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Soldiers conduct live-fire testing of early versions of the Army Tactical Missile System at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., on Dec. 14.

JOHN HAMILTON, U.S. ARMY/AP

Weapons wish list

US systems Ukraine will or won't get soon

BY TARA COPP AND LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ukrainian leaders are pressing the U.S. and Western allies for air defense systems and longer-range weapons to keep up the momentum in their counter-offensive against Russia and fight back against Moscow's intensified attacks.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday said allies are committed to sending weapons "as fast as we can physically get them there." And he said defense leaders meeting in Brussels are working to send a wide array of systems, ranging from tanks and armored vehicles to air defense and artillery.

SEE WEAPONS ON PAGE 7

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NATO to deliver drone jammers to Ukraine, bolster air defense
Page 6

Grinston: Soldiers with high fitness scores can skip tape measure test

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Troops who score high on the Army's fitness test could soon be exempt from the tape measure test for height and weight balance, the service's top enlisted soldier said this week.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston is proposing that soldiers who achieve a 540 or higher on the Army Combat Fitness Test won't be measured against the service's

height and weight standards. A perfect score on the fitness test is 600.

"If you score high on the ACFT, you should be good," Grinston told soldiers Wednesday during the Association of the U.S. Army's 2022 annual conference in Washington.

Grinston said he doesn't envision changes to the Army's height and weight body composition standards, which have been studied by the service.

"The data shows the height and weight tables are correct," he said.

Measuring body composition is relevant because people with excess body fat are at higher risk for injury, Grinston said.

Some critics of the body composition test argue that it is not an accurate assessment of fitness and doesn't take into account all body types.

According to the Army's height and weight table, a 6-foot, 2-inch male between

28 and 29 years of age can weigh no more than 218 pounds. A 5-foot, 5-inch woman of the same age range can weigh no more than 154 pounds.

If a soldier's weight exceeds the standards, parts of the body such as the waistline are measured for excess flab and proper body composition.

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	Change in price	Turkey	Change in price
Germany	\$4.294	\$4.852	\$5.193	\$5.606	..	..	\$5.072	..
Change in price
Netherlands	..	\$4.577	\$4.819	\$5.646	..	..	\$4.871	\$5.284*
Change in price
U.K.	..	\$4.788	\$5.129	\$5.542	..	..	..	..
Change in price

Europe fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective Oct. 14.

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	Guam	Change in price
Japan	..	\$4.879	..	\$5.289	\$3.989	\$4.549	\$4.889 \$5.299
Change in price	..	+10.0 cents	..	+39.0 cents	+13.0 cents	+10.0 cents	+9.0 cents +38.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.979	..	..	\$5.289	\$3.989	\$4.549	\$4.889 ..
Change in price	+13.0 cents	..	..	+39.0 cents	+13.0 cents	+10.0 cents	+10.0 cents ..

*DieselEFD **Midgrade

Pacific prices are for the week of Oct. 14-20

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		South Korea (Won)	1444.04
Euro costs (Oct. 14)	\$0.95	Switzerland (Franc)	1.0042
Dollar buys (Oct. 14)	1.0029	Thailand (Baht)	38.23
British pound (Oct. 14)	\$1.10	Turkey (NewLira)	18.5825
Japanese yen (Oct. 14)	142.00		
South Korean won (Oct. 14)	1389.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769		
Britain (Pound)	1.1204		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3898		
China (Yuan)	7.2040		
Denmark (Krone)	7.6737		
Egypt (Pound)	19.6639		
Euro	1.0317		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8497		
Hungary (Forint)	444.74		
Israel (Shekel)	3.5871		
Japan (Yen)	147.24		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3104		
Norway (Krone)	10.7281		
Philippines (Peso)	59.06		
Poland (Zloty)	4.99		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7571		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.4372		

(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

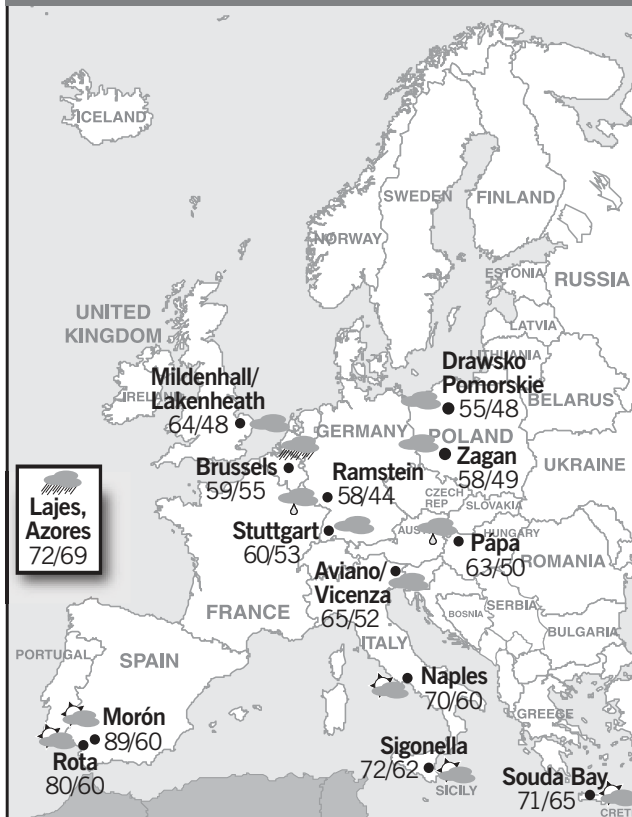
Prime rate	6.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	3.08
3-month bill	3.64
30-year bond	3.88

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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PACIFIC

S. Korea: No need to deploy nuclear arms

Defense official says US systems in place will deter North

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Positioning U.S. strategic assets in South Korea is preferable to deploying nuclear arms there to match the threat from North Korea, a senior defense official in Seoul said Thursday.

It is “most desirable” to deter the North using “U.S. strategic assets currently available on the Korean Peninsula,” rather than deploying U.S. tactical nuclear weapons, Vice Minister of National Defense Shin Beom Chul told SBS Radio on Thursday.

The United States has roughly 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea as well as a state-of-the-art Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system capable of intercepting ballistic missiles.

The defense ministry has primarily focused on the timely deployment of “strategic assets” in South Korea, rather than a “nuclear sharing” agreement with the U.S., Shin said.

His comments follow a call by the leader of the ruling People Power Party to scrap a 1991 inter-



KCNA

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watches a missile launch in this image released by the state-run Korean Central News Agency on Monday.

Korean denuclearization agreement that prohibits the South from possessing or producing nuclear weapons.

The agreement should be abolished if North Korea conducts its seventh nuclear test, Chung Jin-suk wrote Wednesday on his personal Facebook page.

“The moment of decision has come,” Chung said. The agreement has been turned into “scraps of toilet paper,” he add-

ed.

U.S. and South Korean officials have said North Korea, which has fired more than 40 missiles in 25 rounds of tests so far this year, is also prepared to test its first nuclear device since 2017.

The communist regime last fired two cruise missiles on Wednesday, according to North Korean state-run media and the South’s Ministry of National Defense. The North alarmed world

leaders by launching a ballistic missile over Japan on Oct. 3.

A potential nuclear weapons program in South Korea would be at odds with existing U.S. policy. U.S. administrations under Presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump have consistently stressed that the White House goal in the region is to rid the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons entirely.

“We will seek sustained diplo-

macy with North Korea to make tangible progress toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, while strengthening extended deterrence in the face of North Korean weapons of mass destruction and missile threats,” said Biden’s National Security Strategy released on Wednesday.

Former senior U.S. military officials have warned against deploying nuclear weapons in South Korea.

During a panel discussion hosted by The Korea Society in New York in November, former U.S. Forces Korea commander Robert Abrams said a South Korean nuclear weapons program is “unnecessary and it could potentially lead to misunderstanding and miscalculation by not just North Korea but other people in the region.”

“There’s been a lot of chatter lately about whether the Republic of Korea should develop its own nuclear weapons program — I’m not in favor of that,” Abrams said during the discussion, referring to South Korea. “I think that would be a bad idea. There’s a lot of unmentioned costs that go towards building a nuclear weapons program that I’m not sure has been well thought out.”

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N. Korea fires another missile, flies warplanes near border

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea early Friday launched a short-range ballistic missile toward its eastern waters and flew warplanes near the border with South Korea, the South’s military said, further raising animosities triggered by the North’s recent barrage of weapons tests.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement the missile lifted off from the North’s capital region at 12:49 p.m. EDT on Thursday.

It said South Korea boosted its surveillance posture and maintains military readiness in close coordination with the United States.

The Japanese Defense Ministry and prime minister’s office also tweeted that North Korea launched a possible missile.

It’s the latest in a series of missile launches by North Korea in recent weeks. North Korea said Thursday that leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test-launches of long-range cruise missiles that he said successfully demon-

strated his military’s expanding nuclear strike capabilities.

North Korea said Monday that its missile tests in the past two weeks were simulated nuclear attacks on key South Korean and U.S. targets. North Korea said the weapons tests were meant to issue a warning to Seoul and Washington for staging “dangerous” joint naval exercises involving a U.S. aircraft carrier.

The North Korean launches, part of its record-breaking run of weapons tests this year, were seen as an attempt by Kim to acquire a more intimidating arsenal to pressure its rivals to accept his country as a legitimate nuclear state and lift economic sanctions.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff also said in a statement that North Korea had flown warplanes near the rivals’ border late Thursday and early Friday, prompting South Korea to scramble fighter jets.

The North Korean planes flew as close as 7 miles north of the inter-Korean border. The South

Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said it responded by scrambling F-35 jets and other warplanes, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There were no reports of clashes. A similar incident took place earlier this month, but it was still uncommon for North Korea to fly its warplanes near the border. Also, in the previous flight this month, North Korean warplanes flew much farther from the border than their flights between Thursday and Friday.

North Korea’s military also issued a statement early Friday accusing South Korea of carrying out artillery fire for about 10 hours near the border Thursday. It didn’t say whether the artillery fire was an exercise or firing at North Korea. The North Korean military said it took unspecified “strong military countermeasures” in response.

“The (North) Korean People’s Army sends a stern warning to the South Korean military inciting military tension in the front-line area with reckless action,”



KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY/KOREA NEWS SERVICE/AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, supervises tests of long-range cruise missiles at an undisclosed location in North Korea on Wednesday.

an unidentified spokesman for the General Staff of the Korean People’s Army said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The public affairs office at the South Korean Defense Ministry said it has no immediate comment.

After Wednesday’s cruise missile tests, Kim Jong Un praised the readiness of his nuclear combat forces, which he said were fully prepared for “actual war to

bring enemies under their control at a blow” with various weapons systems that are “mobile, precise and powerful,” according to KCNA.

Kim said the tests send “another clear warning to enemies” and vowed to further expand the operational realm of his nuclear armed forces to “resolutely deter any crucial military crisis and war crisis at any time and completely take the initiative in it,” KCNA said.

MILITARY

USAF adds options for sex harassment victims

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Victims of sexual harassment in the Air Force and Space Force now have the same reporting options and access to help that previously were limited to sexual assault cases.

Active-duty service members may file a restricted or unrestricted report with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response office to gain more advocacy and support services, the Air Force announced Wednesday.

The change expands “an individual’s choice, autonomy and control over what options and support are best for them,” Laurel Falls, an Air Force spokeswoman, said in a statement.

As with sexual assault, a restricted report remains confidential and

doesn’t trigger an investigation or command notification, unless the service member gives written consent or if it’s determined a health and safety risk exists, the Air Force statement said.

With an unrestricted report, the victim’s commander and the installation Equal Opportunity office are notified. The EO office talks with the victim about the complaint process and the workings of a command investigation.

Both reporting options offer advocacy, chaplain resources, medical, mental health or legal referrals, and safety assessments, Falls said.

Federal law defines sexual harassment as conduct that involves unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or deliberate or repeated offensive comments

or gestures of a sexual nature that are either implicitly or explicitly made a term or condition of a person’s job, pay or career.

The behavior also interferes with a person’s work performance or creates a hostile work environment, according to the definition.

“For service members victimized by this harmful behavior, it can be crippling, preventing them from coming forward out of fear of further harassment or the perceived lack of support from their leaders or co-workers,” Brig. Gen. Debra Lovette, the service’s integrated resilience director, said in a statement.

The policy implements requirements laid out for all the services in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act and the Defense De-

partment’s independent review of sexual assault and harassment in the military.

The review commission wrote in its 2021 report that “commanders must ... shift their mindset on sexual harassment and sexual assault and see tackling them as part of their main effort,” finding that sexual assault is less prevalent in military units where sexual harassment occurs less.

DOD’s 2021 annual report on sexual assault in the military, released last month, found that more than 8% of active-duty women and about 1.5% of active-duty men indicated experiencing some form of unwanted sexual contact in the year before the survey was conducted.

Most services previously directed sexual harassment victims to file

a complaint with Equal Opportunity, an office that addresses workplace equity and safety. But the approach came “at the expense of establishing a clear response for victims to receive support,” the commission report said.

The review led to other changes as well. Prosecution of sexual assaults and related crimes was removed from the military chain of command, and sexual harassment was added as an offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Air Force civilians are not eligible for restricted or unrestricted reporting or advocacy through the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response office.

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Next battle tank could utilize artificial intelligence

By PRANSHU VERMA
The Washington Post

Over the weekend, in a 55-second YouTube video with dramatic music, the world got a glimpse at a new killing machine that’s more fuel-efficient, quieter and sleek.

General Dynamics, the defense contracting juggernaut, showed off a prototype of its next-generation military tank, the AbramsX. It’s the biggest upgrade of America’s military tank technology since early in the Cold War, former military officials said, which presents both critical design advances and worries about unnecessary military spending.

The AbramsX comes loaded with features typical of modern military weapons. Powered by a hybrid electric diesel engine, it’s lighter and far more fuel-efficient than current gas-guzzling Abrams tanks. It can also operate with a smaller crew and has artificial intelligence systems to spot enemies, its creators said.

But the design faces an uphill climb in the halls of the Pentagon, military experts said. Russia’s war in Ukraine has shown the promise and peril of tank technology in a modern battlefield. Military strategists worry how useful tanks might be in a potential war against China, the U.S. military’s chief rival. Outfitting lethal machines with artificial intelligence also concerns military skeptics.

“It’s going to be hard for the tank community to get resources to do a major upgrade,” said Mark Cancian, a retired Marine colonel and senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a national security think tank.

Shortly after the Vietnam War, the Defense Department commis-



General Dynamics Land Systems

General Dynamics showed off a prototype of its next-generation military tank, the AbramsX, over the weekend.

sioned Abrams tanks into service, looking to match Soviet firepower and technology. The M1 Abrams tank has served as a primary battle tank for the U.S. Army and, until recently, the Marine Corps.

The Abrams tank has gone through various changes in the past century, but it has been plagued with several issues: It’s costly and gas-guzzling, and it isn’t as nimble on the battlefield as lightweight armored vehicles, such as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, military experts said.

For the past few years, General Dynamics has been trying to solve those problems, said Tim Reese, the company’s director of U.S. business development. General Dynamics did not disclose a price tag for the AbramsX, which is still in the preliminary stages.

Reese said the tank weighs roughly 10 tons less than current models in service. Its hybrid elec-

tric diesel engine would be 50% more fuel-efficient than the Abrams tanks the military uses now, Reese said.

The design would also be slightly different. Instead of soldiers sitting in the turret at the top of the tank, they would be in the hull. Creators said the tank could operate with a three-person team, one fewer than usual. The AbramsX has enhanced armor to protect it against bombs dropped by drones.

The tank’s software is another major upgrade. An artificial intelligence system on board could be used to spot dangers in the distance.

In fighting situations, Reese noted, the tank’s artificial intelligence could prioritize a target list when multiple enemies are present. But it could not kill anyone automatically. “In the end, a human operator—the commander of the vehicle—makes a decision whether to engage and with what got it,” he said.

Search is on in Spain for missing US sailor

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy and Spanish police are investigating the disappearance of a 31-year-old sailor missing for nearly a week from his home near Naval Station Rota.

Lt. j.g. Eric Caldwell was last seen Oct. 7 in Chipiona, a small town on Spain’s Atlantic coast about 10 miles north of the base, said Lt. j.g. Charena Comacho, a base spokeswoman.

Navy officials are working with Chipiona police in the search, and the case also is being investigated by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, she said.

It’s unclear exactly when Caldwell went missing, where he was or what he was doing. He lives in Chipiona, Comacho said.

Caldwell is a physician assistant at U.S. Naval Hospital Rota, according to the hospital Facebook page, which posted photos of him at an Oct. 6 celebration.

“I chose to become a PA because I love patients, love talking to them



Caldwell

and getting to know each person,” Caldwell wrote in a post made one day before his disappearance.

He is about 5 feet, 8 inches tall with a slim build, brown hair and blue eyes. He was last seen wearing blue shorts and a long-sleeved white shirt with small blue polka dots, according to a story published Tuesday by the newspaper Viva Rota.

Dozens of residents as well as Caldwell’s friends and fellow service members participated in at least one coordinated search Monday, according to the newspaper.

Anyone with information about his whereabouts can call NCIS at +34 956 824 384 or +34 649 479 689, the hospital said on its Facebook page.

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Vets, retirees’ benefits rise with Social Security boost

By SARA SAMORA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Veterans and military retirees will see an increase in their disability compensation after the Social Security Administration announced 70 million Americans will see an 8.7% increase in their benefits next year.

The announcement comes two days after President Joe Biden signed the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2022, which will require the Department of Veterans Affairs to

boost compensation for veterans with disabilities and their families by providing a cost-of-living adjustment equal to the Social Security increase. The cost-of-living adjustment means the average recipient will receive more than \$140 extra a month beginning in January, the Social Security Administration said Thursday.

If a veteran’s disability rating is at 60% and the monthly compensation is about \$1,214 with no dependents, their increase from the VA could be about \$105.

MILITARY

Haddock, general beloved in Germany, dies at 86

BY ALEXANDER RIEDEL

Stars and Stripes

Raymond Haddock, a former Army general who oversaw the missile system that protected Europe against Cold War Soviet threats and was also the last U.S. military commander in West Berlin, died at age 86.

A resident of Spotsylvania, Va., Haddock was battling a serious illness at the time of his death on Oct. 3, which Germans observe as the holiday celebrating the reunification of the country.

The news of his death prompted sympathy and grateful memories in Germany, where he had maintained friendly contact over the decades.

Ralf Stumpf, who in 2014 created a small Cold War museum in the rooms of the old command post at the former Bismarck Kaserne in Schwaebisch-Gmuend, called Haddock "a true gentleman." Haddock's uniform is a centerpiece in the collection, Stumpf told Stars and Stripes.

Gmuend was once a garrison town and home to 4,000 American soldiers and their families. Haddock is remembered fondly by the townsfolk.



National Archives

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Raymond Haddock served as the final U.S. commander of West Berlin from 1988 to 1990.

"He was the reason the German-American friendship existed here," Stumpf said. "He truly cared about the people."

"Great man and great leader," wrote Dale Nye, who served under Haddock in Schwaebisch-Gmuend, on an online memorial page. "I met him in the field and he made it known he had our back!"

As a major general, Haddock was part of the successful fielding of Pershing II missiles in Germany while serving as commander of the 56th Field Artillery Command, the garrison in Schwaebisch-Ge-

muend and its associated missile stations in Germany from 1984 through 1987.

Haddock was in charge of the intermediate range nuclear force at the height of tensions with the Soviet Union. The SS-20 missiles the Kremlin deployed had Europe in their crosshairs.

The deployment of heavy American weaponry wasn't popular in war-weary Germany and received pushback from peace movement activists and local politicians.

For years, protests and road blockades made front-page news in Germany. Additionally, the program incurred setbacks when accidents called public safety into question.

Led by the German-speaking Haddock, the command employed a public engagement policy to win support for his soldiers and Europe's defense against a Soviet nuclear threat in Europe.

Haddock's skills were also relied upon during his tenure as the U.S. commander in Berlin from 1988 through the reunification of Germany in 1990.

At a time when a so-called "death strip" still separated East and West, Haddock commanded

up to 12,000 U.S. and allied service members as the first line of defense for West Berlin.

But as the senior American military official, Haddock also served a diplomatic role.

When demonstrations started to ramp up and East German border guards ceased to enforce emigration rules in 1989, Haddock and his wife were among the first to greet East Germans coming across to West Berlin.

"There was such a tremendous outpouring of enthusiasm on the western side as brothers and sisters, countrymen on the West went to greet their fellow citizens coming from the East," Haddock recalled in 1992 on WTIJ radio in New Orleans. "It was a wonderful experience."

Under his watch, the U.S. closed one of the Cold War's most famous frontline postings, Checkpoint Charlie. It was the only legal crossing point for U.S. service members and civilians traveling between East and West Berlin.

"For 45 years we stood firm on the front lines in Berlin," Haddock said in 1992. "For 45 years there was one policy that said, 'This we will defend.' Berlin will be free and

one day Germany would be united. We stood firm there ... and we won. We won because of that long string of doing the right thing."

Years later, Haddock said witnessing German reunification was one of the happiest days of his life.

Maj. Gen. Stephen Maranian, the current commanding general of the 56th Artillery Command, joined in the online tributes to Haddock.

"His legacy is intertwined with ours and I'm glad that he lived to see the day when the unit that he so loved was brought back into active duty in the U. S. Army," Maranian wrote Oct. 7.

The command was reactivated Nov. 8, 2021, at Clay Kaserne in Wiesbaden amid renewed tension between Moscow and the West.

After launching his military career as the battalion commander of his ROTC unit at West Texas State University, Haddock went on to serve 34 years in the Army.

He is survived by Brunhilde Haddock, his wife of 62 years; a daughter; two sons and eight grandchildren. He will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

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MILITARY

NATO to deliver drone jammers to Ukrainians

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Western allies said Thursday they will rush special weaponry into Ukraine to help Kyiv neutralize drones that the Russian military is relying on to attack cities and civilian targets across the country.

“NATO will shortly deliver counterdrone equipment to Ukraine, with hundreds of drone jammers, which can help render ineffective Russian and Iranian-made drones, and to protect Ukrainian people and critical infrastructure,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

Stoltenberg’s comments came at the conclusion of two days of talks at alliance headquarters in Brussels, where allies were focused on beefing up air defenses not only in Ukraine but on NATO turf.

More than a dozen NATO countries are now on board with plans to launch the European Sky Shield, a new air defense initiative on the eastern side of the Atlantic. They signed a letter of intent Thursday at NATO headquarters in Brussels during a meeting of defense ministers.

“This commitment is even more crucial today as we witness the ruthless and indiscriminate missile attacks by Russia in Ukraine, killing civilians and destroying critical infrastructure,” NATO Deputy Secretary-General Mircea Geoana said in a statement.

Germany is slated to lead the effort through a shared acquisition strategy. It wasn’t clear Thursday when NATO intends the initiative to begin operations, or what weapon systems it will include.

The 14 NATO allies that signed on to the plan are Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia,

Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and the United Kingdom.

Finland, which is still awaiting the unanimous approval of member states required for entrance into the alliance, also is part of the effort.

The assets are expected to integrate into NATO’s broader air and missile defense network, enhancing the allies’ ability to defend their collective territory from air and missile threats, alliance officials said.

On Wednesday, American defense leaders said the U.S. and its allies also are aiming to provide Ukraine with an integrated air defense system that will better protect high-priority parts of the country.

The plan came at Kyiv’s request in the wake of Moscow’s bombardment of numerous cities across Ukraine.

With the war in Ukraine now in its eighth month, the U.S. and other allies have sent billions of dollars in arms to support the country since Russia launched its full-scale invasion. But the scale of allied support has raised concerns about member states depleting their weapon stockpiles.

NATO agreed on Thursday to take steps to ramp up weapons production.

“We all know that we all share the responsibility to prepare and provide ready capabilities and forces to prepare this alliance for the challenges to come,” Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters at the end of discussions Thursday.

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Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, left, addresses reporters with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg before a bilateral meeting in Brussels, on Thursday.



KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

Airman Donald Manunta-Lowell shows off the Hendy prototype at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Sept. 16.

Airman’s invention aims to make handling countermeasures safer

By KELLY AGEE
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Airmen may have an easier time loading chaff and flare canisters for Air Force aircraft thanks to a device created by a former munitions inspector at this airlift hub in western Tokyo.

Senior Airman Michael Henderson, now at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., but formerly of Yokota’s 374th Air Wing, said he invented the “Hendy cradle” to make handling the aircraft countermeasures safer.

“I love seeing the progress the cradle is making,” he told Stars and Stripes by email Sept. 28. “When I first came up with the idea, I thought I’d have to make the whole thing myself, but thankfully I had YokoWERX to really work hard in pushing the cradle forward.”

YokoWERX is an innovation lab at Yokota with a dedicated staff to help members of the base community solve technical problems.

The Hendy cradle stores chaff and flare canisters that are used as defensive countermeasures to confuse or mislead enemy anti-aircraft missiles guided by radar or an aircraft heat signature. Henderson proposed his idea in November 2020, the design stage started December 2020 and the prototype was made in January 2021.

Now the Hendy is in the testing stage at YokoWERX. After years of working on the project, the team is hoping to have the device in use

at Yokota by the end of the year and across the Air Force within the next two years, Tech. Sgt. Nick Richards, a YokoWERX quality assurance inspector, told Stars and Stripes on Sept. 20.

Innovators and inventors can bring their ideas to YokoWERX where a team of Air Force and civilian volunteers can make them a reality, the wing’s innovation officer, said Master Sgt. Sarah Hubert.

“YokoWERX really is the area for you to go to on base where innovation meets the Air Force that you may not be able to find at your regular work center because of restrictions,” she said Sept. 20. “We help remove some barriers and get your ideas, not just at Yokota level of support, but also Air Force level support.”

Airman 1st Class Donald Manunta-Lowell, who loads aircraft with the flare and chaff countermeasures, is helping test the Hendy cradle by loading it on trucks, letting it rattle around and exposing it to working conditions.

After working with the Hendy firsthand, Manunta-Lowell said that ammunition loaders would benefit from its use.

“I am somebody that would benefit from it, using it would make my work life easier, it would make it so we could do our job faster and safer,” he told Stars and Stripes on Sept. 20.

Countermeasures are typically stored in munitions trailers, but Yokota doesn’t have any. So, they have been storing and transport-

ing the countermeasures using empty 20mm ammunition cans, which are padded with pieces of foam, cardboard or another non-conductive material, ensuring the countermeasures do not touch each other during transport.

“I think everybody is looking forward to this,” Manunta-Lowell said. “Everybody gets here and deals with these cans in a regular way of getting it in and out and everybody thinks it’s a bit of a hassle. So, this is a huge deal for everybody.”

YokoWERX trials discovered that loading canisters with the Hendy cradle took about 10 seconds, versus 44 seconds by the existing method.

The Hendy can carry at least 200 pounds of weight, Hubert said.

Richards said he is trying to create a version that costs \$64 per unit to produce. Each Hendy cradle requires 50 to 60 hours to make on a 3D printer.

Instead of selling the idea to a contractor or company Richards says he wants to give the instructions on how to print the parts for the Hendy, so that innovation labs across the Air Force can make the cradle.

“I didn’t realize how much YokoWERX could help make the idea become a reality in the beginning,” Henderson said. “As soon as I explained my idea, everyone at YokoWERX worked together to make the cradle come to life exactly how I pictured it in my mind.”

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EUROPE

Iranian-made drones hit Kyiv area in Ukraine

BY SABRA AYRES
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian forces attacked Ukraine's Kyiv and Odesa regions with Iranian-made drones and used missiles to strike other areas Thursday, Ukrainian officials said as Moscow punished the country for a fourth day after a truck bomb damaged a bridge to the annexed Crimean Peninsula.

A strike carried out near Makariv, a small city located 31 miles west of Kyiv, destroyed critical infrastructure. Throughout the capital region, residents whose lives had resumed some normalcy when the war moved east months ago again awoke to air raid sirens.

Russia intensified its bombardment of civilian areas in recent weeks as its military lost ground in multiple occupied regions of Ukraine that President Vladimir Putin illegally claimed as Russian territory. Putin's supporters urged him to escalate the campaign further after the Crimea

bridge attack.

It wasn't clear if the explosive-packed drones caused any casualties. Ukrainian officials said dozens of people died this week after the Russian military ramped up the scope of its attacks, including at least two killed Thursday in a missile strike that destroyed an apartment building in southern Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials said Thursday that Iranians in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine were training Russians how to use the Shahed-136 systems, which can conduct air-to-surface attacks, electronic warfare and targeting. Their deployment may indicate the Russian military is running out of its own drones.

The low-flying aerial devices help keep Ukraine's cities on edge, but the British Defense Ministry has said the Iran-made drones were unlikely to be fulfilling their purpose of providing strike options deep into Ukrainian



LEO CORREA/AP

Debris covers an area of a heavily damaged school after a Russian attack two days ago in Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukraine, on Thursday.

territory, with many reportedly destroyed before they hit their targets.

Ukraine's air force command said Thursday its air defense shot down six Iranian drones from over the Odesa and Mykolaiv re-

gions during the night.

The Russian military resumed widespread attacks in Ukraine on Monday following the weekend explosion that damaged the Kerch Bridge. The 12-mile span holds importance as a symbol of Mos-

cow's power and carries military supplies from Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

The speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament said Russian forces struck more than 70 energy facilities in Ukraine this week. He threatened an "even tougher" response to future attacks by "the Kyiv regime," although Ukraine has not claimed responsibility for the bridge bombing.

"All the organizers and perpetrators of the terrorist attacks must be found; those who resist must be destroyed," State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin wrote on Telegram.

Russian officials said Thursday that Ukrainian forces shelled the Russia's Belgorod region that borders Ukraine. According to the region's governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, the shelling damaged a multi-story residential building in the city of Belgorod, while a projectile that landed on a school sports ground did not explode.

Weapons: US has sent \$16.8B in aid

FROM PAGE 1

But there are still a number of high-profile, advanced weapons that Ukraine wants and the U.S. won't provide, due to political sensitivities, classified technology or limited stockpiles.

In a meeting with about 50 defense leaders this week, Austin and Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, discussed plans to send more air defense weapons to Ukraine and also increase training for Ukrainian troops.

"We know that Ukraine still needs even more long-range fires, and air defense systems and artillery systems along with other crucial capabilities," Austin said Wednesday. He said allies talked about a number of air defense systems.

The U.S. has already provided 20 of the advanced High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, and has promised 18 more.

And the Pentagon has said it will deliver the first two advanced NASAMS surface-to-air missile systems to Ukraine in the coming weeks, providing Kyiv with a weapon that it has pressed for since earlier this year. The systems will provide medium- to long-range defenses against Russian missile attacks.

Germany is now delivering its first IRIS-T surface-to-air missile system, which has a range of about 25 miles. It has promised a total of



VADIM GHIRDA/AP

A Ukrainian serviceman fires an NLAW anti-tank weapon during an exercise in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine in February.

four.

Overall, the U.S. has sent Ukraine \$16.8 billion in weapons and other aid since the war began on Feb. 24. That aid has included hundreds of armored vehicles, 142 155mm Howitzers and 880,000 rounds of ammunition for them, plus thousands of Javelin anti-tank and Stinger anti-aircraft weapons and 60 million rounds of bullets.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly made it clear that his country needs more advanced weapons to continue the fight. Russia launched a barrage of attacks using drones, heavy artillery and missiles this week.

Zelenskyy's pleas for some weapons, however, are so far going unanswered.

A key request is for the Army Tactical Missile System. Known as ATACMS, it is one of the weapons that Zelenskyy has repeatedly requested. It would give Ukraine the ability to strike Russian targets from as far as about 180 miles.

The system uses the same launchers as the HIMARS rockets that Kyiv has successfully used in

its counteroffensive, but has as much as three times the range of those rockets.

A major U.S. concern is that the longer-range capability could be used against targets inside Russia and further provoke Putin, said Brad Bowman, the senior director of the Center on Military and Political Power at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a Washington-based nonpartisan research institute.

Similarly, the U.S. isn't likely to send Ukraine the highly sophisticated surface-to-air Patriot missile system, which has the ability to shoot down incoming ballistic missiles.

Zelenskyy has also pressed the U.S. since March to provide fighter jets such as F-16s, but the U.S. has repeatedly rejected the idea to avoid further escalation with Russia.

The U.S. also has so far declined to send Ukraine more sophisticated longer-range drones, such as the Gray Eagle, which also would give Ukraine a longer-distance strike capability.

US veteran and father of five dies fighting in Ukraine

BY KELLY KASULIS CHO
The Washington Post

Dane Partridge, a U.S. veteran and former infantryman from Idaho, died this week in Ukraine after suffering injuries from a Russian attack earlier this month, his family told The Washington Post late Wednesday. He was 34.

Partridge, who served as an infantryman in Iraq for 15 months from 2007 to 2009, suffered critical injuries to his neck and brain stem on Oct. 3 when he was hit during a Russian tank attack on his unit in Severodonetsk, a city in Luhansk, his family said, citing a doctor from a Ukrainian hospital. He was on life support until he died Tuesday.

A State Department spokesperson confirmed the recent death of a U.S. citizen in Donbas without naming them.

There are no official public numbers of U.S. volunteer fighters in Ukraine, or of those who have died there, though an official at the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington told The Post in

March that about 4,000 had expressed interest in the newly formed International Legion of Territorial Defense of Ukraine. Partridge's death follows that of Luke Lucyszyn and Bryan Young in July, Stephen D. Zabielski in May and Willy Cancel in April.

In the first six months of the war, Ukraine lost about 9,000 troops, with more than 7,000 missing, according to official Ukrainian statements, though the numbers could be higher.

Partridge wrote a will before buying a one-way ticket to Poland, where he signed up to fight in the legion in April. His sister, Jenny Corry of Idaho Falls, said he felt a spiritual calling to join.

"He felt strongly with almost every bone in his body that he needed to go and he needed to fight," she said. "When he did leave, it was emotional for me, because I just knew in my heart it would be the last time I saw him."

Partridge separated from the military in 2012 with the rank of private first class, according to his father, Dennis Partridge.

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NATION

Jan. 6 panel plans to subpoena Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House Jan. 6 Committee planned to vote Thursday to subpoena former President Donald Trump to testify, as it presented interviews with his aides and new documents detailing his unflinching multi-part efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss.

The vote seeking Trump's testimony comes as panel is producing vivid new details and evidence of Trump's state of mind as he refused to concede his election loss to Joe Biden, resulting in the 2021 attack at the Capitol.

In never-before-seen Secret Service messages, the panel produced evidence of the way extremist groups provided the muscle in the fight for Trump's presidency, planning weeks before the attack to send a violent force to Washington.

"Their plan is literally to kill people," read a tip that was sent to Secret Service more than a week before the violence on Jan. 6.

The Secret Service warned in a Dec. 26, 2020, email of a tip that members of the right-wing Proud Boys planned to march in Washington on Jan. 6 with a group large enough to outnumber the police.

"It felt like the calm before the storm," one Secret Service agent wrote in a group chat.

The House panel warned that the insurrection at the Capitol was



ALEX WONG, POOL/AP

The House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol holds a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, on Thursday.

not an isolated incident but a warning of the fragility of the nation's democracy in the post-Trump era.

"None of this is normal or acceptable or lawful in a republic," Republican Rep. Liz Cheney said.

