's hard to watch "The Jewel Thief" without wondering if he could have used his skills for good, such as advising on bank security.

Van Soest calls him "clearly a very intelligent, very capable person that could have offered something much more positive to society." But Blanchard says that once he had a criminal record, law enforcement jobs became impossible.

He tells The AP he's happy with where his life is now.

"I learned deep inside myself is the void that I have, which is money doesn't bring happiness," he said. "I've lived a poor life being young. I lived a wealthy life. I've lived the middle class life. So I've had the whole spectrum in my lifetime and I'm comfortable with living a normal, middle class life."

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Relaxing in Stockholm's idyllic archipelago

For years I'd flown over Stockholm's famed archipelago, or glided by it on a big cruise ship heading for Helsinki. When I finally dived into the 80 miles of scenic islands that stretch out from downtown Stockholm, I wondered why I'd waited so long.

It's hard to put a number on just how extensive the archipelago is. Locals love to brag that it has 34,000 islands — but they must be counting mossy little rocks, so I don't use that figure. I can tell you that about a hundred of them are served by ferries, providing Stockholmers with the ideal island escape.

The local name for this area is "Skärgården" — literally "garden of skerries," unforested rocks sticking up from the sea. That stone is granite, carved out and deposited by glaciers. The archipelago closer to Stockholm is rockier, with bigger islands and more trees. Farther out (such as around Sandhamn), the glaciers lingered longer, slowly grinding the granite into sand and creating smaller islands.

One of the joys of an archipelago boat trip is to grab a perch on the breezy sundeck with the Swedes as they enjoy their island wonderland. Even if your island isn't an official stop, ferries will

dock on request. ... or to plop down the day's mail.

Two major companies run public ferries from downtown Stockholm to the archipelago. Waxholmsbolaget's big ships depart across from Stockholm's



Rick Steves

Grand Hotel, at the stop called Stromkåjen. The smaller Cinderella Båtarna ships — generally faster, more comfortable and a little pricier than their rival's — leave from near Stockholm's Nybroplan. Because the routes and schedules can be confusing, it's smart to review and confirm your plans in advance, ideally at a tourist information office.

Your archipelago options are endless in this picturesque land-and-seascape. For a quick look, consider one of the many half- or full-day package boat trips from downtown Stockholm. For more flexibility, freedom and a better dose of the local vacation scene, do it on your own. Overnighting on an island really lets you get away from it all and enjoy the island ambiance. Don't struggle too hard with the "which island?" decision, although nature lovers might want to travel well beyond



CAMERON HEWITT/Rick Steves' Europe

With its swanky yacht club, Sandhamn is often regarded as Sweden's answer to Nantucket.

the island of Vaxholm, where the scenery gets more striking.

Out on the distant fringe of the archipelago — the last stop before Finland — sits the proud village of Sandhamn on the island of Sandön. Literally "Sand Harbor," the town has a long history as an important and posh place — Sweden's answer to Nantucket. It is an extremely popular stop for boaters — from wealthy yachties to sailboat rac-

ers — as well as visitors simply seeking a break from the big city.

Sandhamn has two halves: In the shadow of the iconic yacht clubhouse is a ritzy resort/party zone throbbing with big-money nautical types. But just a few steps away, around the harbor, is a picture-perfect old town of colorfully painted, shiplap cottages tucked between tranquil pine groves. While most tourists come here for the resort, the quieter

part of Sandhamn holds the real appeal.

No matter which island you plan to explore, the best way to experience the magic of the archipelago is simply stretching out comfortably on the rooftop deck of your ferry. The journey truly is the destination.

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Waterside fun beckons at these European festivals, events

What do some of Europe's best summer festivities recalling saints, solemn promises, plagues and LGBTQ+ rights have in common? They all take place alongside, if not directly in, the bodies of water that shaped the histories of the cities in which they're found. Here's where to go for some waterside fun in the coming weeks.

Venice, Italy: The Festa del Redentore, or Feast of the Redeemer, recalls the city's deliverance from a plague epidemic that ravaged the town from 1555-1557. On the third Sunday of July each year (July 15 in 2023), a temporary pontoon bridge is erected to enable the faithful to cross St. Mark's basin as they make way to the magnificent Church of the Redeemer, built to honor God's intercession in lifting of the plague. In addition to the day's religious significance, it's a weekend given to revelry. On Saturday



Karen Bradbury

afternoon, regattas between various types of watercraft take place in the Grand Canal. As the hour grows late, the crowds gather alongside the basin in force. Those with access to boats climb on board laden with picnic baskets of traditional foods for the feast— sardines, stuffed duck, pasta and beans, with watermelon for dessert. Fireworks end the day at 11:30 p.m. Online: tinyurl.com/y8z65xyn

Ulm, Germany: One of the biggest days of the year for this pretty city by the Danube is Schwörmontag, or Oath Monday. Celebrated July 24 this year, the day recalls an oath first sworn by a city official back in 1345 to serve rich and poor alike. On the day, the city's Lord Mayor vows to uphold his work for the good of all citizens. Following these formalities, the action moves down to the riverbanks, site of a water festival known as the "Nabada." The carnivalesque celebrations see young and old alike take to the waters of the murky river, onboard homemade watercraft, atop flotation devices or under their own steam. Online: tinyurl.com/24ey99uy



iStock

Gay Canal Pride Amsterdam will take place in the Netherlands' famous canal-crossed city on Aug. 5.

Amsterdam, Netherlands: No other city puts on a Pride celebration quite like the one in Amsterdam. Gay Canal Pride Amsterdam, slated for Aug. 5, will see hundreds of flamboyantly decorated boats and barges chug along the Amstel River and its connecting canals. The route begins by the Scheepvaart Museum at Oosterdok and concludes at Westerdok. From noon to 6 p.m., thousands of spectators, many dressed up in keeping with the day's festive mood, will perch atop bridges and alongside the canals in order to sing and dance along. The festive mood continues with street parties and clubbing events stretching late into the night. Online: tinyurl.com/4wbrt4n

Rostock, Germany: One of Germany's top maritime festivals is Hansa Sail, a celebration of remarkable sailing vessels. From Aug. 10-13, about 200 participating ships including cruise liners, ferries and naval craft from around the world call in to this pleasant port on the Baltic Sea. In addition to watching various regattas and ship-

spotting, visitors can arrange their own short voyages or visit ships at anchor. Online: hansesail.com

Konstanz, Germany: The Konstanzer Seenachtfest, set for Aug. 12, turns the promenade along the shore of Lake Constance into one giant party zone. Beginning at 3 p.m., visitors can enjoy musicians on stage, DJ music, street artists, a crafts market, a waterskiing show and other forms of entertainment prior to the fireworks display set for 10:15 p.m. Online tickets go for 23.90 euros for adults and 3.50 euros for 6-14. Online: seenachtfest.de

Dinant, Belgium: On Aug. 15 each year, the Meuse River sets the scene for a boat race of another sort. The city's International Bathtub Regatta sees competitors race in imaginatively decorated bathtubs propelled solely by the paddling powers of their crews. Some 25,000 spectators typically gather along the half-mile route to see how swift and seaworthy these craft turn out to be. Each year's edition boasts a new theme; in 2023, farming is in the spotlight. Online: lesbaignoires.be

Bamberg, Germany: A highlight of summer in Franconia's fine city of baroque and beer is the annual Sandkerwa, five days of celebrations alongside the Regnitz river. At its heart a date honoring the consecration of the St. Elisabeth Church, visitors enjoy a volksfest-like atmosphere with attractions, games, regional culinary specialties, live music and more. Program highlights include a fishermen's joust on Sunday and fireworks on the last evening. This year's festivities take place Aug. 24-28. A festival badge costs 2.50 euros. Online: sandkerwa.de

Frankfurt, Germany: Spending time in Frankfurt's world-class museums is just one of countless activities to indulge in during the Museumsuferfest, scheduled for Aug. 25-27. Up to three million visitors appear annually to stroll along both banks of the Main River, taking in the sounds of world, pop or DJ music, watching entertainment on stage or sampling cocktails and culinary treats. Online: museumsuferfest.de

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

In defense of tourist traps

Trying to be a ‘traveler’ by doing as the locals do all the time can be exhausting

By NATALIE B. COMPTON
The Washington Post

The first sign I was breaking down was at a fruit stand in Hanoi. I kept handing the vendor the incorrect amount of money as she kept shaking her head and repeating the price. Finally, she put both of us out of our misery by taking the correct amount out of my hand.

I had done my best Anthony Bourdain impersonation for eight days in Southeast Asia: eating street food on sidewalks, taking Muay Thai classes, venturing out of city centers to meet locals on their farm and try their mom’s home cooking. I’d spent roughly 38 hours on overnight trains, sleeping on questionable bedding and bathing with baby wipes. By the time I got to Hanoi, I was ready to throw in the towel on doing as the locals do.

Somewhere between leaving the train station, eating pho and taking a motorbike in the wrong direction — there it was. An oasis beyond the treacherous traffic: A tourist trap.

These places aren’t the hole-in-the-wall mom-and-pops hiding down an alley; they’re the easy-to-find spots on the beaten path with big menus translated into many languages. Their proprietors may charge exponentially more than a locals-only establishment, perhaps to cover the high rent of operating near popular sights. Or just because they can.

But tourist traps aren’t just bars selling overpriced drinks or souvenir shops pushing kitsch. They can be museums and monuments — places that hover at the top of Tripadvisor lists. There’s a time and place for them, too. As much as we want to see new destinations like locals, it would be criminal not to see some of their most well-known sites. The idea of going to northern India and skipping the Taj Mahal is absurd.

My tourist trap was a charming restaurant on Hanoi’s Hoan Kiem Lake, not far from where visitors flock to see the city’s famous water puppet show. It had a terrace with yellow-striped awnings, and I asked to sit at one of the tables under a red umbrella. I sloughed off my heavy backpack and tough-guy persona; I finally had permission to rest.

These days, everyone wants to be a “traveler,” not a “tourist.” Both mean you’re away from home, exploring someplace foreign to you, but one term has cachet while the other gets a bad rap.

But being a “traveler” can be exhausting. After peeling myself off my train bunk bed, I trudged with my backpack (I go carry-on only — no wheels — for the practicality and the bragging rights) around the neighborhood in search of lunch before I could check into my hotel. Along a narrow and chaotic road, a passing motorbike caught one of my backpack straps and nearly dragged me to the ground into traffic. Shaken but unharmed, I finally found a street food stall with



PHOTOS BY NATALIE COMPTON/The Washington Post

Washington Post writer Natalie Compton visited this restaurant overlooking Hanoi’s Hoan Kiem Lake, which she says was a tourist trap, and gave herself permission to rest from the effort of trying to be a “traveler.”

Being a “tourist” ... is freeing. There is no pressure to be cool. You are allowed to be a guidebook-toting, comfortable shoe-wearing, selfie-taking outsider — all enthusiasm, no shame.

enough room for one more, sat down self-consciously and overanalyzed how I was eating.

Being a “tourist,” on the other hand, is freeing. There is no pressure to be cool. You are allowed to be a guidebook-toting, comfortable shoe-wearing, selfie-taking outsider — all enthusiasm, no shame.

The tourist trap welcomes the tourist with open arms. You’re not just allowed to be there, they want you there. And they have WiFi, bathrooms and English menus to prove it.

But there is a line. I wasn’t going to waste an entire meal at my tourist trap. A snack? Fair game. I ordered an iced coffee and a cup of coconut ice cream. I gazed at the lake, wrote postcards, read a few pages of my guidebook, watched a tourist at the table next to me ask the server to take her photo with her tower-



Compton at the Taj Mahal in 2015. Compton says it would be criminal to travel someplace and not see some of its most well-known sites, even if they are tourist traps.

ing sundae. It was glorious. And instead of being humiliated by my capitulation, I owned my decision to embrace my inner tourist and posted a photo of the scene on Instagram. Like a tourist.

Once I paid my bill, which was three times as much as I could have paid for the same fare elsewhere, I felt refreshed. I hulked my backpack back on and resumed roughing it.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Getting a handle on hotel showers

Multiple heads and controls can lead to soakings, scaldings and embarrassing calls to the front desk

BY ANDREA SACHS
The Washington Post

When Bob Phillips first enters a hotel room, he heads straight for the shower.

Years of touring have taught the Detroit-based comedian to inspect the bathing apparatus in advance. If he skips this step, he could end up soaked and scalded, or even worse, unwashed and ill-humored right before a performance.

“That is the number-one priority when I’m staying at a downtown hotel or something that’s a little more upscale,” Phillips said before a recent Chicago gig. “I know better than to try to take a shower an hour before a show, because sometimes I need more time to figure out the mechanics of it.”

Any traveler who has stared down an intimidating hotel shower system with Hydra heads and snaking limbs can relate. A few years ago on Twitter, Phillips summed up the experience in a GIF of a raccoon frolicking in a lawn sprinkler. More recently, he tweeted an image of Britain’s new king with the tagline, “When you figure out the hotel shower on the first try.”

“Charles was looking very self-satisfied and I thought, well, what would I have to do to look like that?” he said.

Conquering a hotel shower earns you gloating rights. In terms of guest challenges, it’s up there with adjusting your room’s temperamental air-conditioning unit and extinguishing its Milky Way of lights. At older or more modest lodgings, the shower is often as simple as turning a knob or two. However, the health-and-wellness movement has transformed the hotel bathroom from a basic necessity into a self-care sanctuary.

“One of the primary functions of the bathroom is to groom and clean for hygiene purposes,” said Christina Trauthwein, vice president of content and partnerships at Hotel Business and InspireDesign, a publishing company that specializes in hotel trends, “but it’s also become a place to relax, to revive yourself and to refresh. The shower is really where it’s at.”

As part of this renaissance, interior designers are opening up the once-private space in order to create more harmonious accommodations. To achieve this look, they are tearing down shower curtains and doors, introducing window views and natural light, and eliminating tubs and TVs embedded in the mirrors, according to Jese Medina-Suarez, creative director and principal at Campbell House, an interior design firm that specializes in hotels and restaurants around the world.

“You don’t get this feeling of having a box inside another box, but rather something very holistic,” Medina-Suarez said

from his Paris outpost.

The shower is often the centerpiece of the reimagined bathroom, especially as hotels pull the plug on bathtub-and-shower combos. Jason Reynolds, director of hospitality and architect and designer sales at Moen, which produces kitchen and bathroom products, said brands are favoring shower-only facilities with glass enclosures, though over the years these partitions have been slowly disappearing or downsizing.

Inside the shower stall, travelers may find a multitude of amenities, including a bench for guests with mobility issues or tired legs, a towel rack, bathrobe hooks, toiletry pumps and a range of shower heads with varying water pressure and spray sensations. Designers also have to consider Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant features, like roll-in showers or hand-held heads, for certain hotel rooms.

“Hotels have found that a key for attracting luxury room bookers is designing a space that offers several showering outlets: ceiling rain shower heads for coverage, wall-mounted shower heads for those who want to avoid the vertical down-pour, body sprays for an immersive experience and handhelds for a targeted experience,” Reynolds said.

According to Hotels.com app reviews from 2022 to 2023, travelers are especially fond of rainfall showers, followed by dual-head showers. They are also appreciative of additional temperature controls and shower head heights that can accommodate tall frames. Alternately, they are highly critical of hotel showers with weak water pressure.

Overall, guests prefer “simple elegance over extravagance,” a Hotels.com spokesperson said. “Bathroom design doesn’t dominate Hotels.com reviews. In fact, two- and three-star properties receive the most strongly positive reviews on our app.”

Reynolds acknowledges the downside of too many shower heads. The tangle of hardware can crowd out the guest and cause a deluge that can overwhelm the drain and create a small flood on the bathroom floor. If the design is not intuitive, guests might have to retrieve their pants and make the dreaded call.

“I have cried uncle and said to [the front desk], ‘You’ve got to come up here and figure this out for me, because I can’t even get the water to start running. I have no idea how to adjust the temperature,’” Phillips said, recalling his experience at a Hilton in Chicago a few years ago.

Trauthwein has found showering guidance within her circle of travel companions. During a business trip, she said the shower “was just not doing what I needed it to do.” She didn’t want to bother her



colleagues for assistance, but she later shared her frustrations with a friend, who also had to wrangle the shower.

“We started consulting on the side with each other about it,” she admitted.

Medina-Suarez said thoughtful placement of the shower’s main components — such as the mixer, which combines the hot and cold water, and the shower head controls — can help guests avoid an accidental dousing.

“Ideally you are close to the mixer and to the device that allows you to swap from shower head to spout to shower handle,” he said. “With that kind of system, [shooting water] would never happen.”

Reynolds said hotels should use a manufacturer whose on/off and diverter systems are familiar to guests or can be mastered with a quick glance.

“No one wants to be in the vulnerable position of being unclothed and on the phone requesting bathing assistance,” he said.

Trauthwein suggests hotels place an instruction card in the guest room or provide a QR code on how to operate the shower.

“You are standing there, pulling at this

and pushing at this, and still not getting what you want,” she said. “I think one of the things that the industry needs to work on is education.”

One shining example: Many Glacier Lodge in Glacier National Park in Montana. The historic property has affixed laminated cards to the bathroom walls to help guests operate its “octopus control,” a main feature of its claw-foot tub.

If the convoluted shower wins the battle, James Hamblin, a physician and lecturer at Yale’s School of Public Health, says don’t sweat it. While washing your hands is a critical public health measure, cleansing your hair and body is not.

“Showering is not about disease prevention at all,” said Hamblin, who wrote about abstaining from showering in his book, “Clean: The New Science of Skin.” “It’s almost entirely about personal enjoyment and the social codes of how we look.”

As for the bouquet of fancy shower heads, he said these perks are for pampering only. Any water source will suffice.

“There’s nothing happening under a waterfall shower that couldn’t be just as well achieved with a bucket of soapy water and a rag,” he said.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER SVAN/Stars and Stripes

A sign marks the start of the Path of the Middle Ages, a 5.2-mile loop that starts in the historic medieval village of Herrstein, Germany.

A path to the Middle Ages

Roman roads and medieval charm highlight 5.2-mile loop around Germany's Herrstein

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Wandering Herrstein's narrow cobblestone streets lined with beautiful half-timbered homes feels like walking through a German-themed village at Disney World's EPCOT theme park.

About 40 years ago, a project to restore the historic town along Germany's Gem Road involved workers chipping away at gray plaster facades to reveal the original medieval timber-framed buildings.

The oldest of the 60-some homes, most of them occupied by residents, dates to 1525. Colorful window flower boxes, antique metal benches etched with chickens and a chiming clock tower add to the Old World charm.

While Americans were celebrating the Fourth of July, a holiday that commemorates a 1776 "birthday," my friend, son and I stood in a town square that may have been around as early as 1279.

The year is the earliest date that Herrstein and a knight named Ruther von Herestejn are mentioned in historical documents, according to the town's website.

My son tested out the neck shackles hanging in the square before we climbed the stairs to the castle church and passed the Schinderhannes tower, where legend has it that one of the region's most famous bandits was once imprisoned for a night.

It was the start of the Path of the Middle Ages, a 5.2-mile loop that begins and ends in Herrstein. We picked that route because it was voted Germany's most beautiful hiking trail in

2010, according to the Outdoor-active trail app.

With the town and the trailhead less than an hour's drive from Kaiserslautern, it seemed like a good choice for a summer day that was about 10 degrees too cool for swimming.

It turns out we picked the right day. Most of the trail traversed open fields, offering panoramic vistas of the surrounding valley but little shade. The path at times crisscrossed forest, but only for short stretches.

Overall, we kept waiting to be wowed to validate the trail's No. 1 ranking, but nothing along the route struck us as being extraordinary. Nevertheless, we enjoyed ambling through fields of wheat and wildflowers billowing in the day's gentle breeze.

The path at times meandered along two streams, the Hosenbach and Fischbach, and there was even a tower to climb for a bird's-eye view of the rolling countryside.