"There is no defense that Donald Trump was duped or irrational. No president can defy the rule of law and act this way in a constitutional republic, period."

The 10th public session, just

weeks before the congressional midterm elections, was delving into Trump's "state of mind," said Democratic Chairman Bennie Thompson.

The committee is starting to sum up its findings that Republican Trump, after losing the 2020 presidential election, launched an unprecedented attempt to stop Congress from certifying Democrat Biden's victory. The result was the

mob storming of the Capitol.

Statements from Thompson and Cheney were laden with language frequently seen in criminal indictments. Both lawmakers described Trump as "substantially" involved in the events of Jan. 6. Cheney said Trump had acted in a "premeditated" way.

To illustrate what it said were "purposeful lies," the committee juxtaposed repeated instances in

which top administration officials recounted telling Trump the actual facts with clips of him repeating the exact opposite at his pre-riot rally at the Ellipse on Jan. 6.

The committee may well make a decision on whether to make a criminal referral to the Justice Department.

Thursday's hearing opened at a mostly empty Capitol complex, with most lawmakers at home campaigning for reelection.

To describe the president's mindset, the committee divulged new material, including interviews with Trump's top Cabinet officials, aides and associates in which some described the president acknowledging that he had lost.

The committee is also drawing on the trove of 1.5 million documents it received from the U.S. Secret Service, including an email from Dec. 11, 2020, the day the Supreme Court rejected one of the main lawsuits Trump's team had brought against the election results.

Cabinet members including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Attorney General William Barr and Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia also said in interviews shown at the hearing that they believed that once the legal avenues had been exhausted, that should have been the end of Trump's efforts to remain in power.

Trial: Tweet about 'wild' protest energized extremists

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Members of the far-right Oath Keepers were ecstatic when then-President Donald Trump invited supporters to a "wild" protest in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021, when Congress would be certifying the results of the 2020 election, according to messages shown Thursday during the seditious conspiracy trial for the militia group's founder and four associates.

During an FBI agent's testimony, jurors saw a string of online posts that Oath Keepers members in Florida exchanged after

Trump's tweet on Dec. 19, 2020, about a "big protest" at the upcoming joint session of Congress on Jan. 6. "Be there, will be wild!" Trump said.

"He wants us to make it WILD," Kelly Meggs, an Oath Keepers leader from Dunnellon, Fla., wrote in a message to other group members. "He called us all to the Capitol and wants us to make it wild!!! Sir Yes Sir!!!"

Trump's words appeared to energize Oath Keepers members. They used an encrypted messaging app to discuss their plans to be in the nation's capital on Jan. 6, when, after a Trump rally near the

White House, a mob stormed the Capitol and disrupted Congress from certifying Democrat Joe Biden's victory over the Republican incumbent.

"These will be flying Jan. 6 in front of the Capitol," Meggs wrote in a post that included the image of an Oath Keepers flag.

Graydon Young, an Oath Keepers member from Florida who has pleaded guilty to a conspiracy charge, said he was going to Washington even though it "feels like a fool's errand." Oath Keepers founder and national leader Stewart Rhodes responded on Dec. 25, 2020, that he disagreed with that

assessment.

"Trump needs to know we support him in using the Insurrection Act," Rhodes wrote. "And he needs to know that if he fails to act, then we will."

A key argument for Rhodes' lawyers is that the Oath Keepers founder believed Trump was going to invoke the Insurrection Act, which gives the president broad authority to call up the military and decide what shape that force will take. Trump did float that kind of action at other points in his presidency.

Meggs and Rhodes, who's from Granbury, Texas, are on trial with

Thomas Caldwell of Berryville, Va.; Kenneth Harrelson of Titusville, Fla.; and Jessica Watkins of Woodstock, Ohio.

They are the first Capitol riot defendants to be tried on seditious conspiracy charges for what prosecutors said was a plot to stop the lawful transfer of presidential power. The Civil War-era charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Defense lawyers have accused prosecutors of cherry-picking messages and have said there is no evidence the Oath Keepers had a plan to attack the Capitol.

The trial started last Monday.

Parkland school shooter to get life sentence for killing 17

By TERRY SPENCER
Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Florida school shooter Nikolas Cruz will be sentenced to life without parole for the 2018 murder of 17 people at Parkland's Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, after the jury said Thursday that it could not unanimously agree that he should be executed — a deci-

sion that left some parents in tears as they exited the courtroom.

The jury's recommendation came after seven hours of deliberations over two days, ending a three-month trial that included graphic videos, photos and testimony from the massacre and its aftermath, heart-wrenching testimony from victims' family members and a tour of the still blood-

spattered building.

Under Florida law, a death sentence requires a unanimous vote on at least one count. Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer will formally issue the life sentences Nov. 1. Relatives, along with the students and teachers Cruz wounded, will be given the opportunity to speak at the sentencing hearing.

Cruz, his hair unkempt, largely

sat hunched over and stared at the table as the jury's recommendations were read. Rumblyings grew from the family section — packed with about three dozen parents, spouses and other relatives of the victims — as life sentences were announced. Many shook their heads, looked angry or covered their eyes, as the judge spent 50 minutes reading the jury's deci-

sion for each victim. Some of the parents sobbed as they left the courtroom.

Cruz, 24, pleaded guilty a year ago to murdering 14 students and three staff members and wounding 17 others on Feb. 14, 2018. Cruz said he chose Valentine's Day to make it impossible for Stoneman Douglas students to celebrate the holiday ever again.

NATION

Jones ordered to pay \$965M for Sandy Hook lies

By **DAVE COLLINS**
Associated Press

WATERBURY, Conn. — Jurors ordered conspiracy theorist Alex Jones on Wednesday to pay nearly \$1 billion to Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims' relatives and an FBI agent, who said he turned their loss and trauma into years of torment by promoting the lie that the rampage was a hoax.

The \$965 million verdict is the second big judgment against the Infowars host for spreading the myth that the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history never happened, and that the grieving families seen in news coverage were actors hired as part of a plot to take away people's guns.

The verdict came in a defamation lawsuit filed by some of the families of 26 people who were killed in the 2012 shooting, plus an FBI agent who was among the first

responders. A Texas jury in August awarded nearly \$50 million to the parents of another slain child.

Robbie Parker, who lost his 6-year-old daughter, Emilie, said outside the Connecticut court that he was proud that "what we were able to accomplish was just to simply tell the truth."

"And it shouldn't be this hard, and it shouldn't be this scary," said Parker, who became an early target of conspiracy theorists after he spoke at a news conference the day after the shooting. The jury awarded him the most of any plaintiff: \$120 million.

Jones wasn't at court but reacted on his Infowars show.

As courtroom video showed the jury awards being read out, Jones said that he himself had never mentioned the plaintiffs' names.

"All made up. Hilarious," he said. "So this is what a show trial looks like. I mean, this is the left



BRIAN A. POUNDS, HEARST CONNECTICUT MEDIA, POOL/AP

Plaintiff Robbie Parker drops his head in his hands and fellow plaintiffs William Sherlach, left, and Francine Wheeler lend emotional support as the jury verdict awards are read in the Alex Jones defamation trial at Superior Court, on Wednesday in Waterbury, Conn.

completely out of control."

Jones' lawyer, Norm Pattis, portrayed the trial as unfair and pledged to appeal.

"Today is a very, very, very dark day for freedom of speech," he said outside court.

The jury awarded various sums to the victims' relatives, who testified that they were threatened and

harassed for years by people who believed the lies told on Jones' show. Strangers showed up at the families' homes to record them. People hurled abusive comments on social media.

To plaintiff William Sherlach, the verdict "shows that the internet is not the wild, wild West, and that your actions have conse-

quences."

He had testified about seeing online posts that falsely posited that the shooting was a hoax; that his slain wife, school psychologist Mary Sherlach, never existed; that he was part of a financial cabal and somehow involved with the school shooter's father; and more.

Clinics offer free vasectomies, citing a surge in demand

By **HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH**
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Denny Dalliance had long worried about what would happen if he fathered a child because his job as a truck driver keeps him away from home most of the week.

But after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June, the 31-year-old Independence, Mo., man decided it was time to take action — and jumped at the chance to sign up for a free vasectomy.

"These are grim circumstances under which I made this decision," he said as he drove a load of cardboard boxes through Kansas this week.

The vasectomy he is scheduled to get next month is part of an effort that involves Planned Parenthood and a physician with a mobile vasectomy clinic. Sixty vasectomies will be offered over three days in and outside Planned Parenthood clinics in St. Louis, Springfield and Joplin to uninsured patients during the first week of November amid what the clinics say is a surge in demand

for the procedure.

Dr. Esgar Guarin then plans to take his mobile clinic — a vehicle decorated with large images of sperm that his friends have jokingly dubbed the "Nutcracker" — on the road the following week to offer 40 more free vasectomies in several towns across Iowa.

Guarin also plans to offer discounted vasectomies that month at his regular clinic in the Des Moines area.

The efforts are part of World Vasectomy Day, originally a single-day event that now includes a year-round focus and a host of activities in November.

"It's a very particular moment in reproductive rights in the United States. And we need to we need to talk about it," he said, adding that vasectomies are performed far less often than the tubal ligation method of female sterilization, even though they are cheaper, have a shorter recovery time and require local, rather than general, anesthesia.

Guarin, who serves on the medical advisory board for the World Vasectomy Day, helped offer va-



DENNY DALLIANCE/AP

Denny Dalliance

sectomies last year at the Planned Parenthood in St. Louis to raise awareness about the procedure. The effort was so popular that the decision was made to expand it to other cities even before the toppling of *Roe* sent demand soaring.

In July alone, the Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri performed 42 vasectomies, compared to 10 in the same month last year. Female sterilizations rose to 18 that month from just three in July 2021.

It is too early for any post-*Roe* national numbers on permanent sterilization, said Laura Lindberg, a professor at Rutgers University's School of Public Health in New Jersey.

Applications for jobless aid increase last week

By **MATT OTT**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits rose slightly last week but remains historically low even as the U.S. economy slows in the midst of decades-high inflation.

Jobless claims for the week ending Oct. 8 rose by 9,000 to 228,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The four-week moving average ticked up by 5,000 to 211,500.

Considered a proxy for layoffs, applications for jobless aid have remained historically low since the initial purge of more than 20 million jobs at the start of the coronavirus pandemic in the spring of 2020.

Some recent employment data has indicated that the job market may be cooling slightly, but overall, it remains the healthiest part of an economy that's been wobbling since early this year.

The government reported Thursday that that inflation in the United States accelerated in September, with the cost of housing and other necessities intensifying pressure on families and businesses.

Four-decade high inflation has

prompted the Federal Reserve to keep raising its key interest rate, which is currently in a range of 3% to 3.25%. A little more than six months ago, that rate was near zero. The sharp rate hikes have pushed mortgage rates up to 15-year highs, and made other borrowing costlier. The Fed hopes that higher interest rates will slow borrowing and spending and push inflation closer to its traditional 2% target.

Fed officials have warned that the unemployment rate will likely have to rise as part of their fight against rising prices, and last week's jobs report likely snuffed out any hope that the Fed would pause rate increases when it meets in early November.

American employers slowed their hiring in September but still added 263,000 jobs and the unemployment rate dropped from 3.7% to 3.5%, matching a half-century low.

The Fed is hoping that a slower pace of hiring would eventually mean less pressure on employers to raise pay and pass those costs on to their customers through price increases — a recipe for high inflation. But September's job growth was likely too solid to sway the central bank's inflation watchdogs.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

US clears COVID booster for kids as young as 5

Associated Press

The U.S. on Wednesday authorized updated COVID-19 boosters for children as young as 5, seeking to expand protection ahead of an expected winter wave.

Tweaked boosters rolled out for Americans 12 and older last month, doses modified to target today's most common and contagious omicron relative. While there wasn't a big rush, federal health officials are urging that people seek the extra protection ahead of holiday gatherings.

Now the Food and Drug Administration has given a green light for elementary school-age kids to get the updated booster doses, too — one made by Pfizer for 5- to 11-year-olds, and a version from rival Moderna for those as young as 6.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends how vaccines are used, also signed off.

Americans may be tired of repeated calls to get boosted against COVID-19 but experts say the updated shots have an advantage: They contain half the recipe that targeted the original coronavirus strain and half protection against the dominant BA.4 and BA.5 omicron versions.

These combination or "bivalent" boosters are designed to broaden immune defenses so that people are better protected against serious illness whether they encounter an omicron relative in the coming months — or a different mutant that's more like the original virus.

"We want to have the best of both worlds," Pfizer's Dr. Bill Gruber, a pediatrician, told The Associated Press. He hopes the updated shots will "re-energize interest in protecting children for the winter."

The updated boosters are "extremely important" for keeping

Only people who've gotten their initial vaccinations — with any of the original-formula versions — qualify for an updated booster

kids healthy and in school, said Dr. Jason Newland, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Washington University in St. Louis.

Parents should know "there is no concern from the safety perspective with the bivalent vaccines, whether Moderna or Pfizer," Newland added.

Only people who've gotten their initial vaccinations — with any of the original-formula versions — qualify for an updated booster. That means about three-fourths of Americans 12 and older are eligible. As of last weekend, only at least 13 million had gotten an updated booster, White House COVID-19 coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha estimated Tuesday.

To pediatricians' chagrin, getting children their first vaccinations has been tougher. Less than a third of 5- to 11-year-olds have had their two primary doses and thus would qualify for the new booster.

This age group will get kid-size doses of the new omicron-targeting booster — and they can receive it two months after their last dose, whether that was their primary vaccination series or an earlier booster, the FDA said.

As for even younger tots, first vaccinations didn't open for the under-5 age group until mid-June — and it will be several more months before regulators decide if they'll also need a booster using the updated recipe.



MATT ROTH/For The Washington Post

Mallory Stanislawczyk, a former nurse practitioner, administers a saline infusion at home in Walkersville, Md., in May. Long COVID has made it difficult for her to stand up without fainting.

Study shows depth of long COVID's impact

By FRANCES STEAD SELLERS
The Washington Post

A new long-COVID study based on the experiences of nearly 100,000 participants provides powerful evidence that many people do not fully recover months after being infected with the coronavirus.

The Scottish study found that between six and 18 months after infection, 1 in 20 people had not recovered and 42% reported feeling only somewhat better. There were some reassuring aspects to the results: People with asymptomatic infections are unlikely to suffer long-term effects, and vaccination appears to offer some protection from long COVID.

"It's one more well-conducted, population-level study showing that we should be extremely concerned about the current numbers of acute infections," said David Putrino, director of rehabilitation innovation for the Mount Sinai Health System in New York. "We are in trouble."

Jill Pell, a professor of public health at the University of Glasgow who led the research, emphasized that the study revealed the wide-ranging impact of long COVID on people's lives. "There are

lots of different impacts going beyond health to quality of life, employment, schooling and the ability to look after yourself," she said.

The paper, published Wednesday in Nature Communications, represents the first findings of an ongoing study into long COVID — the Long-CISS (Covid in Scotland Study).

The range of reported symptoms and inability to provide a prognosis for patients have perplexed long-COVID researchers, even as the breadth of the challenge has become clearer. Between 7 million and 23 million Americans — including 1 million who can no longer work — are suffering from the long-term effects of infection with the virus, according to government estimates. Those numbers are expected to rise as COVID becomes an endemic disease.

Previous studies have been challenged by the nonspecific nature of long-COVID symptoms, including breathlessness and fatigue, which are also common in the general population. The Covid in Scotland Study, which included a control group, was able to pinpoint which symptoms were

linked to COVID, Pell said.

Putrino pointed out that between 16 and 31% of the control group also suffered those same symptoms — a figure that is similar to the false negative rate of a PCR test, suggesting some of the control group may have been infected. Pell agreed that it is possible that some people with negative tests could have been infected, serving to reinforce the study's broader findings.

Long hauler symptoms range widely from person to person. In the Scottish study, the most commonly reported symptoms included breathlessness, palpitations, chest pain and "brain fog," or reduced mental acuity.

Symptoms were worst among people who were sick enough to be hospitalized during the acute infection — a fact that does little to quell experts' concerns.

"It has always been the case that those who are sicker are more likely to have long-term sequelae," Putrino said. "What is frightening is that the mild cases by far outnumber the severe, so even a small percentage of mild cases going on to develop long-term sequelae is a massive public health concern."

White House: Get booster by Halloween for safer holidays

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House on Tuesday said eligible Americans should get the updated COVID-19 boosters by Halloween to have maximum protection against the coronavirus by Thanksgiving and the holidays, as it warned of a "challenging" virus season ahead.

Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House COVID-19 coordinator, said the U.S. has the tools, both from vaccines and treatments, to largely eliminate serious illness and death from the virus, but stressed that's only the

case if people do their part.

"We are not helpless against these challenges," he said. "What happens this winter is up to us."

So far the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says only about 11.5 million Americans have received the updated shots, which are meant to provide a boost of protection against both the original strain of COVID-19 and the BA.5 variant that is dominant around the world. Jha said studies suggest that if more Americans get the updated vaccines, "we could save hundreds of

lives each day this winter."

More than 330 people die on average each day of COVID-19, according to CDC data, with the U.S. death toll standing at over 1.05 million.

Jha acknowledged the slower pace of vaccinations, saying, "we expected September to be a month where it would just start picking up." He added that the White House expects more Americans to get the updated boosters this month around the time when they get their annual flu shots. He also emphasized that they should look to

get them soon to be protected when they gather with family and friends.

"I think people should get vaccinated before Halloween," he said.

Jha criticized Congress, which has refused the White House's \$22 billion budget request for virus response, saying that has kept the U.S. from building a stockpile of tests to use in the event of a new winter surge.

"You can't fight a deadly virus without resources," he said, "and congressional inaction is really costly."

WORLD



DMITRI LOVETSKY/AP

Soviet sub bound for museum

The bow of the Soviet submarine K-3 "Leninsky Komsomol" is transported by a platform along the street from the pier to the museum where it will be assembled with the stern and installed in the city of Kronstadt, outside St. Petersburg, Russia, on Wednesday.

Iran's president accuses US of 'destabilization' amid protests

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's president accused the U.S. on Thursday of conducting a "failed policy of destabilization" targeting his nation after Iranians in cities nationwide protested the death of a 22-year-old woman in the custody of the country's morality police.

President Ebrahim Raisi's repeated comments have tried to blame the demonstrations sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini as a Western plot, even as school-age protesters remove their mandatory headscarves, or hijabs. They come after protests in cities across Iran on Wednesday, with videos circulating of security forces apparently firing toward demonstrators and using violence

to put down the dissent.

The protests have become one of the greatest challenges to Iran's theocracy since the country's 2009 Green Movement. Raisi, a hardline protégé of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, described them as a plot against Iran by its enemies abroad. Raisi's remarks came Thursday as he spoke to a conference in Astana, Kazakhstan.

"The Iranian nation has invalidated the American military option and, as they themselves have admitted, brought the policy of sanctions and maximum pressure a humiliating failure," Raisi said, according to a transcript of his remarks. "Now, following America's failure in militarization and sanctions, Washington and its allies

have resorted to the failed policy of destabilization."

Raisi did not otherwise directly address the demonstrations, which took place across at least 19 cities on Wednesday.

Gathering information about the demonstrations remains difficult amid the internet restrictions and the arrests of at least 40 journalists in the country, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Iran's government insists Amini was not mistreated, but her family says her body showed bruises and other signs of beating after she was detained for violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code.

It remains unclear how many people have been killed or arrested so far in the protests.

Iraqi military: 9 rockets target Green Zone

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — At least nine rockets targeted Iraq's parliament inside the heavily fortified Green Zone on Thursday ahead of a much-anticipated session to resolve a political crisis, Iraq's military said.

The rocket attack delayed but did not postpone the parliament session scheduled to take place to elect a president, a key step toward resolving Iraq's stalled government formation one year since federal elections were held. Quorum was reached to hold the session in the afternoon with at least 269 lawmakers of the 329 attending the session.

At least five people were wounded in the attack — three were civilians and two were military personnel — the officials said without giving more details. The culprits were not immediately known.

The attacks, which appeared to be an attempt to derail the scheduled session, struck after the Coordination Framework, an alliance made up of mostly Iran-backed Shiite parties, submitted a formal letter claiming to be the largest bloc in Parliament.

The alliance named Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as their nominee for the premiership, a key legal step before the next

government can be formed.

Many feared protests by the followers of influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a political opponent of the Framework, ahead of the session. His supporters stormed the parliament on June 30 and stalled the government formation process when al-Sudani was first named nominee by the Framework.

Al-Sadr's party won the largest number of seats in the October 2021 federal election, but he ordered his lawmakers to resign after failing to secure a quorum to vote in a government that would exclude his Iran-backed allies.

Saudis: US urged 1 month delay of OPEC + oil cuts

By JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Saudi Arabia said Thursday that the U.S. had urged the kingdom to postpone a decision by OPEC and its allies — including Russia — to cut oil production by a month. Such a delay could have helped reduce the risk of a spike in gas prices ahead of the U.S. midterm elections next month.

A statement issued by the Saudi Foreign Ministry didn't specifically mention the Nov. 8 elections in which President Joe Biden is trying to maintain his narrow Democratic majority in Congress. However, it stated that the U.S. "suggested" the cuts be delayed by a month. In the end, OPEC announced the cuts at its Oct. 5 meeting in Vienna.

Rising oil prices — and by extension higher gasoline prices — have been a key driver of inflation in the U.S. and around the world, worsening global economic woes as Russia's months-long war on Ukraine also has disrupted global food sup-

plies. For Biden, gasoline prices creeping up could affect voters. He and many lawmakers have warned that America's longtime security-based relationship with the kingdom could be reconsidered.

Saudi Arabia issuing a rare, lengthy statement shows just how tense relations are between the two countries.

The White House pushed back on Thursday, rejecting the idea that the requested delay was related to the U.S. elections and instead linking it to economic considerations and Russia's war on Ukraine.

"We presented Saudi Arabia with analysis to show that there was no market basis to cut production targets, and that they could easily wait for the next OPEC meeting to see how things developed," said John Kirby, coordinator for strategic communications at the National Security Council.

"Other OPEC nations communicated to us privately that they also disagreed with the Saudi decision, but felt coerced to support Saudi's direction," he added.

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FACES



Disney+

Tatiana Maslany stars as the titular superhero on “She-Hulk: Attorney at Law.” The finale of Season 1 is now streaming on Disney+.

A funny thing happened to MCU

Tatiana Maslany finds humor as the face of ‘She-Hulk’

BY DAVID BETANCOURT
The Washington Post

Tatiana Maslany had only one concern when she began filming her role as the newest hulk in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

It wasn’t the motion capture suit, which made her feel like a kid in pajamas. The days of painting a bodybuilder green to be a Hulk on television have long since passed, so she knew her superhero self would be digitally illustrated later.

The only thing Maslany worried about was whether she had a funny bone or not.

“For me, it was like ... can I lead a comedy?” Maslany recently recalled to The Washington Post. “There’s some really funny moments in that show, and I wanted to do them justice.”

In its first season, which now has all nine episodes streaming on Disney+, “She-Hulk: Attorney at Law” has been Marvel Studios’ funniest franchise by a lot. That’s a lofty achievement when you consider humor fueled by the comedic chops of superhero heavyweights Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans and Chris Hemsworth has been a key ingredient in the MCU’s first decade of success. Maslany and head writer Jessica Gao have found ways to find that comedy while combining it with sexiness, delving into topics such as superhero dating and Captain America’s virginity.

One of those funny scenes was She-Hulk twerking alongside Megan Thee Stallion. Gao didn’t tell Maslany about the cameo until days before shooting, as she feared Maslany, who has admitted to waiting in line for hours to get a glimpse at Megan Thee Stallion and attended many a concert, wouldn’t be able to concentrate on filming any other scene. And thus, the MCU’s first superhero twerk was born.

“Now that’s canon,” Maslany said. “I’m a big dork for her. This is something I’d been working toward forever by sheer force of will. She was so chill and confident. She-Hulk could take a few lessons from Megan in terms of chillness.”

Maslany plays Jennifer Walters, a lawyer in Los Angeles whose life changes dramatically when an accidental blood transfusion from her cousin, the Incredible Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), turns her into a new hulk with new rules. The character first appeared in the pages of “Savage She-Hulk” No. 1 at Marvel Comics in 1980 and was created by Stan Lee and John Buscema. Anger doesn’t trigger She-Hulk’s transformations like it does with the original Hulk. She makes the switch from gentle to green whenever she wants. That creates the weird situation of everyone from her supervisor at work to the men she dates preferring her as She-Hulk and not as her less-superhuman alter ego — which allows the show to examine an issue that’s a little more serious.

“The ownership that people have over a woman’s body and how they treat her based on how she presents is very intense and very felt. We were touching on that in a way that was super relatable and light but also could prompt people to think about things, in a way,” Maslany said. “She’s sort of trying to find wholeness in these two seemingly opposing sides of herself that are actually all her and all who she is. It’s just different bodies. That duality is really interesting to me, and that contradiction and that resistance to those two sides of herself that she’s also kind of secretly embracing.”

“She-Hulk” also focuses on sex as a part of the story in a way that other corners of the MCU don’t, featuring dating apps and superhero hookups. In this season’s penultimate episode, Charlie Cox made his highly-anticipated Marvel Studios debut as Daredevil, resuming a role he originated on Netflix. Daredevil hooks up with She-Hulk after the two share a night of crime-fighting together, forcing him into a bootless superhero walk of shame the next morning. Maslany credits Gao with placing just as much emphasis on the personal side of being a superhero as potential threats to the universe.

“It’s joyful, and there’s something about it that does kind of buck at the classic Marvel



Rapper Megan Thee Stallion’s cameo on the show gave the “She-Hulk” writers the opportunity to insert a twerking superhero scene.

things that we’ve seen in the past,” Maslany said.

Her co-star Ruffalo has the most cinematic Hulk/Bruce Banner appearances — ahead of Edward Norton and Eric Bana — but can appear as his version of the Hulk in the MCU only in guest appearances because of an ongoing deal with Universal. Ruffalo has said frequently he’ll probably never have his own Hulk movie, unlike many of his “Avengers” co-stars. Maslany’s She-Hulk has no such limitations.

“He was super jealous of it,” Maslany said with a laugh.

“She-Hulk” co-stars Josh Segarra and Renée Elise Goldsberry said one of the more frequent sources of laughs on set was when they would constantly be reminded to avoid eye contact with Maslany as She-Hulk, since she would later be digitally altered to be almost seven feet tall. They also kept asking Gao if their supporting characters, Augustus “Pug” Pugliese and Mallory Book, lawyers at She-Hulk’s firm, would get superpowers like Maslany. Segarra is no stranger to superhero television, having starred as a villain in the CW’s “Arrow,” and “Hamilton” star Goldsberry is a veteran of courtroom comedy and drama, having co-starred in “Ally McBeal” years ago. So far the answer has been a definitive no.

“We’re all working out just in case,” Goldsberry said.

‘American Idol’ runner-up Spence dies in car crash

Former “American Idol” finalist Willie Spence died Tuesday from injuries suffered in a car crash in Tennessee, according to news outlets. He was 23.

The fan-favorite “Idol” contestant was the runner-up in the competition program’s 19th season last year. Chayce Beckham was the winner.

Fellow “American Idol” alum Katharine McPhee, who mentored and performed with Spence during Season 19, mourned the singer Tuesday on Instagram.

“I received very tragic news tonight,” McPhee wrote. “Life is so unfair and nothing is ever promised. God rest your soul, Willie. It was a pleasure to sing with you and to know you.”

McPhee also shared a video that Spence posted on Instagram “right before his accident.” In the clip, Spence passionately belts Selah’s “You Are My Hiding Place” in his car.

During his “American Idol” audition, the vocalist from Douglas, Ga., blew the celebrity judges away with a powerful rendition of Rihanna’s “Diamonds.”

In April 2021, Spence released his debut EP, “The Voice,” followed by singles “Never Be Alone” and “The Living Years.”

“I just want my voice to reach the world and share my gift,” he said at his “Idol” audition.

Colbert to host celebrity pickleball charity special

The pickleball craze is getting the Stephen Colbert treatment, with charity the winner.

Colbert will host CBS’ “Pickled,” described as a sports-comedy special centered on a celebrity pickleball tournament. Among the players: Dierks Bentley, Will Ferrell, Emma Watson, Daniel Dae Kim, Max Greenfield, Luis Guzman, Sugar Ray Leonard, Tig Notaro and Kelly Rowland.

The two-hour special will air Nov. 17 on CBS. It will stream live and on demand on Paramount+.

Teams will compete to benefit nonprofit Comic Relief US.

Other news

■ Singer-actress **Brandy** is resting after an apparent medical scare, telling fans she experienced “dehydration and low amounts of nutrition.” Her update came on Twitter after TMZ reported Wednesday that the 43-year-old artist, whose full name is Brandy Norwood, had been hospitalized in Los Angeles with a possible seizure.

■ Grammy-winning singer and composer **Anita Kerr**, whose vocal group the Anita Kerr Singers provided the lush backdrop to the Nashville Sound in the ‘50s and ‘60s, has died. She was 94. Her daughter, Kelley Kerr, confirmed that her mother died in Geneva on Monday.

From wire reports

WEEKEND



Paramore leans into emo nostalgia
Music, Page 28



PUT A KNIFE IN IT

Michael Myers horror franchise says it's done after release of its 13th film, 'Halloween Ends'

Page 15

UNIVERSAL PICTURES/AP

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



Photos by Andre Souto

Scientists in the Netherlands used a 3D printer to create chocolate shapes to test which ones tasters preferred, taking the factor of crunchiness into particular consideration.

Math and mouthfeel

Scientists study effects of brittleness on tasting experience of chocolate

BY GALADRIEL WATSON
The Washington Post

Trick or treat! With Halloween around the corner, kids across the country are about to collect bags full of candy — including heaps of chocolate. Meanwhile, a group of researchers in the Netherlands has been experimenting with a method to make chocolate more of a “treat” than ever.

While chocolate is delicious for many reasons, this study focused on how it cracks when it is bitten.

“An aspect that I particularly like is its brittleness, and what it does when it breaks,” says researcher Corentin Coulais, who teaches physics at the University of Amsterdam. To optimize how it feels in the mouth, “we gave geometry to chocolate,” he says, “that would then change the way it breaks.”

Giving it “geometry” involved using a 3D printer to layer 72 percent dark chocolate in various ways. Rather than creating a flat, solid chunk, the machine printed it into a simple S-shape, or zigzagged super-thin layers back and forth several times, or swirled it into increasingly complicated spirals. The resulting pieces were fed to 10 eager volunteers. The researchers asked: “How crunchy was it?” “How easy was it to bite?” “How would you rate the overall experience?”

The crunchiest — while remaining easy to bite — was the chocolate swirled into fairly complicated spirals. It was also the top tasting experience. “More crunchiness meant that people tended to like it more,” Coulais says.

The researchers also used a machine to crack the various shapes and see which was the most brittle. Plus, they recorded the sounds of the cracking, because a pleasurable eating experience doesn’t only take place in the mouth, but can be affected by the noises in your skull.



This complicated spiral shape was the favorite of the testers — for crunchiness and overall tastiness.

The general winner remained that spiral.

However, the spiral’s not necessarily the best shape possible; it was just the best out of the few the researchers tested. “I’m sure there would be better ones if you would search more,” Coulais says. It’s also not necessary to create them with a 3D printer; this was just a handy method to quickly try out multiple options.

Whether chocolate will soon be made differently thanks to this research, “it’s too early to say,” Coulais says. He is working with a couple of organizations to see how it might be applied. He’s also involved in putting together a team to look at the physics of how things crack in materials other than chocolate — ones that might be used in vehicles, for example, to make them less dangerous when they crash.

“The idea is to embrace failure,” he says. “When you get an impact of some form, you know something is going to break.” If you can control how it breaks, “maybe you can deflect the energy of the impact away from the passengers, for instance.”

Understanding fractures could make life safer — in cars or airplanes or wearing helmets. It could also make those Halloween treats even more tasty.

Hybrid power flashlights useful in an emergency

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

You don’t need a good flashlight until you need it. And often, at that point, you’re already in the dark. Additionally, having a great flashlight requires fresh or charged batteries; otherwise, it can be the greatest in the world, but if it’s powerless, it’s useless.

The new Infinity X1 Highland Hybrid power flashlight series fits the bill. The day after these arrived for testing, tree trimmers in my neighborhood knocked out our power, which made it a perfect situation to try the flashlights. And they shone in every aspect.

The series comes in four models, each with a different number to indicate how much lumens or power each light has. They start with the 1500 Lumens and go up with 2500, 4000, and 5000.

For understanding the lumen measurements, as described by Infinity, “The higher the lumen count, the brighter the light will appear. The lumen count on each light indicates the highest brightness for that light, set to its highest brightness mode.”

I used the 2500-lumen hybrid power flashlight (12.6-by-2.2 inches) for testing. It can be powered by the included USB rechargeable core power battery pack, which slides into the bottom of the flashlight. For recharging the power pack, there’s a built-in USB-A charging cable.

When emergency power is needed for another device, such as a smartphone, the rechargeable battery pack has a USB-A out port for charging.

The other option for power is a AA battery holder, which holds six batteries (included). To install this again, remove the back cap, slide it in, then screw the back cap back on. Infinity rates the beam distance as 426 feet or 130 meters.

Each flashlight has three lighting modes, accessed by pressing the only button on the flashlight. One press turns it on to the highest, in this case, 2500 lumens, which is suitable for two hours of use.

Another press makes it a dimmer 1100 lumens, good for 3.5 hours, and the lowest is 250 lumens for 5.5 hours. The last press will turn it off.

The front barrel turns to widen or narrow the light beam, similar to focusing a lens. All the Infinity X1 Highland Hybrid power flashlight models are drop-proof up to 1 meter and IPX4 water resistant-rated.

Online: infinityx1.com; 1500 Lumens, \$59; 2500 Lumens, \$69; 4000 Lumens, \$79; and 5000 Lumens, \$89

Catalyst was one of the first to offer protection for the new Apple iPhone 14 with the **Crux and Influence MagSafe-compatible cases**.

The durable case is designed with 33% wider corners to protect the corners and edges from drops and scratches. They also have added an extra layer of protection and a feature to prevent falls before they happen.

They include the Catalyst Crux Case, designed to survive drops 2.5 times higher than military standards of 10 feet. It has an outer anti-slip grippy texture and wider corners for protection. A lanyard is included to attach to the smartphone for securing it to a belt or backpack.

The Crux Case (\$49.99) for the iPhone 14, 14 Pro, 14 Plus and Pro Max is made of durable, flexible TPU for easy and repeated installations without in-molded stress cracking at corners, and the material allows for a reliable connection when using MagSafe Wireless Charging and MagSafe Accessories.

Catalyst also has new Ultra-thin and lightweight tempered glass screen protectors (\$39.99) for all four sizes of the iPhone 14. After it’s installed, it adds shatter- and scratch-resistant protection and is fingerprint-free.

The Catalyst Influence with MagSafe cases (\$39.99) is compatible with MagSafe wireless charging and also has a high degree of drop protection. A lanyard is also included.

Online: catalystcase.com



NICK BERARD, INFINITY/TNS

The Infinity X1 Highland Hybrid flashlight series is bright and hardy.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

Jamie Lee Curtis attends the premiere of "Halloween Ends" on Oct. 11 in Los Angeles.

End of a 'Halloween' era

Curtis reflects on her time playing the lead in the franchise's 13 films

BY CARLOS DE LOERA
Los Angeles Times

Scream queen Jamie Lee Curtis is laying her crown down and stepping away from her star-making role as Laurie Strode in the "Halloween" franchise as "Halloween Ends" hits theaters this weekend.

In an essay written for People, Curtis reflected on what the role of the Haddonfield, Ill., babysitter-turned-slasher hero has meant to her.

"For 44 years, I have tried to figure out why and how the confluence of a young girl (Laurie Strode) and a monster (Michael Myers) came together in the 13 films titled 'Halloween.' And this month, as I play Laurie for the last time, in 'Halloween Ends,' the final installment of the franchise, I am trying to figure out how to say goodbye to Laurie, who has taught me the meaning of the words 'resilience,' 'loyalty,' 'perseverance' and 'COURAGE.'"

Curtis noted that her role in the 1978 horror flick opened more doors for her acting career.

"As I write this, I keep connecting the dots. If I hadn't been in 'Halloween,' I wouldn't have met John Landis, the director who put me in 'Trading Places' and showed the world I can be funny. That got me 'A Fish Called Wanda.' That led to 'True Lies,' which led to 'Freaky Friday.' Dot connected, dot connected."

The "Knives Out" actor said the opportunity to play Strode came at a time when she had just been fired from her first acting gig and believed that her career was over. Curtis "discovered a natural instinct" while auditioning for the John Carpenter-directed classic, further saying that instinct has guided her career since.

Curtis has used the character to "represent survivors of all types of unimaginable horror and trauma, pain and suffering, who stand up to tyranny and oppression — real and imagined."

"It's now the end for Laurie and me," Curtis wrote at the end of her emotional essay. "I'm going to miss her. ... I am scared right now, as I hang up my bell-bottoms and say goodbye to 'Halloween.' Life is scary. But Laurie taught me that life can also be beautiful, filled with love and art and life!"

Curtis appeared on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" to discuss "Halloween Ends" and to formally sign a document stating that she really is done appearing in the slasher franchise.

"I declare this is my last Halloween movie," read the statement Kimmel drafted for Curtis. "I, Jamie Lee Curtis, queen of scream, daughter of Janet Leigh and Tony Curtis, mother of Lindsay Lohan, hereby swear under penalty of perjury that 'Halloween Ends' will be the last 'Halloween' movie I will ever appear in. For all time, across all sequels and multiverses, enforceable by the Police Department of Haddonfield, Illinois."

"... I am trying to figure out how to say goodbye to Laurie, who has taught me the meaning of the words 'resilience,' 'loyalty,' 'perseverance' and 'COURAGE.'"

Jamie Lee Curtis
People essay

After joking that she would need to call her lawyers before signing anything, Curtis signed the document.

"We'll get this to the legal team at Myers and Myers and they'll handle it from here," Kimmel joked.

Earlier in the interview, Curtis talked about the emotions that came with forever leaving Haddonfield.

"I care. I care too much," she said. "I'm a weeper. I've been weeping for about a month now, trying to figure out how to say goodbye to all this."

'Halloween Ends' finally puts film series out of its misery

BY KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Previously, in the "Halloween" franchise: The residents of Haddonfield, fed up with four decades of fear inflicted by their local mask-wearing serial killer, Michael Myers, descended into a pitchfork-wielding mob, chanting "Evil Dies Tonight." Unfortunately, it was a forgone conclusion that they would not be successful in their crusade, because the film, "Halloween Kills," was only the second installment in David Gordon Green's trio of Halo-reboots, and he still needed a Myers for the third film in the trilogy, "Halloween Ends." And end it does, not with a scream but with a whimper, or perhaps, a sigh of relief that it's over — the franchise, that is, at least for now.

"Halloween Ends" has the feeling of dour obligation, and it's clear that no one's heart is really in this any more, the limits of narrative possibility in Haddonfield stretched beyond their max. The writers don't seem interested in writing real characters, but rather in proclaiming vague archetypes and platitudes about "evil," which are declared in narration by Laurie Strode (Jamie Lee Curtis), who is finally writing her memoir.

Laurie describes evil as "an infection," which is the main plot of "Halloween Ends," a story about the lasting effects of violence that ripple outward from the main actors and that can reverberate for generations. There's also a half-baked exploration of the ways in which bullying and name-calling can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy that in "Halloween Ends" acts as a sort of vampirism, or even a death curse trope.

"Halloween Ends" returns to where it all began, with a twist. A babysitter shows up on Halloween night to take care of a kid, and things go downhill from there. The "boy babysitter," Corey Cunningham (Rohan Campbell), ends up in prison for

aggravated manslaughter, and can't shake the "psycho" label that he's stuck with on release a couple of years later. The only person in town who gives him the time of day is Laurie's granddaughter Allyson (Andi Matichak), now a nurse, who knows a thing or two about being judged. The pair fall into a dark romance while Corey starts to descend deeper into his own bloody impulses.

There are a few inspired and stylish moments in "Halloween Ends," as it takes a turn away from the lean slasher aesthetic that marked John Carpenter's original film, and plunges into a swoony, neon-soaked vibe reminiscent of Kathryn Bigelow's "Near Dark," Joel Schumacher's '80s horror films and even David Lynch's "Wild at Heart." But those moments are fleeting, and more importantly, they don't feel like a "Halloween" movie at all, which is presumably why we are all here. So after that strange, yet interesting, diversion, it's back to Laurie to see if she can wrap things up once and for all, complete with refresher clip packages.

By the time we get to the last act for the final, final denouement (really, it better be final), all of the energy has been sapped, and it feels like a compulsory trudge to the finish line. Perhaps that's the point, that wrapping up this 40-year franchise after all this time should be more funeral march than fun. But we come to these movies for the thrills, the chills and the screams. Even the kills in "Halloween Ends" feel perfunctory at best. Perhaps it's for the best that it ended this way, without leaving us bloodthirsty for more. But even if the filmmakers feel duty-bound to finish things out, horror fans should know this installment isn't required viewing.

"Halloween Ends" is rated R for bloody horror violence and gore, language throughout and some sexual references. Running time: 111 minutes. Now playing in select AAFES theaters and streaming on Peacock.



UNIVERSAL PICTURES/AP

Jamie Lee Curtis is chased down one last time in "Halloween Ends."

WEEKEND: MOVIES



FOCUS FEATURES/AP

Cate Blanchett appears in a scene from “Tár” as trailblazing conductor Lydia Tár, whose status is threatened amid a misconduct scandal of her own making.

Philharmonic power

Blanchett says she'll never forget how she felt the 1st time she conducted the Dresden orchestra for her role in 'Tár'

By **JOSH ROTTENBERG**
Los Angeles Times

Cate Blanchett has played her share of formidable characters, rulers who could bring mere mortals to their knees with a single icy stare: Queen Elizabeth I in “Elizabeth,” Galadriel in the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy, the goddess Hela in “Thor: Ragnarok.”

But none of that could compare with the surge of power — and terror — the actress felt the first time she stood in front of the Dresden Philharmonic orchestra with a conductor’s baton on the set of her new film, “Tár.”

“Nothing will prepare you for the moment when you stand on the podium, which was terrifying, and give the downbeat and start making that sound with an orchestra of that size,” says Blanchett, who plays Lydia Tár, a brilliant but deeply flawed classical conductor in writer-director Todd Field’s psychological drama. “I will never forget that moment.”

Now playing in select theaters and expanding throughout the month following a tide of ecstatic reviews and rapturous receptions at the Venice, Telluride and Toronto film festivals, “Tár” chronicles the precipitous fall from grace of a conductor who has achieved the pinnacle of success in her rarefied field. The first woman to lead the legendary Berlin Philharmonic, Tár reigns

with imperious mastery over her domain, only to see her carefully composed life unravel following the revelation of a personal scandal involving her abuse of power. By turns chilly and searing, the film unfolds as both a tragic character study and a #MeToo-inflected thriller with a grand, symphonic sweep.

“This film is not really about classical music, it’s not about conducting — it’s about power,” said Field, who returns to feature directing for the first time since 2006’s “Little Children.” “Music just happens to be the world that we found this character in.”

That said, music is the wellspring of Tár’s power and the very air that she breathes, and faithfully capturing the passion and artistry of her musical life was critically important to Field and Blanchett.

“We’ve all seen films about industries, the film industry being one of them, where we say, ‘Well, that’s cute but that’s not really how it is,’” says Field, who consulted with conductor John Mauceri as he was developing the script to make sure the smallest details were accurate. “My fear was doing a sort of toy town version of this milieu and having people who are in the trade say, ‘Bull—, that’s not what it is.’”

The film’s narrative is constructed around two canonical classical works — Gustav Mahler’s Fifth Symphony and Elgar’s Cello Concerto — which are

interwoven with a haunting score by Icelandic composer Hildur Guðnadóttir. With Field insisting on absolute authenticity, all of the music performed in the film, which co-stars German actress Nina Hoss as Tár’s violinist wife and concertmaster, was played live in front of the camera. To prepare for her role, Blanchett not only learned how to conduct but also how to speak German and play piano.

“I learned piano as a girl but that was a very long time ago now,” says Blanchett, who is already considered a veritable lock for an Oscar nomination. (An Oscar win would be her third following “The Aviator” and “Blue Jasmine.”) “With each subsequent pregnancy, I kept saying, ‘I must pick it up.’ But, being terribly lazy, it’s not until it’s demanded on me from work that I actually learn a new skill.”

For the scenes in which Tár is conducting rehearsals for an upcoming performance of Mahler’s Fifth, Blanchett and Field strove for the greatest possible accuracy.

“I didn’t want to stand up there doing some kind of trick,” Blanchett says. “I wanted to be able to look at the score and be referring to the exact note and dynamic marking. I didn’t want to have to fake it because those musicians weren’t faking it. That would have been profoundly lazy. But also, where’s the joy in that? If I

SEE TÁR ON PAGE 17



MATT LICARI, INVISION/AP

Todd Field, left, and Cate Blanchett pose for a portrait on Oct. 2 in New York to promote their new film, “Tár.”

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Tár: Album to be released featuring actor conducting**FROM PAGE 16**

was never going to have that experience again, I wanted to try and get as close to the thing as possible.”

Field is well aware that the prospect of spending 2 ½ hours immersed in the world of classical music could be an intimidating prospect for many viewers, who could find themselves occasionally lost in the film’s references to esoteric musical terminology and past conductors like Wilhelm Furtwangler. The film opens with a long, dialogue-heavy scene in which Tár is interviewed onstage by New Yorker writer Adam Gopnik, throwing the audience into the deep end with a crash course in the art of conducting.

“You’re dealing with a part of our so-called high culture that is intimidating by design,” says Field, who was a budding jazz musician before he turned to acting and then directing. “When you hear a beautiful piece of classical music on the radio, why is it that you have to pull over and write down 6.93 squared to figure it out? It’s the same

way the class system was designed to where you wouldn’t understand how to score tennis so the lower classes wouldn’t play it.”

For Field, Mahler’s Fifth has always been a touchstone. “The Five was really like my gateway drug into a lot of classical music,” he says. “I became obsessed with it and I bought every recording I could.” As he was crafting the script, Mahler’s epic, emotionally sweeping symphony, which opens with a funeral march, seemed a perfect musical accompaniment to the story of Tár’s downfall.

“The first movement of the Five is about death, and Lydia is undergoing a sort of artistic death, a personal death and a potential rebirth,” Field says. “It’s almost like it’s haunting her, coming for her.” In composing the symphony, Mahler was also inspired by his love for his future wife Alma Schindler, who was 19 years his junior, echoing an infatuation Tár develops with a much younger Russian cello prodigy named Olga.

Casting the role of Olga proved one of the biggest challenges for Field, who was determined to find a performer who could both

act and play Elgar’s emotionally stirring Cello Concerto at a virtuosic level. After combing through hundreds of auditions from around the world, Field says, “It started to feel like it was going to go tragic.”

Just as Field was beginning to lose hope, a self-made audition tape arrived out of the blue from a 19-year-old British cellist named Sophie Kauer, who proved both a highly accomplished musician and a natural-born actor. “I said to her, ‘Where did you get the Russian accent?’” Field says. “She said, ‘Oh, some video on YouTube.’”

In composing the film’s score, Guðnadóttir — who in 2020 became the first woman in two decades to win the original score Oscar for her work on 2019’s “Joker” — strove to capture the joys and struggles of music-making itself.

“My job was connecting to the process of making music, rehearsing music, practicing music — the kind of psychological and emotional aspect of that whole process,” says Guðnadóttir, who also wrote a piece of music that Tár

composes in the film. “It was interesting to figure out how to wield those very delicate threads of internal music and connect that to the characters in this subtle way.”

In conjunction with the film, Deutsche Grammophon is releasing a concept album that includes Blanchett conducting rehearsals for the Mahler symphony, Guðnadóttir providing instruction to the London Contemporary Orchestra on the score and Kauer, in her professional debut, performing the Elgar concerto.

In the end, Blanchett says, for all the technical preparation she brought to bear to play Tár, it was music that ultimately brought the character to life.

“I like nothing better than when you can dispense with words and explain something through a sound,” Blanchett says. “One of the seminal moments for me at drama school was playing Electra [in Sophocles’ play] and breaking down grief into vowel sounds, feeling what vowel sounds resonated in different parts of your body. Todd’s screenplay affected me on a rhythmic level as much as it did on an intellectual level. My way in was through the music.”

“I like nothing better than when you can dispense with words and explain something through a sound.”

Cate Blanchett
Lydia in “Tár”



FOCUS FEATURES/AP

Cate Blanchett in a scene from “Tár.” In the film, her character, Lydia, is a force of headlong momentum.

Seeing a maestro at work

Blanchett’s performance as Lydia in ‘Tár’ may be finest of her career

By **JAKE COYLE**

Associated Press

“Time is the thing,” says Lydia Tár (Cate Blanchett) in Todd Fields’ “Tár.” Lydia, a world-renowned conductor, is explaining her art as more than waving a baton around — not a mere “human metronome” — but rather an almost god-like ability to mold and contort time. The way Blanchett says this, with her arms swirling and shaping the air like clay, makes you believe, yes, she really can stop time.

But in “Tár” — a movie that likewise measures and sculpts moments with intense precision — time may be catching up with Lydia. She would seem impervious to downfall. Just after the opening credits roll, Lydia is there on a gleaming New York stage before a rapt audience being interviewed at length, and with almost oppressive accuracy for such fawning exchanges, by The New Yorker’s Adam Gopnik (as himself). Her listed accomplishments — conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, protégée of Leonard Bernstein, a glass ceiling-shattering figure of the classical music world, an EGOT-winner with a new memoir, “Tár on ‘Tár;’” out — are as impressive as her regal, polished stage presence.

Yet an introductory, fleeting moment of a phone camera pointed at an asleep Lydia, with mocking texts filling the screen, presages that the conductor’s rarefied perch may be in jeopardy. “Tár,” now in theaters, is situated in a very real high-art, big-media world. The spaces Lydia occupies are crisply contemporary architectures. The film is shot by Florian Hoffmeister with a cool, almost documentary-like perspective. It’s in these chilly, highbrow environs that Lydia operates with exquisite intellect and ruthless cunning — and Blanchett gives a colossal tour-de-force performance that may be the finest of her career, a career as decorated as Lydia’s.

“Tár,” written and directed by Fields, is, itself, distinguished by time. It’s Fields’ first film in 16 years, following the uneven 2006 misfire “Little Children” and his assured Oscar-nominated 2001 debut, “In the Bedroom.” At 2 hours and 38 minutes, you can almost feel him trying to make up for the lost years in “Tár.” Into it he funnels a gripping portrait of power and art, rigorous and devastating in its exactitude, while impressively less definite about a host of hot-button issues like so-called cancel culture, identity politics and #MeToo.

But though Lydia’s mounting issues — whispers about her propensity to groom young female players as her lovers; the suicide of a former trai-

nee conductor following Lydia’s blacklisting of her; a young daughter (Mila Bogojevic) she leaves largely for her wife and philharmonic concertmaster (the brilliant Nina Hoss) to care for — are increasingly public, “Tár” is a thoroughly intimate film. We follow Lydia’s every move with a mix of awe (she is genuinely brilliant), curiosity (how much can she get away with?) and wonder. Just how deeply connected is Lydia’s cruelty to her genius?

The answers Fields supplies are not always satisfying, but for much of the film, he and Blanchett orchestrate a mesmerizing character study. The first such beguiling scene places Lydia, who describes herself off-handedly as “a U-Haul lesbian,” as a guest lecturer at Juilliard with aspiring conductors. One says he’s “not into Bach.” He shakes as Lydia calmly tears into him as “a robot.” “Don’t be so eager to be offended,” she says.

Lydia’s perspective will rile some and be applauded by others, but in her smooth torrent of words she also makes less controversial, sincere arguments for “sublimating” and “obliterating” one’s self before art. Lydia spends much of “Tár” running her considerable business, manipulating the inner workings of the philharmonic with her personal assistant (Noémie Merlant) and eyeing a young Russian cellist (Sophie Kauer).

But when she’s rehearsing Mahler’s Fifth with the orchestra or in the full thrall of the music, Lydia is masterful. She may always be in some sense performing, but that doesn’t mean she isn’t being genuinely herself. “Music is movement,” Bernstein is heard saying in an old recording during the film. It’s clear that Lydia, too, is a force of headlong momentum.

However, once the noise that’s plagued Lydia throughout the film finally consumes her, we don’t experience her downward spiral as you might expect. To her, it’s less Greek tragedy than a kind of pestering nuisance. “Tár” sags here and there from overwritten dialogue, and drama too drawn out. But its most glaring missteps come in this chapter, when the movie’s sober spell breaks in a not-believable fit of violence and an off-key final note turns its protagonist into a punchline.

Fields strikes a deft balance for much of the film’s running time, demurring judgment of Lydia and declining to saddle her with the expected arts-artist commentaries. But above all, it’s because Blanchett has created such a symphony of a character, one that uses every trick and tone of her vast repertoire, that any wrong note jars. The word I’m looking for is “maestro.”

“Tár” is rated R for some language and brief nudity. Running time: 158 minutes. Now playing in select theaters.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



NBA 2K23/TNS

The Jordan Challenge returns in NBA 2K23, allowing you to play through a series of iconic moments from basketball legend Michael Jordan's career.

A blast from pro hoops' past

Latest addition in NBA 2K franchise features a new Eras mode: Take the helm of any team in one of four time periods

BY EBENEZER SAMUEL
New York Daily News

I've spent several weeks playing NBA 2K23, and I've started a franchise at least eight different times, using no less than six different teams. Each time, I find myself quitting after just a few games — mostly because I decide I want to try something else. Mostly because there are that many compelling combinations.

Mostly because I've never played a sports game quite as painstakingly well-crafted as NBA 2K23. The latest game in 2K's long-running basketball game series is a love letter to the most ardent basketball fans and sports historians.

And it's all because of the incredible detail that developer Visual Concepts packs into every part of the game. Most sports games essentially tout tiny iterative adjustments each year. Instead of doing that, 2K23 rethinks why you play a sports game, creating a framework that lets every sports fan lead the league in any fashion they choose.

The centerpiece of all of this is the NBA Eras mode, which replaces your current franchise — or rather, includes (but is not limited to) a classic franchise mode. Instead of simply letting you take the helm of any NBA team of your choosing (standard franchise-mode stuff), NBA Eras lets you take the helm of any NBA team of your choosing in one of four different eras. Run the Bulls in the 1980s, just before Michael Jordan (the legendary cover guy of this legendary NBA game), or grab the Magic of the 1990s, or play as the Seattle SuperSonics of the 2000s, before they headed for Oklahoma City. (You can also start a traditional franchise in 2022, of course, if you're a sports gaming purist.)

This mode is made even more exciting and immersive by the details placed into it. Each era has specific rules, outfits and courts — and even a unique style of play. Start a franchise in the 1980s, and you can expect fewer three-pointers. Start in the '90s, and you'll see longer shorts.

Watch as teams rebrand and move to different cities — or veto those moves and keep hand-checking and change

the course of the league.

It has a blend of role-playing game qualities, such as running a team and world-building, as you manage like Adam Silver, and it's all wildly accurate thanks to the most realistic (and deepest) rosters you've ever seen. NBA 2K (and other sports games too!) have mixed in all-time greats and all-time teams for a decade or so, but, especially in NBA 2K, the players on those rosters routinely fell short. You'd get a 1992 Chicago Bulls team or 2001 Lakers team with four or five fake players, and while you might have fun playing as a classic team, when David Johnson came off the bench, it would break your immersion just a bit.



That's far less of a problem because whoever builds the rosters in NBA 2K23 went the serious extra mile. Miles, actually. To make the Eras plan work, you need nearly-complete rosters; getting the greats and key role players from an era is half the fun. And NBA 2K23 works hard to deliver. Such luminaries as Tyus Edney (a smurfy UCLA guard drafted by the Kings in the '90s), Earl Boykins (the 5-foot-5 guard out of Eastern Michigan) and Marcus Fizer (a failed early-round Bulls pick in the days after Jordan) are all in here. There are still a few glaring roster omissions (Reggie Miller among them, and it's a shame Chris Webber isn't here for the first time in years), but, by and large, the players of the era are captured in addition to the feel.

The entire experience plays out with only minimal bugginess: The game still adds in randomly generated players as time wears on, breaking your immersion (or leaving you to correct the problem as you go), and, oddly, you can't turn off the G League in the middle eras. But these issues are largely minor; point blank, this is the

most robust sports game ever, no matter how you play it.

This immersion translates beyond Eras mode too, into the Jordan Challenge. It's been years since 2K built a Jordan Challenge: a series of iconic moments from the NBA's preeminent legend, Michael Jordan, that you play through. And the current generation of consoles is built for this. Again, era-specific details shine, and in vast moments, you'll get goosebumps. No other sports game has ever chased this much detail. And no other sports game has delivered on those fronts quite this robustly, either.

Even more impressive is that 2K also continues to improve its on-court game. On the floor, the title plays much as you know and love, but 2K continues to tweak things for realism. The biggest addition this year is an "adrenaline" boost concept: In addition to a standard energy meter, each player also has three "boosts." These turbo-charge your speed, but at a cost: Use them all up, and your player's energy will drain ultra-fast. This should keep players from spamming turbo for an entire game, although it's also not fully balanced: Every player, regardless of position, gets three speed boosts. Long-term, you hope this is altered so lumbering big men don't get the same boost power as, say, Allen Iverson or Ja Morant.

The game also throttles back on the three-point shooting this year, with a slightly tweaked shot meter. The new meter definitely rewards skill even more, and it can be customized so you have to time your shot stick release either early or late. It's precise enough that you won't hit as many threes with questionable big men, but at times it's almost too precise. Meanwhile, the post game gets a boost; spin moves and dropsteps feel a bit more natural and useful in 2023.

And in 1993. And 1983. Because NBA 2K23 has all those eras, too. This is, quite simply, the finest sports game ever made and will keep you entertained for an impressively long time — if you can avoid constantly restarting and rethinking your dream franchise, that is.

Platforms: Xbox platforms, PlayStation platforms, Nintendo Switch, PC

Online: nba.2k.com/2k23

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

The Bavarian background of Hitler's Eagle's Nest

In the 1930s, after becoming the German chancellor, Adolf Hitler was looking for the perfect spot to establish an official mountain retreat — a Camp David for his Nazi regime. He chose Obersalzberg, a dramatically scenic mountainside area a few miles uphill from the market town of Berchtesgaden.

The region, a finger of Bavarian territory that pokes south into Austria, had long been one of the classic Romantic corners of Germany. Hitler had famously credited its landscape — so steeped in legend and close to the soul of the German people — for inspiring him as he finished his manifesto, *Mein Kampf*, in a rented Obersalzberg cabin in the 1920s. His propagandists capitalized on his love of this region to establish the notion that the native Austrian was truly German at heart.

For his new official retreat, Hitler had a once-modest chalet renovated into a supersized alpine farmhouse, named the “Berghof” — the ideal setting for crafting his public image.

By 1936, German media was awash in photos of the Führer in

Obersalzberg: surrounded by nature, gently receiving alpine flowers from adoring children, lounging with farmers in lederhosen ... no modern arms industry, no big-time industrialists, no ugly extermination camps. Party leaders soon took over the rest of Obersalzberg as their own vacation spot.



Rick Steves

But Obersalzberg was also home to a huge compound of 80 buildings — fenced off from the public after 1936, and connected by extensive bunkers — where the major decisions leading up to World War II were hatched. Hitler himself spent about a third of his time as chancellor at the Berghof, hosted world leaders in the compound, and later had it prepared for his last stand.

In April 1945, Britain's Royal Air Force bombed the Obersalzberg compound nearly flat, including the Berghof. Seven years later, the Bavarian government blew up most of what had survived the bombing, wanting to

leave nothing to attract neo-Nazi pilgrims.

But large sections of the Nazis' bunker system — intended as the regime's last resort as the Allies closed in — still remain. And the bombers had entirely missed the difficult-to-target Kehlsteinhaus, a small chalet on a 6,000-foot outcrop that juts up two miles south of Obersalzberg. (A visiting diplomat humorously dubbed it the “Eagle's Nest,” and among English speakers, the name stuck.)

While for many modern visitors “Berchtesgaden” is synonymous with “Hitler's Eagle's Nest,” “the Eagle's Nest” actually refers just to this small lodge itself, perched alone amid spectacular scenery like a Bond villain's lair. Built in 1939 with precision stonework evoking fascist obedience, it was Hitler's 50th birthday gift from his inner circle. The lodge and the road up to it cost a fortune — but Hitler, who was afraid of heights, visited only 14 times. (It wasn't even much of a lodge: it never had any beds.)

Today, the chalet that Hitler ignored is basically a three-room,



Rick Steves

The Eagle's Nest chalet, Hitler's 50th birthday present, perches on a mountaintop above the Bavarian resort of Berchtesgaden.

reasonably priced restaurant with little in the way of artifacts.

For many, however, Obersalzberg's vast bunker system is the more fascinating part of a visit. This professionally engineered underground town held meeting rooms, offices, government archives and lavish living quarters for Hitler — all connected by four miles of tunnels cut, by slave labor, through solid rock. You can't visit all of it, and what you can see was stripped and looted by Allied soldiers. But enough is left that you can wander among

the concrete and marvel at megalomania gone mad.

In 1999, a museum — the Obersalzberg Documentation Center — was built atop one of the bunkers. It does a fine job of explaining the history of the site and offers a concise and powerful overview of Nazi history. There's very little in English here, but an audioguide app makes the visit worthwhile.

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

Fall markets provide delicious reasons to take a drive

As autumn settles in, thoughts might turn toward preparation for the dark and chilly days that inevitably lie ahead. From thick winter jackets to sturdy boots to storable foodstuffs that could help carry a household through the winter, markets have long been the place to go for items promising warmth and sustenance. Even in our age of convenience, markets can make for fun family outings and the chance to pick up unique objects. Here are just a few autumn markets taking place within reasonable distance to U.S. military installations in Europe in the weeks to come:



Karen Bradbury

Belgium

Sankt Vith: On the third Tuesday of November each year, this small city in the Eifel region hosts its annual Katharinenmarkt. On Nov. 15, some 200 stallholders will offer an assortment of goods from socks to spoons. Between perusing the wares, visitors can feast on pea soup or potato pancakes and warm up with mulled wine. Online: tinyurl.com/42vhe2cw

Germany

Meersburg: This well-preserved town ideally situated on the eastern shore of Lake Constance hosts a crafts market Oct. 15-16. Pottery, leather goods, jewelry and metalwork are among the goods for sale at the Schlossplatz. Online: tinyurl.com/2weazykt

Hauenstein: This speck of a town lies deep in the heart of the Palatinate Forest, one of the few places in Germany where edible chestnuts thrive. On Oct. 16, those who venture to this out-of-the-way corner will be rewarded with freshly roasted chestnuts alongside fresh bread, buns and cakes made with chestnut flour. The “Keschdemarkt” runs from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Online: tinyurl.com/ycktumkf



iStock

Roasted chestnuts and other seasonal treats await at fall festivals, including these in Belgium and Germany.

Maikammer: A village along the German Wine Road just south of Neustadt is the site of a French-German farmer's market. On Oct. 23, producers from both countries will offer cheese, sausages, wine, marmalade, honey and other locally made products. Online: pfaelzerwald.de/bauernmaerkte

Nördlingen: This Swabian town encircled by an intact medieval wall offers an additional draw for tourists on Oct. 23, as its annual autumn market attracts vendors selling sweets, spices, socks and other surprises. Online: tinyurl.com/mrsjpu6b

Völklingen: This city by the Saar River known for its hulking, disused ironworks is the site of a unique night market. Starting at 4 p.m. Nov. 4, the “Mondscheinmarkt” offers dozens of market stands accompanied by entertainment and the usual festival treats. Medieval-themed crafts are sold nearby. Online: tinyurl.com/5fsj6j2z

Pirmasens: This city 25 miles south of Kaiserslautern is surrounded by the Palatinate Forest and its endless hiking possibilities. From Nov. 4-6, the “Novembermarkt” offers stalls, a wine tent, live music and a few attractions including a Ferris wheel. Online: tinyurl.com/3b5ny6y7

Hochheim: This wine town near the Main River just east of Wiesbaden hosts a fair and folk festival rolled into one. From Nov. 4-8, visitors can peruse household goods, clothing, home décor, gardening tools and countless other items. Culinary treats, a midway filled with high-tech carnival rides, a beer tent and lots of wine make for a memorable day out. Online: tinyurl.com/mus89cse

Mosbach: A town of half-timbered houses in the midst of the Odenwald hosts a Middle-Ages and artisan's market Nov. 5-6. Online: tinyurl.com/5xdv25s

Bad Schwalbach: An unassuming spa town 12 miles northwest of Wiesbaden will be the site of a small market at its Weinbrunnenplatz on Nov. 6. A small fun fair takes place nearby. Online: tinyurl.com/v9tzdbhj

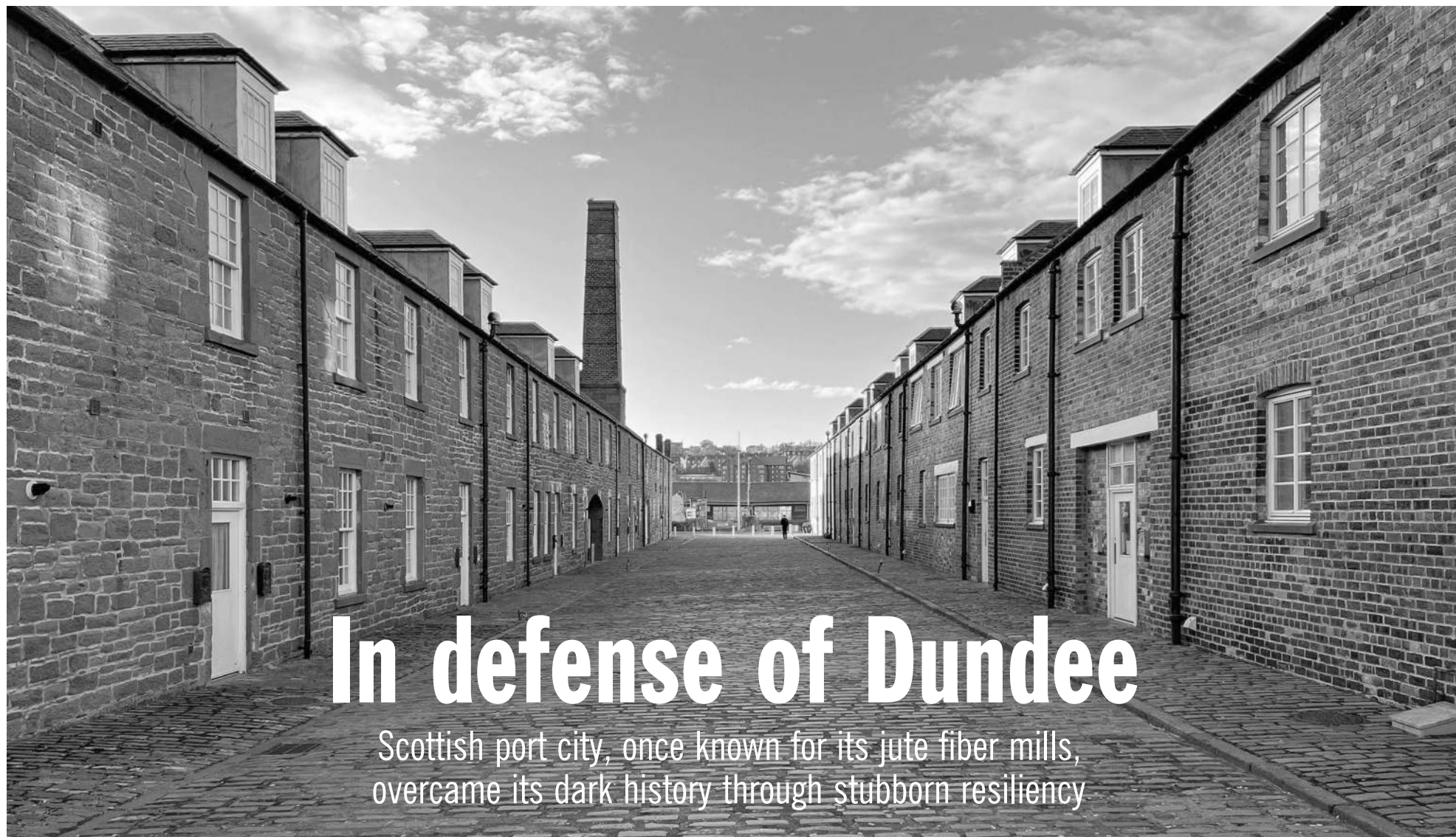
Esslingen: On Nov. 6, this town by the Neckar River shrugs off its usual Sunday slumber to host a flea and artisan's market. Walking acts further enliven the city streets. Online: tinyurl.com/3jmsh6n2

Kirchheim unter Teck: This small town about 25 miles southeast of Stuttgart has been hosting its annual Gallusmarkt since 1574. On Nov. 7, around 200 sellers will offer a wide range of practical goods. A small fair accompanies the trade. Online: tinyurl.com/2n9n883n

Garmisch-Partenkirchen: Locals and visitors alike can enjoy the small Martinimarkt held in the center of Garmisch from noon to 5 p.m. on Nov. 13. Online: tinyurl.com/23kct8j5

Tübingen: This handsome university town on the Neckar hosts its annual Martinimarkt Nov. 15-16, offering an assortment of traditional goods from baskets to brushes. Online: tinyurl.com/2tkmkj4c

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



In defense of Dundee

Scottish port city, once known for its jute fiber mills, overcame its dark history through stubborn resiliency

PHOTOS BY DAVID BROWN/For The Washington Post

As part of Dundee's waterfront preservation, the city has saved workshops and offices that whisper of the city's importance as a whaling, import and shipbuilding powerhouse.

BY DAVID BROWN

Special to The Washington Post

Some cities have a past that is beautiful in the present. Old buildings and public spaces effortlessly become tourist attractions long after their reason for being has disappeared. Venice is like that. So is Paris.

Other cities carry their past into the present as an unavoidable burden, sprucing up their edges with beautiful things, new and old, to distract attention. Dundee, on the east coast of Scotland, is one of those. So is Baltimore, my home.