Besides a chance to enjoy nature, the trail offered some history lessons. Signs along the way described how the area intersected a former trade route used by the Romans from about 50 B.C. through the fifth century; some of the field and forest paths were ancient Roman roads.

The trail also is close to the village of Niederhosenbach, considered the birthplace of Hildegard von Bingen, a 12th-century Benedictine nun proclaimed a saint by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012.

Signs at the start of the Middle Ages trail show replicas of von Bingen's illustrations, describing some of the 26 religious visions she experienced, including God on a mountaintop with two fe-



Herrstein is one of the most well-preserved medieval towns in Germany's Nahe-Hunsrueck region, an area framed by the Saar, Moselle, Rhine and Nahe rivers northwest of the U.S. Army's post at Baumholder.



More than 50 half-timbered homes dating back as far as the 16th century have been preserved in Herrstein.



Hikers cross an open field along the Path of the Middle Ages.

On the QT

Directions: Herrstein is about 37 miles north of Kaiserslautern and 18 miles north of Baumholder. It's an easy drive along one of two main routes for most of the way, either autobahn A62 or highway B270.

Food: Cafe Zehntscheune; Online: zehntscheune.de

Information: For details online about hiking routes around Herrstein, outdooractive.com/de; for more about Herrstein itself, herrstein.de.

Jennifer Svan

male figures at the foot of the mountain.

A giant oak tree along the path is the only one remaining from an old forest in which villagers hid from marauding Spanish and Croatian troops during the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century.

The oak survived a fire set by the invaders that killed many villagers, according to a sign by the tree.

After more than three hours meandering along footpaths worn into the dirt centuries ago, we wandered some more through the streets of Herrstein. The town has a few gem shops and a local history museum. The latter is open from 2 to 5 p.m. on Sundays.

The biggest draw on the Tuesday afternoon when we visited was Cafe Zehntscheune, a restaurant that was formerly a tithe barn, where farmers brought crops to be paid to the local prince as taxes.

One of the house specialties is stuffed potato dumplings. A variety of homemade cakes, fruit cobblers and tortes are also on the menu.

Seats in the courtyard were full on the day we stopped by. The restaurant also has inside seating and takes reservations, so we plan to go back with the goal of getting a seat and some potato dumplings next time.

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Much of the 5.2-mile loop traverses meadows and cropland.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Fusion of flavors and architecture

Degenhardt in Wiesbaden mixes cuisines, styles

BY MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

It was the architecture rather than the food that first piqued my interest in Degenhardt, an eatery in Wiesbaden, Germany. When I first saw it on a wintry afternoon, I didn't even realize that it was a restaurant.

The building has a 1950s facade with large windows that run almost the length and height of the whole ground floor. The name of the place is written on a pink neon sign in cursive.

Unsure what kind of business it was, I peeked through a tall window and saw people enjoying food and drink inside.

Once one of Wiesbaden's most popular and oldest hair salons, it is now a well-visited restaurant and bar that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

My wife and I had just eaten lunch in downtown Wiesbaden, so Degenhardt was added to a long list of restaurants we wanted to try.

We got the chance on a recent warm summer evening. Numerous tables were set outside along Luisenplatz, a leafy square, and most were taken.

We found one that was free and studied the menu. The variety is not huge, with nine breakfast selections, 15 entree plates and a dessert.

It is supplemented by a daily menu that adds maybe another half-dozen main dishes and a pair of desserts.

Except for the schnitzel dishes, the cuisine served at Degenhardt is hard to categorize. Calling it a kind of fusion probably describes it best.

Friends at another table were sharing two kinds of flammkuchen, a pizza-like dish popular in Germany and France. We also saw two ladies enjoying delicious-looking fried feta cheese with a tomato salad.

I went with the schmankerl salad. The word schmankerl, which is often used in Bavaria, translates to delicacy or treat. My wife chose the chicken-chorizo pan. We ordered a bottle of water and we each had a glass of wine off of a summer wine menu.

Other dinner choices we could have considered were the curry chicken with pineapple, peanuts and rice — which has a vegan version, too — or pasta with eggplant, zucchini, mushrooms, burrata cheese and pepper flakes tossed in cream and cognac.

Degenhardt's Wiener schnitzel



AFTER HOURS
GERMANY

Degenhardt

Address: Luisenplatz 4, Wiesbaden, Germany

Hours: 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday to Friday; 9 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday

Prices: Breakfasts are from 10 euros for a fruit salad to 33 euros for a breakfast for two with a glass of Prosecco. Lunch and dinner cost from 12 to 26 euros.

Information: gastwerk-degenhardt.de

Michael Abrams

is made how it is supposed to be, with veal.

My wife's chicken-chorizo pan was delicious. The mix of tender, grilled chicken breast and spicy chorizo with olives, peppers and potatoes was an explosion of tastes. It was so good that I almost wished that I had ordered it. But my schmankerl salad lived up to its name, which is to say it really was a treat: a heap of various lettuces served with shrimp, Parma ham, Parmesan cheese shavings and cucumber slices, garnished with strawberries and two slices of garlic bread. About halfway through, I noticed that the Parmesan had been left out. After our server was made aware of the faux pas, she brought me a plate of cheese shavings, which I spread over the remainder of my salad.

Our entertainment for the night was a wasp, which was enthralled with the chicken. My wife sacrificed a little piece of fowl, and we watched the wasp shear off a piece, roll it into a ball with its legs and fly off, only to return for more helpings.

Tartufo classico and apple strudel were the desserts on the menu, and we took one of each. Both provided a very satisfying end to our dinner.

The former had a frozen zabaglione center surrounded by chocolate cream and cacao powder. The warm strudel came with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and a smattering of fruit.

Before leaving, we checked out the interior. Simple wood tables, chairs with curved backs and an unadorned, straight bar evoked the Art Nouveau era and were inviting us for another visit. Perhaps for breakfast, but without our buzzing dinner companion.

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PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Diners at Degenhardt in Wiesbaden, Germany, sit outside under umbrellas. Note the 1950s facade with the name written in cursive.



The schmankerl salad at Degenhardt. It included shrimp, Parma ham and Parmesan cheese shavings.



The chicken-chorizo pan was delicious, with a mix of tender chicken breast, spicy chorizo, olives, peppers and potatoes.



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WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

‘Hard Feelings’ for comedian

Iliza Shlesinger brings her act to US bases near Tokyo

BY KELLY AGEE
Stars and Stripes

Comedian Iliza Shlesinger is bringing her “Hard Feelings” to Tokyo and three U.S. military bases in Japan through the USO.

The self-described “elder millennial” riffs on familiar topics from a fresh perspective, and her shows are for mature (18 and older) audiences, who should expect ribald, observational comedy on dating, gender differences, bra engineering and “the reason women talk a lot.”

A comment on Shlesinger’s most recent YouTube segment summed it up: “Never heard of her. Now I have. I’m a fan now.”

The comedian, actress, TV host, executive producer and screenwriter has made more than five Netflix stand-up specials. Her “Hard Feelings” tour, with dates in the United States, Europe and Japan, is making up for the “Back in Action” tour that was canceled in 2022 thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

She’s scheduled to perform July 20 at Yokota Air Base’s Enlisted Club, July 21 at Yokosuka Naval Base’s Fleet Theater and July 22 at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni’s Club Iwakuni. Then it’s July 24 at Yamano Hall in Tokyo’s Shibuya ward.

Shlesinger spoke to Stars and Stripes through Zoom on July 6 about her upcoming Japan tour.

Stars and Stripes: First off, how are you doing today?

Shlesinger: My day is going great; I just went and tried to get my nails done for the tour. I was gonna do, like, pastel camouflage, but there was a miscommunication between me and the technician, so it just looks like mummy wrapping. That wasn’t the vibe I was going for, but these are the nails, so get into it, Japan.

What got you into USO shows?

I was asked several years ago to do a USO tour for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who at the time was Gen. Martin Dempsey, and I thought that that was an incredible opportunity. I kind of got the bug after that and I fell in love with the USO. So, I will support the USO until my jokes are so outdated that they ask me not to come back because it’s a matter of national security.

What challenges are there performing for a military audience?

These are not people who are just out on

a Saturday night; there’s a little bit more pressure because in many cases they have this one night off. So, it’s about getting in there, finding what makes that audience tick and really drilling into that. And in some cases, grabbing onto that one guy with a bad mustache and not relenting; making fun of him the entire time. Don’t think just because you’re the military I won’t come for you.

Can you recall a particular moment from a USO tour?

The first show I did with Dempsey, and I didn’t know anyone, and they didn’t really know me, but I remember having such a great set. Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia was on the tour with us, and I came off stage and he was just standing there with his arms wide open to give me a hug. And I felt so accepted; from then on the rest of the tour was just like a big family. So that was very gratifying, that’s like the hug from the military dad you never knew you needed.

What is it about other comedians and comedy that you enjoy?

I love the human condition. I love weird moments. I love characters. I love voices. I like having an act that’s incredibly honest, that men and women can relate to, but that’s, like, a little bit weird and a little bit whimsical. I am that voice in your head that you didn’t know you were allowed to verbalize.

Have you had to change or avoid any material to avoid sensitive talk about the military?

For the military, before you do a USO tour they have, like, certain things they’d like you to stay away from. You know, they’re like, maybe don’t talk about how great drugs are; maybe don’t [expletive] on the president or their government. But I’ve never felt censored. Of course, because they say don’t talk about drugs the whole time, you’re like, ‘Oh my god, don’t mention cocaine.’

What brings you back to Japan?

The USO offered me this mini tour of bases in Japan, and then I was like, we had an Asia tour booked and it got canceled. And I was like, we’re there, let’s put up a non-military show. So, I can finally make all my cocaine jokes.

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Iliza Shlesinger will take her humor to U.S. military bases in Japan next week.

United Talent



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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY JENNESSA DAVEY/Stars and Stripes

Kaneyo Art Cafe has a wood cabin feel and is filled with paintings, sculptures, books and natural light.

A fresh perspective

Cozy, artsy lunch spot offers ocean vistas near Yokosuka Naval Base

BY JENNESSA DAVEY
Stars and Stripes

A homey, comfortable cafe near Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, comes with ocean views, original art and a new menu every day.

The cozy Kaneyo Art Cafe is hidden in trees and bushes, right off Yokosuka Kaigan-dori, between Hashirimizusuigenchi Park and Hatayamazaki Park along the water.

The cafe has a wood cabin feel and is filled with paintings, sculptures, books and natural light coming from all directions.

The staff speak very little English, but it is not hard to communicate with them. The menu changes every day based on what fresh seafood is available.

On the day of my visit, the appetizer was a fresh seafood platter of tuna, mackerel and octopus sashimi. The fish was fresh and served on clean white plates.

The day's special was tempura vegetables and tempura local fish — octopus with a special sauce. The tempura was not overbearing and tasted fresh to complement the fresh vegetables and fresh octopus.



Kaneyo Art Cafe

Location: 1-6-4 Hashirimizu, Yokosuka, Kanagawa 239-0811
Hours: Open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. Closed on Mondays.

Prices: Most entrees cost between 1,200 yen and 1,518 yen, about \$9 to \$12. Drinks and ice cream vary between 440 yen and 935 yen. The café accepts cash, cards and Apple pay.

Dress: Casual
Directions: From Yokosuka Naval Base, follow Yokosuka Kaigan-dori road past Hashirimizusuigenchi Park and into a parking lot, turn left and continue to a dead end with trees and bushes and find the café.

Information: Phone: 046-841-9881; Instagram: @kaneyo_shokudou

Jennessa Davey

No worries if you don't like seafood. Kaneyo also offers homemade personal pizza options and a daily curry.

The cafe's drink and dessert menu will keep you refreshed with fresh fruit juice and Hilo homemade ice cream.



Kaneyo Art Cafe's menu changes every day based on what fresh seafood is available.



Kaneyo Art Cafe's staff speak very little English, but it is not hard to communicate with them.

The staff is very friendly and kind. This is a place to bring friends to hang out and spend time together on a nice day.

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Strategies for wasting less food in the kitchen

BY KATIE WORKMAN
Associated Press

Nobody likes to waste food, especially when grocery prices are high and landfills keep growing. It feels like an imperative to make use of every ingredient we buy (or maybe grow).

But about 40% of food in the U.S. is wasted, according to estimates from the nonprofit Feed America and other sources. That figure includes excess from industry, grocery stores, restaurants and our very own kitchens.

There are lots of ways to reduce the amount of wasted food at home, and many are downright easy.

Four strategies:

Plan

A good place to start is making a meal plan and purchasing just the foods you have specific plans for. Make a shopping list and avoid impulse buys that might languish in your fridge.

When you are cooking, start thinking already about Intentional Leftovers, one of my favorite cooking mantras. Planning to use those extra cooked chicken breasts in a Mexican Tortilla Soup recipe, or those extra meatballs in a sub sandwich, will prevent them from hanging out without a purpose, only to be tossed days later.

Save

Whenever you are trimming or peeling vegetables, give them a wash first. That way you can save those peels and scraps to make stock. Just keep a freezer-proof zipper-top bag on the counter while you are cooking and add them to the bag, along with herbs that have lost their perkiness. (Don't throw in any roots, which would make your stock gritty).

Keep the bag in the freezer, and when it's full, dump the contents into a pot, add water to cover, season with salt and pepper, and simmer until the stock has taken on its fullest flavor before straining.

This is also a good idea for poultry scraps or red meat scraps. Keep them in separate, labeled freezer-proof bags and use them for stock when you have saved enough.



AP

There are lots of ways to reduce the amount of wasted food at home. Start by making a meal plan and purchasing just the foods you have plans for.

Improvise

If you have a lot of odds and ends in the fridge, think about making a flexible, inexpensive dish that makes good use of bits and bobs of various foods. Frittatas, stir-fried rice, omelets, quesadillas and soups are adaptable dishes that allow you to use up things like a cup of leftover steamed broccoli, a handful of shredded cheddar, a bit of pesto, some slightly limp scallions.

Organize

Organize your fridge and pantry so you can see what you have, and avoid tossing items that you just didn't remember were there. Keep super-perishable items, like fish or berries, in plain sight and use them quickly.

Do a little research on expiration dates. For instance, if a food item has a "sell by" date, that doesn't mean you should toss it on that day. It usually means the clock starts ticking, but even items like eggs or dairy usually last for another several days or longer after the sell-by date.

A "best by" date also isn't a definitive mark that the food is spoiled. Many items can be safely consumed for weeks after that date, without a noticeable deterioration of quality.

Make sure you are storing your foods smartly to slow down spoilage and reduce waste. Many reusable storage options — containers, wraps, etc. — on the market are geared toward a specific food type, like greens, berries, herbs, or cheeses.

Label everything in your fridge that isn't easily identifiable.

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STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Is travel with a toddler worth it?

Child psychologists say your kid may not remember every detail of a pricey vacation, but it will leave a lasting impression

BY CHRIS SCHALKX
For The Washington Post

This wasn't the reply I expected when I recently told a (happily child-free) friend I'd be taking my 4-year-old son on his first African safari: "You know he's not going to remember any of it, right?"

But she did have a point. As Bangkok-based expats and frequent travelers, my wife and I had already lugged my child across the globe before "airplane" was even part of his vocabulary. He took his first unassisted steps on a tatami floor in Tokyo, and by the time he turned 4, he had already collected more passport stamps than I had until well into my 20s. But my friend's comment made me wonder: What does my son remember from his years as a globe-trotting toddler? Have the bucket-list trips we've taken been in vain?

After probing him for an answer, he recalled a fuzzy memory of a lighthouse he saw in Galle in southern Sri Lanka at age 2, but had forgotten about the seven-hour train ride through the country's tea plantations that followed. Neither did he remember that we shuffled down the snow-covered Great Wall of China a few months earlier, nor that we clinked (virgin!) mojitos in Cuba that New Year's Eve. His first Christmas at his grandparents' home in the Netherlands? Not a clue. An anecdote I shared from our first father-son trip to Bali at age 1½ was met with a blank stare.

He could, however, describe more recent trips much more vividly. He reminisced about the time he peed down a waterfall when I took him on a hike in the Northern Thai jungle just after his 3rd birthday. He brought up the light show at Singapore's Marina Bay Sands we visited in the same year and talked about the time he rode a horse and played football with novice monks in Bhutan a year later.

The science checks out: The consensus among neuroscientists, psychologists and child development experts is that most children start retaining accessible memories around 4 years of age, but it might take longer in some cases.

"Since there's a large range for when long-term memories begin and persist, it's hard to say definitively when the right

time is for a bucket-list trip for any given family," says Rebecca Weksner, a Massachusetts-based psychologist specializing in pediatrics and mother of three young children. "One child may recall it since the emotional experience may have been so strong as to create a lasting memory trace, while for another it may not."

More than a memory

The fact that children likely won't remember the exact details of the safari, European city or national park trip they've taken before their fourth birthday doesn't mean that those big-ticket trips are a waste of money and time.

"Travel provides multiple opportunities for new experiences and therefore has the ability to activate different regions of the brain," says Jessica Sproat, a child development specialist in Vancouver who frequently brings her 3-year-old along on adventure trips in the Canadian wilderness. "These activations strengthen the connections between neurons in the brain and increase its ability to change and adapt in response to new experiences, leading to increased learning capacity."

Exposing young children to foods, languages, animals and climates they might not encounter closer to home also helps them develop empathy, adaptability and social skills.

"These novel experiences stimulate children's curiosity and promote active learning," Sproat says. "Children learn best through firsthand experience, and so being directly involved in cultures that are different than their own broadens their perspectives."

And though explicit memories of a trip might fade, psychoanalyst Claudia Luiz stresses the importance of "implicit memories," which are formed subconsciously and are completely impressionistic.

"Implicit memories get registered in the brain differently," she says. "Instead of going into a memory bank, they set neuronal pathways that determine our future experiences."

She explains that while a 4-year-old child might not remember the glory of a pony ride, they will remember it as an experience that brought everyone joy, which sets the tone for future expectations

of pleasure, joy and fulfillment in a new experience.

Making every trip count

Vacations, especially those of the bucket-list kind, often come with hefty price tags, so it's worth looking into ways to have them benefit a child's development as much as possible.

"Parents often ask their child if they're excited to go to a particular place without realizing that their child hasn't been there before and doesn't really know what to expect," says Melanie English, a licensed clinical psychologist in Seattle who often works with families. She suggests preparing children for a new-to-them destination by reading books and watching videos about the landscapes, people and animals they might encounter during their trip.

Getting children involved in shaping the itinerary can also pay off.

"Traveling requires problem-solving and flexibility that might not be necessary while at home and in routine," Sproat says. She explains that even though executive functioning skills such as planning and judgment-making are not yet fully developed in young children, there are opportunities to include them in simple decisions before and during a trip, such as choosing between two activities, or a new food to try. All of which, Sproat says, "Build foundational skills that support later developing cognitive skills and executive functioning."

Ryan Sultan, an assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University, says that trips involving active participation and sensory stimulation may leave a deeper impression on young children.

"To make experiences more memorable, consider activities that cater to their interests," he says. "A visit to a children's museum or a zoo can be more memorable than passively sightseeing."

Tom Merchant, whose travel company Black Tomato has planned numerous bucket-list trips for families with young children, makes sure that their trips remain both manageable and memorable and suggests choosing a destination with an inherent "wow" factor (such as vibrant colors, dramatic sunsets and animals) young children are more apt to remember.

"We organize experiences that can be done in a short time frame so that a child's wonder is maintained," he says. "This way we avoid young children becoming annoyed and tired, which could eclipse the richness of the experience."

Model how to travel

Traveling with young children introduces a whole new set of logistic and emotional hurdles, which often increase the more far-flung or complex a trip becomes. Consider how you handle unforeseen situations as your stress can be contagious. English suggests having one-liners ready for when plans change ("Well, the flight time is longer, but you get to watch another movie now"), and pointing out what your child is gaining when they miss something familiar ("I know you miss your bed, but this one is much bigger!").