I spent most of a week in Dundee last spring while doing archival research in St. Andrews, 13 miles to the south across the River Tay, Scotland's longest river. Every day I commuted to my hotel — 40 minutes by bus — in a “real” city, as I had between Washington and Baltimore for 22 years.

And I came away a fan. More than a fan, actually. When I left, in my breast was the defensive love felt by people who stumble into has-been cities and stay, as I've done in Baltimore for more than half my life.

Dundee, like Baltimore, is a city whose great days are a century gone.

It has a world-class industrial past, and a vast inventory of vacant industrial buildings in the present — like Baltimore. Both cities have a dominant and oppressive building material — red brick in Baltimore, and in Dundee a local sandstone that can't make up its mind whether it's tan or gray. As in Baltimore, some of these buildings — wonderful ones — have been repurposed, like the hotel I stayed in, an old linen mill.

Both cities have signature culinary products — crabs in Baltimore and marmalade in Dundee. Both have a lot of lit-



The ship Discovery, built in Dundee and launched in 1901, spent years in Antarctica and was reputedly the first ship designed specifically for scientific research.

ter. Both are defaced or decorated with graffiti, depending on your taste. Dundee has the highest crime rate of cities in Scotland while Baltimore ranks third in the United States.

Where does one begin to learn about Dundee's history and heart? Luckily, for a tourist, there is a place.

It's called Verdant Works, a former jute fiber mill in a part of the city known as Blackness. (Charles Dickens couldn't have come up with a better name.) Once the employer of 500 people, the mill is a keyhole through which most of Dundee's history can be described. Unlike many factory museums, its story is made vivid

by docents only one or two generations removed from its inescapable clutches.

But before we spend an afternoon there, let's look around.

Dundee is a port on the Firth of Tay, the place where the river widens into a tidal estuary before entering the North Sea. It was built on trade, and for many centuries it was Scotland's second most important city, behind Edinburgh. Its maritime past is telegraphed in street names (Chandlers Lane, East Whale Lane), stone workshops along the waterfront, a compact Maritime Trail where its piers and shipyards once stood and a small collection of historic ships.

Of the last, the most notable is the Discovery, a three-masted sailing vessel that also had a steam engine. Billed as the first ship designed specifically for scientific research — there was no iron or steel within a 30-foot radius of its “magnetic observatory” — it was built in Dundee in 1901 and owned by the Royal Geographical Society.

The Discovery's most famous voyage was a four-year trip to Antarctica featuring two of Britain's legendary explorers — Robert Falcon Scott, the captain, and Ernest Shackleton, the third officer. Visitors are allowed to wander almost anywhere on it. (In that regard it's better than Baltimore's estimable Constellation, built in 1854 and used to catch slave traders, among other tasks.)

On the pier next to it is V&A Dundee, an offspring of London's Victoria and Albert Museum. Like its parent, it's dedicated to design, decorative arts and performance. Opened in 2018, the V&A is the antithesis of the Discovery — no vertical lines in view, and clad in what looks like a grate from a pier. But it's just as interesting, with a wonderful collection that includes a salvaged tea room from Glasgow that was designed by Scotland's art nouveau genius, Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

The ship and the museum are the most visible pieces of a 30-year, nearly \$2 billion development project along five miles of waterfront.

A 15-minute walk inland is the McManus, a gallery and museum that's a good place to see art and artifacts telling Dundee's story. That includes eras as Britain's most important whaling port; a textile and shipbuilding center; and, in the second

SEE DUNDEE ON PAGE 21

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Dundee: Mill families both lived and worked in difficult conditions

FROM PAGE 20

half of the 20th century, the British home to American companies, including Timex and National Cash Register.

As in Baltimore, Dundee's shipyards and factories eventually closed. (The city lost 10,000 manufacturing jobs in the 1980s.) Like Baltimore, it's now trying to cobble a future out of tourism, biotech and lots of little companies.

There's a lot to see in Dundee's environs, including castles and archaeological sites. But if you have time for only one stop, make it Verdant Works. The museum stands in for the more than 100 jute mills that once operated in Dundee and employed, by the late 1800s, 40,000 of the city's 170,000 residents.

Jute?

It's a fiber made from the middle layer of a 12-foot-high grass that grows mostly in India and Bangladesh. Its closest competitor is hemp.

You make burlap from jute. From burlap (in the old days) you made the binding of cotton bales and sacks for coffee, cocoa, sugar, potatoes and lots of other things. Woven tighter, it became cloth for tents and the covers for artillery pieces. War was good business for jute. In one two-week period during World War I, 150 million jute sandbags were shipped out of Dundee.

So how did a city on the North Sea come to process fiber grown in South Asia?

In the 1700s, Dundee developed a linen industry, importing flax from the Baltic states and other high-latitude countries where it grew. By 1840, the city had overtaken Leeds, in England, in the production of coarse linen. The Crimean War (1853-1856), however, interrupted the flax trade.

Dundee's industrialists realized they had the knowledge and labor to process, spin and weave other fibers. Imperial Britain had access to a flax alternative growing in its colony, India. Add a little time, and Dundee became the jute capital of the world.

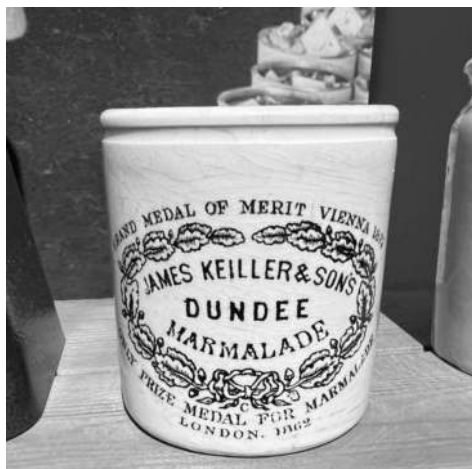
A small thing that made a big difference was Dundee's whaling fleet. At some point the mill managers discovered that washing the raw fiber in a mixture of 90% water and 10% whale oil made raw jute less likely to snag in fast-moving machinery. This 10% solution was enough to keep Dundee's whaling industry alive 50 years longer than in almost anywhere else in the world.

The first docent I encountered at Verdant Works was Ian Findlay, a 73-year-old retired civil servant. His mother's mother was a jute weaver. His father's mother was a jute spinner. His father's father was a maintenance engineer in a jute mill.

"It was the only show in town, to be honest," he said.

On the factory floor I met another man, Iain Sword, also 73, whose jute pedigree wasn't as long. His father left school at 14 and was a jute salesman, mostly to the carpet industry, his whole life.

Sword had been a banker around the United Kingdom before retiring to Dundee, his hometown. He was a jute Wikipedia, and no apologist for the mill owners. He told me that when Britain finally required public education, Dundee mill



PHOTOS BY DAVID BROWN/For The Washington Post

Keiller marmalade, in its distinctive white crock, is the only thing most people outside Scotland know about Dundee.

owners successfully petitioned to be an exception. They got permission to employ "half-timers" — children who'd work 30 hours a week in the mill for minuscule pay and go to school for half days only. Their expertise was in crawling under machinery and pulling out dust and fibers.

In fact, 70% of mill workers in Dundee were women and children, who were paid less than men. The city was known as "She Town" and was the first place in Scotland where jailed "suffragettes" went on hunger strike. It was also full of men raising children and drinking too much.

There's a lot to see in Dundee's environs, including castles and archaeological sites. But if you have time for only one stop, make it Verdant Works. The museum stands in for the more than 100 jute mills that once operated in Dundee and employed, by the late 1800s, 40,000 of the city's 170,000 residents.

In part as a consequence of these conditions, 63% of Dundee's eligible men fought in World War I, where they were slaughtered in droves. A battalion known as "Dundee's Own" sent 423 men and 20 officers into battle at Loos, France, in September 1915. All but one of the officers were killed, as were 230 enlisted men. The McManus has a spectacular painting of two dozen Dundonians — that's what the city's residents are called — standing in the ruined landscape after another battle, Neuve Chapelle. The painter, Joseph Gray (1890-1962), had been a newspaper artist in Dundee; everyone in the painting is identified.

"Working conditions were just very, very hard. It's very difficult to think of what life was like," Sword said, between explanations of how various pieces of machinery operated.

A glimpse of that life, however, comes through in a remarkable piece of public health research published by the Royal Society of London in 1886. The authors were three men — Dundee's health officer; a chemist at University College in



There were once more than 40 jute mills in Dundee, and Verdant Works has been preserved to tell their story.

London; and a second scientist from that institution, J.S. Haldane, who would become the most important respiratory physiologist of his generation.

The team took air samples from tenements occupied by mill families — 29 one-bedroom and 13 two-bedroom dwellings — and from 18 dwellings of four or more bedrooms occupied by middle- and upper-class families. They measured temperature, carbon dioxide (a product of respiration and a measure of crowding), as well as "organic matter" (basically dust), and bacteria and mold.

years sooner, on the average, than those of the better class." At this, the scientists couldn't restrain themselves: "This is an enormous difference."

Other research found that teenage boy mill workers were 4½ inches shorter and "a stone lighter" — that's 14 pounds — than rural teenagers in Scotland.

Haldane's more famous son, mathematician and geneticist J.B.S. Haldane, later said of his father: "His experience of the Dundee slums may not have made him a radical, but it kept him one."

What Dundee needs is its version of New York's Tenement Museum, or even Baltimore's modest Irish Railroad Workers Museum, to bring these conditions to life.

Jute mill owners eventually found a way to make even more money: They moved the business to India, closer to the fiber's source. Dundee lost a whole industry, much of its culture and untold thousands of people. Before, it had been a place where a boy with mechanical aptitude could advance — even if he left school at 14. "The loss of the textile industry pretty much led to the loss of all that," Iain Sword told me.

But remnants of the jute trade are still visible in Dundee, if you keep an eye out. Passing a trash-strewn factory yard early in my visit, I saw at the far end a sign over a door: "Drivers should not stand under slings while bales are being hoisted." Jute bales — compressed rock-hard to save space on shipment from India — weigh 400 pounds.

The city is also full of concert halls, parks, pools and other public amenities that might not exist but for the barons. They gave generously while mercilessly exploiting their workers — like Andrew Carnegie, a Scot whose wealth paid for more than 1,500 libraries in the United States.

Verdant Works shows this story and doesn't just tell it. The exhibits are clever and moving. Physical objects butt up against photographs of people doing work with those same objects. You feel as if you're in a diorama or onstage in a play. Mural-size photographs make faces larger than life. You can't help pondering the individuality of the people staring at you.

It's a place to feel the beating heart, and the stony heart, of a city.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Solemn site for reflection

Discover Kaiserslautern's history and remember US military children at the city's main cemetery

By **HEATHER BENIT**
Stars and Stripes

Buried beneath the oak and linden trees in the southeast side of Kaiserslautern's largest cemetery are the graves of 451 infants born to American military families stationed there in the 1950s and '60s.

The Hauptfriedhof, near the U.S. Army's Daenner Kaserne and Kleber Kaserne, sprawls across parklike grounds, giving residents a placid place to meditate and mourn.

For Americans, visiting the cemetery offers a connection to the German city at the heart of the largest U.S. military community overseas as well as a chance to remember their predecessors' young children who were laid to rest there.

Every year, Germans and Americans come together for a memorial ceremony and place flowers and U.S. flags at the stone markers that dot the Kindergraves section.

The babies who are buried there died soon after being born at Landstuhl or nearby local hospitals from 1952 to 1971, during a time when the Red Cross and U.S. military didn't pay to send the remains back to the U.S.

The site is located east of the cemetery's main entrance on Mannheimerstrasse, across from the Kleber clock tower.

The outer cemetery wall that runs along Mannheimerstrasse leads to the old Jewish cemetery, which is the oldest section, dating from 1858. The rest of the cemetery was expanded around it in 1873.

Just beyond the Mannheimerstrasse entrance is the majestic Lion Fountain, which was built in 1917 and 1918 as part of a cemetery expansion.

There are benches around the fountain — among the 400 throughout the cemetery, according to The Rheinpfalz newspaper — and people often sit there while reflecting, reading or watching the wildlife.

The city recently installed 70 new bird nesting boxes around the cemetery, the Wochenblatt reported.

On the northeast side is a forest cemetery that was laid out with tree-lined paths in 1912.

Also on that side, there is a military section dating from 1870

On the QT

Address: Donnersbergstrasse 78, Kaiserslautern, Germany

Hours: Visitors can walk the grounds from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Cost: Entrance is free; free parking is available near the chapel on Donnersbergstrasse.

Restrictions: Bikes and dogs are not allowed at the cemetery.

that contains the plots of German service members killed in the Franco-Prussian War, World War I and World War II.

It's not unusual to see soccer fans decked out in red-and-white 1.FCK scarves roaming the cemetery looking for the grave of legendary local player Fritz Walter, for whom the Kaiserslautern team's stadium is named.

Die-hard devotees have been making a pilgrimage to the world champion's final resting place since 2002, when he died at age 81.

At the edge of the cemetery next to Daenner Kaserne, east of the American Kindergraves, is a section called Sternerwiese, or star meadow, a burial ground for stillborn babies who weighed less than 1.1 pounds.

The annual memorial ceremony for the Kindergraves won't be held again until after Mother's Day, but the cemetery is open all year.

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PHOTOS BY HEATHER BENIT/Stars and Stripes

The Kindergraves memorial at Hauptfriedhof Kaiserslautern is decorated with American and German flags. Gravestones mark the burial spots of 451 American infants who died between 1952 and 1971 while their families were stationed in or near Kaiserslautern, Germany.



Memorial stones dating back to 1906 rest in the wall along Mannheimerstrasse at the main cemetery in Kaiserslautern.



The majestic Lion Fountain, beyond the gate on Mannheimerstrasse across from Kleber Kaserne, is surrounded by benches where people can reflect, relax or read. There are 400 benches in the cemetery.



Stones marking the graves of American infants at the Hauptfriedhof.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Hidden Vietnamese spot worth seeking

Luc Lac is great shakes even after relocating to spot near Army barracks

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Given the name of the Stuttgart restaurant Luc Lac, it's no surprise that stir-fried dishes from the wok factor heavily into the menu.

There are a variety of "luc lacs" on the menu. On a recent visit, I ordered the classic Vietnamese dish bo luc lac, which roughly translates to shaking beef.

The "shaking" part apparently refers to the chef's back-and-forth technique with the wok to bring the ingredients together.

The Vietnamese eatery, which is on the north side of the city not far from the Army's Robinson Barracks, is hidden away on a small side street, making it easy to miss.

But Luc Lac seems to have a loyal clientele among lunchtime patrons from nearby office buildings and in the evening from the surrounding neighborhood.

The namesake dish can be made with chicken, shrimp, squid, crab or beef. All versions come with various mixes of vegetable and sauces.

My beef dish, which was advertised as spicy, was only mildly so. But the flavors were balanced



PHOTOS BY JOHN VANDIVER/Stars and Stripes

Luc Lac, a Vietnamese restaurant in Stuttgart, is known for cooking up stir fry specialties.

out nicely with a hint of lemon-grass as well as mushrooms, onion, sprouts and thinly sliced green beans, bell peppers and chilies. The meat was tender, and it all was infused with a rich, beefy sauce.

The menu has other offerings,

too, including soups such as Vietnam's iconic pho bo, which consists of rice noodles and meat served in an herby broth.

The various spring roll dishes are tasty choices for an appetizer.

The service was polite, un-animated and noninvasive in the

manner typical in Germany.

The atmosphere inside Luc Lac is bright and modern, with big windows and a patio for outdoor dining when the weather is comfortable.

The restaurant moved to its current location a year ago from



Luc Lac

Address: Im Götzen 1, Stuttgart, Germany

Hours: Monday, Wednesday-Friday, 12-3 p.m.; 5:30-11 p.m.; closed Tuesday; Saturday, 5:30-11 p.m.; Sunday, 12-9:30 p.m.

Prices: Dishes under 15 euros. Appetizers are between 5 and 10 euros.

Information: Online: lucac.de



Luc Lac, located on the north side of Stuttgart, focuses mostly on Vietnamese specialties.

a more central downtown area where it operated for about 10 years.

It's unclear what motivated the relocation to a quieter part of town, but the regular crowds suggest the move has gone well so far.

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Finding delicious common ground in the jollof rice 'wars'

By CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL
For The Associated Press

One of the iconic dishes of West Africa, jollof rice is vibrantly colored and heavily spiced. And it reflects how cultures across continents blend with delicious results.

It began in the ancient Wolof Empire, the first society in Africa to establish trade with European powers in the 1400s. New World ingredients — tomatoes, bell peppers and chilies — were combined with native spices like grains of selim and rice. Later, the Portuguese would bring curry spices from India.

Now the dish is at the center of family meals and most celebrations, and countries from Nigeria to Ghana to Senegal claim to be winning the "Jollof Wars." It's also a delicious one-pot meal that was perfect for our book "Milk Street Tuesday Nights," which limits recipes to 45 minutes or less.

With up to 20 possible ingredients and countless variations,



MILK STREET/AP

There are countless variations on the West African dish Jollof Rice, a one-pot meal that is easy to prepare in 45 minutes.

we focused on common denominators to pare down the list to essentials. Nutty, fragrant basmati rice is seasoned with paprika, curry powder and thyme, then we simmer the grains with chopped carrots in a puree of tomato, red bell pepper and gar-

lic. Frozen peas warmed in the residual heat as the rice finishes absorbing the liquid helps retain their texture.

To ensure the rice cooks evenly, use a large skillet with a tight-fitting lid. And don't forget to rinse and drain the rice. This

washes away surface starch and decreases stickiness in the finished dish.

Jollof Rice

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Servings: 6

Ingredients

1 pound plum tomatoes, cored and quartered, OR a 14½-ounce can diced tomatoes, with juices

1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and cut into quarters

2 medium garlic cloves, peeled
Kosher salt and ground black pepper

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium yellow onion, chopped

1½ cups basmati rice, rinsed and drained

3 medium carrots, peeled and chopped into ¼-inch pieces

1 tablespoon curry powder

1½ teaspoons smoked paprika

1 teaspoon dried thyme

1 cup frozen green peas

Directions

In a food processor, combine the tomatoes, bell pepper, garlic

and 1 teaspoon salt. Process until smooth, about 1 minute. Set aside.

In a large skillet over medium, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until beginning to brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in the rice, then the carrots, curry powder, paprika, thyme, 1½ teaspoons salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring, until the rice is fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in 1½ cups water, bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the water has been absorbed, about 2 minutes.

Stir in the tomato puree and return to a simmer, then reduce to medium-low. Cover and cook until almost dry and the rice is tender, 12 to 15 minutes.

Scatter the peas over the rice, then cover the pan. Remove from the heat and let stand until the remaining moisture has been absorbed and the peas are heated through, about 5 minutes. Stir the peas into the rice. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

The water at Katherine Hot Springs in Australia's Northern Territory is crystal clear with no sign of crocodiles.

Relax in the Outback

Take a dip inside a free hot spring in Australia's Northern Territory

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A dip in a hot spring isn't the hoped-for relief anyone craves in the sweltering tropical heat of Australia's Northern Territory.

And few people associate the great southern continent with geothermal activity. Australia has almost 150 volcanoes, but none has erupted for more than 4,000 years.

That's because Australia, unlike Japan and New Zealand, is far from the Pacific Ring of Fire where plate boundaries meet, and eruptions and earthquakes are common.

Beneath Australia's red soil, however, there's plenty of rock, heated by the earth, and that means there are hot springs to be found at various places in the Outback.

One of them is in Katherine, home to about 6,000 people. The town is 10 miles' drive from Royal Australian Air Force Base Tindal, which frequently hosts U.S. military forces training in the country.

Katherine Hot Springs, walking distance from the town's main street, is officially open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., although it doesn't appear to have a fence, gate or anyone keeping an eye on it.

There's a big parking lot near the springs, which are reached via a short downhill trek along a path that leads into a shady grove of gum trees.

The springs feature several pools linked by a meandering stream. A steel walkway and steps lead down to the largest pool.

The water in the pools is crystal clear with no

If you go

Location: Riverbank Drive, Katherine South NT 0850, Australia

Directions: Take the Stuart Highway and head north from central Katherine, then turn left onto the Victoria Highway before crossing the river and drive about a mile. A sign for the hot springs will direct you to the carpark.

Hours: Open daily, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Cost: Free

Food: The onsite Pop Rocket Café serves fancy coffee, snacks and meals.

Information: Phone: +61 8 8972 5500; Online: tinyurl.com/83h4a5bz

Seth Robson

sign of crocodiles.

The largest pool is about 30 feet across and perhaps 5 feet at its deepest point. You climb down a steel ladder to get in.

The water is only lukewarm — 75-86 degrees Fahrenheit, according to Katherine's official website — but it's quite pleasant to float in first thing in the morning, under the shade of the gum trees.

After your swim, you can head back up the hill and find plenty of tables and chairs and the Pop Rocket Café serving food and drinks out of a shipping container.

Access to the pools may be restricted during the territory's wet season, from September to April depending on water levels, according to the town's website.

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The largest pool at Katherine Hot Springs is about 30 feet across and perhaps 5 feet at its deepest point.



The Pop Rocket Café is a great place for a snack after a dip in the Katherine Hot Springs in Australia's Northern Territory.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

No-reservation recommendation

Thai restaurant Soi Gapao near Camp Zama is a good, tasty bet for spontaneous diners

BY CLAIRE JENQ
Stars and Stripes

My least favorite Japanese word is “yoyaku,” which means reservation. Last-minute planner that I am, I don’t often make one.

Also, not every restaurant in the United States requires a reservation, but in Japan, the yoyaku is king. I’m embarrassed to admit the number of times I have walked into a delightfully aroma-tinged restaurant with open tables; heard the host utter, “yoyaku?” and then sheepishly turned away with a twinge of regret.

My husband and I made that mistake when we went on a date recently. We planned on going to a local sushi restaurant — a place that deserves its own write-up. The restaurant was nearly empty the last time we ate there, but this evening it was a full house. “Yoyaku?” the host asked. And I knew we wouldn’t be having sushi that night. We turned away, a little defeated, and drove around Sagami-hara, Japan, looking for an alternative, until we decided to try Soi Gapao in a last-ditch effort to rescue date night.

Soi Gapao has been recommended by many of our friends at Camp Zama, but we’d never given it a try. When we walked through the door, I was struck by the fun, warm and eclectic Thai decor.

“Yoyaku?”

When we tentatively shook our heads no, the host replied in Japanese, “Just a moment please.” I felt relief when he turned back around, smiled and asked in Japanese, “Two people?”

By now, we were both hungry. We ordered several dishes to split, including Chinese spinach, chicken satay, green chicken curry, soft-shelled crab and fried



Soi Gapao

Location: 252-0303 Kanagawa, Sagami-hara, Minami Ward, Sagami-cho, 5 Chome-29-10-1 shino-plaza1F, Japan

Directions: About a 20-minute drive from Camp Zama, Japan, or a short walk from Sagami-Ono Station

Hours: Open daily, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Prices: Most dishes are around 990 yen, or about \$6.80

Dress: Casual

Information: Phone: 042-851-5598; Online: soigapao.com/en.html

Claire Jenq

chicken wings. Everything was delicious.

The spinach was perfectly simmered in a flavorful sauce with garlic and spicy-sweet red peppers.

The chicken satay had a crunchy char on the outside and came with a pungent fish sauce and plenty of herbs. I questioned whether the soft-shelled crab was even seafood. The green curry was spicy, sweet and creamy.

And if you ever see Thai fried chicken wings on a menu, order them. They’re always amazing, but these ones especially because the chef had added bits of herbs in the batter.

Soi Gapao is a must-try for anyone, whether on a date or on your own. You can bring your dog along too, since pets are welcome on the patio.

But I would recommend making a yoyaku on Soi Gapao’s website for your next visit, just in case.

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PHOTOS BY CLAIRE JENQ/Stars and Stripes

Soi Gapao, a Thai eatery not far from Camp Zama, Japan, is a must-try for its delicately seasoned fare.



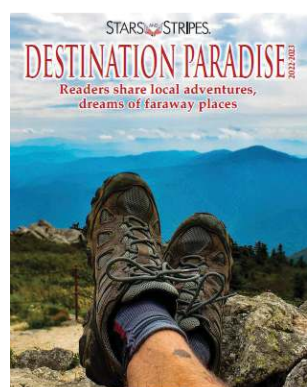
The chicken satay from Soi Gapao has a crunchy char on the outside and is served with a pungent fish sauce and plenty of herbs.



Pets are also welcome at Soi Gapao.



The green curry from Soi Gapao, a Thai restaurant in Sagami-hara, Japan.



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STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

On the precipice

Disastrous snow season, COVID puts 2 famed New Zealand ski areas on thin ice

BY NICK PERRY
Associated Press

New Zealand's Turoa ski area is usually a white wonderland at this time of year, its deep snowpack supporting its famed spring skiing. This season, it's largely a barren moonscape, with tiny patches of snow poking out between vast fields of jagged volcanic boulders.

The ski area was forced to close for the season last week, three weeks earlier than planned.

Rain repeatedly washed away the snow, and the ski area's 50 snowmaking machines proved no match against balmy temperatures. Climate change appears to be a significant factor, after New Zealand experienced its warmest winter on record — for the third year in a row.

The disastrous snow season comes after the previous two seasons were severely disrupted by COVID-19, leaving Turoa and its sister ski area Whakapapa on the brink of bankruptcy.

The two ski areas, which are among New Zealand's largest, are owned by the same company and located on opposite sides of Mount Ruapehu. Should they be forced to close permanently, it would leave North Island, where more than three-quarters of the nation's 5 million people live, without any major ski areas.

Even in New Zealand's cooler South Island, climate change is raising questions about the future of skiing and snowboarding. The sports have long been important for attracting foreign tourist dollars to New Zealand and form part of the nation's identity as an outdoor adventure destination.

At Turoa this season, workers in snow-grooming machines spent thousands of hours pushing what snow there was onto trails, allowing expert skiers and snowboarders to take the chairlifts to the top of the ski area for limited runs. But there was little on offer for beginners or intermediates.

Sam Yates, 21, this year landed his dream job as a ski instructor at Turoa. But he estimates he managed to teach people on only about a dozen days between frequent mountain closures. On some days when Turoa was closed, he was asked to pour coffee in the cafeteria at Whakapapa. In mid-August, he was one of about 135 workers — one-third of the staff at the two ski areas — who were laid off.

"It's heartbreaking to see the weather," Yates said. "You move down here and sacrifice six months of your life to commit to

skiing. When you do that and then you can't ski, it's quite disheartening and yeah, heartbreaking."

With the snow melting away and his job gone, Yates decided to pack up his van and move to South Island, where the skiing has been better. Then he hopes to follow the winter to Canada.

Johan Bergman, the ski area manager at Turoa, said it had been a tough season.

"We've had some pretty decent snowfalls, but they've generally been followed by rain events, which has washed a lot of the snow away," he said. "And it's been a bit warm this winter, too, over the whole country, so we're really lacking that snow this year."

He looked behind him at the barren mountain.

"This should be white at the moment," he said.

Bergman said that in his view, climate change is a background factor but this season has been more a case of bad luck. And he's bullish on the sport's future at Ruapehu.

"I always see skiing up here in the North Island of New Zealand," he said.

But the poor season is putting severe financial pressure on Ruapehu Alpine Lifts, the company that owns both ski areas. Set up 70 years ago by ski enthusiasts, the company operates as a nonprofit. It's exempt from paying company tax and is required to put any profits back into enhancing the ski areas.

But there are no profits. Last year the company lost nearly

"I've told the North Island ski operators more than once that things are going to become marginal fairly quickly."

Professor James Renwick

climate scientist at the Victoria University of Wellington

\$3.4 million and its total debt climbed to over \$16 million. The company has been seeking a major new investor, so far without success.

Even before this year's barren snow season, the company's auditors noted there was significant doubt about whether the company could continue to stay afloat. Chief Executive Jono Dean did not immediately respond to written questions about the company's future.

The company seems to have underestimated the threat posed by global warming. It doesn't



PHOTOS BY NICK PERRY/AP

The ski slopes are almost devoid of snow at the Turoa ski field on Mount Ruapehu, New Zealand, on Sept. 22. A disastrous snow season has left the field, one of New Zealand's largest, on the brink of bankruptcy, with climate change appearing to play a significant role.

mention climate change once in its most recent 54-page annual report, instead listing the major threats to its business as further COVID-19 disruptions and borrowing restrictions.

The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research found New Zealand's average winter temperature hit a new record this year of almost 50 degrees Fahrenheit. It was also the wettest winter on record. The agency concluded that climate change was a major contributor to both the extra warmth and the rain.

Professor James Renwick, a climate scientist at the Victoria University of Wellington, said that as temperatures increase in New Zealand, skiing will become more untenable.

"I've told the North Island ski operators more than once that things are going to become mar-

ginal fairly quickly," Renwick said.

He said there would always be changes from season to season, but the trend was for warmer winters. He said it was hard to predict how long any individual ski area could survive.

"The further south you are and the higher up the mountains you are, the colder it is, so the longer you can keep going," he said.

Some ski areas may even benefit, at least initially, from the extra precipitation driven by climate change if it's cold enough to fall as snow, Renwick added.



Skiers make the most of the very little snow at the Turoa ski field, on Mount Ruapehu, New Zealand, on Sept. 22.

Ski areas in some countries have increased revenues by opening their chairlifts to mountain bikers during the summer. But the ski areas on Mount Ruapehu can't because they are in a national park and don't have permission.

Mount Ruapehu is stunning, an active volcano that film director Peter Jackson used as a backdrop in "The Lord of the Rings" movies. The fertile volcanic soil at its base has allowed market gardening to flourish, including in the village of Ohakune, which is affectionately known as the nation's carrot capital.

But Ohakune also relies on the ski business.

Phil Jackson, who built the Hobbit Motorlodge in Ohakune nearly 40 years ago, said this year has had the worst ski season since 1983, when the mountain was covered in ice. Normally he would ski at Turoa, he said, but this year his only skiing has been four days on the South Island. And business at his motor lodge has been terrible.

"A shocker," Jackson said. "Two years of COVID and now another disaster ski season. We'll survive, but there will be people

who won't be able to survive."

Others are hoping increased summer activity might make up for the skiing shortfall.

Ben Wiggins, the managing director of the TCB Ski, Board and Bike shop, said that while fewer people were coming to Ohakune for skiing and snowboarding, they've seen more visitors who want to go golfing, fishing, camping and mountain biking.

"The facilities down here like bars, cafes and restaurants are beautiful, and everybody loves the little town," he said.

Nearby at the Osteria restaurant, manager Teresa Mochan said diner numbers were lower this year than they were pre-COVID-19, but she was still busy because staff were hard to find.

"There are people that are a little bit down, I guess, because they haven't been able to go skiing," she said.

But Mochan said she loves living in Ohakune and plans to stay.

"Fingers crossed that next year we bounce back and have an amazing winter season and the town can really start to show its full potential again," she said.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Story of a spiral

Unauthorized Bourdain biography a well-researched, impressionistic portrait of the troubled chef, TV host

BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

Biographers try as best they can to walk in the shoes of their subjects. Charles Leerhsen took it a step further: He slept in the same French hotel room where Anthony Bourdain killed himself, earning a unique perspective — and pushback.

“There’s been some people who’ve criticized me, saying it’s ghoulish or that I’m the kind of reporter who goes through people’s garbage cans,” Leerhsen, the author of “Down and Out in Paradise: The Life of Anthony Bourdain,” told The Associated Press. “But all the best biographers — I wouldn’t put myself in their ranks — but all the guys who win the prizes, they believe that you really need to go where the person was.”

Seeing what the chef, writer and TV host saw on his last day alive in 2018 is only part of Leerhsen’s exhaustive research for the book that came out this week, which included 80 interviews and material from Bourdain’s laptop, diaries and his final texts.

The impressionistic portrait that emerges is of a complex man who combined swagger and spiky cool with deep insecurity, neediness and image-consciousness. Leerhsen calls him “a crash test dummy extraordinaire.”

The book traces Bourdain’s life from his childhood in Leonia, N.J., to dropping out of college, washing dishes in Cape Cod and spending years as a chef in Manhattan, where he built a punk rock persona and became addicted to heroin.

“Getting hooked on heroin was the fulfillment of an almost lifelong dream,” the author writes.

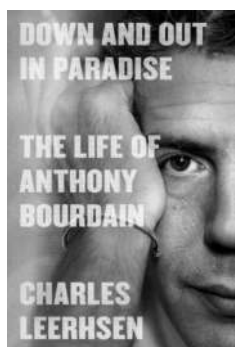
Bourdain’s big break came after a magazine piece was expanded into “Kitchen Confidential,” his wickedly funny memoir

about the underbelly of the restaurant world. That led to a life as a globetrotting TV raconteur, cut short at 61.

“I was curious about how could the guy who had the best job in the world, who seemed so cool and was so smart, in some ways and so sophisticated — how could he do this?” Leerhsen said. “My reason for writing the book was that simple.”

What he found was a man who was prone to overdoing things and addicted to being busy, even at the detriment of his happiness.

“I think he had a hard time just staying in that state of success and bliss,” Leerhsen said.



He quotes a former girlfriend with a telling observation about a TV figure who seemed to be the essence of

manliness: Bourdain was actually an adolescent all his life. He actively tried to be a rebel but had a Google alert set to his own name.

The unvarnished biography returns again and again to the performative aspect of Bourdain’s personality: “Authenticity, in the sense of being the real thing and not a pretender, was his lifelong preoccupation.”

Leerhsen’s reporting finds an “increasing obnoxiousness” in Bourdain’s last two years: “Tony pushed people away or let long-running relationships lapse until by June 2018 there was no one left in his life to play the role of Person Who Plans Your Funeral.”

The book’s most mournful part is the anguished texts from Bourdain in the days leading to his death. He was in an un-



EVAN AGOSTINI, INVISION/AP

A picture of Anthony Bourdain, shown in 2016, as a man with outward swagger but an inwardly needy, insecure, addictive personality emerges in “Down and Out in Paradise.”

healthy long-distance relationship with actor Asia Argento, and was taking steroids, human-growth hormone and Viagra, Leerhsen reports.

“You were reckless with my heart,” Bourdain wrote to Argento on the night before he died. The book reveals that Bourdain googled her name “several hundred times” in his last three days after a tabloid published pictures of her with another man.

“He’d turned into — a character out of a sordid, slightly deranged James Ellroy novel, a doomed and desperate lover,” Leerhsen writes. The last website Bourdain visited was a prostitution service.

The book is unauthorized; Leerhsen wasn’t able to speak to many in Bourdain’s inner circle on the record and relies on many confidential sources. Argento, tellingly, did not participate. But it is a very detailed profile, revealing everything from what posters were on his dorm walls to his

preferred brand of gin.

Bourdain’s estranged brother, Christopher, has called the book hurtful and defamatory fiction, but Leerhsen called him unreliable and said no one else has come forward to challenge his work.

Simon & Schuster, in a statement, defended the book, saying it “is a candid and comprehensive biography” that is “based on extensive interviews with people who knew him intimately. We stand by our forthcoming publication.”

Leerhsen is a former executive editor at Sports Illustrated whose previous books include biographies of Ty Cobb and Butch Cassidy. He said his account of Bourdain, flaws and all, serves as a corrective to many profiles that are fawning.