It also offers parents the opportunity to model skills such as problem-solving and adapting to new situations.

"Young children learn through observation," Sproat says. "Watching caregivers demonstrate these things will support them as their brains develop as well."

Don't forget to debrief

What happens after returning home is just as important in making memories linger longer. My son and I often browse through the (printed) photo albums we've compiled from our previous trips and use it to rekindle memories that might've faded over time.

Sproat agrees that videos and photos are helpful in referencing travel experiences, as young children might not be able to recall them without these visual aids. She also advises continuing to point out similarities and differences between home and the destination of previous trips ("This is different than what we saw in ..." or "This tastes similar to what you ate in ..."). "This process of linking existing knowledge to new experiences strengthens cognitive associations, helps with knowledge transfer and improves memory," she says.

"[But] don't forget that what was meaningful to you may not have been meaningful for your child," English adds. "They might surprise you with what they enjoyed most about their vacation."

WEEKEND: BOOKS

PTSD not a modern phenomenon

‘Soldiers Don’t Go Mad’ explores budding awareness of disorder during WWI

By **ROBERT H. REID**
Stars and Stripes

Charles Glass’ masterful work “Soldiers Don’t Go Mad” dispels the notion that post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is a modern phenomenon of the “woke” generations.

The book, by former ABC News correspondent who covered wars in the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans, explores the lives of young British army officers who fought in the trenches in World War I. They were brought to Craiglockhart War Hospital outside Edinburgh after their minds and spirits were shattered by the horrors of trench warfare.

Instead of PTSD, their condition was described at the time as “nervous disorders” or “shell-shock.” Their wounds were sometimes dismissed by top British commanders as cowardice but were as real and debilitating as a shattered limb or machine gun bullets in the gut.

Despite lingering ignorance and hostility to the soldiers’ agony, senior British commanders had no choice but to take psychological wounds more seriously.

Nothing could prepare young soldiers for what to expect when

World War I erupted in 1914. More than 40 years had elapsed since war between France and Prussia ended in 1871 — the most recent major continental conflict.

Instead of glory, the soldiers found a terrifying world of high explosives, flamethrowers, machine guns and poison gas never before seen in warfare. With the conflict at a standstill for years, troops were huddled in rat-infested, drenched trenches and underground bunkers without adequate food and ammunition.

Under such conditions, 10 percent of the officers and about the same percentage of enlisted men suffered mental collapse. The high commands of both sides were desperate for ways to rehabilitate experienced soldiers and send them back to the slaughter.

Still, not everyone in the British establishment understood the reality of PTSD or how to deal with it. One of the patients, Siegfried Sassoon, was sent to the hospital despite having no visible symptoms, such as uncontrolled shaking, bouts of weeping or inability to focus.

Sassoon, from an upper-class, politically connected family, had become an outspoken critic of the war and the politicians who ran it. Rather than court-martial a

decorated combat veteran, whose near-suicidal courage earned him the nickname “Mad Jack,” the brass sent him to a mental hospital in hopes he would change his views.

At Craiglockhart, patients received experimental treatment considered routine today — including therapy, dream analysis, hypnosis and hobbies — but which were revolutionary in an era when mainstream doctors favored electric shocks, ice baths and memory suppression.

Doctors convinced Edinburgh city fathers to suspend the daily cannon firing at Edinburgh castle because of the effects on patients.

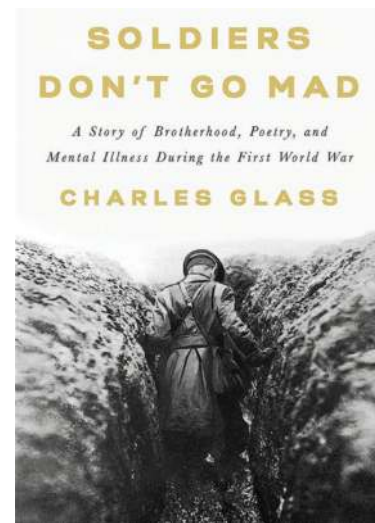
Social mores of the early 20th century British class system required separation of officers and enlisted soldiers. Officers were sent to Craiglockhart. Enlisted patients were farmed out to conventional mental hospitals, basically “lunatic asylums,” or simply discharged.

Some patients recovered enough to return to combat or light duty far from the battlefield. Others never did.

Ironically, the Craiglockhart doctors modeled their treatment along techniques they learned as students in Germany and Austria, the very countries that Bri-

tain was fighting but which had pioneered research into diseases of the mind.

The book is not only a tale of war and resilience but one that explains the wave of pacifism that swept Europe in the years before World War II and complicated diplomatic efforts to curb the rise of Nazism in Germany.



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WEEKEND: MUSIC

Speak now (and again)

Swift revisits one of her most transformative albums in latest release

By MARIA SHERMAN
Associated Press

In 2010, newly anointed as a Grammy winner, Taylor Swift released “Speak Now,” her third studio album and her first without a single songwriting collaboration.

Her 2006 self-titled debut and 2008’s “Fearless” had inspired both acclaim and criticism for her bold bridges and keen lyricism — these are masterful country-pop songs, critics argued, but surely a teen idol wasn’t responsible for them. Swift proved her detractors wrong on “Speak Now,” an album that arrived just before her pivot from country’s youngest hope to pop’s freshest voice.

The album served as a close document of her nascent fame and future career ambitions, and now, 13 years on, it’s back. “Speak Now (Taylor’s Version),” released July 7, is the third release of the six albums Swift plans to re-record. The Taylor’s Version albums, instigated by music manager Scooter Braun’s sale of her early catalog, represent Swift’s effort to control her own songs and how they’re used — a fitting ethos for “Speak Now,” a record built exclusively of her own voice.

In preparation for “Speak Now (Taylor’s Version),” The Associated Press reached out to Taylor Swift scholars to discuss all the ways listeners can and should think about the release.

Adolescence to adulthood

Before “Speak Now” became “Speak Now,” the working title was “Enchanted,” named after the power ballad of the same name. The mythology (folklore, anyone?) behind the shift is that Swift’s label president at the time, Big Machine Records CEO Scott Borchetta, told her to move on from whimsy and fairytale iconography — she was entering her 20s and this LP warranted a more mature title.

Transition creates an interesting framework for thinking about this album: Written largely between the ages of 18 and 20, released when she turned 21, “Speak Now” is a collection of songs on a precipice — of adulthood, of fame, of declaring ownership but still concerned with the subject matters that concern a young adult. There are crushes (“Superman,” “Sparks Fly”) and bitter-

SEE SPEAK ON PAGE 29

Taylor Swift performs during “The Eras Tour” on May 5 at Nissan Stadium in Nashville.

GEORGE WALKER IV/AP

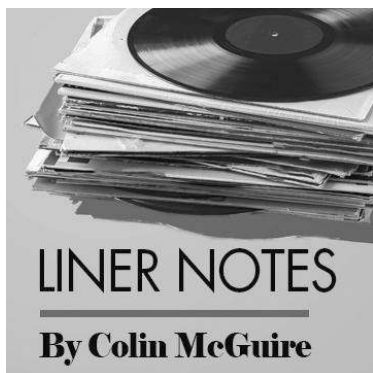


WEEKEND: MUSIC

Records shatter in this month's touring roundup

Guess who's back? Back again. Harry's back. Tell a friend.

Last month marked the first time in the brief history of our tour roundup that Harry Styles didn't appear on Pollstar's Live 75 chart, which tracks active tours by the average tickets sold for shows that happened over the past 30 days. The metric, which we spotlight each month here, had featured Styles each month of 2023 until last month, but now that we're in July ... well, he's back. And in the No. 3 spot, even, having sold an average of about 53,000 tickets in the past 30 days. Sitting atop the chart this month is Ed Sheeran, who nabbed the No. 1 spot by averaging about 62,000 tickets sold in the past 30 days. Those British boys sure know how to



dominate the live music world, don't they?

Speaking of Sheeran, he made news recently when he set a new record for attendance at a Gillette Stadium show, just outside of Boston. The "Thinking Out Loud" singer brought in 71,723 to his show there on July 1, besting U2, who set the most recent mark

for the stadium back in 2009. As for another record in the live music world, a pair of singer-songwriters made waves at the end of last month when they announced plans to play 50 shows in 50 states over the course of 49 nights. And yes, if they do it, the feat will be recognized as a Guinness World Record.

Devon Allman and Donavon Frankenreiter announced on June 30 that they will set out on Aug. 5, playing the first two shows of their tour in one day. The duo will begin in Annapolis, Md., before making the three-hour drive to Bethlehem, Pa., to perform later that night and knock out the first two shows/states of the tour. From there, they will perform in 48 states over the next 48 days. The trek

wraps up on Sept. 22 in California — and in case anyone was wondering, they will indeed hit both Hawaii and Alaska during their journey. According to Pollstar, Allman (he of Allman family fame) initially had the idea and presented it to Frankenreiter some time ago.

From there, it took the duo and all parties involved about a year to make the idea something that worked for everyone. The proverbial cherry on top comes in the form of an EP that the two recorded together in anticipation of making the tour happen.

A band that has never had a problem making things happen? L7. The rock group announced last week that they're going to set out for a quick fall tour this year. Beginning in New Jersey on Sept. 14, the trek will take them to

California on Oct. 7 over the course of nine scheduled shows in that timeframe.

Also heading out in September will be Brian Setzer, who will be touring under his Rockabilly Riot! solo project through October. The Jaunt begins in New Jersey on Sept. 27 and will go until Oct. 13 in Minneapolis.

And then there are the Breeders, who will celebrate 30 years of what is perhaps their best album, "Last Splash," beginning full-time in September after a one-off date in Idaho on Aug. 3. That tour will wrap in Seattle on Oct. 25.

No word yet on how audiences might be able to tell the difference between twin sisters Kim and Kelley Deal as they perform. To be fair, there's still time.

Happy concert-ing!

Speak: Album marks Swift's final set before going full-on pop

FROM PAGE 28

sweet breakups ("Back to December," "If This Was a Movie") alike.

"You hear a youngness when you listen to these songs," says musicologist Lily Hirsch, author of "Can't Stop the Grrrls: Confronting Sexist Labels in Music from Ariana Grande to Yoko Ono." "It's all about these romantic relationships. The world hinges on all of that, which is so typical of that age. So, it is interesting hear the re-recordings bring a more mature voice to those earlier preoccupations."

Elizabeth Scala teaches a course on Taylor Swift's songbook at the University of Texas at Austin as an introduction to literary studies and research methods.

"I think 'Speak Now' is still in the vein of 'I don't have enough life experience at my ripe age of 18 to give you a fully autobiographical anything, but I'm going to use what I read and what I know from other people,'" she says of the songs' lyrical content, which still manage to "make really beautiful, coherent things out of the messiness and inaccuracy of our memories."

In conversation

Coming a year after Kanye West interrupted her acceptance speech at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards, "Speak Now" is the moment in Swift's career where she began to use her celebrity as a mirror to her interior life.

"Mean," a takedown of a rock critic, becomes a banjo-led treatise on antagonism of any kind; the blues-y "Dear John" centers on a young woman's tumultuous



EVAN AGOSTINI/AP

John Mayer and Taylor Swift perform together at the 2009 Z100 Jingle Ball at Madison Square Garden in New York. Mayer is widely assumed to be the subject of Swift's song "Dear John."

relationship with an older man.

"Insults are everywhere in music, and men don't get the same flak for it," Hirsch says, in reference to "Dear John" and "Mean." "There's this idea that women especially are supposed to take the high road, turn the other cheek and all of that, and men can get away with the low road, and they certainly do in music. It's a kind of double standard. Women are labeled 'catty' when confronting bad behavior, like in 'Dear John.'"

A common pastime among Swift fans is to unearth the identities of her songs' subjects. But, to Scala, "the most boring way to think about Taylor Swift is in terms of her biography."

At a recent stop of her Eras Tour in Minneapolis, Swift seemed to agree, playing "Dear John" live for the first time in 11 years after delivering this introduction:

"I'm 33 years old. I don't care about anything that happened to me when I was 19 except the songs I wrote and the memories

we made together. So what I'm trying to tell you is, I'm not putting this album out so you should feel the need to defend me on the internet against someone you think I might have written a song about 14 billion years ago."

Scala sees a throughline between this album and its successors, with "Dear John" as a precursor to "All Too Well" and "Mean" as prescient to "Blank Space," a song that parodies how she's been portrayed in the media.

Revisionist history

Much online chatter surrounding the re-recording of "Speak Now" has centered on "Better Than Revenge," a pop-punk song that takes aim at another woman instead of the man that wronged them both. It takes both sonic and thematic cues from Paramore's 2007 pop-rock hit "Misery Business," a similar song about the same subject. (In fact, on "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)," Paramore singer Hayley Williams lends vocals to a "vault"

song, "Castles Crumbling.")

In the original chorus of "Better Than Revenge," Swift sings, "She's an actress / She's better known for the things she does on the mattress," a rare lyrical misstep in a career underscored by poetic turns of phrases (in the opener "Mine," she sings "You made a rebel of a careless man's careful daughter"). In her 2023 "Better Than Revenge" version, the lyric becomes "He was a moth to the flame / She was holding the matches."

"If we think about 2010, slut-shaming rhetoric certainly existed in movies and shows. She's certainly not the only one who has done this at that time," Hirsch argues, quick to point out that Swift has also been the target of sexist vitriol.

Swift's alteration of the song in her re-recording follows a lineage of other pop stars doing the same. Lizzo and Beyoncé recently changed lyrics to songs deemed offensive. Weird Al no longer performs his Michael Jackson parodies. And because Swift hasn't performed "Better Than Revenge" live for well over a decade, she hasn't needed to confront this particular song, in this particular way.

"We are willing to replace the old version with Taylor's Versions because they are exact replicas, as much as they can be," Scala argues. "If she does something different, it becomes a different song." A different song, this time, owned by Swift.

Art evolves with time

"From a literary historian's point of view, when you first hear 'Speak Now,' you could only look at her career up to that point: It

meant something in her creative timeline," says Scala. "And now we have the rest of her career to compare it to, so it's hard to listen to the record the same way. You can compare it to the older recording, but it's deeper and richer." Technology has changed from 2010. So has Swift: Her voice has matured, no longer possessing the sweet self-restraint that colored her earliest releases. Each release comes with a few "From the Vault" tracks, unreleased songs from each album's period reimagined for the current moment. They, too, give a fuller picture.

An exercise in autonomy

Beyond all of the music and cultural considerations, the fact is: Taylor Swift is re-recording this album to own her work, like she is doing with so many of her records — but this is the only album in her discography that is entirely self-penned, the one celebrated for its dismissals of exploitative male characters and poetic embrace of girlhood.

In fact, it's hard not to think of "Could've, Would've, Should've" from her 2022 LP, "Midnights," where Swift sings "Give me back my girlhood, it was mine first," as a self-reflection of her "Speak Now" self. That track is a creative reclamation of the teen who wrote "Dear John" as an adult; "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)" is the literal reclamation.

"Owning these masters, she decided to take back that control," Hirsch says. "I love what it communicates: that we all have power; we don't have to just sit back and take these situations, especially when it concerns our own voice."

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Adjusting to a life without stunts

Former 'Jackass' ringleader Knoxville discusses his new way of getting his adrenaline fix: co-hosting 'The Prank Panel'

BY KRISTA FAURIA
Associated Press

Johnny Knoxville is no stranger to head injuries. In the decades since he rose to fame as the daredevil ringleader of "Jackass," he has had more than a dozen concussions — that he knows of. But his most recent one was different.

Now, by doctor's orders, he has to get creative to chase that adrenaline fix through safer means. His latest attempt is with his "Jackass Forever" co-star Eric Andre and Oscar nominee Gabourey Sidibe on their new series, "The Prank Panel" on ABC.

Doing work tame enough to be on network television has been a major, but necessary, lifestyle adjustment for the 52-year-old thrill-seeking stuntman.

He suffered serious brain injuries after getting rammed by a bull for the fourth and final "Jackass" film, which was released in 2022. That led to nearly a year of depression and mental health struggles — a turn of events that made him permanently swear off those kinds of stunts despite his love of doing them.

"I think I got a little addicted to it, to the point where, you know, I scrambled my brains," he said. "I can do little stunts where if I, you know, break a hand or an ankle or whatever, no one cares about that. I just can't — no more concussions for me."

Knoxville isn't quite sure what it is about stunts that is so gratifying — is it the attention people give him, or the thrill of pulling it off?

"It's complicated," he said, pensively. "Being with everyone, all my friends around and, you know, it's just a real moment. But don't make me start romanticizing it."

So, for now, "The Prank Panel" will have to suffice. It's a kind of spoof on reality competition shows, where people come on and pitch ideas for pranks to the three hosts. If either Knoxville, Andre or Sidibe — billed on the series as the "world's greatest pranksters" — is convinced of the idea's merits, the hopeful prankster will get money, resources and help from their sponsor to execute the caper on an unsuspecting victim.

Knoxville, shown in the trailer hitting Andre between the legs, said he was pleasantly surprised when his attempts to push boundaries on the network show were met with purportedly little



WILLY SANJUAN, INVISION/AP

Johnny Knoxville poses for a portrait in Los Angeles on June 15 to promote his ABC series "The Prank Panel." On the show, guests compete to convince the hosts that their prank idea has the most merit.

resistance.

"I didn't worry about me being more buttoned up. They can beep my words and cut around when I'm really naughty. But I was just more concerned about what we could get away with on ABC," he recalled. "In hindsight, we got away with a lot more than I

thought we were able to."

The show even signed off on a prank that resulted in Knoxville being sued by a handyman who said he was subjected to a "terrifying ordeal" after being hired for a job listed on TaskRabbit. Knoxville's publicist interjected when he was asked to elaborate

but not before he jokingly asked, "Which lawsuit?"

The art of the prank can take on many forms and objectives. There are some who have garnered recognition for their social or political commentary — à la Sacha Baron Cohen's "Borat" — or there are pranks that are

"I like to confuse more than anything else. I don't want to make someone look stupid. I just want to create a really bizarre situation where they're like, 'What is happening?'"

Johnny Knoxville
co-host on ABC's "The Prank Panel"

meant to make the victim its champion: Think the recent cult series "Jury Duty," which sought to construct a hero's journey for the one being tricked.

But as Knoxville refined his theory of pranking over the years — a vital component of the "Jackass" franchise — his intentions crystallized into a simple aspiration: He just wants to be shocking.

"I like to confuse more than anything else. I don't want to make someone look stupid," he explained. "I just want to create a really bizarre situation where they're like, 'What is happening?'"

That approach has made him and the rest of the "Jackass" stars immune, in a lot of ways, to the complaints that some comedians have expressed about political correctness or cancel culture.

"Some might find it distasteful, and some may find it over the line, but it's not like anything that is going to truly upset anyone," he said. "But I know in other areas of comedy it's a little dicier these days."

In addition to realizing he has to restrain himself with stunts and physical comedy, Knoxville said his experience with having a long-term brain injury has also made him aware of the importance of mental health more broadly, something he is candid about with the hopes that it will help others.

"Having gone through it, it opens your eyes," he said. "For anyone out there suffering from depression or intrusive thoughts, just know that your brain is literally playing tricks on you. And if you seek the help of a psychiatrist, doctors, you can turn it around."

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Grylls' show challenges celebrities

Cooper, Cumberbatch, Erivo, Brand, Kotsur, Ora, Diggs, Maslany put to test on new season of 'Running Wild'

BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

For his latest role, Bradley Cooper leapt onto a hovering helicopter, rappelled down a 400-foot cliff and pulled himself across a 100-foot ravine in one of the harshest climates in North America.

His reward wasn't an Oscar nomination or a big box-office hit. It was a hug from adventurer Bear Grylls and some words of encouragement.

"He smashed it," Grylls says.

Cooper is one of several celebrities — including Benedict Cumberbatch, Cynthia Erivo, Russell Brand, Troy Kotsur, Rita Ora, Daveed Diggs and Tatiana Maslany — who put their survival skills to the test in a new season of Nat Geo's "Running Wild with Bear Grylls: The Challenge."

"I'm really proud of this season. We've had incredible guests who pushed the boundaries in terms of terrain and the challenge," Grylls told The Associated Press. "When there's real tough weather with fun people, it's often really compelling TV."

The series pairs Grylls with a celebrity for 48 hours in a harsh environment. The first day, Grylls teaches key skills — climbing techniques, water-finding tips and fire-setting, among them — and then the guest must do them alone the second day.

Kotsur, who won an Oscar for "CODA," was tested in the Scottish Highlands, descending 2,500 feet across eight miles of harsh terrain and freezing rivers, including a 150-foot rappel down a waterfall. Because Kotsur is deaf, the two men used rope tugs to communicate. Kotsur's reward: haggis, a Scottish delicacy in which organ meat is put inside a sheep's stomach and cooked.

Diggs, a city kid, finds himself in the inhospitable Great Basin Desert in Nevada.

"I don't know how this is going to go and that's why I'm doing it," he says. Diggs learns how to use anchor points, track a target and make a signal fire. His dinner is a tarantula.

"It's not what I was hoping for, I'm not going to lie to you," Diggs says.

Grylls told the AP the best guests are always those who come with a willingness to go with it, not to look good.

"The wild is so unpredictable and stuff is always happening. You can't look cool all the time in the wild," he said.

The show is not just about survival. Grylls' guests usually open up and show a different side. Ora talks about her ties to Kosovo, Cooper seems unfazed eating mule deer tongue and Cumberbatch reveals stories about his grandfather. Over a campfire, Grylls goes deeper than many TV interviewers.

"It's as much about the stars and their own personal journeys and struggles and battles as it is about the adventure and the places," he says. "I think that combination works well because it doesn't feel like a performance, like a chat show does, where you're dressed up and made up and you get three minutes."

Cumberbatch is taken to the Isle of Skye, where his grandfather trained as a submariner. He learns how to



PHOTOS BY NAT GEO/AP

Bradley Cooper traverses a ravine during his journey through the Pathfinder Canyon area in Wyoming in "Running Wild with Bear Grylls: The Challenge." In the show, he also leaps onto a hovering helicopter and rappels down a cliff.

"The wild strips us all bare, doesn't it? It's like a grape: when you squeeze us, you see what we're made of. And that's always the appealing part of 'Running Wild' — getting to know the real people."

Bear Grylls

use climbing talons and how to tie an Italian hitch knot.

"It's not the same as doing a stunt on a Marvel film. It's a lot more real," Cumberbatch says. His meal is seaweed and limpets — "Definitely al dente," he jokes — and his bed is a wet field.

Ora arrives at the Valley of Fire in Nevada following a 15,000-foot skydive, learns a chimney climb, butchers a dead pigeon, sacrifices her lip balm to make a fire and uses a sock to soak up water. She and Grylls even dance on a rock ledge, casting their shadows tall.

"The wild strips us all bare, doesn't it?" Grylls told the AP. "It's like a grape: when you squeeze us, you see what we're made of. And that's always the appealing part of 'Running Wild' — getting to know the real people."

One commonality among the guests is that viewers will often hear it was the celebrity's parents who instilled in them a sense of adventure and testing themselves.

"It's a reminder of just how important parenting is," Grylls said. "Almost invariably when I ask stars, 'Where does it come from?' they go, 'Oh, my dad was amazing when I was really struggling at school.' Or, 'My mum was just such inspiration holding down three jobs.'"

"Running Wild with Bear Grylls" is only one of several shows the adventurer is juggling. On TBS this year, he



Troy Kotsur, who is deaf, signs to Bear Grylls in the Scottish Highlands in a scene from "Running Wild with Bear Grylls: The Challenge."

debuted "I Survived Bear Grylls," a competition series that bridges the survival and game show genres by having regular contestants re-create some of Grylls' stunts — like digging through poop or drinking urine. Younger fans can also enjoy "You vs. Wild," an interactive Netflix show that asks viewers to choose how Grylls will make it out of the wilderness alive.

"I'm not going to be doing these shows forever, but hopefully having an adventurous spirit and knowing the value of great friends and the power of a never-give-up attitude in the world — hopefully those things will keep going," the 49-year-old said.

He seems to have tapped into something deep in the human DNA — a need to be able to start a fire, use tools and master the wild. But Grylls thinks it's more than that.

"I really believe it's a state of mind. We don't have to be in the wild to live an adventurous life," he said. "It's how we live our life, how we approach our work, our relationships, our dreams, our aspirations, our interactions with people. Are we leaning on the adventure side? Are we always pushing the boundaries, taking a few risks?"

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Prime suspect for parental concern

Politicians, health experts say that guardians should be worried about energy drink's caffeine, marketing

BY JENNIFER HASSAN
AND TEDDY AMENABAR

The Washington Post

P rime energy drinks are highly caffeinated beverages in brightly-colored cans with flavors such as Ice Pop and Tropical Punch. Now some politicians and experts are raising concerns that the drinks aren't safe for young people.

Prime Energy and Prime's sports drinks have achieved a cultlike status thanks to the viral online marketing campaign by the beverage company's creators, YouTube stars Logan Paul and KSI, who combined have 40 million subscribers.

Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., said Prime's website lacks warnings and other information to help parents understand the "eye-popping" caffeine content in its drinks. He's calling on the Food and Drug Administration to investigate the company, which he says is "feverishly" targeting children.

Here's what you need to know about the caffeine content in Prime Energy, how it compares to other drinks and what experts say about whether kids should be drinking them:

Why is Prime Energy controversial?

Prime Energy has 200 milligrams of caffeine in a 12-ounce can, which is about six times the amount of caffeine in a comparable can of Coca-Cola. It also has taurine, inositol, 1-theanine and glucuronolactone, ingredients commonly found in other energy drinks. The company also makes Prime Hydration, a sports drink that doesn't have caffeine.

The cans of the energy drink state that the product is not recommended for children under age 18, women who are pregnant or nursing, or people who are sensitive to caffeine.

Schumer says this warning is not enough, and parents could get the caffeinated and non-caffeinated beverages of Prime mixed up.

A spokesperson for Prime wrote in an email that the two drinks the company sells "are vastly different" products.

Prime Energy "contains a comparable amount of caffeine to other top selling energy drinks, all falling within the legal limit of the countries it's sold in," the spokesperson said. "It is an energy drink and is not made for anyone under the age of 18."

Prime's spokesperson said the company's "top priority" is consumer safety, and they welcome discussions with the FDA

regarding suggested changes to the industry "in order to protect consumers."

Canadian health authorities have also voiced concerns that cans sold there may be exceeding regulations on limits for caffeine. The president of the Canadian Beverage Association told CBC that safety for consumers should be a "top priority," while Prime told the outlet it follows each country's regulations.

How does it compare to other caffeinated beverages?

Most energy drinks contain about 100 to 300 mg of caffeine per serving, experts say. Here's a side-by-side comparison of caffeine content in some popular drinks:

- Prime Energy (12 ounces): 200 mg
- Celsius (12 ounces): 200 mg
- Starbucks Cold Brew with Vanilla Sweet Cream (11 ounces): 155 mg
- Monster Energy (12 ounces): 123 mg
- Red Bull (12 ounces): 108 mg
- Diet Coke (12 ounces): 46.8 mg
- Snapple iced peach tea (16 ounces): 37 mg

Is 200 mg a lot of caffeine?

Kate Zeratsky, a registered dietitian nutritionist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., said 200 mg of caffeine is a moderate amount of caffeine for the average American.

"That's roughly two cups of coffee, which I think is a fairly common intake for a lot of people," Zeratsky said. "Not very many people drink a six- to eight-ounce cup of coffee anymore."

The FDA doesn't require beverage companies to list the amount of caffeine on their products, Zeratsky said. But there's this "cautionary tale" with energy drinks from reports of people admitted to emergency rooms after drinking too many of the caffeinated beverages.

An FDA spokesperson wrote in an email that the agency is reviewing the letter by Schumer.

The FDA spokesperson went on to say that families should be aware there are "many different types" of caffeinated products available to buy. And that parents and caregivers should "read a product's label" before giving it to their child.

How much is too much caffeine?

Caffeine is a stimulant that affects the central nervous system and can boost our alertness and enhance our ability to concentrate. It's found naturally in plants used to make coffee, tea and chocolate.

Pediatricians recommend children under 12 avoid caffeine completely and kids who are 12 and older consume up to only 100 mg per day. Physicians recommend adults have no more than 400 milligrams of caffeine a day, which is about four or five cups of coffee.

"These products are dangerous if you



PHOTOS BY BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP

Above: Prime Energy drinks displayed for sale in a supermarket July 11. Below: Prime Energy has 200 milligrams of caffeine in a 12-ounce can, which is about six times the amount of caffeine in a comparable can of Coca-Cola.



haven't developed a tolerance for caffeine and a child decides to chug two, three of them in a sitting," said Jennifer Harris, a senior research adviser at the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut.

According to the FDA, "rapid consumption" of around 1,200 mg of caffeine can lead to "toxic effects," such as seizures.

Some people are more sensitive to caffeine than others. It depends on how fast your body metabolizes the stimulant and whether you've built a tolerance to caffeine after drinking a cup of coffee every morning for years.

Some groups of people with blood pressure issues or other preexisting conditions need to talk to their doctor about whether they should limit caffeine, Zeratsky said.

What are the side effects?

Too much caffeine can cause anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, gastrointestinal problems and cardiovascular symptoms, said Shelina Visram, a senior lecturer in public health at Britain's Newcastle University and Fuse, the U.K. Centre for Translational Research in Public Health.

One concern is that energy drinks are

more likely to be consumed at a faster rate than coffee or tea because they're chilled beverages, not steaming hot, Visram said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, legal stimulants in energy drinks, such as taurine, can cause dehydration, anxiety, insomnia and heart complications.

After consuming a lot of caffeine, your heart can start to feel as if it's racing or skipping beats, said Holly Benjamin, a professor of pediatrics and orthopedic surgery and a pediatric sports medicine specialist at the University of Chicago. And a child or teenager will be more affected by the same dose of caffeine.

Caffeine acts "like a drug," Benjamin said. "If you take a high dose of caffeine because you want to stay more awake, and you want it to stimulate your brain, you can't stop it from also affecting your heart rate, blood pressure, your stomach, the gastric secretions that you have."

Benjamin said students may rely on the drinks to help them stay awake to finish homework or write a paper. But physicians are more concerned with the "addictive-type behavior" of those who drink energy drinks every day.

WEEKEND: FAMILY



The stress of a 2nd child

Expect logistical, emotional chaos when adding another human to the family

BY CAITLIN GIBSON
The Washington Post

If you have one kid, and you're expecting another, you might think you know something about what's coming, and how to prepare for it. But then an entirely distinct and unique new baby arrives, blithely indifferent to an older sibling's blueprint, and you realize you have to learn how to care for this tiny stranger while also caring for your first offspring, who probably has some big feelings about the radical realignment of their family unit. Until this transition is upon you, the logistical and emotional chaos of having to divide your focus between two small humans (never mind yourself, never mind a partner) is hard to fathom.

"I think the shift from one to two children is such a drastic change in everyone's life, and it is not explored enough or mentioned in general conversation," says Sherisa de Groot, a mother of two and founder of the online literary platform Raising Mothers. "I feel like I spent most of my pregnancy preparing my son and very little preparing myself."

Several moms interviewed for this story said that, before the arrival of a second kid, they felt comforted by how reasonable the number sounded: two. But there are certain realms where mathematics gets complicated and counterintuitive — like quantum field theory, or the addition of one child to a family that already has one child.

"One child is one," says Joanna Kaylor, a mom to a 4-year-old son and 2-year-old daughter in Virginia. "Two children are actually somewhere between three and five kids' worth of everything." Add a stomach virus or a lice infestation to the equation, and a parent can no longer offer a numerical estimate because they've sprinted off into the hills wearing a lampshade for a hat.

Ryann Fapohunda, who has 3-year-old and 1-year-old boys, says she tried to brace herself, asking her friends what to expect when she was pregnant with her second. "My friends were like, 'You know, there are days where I don't even wash my face. I'm just too busy.' And I'm like, 'What do you mean? You don't wash your face?'" She laughs. "I didn't understand. And now I do."

In the early years of a two-child family, there is an overwhelming physicality to the act of parenting. There is constant carrying, changing, buckling and dressing, the daunting task of supervising and safeguarding two bodies. Most parents of two (or more) kids have a story (or 10) about confronting this reality.

Kaylor can still picture the morning when she was helping her 4-year-old son use the bathroom and she heard the sound of fluid splashing in the kitchen. It took her a moment to deduce that her toddler daughter was pouring milk all over the table and the floor, and there was absolutely nothing Kaylor could do about it.

"When I came back in the kitchen, my daughter was playing in the milk and needed a bath," she says. "Which meant my son also wanted a bath. At 8 a.m., as I was trying to get them out the door to day care."

For Sarah Holmes Walden, a mom of two in North Carolina, the breaking point was always dinner-time, when her husband was still at work and she was juggling her newborn and toddler.

"I remember one night having food on the stove, and my son was crying, and my 2-year-old daughter was asking for something and pulling on my legs," she says. "I had to turn the fire off, feed my son, take care of my daughter, and dinner still wasn't made, and then I remember looking around and being like: 'Oh, gosh, there's also laundry. There are bottles in the sink that need to be washed.'" It's hard to find a word for what that time felt like, she says, except: "Whoa."

When second-time moms seek support from Jessica Zucker, a psychologist who specializes in maternal and reproductive mental health, they often tell her that they're struggling with feelings of guilt over spending less quality time with their older child. They tell her that it's hard to find time to rest and care for themselves.

"Second-time mothers, in my clinical experience, all too often blame themselves for 'not being able to do it all,'" she says. "And yet, they are juggling it all! The culprit, I tell them, is the culture not supporting us in deep and meaningful ways as mothers."

Some parents find that their friends and family don't rally around them as intensely for baby No. 2. Zucker says she's heard second-time moms wonder aloud in therapy sessions about whether people "even care" about meeting a second child.

"The emotional temperature of the second-time mother seems not to be taken the way it is the first time around," Zucker says. "Checking in. Sending food, flowers, gifts, support. My sense, though, is that it's less a function of people not caring, but more of an assumption that mothers have 'got this,' since it is not their first rodeo."

But it's still uncharted territory: "No two pregnancies, deliveries or babies are the same," she says. "No two motherhoods are necessarily the same, either."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Do civilians still respect notion of military service?

As I traipse further down the road of life, I've begun to lose perspective on certain things. Any semblance of fashion sense. Modern music. I no longer care about getting a tan.

More concerning, I worry that I've lost my perspective on the true value of military service. Ever since we entered the post-9/11 era, scientists have studied the "military-civilian divide." Myths sprang out of the ever-widening "gap in understanding" between civilians and military, creating a more insular military community and civilian population that wasn't interested.

The public's general support for U.S. military forces in the years after 9/11 waned as people became war-weary, conflicts ended and warriors survived intact. By the time of the botched Afghanistan withdrawal, U.S. public opinion of the military had reached a low point, affecting military recruiting efforts, veteran hiring and military strength.

I have never questioned our family's decision to stay in the Navy. Our pride in military service never wavered, and I believed, perhaps naively, that the vast majority of military-connected people felt the same sense of honor.

However, recently I've begun to question the accuracy of my beliefs. Do people still hold military service in high regard, or has it become just another job like truck mechanic, medical assistant or airline pilot?

Recently, a friend commented that today's military recruits sign up for the benefits or because they "graduate and don't have other options." I didn't question him at the time, but his comment twisted and turned in the back of my brain, until I had to know if he was right.

Researching, I found the Reagan National Defense Survey, an annual study gauging American's concerns about the military. The study indicated that public trust and confidence in the U.S. military fell from 70% approval in 2018 down to 45% in 2021. There was an uptick last year to 48%, but the reports indicate that the majority of Americans think negatively about the military. The cynicism is especially prevalent among younger Americans. People between 18 and 45 have an unfavorable view of the U.S. military, according to 2022 polling, which is particularly concerning considering that this age pool must be tapped for new military recruits.

In my middle-aged military spouse mind, I could chalk all these abysmal facts up to the gap in understanding. "The public just doesn't get it," I might say. "Those of us who lived military life know better!"

However, I also found studies indicating that the percentage of military-connected people who would recommend military service to others is dropping fast — from 75% in 2019 to 63% in 2021.

I did find two studies that debunk the preconceived notion that the military is "a refuge for the unfortunate" who serve because they have no other options. Although the public perceives that military recruits are less-educated and less-skilled people that sign up out of "desperation," the truth is that most are from middle-class backgrounds and have cognitive skills advanced enough to handle the increased demands of America's "information-dominant, expeditionary" military force. Forty-three percent of those who served cited patriotic or citizenship reasons, and 48% listed pay and benefits as the primary reason, but very few of those who served said their motivation was desperation.

The only thing that was clear from my research was that it is difficult to prove that military service is an honorable, respectable thing to do with one's life. However, I still have my perceptions, as old-fashioned as they may be. Despite the depressing statistics I found, I believe that serving one's country is the best and smartest thing any American can do. Our family has no regrets about the 28 years my husband spent serving in the Navy, only pride.

And that's a fact.