“I don’t get the people who say, ‘Don’t tell me. I want to remember him a certain way,’” he said. “I was curious. If you’re not curious like I was, then God bless you, you know?”

‘Cradles of the Reich’ a WWII novel about Nazi eugenics

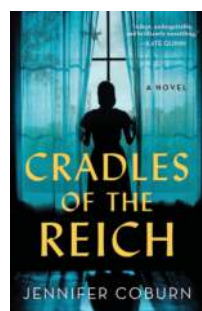
BY DONNA EDWARDS
Associated Press

Gundi, Irma and Hilde all find themselves at a Lebensborn Society house for future mothers who are deemed to be racially fit. Each woman is there for the same reason: to usher life into the world. But the three main characters have different stances on Nazi Germany and its burgeoning eugenics program.

Often overlooked in history, women are the focus of Jennifer Coburn’s novel “Cradles of the Reich.” The horrors of Nazi Germany are no secret and there’s no shortage of World War II literature around, but Coburn manages to peel back layer after layer of shocking misconduct, maintaining suspense all the while.

Irma Benz, who retired from

nursing after witnessing tragedy in World War I, wants nothing more than to settle down and live a normal life with her fiancé.



an, is pregnant with a Jewish man’s baby. She possesses levels of morality and self-evaluation well beyond her years, yet she is unable to fathom the cruelty of the Reich, her inexperience in suffering a byproduct of her youth and beauty.

Hilde Kramer, a prospectless high school graduate, discovers a future for herself as the mistress of a high-ranking official. Her naiveté and inexperience mixed with inside knowledge and loads of propaganda lead her into deeper, murkier waters as she desperately seeks validation and status.

“Cradles of the Reich” switches between their points of view, urgency dictating which woman’s name appears at the top of each chapter. The ending came much quicker than I expected — Coburn easily could have kept my attention a lot longer, but it’s a smart play to end where she did and not risk overstaying the story’s welcome.

Coburn applies thorough research and a strong dose of empathy to her characters and pro-

vides reasons for their complacency or compliance in a deadly regime, epitomizing how unaware some Germans were of exactly how the Third Reich operated.

German vernacular is laced into the story — leading to rich veins of knowledge should the reader choose to do further digging — but it’s mostly contextual, so the words’ meanings can be figured out even without Google handy.

It’s just one of the many elements that make the novel immersive; from settings to wardrobes, the details are consistent but not over-pronounced.

Though it most definitely is fiction, the amount of truth embedded throughout makes “Cradles of the Reich” a book that fits into the canon of WWII non-

fiction. Beyond using names of real people and places, it’s saturated in mannerisms, propaganda, foods and furniture that reflect actual history. Coburn also includes lesser-known pieces of Nazi eugenics, like the Aktion T4 campaign that targeted disabled people. The pieces that Coburn took creative liberty with are explained in her Author’s Note.

A WWII newbie who knows little to nothing of the subject would find the book horrifyingly educational. A scholar of Nazi Germany would be pleasantly surprised at nuggets of fact embedded throughout the fiction and the overall level of historical accuracy.

Every historical fiction novel should strive to be this compelling, well-researched and just flat-out good.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Ain't it fun?

As nostalgia for emo crests, Paramore returns with a new sound and a healthy outlook

By SUZY EXPOSITO
Los Angeles Times

Twenty years ago, if you told Paramore vocalist Hayley Williams that she'd become one of the most influential pop singers in America, she might have offered little more than a scowl. As a DayGlo-haired punk sprite, miraculously gifted with the lung capacity of a Southern church choir, she couldn't have seen it then — nor could her childhood friends-turned-bandmates, Zac Farro and Taylor York — but Paramore would go on to craft songs that would alter the trajectories of rock and pop.

Artists such as Olivia Rodrigo, Demi Lovato and Willow Smith have all cited Paramore's music as the blueprint for their own snarling pop-punk confessionals. For her 2021 hit "Good 4 U," Rodrigo gave Paramore a songwriting credit, citing the verses of their 2008 song "Misery Business," a scathing missive to Williams' teen rival.

"What feels most merciful about it is that we didn't know we were doing anything different back then," Williams tells the *Los Angeles Times* inside the band's North Hollywood studio, her neon locks now a mulled shade of amber. "I use the word 'merciful' because we could not have predicted that people would give a s— 20 years later. We were just eating peanut butter and living the dream."

Behind a wall of Marshall stacks and assorted trunks of gear, Williams, 33, drummer Farro, 32, and guitarist York, 32, nestle into a leather couch. Williams' charismatic goldendoodle, Alf, holds court in the studio: he tramples over Williams, curls his body around Farro's neck like an exquisite wriggling scarf, then finally curls himself into a ball next to me. Williams, donning a white hoodie emblazoned with the words "Main Character" in rhinestones, chuckles at her dog's audaciousness; "I'm so sorry. He's such a star," she says.

The band has officially just wrapped production on its upcoming album "This Is Why," set for release on Feb. 10. The lead single of the same name — and the band's first new offering since the 2017 album "After Laughter" — is a funky tapestry frilled with tambourines and

angular dashes of guitar. Paired with a crisp "Mod Squad"-evoking video, directed by Turnstile frontman Brendan Yates, "This Is Why" weaves in tendrils of rock 'n' roll's past but lodges the band firmly back into the foreground of pop's present.

The band first teased "This Is Why" in September, with a photo of the players' faces smushed against glass. It called to mind the stifling social restrictions brought on by COVID-19, and the residual hostility between people. "This is why I don't leave the house," Williams sings bitingly on the new track, "You say the coast is clear/ but you won't catch me out!"

"How sad it is that we've gone through this horrible thing globally, as humans," says Williams. "Whether it's racism, or conspiracy theories ... I think about how the internet is supposed to be this great connector, but drives us further inward and further apart. I've watched people be so awful to each other. How could we go through these things together and come out worse?"

Ironically, Paramore is gearing up to greet more people than they have in the past four years combined — this fall, they will hit the road for the first time since 2018. The tour, which kicked off Oct. 2 in Bakersfield, Calif., includes shows in L.A. on Oct. 20 and 27, and three nights at the sold-out pop-punk and emo festival When We Were Young, scheduled for Las Vegas on Oct. 22, 23 and 29.

Paramore will co-headline the fest with another essential emo group, My Chemical Romance. Yet there's a catch: They may have to perform at the same time on opposite stages.

"They want war!" jests Williams, a longtime MCR fan. "We did not think there was going to be the kind of demand there is. We're careful about how we engage with nostalgia; five years ago we would have said 'absolutely not' to this. But I think it's significant that we feel confident enough to maintain the journey that we've been on and celebrate with these fans."

A feminine perspective

Some of the fanfare hasn't computed for Williams, who came to fame during a vastly different time for women in rock



Zachary Gray

Paramore will release "This Is Why" in February, more than five years after they released their most recent album, "After Laughter."

music. Paramore used to be relegated to smaller, designated female stages at festivals, such as the Shiragirl stage at the Vans Warped Tour. While still a minor, Williams was written off as sexual fodder by punk gatekeepers; and by her own admission, "Misery Business," which viciously dressed down another girl, has aged poorly since the 2000s. Williams retired the song from the band's repertoire in 2018, citing sexist lyrics like "Once a

where, you're nothing more," but the song briefly resurfaced at April's Coachella festival, where Williams performed a course-corrected version with pop superstar Billie Eilish.

"It wasn't cool to be feminine back then," Williams explains. "I put a damper on that for my own confidence, because it was hard to go into a male-dominated space — not even as a woman, but as a little girl."

"I think that's why a feminine

perspective is really important in this day and age of music," offers Farro.

Williams' dreams of rock stardom were realized early in life. After her parents divorced in 2002, Williams and her mother relocated from their hometown of Meridian, Miss., to Franklin, Tenn., a 30-minute drive south of Nashville. A prodigious singer-songwriter new to the Music City

SEE PARAMORE ON PAGE 29

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Paramore: Latest album marks growth, maturity for band**FROM PAGE 28**

circuit, Williams was discovered by managers Dave Steunebrink and Richard Williams; she then signed a deal with Atlantic Records in 2004, when she was 15 years old.

The label primed Williams to be a solo act, in the same vein as pop-rock virtuosas Kelly Clarkson and Avril Lavigne. Yet Williams, already promised to punk, insisted on sticking with her band of friends: bassist Jeremy Davis, guitarist Josh Farro and his kid brother Zac. (York opted to graduate from high school before joining the band as rhythm guitarist in 2007.)

While Williams retained her solo deal with Atlantic, the label decided to release Paramore's thunderous 2005 debut, "All We Know Is Falling," via the Florida label Fueled by Ramen: a launchpad for pop-faring emo bands like Jimmy Eat World, Fall Out Boy and Panic! at the Disco. With the release of Paramore's 2008 breakthrough LP "Riot!," the band rose up the ranks of the Top 40, continuing with 2008's "Decode," their moody cut from the "Twilight" soundtrack.

However, the separate record deal with Williams, as well as differences in faith and lifestyle, sparked discord between bandmates. After releasing their 2009 album, "Brand New Eyes," the Farro brothers departed in 2010, stating wishes to be closer to family. Davis worked intermittently between the years of 2005 and 2015; after his resignation, he filed a lawsuit claiming credit for songs on their 2013 self-titled record. (It was settled in 2017.)

The group's remaining members, Williams and York, won the Grammy for best rock song in 2013 for Paramore's guitar-gospel hit, "Ain't It Fun."

Yet the two found it difficult to celebrate; Williams began floundering in the throes of what she's come to understand as depression and PTSD, while York says he developed symptoms of acute anxiety. "I was struggling with agoraphobia before the pandemic," he says, with a hint of levity.

All in the family

In 2016, Williams married her partner of nine years, Chad Gilbert, lead guitarist in New Found Glory.

The marriage ended the following year in divorce, due to what Williams has described as issues with his infidelity. She began a course of therapy thereafter.

"In retrospect, I can see clearly that I was looking for a family unit that I didn't have," says Williams. "I was angry about that for a long time."

During this period, Williams exchanged messages with Zac,



"We didn't know we were doing anything different back then. ... We were just eating peanut butter and living the dream."

Hayley Williams

on Paramore's genre-bending roots

Photos by Zachary Gray

Paramore is currently on tour throughout the United States in support of their upcoming album, "This Is Why."



who had started his own projects, Novel American and HalfNoise, and relocated to New Zealand for two years. Zac returned to Nashville to record drums on the band's 2017 album, "After Laughter" — a 12-track dance-off with depression that conjured the world-music infatuations of new wave groups like Talking Heads.

"Somehow we metabolize all

these styles that we loved growing up, or that we randomly discovered, and it still sounds like us," says Williams.

The band further indulges their sonic curiosities on "This Is Why," which is accentuated by syncopated rhythms and jagged guitar rock riffs. The band absorbed the sounds of U.K. acts like Radiohead and Bloc Party,

says their L.A.-based producer Carlos de la Garza; the Red Hot Chili Peppers' 1985 funk-punk LP, "Freaky Styley," also played a pertinent role during the recording process.

"You just have a new animal," he says of the trio.

"It's only lately that my outside and my inside world are kind of congruent, where I feel safe," says Williams, motioning at Farro and York. "I think as more LGBTQ people [enter mainstream] conversations, people are now familiar with their term 'chosen family.' This band kept me out of a lot of trouble. It gave me a place to belong and identify with."

Paramore's live shows have served a similar purpose for its diverse fanbase. Prior to the pandemic, Paramore shows culminated in Williams picking a fan from the crowd to hoist onstage and sing along with the band.

On social media, people share videos of Black and brown Paramore fans — long marginalized in emo and the music industry surrounding it — shaking and crying with glee as they sing their favorite Paramore songs opposite Williams.

"I feel a very ferocious passion and want to protect people that don't look like me," says Williams, who used her Instagram page to platform anti-racist activists during the George Floyd protests in the summer of 2020.

"Not that there's any comparison, but there's something that we learned from not knowing where to fit in growing up," adds Farro.

"We benefit from the joy of people feeling free and welcome at our shows," says Williams. "I want people to see different fans onstage. If everyone had the same opportunities, I think we'd be surprised [to see] who would step up when given the chance."

"It is our responsibility to uplift new artists and young people," says Williams, who has amplified indie artists like Phoebe Bridgers, Nova Twins and Pom Pom Squad on her podcast for BBC Sounds, "Everything Is Emo."

"I'm stoked it's turning around, that there's more people of color in the scene, and so many rad new bands that are teaching bands like us," says Williams. "We have to continue to make it easier and more hopeful and more equitable as a scene."

WEEKEND: TELEVISION



JAMES MINCHIN/Showtime

Demián Bichir plays Mark Kane, father of vampire Eleanor, in “Let the Right One In.” His character becomes a killer so his daughter doesn’t have to.

Fortune favors the bilingual

Demián Bichir, star of Showtime’s adaptation of ‘Let the Right One In,’ maintains success in both Mexico and US

BY GREG BRAXTON
Los Angeles Times

Demián Bichir firmly believes that being a good parent means doing whatever it takes to protect your child, setting a good example and never, ever breaking the rules.

The veteran Mexican actor shares that philosophy with Carlos Galindo, the undocumented immigrant he played in 2011’s “A Better Life.” His wrenching portrayal of the hardworking gardener struggling to make life better for himself and his defiant teenage son earned him an Oscar nomination for lead actor while also introducing him to American audiences.

But Bichir also understands that there can be exceptions to the “good parent” code — particularly if your child is a vampire.

That’s the dilemma faced by Bichir’s latest father figure, Mark Kane, in “Let the Right One In,” Showtime’s adaptation of the popular 2008 Swedish film about a frail youth who befriends his mysterious young neighbor, unaware she is a vampire.

In the series, Kane, a former New York chef, returns to Manhattan with his vampire daughter, Eleanor (Madison Taylor Baez). Kane is desperate to find a cure for his child, but in the meantime he must

constantly hunt for new victims, kill them, drain their bodies of blood and bring the vital fluid home for Eleanor to consume — all without getting caught. Making that situation more difficult is his neighbor, homicide detective Naomi Cole (Anika Noni Rose) and her bullied son Isaiah Cole (Ian Foreman).

“In ‘A Better Life,’ there’s a line I will never cross. Everything I do and say is being watched by my kid, so I better do the right thing,” said Bichir, who is also a producer of the series, which premiered Oct. 7. “But ‘Let the Right One In’ shows the ultimate line-crossing that any parent would do for his kid. You have to kill in order to keep them alive. You’re not only protecting them and keeping them safe, but you’re literally feeding them.”

The portraits of the two fathers represent bookends to the past decade or so of Bichir’s impressive career, in which he’s bounced regularly between his home country and the U.S. Although he had long been among Mexico’s most highly regarded actors, “A Better Life” — along with a recurring role on Showtime’s “Weeds” — served as his calling card to Hollywood, landing him in several films including “The Hateful Eight,” “Che,” “The Nun,” “Alien: Covenant,” “The Heat” and “Godzilla vs. Kong,” as well as FX’s “The Bridge.” And his list of credits keeps

growing. He just completed work in Italy with Salma Hayek on “Without Blood,” which is written, produced and directed by Angelina Jolie and based on Alessandro Baricco’s novel of the same name.

But “Let the Right One In” is new terrain for the actor: a leading role in a buzz-worthy genre property from the network behind last year’s fall breakout “Yellowjackets.”

“I’ve been very, very blessed in many different ways,” Bichir said during a recent stop at Showtime’s West Hollywood headquarters. “When I grew up in Mexico doing theater with my family and I wanted to be an actor, I never thought of things happening like this. I never, ever dreamed of such a beautiful life.”

Clad in a black shirt and trousers, the actor was charming, upbeat and down-to-earth. At one point, he requested that everyone gathered in the large space, including publicists, journalists and others, pose for a group photo so that he could mark the occasion.

Sitting down a few minutes later, he referred to what he called his good fortune — working with top directors such as Quentin Tarantino, George Clooney and Ridley Scott and being able to find rewarding work in both Mexico and the U.S.

“I continue to do films and theater in English and Spanish because I can,” Bi-

chir said, adding with a laugh, “Brad Pitt can’t do that. George Clooney can’t do that. Sandra Bullock — you’re beautiful, baby, but you can’t do that!”

Consider the evidence. In 2020, Bichir appeared in Netflix’s sci-fi drama “The Midnight Sky,” which starred and was directed by Clooney. The same year he appeared in the intimate Mexican drama “Danyka: Mar de Fondo,” playing a married writer who engages in a potentially dangerous flirtation with a teenage girl.

His face lit up as he recalled his first encounter with Tarantino. He was attending a party for his “The Bridge” co-star Diane Kruger, who had appeared in Tarantino’s World War II epic “Inglourious Basterds”:

“Diane, who is really good friends with Quentin, invited me over, and Quentin tells me, ‘I’ve just been through a Demián Bichir marathon over the last few weeks watching everything you’ve done. I am finishing a script right now. When it’s finished, can I send it to you?’”

Bichir paused: “It was one of those moments when you think you’re dreaming: ‘This is not happening, right?’ I’ve been through very long auditions and callbacks my entire life, and then Quentin Tarantino tells you, ‘I’ve been watching your work.’”

SEE SUCCESS ON PAGE 31

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Success: Bichir says the show is 'best example of how lucky I am'**FROM PAGE 30**

Can I send you a script?

"I said, 'Are you kidding me?' and then I said, 'If there's a role for me, can I read for you?' He said, 'No, no, no. If you like it, it's yours.' That was that."

The script was "The Hateful Eight." He later learned that the "Pulp Fiction" filmmaker had been looking for a Mexican actor to play an outlaw named Bob. His friend writer-director Robert Rodriguez had recommended Bichir, calling him "the best Mexican actor you can find."

Quipped Bichir: "I've been sending Robert a bottle of tequila every week since."

Kruger also lavished praise on Bichir:

"Demian was one of the main reasons I wanted to do the series," Kruger said about "The Bridge," which paired the performers as detectives from opposite sides of the U.S.-Mexico border who are forced to work together to catch a serial killer.

"I felt his work, both in Spanish and English, had been very strong," she said. "We met and just had an instant connection. He's very proud of his heritage, who he is as a person and an actor, and I feel that really comes through in his work."

Robin Wright sought out Bichir for her 2021 directorial debut, "Land," in which she plays a stricken woman who moves to a remote cabin to escape human contact, only to meet near-death from the ravages of nature. Bichir plays a hunter who discovers her and helps her heal, physically and emotionally, even though he is dealing with his own trauma.

"He read the script — never thought he would do it — and said he'd love to meet with me," Wright said. "He came to my house, and the minute he walked in, I felt like I had met my long-lost brother. We just ran into each other's arms. I just loved him instantly. The soul of that man is so beautiful."

She added, "When we were shooting on a mountaintop in Canada, we had a relationship that just felt old-soul. To me, he is the movie. If I did not have him in that part, it would not have been as moving and thoughtful and soulful."

Working with top Hollywood talent is worlds away from Bichir's beginnings in Mexico City. He was born into a show business family — his father is a theater director, and his mother and brothers are actors. He was a member of the National Theatre Company for seven years, performing in productions of works by Shakespeare and Eugene O'Neill.

"A Better Life" was a "game-changer" for his career. But the film was a box-office failure when it was first released.

"We thought the 12 million undocumented people living here would go to see it, but the truth is they don't go to see those films," he said. "When they go to the movies, they want to escape that reality." But he said more people have caught up with it in the years since (it's currently streaming on Peacock), and he has high hopes that the film, and its subject matter, will gain momentum: "That's the only way this industry will make more movies like this."

As for "Let the Right One In," Bichir counts himself a fan of the original —

which also spawned a 2010 American film remake, "Let Me In" — and jumped at the chance when he was offered the role on the series.

"This show is the best example of how lucky I am, and for that I will be forever grateful," he said. "It's one of the most powerful roles I've ever played. It has such power — it's Hamlet, it's Richard III, it's Quixote from Cervantes."

The drama is also likely to provoke strong reactions — pro and con — not only about the dramatic story, but also about the decision to shift the setting from the icy starkness of Stockholm to the heat of Manhattan, and to explore new themes through the father/daughter lens.

The show's creator and showrunner, Andrew Hinderaker, described the series as a tale of addiction: "In this case, it's a creature, a child who is simultaneously not a child, who is addicted to blood. This is about the devastation that addiction brings to everyone around them."

Hinderaker said the Mark Kane character has to show "the brutal and emotional toll" his mission takes on him and "simultaneously preserve his humanity and his love for his child. He makes us believe that despite all the darkness he's been living in, he's been able to protect her and her humanity and, to a degree, some semblance of her childhood."

He added, "That is extraordinarily difficult to have that range. I honestly can't imagine any other actor who can pull off those dimensions."

Bichir called "Let the Right One In" "a love story between a father and a daughter. This will impact anyone who has been a son, daughter, mother or father. It shows how far you will go to keep your kids safe."

As for the murders that Kane is forced to carry out, Bichir understands his character's motivation. "The only reason my character decides to kill in order to feed his daughter is that I don't want her to do it. The only other way she can survive is for her to go out into the night, hunt and get fed. I can't allow her to do that. I will become a killer and assassin first before my kid needs to do that."

And even though "Let the Right One In" is grounded in the horror/thriller genre, he feels the subject matter also resonates with the harrowing plight of undocumented immigrants in this country.

"It breaks my heart when I see pictures of my fellow countrymen and their children who are crossing the border and end up dying in the desert," he said. "Many of those photos are fathers holding their kids who are dead, drowned or exhausted by the heat. But they're always together and holding each other."

Bichir plans to keep engaging in projects that are meaningful and rewarding. One of his goals is to write and tell the story of a child who didn't speak any English but got a career in English as an actor: "The child grew up in Mexico in the theater and winds up sharing the stage with Brad Pitt and George Clooney, and having the best directors appreciate him and invite him to play with them."

He flashed a wide smile: "That's a good story."



PEACOCK/TNS

A screenshot of a scene from the Barney documentary "I Love You, You Hate Me."

Bashing Barney

Documentary 'I Love You, You Hate Me,' explores reaction of loathing toward divisive purple children's TV character

BY JASON NARK

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Barney, the big purple dinosaur's ever-present smile, his saccharine song lyrics that force-fed love to the masses, engendered a level of hate few children's characters have ever seen.

Barney stuffed animals were torn apart and run over at public events. An online group declared "jihad" on him a decade before most Americans had even heard that word. His most infamous song, "I Love You," may have been used to torture prisoners.

Tommy Avallone, a Camden County, N.J., native, spent two years immersed in the Barney universe researching his latest documentary, "I Love You, You Hate Me." The experience, he said, didn't drive him over the edge; it made him a better father, and a little less cynical.

"Why would we make people feel bad for liking something? Super simple things can sometimes heal scars or knock down barriers," Avallone, 39, said during a recent interview. "I hope the film makes some people rethink the things they say around others, especially children. Barney has done that for me."

Avallone, who lives in Audubon, N.J., with his wife and two children, has explored other, more beloved cultural phenomena in the past, including Santa Claus and Bill Murray. Too old to enjoy "Barney & Friends," which ran from 1992 to 2010, Avallone said he grew up dismissing the show as kiddie pablum like most tweens, teens and adults. But that focused ire, the organized hate directed at Barney for years, is what drew his interest as a filmmaker. Specifically, it was an old news clip of a "Barney Bashing" event at the University of Nebraska.

"At the end, the newscasters said, 'That's the future of the country,'" he said. "And I thought it would be great to explore our current times, to explore love and hate, though the lens of Barney."

The two-part documentary, which debuted Wednesday on Peacock, is an examination of that hate, not a celebration. Meeting the people behind the purple costume, the musicians who wrote the songs and the now-grown children who

appeared in the popular television show, do much to humanize the show. Singer Demi Lovato, who appeared on the show as a child, has said Barney "saved her life."

Most of the show's cast and creators earnestly believed in the message.

"Barney stands for inclusion, acceptance," Bob West, the original voice of Barney, says in the documentary's trailer.

Children's television stars Bill Nye, the Science Guy and Steve Burns of "Blue's Clues" make appearances. The documentary also takes turns into true crime and tantric sex. Seriously.

Avallone began filmmaking when he was a student at Haddon Heights High School. His "Station Crew" made home movies and parody music videos, doing just about anything to get some attention in the bucolic suburb. At 20, Avallone ran for mayor of Haddon Heights and lost.

"I was just like 'Hey, that sounds like fun,'" Avallone told *The Inquirer* during election season in 2003. "My goal is to really be a filmmaker."

Since then, Avallone has made four films and helped produce many more, including documentaries that have explored fan cultures — "Ghostheads" about "Ghostbusters" fans and "This is Gwar" about the "the humans who have fought to keep alive" the metal group Gwar. Working on "I Love You, You Hate Me" with Peacock was Avallone's first time working with a major studio and quite a change for him.

"I'm used to me and two other people working on something, not a whole team, so having all the support was something new," he said. "There's going to be more eyes on this film than anything I've ever done, so I'm excited to see how it plays out."

While promoting the Barney documentary, Avallone was in the midst of another project, "The House From ...," which will take viewers into iconic homes from film and television. He's visited the "Full House" home, along with filming locations from "Golden Girls" and "Friday," to name a few.

"I just want to keep doing big projects and smaller ones," he said. "That's the only thing that will keep me sane."

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Making sense of my loss of smell

College student who had long COVID describes her experience living with anosmia, how she has learned to cope

By NICOLE KAGAN
Los Angeles Times

Two and a half years ago, my nose stopped working.

That's when I realized how often smell comes up in daily conversation: "That Uber smelled weird," or "that woman was wearing way too much perfume," or "someone's definitely smoking weed nearby."

I have anosmia, a symptom of long COVID-19. I caught the virus early in the pandemic and had terrible symptoms, but after a week of bed rest, I was ready to resume my life. My nose wasn't.

With the pandemic now well into its third year, anosmia — once an obscure problem — has become increasingly widespread.

Roughly 5% of people who experience smell loss during COVID-19 will develop long-term anosmia, according to Dr. Bradley J. Goldstein, an ear, nose and throat doctor at Duke University Hospital.

The impact is more drastic than most people realize.

"The sense of smell is one of our key sensory systems that is constantly providing information about our environment, about the world around us, to the brain," Goldstein said. "A lot of that is happening sort of passively to us. We're not always intentionally thinking about sniffing, but we're constantly getting a lot of input."

I'm now a junior in college, and I have no idea what my campus smells like. I am constantly afraid that I smell bad, that the food I'm about to eat is rancid or that my dorm might be on fire. I can't remember the last thing I smelled.

"We tend to rely on vision and hearing perhaps a little bit more directly, but smell is still a really important sensory system. And when it's not working, people really do realize that there's something major sort of missing," Goldstein said.

People love to tell me that having a dysfunctional nose can be good at times. And sure, I can cook broccoli in my studio apartment and use public bathrooms without gagging. I was unfazed during a 14-hour car ride from North Carolina to Louisiana with four boys (and their Moe's Southwest Grill orders).

But then there are the other times. Like the gas leak in my dorm building — I was oblivious to the odor, watching TV, when my resident assistant pounded on my door shocked to find that I had not already evacuated.

The sudden increase in the number of patients losing their sense of smell has had a major impact on odor researchers, as well.

"It really radically changed the lives of many smell researchers that were doing something else and are now studying the effects of COVID," said Dr. Danielle R. Reed, associate director of the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia. "It was really astonishing to suddenly be the focus of worldwide attention."

Reed and her colleagues knew before the pandemic that viral infection could cause smell loss, but there wasn't much attention paid to how or why. Now, answering those questions is paramount — and researchers have been thrown into the limelight.

Early on, Reed's lab developed a test to try to standardize smell-loss diagnoses at doctors' offices. It asks patients to locate smells on a sheet, rate their intensity and attempt to identify them. This way patients can know the severity of their conditions, and their doctors can easily measure improvement.

Now the lab is working on taking cells from tissue in the nasal cavity and growing them in a petri dish. They plan to expose these cells to SARS-CoV-2 and other viruses to learn why COVID-19 has a unique impact on smell.

"There are biological processes that we are working to understand.

And if we can understand it, we can hope to correct it," she said.

Researchers in Goldstein's lab have undertaken similar work. Starting in 2020, they began to biopsy the nasal tissues of patients with long COVID anosmia to see if they could uncover what was responsible for the loss of smell.

"We're still learning more about what exactly is damaged or where exactly the damage is," he said.

Still other researchers study how the virus attacks the olfactory nerve, which conveys smell sensations to the brain.

While researchers look for a cure, the internet has filled with suggestions — sometimes well meaning, but mostly ineffective.

People love to tell me about the latest cure

they saw on TikTok. I've tried them all: the burnt orange trick, the flick to the back of the head trick, aromatherapy with essential oils and a daily nasal steroid. I went to Goldstein's clinic to take a smell identification test and get a nasal endoscopy.

So far, there is no cure.

But there are ways to cope.

Early on, I'd smile and nod when people who didn't know about my anosmia would ask me things, like to confirm that their candle from Bed Bath & Beyond smelled good. I was embarrassed to tell them that I really didn't know. Like it somehow made me seem lesser.

"Oh crap, I'm sorry," my Dad started saying every time he instinctively commented on a passing aroma.

But I actually like when people bring up surrounding scents.

"It's OK, just describe it to me," I'll respond.

I want to know that the Subway sandwich shop across the street from my apartment still emits wafts of warm, strangely sweet bread. Or that the pasta my sister ordered for dinner made the whole table smell like truffles.

Sometimes when walking into a restaurant or store for the first time, I'll say out loud, "What's that smell?" just in case there is one for someone to tell me about. I don't want to be left out.

I've learned that the English language is lacking in scent descriptors. Most of the time people just default to "good" or "bad."

If they're really trying, people will add a 'y' onto the end of another word. Earth-y. Mint-y. Fruit-y. These are better than "good," but still hard for me to wrap my head around. (Tropical fruity and wild berry fruity are two very distinct scents — that, I remember.)

At some point, I started saying "compare the smell to something" rather than "describe it." It's much easier for me to imagine a scent when someone likens it to, say, a wet dog or strawberry Jell-O.

My close friends understand the need to say that bakeries we pass smell like caramelized sugar, and that college parties we attend smell like sweaty boys and old beer. Those are smells I know.

Luckily my sense of taste has not been dramatically affected. I've done blind taste tests with different potato chip flavors to confirm this.

A person can taste with a dysfunctional nose, Goldstein said. Sensations from taste buds in the mouth are just one part of how we experience flavor. The mouthfeel from sensory nerves and the airborne substances that find their way to olfactory cells in the nose "give you a lot of information about the chemical qualities of food," Goldstein said.

"If someone totally loses their sense of smell, they're missing a lot of that input," he said. "Yes, they can still taste salty or they can still taste sour or bitter, but some of the other qualities that are mediated by the olfactory sensation are kind of missing."

That sort of loss is just one of the additional problems that some people who have lost their sense of smell deal with. For some, the impact can include depression and anxiety, Reed said.

"Nobody really wants to talk about the mental health aspect of it," she said. "But that is definitely something that comes up over and over again."

Chrissi Kelly, now an advocate in Britain for the treatment of smell disorders, lost her smell following a sinus infection in 2012. Soon after, she began to experience intense depressive effects.

"I was unprepared for that and didn't really know where to go for advice," Kelly said. "It really did change my life. It was just a very, very dark time for me."

Kelly founded AbScent shortly after her diagnosis, when anosmia was not as well known. The organization, which provides support and information to those affected by smell disorders, has seen rapid growth with the onset of COVID-19. Before the pandemic, it had around 1,500 members; now it serves more than 85,000 people worldwide.



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WEEKEND: FAMILY



JOHN MINCHILLO/AP

A first grade class at the Drexel Avenue School reads a book on urban gun violence prevention by Ian Ellis James, a Sesame Street writer known by the stage name William Electric Black, on Oct. 3 in Westbury, N.Y.

Coping with scary news

Demand growing for children's books addressing violence and trauma

BY CLAIRE SAVAGE
Associated Press

As the new school year swings into gear, some students carry heavier worries than keeping up with homework: Demand has been growing steadily for children's books that address traumatic events such as school shootings.

Sales of books for young readers on violence, grief and emotions have increased for nine straight years, with nearly six million copies sold in 2021 — more than double the amount in 2012, according to NPD BookScan, which tracks U.S. retail sales of print books.

As anxiety and depression rates have soared among young Americans, educators and advocates say children's books can play a role in helping them cope.

"While it might be second nature to try to shield kids from the harsher realities of life and scary news, it's proving difficult to avoid big society issues," said Kristine Enderle, editorial director at Magination Press, the children's publishing arm of the American Psychology Association. "Kids face these issues and challenges in their day-to-day life."

One book, "I'm Not Scared ... I'm Prepared," was reprinted several times to meet demand after the massacre at Uvalde, Texas' Robb Elementary School in May, according to the National Center for Youth Issues, the nonprofit group that published the book. The story, first published in 2014, features a teacher who shows children what to do when a "dangerous someone" is in their school.

Bookstores around the country see interest in titles from the genre rise and fall depending on local and national headlines, according to bookseller Barnes & Noble.

Some newer titles engage directly with real-world gun violence.

In "Numb to This," a graphic novel released this month, author Kindra Neely details the 2015 Umpqua Community College shooting in Oregon, which she survived, and the aftermath as she tries to heal amid repeated shootings elsewhere. Initially, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers editorial director Andrea Colvin said she was shocked when Keely pitched the idea.

"I had to remember that, yes, this is what our stories are like now. This is what young people have experienced," Colvin said.

Michele Gay, whose 7-year-old daughter Josephine was killed in the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, turned to children's books herself to help her two surviving daughters. One picture book she read to them was "The Ant Hill Disaster," about a boy ant who is afraid to go back to school after it is destroyed.

"It was one of many books that was of comfort to them and gave them a little bit of confidence to just face one more day, one more minute, because we can do it together," said Gay, who advocates for improved security in schools through a nonprofit she co-founded, Safe and Sound Schools.

Parents should make sure books addressing trauma are age-appropriate and backed by psychologists, experts say.

It's important to be aware of whether children are aware of or feeling stress about frightening things in the news, said Aryeh Sova, a Chicago psychologist who works with children who attended the July 4 parade in suburban Highland Park, Ill., where seven people were killed in a shooting. A child asking lots of questions about an event may signify that they are anxious or fixated on it, he said.

"If it's coming from the kid's need, then books could be a great way for kids to learn and to read together with their parents and to review it on their own and to process it at their own speed, at their own pace," Sova said.

But bringing up violence when a child isn't worried about it could increase their anxiety unnecessarily, Sova said.

Some young children experience gun violence at alarmingly high rates, particularly in communities of color.

For them, it is important to start early to address the effects, said Ian Ellis James, an Emmy award-winning Sesame Street writer known by his stage name William Electric Black. He is the author of the illustrated children's book "A Gun Is Not Fun." He said young children in areas afflicted by gun violence are more aware of it than parents may think.

"They know about flowers and candles and cards in the street. They walk by them every day," he said.

Through children's literature and theater, Black works to reduce urban gun violence. "If you start when they're 5, and you go back when you're 6, 7, 8, 9, you're going to change the behavior," he said.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Doing my part to thwart a Roomba robot takeover

Before I sit down to write my column, I tap the button on my Roomba robot vacuum cleaner with my toe. It activates and emits a series of beeps before backing off its docking station and fastidiously following my unspoken orders. There's something comforting about the soft whirr of its motor rambling, bumping and pivoting around my house.

My Roomba inevitably gets stuck under the buffet and calls out "Error!" for my assistance. After coming to its rescue, I plop onto our couch with a sense of security. "Things are being taken care of," I think to myself.

Moby, our yellow lab, disagrees. While sitting at my feet, he side-eyes the suspicious object traversing our foyer, sucking up tiny tumbleweeds of carpet fuzz, dirt and dog hair. It soon enters the family room, making a beeline for my Birkenstocks. Just as I take a sip of my pumpkin spiced coffee, Moby leaps onto the couch beside me.

"Moby, it won't hurt you, you blockhead!" I exclaim, grimacing at the fresh stain on my cotton sweater.

If you don't own a robot vacuum cleaner, you probably find this scenario somewhat odd. You're probably wondering why anyone would assign human personality traits to a simple household appliance. I may be crazy for forming an emotional relationship with my Roomba, but I am not alone.

More than 40 million people worldwide have purchased Roomba robot vacuum cleaners since an MIT professor and two students invented them two decades ago, not to mention all the competing brands. Researchers have found that owners tend to personify their robot vacuums, assigning them as male or female (we think our Roomba is nonbinary), giving them names (my favorites: Meryl Sweep, Rosie, Lurch, Optimus Grime, Vlad the Inhaler, Dirty Hairy, Alice and Dustbin Bieber), and forming emotional bonds (one owner introduced his Roomba to his parents as his girlfriend).

Roombas have made their way into our hearts and pop culture, as evidenced by internet videos of Roombas terrifying dogs and transporting cats, and the recurring "Parks and Recreation" sitcom character "DJ Roomba." However, many robots are portrayed as scary machines programmed to kill, like HAL, Terminator and Ultron. No wonder there are disturbing internet posts of Roombas strapped with knives and chain saws, with captions like "Alexa, intruder alert, release the Roomba!"

Speaking of Alexa, Amazon's Wi-Fi-connected smart speaker is not to be trusted. I refuse to upgrade my 600-series Roomba to a Wi-Fi-capable model that can scan, map and memorize my home's interior layout and communicate with Alexa for optimal cleaning. My old-school Roomba can't receive commands from our Alexa, which of course prevents them from conspiring to kill me and conquer the human race. I'd much rather have my dim-witted Roomba bouncing blindly against my furniture and leaving swaths of dirty floors in its wake than risk robot world domination.

My phone, television, computer, microwave, refrigerator, thermostat, toothbrush and thermostat are Wi-Fi-connected, but unlike my Roomba, they can't move around the house. I certainly don't want my mobile Roomba to buddy up with Alexa, turn against me and become a human battering ram.

"Police are looking into the mysterious death of housewife Lisa Molinari, who was found fatally pummeled on her kitchen floor on Wednesday. No suspects have been named. However, the medical examiner identified what appeared to be miniature tire marks on the victim's body. ..."

As I sit on my couch tapping away at my laptop, I hear my Roomba emit a familiar sing-song tune, indicating that it has finished its task and returned obediently to its docking station. I'm not sure if my robot is good or evil, male or female, threatening or harmless, high-tech or low-budget. All I know is that it sucked up a heckuva lot of dog hair while I wrote this column, and for that, I am grateful.

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

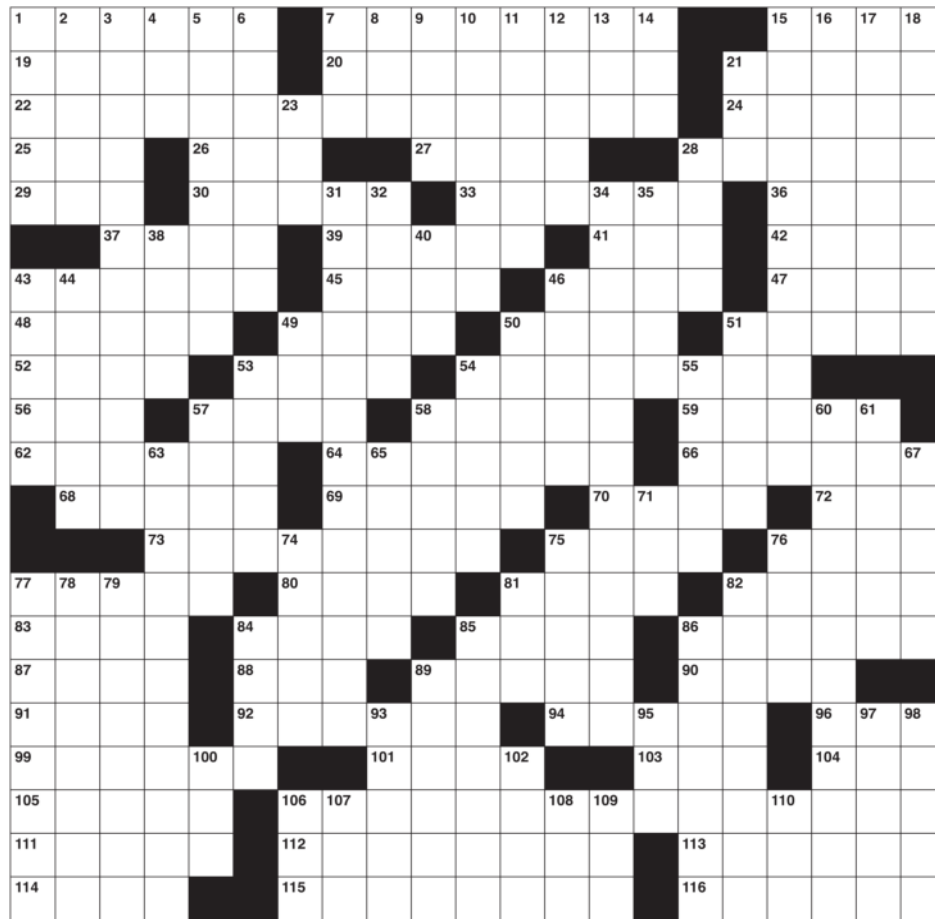
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

LE PUZZLE

BY KATHY BLOOMER / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Kathy Bloomer, of Seattle, is a retired hospital pediatrician. Constructing crosswords developed out of her love for solving diagramless puzzles, which involve a similar logic. This is her second Times crossword, after her debut in 2018. She had lots of attempts that didn't quite make it. Kathy says, "I am working on a book I am going to call 'Best Puzzles Rejected by The New York Times.'" — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Complete jerk
 - 7 Experience equanimity
 - 15 Word with ghost or pirate
 - 19 Inventor Tesla
 - 20 Champion
 - 21 Old-fashioned trial transcriber
 - 22 "When will the leaky faucet get fixed?" e.g.?
 - 24 "___ Speaks!" (Marx brother autobiography)
 - 25 Equinox mo.
 - 26 PC key
 - 27 Actor Astin
 - 28 Spam generator
 - 29 Gridiron gains: Abbr.
 - 30 Bygone theater chain
 - 33 Lithé
 - 36 Spam containers
 - 37 Opposed to, in dialect
 - 39 Song from back in the day
 - 41 German physicist with an eponymous law
 - 42 Focal points
 - 43 Worldly
 - 45 Hoot
 - 46 Part of a how-to manual
 - 47 Oklahoma city named for a character in a Tennyson poem
 - 48 Curt summons
 - 49 Remarks further
 - 50 It may be unlimited in a phone plan
 - 51 One-named singer whose last name is Adkins
 - 52 Faulkner's "As ___ Dying"
 - 53 Setting for a classic Agatha Christie novel
 - 54 Opt for "deluxe," say
 - 56 Baby louse
 - 57 The brother in 24-Across, for one
 - 58 Harvester of the future
 - 59 Potentially offensive, say
 - 62 Easy pill to swallow?
 - 64 Candy bar whose name is an exclamation
 - 66 2015 inductee into the World Golf Hall of Fame
 - 68 Bloke
 - 69 Covers, as the bill
 - 70 Labneh go-with
 - 72 Most popular dog breed in the U.S., familiarly
 - 73 Gives a whirl
 - 75 Without: Lat.
 - 76 A bunch of
 - 77 Common stain on a baseball uniform
 - 80 Adversaries
 - 81 Bit of spice, figuratively
 - 82 Writers not likely to win literary prizes
 - 83 Floppy features of basset hounds
 - 84 Asset
 - 85 Possible cause for road rage
 - 86 Boos
 - 87 Editorial override
 - 88 Word before crew or dirt
 - 89 Prop for a painter
 - 90 Former attorney general Holder
 - 91 Salty droplet
 - 92 Home to the University of Georgia
 - 94 Begins giving solid food, say
 - 96 Green-lights
 - 99 Floating
 - 101 Whip
 - 103 Imitate
 - 104 Country bordering Oman, for short
 - 105 Versatile neutral shade
 - 106 Where you'd find sap for syrup?
 - 111 Sam the ___ (patriotic Muppet)
 - 112 Condition treated with insulin
 - 113 Rang
 - 114 Wedding invitation enclosure, in brief
 - 115 The other you
 - 116 Protests, in a way
 - 4 Post ___ (occurring after the event)
 - 5 Basic
 - 6 Brewski
 - 7 Help-page initialism
 - 8 URL ender
 - 9 Times outside office hours, in personals
 - 10 Goes berserk
 - 11 About 6.5 inches, on a standard piano
 - 12 Virginia senator Tim
 - 13 From ___ Z
 - 14 Currency that features "The Tale of Genji" on one of its bank notes
 - 15 Show up naked, perhaps?
 - 16 Emma Watson's role in the Harry Potter films
 - 17 Not marked permanently, say
 - 18 Lounge chair location
 - 21 "Yellowjackets" ailer, for short
 - 23 Summer abroad
 - 28 Plant fiber used to make some jewelry
 - 31 M _ U _ H?
 - 32 It's a slippery slope
 - 34 Loss of the winning ticket?
 - 35 A layoff, crudely
 - 38 Like venison
 - 40 Salon specialties
 - 43 Exploiting
 - 44 Kind of map
 - 46 Leo with the 1977 No. 1 hit "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing"
 - 49 Cornhole player's asset
 - 50 New beginnings
 - 51 It may be vegetal or fruity
 - 53 Lightly bite, as a pup might
 - 54 Sappho and Mirabai
 - 55 Certain fed. security
 - 57 Alternatives to shakes
 - 58 Drinks that are "slammed"
 - 60 King and queen?
 - 61 Exhibiting the effects of too little sleep, say
 - 63 The three R's?
 - 65 Stays optimistic
 - 67 Bottomless void
 - 71 Quill go-with
 - 74 Note in the C minor scale
 - 75 Raw power
 - 76 Salon job, informally
 - 77 Develops, as an idea
 - 78 Like some high-quality bonds
 - 79 They might tie the room together
 - 81 Bout enders, for short
 - 82 Caballero, e.g.
 - 84 Bog contents
 - 85 Hosts
 - 86 Nag
 - 89 Dress for graduation
 - 93 Razzle-dazzle
 - 95 Contented sigh
 - 97 Superman's birth name
 - 98 A pomegranate can contain a few hundred of these
 - 100 Corkage ___
 - 102 Name of either brother in a classic Nickelodeon sitcom
 - 106 Computing pioneer Lovelace
 - 107 Teeny
 - 108 Rule, informally
 - 109 Menu eponym
 - 110 Pint contents



GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

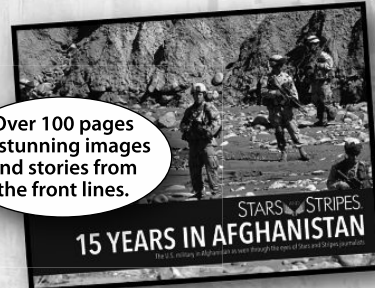
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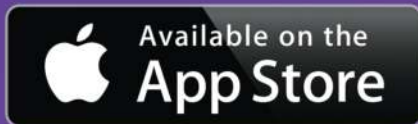
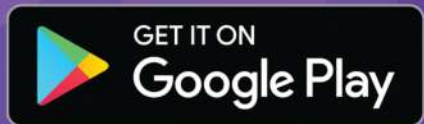


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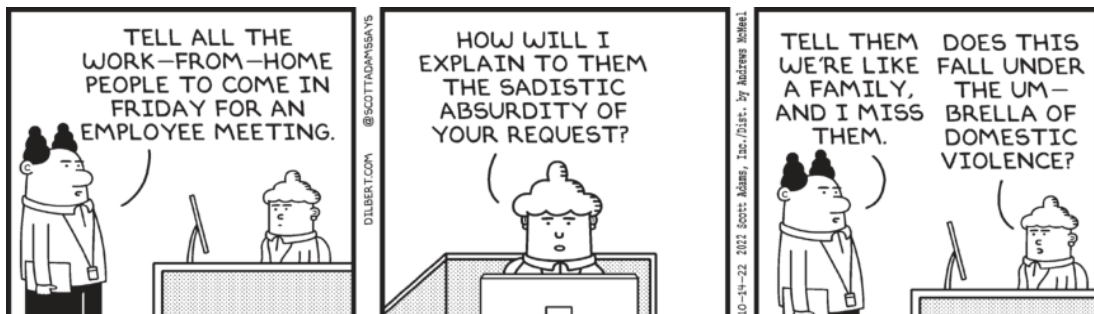
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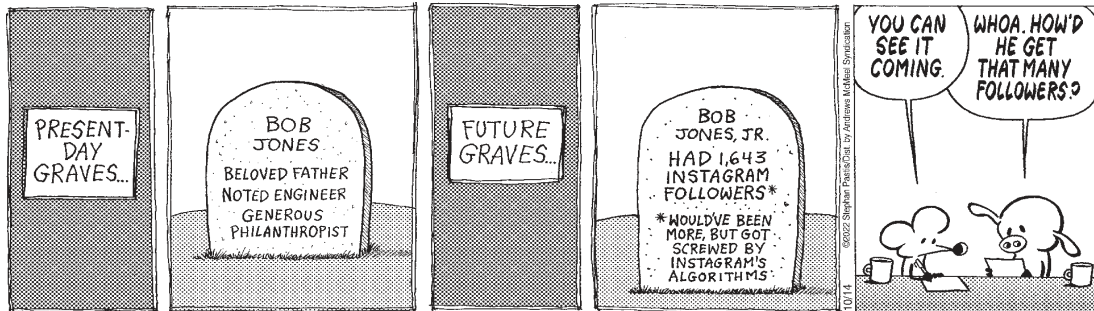
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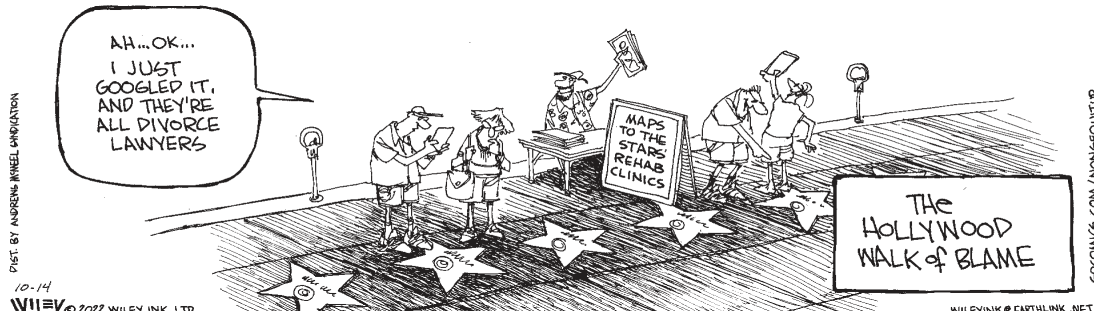
Dilbert



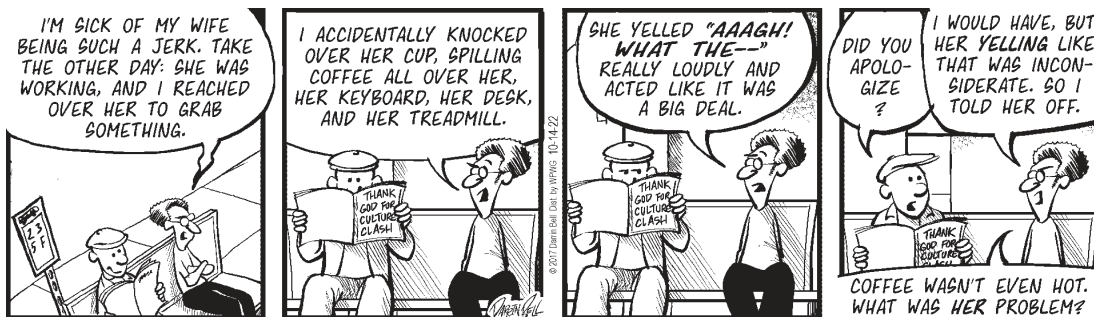
Pearls Before Swine



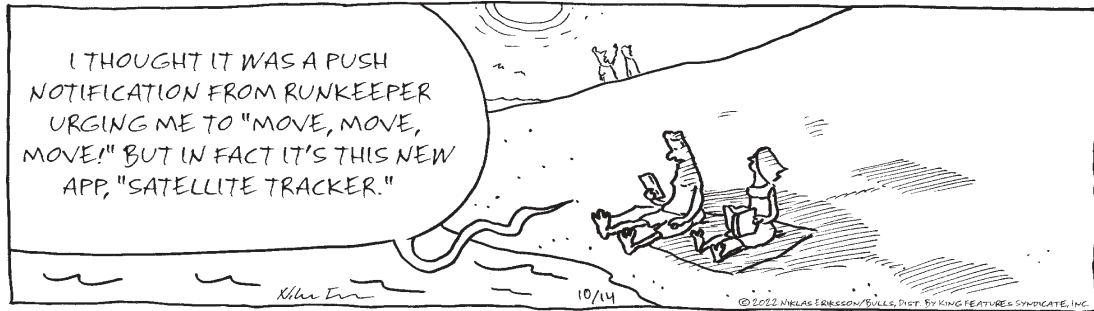
Non Sequitur



Candorville



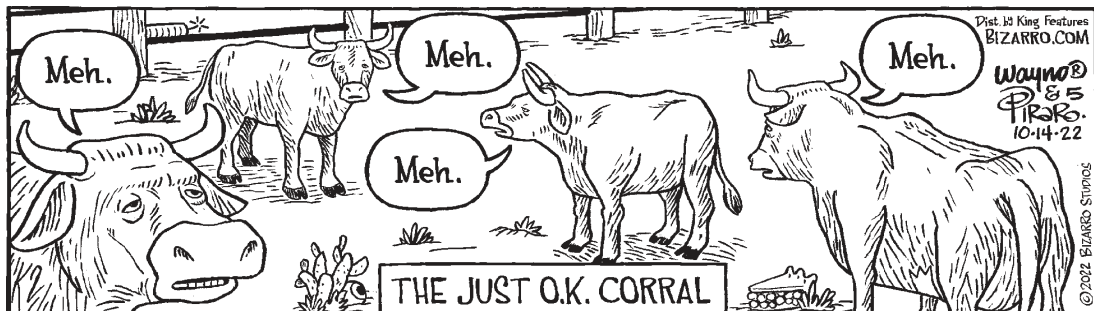
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19								
20			21		22				23	24	25	26
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38					39	40			41	42	43	44
				45				46		47		
48	49	50	51							52		
53						54				55		
56						57				58		

ACROSS

- 1 Embrace
- 4 Vinyl records
- 7 Winning
- 12 Discoverer's call
- 13 Epoch
- 14 — and dined
- 15 Feedback bit
- 16 1999 Wimbledon champion Lindsay
- 18 Place
- 19 Acknowledges
- 20 Cabbage salad
- 22 Use henna
- 23 Caulterize
- 27 Lawyers' gp.
- 29 Bulletin
- 31 Alpha's opposite
- 34 Jeopardizes
- 35 Bring in from overseas
- 37 Bio stat
- 38 Low-fat
- 39 Dhabi preceider
- 41 Warble
- 45 Goats
- 47 Mafia boss
- 48 Bad loser
- 52 Carnival city
- 53 Levels
- 54 Irish actor Stephen
- 55 Doctrine
- 56 Gem weight
- 57 Wd. from Roget
- 58 Observe

DOWN

- 1 Some earrings
- 2 Mover's rental
- 3 "Something's — Give"
- 4 Spartan queen
- 5 Soviet newspaper
- 6 Cabbage choice
- 7 Botanical bristles
- 8 Trendy
- 9 Rock's Brian
- 10 — Lingus
- 11 Banned pesticide
- 17 Ornamental jug
- 21 Conestoga, for one
- 23 Covert agents
- 24 Dawn goddess
- 25 Deluge refuge
- 26 ACLU issues
- 28 Tavern
- 30 Work unit
- 31 Sesame product
- 32 Bovary, e.g. (Abbr.)
- 33 Ecol. watchdog
- 36 Rain-delay cover
- 37 Hollywood's Hepburn
- 40 Crude dudes
- 42 "Thor" actor Elba
- 43 Racket
- 44 Garden statuette
- 45 Whispered "Hey!"
- 46 Jazz great Getz
- 48 Chest muscle
- 49 Eggs
- 50 Not 'neath
- 51 Genetic letters

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	R	F		A	R	N	E		D	I	E	D		
L	O	U		L	I	E	V		A	D	D	A		
F	I	L	L	M	O	R	E		Y	O	G	I		
				L	E	O		O	R	A	C	L	E	S
C	U	B	I	S	T			T	R	A				
H	B	O		T	I	C		I	M	A	G	E		
A	E	R	O		N	A	M		P	L	O	D		
D	R	E	A	M		R	E	B		B	O	N		
				T	A	M		H	A	V	A	N	A	
A	R	A	M	A	I	C		S	A	C				
B	A	L	I		F	O	L	K	L	O	R	E		
E	C	O	L		F	L	E	E		R	E	P		
L	E	E	K		S	T	E	T		E	V	A		

10-14

CRYPTOQUIP

KRQQWURLWBPYJ CSEDA WQUSF

UA CWFJZ MWOOFWE ZWYPV

WEZ FPKD MWNNJL'V UWEZ:

"FPQJV-VBREJV."

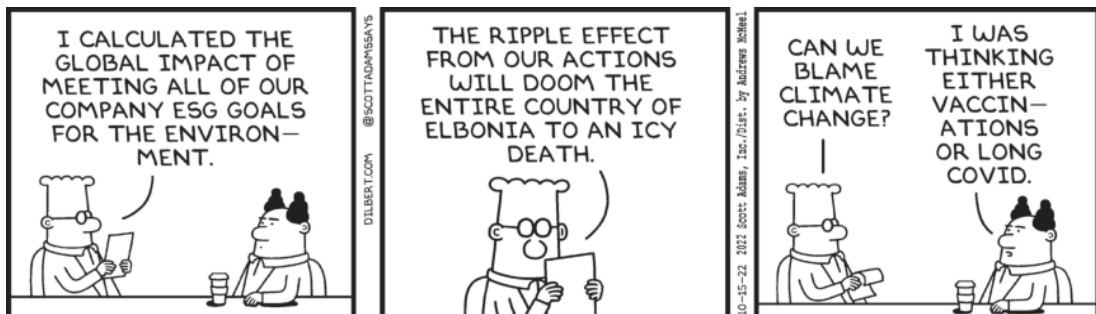
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: EVERYBODY IN THE WORLD WILL MAKE SOME SORT OF MISTAKE. INDEED, NO ONE IS ABOVE THE FLAW.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals D

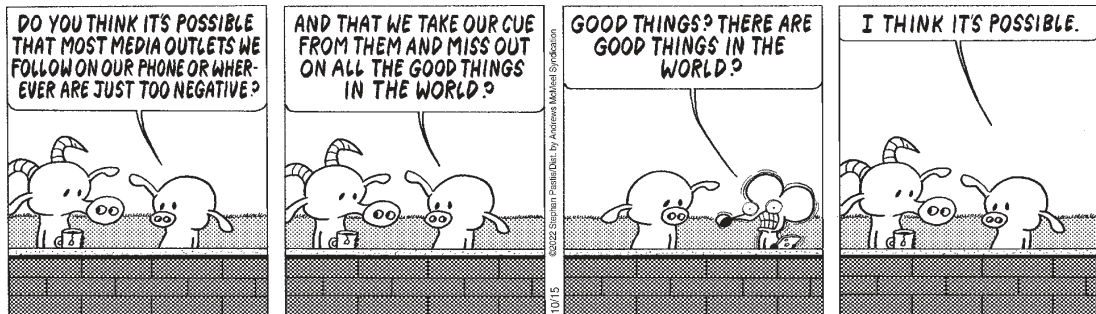
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



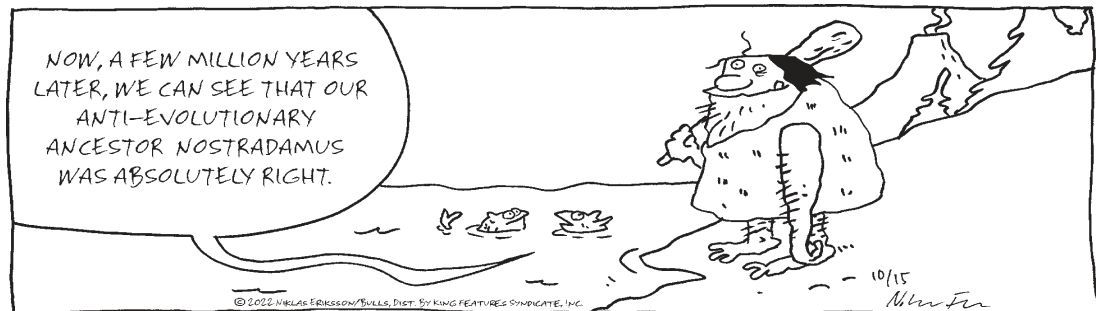
Non Sequitur



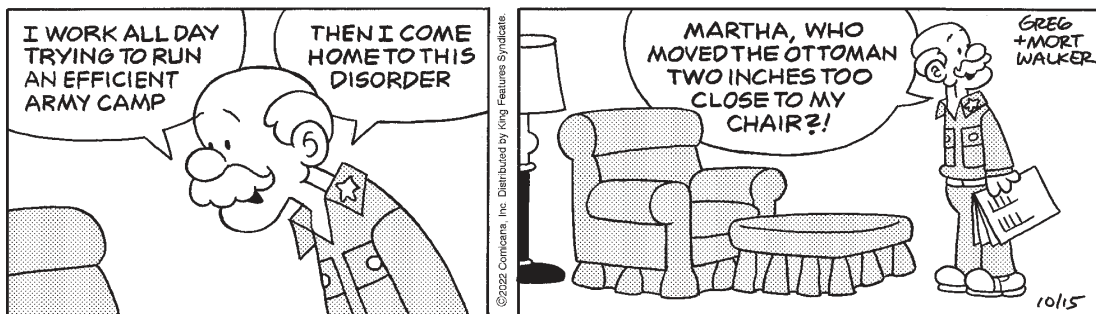
Candorville



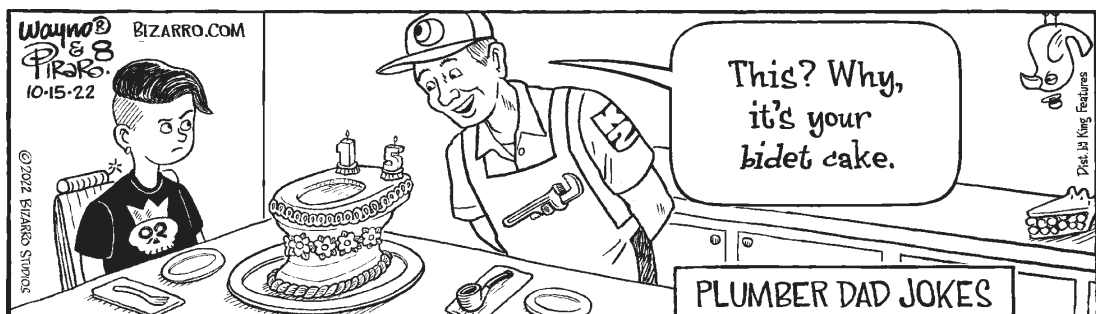
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19						20			
			21				22					
23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31				32			
33				34					35			
			36				37					
38	39	40				41				42	43	44
45						46				47		
48						49				50		
51						52				53		

ACROSS

- 1 Tear
- 4 Priests' garments
- 8 Grouch
- 12 Bat wood
- 13 Composer Porter
- 14 Prefix with dynamic
- 15 Omega preceder
- 16 Horn sound
- 17 Hang in the balance
- 18 Speaking frankly
- 21 Myrna of movies
- 22 Epoch
- 23 "— intended"
- 26 Hosp. scan
- 27 Sailing hazard
- 30 Edge
- 31 Possesses
- 32 Utah ski resort
- 33 High card
- 34 Glutton
- 35 Dundee residents
- 36 Weep
- 37 Depot (Abbr.)
- 38 Politico's discussion items
- 45 Lamb alias
- 46 Port of Algeria
- 47 Sushi fish
- 48 Chimney buildup
- 49 Take the bait
- 50 Badminton barrier
- 51 Melody

DOWN

- 1 Engrossed
- 2 "Insecure" actress Rae
- 3 Dr. McGraw
- 4 Director's call
- 5 Bonkers
- 6 Online journal
- 7 Hunting dogs
- 8 "It's a Wonderful Life" director
- 9 Stink
- 10 "Alfred" composer
- 11 Soul mate?
- 19 Model Heidi
- 20 Mentalist Geller
- 23 Cagers' gp.
- 24 Tolkien ogre
- 25 Key lime —
- 26 Periodical, for short
- 27 Mel's Diner waitress
- 28 Mel of Cooperstown
- 29 Ozone, for one
- 31 Mingles
- 32 Berry used in smoothies
- 34 — polloi
- 35 High
- 36 Emulate Lipinski
- 37 Sudden onrush
- 38 Try out
- 39 Slugger Moises
- 40 King of the jungle
- 41 Clench
- 42 "Peter Pan" pooch
- 43 Not us
- 44 Poses

Answer to Previous Puzzle

H	U	G		L	P	S		A	H	E	A	D	
O	H	O		E	R	A		W	I	N	E	D	
O	A	T		D	A	V	E	N	P	O	R	T	
P	U	T		A	V	O	W	S					
S	L	A	W		D	Y	E		S	E	A	R	
				A	B	A		R	E	P	O	R	T
O	M	E	G	A				R	I	S	K	S	
I	M	P	O	R	T		A	G	E				
L	E	A	N		A	B	U		S	I	N	G	
					P	R	O	D	S		D	O	N
P	O	O	R	S	P	O	R	T		R	I	O	
E	V	E	N	S		R	E	A		I	S	M	
C	A	R	A	T		S	Y	N		S	E	E	

10-15

CRYPTOQUIP

CH IKD LRZR QK ULRNZ KV
 KVOI KVR BNZQCADONZ TKKY
 KH QSR TCTOR, IKD AKDOM
 JNYR N BUNOJ KNQS.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: COLLABORATIVE FUNKY ALBUM BY FAMED JAZZMAN DAVIS AND MICK JAGGER'S BAND: "MILES-STONES."
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals Y

STARS AND STRIPES

OPINION

T.S. Eliot's primal scream resonates 100 years on

BY DAVID VON DREHLE

The Washington Post

Whoever coined the term Modernism for the artistic revolution unleashed by the 20th century must have thought the world was near its end. Otherwise, the term was doomed to anachronism as The New inevitably became old.

The world did not end (though not for lack of trying). Thus it has come to pass that the most Modern of all poems, "The Waste Land," by T.S. Eliot, has reached the ripe old age of 100. Once scandalous and provocative, the work loomed for generations as a model of poetic obscurity — a notion that the best poems are the most difficult to understand. Today, "The Waste Land" is a lesson in creative alchemy, in which intimate feelings are transformed into a work that touches millions.

First published in the inaugural October 1922 issue of Eliot's literary magazine, the *Criterion*, "The Waste Land" was quickly recognized as a seismic event. Evelyn Waugh, a novelist of exquisite eye, re-created the force with which the poem landed. In "Brideshead Revisited," his novel of 1920s Oxford, Waugh placed a sophisticated student of cutting-edge taste on a balcony, loudly declaiming lines from "The Waste Land" as crowds passed below.

"April is the cruellest month," the poem began, with a sigh of weary nihilism. Lovely April — cruel? Yes, because spring feeds life and life is spiritual torture, a march of dull souls trudging through brown streets, haunted by loveless marriages and sparkless trysts. In "The Waste Land," church bells sound dead. Birds sing into dirty ears. Rats drag their bellies through mud, and knowledge it-

self is but "a heap of broken images."

Eliot's timing was perfect. "The Waste Land" launched in a world thoroughly demoralized and disillusioned by World War I. All gods were dead, all faiths in man shaken, as F. Scott Fitzgerald famously summed up the period. A two-volume slog called "The Decline of the West" bowed the bookshelves of countless intellectuals, assuring them that civilization was petering out.

The poem evoked this mood powerfully, but with an open-ended elusiveness that allowed readers to fill its gaps from their own wells of feeling. Eliot's verse was hypnotic and entrancing — but also elliptical and enigmatic; its profundity seemed just beyond reach. No matter how urgently one pursued its meaning, the meaning always disappeared around the next corner.

Eliot cunningly reinforced this problem of comprehension by adding pages of unhelpful, even misleading, end notes. The effect was to put distance between the massively learned poet and the bewildered, intimidated reader.

Late in life, the poet acknowledged that "The Waste Land" was not his favorite work. But it was his biggest hit, boosting Eliot to a level of celebrity hard to imagine for a literary poet today. In 1956, 14,000 people packed the basketball arena at the University of Minnesota to hear Eliot deliver a lecture on literary criticism.

During the past generation, as various troves of biographical material, long sealed, have been opened, scholars have combed the records for keys to this poem's mysteries. What had been known only in outline — most ably drawn by the biographer Lyndall Gordon — has been filled in with vivid detail. Robert Crawford's recently published "Eliot After

"The Waste Land" completes a comprehensive two-volume examination of the man; beyond that lies an ever-growing library of Eliot's letters.

A shy and repressed young man — "very immature for my age, very timid, very inexperienced," as Eliot put it in an unusually revealing statement unsealed in 2020 — used the outbreak of war in 1914 to cast off his American future as a dreary philosophy professor in favor of life as an English poet. "Because I wanted to burn my boats," Eliot rushed into marriage with a bright but brittle English woman named Vivienne Haigh-Wood, whom he barely knew.

Their life together was "agony" from the start. Indeed, it drove them both half-mad. Eliot escaped into work, a banker by day and literary critic by night, until he suffered a breakdown that sent him to a sanatorium in Switzerland. There, he compiled his personal pain into a draft of some 800 lines, which his friend Ezra Pound brilliantly cut by half, leaving a masterpiece.

In happier times, Eliot would describe "The Waste Land" as "just a piece of rhythmical grumbling." More accurately, it is the primal scream of a very private, very gifted writer trapped by his own fear-based choices. It is a roundabout confession and sublimated cry for help half-hidden by veils of erudition. Readers who also know fear and unhappiness sense the wounded voice of one small man behind the rattling thunder of the Modern epic. This connection of one human heart to another, across space and time, is the essence of art and its claim on permanence.

Washington Post columnist David Von Drehle is the author of "Triangle: The Fire That Changed America."