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

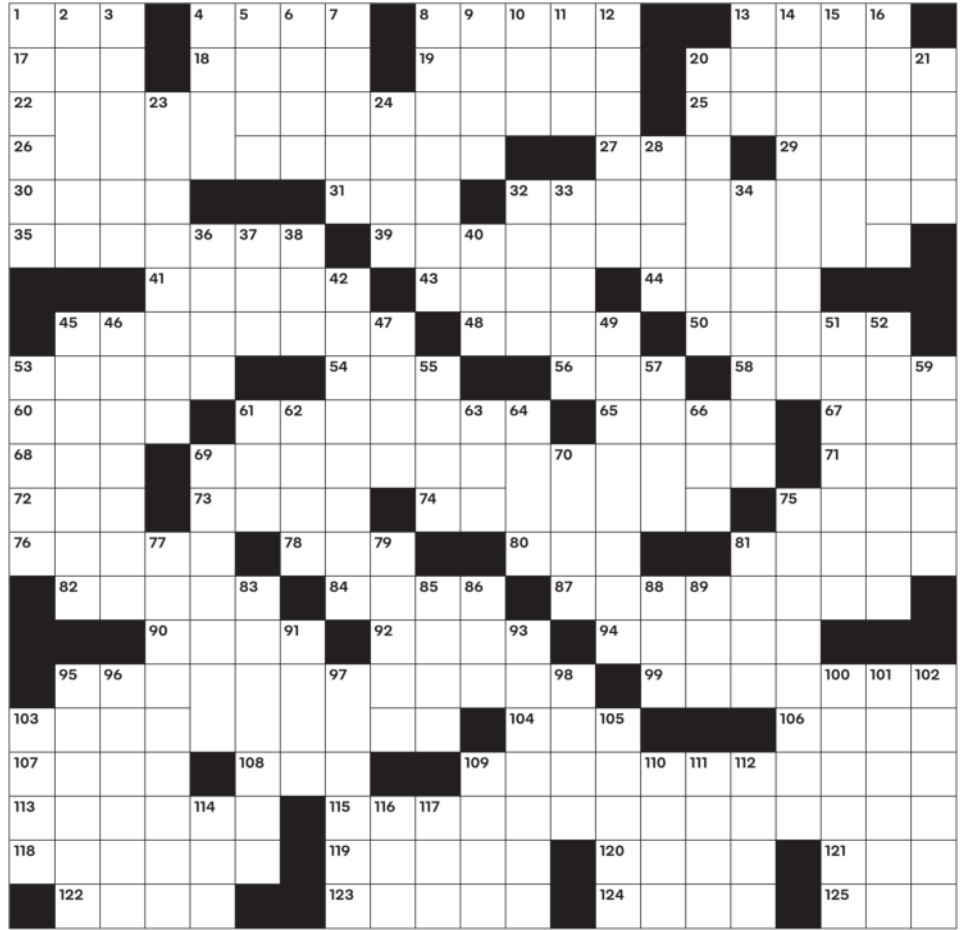
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

ABOUT TWO FEET

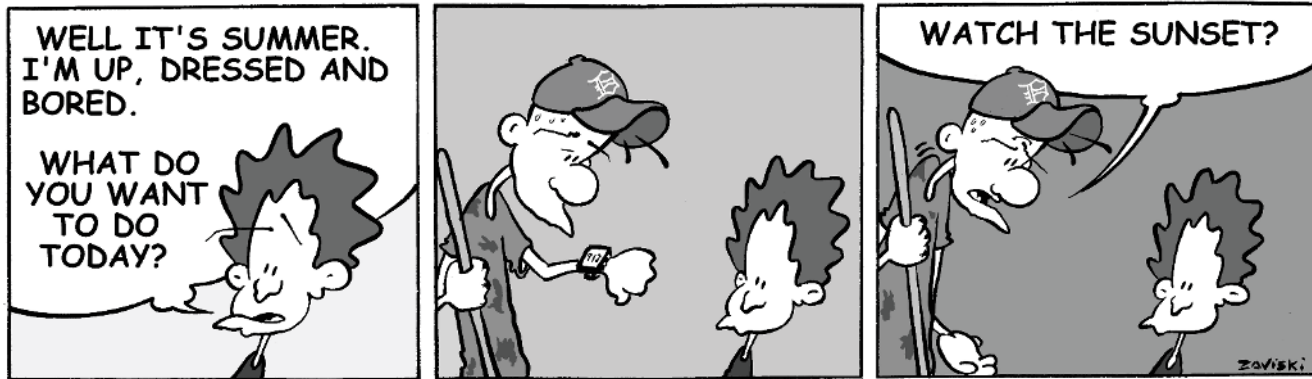
BY REBECCA GOLDSTEIN AND RAFAEL MUSA / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Rebecca Goldstein, of Albany, Calif., is a research scientist at Merck, developing immunotherapies for cancer. Rafael Musa, of San Francisco, is a software engineer at Airbnb. Each has been published individually in The Times, but this is their first collaboration. As friends they see each other occasionally at Bay Area puzzle events and otherwise. They worked separately, though, through many different versions, to implement this crossword's ambitious theme. — W. S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Band with the 2021 No. 1 hit "Butter"
 - 4 Under 1%, say
 - 8 What always has time on its hands
 - 13 Turns down
 - 17 Abraham Accords country: Abbr.
 - 18 "Put your wallet away"
 - 19 Hill who wrote "Speaking Truth to Power"
 - 20 Think of
 - 22 1980 film that led to the creation of the Academy Award for best makeup
 - 25 Broadway, e.g.
 - 26 Mobile homes, punnily
 - 27 Secretary of the interior Haaland
 - 29 Oil company with toy trucks
 - 30 Georgetown athlete
 - 31 Razor edges?
 - 32 Coin-toss spots, once
 - 35 Longed (for)
 - 39 What "X" could mark on a map
 - 41 Jazz genre for Charlie Parker
 - 43 Court count
 - 44 "___ that somethin'!"
 - 45 Author of "The Climate Book," 2022
 - 48 Vegetable that can be slimy when cooked
 - 50 Abounds
 - 53 Crystal container
 - 54 Airport across the bay from SFO
 - 56 OB-GYN offering
 - 58 Group of candidates
 - 60 Pantomimes, perhaps
 - 61 Important part of a toddler's day
 - 65 What follows You on the internet
 - 67 Paella seasoning
 - 68 "Don't be ___!"
 - 69 In which "P or Q, but not both" is represented as (P ∨ Q) ∧ ¬(P ∧ Q)
 - 71 Prompt
 - 72 Soup often made with rice vermicelli noodles
 - 73 ___-Missouria Tribe
 - 74 Peacock seen on TV
 - 75 Called up
 - 76 Diner-caddy offering
 - 78 Garage brand
 - 80 Alley ___
 - 81 "My goodness!"
 - 82 Linguistic group including Zulu and Xhosa
 - 84 Coast, in a way
 - 87 Highfalutin
 - 90 Zero
 - 92 Does an impression of
 - 94 Give in
 - 95 "Stop, I'm blushing!"
 - 99 Break after a major fall?
 - 103 Evening coffee order
 - 104 Sch. whose mascot is Brutus Buckeye
 - 106 Love, at the Louvre
 - 107 The "I" in FIFA: Abbr.
 - 108 Greek vowel
 - 109 "This was fun, but I gotta go"
 - 113 Mages' accessories
 - 115 High standards established by a predecessor . . . or what you are presented with in this puzzle?
 - 118 File menu option
 - 119 Future 122-Across
 - 120 Like heterochromia in eyes
 - 121 Actress Long
 - 122 Future flower
 - 123 Author/economist Emily
 - 124 Makes a case against, say
 - 125 Ready-to-go link?
 - 10 Collegiate beaver mascot whose name is its school spelled backward
 - 11 Overseer of Windy City buses and trains, in brief
 - 12 Twitter username
 - 13 Software engineer, for short
 - 14 Chill place to stay?
 - 15 "Olympia" painter
 - 16 Like some winter roads
 - 20 Chinese zodiac animal of 2023
 - 21 Minus
 - 23 AirPods, e.g.
 - 24 National org. that doesn't actually have an age requirement for membership
 - 28 Designer Schiaparelli
 - 32 Go down in flames
 - 33 Cheri of Hollywood
 - 34 "Be right with you!"
 - 36 Wildlife spotted in Haleakala National Park
 - 37 Recede
 - 38 Female 20-Down
 - 40 ___ Negro (Amazon tributary)
 - 42 Certain side wagers, informally
 - 45 Silicon Valley, e.g.
 - 46 Angles above 90 degrees?
 - 47 Cat, in Spanish
 - 49 Feature that helps to avoid late penalties
 - 51 Contents of some streaks on cheeks
 - 52 Unflagging
 - 53 Shocked sounds
 - 55 Pottery oven
 - 57 Excavated
 - 59 Poetic lament
 - 61 Sullivan's opponent in a landmark free speech case: Abbr.
 - 62 Stephen K. ____, British stand-up comedian
 - 63 Alien-film franchise, for short
 - 64 Prefix with sphere or system
 - 66 Prefix with sphere or system
 - 69 In a way
 - 70 Online initialism rarely meant literally
 - 75 Proxima Centauri, e.g.
 - 77 Alternative to a monthly charge
 - 79 Actor Oliver
 - 81 Ventimiglia of "This Is Us"
 - 83 "Although . . ."
 - 85 Pentathlon event
 - 86 "___ Rosenkavalier"
 - 88 That guy's
 - 89 Recliner setting
 - 91 Accept, as losses
 - 93 Show excessive affection toward
 - 95 Gossips
 - 96 B to B, e.g.
 - 97 We don't talk about that
 - 98 Petrol brand
 - 100 Attention-grabbing protests
 - 101 Charlotte ____, capital of the U.S. Virgin Islands
 - 102 Loudly chastise
 - 103 Insult
 - 105 Rated rides
 - 109 Deer ____, Maine vacation destination
 - 110 "Man of the open country," in Genesis
 - 111 French 101 verb
 - 112 Turndowns
 - 114 It goes in and out
 - 116 E.R. lines
 - 117 ___ check



GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

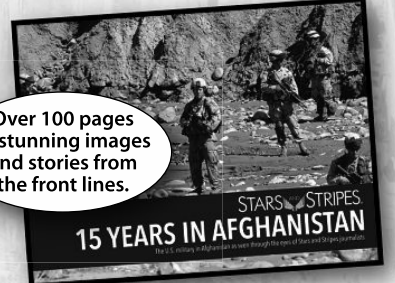
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From left: Photographer Evgeniy Maloletka, "Frontline" producer/editor Michelle Mizner, director Mstyslav Chernov and field producer Vasilisa Stepanenko pose for a portrait to promote the film "20 Days in Mariupol" during the Sundance Film Festival on Jan. 22 in Utah.

Capturing a city under assault

Wrenching AP/'Frontline' documentary '20 Days in Mariupol' reaches stateside theaters

BY LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Associated Press video journalist Mstyslav Chernov had just broken out of Mariupol after covering the first 20 days of the Russian invasion of the Ukrainian city and was feeling guilty about leaving. He and his colleagues, photographer Evgeniy Maloletka and producer Vasilisa Stepanenko, had been the last journalists there, sending crucial dispatches from a city under a full-scale assault.

The day after, a theater with hundreds of people sheltering inside was bombed and he knew no one was there to document it. That's when Chernov decided he wanted to do something bigger.

He'd filmed some 30 hours of footage over his days in Mariupol. But poor — and sometimes no — internet connections made it extremely difficult to export anything. All told, he estimates only about 40 minutes of that successfully made it out to the world.

"Those shots which went out were very important. They went on the AP and then to thousands of news outlets," Chernov said earlier this year. "However, I had much more. ... I thought I should do something more. I should do something more with that 30 hours of footage to tell a bigger story and more context to show the audience of the scale."

The bigger story became a documentary, "20 Days in Mariupol," a joint project between The Associated Press and PBS "Frontline," which premiered earlier this year at Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, where it won the audience award for world cinema documentary. Their reporting was also awarded two Pulitzer Prizes, including the prestigious public service award and for breaking news

photography. And now the film is coming to a handful of theaters around the U.S. in July, starting with New York and Chicago this weekend.

Chernov knew there were many ways to tell this story. But he decided early on to keep it contained to those harrowing first 20 days that he and his colleagues were on the ground, to evoke the claustrophobic feeling of being trapped. He also chose to narrate it himself and tell it as a journalist would.

"It's just a lens through which we see the stories of Mariupol's residents, the death, their suffering the destruction of their homes," he said. "At the same time, I felt that I can do it. I'm allowed to do it because I'm part of the community. I was born in eastern Ukraine and (a) photographer who worked with me was born in the city which is right next to Mariupol, which got occupied. So this is our story too."

As an AP employee, Chernov was extremely aware of maintaining neutrality and being unbiased.

"It's OK to tell the audiences about your emotions," he said. "It's just important to not let those emotions dictate what you show and don't show. ... While narrated by me, I still tried to keep it fair."

He encounters quite a few different reactions to him and his colleagues being on the ground. Some thanked them for doing their jobs. Some called them prostitutes. Some doctors urged them to film graphic scenes of injured and dead children to show the world what had been done.

After Chernov left Mariupol and was finally able to catch up with the news reports around the world, he was stunned by the effect their footage had. They followed up with people they'd met during their time there, some who

got out, others who didn't and asked whether or not they'd affected their lives.

Some said relatives had found them because of the footage, or that they'd been able to get help. Doctors and officials said it made it easier to negotiate the green corridor to safety.

"I don't know how much of that is our footage, how much of that is just what happens," Chernov said. "But I really would like to believe that we did make a difference, because I guess that's what journalism is about, to inform people so they make certain decisions."

At Sundance he was able to watch the film, edited by Michelle Mizner of "Frontline," with an audience two times. The film got a standing ovation at the premiere. And at a subsequent screening he met several audience members who said they were from Mariupol and that their relatives were escaping the besieged city at the same time he was.

"I hoped they will have emotional responses, and they did. But at the same time, to watch people crying, it's hard," he said. "When you place an audience for 90 minutes into this chaos and this mess and this violence, there is a risk of people getting too overwhelmed or even pushed back by the amount of this violence."

"You just really want to show how it really was," he added. "That was the main challenge of making choices while assembling the film. How do you show the gravity, but at the same time not push the audience away? ... We had already two screenings, and audience responses are very strong. People are crying, people are depressed and they express a wide range of feelings, from anger, to sadness, to grief. That is what I as a filmmaker intended to do."

"But at the same time, I realize that probably that's not easy for everyone."

Fillion cast as Green Lantern in Gunn film

From news reports

"Firefly" actor Nathan Fillion will don the emerald ring as the Green Lantern in James Gunn's upcoming film "Superman Legacy," the director confirmed Tuesday on Twitter. Fillion's portrayal of Guy Gardner will mark the first big-screen appearance for a Green Lantern since Ryan Reynolds played the hero in 2011's ill-fated "Green Lantern."



Fillion

But Fillion is no stranger to the role. He voiced the superhero in several DC animated movies from 2011 to 2019.

Fillion's involvement in the film was inevitable as he has participated in all of Gunn's feature films. Most recently, the "Castle" star appeared as T.D.K. in Gunn's 2021 adaptation of "The Suicide Squad" and provided comedic relief as Master Karja in this year's "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3."

"Superman Legacy" is slated for a July 11, 2025, theatrical release.

Foxx still 'not 100%'

Jamie Foxx is still recovering from an undisclosed health issue that led to his hospitalization this spring. Despite appearing in public in Chicago over the weekend for the first time in months, the 55-year-old actor is still "not 100%," according to a new report from US Weekly.

"Jamie is doing so much better and he's starting to feel like himself again. He's not 100% and is still taking things easy, but he's definitely on the road to recovery," a source told the magazine.

Foxx was hospitalized in April after suffering a "medical complication," daughter Corinne Foxx said at the time.

Other news

■ There's a new host in the "Top Chef" kitchen. Season 10 winner **Kristen Kish**, who competed on the Emmy-winning Bravo series in 2013, will replace former host Padma Lakshmi when Season 21 sets up shop in Wisconsin, producers announced Tuesday.

■ Actors **Claire Danes, 44**, and **Hugh Dancy, 48**, have welcomed their third child together, a representative confirmed Tuesday to the L.A. Times. The name and date of birth of the newborn, a baby girl, were not revealed.

■ **Britney Spears** is finally ready to share her story, years after her conservatorship came to an end in 2021. "The Woman in Me" will hit book shelves Oct. 24, the singer announced via Twitter on Tuesday.



All honorably discharged Veterans and Department of Defense civilians with CAC can shop tax free at *shopmyexchange.com*. In addition, the Department of Defense expanded in-store military exchange and commissary shopping privileges as well as MWR resale facility use to all Veterans with service-connected disabilities.



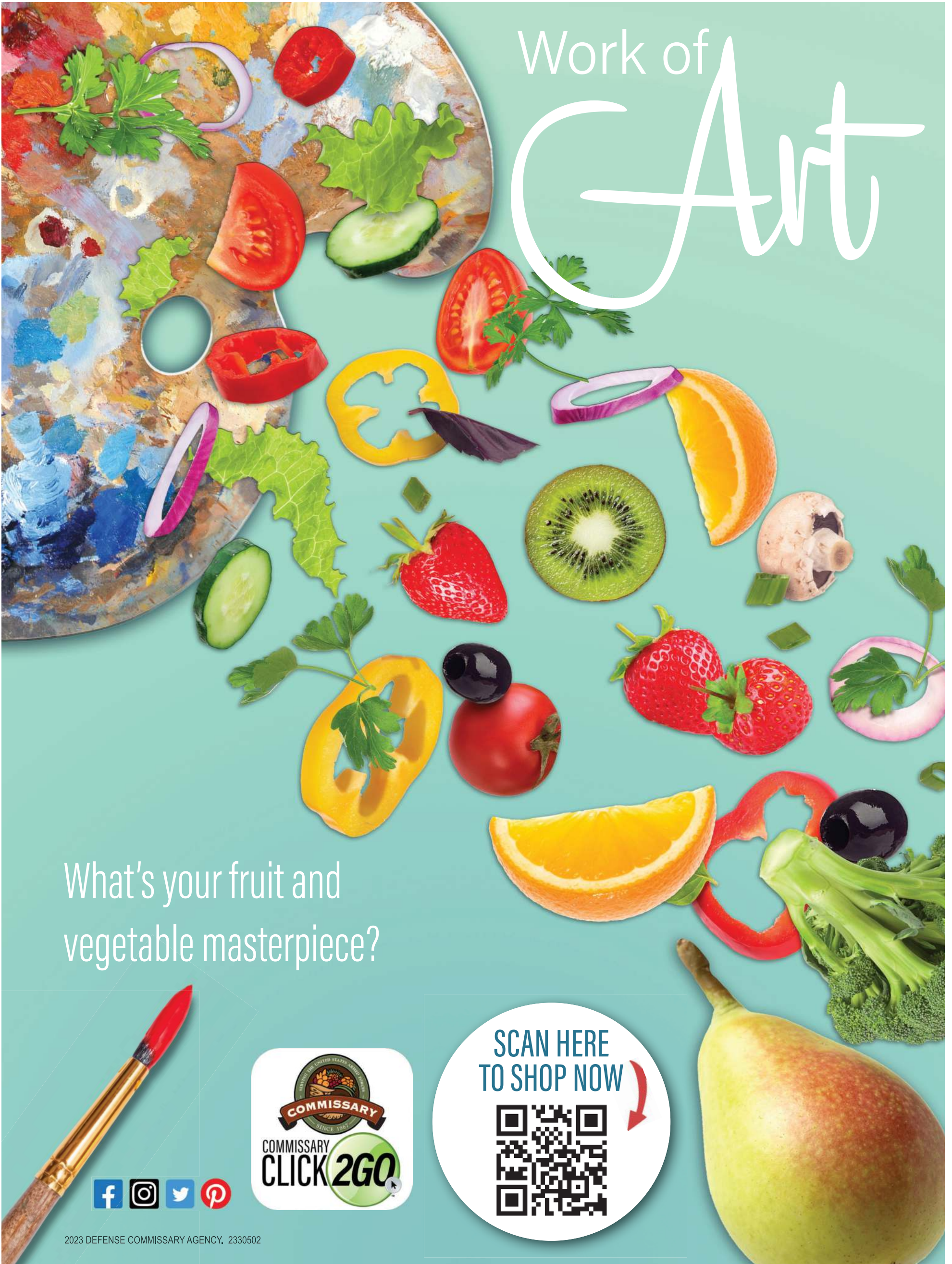
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American ways of life are many and can coexist

By DANIEL O. JAMISON

The Fulcrum

“Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!” — so declared Sen. Daniel Webster in ending his famous 1830 reply in the U.S. Senate to South Carolina Sen. Robert Hayne’s angry defense of slavery and of a state’s right to nullify federal law.

Leading up to the Civil War in 1861, Southerners loved an America that they believed included a God-given right to enslave others. To question their way of life was to question everything about them. They hated it.

Not happy with the outcome of the 1860 presidential election of Abraham Lincoln as president, the South rejected the Constitution, rebelled and seceded from the Union to protect their way of life. Lincoln and the North saw secession as dooming our democratic republic and its revolutionary ideals if states unhappy with an election outcome could simply leave the Union.

The South’s beliefs were pernicious. The new vice president of the Confederacy promptly announced: “Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea [from all are created equal]; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition. This, our new Government, is the first in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical and moral truth.”

Earlier this year there was again talk of secession if its proponents cannot have their way. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis even essentially proposed to nullify the Constitution’s Article IV requirement to extradite former President Donald Trump to New York.

Have they not learned that the South suffered a devastating military defeat?

Speaking in reply to President Joe Biden’s State of the Union address, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders said: “Today, our freedom is under attack. The America we love is in danger.” What America is she referring to?

No one, whether on the left or right, can claim that their way is the only American way of life. The Constitution and its amendments reflect decisions of “We the People” that the ways of all Americans, whatever their color, religion or culture, are American ways of life as long as they respect the rights of others under the Constitution and the law.

Something is desperately wrong with American education if large portions of the country, on the right or left, do not understand this.

Each generation holds a great trust for succeeding generations to preserve and build upon the nation’s evolving foundation. The decadeslong neglect of American history and civics in our schools has violated that great trust and led to political violence.

State universities can begin to correct this neglect by requiring for admission more history and civics courses in high school. High schools generally require on-

ly a few American history and civics courses because that is all that state universities require for admission.

Overemphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has depleted history teachers at all levels. More high school civics and history courses should also cause universities to have and train more teachers of these subjects.

Sanders adds: “Our children are taught to hate one another on account of their race, but not to love one another or our great country.” Where this statement may be true, the teaching is wrong, but nothing should be glossed over in the good and bad of our history and civics. Fear that frank discussion of racism in America might cause hatred of white students is unwarranted and prevents progress in dealing with the ongoing consequences of past racism.

Youth need to know what happened, even if some ancestors’ acts were monumentally atrocious (such as participating in savage lynchings). They must also be taught that while they are not responsible for the wrongs of ancestors, they are responsible to know the ongoing effects of what ancestors did and to deal maturely with one another in addressing those effects.

Also, long-delayed before Congress is the proposed Civics Secures Democracy Act, which aims to improve civics and history education.

“Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!”

Daniel O. Jamison is a retired attorney.

On hiring military spouses, the government has work to do

By MELISSA A. SULLIVAN

Special to The Washington Post

Summer for most American families means hitting the beach (or the road), but for countless military families, it’s PCS — or permanent change of station — season.

“PCS-ing” is military jargon for packing up your life, saying goodbye to friends and relocating to an area hundreds of miles from your most recent home — and repeating this dozens of times throughout a military career.

On average, military families move every two to three years. Not only is this emotionally exhausting, but it also makes it difficult for military spouses like me to find or maintain employment.

High spousal unemployment is a problem as the military grapples with a recruiting and retention crisis 50 years into our all-volunteer service, and with a large-scale conflict potentially looming. It adds to the financial strain on military families and contributes to many service members’ decision to opt out and pursue more attractive civilian opportunities — which in turn affects the readiness of our fighting forces.

With rising inflation, many military families struggle to make ends meet without dual incomes. According to the latest Military Family Lifestyle Survey conducted by Blue Star Families, a nonprofit organization that advocates for the military community, 1 in 7 enlisted families had experienced food insecurity in the previous 12 months.

In that same survey, 35% of military spouses reported being unemployed “but

need or want employment.” Defense Department data show that the official rate has been around 21% for almost a decade.

Among the reasons for this high unemployment rate: employers are reluctant to hire someone guaranteed to move away in a couple of years; lack of licensing reciprocity for jobs in fields such as health care or education; and résumé gaps caused by periods of unemployment.

But perhaps most important is the U.S. government’s role. According to the Office of Personnel Management, the federal government is our nation’s largest civilian employer, with a workforce of 2.1 million. Yet, it employs only 16,000 military, veteran, caregiver and surviving spouses.

Fortunately, solutions are in the offing. Last month at Fort Liberty in North Carolina, President Joe Biden signed an executive order with nearly 20 actions to enhance career stability and expand employment resources for the military community. Among other actions, it directs the federal government to develop a strategic plan to eliminate barriers to hiring and retaining military and veteran spouses, caregivers and survivors. It also creates standards for the Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas program, permitting certain federal employees to remotely work overseas. This policy is especially beneficial for military spouses who move to a foreign posting.

As a military spouse employed by the federal government, I find two measures of particular interest: increasing the number of federal job postings utilizing the Military Spouse Noncompetitive Appointing Authority, which prioritizes hiring military

spouses for certain federal positions, and proposed legislation that would grant military spouses more flexibility to remotely work for the government.

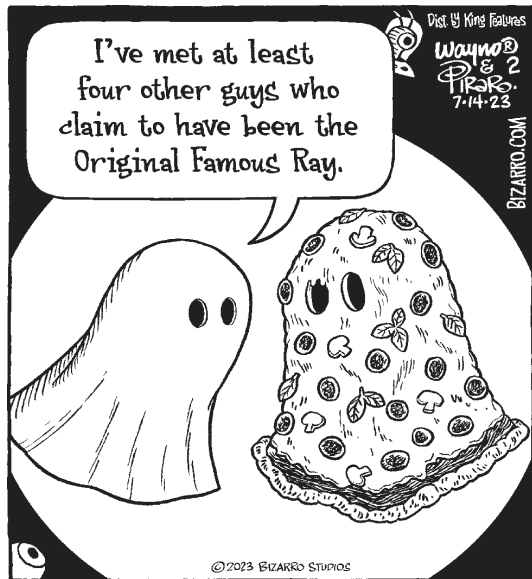
With abundant federal positions typically available near major military installations domestically and abroad, it makes business sense for the federal government to hire more military spouses and make transferring duty stations easier for them.

Passing legislation to expand remote work is also imperative. Even though remote work has been shown to benefit employee morale, improve work-life balance and boost productivity, senior management across the government is largely resistant to expanding telework opportunities or designating roles as fully remote. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, I have been fully remote. My ability to continue working remotely is a significant factor in my deciding whether to remain with the government when my spouse and I relocate, and, consequently, in my spouse’s deciding whether to remain with the military. If the government cannot extend a remote opportunity and the peace of mind it offers, it might lead to my spouse choosing to separate from the service. We are not alone in this predicament.

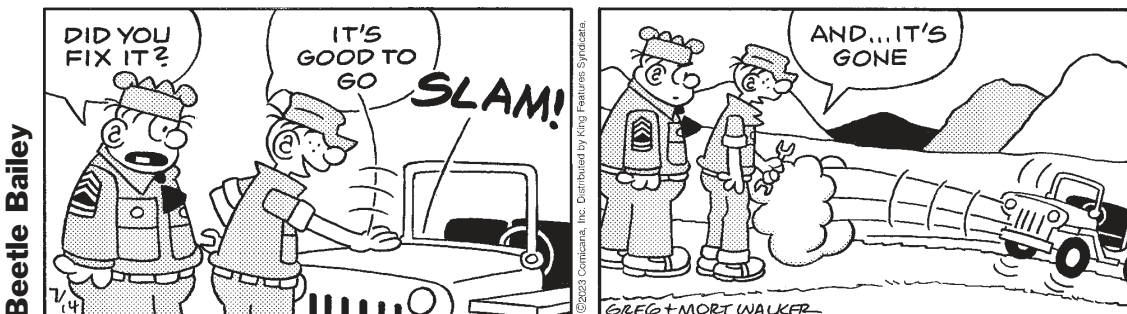
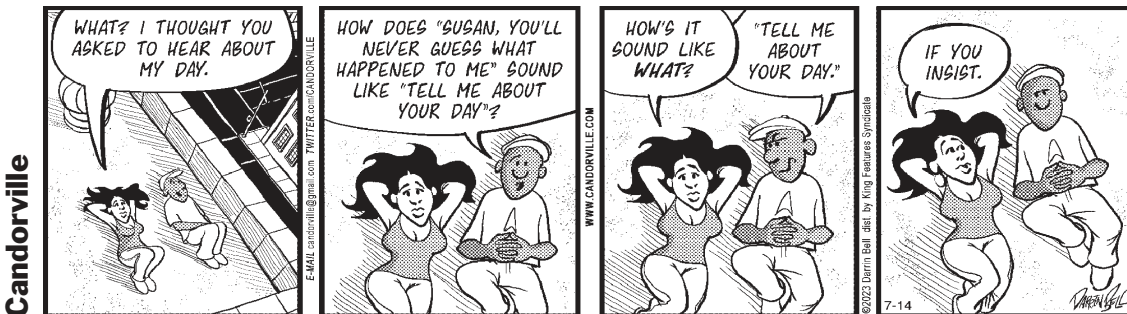
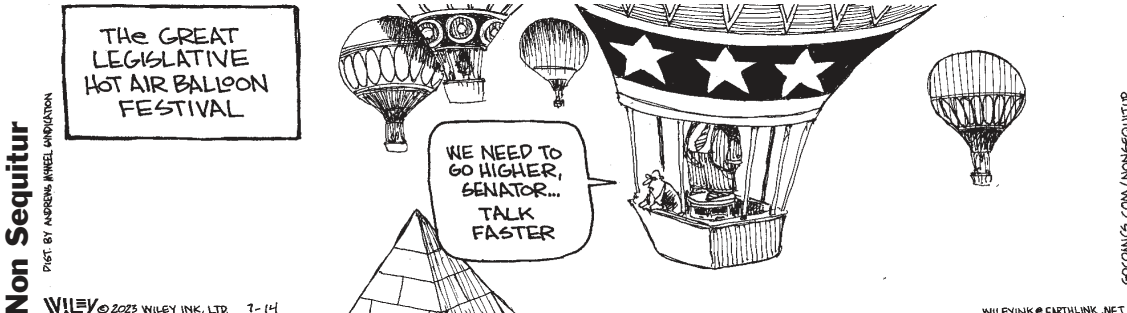
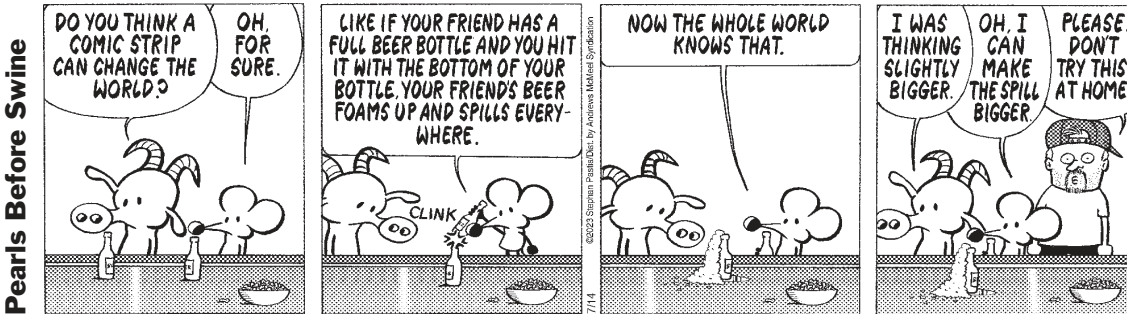
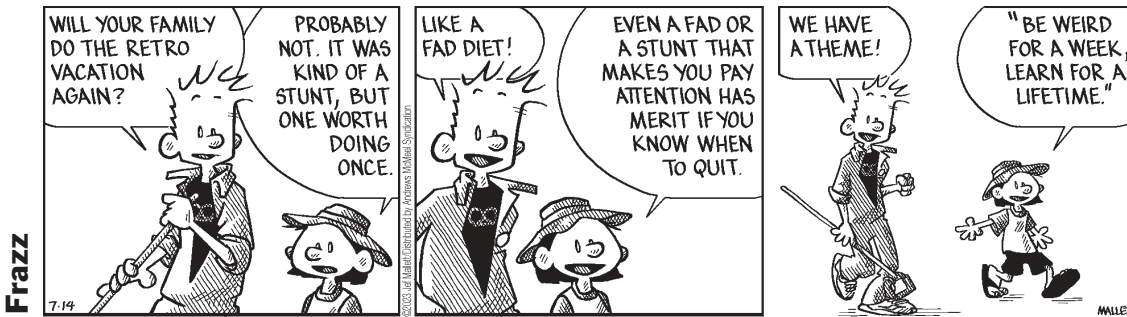
Military spouses like me are agile, talented and diverse. We are highly educated and motivated to work. It’s time for the U.S. government to recognize and value such a robust resource — and avoid undermining the readiness of our fighting forces.

Melissa A. Sullivan is a military spouse and a press officer with the federal government.

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18							19			
20	21					22	23					
24					25					26	27	28
29				30						31		
32			33							34		
			35						36			
37	38	39						40				
41						42	43				44	45
46						47					48	
49						50					51	

- ACROSS**
- 1 Scribble (down)
 - 4 Grand tale
 - 8 Wild guess
 - 12 Oklahoma city
 - 13 Crumbly earth
 - 14 Sit for a photo
 - 15 "Right-o!"
 - 17 Evict
 - 18 TV alien
 - 19 Heart line?
 - 20 Riyadh residents
 - 22 Pre-weekend yell
 - 24 Camera part
 - 25 Elton John hit single
 - 29 Chou En- —
 - 30 Sitar tunes
 - 31 Former Mideast gp.
 - 32 Peruvian artist with a multi-octave range
 - 34 To be, in Paris
 - 35 Dick Tracy's love
 - 36 "Pride and Prejudice" suitor
 - 37 Implore
 - 40 Kismet
 - 41 Tragic king
 - 42 "Get rid of stuff" event
 - 46 Brewer's kiln
 - 47 Secondhand
 - 48 Ripken of baseball
- DOWN**
- 1 Blue bird
 - 2 Poem of praise
 - 3 Australian state
 - 4 Dubai dignitaries
 - 5 Picnic spot
 - 6 Rage
 - 7 Browns, on scoreboards
 - 8 Parodies
 - 9 See the sights
 - 10 CEO's aide
 - 11 Alpha follower
 - 16 Weeps
 - 19 Broadcasts
 - 20 Friend
 - 21 500 sheets
 - 22 Roman robes
 - 23 Avocado dip, for short
 - 25 Orange veggies
 - 26 Community program
 - 27 DEA agent
 - 28 Joel of "Cabaret"
 - 30 Regretted
 - 33 Kicks off
 - 34 Takes courses?
 - 36 Papa
 - 37 Oxen's burden
 - 38 Wife of Jacob
 - 39 Relaxed
 - 40 Worry
 - 42 Guffaw
 - 43 Solid-rock insert
 - 44 Felon's flight
 - 45 Stately tree

Answer to Previous Puzzle

W	E	D	S		D	O	T		C	P	A	S		
E	R	I	C		W	A	R		A	O	N	E		
T	I	V	O		E	T	E		L	P	G	A		
S	E	A	N	C	E		L	I	E	U				
				C	O	B	A	L	T	B	L	U	E	
A	S	S	E	T		D	I	S		A	R	A		
T	O	N	S		E	L	S		S	C	A	R		
O	H	O		M	A	I		S	P	E	L	L		
P	O	W	D	E	R	B	L	U	E					
				B	U	L	B		A	R	A	G	O	N
F	R	E	E		U	L	T		K	E	N	O		
D	O	L	L		D	S	T		U	N	T	O		
R	O	T	S		S	U	E		P	E	O	N		

7-14 CRYPTOQUIP

OVL WJSC "KED WNXAKGKSADG"
 UES SUAG P WPJC OJSUXAO
 P BDKPXA BDDPN OJPGG:
 IPJNDL JVIIND.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I'M QUITE CERTAIN THAT FOR VICTORY IN TENNIS MATCHES, LOVE DEFINITELY DOES NOT CONQUER ALL.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals G

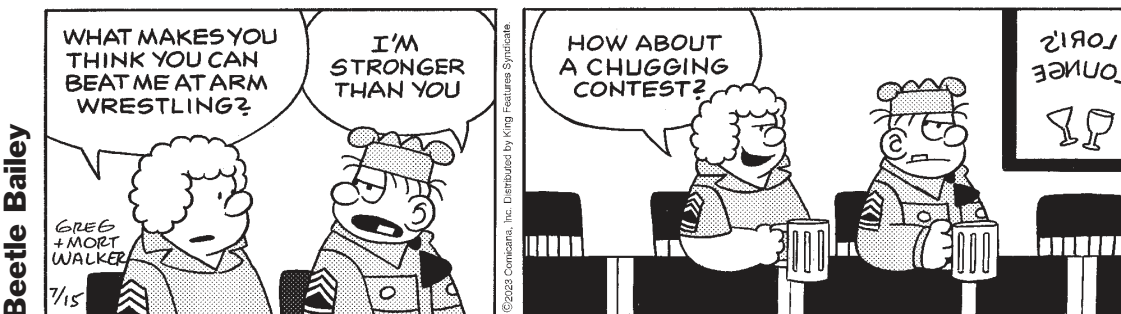
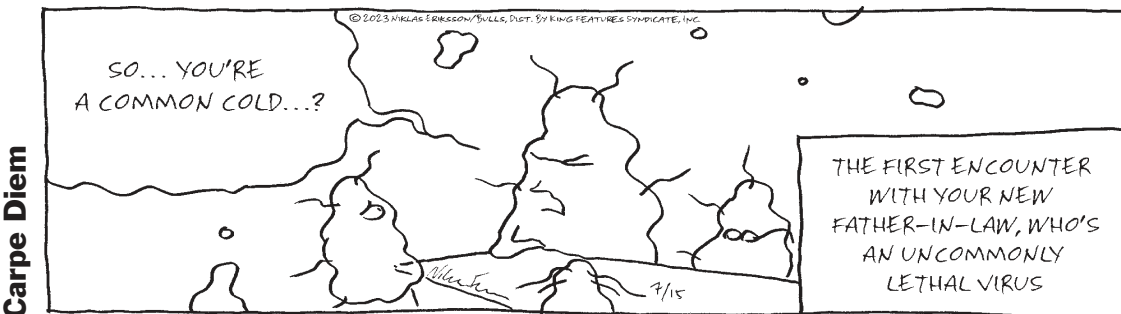
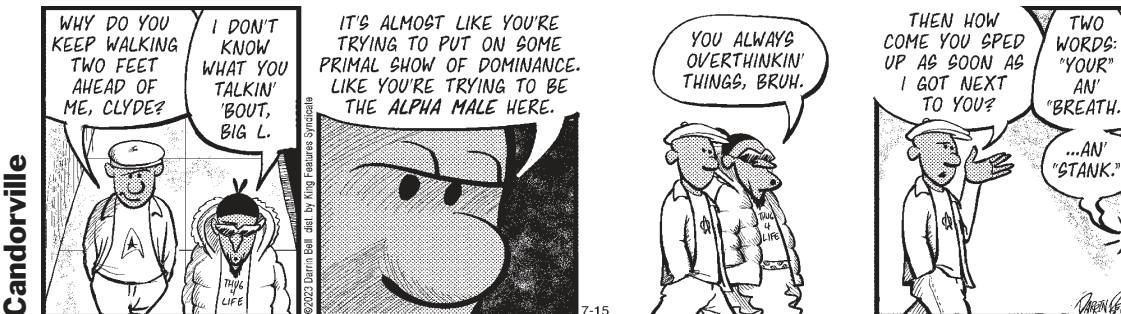
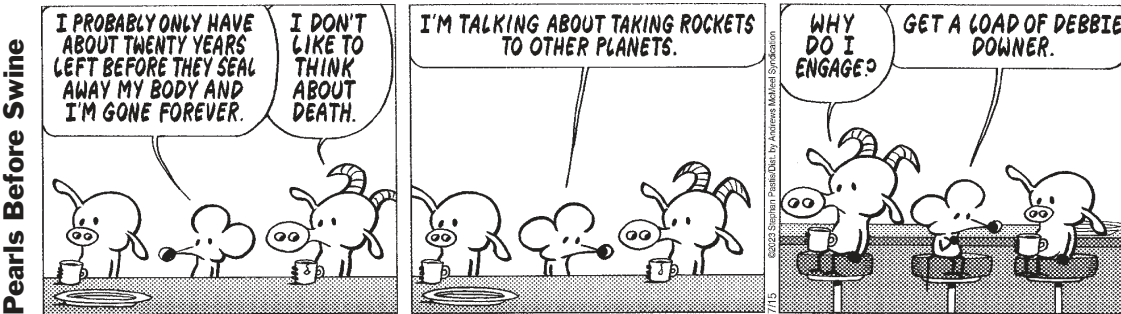
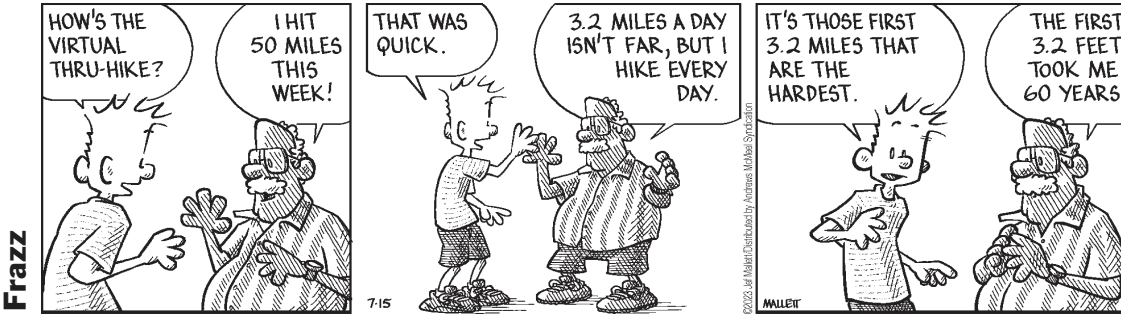
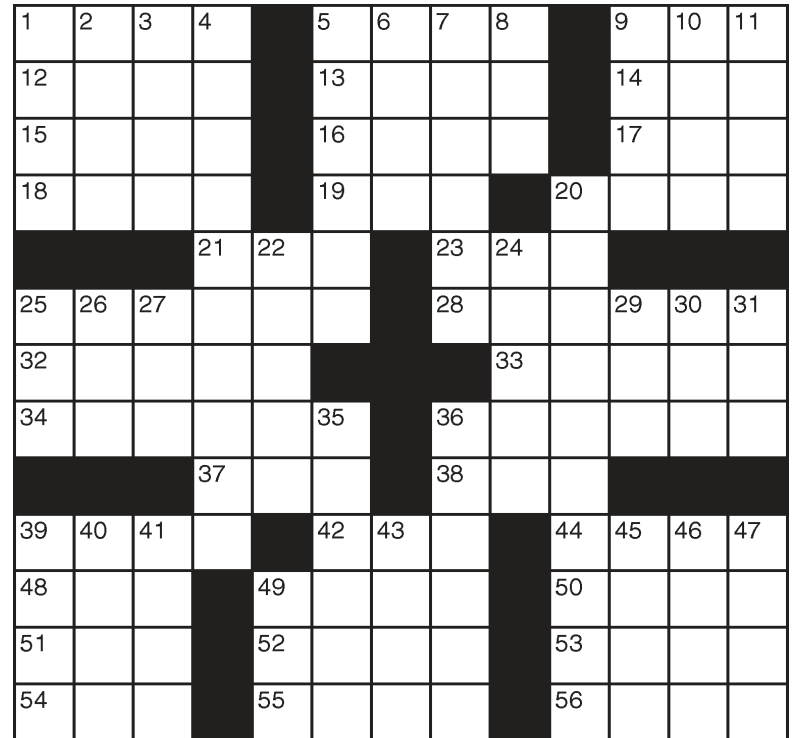
Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