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Spending data suggests GOP edge in the midterms

BY HENRY OLSEN

Special to The Washington Post

Pundits have seized on close midterm polling suggesting that Democrats could conceivably retain at least one of their congressional majorities. But the behavior of the two parties points to a different conclusion: a Republican-leaning environment that's getting stronger.

Most media analysis starts and ends with the top-line polling results. Pundits look at the generic congressional ballot, which measures which party a voter would hypothetically support for Congress. They also look at polls in individual races to get a clue on how candidates are faring in important contests.

These measures are driving the "close election" narrative. The RealClearPolitics generic ballot polling average has Republicans ahead by less than one point, while the FiveThirtyEight polling average has Democrats up by a similarly tiny margin. Democrats are ahead in polls in key Senate races in Arizona, Pennsylvania and Georgia, and are close in Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio and Wisconsin. Taken together, these data indicate an election outcome that's up for grabs.

But the parties' spending patterns suggest something very different. Republicans are investing in races in the House and Senate that they should have no business winning in a neutral political environment. Meanwhile, Democrats in the House are spending to defend seats they have no business losing unless the terrain strongly favors Republicans. Either the parties don't know what they're doing, or their private data are telling them something

at odds with the public data pundits analyze.

Oregon's 6th Congressional District is a case in point. The internal poll for the Democratic nominee, Andrea Salinas, found her ahead by one point, but also found the Republicans ahead by four points on a generic ballot. This is a seat that President Joe Biden won by 13 points in 2020. It should not be up for grabs in a neutral political environment, but the Democrats' own polls say it is. Something is not matching up.

Democratic campaign committee spending projects a similar message. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee just spent over \$585,000 in Oregon's 6th District, bringing outside Democratic spending in this race to nearly \$2 million. Democrats have also spent more than \$2 million defending Rep. Greg Stanton in Arizona's 4th District, a Phoenix-area seat that Biden won by 10 points, and millions more defending nominees in seats that Biden carried by between seven and 13 points. That's either incredible wastefulness or a warning sign that the national narrative is off.

Republican spending patterns shows similar indications in the opposite direction. The Senate Leadership Fund, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's primary campaign vehicle, recently added \$3.3 million to support the GOP challenger to New Hampshire Sen. Maggie Hassan. Biden carried the state by seven points, thanks to its white college-educated voters who typically lean Democratic. Yet the SLF has now spend more than \$12 million on the race with a month to go.

The combined spending patterns of the two

parties paint a picture of Republicans nationally leading. California political analyst Rob Pyers has compiled an essential spreadsheet that shows all the seats the parties see as competitive enough to spend money on. Overall, Biden carried these districts by a median of about seven points in 2020. If the party's spending priorities accurately reflect the general shift toward Republicans from Biden's 2020 win, when he won by four and a half points, it would suggest that Republicans are leading today by about two and a half points.

If true, Democrats have no chance of holding the House, and their chances of holding the Senate are also slim. Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan would have no chance beating Republican J.D. Vance in Ohio's Senate race, given that Donald Trump won the state by eight points. It would also explain why national Democrats are not spending on Ryan's behalf despite the polls. Meanwhile, Democratic Sens. Mark Kelly (Arizona), Raphael Warnock (Georgia) and Catherine Cortez Masto (Nevada) all represent states that Biden won by less than three points in 2020. A seven-point shift to the right would put them all in danger, saved potentially only because of the GOP candidate's purported weakness. A seven-point national shift would also put Hassan in the danger zone, which explains why McConnell is spending so much to try to reel her in.

In politics, it's always a good idea to follow the money. The parties' money so far suggests the midterms are tilting toward Republicans.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

SCOREBOARD

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wednesday's score

EAST

Louisiana-Lafayette 23, Marshall 13

Schedule

Friday's games

EAST

Brown (2-2) at Princeton (4-0)

SOUTH

UTSA (4-2) at FIU (2-3)

SOUTHWEST

Navy (2-3) at SMU (2-3)

Saturday's games

EAST

Colgate (1-4) at Army (1-4)
 Bucknell (0-5) at Yale (3-1)
 Dayton (3-2) at Marist (2-3)
 Lehigh (1-5) at Cornell (2-2)
 Buffalo (3-3) at UMass (1-5)
 Columbia (3-1) at Penn (4-0)
 Stonehill (3-0) at Sacred Heart (3-2)
 Wagner (0-5) at Merrimack (4-2)
 St. Francis (Pa.) (3-2) at LIU Brooklyn (0-5)

Monmouth (NJ) (4-2) at Maine (1-4)
 Elon (5-1) at Rhode Island (3-2)
 New Hampshire (4-2) at Dartmouth (1-3)
 Hampton (3-2) at Albany (NY) (1-4)
 NC State (5-1) at Syracuse (5-0)
 Harvard (3-1) at Howard (1-4)
 Charleston Southern (0-5) at Bryant (2-4)
 Stony Brook (0-5) at Fordham (5-1)

SOUTH

Old Dominion (2-3) at Coastal Carolina (6-0)
 Auburn (3-3) at Mississippi (6-0)
 Miami (2-3) at Virginia Tech (2-4)
 Cent. Arkansas (2-4) at Kennesaw St. (2-3)

Morehead St. (2-3) at Davidson (4-2)
 Robert Morris (0-5) at Campbell (3-2)
 Edward Waters (0-0) at NC A&T (2-3)
 The Citadel (1-4) at Wofford (0-6)
 Va. Lynchburg (0-4) at SC State (1-4)
 VMI (1-4) at Chattanooga (4-1)

Delaware St. (3-2) at Norfolk St. (1-5)
 W. Carolina (3-3) at Furman (4-2)
 Florida A&M (4-2) at Grambling St. (1-5)
 MVSU (0-6) at Alabama St. (3-3)
 Alabama (6-0) at Tennessee (5-0)
 Gardner-Webb (2-4) at Liberty (5-1)
 Texas State (3-3) at Troy (4-2)

Vanderbilt (3-3) at Georgia (6-0)
 Charlotte (1-5) at UAB (3-2)
 Villanova (3-2) at Richmond (3-2)
 W. Kentucky (3-3) at Middle Tennessee (3-3)

ETSU (3-3) at Mercer (5-1)
 Incarnate Word (5-1) at Nicholls (1-5)
 Jackson St. (5-0) at Bethune-Cookman (1-4)

James Madison (5-0) at Georgia Southern (3-3)
 Murray St. (0-6) at Austin Peay (4-2)
 Tulane (5-1) at South Florida (1-5)
 Sam Houston St. (2-2) at E. Kentucky (3-2)

Rice (3-2) at FAU (2-4)
 Alcorn St. (3-2) at Southern U. (3-2)
 LSU (4-2) at Florida (4-2)
 North Alabama (1-4) vs. Jacksonville St. (5-1) at Madison, Ala.

Tennessee St. (1-4) at Tennessee Tech (1-4)
 Louisiana-Monroe (2-4) at South Alabama (4-1)

Arkansas St. (2-4) at Southern Miss. (2-3)
 Clemson (6-0) at Florida St. (4-2)
 Mississippi St. (5-1) at Kentucky (4-2)
 Memphis (4-2) at East Carolina (3-3)
 Texas A&M Commerce (3-2) at McNeese St. (1-4)

North Carolina (5-1) at Duke (4-2)

MIDWEST

Miami (Ohio) (3-3) at Bowling Green (2-4)
 Minnesota (4-1) at Illinois (5-1)
 Penn St. (5-0) at Michigan (6-0)
 Cent. Michigan (1-5) at Akron (1-5)
 Uconn (3-4) at Ball St. (3-3)
 Butler (3-2) at Valparaiso (3-2)

Indiana St. (1-4) at Youngstown St. (2-3)
 Drake (0-6) at St. Thomas (Minn.) (4-1)
 South Dakota (1-4) at Illinois St. (3-2)
 Lindenwood (Mo.) (3-2) at E. Illinois (2-3)
 W. Illinois (0-5) at S. Illinois (4-2)

Maryland (4-2) at Indiana (3-3)
 N. Illinois (1-5) at E. Michigan (4-2)
 Kent St. (2-4) at Toledo (4-2)
 S. Dakota St. (5-1) at N. Dakota St. (5-1)
 Ohio (3-3) at W. Michigan (2-4)
 Wisconsin (3-3) at Michigan St. (2-4)
 Utah Tech (1-4) at N. Iowa (2-4)
 Stanford (1-4) at Notre Dame (3-2)
 Nebraska (3-3) at Purdue (4-2)

Kansas (5-1) at Oklahoma (3-3)
 Iowa St. (3-3) at Texas (4-2)
 Oklahoma St. (5-0) at TCU (5-0)
 Louisiana Tech (2-3) at North Texas (3-3)
 S. Utah (3-3) at Abilene Christian (4-2), 4:25 p.m.

Northwestern St. (2-4) at Houston Baptist (2-3)
 Tarleton St. (4-1) at Stephen F. Austin (3-3)

FAR WEST

California (3-2) at Colorado (0-5)
 Montana St. (5-1) at N. Colorado (2-4)
 Cal Poly (1-4) at Idaho St. (0-6)
 Idaho (3-2) at Montana (5-0)
 Arkansas (3-3) at BYU (4-2)

Weber St. (5-0) at Portland St. (2-3)
 Presbyterian (1-5) at San Diego (2-3)
 Arizona (3-3) at Washington (4-2)
 Utah St. (2-4) at Colorado St. (1-4)
 N. Arizona (2-4) at UC Davis (1-4)
 Sacramento St. (5-0) at E. Washington (1-4)

Southern Cal (6-0) at Utah (4-2)
 New Mexico (2-4) at New Mexico St. (1-5)
 Washington St. (4-2) at Oregon St. (4-2)
 Air Force (4-2) at UNLV (4-2)
 San Jose St. (4-1) at Fresno St. (1-4)

Sunday's games

Ark.-Pine Bluff (2-4) vs. Alabama A&M (2-4) at St. Louis

FAR WEST

Nevada (2-4) at Hawaii (1-5)

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	4	1	0	.800	152	61
Miami	3	2	0	.600	115	131
N.Y. Jets	3	2	0	.600	116	118
New England	2	3	0	.400	103	98

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	3	2	0	.600	96	118
Indianapolis	2	2	1	.500	69	94
Jacksonville	2	3	0	.400	111	80
Houston	1	3	1	.300	86	99

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	3	2	0	.600	138	117
Cincinnati	2	3	0	.400	108	89
Cleveland	2	3	0	.400	133	125
Pittsburgh	1	4	0	.200	77	128

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	4	1	0	.800	159	125
L.A. Chargers	3	2	0	.600	122	136
Denver	2	3	0	.400	75	80
Las Vegas	1	4	0	.200	125	130

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	5	0	0	1.000	135	88
Dallas	4	1	0	.800	93	72
N.Y. Giants	4	1	0	.800	103	93
Washington	1	4	0	.200	90	128

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	3	2	0	.600	103	83
Atlanta	2	3	0	.400	118	122
New Orleans	2	3	0	.400	115	128
Carolina	1	4	0	.200	93	122

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Minnesota	4	1	0	.800	115	102
Green Bay	3	2	0	.600	97	96
Chicago	2	3	0	.400	86	106
Detroit	1	4	0	.200	140	170

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	3	2	0	.600	108	61
Arizona	2	3	0	.400	105	123
L.A. Rams	2	3	0	.400	80	116
Seattle	2	3	0	.400	127	154

Thursday's game

Washington at Chicago

Sunday's games

Baltimore at N.Y. Giants
 Cincinnati at New Orleans
 Jacksonville at Indianapolis
 Minnesota at Miami
 N.Y. Jets at Green Bay
 New England at Cleveland
 San Francisco at Atlanta
 Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh
 Arizona at Seattle
 Carolina at L.A. Rams
 Buffalo at Kansas City
 Dallas at Philadelphia
Open: Houston, Las Vegas, Tennessee, Detroit

Monday's game

Denver at L.A. Chargers

Thursday, Oct. 20

New Orleans at Arizona

Sunday, Oct. 23

Atlanta at Cincinnati
 Cleveland at Baltimore
 Detroit at Dallas
 Green Bay at Washington
 Indianapolis at Tennessee
 N.Y. Giants at Jacksonville
 Tampa Bay at Carolina

PRO SOCCER

MLS playoffs

First Round Saturday

Cincinnati at New York Red Bulls
 Nashville at LA Galaxy

Sunday

Real Salt Lake at Austin
 Orlando at Montreal

Monday

Miami at New York City
 Minnesota at Dallas

NWSL playoffs

First Round Sunday

Kansas City at Houston
 Chicago at San Diego

Houston at Las Vegas
 N.Y. Jets at Denver
 Kansas City at San Francisco
 Seattle at L.A. Chargers
 Pittsburgh at Miami
Open: Buffalo, L.A. Rams, Minnesota, Philadelphia

Monday, Oct. 24

Chicago at New England

NFL injury report

NEW YORK — The National Football League injury report, as provided by the league (OUT: Player will not play; DOUBTFUL: Player is unlikely to play; QUESTIONABLE: Player is not certain to play; DNP: did not practice; LIMITED: limited participation; FULL: Full participation):

Sunday

ARIZONA CARDINALS at SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — ARIZONA: DNP: RB James Conner (ribs), C Rodney Hudson (knee), CB Trayvon Mullen (hamstring), K Matt Prater (right hip), RB Darrel Williams (knee). LIMITED: G Max Garcia (toe), LB Dennis Gardeck (ankle), C Sean Harlow (ankle), T D.J. Humphries (hamstring), DT Rashard Lawrence (hand), G Justin Pugh (elbow). SEATTLE: DNP: WR Dee Eskridge (illness), WR Penny Hart (hamstring), G Gabe Jackson (knee/hip), RB Rashaad Penny (ankle), WR Dereke Young (quadriple), DE Shelby Harris (hip), NT Al Woods (knee). FULL: WR Marquise Goodwin (knee/back), RB Kenneth Walker III (shoulder), CB Justin Coleman (calf).

BALTIMORE RAVENS at NEW YORK GIANTS — BALTIMORE: DNP: WR rashod Bateman (foot), DE Calais Campbell (NIR-resting player), G Ben Cleveland (foot), RB Justice Hill (hamstring), OLB Justin Houston (groin), CB Marcus Peters (NIR-resting player), T Ronnie Stanley (NIR-resting player/ankle). NEW YORK GIANTS: DNP: DB Cor'Dale Flott (calf), P Jamie Gillan (NIR-personal), WR Kenny Golladay (knee), DB Tony Jefferson (foot), DB Jason Pinnock (ankle), WR Kadarius Toney (hamstring). LIMITED: RB Saquon Barkley (shoulder), DB Darnay Holmes (quadriple), DB Adoree Jackson (knee/neck), FB Chris Myarick (ankle), DE Azeez Ojulari (calf), WR Wan'Dale Robinson (knee), QB Tyrod Taylor (concussio), DL Leonard Williams (knee).

BUFFALO BILLS at KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — BUFFALO: DNP: RB Taiwan Jones (knee), WR Jake Kumerow (ankle), G Rodger Saffold (NIR-resting player). LIMITED: CB Christian Benford (hand), LB Tremaine Edmunds (hamstring), CB Kaiir Elam (foot), DT DaQuan Jones (hip), TE Dawson Knox (foot, hamstring), LB Von Miller (NIR-resting player), C Mitch Morse (elbow), DE Jordan Phillips (hamstring), S Jordan Poyer (ribs). FULL: CB Cameron Lewis (forearm), WR Isaiah McKenzie (concussion), DT Ed Oliver (ankle). KANSAS CITY: DNP: S Bryan Cook (concussion), CB Rashad Fenton (hamstring), CB Chris Lammons (hip), DT Tershawn Wharton (knee). LIMITED: K Harrison Butker (left ankle), DE Frank Clark (illness), DE Mike Danna (calf). FULL: TE Travis Kelce (hip/back), LB Nick Bolton (quad), WR Mecole Hardman (heel), WR Skyy Moore (ankle), G Trey Smith (pectoral), WR Juju Smith-Schuster (hamstring/quad).

CAROLINA PANTHERS at LOS ANGELES RAMS — CAROLINA: DNP: CB Jaycee Horn (ribs), QB Baker Mayfield (ankle), RB Christian McCaffrey (NIR-resting player), WR Laviska Shenault (hamstring), CB Stanley Thomas-Oliver (thigh). LIMITED: CB C.J. Henderson (knee), TE Stephen Sullivan (back), S Xavier Woods (hamstring). FULL: LB Frank Luvu (shoulder), WR D.J. Moore (shoulder). **LOS ANGELES RAMS:** DNP: C Brian Allen (knee), WR Cooper Kupp (foot), TE Tyler Higbee (ankle), DE Aaron Donald (foot), WR Brandon Powell (hip). LIMITED: DB David Long (groin), CB Cobie Durant (hamstring), S Taylor Rapp (ribs).

CINCINNATI BENGALS at NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — CINCINNATI: DNP: OT La'el Collins (NIR-resting player), WR Tee Higgins (ankle), OT Jonah Williams (knee). LIMITED: TE Devin Asiasi (ankle), TE Hayden Hurst (groin), HB Samaje Perine (abdomen). **NEW ORLEANS:** DNP: WR Deonte Hardy (foot), WR Jarvis Landry (ankle), CB Marshon Lattimore (abdomen), WR Chris Olave (concussion), WR Michael Thomas (foot), T Calvin Throckmorton (hip), DE Payton Turner (chest). LIMITED: CB Paulson Aedebo (knee), S J.T. Gray (foot), TE Taysom Hill (rib), S Marcus Maye (rib), T Ryan Ramczyk (NIR-resting player), DT Malcolm Roach (ankle), QB Jameis Winston (back/ankle).

DALLAS COWBOYS at PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — DALLAS: DNP: RB Rico Dowdle (an-

kle), LB Micah Parsons (groin), QB Dak Prescott (right thumb). LIMITED: DE Demarcus Lawrence (chest), T Jason Peters (chest), TE Dalton Schultz (knee). FULL: DT Quinton Bohanna (neck, shoulder), TE Jake Ferguson (knee), S Jayron Kearse (knee), CB Jourdan Lewis (groin), G Connor McGovern (ankle), S Donovan Wilson (ankle). **PHILADELPHIA:** DNP: CB Josh Jobe (shoulder). LIMITED: G Landon Dickerson (ankle), K Jake Elliott (right ankle), RB Kenneth Gainwell (rib), LB Patrick Johnson (concussion), C Jason Kelce (ankle), CB Avonte Maddox (ankle), T Jordan Mailata (shoulder), G Isaac Seumalo (ankle).

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS at INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — JACKSONVILLE: LIMITED: DT Folorunso Fatukasi (quadriple), DT Davon Hamilton (foot), WR Zay Jones (ankle), LB Foyesade Oluokun (calf). **INDIANAPOLIS:** DNP: CB Tony Brown (concussion), CB Stephon Gilmore (NIR-resting player), DT Eric Johnson (illness), C Ryan Kelly (hip), LB Shaquille Leonard (concussion, nose, back), DE Yannick Ngakoué (NIR-resting player), DE Kwity Paye (ankle), RB Jonathan Taylor (ankle). LIMITED: S Julian Blackmon (ankle), RB Nyheim Hines (concussion), DE Tyquan Lewis (concussion). FULL: G Quenton Nelson (ankle, shoulder). **MINNESOTA VIKINGS at MIAMI DOLPHINS** — MINNESOTA: LIMITED: CB Akayleb Evans (concussion), RB Alexander Mattison (shoulder), OLB Za'Darius Smith (ankle). FULL: WR Jalen Nailor (hamstring). **MIAMI:** DNP: T Terron Armstead (toe), QB Teddy Bridgewater (concussion, right pectoral), LB Melvin Ingram (NIR-resting player), RB Raheem Mostert (knee), TE Durham Smythe (hamstring). LIMITED: S Elijah Campbell (foot), S Calyton Fejedelem (ankle/knee), CB Xavien Howard (groins), G Robert Jones (back), CB Kader Kohou (oblique), DE Emmanuel Ogbah (NIR-resting player), DE Zach Sieler (hand), QB Tua Tagovailoa (concussion/ankle). FULL: TE Tanner Conner (knee), WR Tyreek Hill (quadriple/foot), S Brandon Jones (chest), T Greg Little (hip), WR Jayle Waddle (groin).

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS at CLEVELAND BROWNS — NEW ENGLAND: LIMITED: WR Nelson Agholor (hamstring), C David Andrews (back), DL Lawrence Guy (shoulder), RB Damien Harris (hamstring), CB Jonathan Jones (ankle), QB Mac Jones (ankle), LB Raekwon McMillan (thumb), WR Jakobi Meyers (knee), CB Jalen Mills (hamstring), DL DaMarcus Mitchell (concussion), TE Jonnu Smith (ankle). **CLEVELAND:** DNP: G Joel Bitonio (elbow), DE Jadeveon Clowney (ankle, knee, elbow), WR Amari Cooper (NIR-resting player), S Ronnie Harrison (illness), CB Denzel Ward (concussion). LIMITED: DT Taven Bryan (hamstring), DE Myles Garrett (shoulder, biceps, hand), DT Perrion Winfrey (ankle). FULL: RB Demetric Felton (wrist).

NEW YORK JETS at GREEN BAY PACKERS — NEW YORK JETS: DNP: DE Jermaine Johnson (ankle). LIMITED: T Duane Brown (shoulder), DE Carl Lawson (ankle), LB C.J. Mosley (hip), LB Quincy Williams (ankle). **GREEN BAY:** DNP: LB Tita Galeai (hamstring), QB Aaron Rodgers (right thumb), WR Christian Watson (hamstring). LIMITED: T David Bakhtiari (knee), G/T Elgton Jenkins (knee), DL Devonte Wyatt (quadriple). **SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS at ATLANTA FALCONS** — SAN FRANCISCO: DNP: DT Arik Armstead (foot, ankle), DE Nick Bosa (groin), DE Samson Ebukam (Achilles), K Robbie Gould (left knee), DT Javon Kinlaw (knee), CB Emmanuel Moseley (knee), S Jimmie Ward (hand), T Trent Williams (ankle). LIMITED: G Aaron Banks (knee), WR Danny Gray (illness), TE Tyler Kroft (knee), S Tarvarius Moore (hamstring). FULL: RB Tyrion Davis-Price (ankle), CB Deommodore Lenoir (wrist), RB Jeffery Wilson (shoulder). **ATLANTA:** DNP: LB Mykal Walker (groin), G Elijah Wilkinson (knee). LIMITED: LB Adetokunbo Ogundej (shoulder), TE Kyle Pitts (hamstring).

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS at PITTSBURGH STEELERS — TAMPA BAY: DNP: WR Jaelon Darden (tooth), WR Russell Gage (ankle), DT Akiem Hicks (foot), WR Julio Jones (knee), CB Sean Murphy-Bunting (quadriple), LB Carl Nassib (illness), S Logan Ryan (foot). LIMITED: S Mike Edwards (elbow), WR Chris Godwin (hip, knee), T Donovan Smith (elbow). FULL: TE Cameron Brate (concussion), CB Carlton Davis (hip), WR Breshad Perriman (knee, hamstring). **PITTSBURGH:** DNP: CB Cameron Sutton (hamstring), CB Ahkello Witherspoon (hamstring), CB Levi Wallace (concussion), S Minkah Fitzpatrick (knee), DT Montravius Adams (hip), OL Mason Cole (foot), TE Zach Gentry (knee), TE Pat Freiermuth (concussion), DT Larry Ogunjobi (back). LIMITED: WR Diontae Johnson (hip). FULL: S Terrell Edmunds (concussion).

TENNIS

Jule Niemeier, Germany, def. Kamilla Rakhimova, Russia, 6-4, 6-4.

San Diego Open

Wednesday
 At Barnes Tennis Center
 San Diego
 Purse: \$757,900
 Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
 Women's Singles
 Round of 16

Donna Vekic, Croatia, def. Karolina Pliskova, Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-2.
 Danielle Collins, United States, def. Martina Trevisan, Italy, 6-2, 6-4.
 Jessica Pegula (4), United States, def. CoCo Vandeweghe, United States, 6-3, 6-1.

DEALS

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL

American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Claimed OF Jake Cave off waivers from Minnesota. Designated RHP Jake Reed for assignment.

BOSTON RED SOX — Claimed CF Abraham Almonte off waivers from Minnesota. Designated CB Abraham Almonte for assignment.

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association

BOSTON CELTICS — Waived C Reginald Kissooonlal and G Brodrick Thomas.

NHL

Avs raise banner, beat Blackhawks

BY PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

DENVER — Mikko Rantanen and his teammates logged a lot of extra ice time in the opener.

Well worth it, of course, to take part in the emotion-stirring, banner-raising ceremony before the game that lasted 20 or so minutes.

Artturi Lehkonen and Valeri Nichushkin each scored two power-play goals, Rantanen had four assists and the fast-skating Colorado Avalanche began their Stanley Cup title defense with a 5-2 victory over the Chicago Blackhawks on Wednesday night.

Shortly after raising their newest banner to the rafters, the Avalanche went to work. Andrew Cogliano scored Colorado's first goal of the season, the only goal in the game that wasn't on the power play. Nathan MacKinnon, fresh off a new lucrative contract, contributed two assists, while new goaltender Alexandar Georgiev stopped 15 shots.

"Our championship team is in the rafters forever," said Rantanen, who turned in the 12th four-point night of his career. "You don't think about it too much (now), but I think we will appreciate it later."

Jonathan Toews and Max Domi had goals as Luke Richardson made his coaching debut for the Blackhawks. Petr Mrazek finished with 30 saves against an Avalanche team that won the title last season by dethroning Tampa Bay in six games.

"Obviously it's special to see that banner go up there, to contribute to history," Toews said. "But I think once the puck drops the attitude is it's behind you and nobody really cares. You got to go out there and try to win the game."

The crowd was revved up well before the puck even dropped.

The appetizer: A highlight video of Colorado's run to the franchise's third Stanley Cup title. Then, some music as Mark Hoppus of the band Blink-182 led a sing-along of the band's tune "All The Small Things," which became an anthem for the Avalanche.

There also was captain Gabriel Landeskog hoisting the Cup and skating around with the trophy (he missed the game with a lower-body injury). Of course, there were plenty of on-ice pictures, including a memorable shot of the team with Blackhawks defenseman Jack Johnson joining in. Johnson was with Colorado last season.

Finally, the feature attraction — the banner raised to the rafters. As it climbed higher and higher, the cheers got louder and louder.

"I got pretty emotional actually when they're doing the video beforehand," said Johnson, who was wearing his championship ring in

his postgame interview. "Some day I can bring my grandkids or my kids, if they don't believe that dad played, and show them."

Once the pregame celebration concluded, Colorado's title defense got underway.

The Avalanche took a little bit of time to find their rhythm, but once they did they were flying around the ice. They scored four power-play goals, including two by Lehkonen in the second period, for a 4-1 lead.

"Pretty emotional, but I thought we came out really well," Lehkonen said.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	1	1	0	0	2	5	2
Montreal	1	1	0	0	2	4	3
Tampa Bay	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
Florida	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Detroit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buffalo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ottawa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toronto	1	0	1	0	0	3	4

Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	1	1	0	0	2	4	1
N.Y. Rangers	1	1	0	0	2	3	1
N.Y. Islanders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pittsburgh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Philadelphia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbus	1	0	1	0	0	1	4
Washington	1	0	1	0	0	2	5

Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	2	2	0	0	4	7	3
Colorado	1	1	0	0	2	5	2
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dallas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Winnipeg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chicago	1	0	1	0	0	2	5

Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Edmonton	1	1	0	0	2	9	6
Vegas	1	1	0	0	2	4	3
Anaheim	1	1	0	0	2	5	4
Seattle	1	0	0	1	1	4	5
Calgary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Los Angeles	1	0	1	0	0	3	4
Vancouver	1	0	1	0	0	6	9
San Jose	2	0	2	0	0	3	7

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's games
N.Y. Rangers 3, Tampa Bay 1
Vegas 4, Los Angeles 3

Wednesday's games
Boston 5, Washington 2
Carolina 4, Columbus 1
Montreal 4, Toronto 3
Colorado 5, Chicago 2
Anaheim 5, Seattle 4, OT
Edmonton 5, Vancouver 3

Thursday's games
Arizona at Pittsburgh
New Jersey at Philadelphia
Ottawa at Buffalo
Florida at N.Y. Islanders
Washington at Toronto
N.Y. Rangers at Minnesota
Dallas at Nashville
Colorado at Calgary
Chicago at Vegas
Seattle at Los Angeles

Friday's games
Montreal at Detroit
Tampa Bay at Columbus
N.Y. Rangers at Winnipeg
Carolina at San Jose



JOSE JUAREZ/AP

Detroit Red Wings coach Derek Lalonde looks at the scoreboard during a preseason game against the Blackhawks. The Red Wings haven't made the playoffs in six years.

East 'have nots' hoping to start challenging elite

BY JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

Sidney Crosby and Alex Ovechkin aren't getting any younger, and New Jersey Devils general manager Tom Fitzgerald isn't shy about hoping that age finally catches up to the NHL Eastern Conference's elite players.

At the same time, Fitzgerald can appreciate it takes more than hope and age to level the ice for teams such as his in a conference separated by the so-called haves and have-nots in recent years.

"You'd like to think as we continue to ascend, Father Time has to help, and that the top teams that have been the top teams for a while start declining because it's only natural," Fitzgerald said.

"But you can't control that. You need your players to continue to grow and get better and develop each year," he added. "At the end of the day, all the teams you mentioned are only going to ascend when their own players take that big step."

When that might happen is uncertain, especially in the the NHL East, which has been dominated by many of the same six teams since the league juggled its conferences in 2013-14, when Detroit and Columbus were moved over from the West.

In that time, the Penguins, Capitals, Rangers, Lightning, Bruins and Maple Leafs have filled 39 of the conference's 68 playoff spots, not including the 2021 season, when teams were limited to playing within their divisions because of COVID-19. The only East team with more than four playoff appearances in that span is Columbus with five.

That leaves the have-nots, made up of New Jersey (one playoff appearance in 10 seasons), Ottawa (two in nine years), Detroit (six-year playoff drought) and Buffalo (NHL-record 11-season playoff drought).

Detroit GM Steve Yzerman made a series of offseason moves to spur his team's growth, but he is realistic in assessing the reality of how far teams have to go to challenge for one of eight playoff spots. "Toronto, Tampa, Florida: There's the three teams in our division we expect to make the playoffs," Yzerman said of the Atlantic Division's pecking order. "Pick whichever three in the (Metropolitan Division). The rest of us are competing for two wild-card spots. It's a real challenge. I'm hoping we're there. But time will tell."

Last season, the East race was essentially decided on Jan. 2, nearly four months before the season ended. That's when the ninth-place Bruins defeated Detroit 5-1 to vault a point ahead of the Red Wings. The top eight teams never changed from that day forward.

What's more, 16 points separated eighth-place Washington and the ninth-place Islanders in the final standings. It marked the largest differential in points between eighth- and ninth-place teams since the NHL switched to the current conference format in 1993-94.

"I think last year was weird. It was unique. We haven't seen that in a long time. And I just think it was probably one of those things," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said, noting it was just the third time 10 or more points separated the final team in and the

first team out since 1993-94.

The standings in the West, comparatively, have been more fluid in part because of the recent additions of expansion teams Vegas and Seattle.

St. Louis, Minnesota and Nashville — all Central Division rivals — have qualified for the playoffs seven times apiece since 2013-14 (not including 2020-21). The remaining teams — except for Vancouver (twice) and Arizona (once), and not counting Seattle — have made the playoffs at least three times in that span, including six teams with five appearances each.

It's no coincidence that East teams were the most active on the trade and free agency fronts this offseason, Senators GM Pierre Dorion said.

Ottawa added veteran depth to their young core by signing Claude Giroux and acquiring Alex DeBrincat in a trade with Chicago. Yzerman added forwards Andrew Copp and David Perron and defenseman Ben Chiarot to a team that includes youngsters Moritz Seider and Lucas Raymond. Columbus made one of the biggest splashes in free agency by signing Johnny Gaudreau.

Penguins president Brian Burke is well aware of the competition catching up, but he's also proud overseeing a Penguins team that leads the NHL with 16 consecutive playoff appearances.

"There's nothing I can say that won't inflame somebody. But we intend to stay in the top eight," Burke said. "And I'll tell you this: a lot of teams have made significant steps. The neighborhood is getting very crowded for sure."

NHL

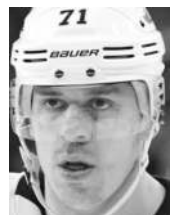
Pens still relying on record-sharing core

Crosby, Malkin, Letang have been on ice together since October 2006

By WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH—The scene was mundane only in its familiarity.

Sidney Crosby working just off to the side of the net. Kris Letang circling the point. Evgeni Malkin coiled in the right circle. The whistle from a member of the Pittsburgh Penguins coaching staff the only thing breaking the silence.



Malkin



Letang

Ignore the rest of the players on the ice — some of whom were in elementary school the first time the core that's defined one of the NHL's marquee franchises for the better part of two decades took the ice together — and it could have been 2009. Or 2013. Or 2017. Or really, pretty much at any other point since Oct. 16, 2006, when Malkin, Crosby and Letang lost to Martin Brodeur and the New Jersey Devils 2-1 in an arena that long ago became a parking lot.

They were kids then. Letang and Crosby, just 19. Malkin, all of 20. They didn't know what they were getting into. The bond they created has withstood various coaches, general managers, health scares as well as the fiscal realities of the salary cap era.

When the Penguins opened the season Thursday night against Ari-

DID YOU KNOW?

Sidney Crosby, Kris Letang and Evgeni Malkin are beginning their 17th year together, tying the run of New York Yankees stars Derek Jeter, Jorge Posada and Mariano Rivera as the longest-tenured trio of teammates in major North American pro sports history.

SOURCE: Associated Press

zona, Crosby, Letang and Malkin began their 17th year together, tying the run of New York Yankees stars Derek Jeter, Jorge Posada and Mariano Rivera as the longest-tenured trio of teammates in major North American professional sports history.

It's rarified air, a milestone — for a few anxious days over the summer anyway — it appeared they wouldn't reach with Letang and Malkin potentially poised to hit free agency.

Malkin agreed to a four-year deal just hours before hitting the market, a signing created in part by Letang's decision to spread out his \$36 million contract over six years instead of four, freeing up enough cap space to make sure Malkin stuck around.

"It's something special," Letang said. "It's something we're going to have together our entire life and (now) we have a chance to make it even stronger and try to win."

Something that hasn't been an issue for the Penguins since Crosby's No. 87, Malkin's No. 71 and Letang's No. 58 became fixtures in the lineup. Pittsburgh hasn't missed the playoffs since 2006, the season before Malkin and Letang arrived to help Crosby resurrect the fortunes of a team coming off a volatile peri-



KEITH SRAKOCIC/AP

In his 16-year career, Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby has never averaged less than a point a game.

od that included bankruptcy and the threat of relocation.

Three times Crosby, Letang and Malkin have paraded through the downtown streets of their adopted hometown with the Stanley Cup. Yet it's been five years since that giddy night in Nashville when the Penguins became the first team in a generation to claim back-to-back titles.

It's a fact not lost on any of them, one of the main reasons they don't view the decision to stick together as a money grab. This isn't about nostalgia. Their legacy was secure long before Malkin and Letang signed their new deals that could keep the core intact through at least 2025, when Crosby's current contract ends.