- ACROSS
1 Faux pas
5 Galileo's birthplace
9 Crucial
12 Takeout request
13 Pedestal occupant
14 Celestial altar
15 Pt. of U.S.A.
16 Antitoxins
17 Badge metal
18 DEA agent
19 Mao -tung
20 Hunt for
21 "Big Little Lies" airer
23 Cutting tool
25 Yacht or schooner
28 Lakota-related, say
32 "Noah" star Russell
33 Foolish
34 Pine products
36 Smith of "Downton Abbey"
37 Mosquito barrier
38 Roker and Michaels
39 Pizzazz
42 Dumpster critter
44 Sombreros and bowlers

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-15 CRYPTOQUIP
GL WGNNGMR NWX ZIHYXZ
HLNXM TJVXZ OHF MJFZXJNXE,
GN AHFIE GTYIO OHF'QX
YQHMX NH ZVG-ZGAVMXZZ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: GUY FROM "THE FLINTSTONES" WHO OWNS A FARM GROWING A CERTAIN CEREAL GRASS: BARLEY RUBBLE.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals G

SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

PRO SOCCER

MLS Eastern Conference and Western Conference tables with columns for W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA.

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Wednesday, July 5: Charlotte FC 1, New York City FC 1, tie. Saturday, July 8: Cincinnati 2, Charlotte FC 2, tie. Wednesday, July 13: Orlando 1, OL Reign 0. Friday, Aug. 18: OL Reign at Kansas City.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA Eastern Conference and Western Conference tables with columns for W, L, Pct, GB.

Wednesday's games: Connecticut 84, Chicago 72. Thursday's games: No games scheduled. Saturday's games: Team Wilson vs. Team Stewart.

DEALS

Wednesday's transactions: Baltimore Orioles (Sent C Anthony Bembom), Boston Red Sox (Agreed to terms with OF Caden Rose), Detroit Tigers (Released 2B Jonathan Schoop).

NWSL: North Carolina 8, Portland 7. Soccer: New York Red Bulls signed M Ibrahim Kasule. Rhode Island named Jayna Ryan coordinator.

CYCLING

Tour de France Wednesday 11th Stage: 111.8 miles from Clermont-Ferrand to Moulins. Also: Matteo Jorgensen, United States, Movistar Team.

TENNIS

Nordea Open Wednesday: Yulia Putintseva (2), Kazakhstan, def. Katie Volynets, United States. Grand Est Open 88 Wednesday: Anna-Lena Friedsam (5), Germany, def. Aleksandra Krunic, Serbia.

PRO BASEBALL

MLB American League and National League tables with columns for W, L, Pct, GB.

Wednesday's games: No games scheduled. Friday's games: San Diego (Darvish 5-6) at Philadelphia (Sanchez 0-2).

Calendar: July 23 — Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, Cooperstown, N.Y.

BRIEFLY

NCAA finds 175 betting violations since 2018

LAS VEGAS — The NCAA has found 175 infractions of its sports-betting policy since 2018 and there are 17 active investigations, according to a letter from the sports organization's president that was obtained Wednesday by The Associated Press.

From The Associated Press

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP



DANIEL KARMANN, DPA/AP

From left, Sjoeke N'sken, Sara D'britz and Alexandra Popp of Germany look dejected after Zambia scored during their international friendly on July 7 at Sportpark Ronhof Thomas Sommer in Furth, Germany.

Popp, Germany hope to find success after near misses

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH
Associated Press

DUESSELDORF, Germany — Alexandra Popp knows a lot about playing in the biggest games, and about tough losses.

A year ago, Popp had to watch from the bench as Germany lost to England in the European Championship final after getting injured in the warm-up. Last month, she and eight of her teammates from that German squad played in Wolfsburg's 3-2 loss to Barcelona in the Champions League final despite leading 2-0.

At the World Cup, much could depend on the experience of Popp, who battled on after blows to the knee and the neck in the loss to Barcelona, a result she called "brutally bitter." Germany coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg was watching from the stands.

Germany was once the undisputed powerhouse of European women's soccer — World Cup champion in 2003 and 2007 and still the only country other than the United States to be No. 1 in the FIFA rankings. As women's soccer booms around the world, the competition is only getting fiercer for Germany.

A group containing Morocco, Colombia and South Korea should be relatively comfortable for Germany, which has never failed to reach the quarterfinals at a Women's World Cup.

Voss-Tecklenburg's preliminary squad of 31 players includes 10 from Wolfsburg and five from national champion Bayern Munich. Popp is by far the most experienced, with 127 games and 61

goals for her country. Only three players are based abroad, backup goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger and midfielder Melanie Leupolz, both at Chelsea, and Lyon midfielder Sara Däbritz.

Germany will warm up for the World Cup with friendlies against two teams who are heading to the tournament for the first time. The Germans beat Vietnam 2-1 on July 1 and lost 3-2 to Zambia on July 7.

The run to the final last year in England brought a boom in interest in women's soccer in Germany, where Bundesliga crowds have tripled to an average of nearly 3,000 this season, though that's still well behind the English league.

The revolution that has made women's soccer an increasingly televised, professionalized sport has also meant Germany's clubs and national teams face ever more pressure from England, Spain and France, not to mention old rival the United States.

Since winning the last of eight European titles back in 2013, the only major tournament win for Germany was the gold medal at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. Since the last Champions League title for a German club by FFC Frankfurt in 2015, Wolfsburg has reached four finals and lost them all.

Germany was a pioneer of women's soccer in Europe but, after a decade of rapid transformation in the sport worldwide, it hasn't always adapted smoothly.

Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg fly the flag for Germany in the Champions League, and the Bun-

desliga is increasingly dominated by clubs with established and lucrative men's soccer teams.

That shift has sidelined the kind of independently run women's soccer clubs which used to lead the way in Germany and internationally. Of Germany's first three European club champions, FFC Frankfurt has been merged into Eintracht Frankfurt, MCR Duisburg is long-defunct and Turbine Potsdam was relegated from the Bundesliga this season after only two wins.

Despite the growth in interest and crowds for German women's soccer, it's a long way from financial independence. A report in February by the German soccer federation indicated top-tier clubs lost on average \$1.63 million on their women's soccer operations the season before, a deficit greater than their average income. Much of the difference is made up by cross-subsidizing from men's teams.

That trend is likely to continue, at least in the short term, as more German clubs invest heavily in women's soccer. Leipzig, backed by energy-drink giant Red Bull, will play in the Bundesliga next season, but some big clubs have lagged further behind.

Perennial men's title contender Borussia Dortmund only founded a women's team in 2020 after increasing pressure from fans and criticism from Dortmund-born national team player Lina Magull, but had to start play in 2021 at the bottom of the league system. It has been promoted to the fourth tier for next season.

Sweden seeks to end tournament bad luck

By STEVE DOUGLAS
Associated Press

Peter Gerhardsson took a moment, then laughed to himself as he pondered the question many in women's soccer are asking.

Just what will it take for Sweden to end its long wait for a major international trophy?

"The next step," the Sweden coach told The Associated Press, "is to score the penalty shot."

Such are the fine margins the Swedes have been treading at the big tournaments over the past decade or so.

A penalty-shootout loss to Canada in the final of the Olympic tournament in 2021. An extra-time loss to the Netherlands in the 2019 World Cup semifinals. A loss to Germany in the 2016 Olympic final. Exits at the semifinals of the European Championships in 2013 and last year.

It's a tale of woe that would floor many people closely associated with the team.

Not Gerhardsson.

He simply puts it down to "one of those things" and prefers to take the positives. Essentially, if Sweden's players keep putting themselves in these good positions, one day they will hit what he calls the "winning formula."

Maybe that time will come at the upcoming Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

"I don't believe in being a 'winner' or anything like that," Gerhardsson said in a phone call. "We are competing in a sport where many different things can happen in a game."

"You look at the Olympics (in 2021) where Caroline Seger missed a penalty. I don't think you can say that if she'd have put it in, we have a better team than in the Euros last year or this World Cup coming now. I don't believe in that kind of thing."

Sweden, whose only interna-

tional title came at the 1984 European Championship when only four teams were involved, is again among the favorites for the World Cup.

How can it not be with a team featuring Fridolina Rolfö, the scorer of the winning goal in the Champions League final for Barcelona this month; or Stina Blackstenius, one of the top strikers in England with Arsenal; or Magdalena Eriksson, one of the most consistent center backs in Europe for years; or Filippa Angeldahl, a midfielder with growing authority at Manchester City.

"Experience for the players playing in big games and big clubs is good for the national team," Gerhardsson said. "They are used to playing in front of big crowds, with good teammates around them. That's the most important thing. If you ask me what the best thing is — to play 90 minutes in the Swedish league or as a substitute at a team like Wolfsburg, I'd say the experience (of the latter) is more important."

It was at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics where then-United States goalkeeper Hope Solo described Sweden as "a bunch of cowards" for dropping off and defending deeply in a quarterfinal match that ended with the Americans losing a penalty shootout.

The Swedes have developed since then and under Gerhardsson, the coach since 2016 and with a contract until 2025, they are a modern-day pressing and counterattacking team, still not one favoring a possession-based approach.

"I say to my girls, 'Can you remember when you started playing, when you were 5, 6, 7, 8, what you did when you lost the ball? You chased it.' Just go — 1, 2, 3, 4. Everybody wants the ball," Gerhardsson said. "I want to create some of the intuition that they had when they started playing football. Not be standing, watching slow (buildup play)."



RUI VIEIRA/AP

Sweden's manager Peter Gerhardsson watches the Women's Euro 2022 semifinal match against England on July 26, 2022 at the Bramall Lane Stadium in Sheffield, England.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Canada starts with unsettled contract

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Two years after winning gold at the Tokyo Olympics, Canada will be one of the teams to beat at the Women's World Cup.

But there's ongoing drama surrounding the team and the federation back home.

The Canadian players are seeking equal pay to the men's team and have been negotiating a new contract with Canada Soccer for more than a year. At the same time, the team said it was told funding issues meant players wouldn't have any send-off matches in Canada ahead of the tournament.

The animosity between the two sides was on display earlier this year when the players threatened to boycott the SheBelieves Cup in the United States. Canada Soccer threatened legal action and the players acquiesced, but wore purple T-shirts during pregame ceremonies that read "Enough is Enough."

Despite the turmoil, Canada cannot be counted out as one of the top teams headed to the World Cup, which kicks off July 20 in Australia and New Zealand. The team is currently ranked No. 7 in the world.

"I know that we have a very re-



FERNANDO LLANO/AP

Canada's Christine Sinclair and Trinidad and Tobago's Victoria Swift compete for the ball during a CONCACAF women's championship match in Monterrey, Mexico, on July 5.

silient group, a very gritty group and that group of people — no matter what is happening off the field — will make sure the job gets done on the field," Canada goalkeeper Kailen Sheridan said. "So I'm not really worried in that sense, but I

also don't want to dismiss what's going on, either."

Canada also has the steadying presence of captain Christine Sinclair, who is international soccer's all-time leading scorer — among men or women. She has 190 career

goals and is arguably the best Canadian player ever.

Now 40, Sinclair has won a pair of Olympic bronze medals and the gold in Tokyo. She has two NCAA tournament titles and three National Women's Soccer League

championships with the Portland Thorns. But a World Cup trophy has eluded her.

Sinclair led a dramatic evolution for Canadian women's soccer over the past decade. It started in the run-up to the 2015 Women's World Cup, held in Canada, when John Herdman was hired as head coach.

Herdman, now coach of the Canadian men's team, led Canada to the bronze medal at the London Olympics. Canada made it to the quarterfinals of the World Cup on home soil, then won a second Olympic bronze medal at the Rio de Janeiro Games.

Bev Priestman took over as coach in 2020, ahead of Canada's gold in Tokyo. She has had to walk a thin line between the players and Canada Soccer amid the dispute.

The players believe they can shut out the noise while abroad. Canada, making its eighth World Cup appearance, is in Group B with co-host Australia, Ireland and Nigeria. Considered the favorite as the highest-ranked team in the group, Canada opens against Nigeria on July 21 in Melbourne.

Canada's best finish at the World Cup was fourth in 2003. At the 2019 tournament, Canada was eliminated in the round of 16 by Sweden.

England coach Wiegman looks to add on another title

BY JAMES ROBSON
Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England — A year after winning Euro 2022, England is out for more at the Women's World Cup.

The Lionesses, playing under coach Sarina Wiegman, won their first major title last year by beating Germany in the final at Wembley Stadium. And they will be among the favorites to win this year's tournament in Australia and New Zealand after qualifying with a perfect record of 10 straight wins.

The Dutch-born Wiegman led the Netherlands to victory at Euro 2017. Her team then reached the Women's World Cup final in 2019, but the Netherlands lost to the United States in France.

Wiegman's preparations for this year's tournament, however, have been disrupted by the unavailability of some of England's key players. Beth Mead, who was the co-leading scorer at Euro 2022 along with Germany forward Alexandra Popp, is out because of an ACL injury. Usual captain Leah Williamson and midfielder Fran Kirby are also injured.

Still, it is an England squad with a winning know-how, featuring 16 players who were part of last year's European success.

Wiegman has also included some bright new talents, such as Lauren James — the sister of Chelsea right back Reece James and one of the most exciting players to emerge since the last Women's World Cup. Fresh from winning a league-and-cup double with Chelsea this season, Lauren James will be playing in her first major international tournament.



LEILA COKER/AP

England manager Sarina Wiegman poses with the trophy after winning the Women's Euro 2022 against Germany at Wembley Stadium in London on July 31, 2022.

The same applies to Laura Coombs, Katie Zelem, Niamh Charles, Esme Morgan and Katie Robinson.

"We're just going to make sure that we're going to be at our best and then we see how far we get, but I think we're still in a pretty good place," Wiegman said of the squad.

A bonus this year has been the form of Tottenham forward Beth England with 12 goals in 12 Women's Super League games. She has been named to an England squad for the first time since last September, hav-

ing thrust herself back into Wiegman's plans after joining Tottenham in January.

"She didn't build that much credit for us because we hardly saw her play," the England coach said. "But then she made a move and she started playing in a hard situation because Tottenham were having a hard time.

"But how she did, and how she performed, and also how much resilience she showed, I think that made us make the decision to get her in the squad."

Lucy Bronze is undoubtedly one of the stars of the women's game and brings huge experience to the team. She secured her fourth Women's Champions League title when Barcelona beat Wolfsburg 3-2 in the final in June and is playing in her third Women's World Cup, having helped England advance to the semifinals in 2015 and 2019.

Millie Bright has been named captain in the absence of Williamson, but is also overcoming a knee injury.

"She's still building, but we have some time," Wiegman said when announcing her squad in May.

For all the talent England has on the field, Wiegman's expertise may be the team's greatest weapon. After taking over in 2021, she has gone on to transform the national team with that historic Euro 2022 title.

On top of the success she achieved with the Netherlands, Wiegman has established herself as one of the world's elite coaches. She bounced back from the disappointment of losing the last Women's World Cup final by helping England qualify for this year's tournament without conceding a goal, scoring 80 and rounding off their group with a 10-0 victory over Luxembourg.

England will face Denmark, China and Haiti in the group stage. The team's first game is against Haiti in Brisbane on July 22.

"We learned a lot of positive lessons about how to get the players fit, fresh and ready from the Euro last summer," Wiegman said, "and we know what we have to do to make sure we hit the ground running in the right way when the tournament starts."

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP



JEFFREY McWHORTER/AP

U.S. forward Catarina Macario is among those sidelined for the World Cup because of an ACL injury.

ACL injuries are keeping stars out of biggest show

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Some of the biggest names in the game won't be playing in the Women's World Cup because of what feels like an epidemic of ACL injuries — and players are asking why.

Netherlands forward Vivianne Miedema, England's Leah Williamson and Beth Mead, Canada's Janine Beckie and rising U.S. star Catarina Macario are among those sidelined for the tournament starting July 20 in Australia and New Zealand.

"I think it's a multifaceted issue. I don't know if I'm the expert in it, even though I've experienced it," said U.S. midfielder Andi Sullivan, who tore her ACL in college at Stanford.

"There's so many different factors that could contribute to that and I think we are a little bit behind on the research as to why, so hopefully now the prevalence will kind of wake people up," Sullivan added. "This is an issue we need to pay attention to and look more into preventing and how to handle it better."

Last year it was estimated that nearly 60 players in the world's top professional women's leagues were sidelined because of anterior cruciate ligament injuries. Among them was Spain's Alexia Putellas, who injured her ACL just before the Euros last July.

Putellas, who will play for Spain at the World Cup, partnered with FIFPRO, the international players' union, to call attention to the outbreak of ACL injuries and



Williamson



Miedema

demand a closer look at possible contributing factors including workload, medical care, field conditions and even equity.

Studies have shown women are up to eight times more likely to suffer ACL injuries in sports involving sudden changes of direction, like soccer and basketball, than their male counterparts. Dr. Mark Cullen, the team physician for the University of New Hampshire who specializes in orthopedic surgery, says women have wider hips which impacts knee mechanics.

"They also tend to land a little bit more stiff-legged and don't absorb the forces as well as their male counterparts, and that puts more force on the ACL and contributes to the tears," Cullen said.

Katie Rood, who plays professionally in Scotland, was hoping to make New Zealand's roster and play in soccer's biggest tournament on home soil. But she recently announced that she had joined the "ever-growing ACL club."

Miedema won't be ready in time to help the Netherlands when it returns to the Women's World Cup after finishing as runner-up to the United States four years ago in France. She is one of four players from Arsenal in the Women's Super League currently sidelined by

ACL injuries. The list includes Williamson, who tore her ACL in April.