This is about making another

deep postseason run next spring. And the spring after that. And the spring after that.

"The main goal of having us all together is because we know we can win," Letang said. "We have the recipe and that's what we want to want to do again. And that's all that matters. It's not breaking records. It's about winning."

It's in the how where things get tricky. Malkin is 36 and coming off a wildly uneven season as he recovered from major knee surgery. Crosby and Letang are both 35 and while they remain in remarkable condition — Letang's ice time last season was 25:47, the third-highest of his career — their bodies don't bounce back quite like they used to. And they know it.

Crosby smiled while pointing out

that 10 years ago, he typically would have stayed on the ice for an extended period after practice rather than try to conserve his energy before the six-month slog that is the regular season begins.

"You've still got to continue to improve and work on your game," said Crosby, whose 1,108 regular-season games are a franchise record. "And you can't cut corners there, either. So it's just a matter of balancing that."

Letang tries to rein himself in on his days off, but says once he hops over the boards it's like "a switch."

"You're playing the game," he said. "You're going as fast as you can. You don't want to start managing yourself. That's where you get hurt or that's where, you know, your play starts to go down."

Broad Street Bully? Tortorella insists he's tamer

By DAN GELSTON
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — John Tortorella coaches the kind of Philadelphia Flyers team that can drive their fans to drink.

Maybe the players, too.

Feisty enough to try to fight his way into a visiting team's locker room, Tortorella is poised enough to send his team a mission statement not through a heated diatribe, but with a handwritten letter.

Tortorella also builds team chemistry the old-fashioned way — especially when that team is projected to be among the worst in the NHL — by urging his players to go out and have a good time. It's one reason why Tortorella hates traveling the night after a game to the next city. Tortorella wants to trade



MATT ROURKE/AP

New Philadelphia coach John Tortorella is 673-541-37-132 over almost 20 NHL seasons.

a silent bus ride or flight full of players with their heads buried in mobile devices for a team willing to spend a night out on the town out for a team meal, perhaps even a bit of carousing.

"Maybe have a few beers together," Tortorella said "Maybe even have a few too many beers. But come back the next day and play guilty. I think playing guilty is a big part of at least a pro sport I've coached in a long time. I think it's kind of a lost art. We don't get together as a group. It's a team sport. I think you should go out together and maybe even get into a little bit of innocent trouble. Not bad trouble, innocent trouble along the way. I think that's good for the camaraderie of the team."

The Flyers, who last won a Stanley Cup in 1975, will try about anything to raise the bar for a franchise that once bullied its way into the heart of the Philly sports scene and now sits in irrelevancy.

They turned to the 64-year-old Tortorella, hoping his demanding,

no-nonsense coaching style can lift the Flyers out of the NHL abyss and into, well, what exactly? The playoffs? Tortorella is sensible enough to soften expectations for a season that opened at home Thursday against New Jersey without a true star, a true bona fide prospect on the roster and without a solid reason for hope.

At least this season.

But as Tortorella scans the city landscape and sees the Phillies in the playoffs, the Eagles undefeated, the Union hailed as one of the top teams in MLS and the 76ers with championship aspirations — and all playing in front of rowdy, packed houses — their successes make him only more determined to add his team to the collection of winners.

Tortorella could have coasted

into retirement or continued to enjoy his broadcasting gig. His résumé was about as good as it gets in the NHL: a Stanley Cup winner with Tampa Bay in 2004; a conference final in 2012 with the Rangers; the master motivator who lifted the Columbus Blue Jackets from perennial losers before he was hired into four straight seasons in the playoffs.

Tortorella, 673-541-37-132 over almost 20 seasons, has changed, such as opening the locker room to cameras for a training camp docu-series called "The Standard." The Boston native has had to keep up with the times as players evolved and old-school methodologies — he backtracked on his stance on athletes who protest during the national anthem — have been weeded out of the league.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Bielema boost: Illini ahead of schedule

BY GAVIN GOOD
Associated Press

Bret Bielema suddenly has No. 24 Illinois looking like a Big Ten West contender in his second year since replacing Lovie Smith as the Illini's coach.

They're ranked for the first time since 2011. They beat Iowa and Wisconsin in the same season for the first time since 1989, and are rolling behind a stingy defense and productive offense.

Bielema is no stranger to success in the Big Ten. He led Wisconsin to three consecutive conference titles and Rose Bowls before departing for seemingly greener pastures at Arkansas in the Southeastern Conference.

The 52-year-old Bielema has changed since his days as a hotshot coaching prospect in Madison. He is perhaps wiser after spending five years and going 29-34 with the Razorbacks before being fired in 2017.

"I think I draw on all the time from my experiences," he said earlier this week.

Champaign could be seeing the best version of Bielema. Early results indicate he may be taking the Illini (5-1, 2-1 Big Ten) from Big Ten afterthought to a formidable contender in the wide open West Division.

"I think our guys are extremely hungry," Bielema said. "They're fun to be around. I don't know if I've enjoyed coaching either before the game, during the game or after the game as much as I have (with) this group."

He and up-and-coming defensive coordi-

Minnesota (4-1, 1-1 Big Ten)
at No. 24 Illinois (5-1, 2-1)
AFN-Atlantic
6 p.m. Saturday CET
1 a.m. Sunday JKT

nator Ryan Walters wasted no time turning an occasional leaky defense under Smith into a unit that allows an FBS-best 3.72 yards per play and the fewest points per game (8).

A once listless offense has turned into a productive unit behind FBS-leading rusher Chase Brown (879 yards) and transfer quarterback Tommy DeVito.

When healthy, DeVito is a quality decision-maker in addition to having a talented and accurate arm. An ankle injury he sustained in the 9-6 win over Iowa last week could limit this team, but the running game may well continue to dominate after Brown put up 146 yards against a rock-solid Iowa front.

"Sometimes you've got to win things in ways that you don't plan," Bielema said.

Already, the Illini are a win away from bowl eligibility. That feat is particularly impressive considering it took Smith four years to reach a bowl and that Illinois has only made six bowls this millennium.

Ron Zook got the Illini off to a 6-0 start in 2011, the program's last seven-win season, before stumbling out of the rankings with six-straight losses and getting fired before a win over UCLA in the Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl.

But this start feels sustainable.



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Illinois running back Chase Brown carries the ball against Iowa last Saturday. Brown is the leading rusher in FBS with 879 yards.

"When that (No. 24 ranking) came through, I literally just sat there for a moment and kind of digested it and thought about it, thought it was a good thing," Bielema said. "I grew up and played for coach (Hayden) Fry (at Iowa). Coach Fry used to always say, 'Partner, if you've done it, you ain't bragging.'"

The program's upward mobility in the Big Ten West since Bielema's arrival — especially after Smith went 4-26 against the division — comes as programs like Wisconsin and Iowa idle or regress.

Whether Bielema can now turn on-field improvement into wins on the recruiting trail will also be pivotal.

"Winning affects everything," Bielema said. "It affects your program, it affects your

recruiting, it affects your retainment of your own roster."

Smith did not leave the cupboard bare, but much of the remaining talent is in its final year of eligibility or may depart to the NFL this spring.

"That's why I want to ride this wave as long and as high as we possibly can, because it will definitely help us in the future."

He credits his players, most of them Smith recruits who could have darted after either of the last two seasons. Offensive lineman Alex Palczewski and safety Kendall Smith, both sixth-year players, are contributors who bought into his vision instead of leaving.

"Like a year ago, I was worried guys might bail," Bielema said. "They had trust and faith in us."

TCU's Duggan excelling after losing starting job

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Max Duggan has certainly surprised new TCU coach Sonny Dykes, who has even gotten emotional talking about the fourth-year quarterback who went from losing his job to being one of the nation's most efficient passers.

The coach's feelings aren't really about the impressive numbers Duggan is now putting up for the undefeated 13th-ranked Horned Frogs. They are for how he responded — or, more accurately, didn't respond — after the new coaching staff went into this season with a different starter than the guy who had been QB1 for TCU most of the past three seasons.

"Yes, he has surprised me, and not as a player, but I just think the entirety of kind of his experience," Dykes said this week. "There's all this stuff that typically happens when a guy loses a job, and especially someone who's played as much football as Max. Well, none of that happened."

While Duggan was disappointed in himself when he didn't win the starting job through spring and preseason practice — redshirt freshman Chandler Morris started the opener before getting hurt — he was unlike so many other Power Five quarterbacks in that position. Duggan didn't jump into the transfer portal.

"Everybody wants to play, everybody wants to be the guy. But, you know, I got



RON JENKINS/AP

TCU quarterback Max Duggan lost his starting job in the preseason but took over when Chandler Morris got hurt in the opener. Duggan has led the Horned Frogs a 5-0 record and No. 13 ranking.

over it," said Duggan, who is on track to graduate from TCU's business school in December. "I didn't feel sorry for myself, I didn't pout. I knew that wasn't going to help the team, so I didn't really worry too much about it."

With the Frogs (5-0, 2-0 Big 12) preparing to host eighth-ranked Oklahoma State (5-0, 2-0) in a matchup Saturday of the league's only undefeated teams, Duggan has completed 93 of 127 passes (career-best 73%)

for 1,305 yards with a league-best 14 touchdowns and one interception. His 194.35 passing efficiency rating is second only to Ohio State's C.J. Stroud, an early Heisman Trophy favorite.

"I would say he's throwing the ball way better. His intermediate, his quick game and his deep ball has gotten more accurate," third-year Oklahoma State cornerback Jabbar Muhammad said.

Duggan trails only Cowboys senior Spencer Sanders in the Big 12 for total yards per game (327 to 301.8) and passing yards (278.8 to 261). Those numbers include Duggan's 68 total yards when he took over after Morris sprained his left knee late in the third quarter of the opener at Colorado. In his four starts, the TCU senior has averaged 360 total yards and 319.5 yards passing with all 17 of his TDs (14 passing, three rushing).

"Everybody feeds off his energy," senior receiver Taye Barber said.

While staying focused in the moment, a level-headed Duggan isn't ready yet to reflect on how his senior season has gone, or a career with 33 starts so far. The Iowa Gatorade player of the year and a four-star recruit before joining the Frogs, he became their starter the final 10 games as a true freshman in 2019.

"I just want to win. ... I want to see the guys have a good time, make sure we finish the season on top," he said.

Dykes said Duggan just keeps getting

better in practice and games, continually making throws the coach has never seen him make in the system that encourages smart and aggressive plays.

Still, that isn't what Dykes was talking about when he got emotional after the Frogs wrapped up non-conference play with a win at SMU, the team he coached the past four years. He expressed being as proud of Duggan as any player he has ever had.

"He loses his job, which is really hard. He's getting ready to be a senior, it's his last year. Then he never blinks. He never had a bad practice, he never pouted, he never thought of himself one time," Dykes said. "How many people can you say that about, that you know in your life? I mean truly, how many people can say that about? And you can say it about Max Duggan, that's for sure. ... I'm incredibly indebted, incredibly proud."

Dykes went to explain his reaction as being because Duggan acted "the way you would want your son to handle that situation."

TCU basketball coach Jamie Dixon, preparing his own team for what is expected to be a pretty good season, has also been impressed.

"I think the quarterback's story is just unbelievable," Dixon said. "Guys transfer when they're second string, and this guy stayed. And to play this well, it's a great story of Max."

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Penn State QB Clifford ready for Michigan

By TRAVIS JOHNSON
Associated Press

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Sean Clifford spent last week getting a head start for what he expects will be his biggest test of the season.

The extra week of practice and film study aside, Penn State's sixth-year quarterback has something else going for him as the No. 10 Nittany Lions prepare to visit No. 5 Michigan Saturday for a Big Ten East showdown.

He's healthy and feeling spry, fresh off a bye weekend spent with friends and family at a pumpkin patch.

"It is nice to be able to have that time off," Clifford said.

He expects a rude welcome in The Big House, where the Wolverines haven't lost



Clifford

since Clifford and Penn State beat them in the finale of the 2020 season. The Wolverines currently have the country's fifth-best scoring defense and are fueled by their pass rush. They've got 14 sacks and 21 tackles for loss over their last three games and 18 total quarterback hurries.

"They look every part of one of the top defensive lines in the country," Clifford said.

Penn State's offensive linemen, who have kept Clifford's uniform clean most of the season, are determined to do so again. They know it could be the difference moving forward.

"Cliff has played in plenty of these big games," guard Sal Wormley said. "He knows how to handle certain situations. It just overall builds up the confidence of the team when you know you've got somebody back there who's gonna be prepared, who's not gonna let the lights outshine him."

Last year, Clifford was dealing with multiple ailments during the bye week, recovering from a hard shot to the ribs that knocked him out of the team's Oct. 9 loss at Iowa. The Nittany Lions never recovered, losing five of their next seven.

Clifford didn't spend time during his break dwelling on his worst outing of the season, either.

He was just 10-for-20 in the rain in Penn State's 17-7 win over Northwestern, tossed a

bad interception and nearly had two other passes picked off. Meanwhile, each of the team's top three running backs fumbled and speedy wideout KeAndre Lambert-Smith was hurt — he's expected to be back for this weekend.

Clifford has excelled at directing traffic and coaching up his younger teammates, notably freshmen backs Nick Singleton and Kaytron Allen who both spent time on the bench after miscues against the Wildcats.

"His entire career and his entire season kind of keeps building up to moments like this and opportunities like this," Penn State coach James Franklin said of Clifford. "To win on the road against this type of opponent, we're going to have to play well and that also includes our quarterback."



GEORGE WALKER IV, THE TENNESSEAN/AP

Mississippi wide receiver Jonathan Mingo races toward the end zone on a 71-yard touchdown reception during last week's game against Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tenn. Mingo finished with 247 receiving yards.

Mississippi's Mingo has record performance year after injury

By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

Elijah Moore was rooting for Jonathan Mingo to break his record.

The former All-American at Mississippi and current New York Jets wide receiver texted his old teammate during last weekend's game, hoping he'd keep getting the ball. Mingo ultimately did, breaking Moore's school record with 247 receiving yards against Vanderbilt for the ninth-ranked Rebels.

"We talked after the game as soon as I got on the bus," Mingo said Tuesday. "He was wanting me to break the record."

Mingo had the biggest game of his career, one in which he's battled injury and been overshadowed by 1,000-yard receivers Moore and Dontario Drummond. It was the most yards of any FBS player in a game this season and

Auburn (3-3, 1-2 SEC)
at No. 9 Mississippi (6-0, 2-0)
AFN-Sports
6 p.m. Saturday CET
1 a.m. Sunday JKT

vaulted Mingo into the Southeastern Conference lead with 507 yards entering Saturday's game with Auburn.

Mingo wound up with nine catches and two touchdowns to help Ole Miss rally from a surprising deficit for a 52-28 win. The performance was even more significant to him because it came amid memories of last October.

That's when he had his first of two surgeries to repair a left foot injury, desperately trying to fight a futile battle to play against Alabama. Mississippi coach Lane Kiffin remembers "the tears in his eyes" when Mingo realized he couldn't play, showing how much

Mingo cares about the game.

"If you take a team meeting at every school and you say, who loves football, they'll all raise their hand," Kiffin said. "Well, that's not true. When you really love football, you practice and prepare like this guy does. He's just awesome to have around."

Mingo broke Moore's 2020 record of 238 yards on a 9-yard pass from Jaxson Dart on the Rebels' final drive.

He also took a short pass 71 yards for his second score and is averaging 23 yards per catch — second-best nationally.

Mingo was named the SEC's co-offensive player of the week along with Mississippi State quarterback Will Rogers, his high school teammate.

AP sports writer Teresa Walker contributed to this report.

Test: Tennessee could get edge at quarterback

FROM PAGE 48

land Stadium an orange-and-white checkerboard pattern for a win over Florida. That's what Alabama safety Jordan Battle is expecting, though all orange seems to be the color of choice for a game so big Tennessee has set up an outdoor watch party area for the sold-out game.

"We know it's going to be loud," Battle said. "I know we probably haven't played the best on the road this year so this week will be a big emphasis of trying to play better on the road."

QB showdown

Young last played in the second quarter against Arkansas and will be evaluated all week. Milroe ran for 83 yards against A&M.

That could give the edge at that position to Tennessee. Hooker has completed 70% of his passes for 1,432 yards and 10 touchdowns without throwing an interception running the nation's top offense in yards and has passed Young in the midseason Heisman Trophy odds, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

"He's always a threat to run it, too, which makes it more difficult, and they've got really good skill guys," Saban said of Hooker. "And their entire offensive team is very efficient in how they operate and how they execute."

Henry's return

Tide linebacker Henry To'oTo'o is playing in this game for the fourth time and second since transferring from the Vols where he was a two-year starter. To'oTo'o had three tackles in two games against Alabama. He had five tackles in last season's game for the Tide and now returns to Neyland Stadium on the opposite sideline.

"Definitely super excited," To'oTo'o said. "So definitely going to be a huge challenge."

No. 3 Alabama (6-0, 3-0 SEC)
at No. 6 Tennessee (5-0, 2-0)
AFN-Sports2
9:30 p.m. Saturday CET
4:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

Vols personnel

Cedric Tillman, the Vols' top returning wide receiver, missed the last two games after a high ankle sprain during a win over Akron. He had a "tightrope" surgery to speed up his recovery time and is expected to play against Alabama. Left tackle Gerald Mincey also is expected back after sitting out the LSU game with an undisclosed injury.

But the Vols have lost cornerback Warren Burrell to season-ending surgery for an upper body injury. Starting safety Jaylen McCollough may miss the game after being arrested on an aggravated assault charge last weekend.

Turnover problem

Alabama coaches regularly talk about the records of teams with various turnover margins. The more turnovers, the uglier the records.

Alabama is defying the odds — so far — despite being in a three-way tie for 115th nationally with a minus-5 turnover margin. North Texas (3-3) and Kent State (2-4) are the other two. Saban insists they've been emphasizing holding onto the ball "like crazy."

"This is the first time in a long time we've had a negative turnover ratio at this point in a season," Saban said. "We don't get enough turnovers on defense, and we've given the ball up more than we have historically. And both of those things need to improve, because it is very, very challenging."

AP sports writer John Zenor contributed to this report.

NFL

'13 Seconds' behind them as Bills meet Chiefs

BY JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — For an outcome which ranks among the most frustrating in his 24 NFL seasons, Bills coach Sean McDermott appeared at ease on Wednesday when asked to relive the nightmare of Buffalo's most recent trip to Kansas City.

McDermott managed to even crack a few smiles as if to welcome questions of Buffalo squandering a three-point lead in the final 13 seconds of regulation of a 42-36 overtime loss to the Chiefs in an AFC divisional playoff game in January.

"Well, I mean that did happen. That's part of our past," he said.

"You learn from things like that and you move forward and you're not afraid to learn from things and correct things and adjust and evolve," McDermott added. "I'm just comfortable with this football team, comfortable going out there today and practicing and trying to get us better."

As much as McDermott was open to addressing the topic with reporters, the game dubbed "13 Seconds" is something he didn't broach with his team as Buffalo prepares to play at Kansas City on Sunday.

"No. I don't think there's a need to," he said. "They're aware. And this is a new team in a lot of ways. And we've already shown that this

**Buffalo Bills (4-1)
at Kansas City Chiefs (4-1)**
AFN-Sports2
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
5:25 a.m. Monday JKT

year in a lot of ways. And this team will take on its own identity."

At 4-1, the Bills are in the familiar position of having won four or more of their first five games of a season for a fourth straight year.

And the Chiefs (4-1) represent a familiar opponent with the non-division rivals meeting for the fifth time in three years, with Kansas City having won three of four, including both playoff meetings.

What encourages McDermott is the Bills showing glimpses of an identity of overcoming adversity. Though they've enjoyed three blowout victories, including a 38-3 rout of the Steelers last weekend, the Bills have also persevered.

In rebounding from a 21-19 loss at Miami, in which Buffalo was thinned by injuries and exhausted by the South Florida humidity, the Bills rallied from a 17-point deficit in a 23-20 win over Baltimore the following week.

It was an outing in which Buffalo finally won a one-score game, after being on the losing end of its past seven decided by seven points or fewer. And it was the largest deficit Buffalo had overcome in 11 years.

Cowboys preparing for Rush to face Eagles

BY SCHULYER DIXON
Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — The Dallas Cowboys are preparing for another start from quarterback Cooper Rush in an NFC East showdown with undefeated Philadelphia as Dak Prescott's recovery from a broken right thumb continues.

Coach Mike McCarthy said Prescott was set to do some light throwing at the end of practice Wednesday after starting the workout in the rehab group.

The division lead will be on the line when the Cowboys (4-1) visit the Eagles (5-0) on Sunday night.

Rush has won four consecutive starts, including over last year's Super Bowl teams in Cincinnati and the defending champion Los Angeles Rams.

Prescott fractured the thumb on his throwing hand in a season-opening loss to Tampa Bay.

McCarthy has said he wanted Prescott to get a full week of prac-

**Dallas Cowboys (4-1)
at Philadelphia Eagles (5-0)**
AFN-Sports2
2:15 a.m. Monday CET
9:15 a.m. Monday JKT

tice before playing, and he indicated Wednesday's activity didn't count toward that.

"I think we're still in the medical rehab phase," McCarthy said. "So once he clears this phase and he's fully activated, then I think that's when we have our conversation."

The Eagles can take a two-game lead on the defending division champions with a victory. Prescott is 7-3 in his career against Philadelphia.

It would be the first start against the Eagles for Rush, who has won the first five starts of his career going back to a victory at Minnesota last season.

McCarthy said Rush's winning streak wasn't a factor in the deci-



JOSHUA BESSEX/AP

Bills quarterback Josh Allen, right, celebrates a touchdown pass on Sunday against the Steelers. Buffalo travels this week to Kansas City, where the Bills lost in an AFC divisional playoff game last season.

For McDermott, beating the Ravens was a tangible sign of progress.

"When you go through things like that, it doesn't define you, but it refines you if you handle it the right way," he said in comparing the loss to the Chiefs to beating Baltimore. "It makes things that we do better, because you do a lot of research, you do a lot of soul-searching."

An offseason of soul-searching led to McDermott introducing the phrase "Find A Way," in reference to his team overcoming obstacles. The Bills also went beyond messaging in muscling up an inconsistent pass rush, highlighted by the addition of Von Miller, the NFL's active leader in sacks.

In an electrifying playoff shootout in which the Chiefs and Bills traded leads four times in the final

two minutes, the eventual outcome hinged on Buffalo's inability to sack Patrick Mahomes.

The final drive of regulation featured Mahomes completing two passes for 44 yards to set up Harrison Butker's 49-yard field goal as time expired. The outcome could well have been different if not for Buffalo's Jerry Hughes being a half-second late in getting to Mahomes before he completed his pass to Travis Kelce.

Miller is more than familiar with facing the Chiefs, after spending his first nine-plus seasons with AFC West rival Denver. And yet, he doesn't have to carry the baggage of the Bills loss.

"I think the good part for me is I don't know what happened. You know, ignorance is bliss," Miller said.

"It's an honor and a privilege to

be a part of it on the Bills side this time, and I'm going to put my best foot forward," he added. "They're going to make plays, we're going to make plays. And we just got to figure a way to make one more play."

In putting the loss to the Chiefs behind him, center Mitch Morse said there's only one lesson to learn from having Buffalo's season end the way it did.

"It stings until the season's over. But time marches on," Morse said. "You learn from those experiences. You understand that games are truly never over until the clock hits zero no matter where you are, especially there."

Notes: WR Isaiah McKenzie practiced fully after being cleared from the NFL's concussion protocol. ... S Jordan Poyer (ribs) practiced on a limited basis after missing one game.



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Cowboys running back Tony Pollard greets quarterback Dak Prescott at practice on Wednesday. Prescott is not expected to play Sunday.

sion on when Prescott would return.

"You've got to trust the medical process," McCarthy said. "I know Dak didn't want to hear it. You've got to make sure that he's right for the long haul, too. Not that I'm say-

ing we're being conservative because that doesn't really line up with him the way he approaches preparing to play."

Prescott entertained reporters with left-handed throws during the open portion of practice. He

threw routes on air to his receivers after practice. Prescott was officially listed as not practicing Wednesday.

"Whatever is best for the team," Prescott said when asked about waiting at least another week.

"I understand the process," he said. "The week can be frustrating. But game day, I'm excited for my brothers. Excited to watch them go and do my part and supporting."

Owner/general manager Jerry Jones said Tuesday on his radio show that Prescott would have to "really spin the ball" to be ready for a game.

"Try to direct that ball without thumb strength if you really have a broken thumb. Can't do it," Jones said. "But if you have strength and can grip the ball, then you can spin the ball. Can he zip the ball out there and make the throw? We'll start working on that Wednesday real hard."

MLB PLAYOFFS



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

The Padres' Manny Machado, right, celebrates his first-inning home run with Brandon Drury during Game 2 of the NLDS on Wednesday.

Machado, Padres hold off Dodgers

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Not many tabbed the San Diego Padres to beat the Mets in New York in the wild-card round. Even fewer picked them against the Los Angeles Dodgers, who have dominated the Padres in recent years and were baseball's best team during the regular season.

But they're all even now.

Manny Machado homered early and added an RBI double off Clayton Kershaw, and Jurickson Profar singled home the go-ahead run as San Diego defeated the Dodgers 5-3 on Wednesday to tie their NL Division Series at one game apiece.

"We're going to compete," Machado said. "We're going to try to do everything possible to help our team win every single day. That's what we started in New York, and we're going to continue to do that until we're not."

The wild-card Padres beat the rival Dodgers for the first time in the postseason. San Diego was swept 3-0 by the Dodgers in a 2020 Division Series and lost Game 1 of this playoff Tuesday.

"It's probably as back and forth a game as you are going to see," Padres manager Bob Melvin said. "A lot of drama to it. Fun win."

Dropped from first to seventh in the batting order for matchup purposes, Profar grounded a single to right field in the sixth inning off reliever Brusdar Graterol, who took the loss. Jake Cronenworth scored for a 4-3 lead.

Cronenworth homered off Blake Treinen in the eighth to give San Diego some insurance, and Josh Hader earned his first four-out save since August 2020 with Milwaukee.

"This team all year, we've been grinding," Machado said.

Freddie Freeman, Max Muncy and Trea Turner went deep for the NL West champion Dodgers.

The best-of-five series resumes with Game 3 on Friday in San Diego.

"Don't take anybody lightly in the

postseason," Freeman said. "They're here for a reason. They play good baseball, they played really good against the Mets, and they just came out on top today."

The teams traded one-run leads on a night when two of baseball's elite pitchers — Kershaw and Yu Darvish of the Padres — got knocked around a bit. In the middle innings, it became a battle of the bullpens for the second straight game.

Hader, who got the final out of the eighth, gave up a two-out double to Freeman off the right-center wall in the ninth. That brought up Will Smith as the potential tying run at the plate. But he flied out to right to end the game.

"Freeman hits an 0-2 pitch that's up around his chin that I don't know how he even gets to," Melvin said, "and then all of a sudden you are one pitch away from being in trouble again."

The Dodgers' only lead was a 2-1 advantage in the second. Baseball's highest-scoring team in the regular season struggled to hit in the clutch.

"There were a couple of opportunities, two innings back-to-back, that we had an opportunity situationally to push a run across to tie the game, let alone to potentially take the lead, and we couldn't do that," manager Dave Roberts said. "Defensively it just wasn't clean, either."

Machado's double in the third tied it, and Cronenworth gave the Padres a 3-2 lead with an RBI groundout.

Turner's homer in the bottom half evened it again.

Darvish, who got the win, allowed three runs and seven hits in five-plus innings and had at least one baserunner in every inning. The right-hander struck out seven and walked two.

"We're in a playoff game, and I think bottom line is if we win the game, it's all good," Darvish said through a translator.

Wright outduels Wheeler, Braves get even in series

By PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press

ATLANTA—This was a game the Atlanta Braves absolutely had to win.

They had the right guy on the mound.

Kyle Wright, baseball's only 20-game winner, threw six brilliant innings to outduel Zack Wheeler as the Braves evened their NL Division Series at one game apiece, blanking the Philadelphia Phillies 3-0 on Wednesday night.

After steady rain delayed the first pitch by nearly three hours, Wright surrendered just two hits and claimed the win when the Braves got to Wheeler for three runs in the bottom of the sixth.

The reigning World Series champions were in a must-win situation after losing the opener of the best-of-five series 7-6.

The Braves turned to the right-hander with a big arm and snapping curveball who has finally cashed in on his enormous potential.

"I've worked on a lot of things this year," Wright said. "Really, it just goes back to confidence."

Wright, the fifth overall pick in the 2017 amateur draft, struggled to get past Triple-A and came into this season with a record of 2-8 in the majors. He totally turned that around, going 21-5 to collect three more wins than any other big league pitcher.

Wright kept it going in the playoffs. His only major threat came in the second, when Bryce Harper led off with a double, then tagged and moved to third on a flyout to deep center by Nick Castellanos.

Harper had to scramble back to third on Alec Bohm's sharp grounder to first, and Brandon Marsh struck out swinging on a four-seamer that clocked in at 96 mph.

"As he's out there and figures things out, he's going to continue to develop and grow and gain confidence," Braves manager Brian Snitker said of Wright. "With that arsenal he's got, he can be a force for a long time."

A.J. Minter, Raisel Iglesias and Kenley Jansen closed out the three-hitter with one inning apiece.

Jansen earned the save, the 20th of his postseason career but first with the Braves after spending the last dozen seasons with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Game 3 is Friday in Philadelphia. Dansby Swanson made a dazzling play to end the Phillies' sixth.

Sprinting with his back to the infield, the shortstop reached out to snare a pop fly from J.T. Realmuto while tumbling to the outfield grass. Wright threw both arms in the air when he realized Swanson had pulled off the catch.



BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Braves starting pitcher Kyle Wright reacts to a strikeout in Game 2 of the NLDS against the Phillies on Wednesday in Atlanta.

Scoreboard

Division Series

(Best-of-five)
(x-if necessary)
American League
Houston 1, Seattle 0

Tuesday: Houston 8, Seattle 7

Thursday: at Houston

Saturday: Houston (McCutters Jr. 4-2) at Seattle (Kirby 8-5), AFN-Sports, 10 p.m.

Saturday CET; 5 a.m. Sunday JKT

x-Sunday: at Seattle, AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. Sunday CET; 5 a.m. Monday JKT

(joined in progress)

x-Monday: at Houston, AFN-Sports, 11 p.m. Monday CET; 6 a.m. Tuesday JKT

New York 1, Cleveland 0

Tuesday: New York 4, Cleveland 1

Thursday: at New York

Saturday: New York (Severino 7-3) at Cleveland (McKenzie 11-11), AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. Sunday CET; 8:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

x-Sunday: at Cleveland, AFN-Atlantic, 1 a.m. Monday CET; 8 a.m. Monday JKT

x-Monday: at New York, AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Tuesday CET; 9 a.m. Tuesday JKT

National League

Los Angeles 1, San Diego 1

Tuesday: Los Angeles 5, San Diego 3

Wednesday: San Diego 5, Los Angeles 3

Friday: Los Angeles (Gonsolin 16-1) at San Diego (Snell 8-10), AFN-Sports, 2:30 a.m. Saturday CET; 9:30 a.m. Saturday JKT

Saturday: at San Diego, AFN-Sports, 4:30 a.m. Sunday CET; 11:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

(joined in progress)

x-Sunday: at Los Angeles, AFN-Sports, 3 a.m. Monday CET; 10 a.m. Monday JKT

Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 1

Tuesday: Philadelphia 7, Atlanta 6

Wednesday: Atlanta 3, Philadelphia 0

Friday: Atlanta (TBD) at Philadelphia (Nola 11-13), AFN-Sports, 10:30 p.m. Friday CET; 5:30 a.m. Saturday JKT

Saturday: at Philadelphia, AFN-Atlantic, 9 p.m. Saturday CET; 4 a.m. Sunday JKT

(joined in progress)

x-Sunday: at Atlanta, AFN-Sports, 10:30 p.m. Sunday CET; 5:30 a.m. Monday JKT

of the dugout as the Braves finally broke the scoreless tie in the bottom half, doing all the damage after Wheeler retired the first two hitters.

It started when Wheeler plunked Ronald Acuña Jr. near the right elbow on a 96 mph fastball that rode up and in.

There was a delay of several minutes while Acuña, writhing in pain, was checked out by the training staff. In the Atlanta dugout, Gil Heredia prepared to go in. Wheeler, meanwhile, tossed a few pitches trying to stay loose.

The right-hander who grew up in metro Atlanta wasn't the same after Acuña finally trotted down to first base.

Swanson walked and Matt Olson drove in the first run of the game, ripping a single past first baseman Rhys Hoskins, who meekly waved at the ball.

"I think if you asked Rhys, he would say he should make that play," Phillies manager Rob Thomson said.

Olson was generously credited with an RBI single, but the Braves weren't done. Austin Riley's mighty swing produced a little dribbler down the third-base line for an infield hit that made it 2-0.

Then, it was Travis d'Arnaud grounding one up the middle for another run-scoring hit before Wheeler finally got the third out.

It turned out to be the final pitch of Wright's 83-pitch gem, in which he struck out six with one walk.

Wright watched from the top step

SPORTS



All even

Cronenworth, Padres tie NLDS series with Dodgers » **MLB playoffs Page 47**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Tide brace for big road test



Tennessee quarterback Hendon Hooker has jumped into the Heisman Trophy conversation by completing 70% of his passes for 1,432 yards and 10 touchdowns without an interception.

WADE PAYNE/AP

No. 6 Vols, No. 3 Alabama both unbeaten for first time since '89

By AL LESAR
Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee coach Josh Heupel recognizes the enormous opportunity awaiting his sixth-ranked Volunteers only too well.

The No. 6 Volunteers host No. 3 Alabama (6-0, 3-0 SEC) on Saturday, and it's the first time since 1989 that both have been unbeaten going into the Third Saturday of October rivalry game. Tennessee (5-0, 2-0) is trying to crack college football's elite for the first time since 2006, when the Vols last beat Alabama.

"This is why you come to Tennessee and want to be in this league," Heupel said.

Alabama has been a regular atop the Southeastern Conference — not to mention winning six national titles — since hiring Nick Saban as head coach. He is 15-0 against Tennessee since then and he knows how crucial beating Tennessee is no matter the records.

"This game means a lot to a lot of people in Alabama," Saban said. "It's kind of a rivalry game."

That's an understatement, at least this season. The Vols are coming off a 40-13 win at LSU,



Heupel



Saban

while Alabama had to hold on to beat Texas A&M 24-20, a win that dropped the Tide two spots from the No. 1 ranking.

The Vols see themselves as the Crimson Tide's biggest challenge though Heupel said: "The expectations we should be concerned about are our own expectations." Tennessee quarterback Hendon Hooker, now being mentioned in the Heisman Trophy conversation, said it's a matter of "just staying even-keeled."

Quarterback Bryce Young missed Alabama's win over Texas A&M with a sprained shoulder and was questionable at midweek. Redshirt freshman Jalen Milroe stepped in for the reigning Heisman Trophy winner and delivered an uneven performance against the Aggies.

Tennessee fans painted Ney-

SEE TEST ON PAGE 45



VASHA HUNT/AP

Jalen Milroe, above, might have to start at quarterback again for Alabama if Heisman Trophy winner Bryce Young is still injured.

Avalanche raise banner, outlast Blackhawks » NHL, Page 42