When Arsenal's Laura Wienroither tore her ACL earlier this month, Miedema posted on social media: "At least we will all be in the gym together. PS. ACL group is full now. Please no more."

Five of the nominees the 2022 women's Ballon d'Or — Putellas, Miedema, Macario, Mead and France's Marie-Antoinette Katoto — all sustained ACL injuries last year.

Mead, who won the Golden Boot at the Women's Euros last year, was left off England's 23-player roster for the World Cup.

"We have to take care of players and do what's smart, and not do what's a little bit naive," England coach Sarina Wiegman said.

Having already lost Katoto, France was dealt another ACL blow when Delphine Cascarino tore her ACL while playing for Lyon.

Lyon teammate Macario, one of the most promising young U.S. attackers, tore her ACL last June. Macario rehabbed at Aspetar, a specialized sports medicine facility in Qatar, but announced in May that she wouldn't make it back in time for the World Cup.

Aside from the mechanics, there's an emotional toll that such long-term injuries take on athletes. For some, it means the loss of a paycheck. For others, it may be that their careers stall or are cut short.

Others miss out on chances to play in the World Cup.

Aim: Developing young talent became US focus

FROM PAGE 48

As part of the deal, the men and women on the national teams will split World Cup prize money.

On the field, the team settled for a disappointing bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics two summers ago. Afterward, U.S. coach Vlatko Andonovski turned his attention to developing young talent.

Among the youngsters is 18-year-old phenom Alyssa Thompson and up-and-comer Trinity Rodman, the 20-year-old daughter of former NBA star Dennis Rodman.

There's also Sophia Smith, who has made a quick ascent with the national team and with her club, the Portland Thorns of the National Women's Soccer League. Just 22, she was named NWSL Most Valuable Player and U.S. Soccer's Player of the Year last year.

Smith was left off the roster for the Tokyo Games. Andonovski said it was a tough conversation when he let her know his decision, but he's been impressed with how she responded.

"She had to face some adversity, she had to face some tough times. I know I've had some tough conversations with her, but from every conversation and every moment she just rose above and was better," Andonovski said. "Every time it seemed like she had a setback or she had a tough moment, she took it as an opportunity to grow and get better and that's why she's where she's at now. She performs very well. We're very happy with where she's at, but I don't

think we've seen the best of Sophia Smith."

Two other young players who were also part of Andonovski's plans for the future, Catarina Macario and Mallory Swanson, won't join the team in Australia and New Zealand because of injuries.


Swanson, 25, was the team's top scorer this year before she injured the patellar tendon in her left knee during an exhibition match against Ireland in early April.

Macario, 23, tore an ACL last year while playing for the French club Lyon. She tried to recover in time — she was even treated in Qatar at Aspetar, one of the world's leading orthopedic hospitals — but ultimately time ran out on her return.

Arguably the biggest absence for the United States is captain Becky Sauerbrunn, who announced that a right foot injury suffered in April will keep her out of the World Cup.


Sauerbrunn, 38, has played in three World Cups and three Olympics. She is more than just the anchor of the team's backline: She led the fight for equal pay and has acted as a moral compass, often speaking out on social justice issues.


The U.S., which has won four World Cup titles overall, the most of any nation, will play in Group E, along with Vietnam, the Netherlands and Portugal. The tournament as a whole kicks off July 20, but the U.S. doesn't play until July 22 in Auckland against Vietnam.




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





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ESPYS/GOLD CUP

LeBron will come back to Lakers next season

By **BETH HARRIS**
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James will play another season for the Los Angeles Lakers.

The 38-year-old superstar announced his intentions on stage at The ESPYS on Wednesday night after accepting the record-breaking performance award for becoming the NBA's career scoring leader.

At the end of last season, in which he surpassed Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's mark, James had said he wasn't sure if he would be back.

"In that moment I'm asking myself if I can still play without cheating the game. Can I give everything to the game still? The truth is I've been asking myself this question at the end of the season for a couple years now. I just never openly talked about it," James said.

"I don't care how many more points I score or what I can and cannot do on the floor. The real question for me is can I play without cheating this game? The day I can't give the game everything on the floor is the day I'll be done. Lucky for you guys, that day is not today."

The crowd at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood let out a huge cheer.

"So, yeah, I still got something left," James said. "A lot left."

He was presented his trophy by wife Savannah, sons Bronny and Bryce and daughter Zhuri. In her introductory remarks, Savannah said, "I think LeBron James is the baddest ..."

She began to say an expletive but cut herself off as Zhuri exclaimed, "Mom!"

James later returned and was joined by Chris Paul and Dwyane Wade to honor Carmelo Anthony, who recently retired after a 19-year career.

Earlier, Chicago White Sox reliever Liam Hendriks told the audience that he pitched much of the 2022 season with non-Hodgkin lymphoma before being diagnosed with an advanced stage of the disease.

He accepted the Jimmy V Award for Perseverance. The 34-year-old Australian was declared cancer-

free in late April and returned to the mound a month later.

"That was an eye-opener. I didn't feel too many symptoms but I had some lumps around. It just shows you the power of the mind. When you don't think anything's wrong and you believe that you can do anything, you can do anything," Hendriks said.

The U.S. women's soccer team was honored with the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage for its fight to receive equal pay. The players sued U.S. Soccer in 2019 and last year reached agreement on a deal that splits men's and women's pay equally.

Briana Scurry, goalkeeper for the national team from 1994-2008, saluted the 1985 team.

"They are the foundation of this entire community of giants," she said.

Patrick Mahomes was honored as best men's sports athlete, while skier Mikaela Shiffrin received the women's sports honor.

The Kansas City Chiefs quarterback has won two Super Bowls in his five seasons and was named MVP of the game each time, including this past February. He turns 28 in September.

"It was an incredible season. There was many ups, many downs," Mahomes said. "I appreciate my teammates, my coaches, the guys that are here. I go back to camp next Tuesday, so this is a great award. But we're going to do this thing again, we're going to keep this thing rolling."

Shiffrin won her 87th World Cup race in March, breaking the mark set by Ingemar Stenmark for the most such wins by any skier. She went on to win an 88th Cup race, as well as the overall season title.

"This season was absolutely incredible and there was a lot of talk about records and it got me thinking, why is a record actually important?" Shiffrin said. "I just feel like it's not important to break records or re-set records. It's important to set the tone for the next generation, to inspire them."



PHOTOS BY GREGORY BULL/AP

Players for Panama look on during the penalty shootout of Wednesday's Gold Cup semifinal match against the United States in San Diego. Panama won 5-4 in a shootout after a 1-1 tie.

Panama advances to final, upsets US on penalty kicks

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — After winning the CONCACAF Gold Cup with its junior varsity two years ago, the United States failed to repeat.

Adalberto Carrasquilla converted the decisive penalty kick after Cristian Roldan was stopped in his attempt, and Panama beat the Americans 5-4 in a shootout following a 1-1 tie on Wednesday night to reach the CONCACAF Gold Cup final against Mexico.

"There's a lot of learning lessons that we're all going to take away as we now continue our preparation to the path of 2026," U.S. interim coach B.J. Callaghan said, looking ahead to the Americans co-hosting the World Cup.

"You had some older senior guys that had experience that we challenged to take on more leadership roles, mentorship roles, and that came out," Callaghan said. "And then we had a group of young players, whether they are U-20 — had played at the U-20 — or Olympic age, and all striving to become part of that roster in 2026."

Iván Anderson put No. 57 Panama ahead in the ninth minute of extra time with his first international goal, and Jesús Ferreira tied the score six minutes later for the 11th-ranked U.S.

Panama reached the final for the third time after losing to the U.S. in 2005 and 2013. Mexico, an eight-time champion, beat Jamaica 3-0 in Las Vegas.

The U.S., a seven-time winner of the championship of North and Central America and the Caribbean, failed to reach the final for the first time since losing a 2015 semifinal to Jamaica. The Amer-



Panama players celebrate after defeating the United States.

icans have not won consecutive Gold Cups since 2005 and '07.

The game marked the finale of Callaghan, who led the U.S. to five wins, one loss and one draw as the Americans' second interim coach this year. Gregg Berhalter returns for the Sept. 9 exhibition against Uzbekistan.

The U.S. had just 34% possession in the first half.

"The first half is my fault," Callaghan said. "I didn't set the team up the way they should have been set up."

American Cade Cowell hit a post about 20 seconds in and that was the closest to a goal until Panama went ahead nine minutes into extra time.

Carrasquilla played a through pass to Anderson, who was kept onside by DeAndre Yedlin. Anderson took a touch and played the ball past onrushing goalkeeper Matt Turner, then kicked the ball into the open net for his first international goal.

Turner, who saved two penalty kicks against Canada, was the only

U.S. player on the field who saw extensive time at last year's World Cup.

Ferreira scored six minutes later after Matt Miazga played a long pass to Jordan Morris, who headed the ball into the penalty area. Ferreira volleyed the ball with his right shin from 16 yards past the outstretched left hand of a diving Orlando Mosquera for his 15th international goal, his seventh of the tournament.

With the U.S. going first in the shootout, Ferreira was stopped by Mosquera.

Fidel Escobar and Ismael Díaz beat Turner, while Djordje Mihailovic and Morris were successful for the U.S. Turner dove to his left to stop Christian Martínez and Julian Gressel and Miazga converted around Édgar Bárcenas' successful kick for Panama, leaving the U.S. ahead 4-3.

Cecilio Waterman tied the score with Panama's fifth shot, Mosquera dove right to parry Roldan's attempt and Carrasquilla put his shot inside Turner's right post.



MARK TERRILL/AP

From left, Chris Paul, LeBron James and Dwyane Wade give a tribute to Carmelo Anthony at the ESPY awards Wednesday in Los Angeles.

WIMBLEDON/GOLF

Jabeur, Vondrousova in women's final

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Ons Jabeur came back from a set and a break down to defeat Aryna Sabalenka 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-3 on Thursday and reach the Wimbledon final for the second consecutive year.

This will be the third title match in the past five Grand Slam tournaments for Jabeur. The 25-year-old from Tunisia already was the only Arab woman and only North African woman to get to a major final.

So far, she is 0-2 at that stage after losing to Elena Rybakina at the

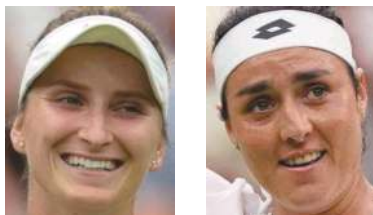
Scoreboard

Thursday
At All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club
London
Purse: £16,077,000
Surface: Grass
Women's Singles Semifinals

Marketa Vondrousova, Czech Republic, def. Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, 6-3, 6-3.
Ons Jabeur (6), Tunisia, def. Aryna Sabalenka (2), Belarus, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-3.

All England Club last July and to Iga Swiatek at the U.S. Open.

The sixth-seeded Jabeur's victory Thursday, which came by col-



Vondrousova Jabeur

lecting 10 of the last 13 games, prevented the second-seeded Sabalenka from replacing Swiatek at No. 1 in the rankings. Sabalenka came into the match with a 17-1 record at majors in 2023, including a trophy at the Australian Open.

Jabeur's opponent for the championship on Saturday will be Marketa Vondrousova.

Vondrousova became the first unseeded women's finalist at Wimbledon since Billie Jean King in 1963 by eliminating Elina Svitolina 6-3, 6-3 earlier Thursday.

Jabeur trailed 4-2 in the second set when she began to turn things around. But not before Sabalenka came within a point from leading 5-3 after Jabeur put a forehand into the net and fell onto her back on the grass of Centre Court.

In the first semifinal, Vondrousova reeled off seven consecutive

games in one stretch. She is ranked 43rd and reached the second Grand Slam final of her career after getting that far as a teenager at the 2019 French Open.

Ranked No. 76 and an unseeded wild-card recipient, Svitolina returned to the tour from maternity leave just three months ago. After surprisingly beating Swiatek in the quarterfinals, she was trying to become the first woman from Ukraine to make it to the title match at a major tournament and received loud support from thousands in the crowd, the cheers echoing off the closed roof.

Players: Monahan must rebuild trust

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

GULLANE, Scotland — PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan returns to work next week and some top players believe he has to regain their trust after leaving members in the dark over an about-face deal with the Saudi Arabia wealth fund behind LIV Golf.



Monahan

"I'd say he has a lot of tough questions to answer in his return," Xander Schauffele said Wednesday at the Scottish Open, where he is the defending champion. "And, yeah, I don't trust people easily. He had my trust and he has a lot less of it now."

"So I don't stand alone when I say that."

A week after Monahan announced a commercial partnership with the Public Investment Fund, the tour said a "medical situation" led Monahan to turn over daily operations of the tour to two executives.

He sent a memo to players last week saying he would resume his role July 17. Monahan did not take part in the Senate hearing Tuesday in which documents outlined some of the conversations that led to the framework agreement.

Players were sent a 275-page file of the documents Congress obtained ahead of the three-hour hearing. Some watched part of it or read through a few excerpts of the documents. Jordan Spieth chose to play golf at North Berwick instead.

When asked if Monahan would have trust issues with the players, Spieth replied: "Quite a bit, just based on conversations I've had with players. And I think he realizes that. I'm sure he's preparing for

a plan to try and build it back." Scottie Scheffler said he watched part of the hearing and didn't learn very much. Then again, the world's No. 1 player isn't sure how much he knew in the first place.

Monahan and two board members — Jimmy Dunne and board chairman Ed Herlihy — negotiated the agreement announced June 6 with the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia.

"As a player on tour, we still don't really have a lot of clarity as to what's going on, and that's a bit worrisome," Scheffler said. "They keep saying it's a player-run organization, and we don't really have the information that we need. I watched part of it yesterday. Didn't learn anything."

Rory McIlroy chose not to say anything.

McIlroy has been seen as the strongest voice in the PGA Tour's battle against Saudi-funded LIV Golf. He said he felt like a "sacrificial lamb" when he spoke to the media a day after the deal was announced, during the Canadian Open.

Schauffele said he glanced through some of the documents and started to watch a link to the hearing until he decided sleep was more important.

He referred to this as "one of the rockier times" on the PGA Tour but said it would be less unsettling if the players stick together.

"There isn't much communication right now and things are a little bit unsettling and there is a bit of a divide between management and the players, if you want to call it that," he said. "And my hope is that a positive thing coming from that will be more communication, more transparency, and sort of understanding which direction the tour will go with us being sort of the ambassadors of it."

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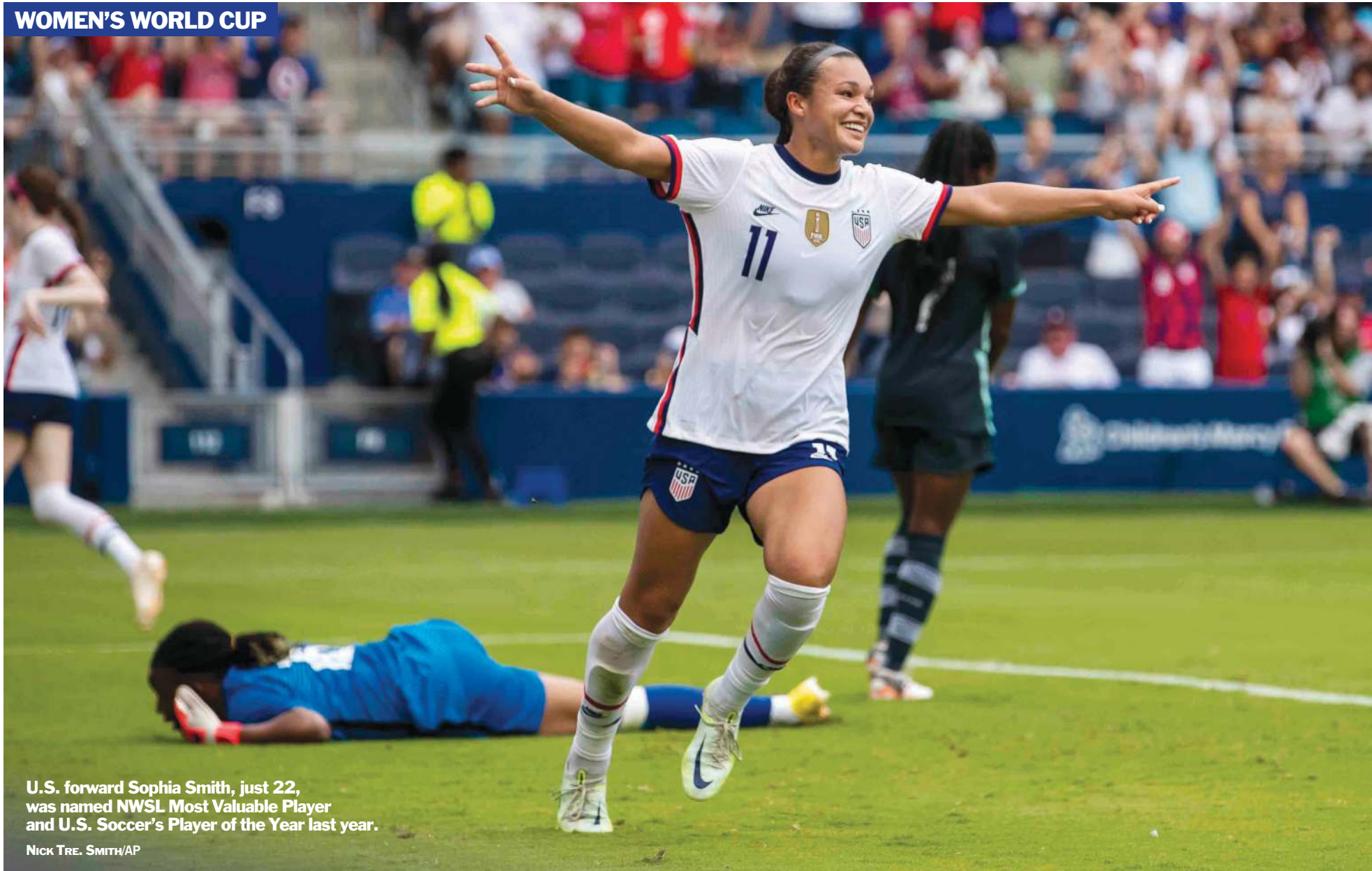
SPORTS

Historic performance

Vondrousova first unseeded women's finalist in 60 years » Wimbledon, Page 47



WOMEN'S WORLD CUP



U.S. forward Sophia Smith, just 22, was named NWSL Most Valuable Player and U.S. Soccer's Player of the Year last year.

NICK TRE. SMITH/AP

US takes aim at three-peat

But could Americans be vulnerable this time?

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

Even without a few key players, the United States heads into the Women's World Cup with a formidable group of wily veterans and eager newcomers.

The question is, will it be enough for the team to lift international soccer's most prestigious trophy again?

The United States has won the last two World Cups and the goal is to three-peat. But American dominance in women's soccer isn't assured anymore.

Teams like England and France have caught up, Germany and Sweden remain strong, and then there's that rival to the north, Canada, which won gold at the Tokyo Olympics.

The growth of women's soccer globally means greater parity. And that means the United States has had to adapt.

"There's so many leagues around the world that are paying players more, that are playing more often

INSIDE

Previews of teams expected to be contenders Down Under Pages 43-44

throughout the season, and that are treating players in a professional way that we've been fighting for a long time, so I think that that has a lot to do with it," star forward Alex Morgan said.

The Americans look far different now than they did four years ago, when they beat the Netherlands 2-0 in the World Cup final and fans in Lyon, France, feted them with chants of "Equal Pay!"

The players did indeed achieve equitable pay with their male counterparts, coming to a historic collective bargaining agreement with U.S. Soccer in 2022.

SEE AIM ON PAGE 45



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

From left, Megan Rapinoe, Alex Morgan and Lindsey Horan are the veterans and proven leaders on this year's World Cup team.

LeBron returning to Lakers next season » ESPYS, Page 46

