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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas



Pilot error blamed in fatal Osprey crash

ELIAS PIMENTEL/U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marines prepare to take off in an MV-22B Osprey at Norwegian Air Force Base Bodo during Exercise Cold Response 22 in Norway on March 16. Four Marines were killed in March when their Osprey crashed during the training exercise.

Investigation finds faulty maneuvers at low altitude resulted in death of four Marines in Norway in March

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Pilot error was the cause of an Osprey aircraft crash in Norway in March that killed four Marines, the service said in a statement.

The crash happened in the vicinity of Bodo, Norway, where

thousands of troops were assembled for Exercise Cold Response.

The crew departed on an approved flight plan in clear conditions to the south of Bodo as their mission got underway, but the aircraft deviated from the pre-planned route, the Corps' investi-

gation of the crash found.

The Osprey then entered the Gratadalen Valley, where it went down. The investigation concluded that the crash resulted from a series of faulty maneuvers conducted at a low altitude, the Marine Corps' 2nd Marine Aircraft

Wing said in the statement Monday.

Analysis of the recovered aircraft data showed that while in the valley, the Osprey made a left turn at 68 degrees angle of bank, followed by an overcorrected right turn of more than 80 degrees, the

Marines said.

Operating standards for the MV-22B Osprey for such a maneuver specify a limit of 60 degrees.

Marine Corps investigators ex-

SEE OSPREY ON PAGE 4

US, South Korea mum on details ahead of Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The United States and South Korea kicked off a four-day preliminary drill Tuesday in preparation for their largest military exercise in five years.

The preliminary drill, which consists of training simulations, ends Friday and is the precursor to Ulchi Freedom Shield, the first large-scale command-post exercise between the U.S. and South Korea since 2017, according to a Ministry of Defense news release.

Ulchi Freedom Shield, named after Eulji Mundeok, a seventh century Korean general, is scheduled to start Monday and end Sept. 1. The exercise was known as Ulchi Freedom Guardian between 2008 to 2018 and as Combined Command Post Training from

2019 to 2021.

Ulchi Freedom Shield is one of two major exercises traditionally conducted annually by the U.S. and South Korea. Exercise Freedom Shield is scheduled for early

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Navy shoots down short-range ballistic missile in SM3 test
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BUSINESS/WEATHER

German industry at risk as Rhine River levels fall

Associated Press

BERLIN — Germany’s main industry lobby group warned Tuesday that factories may have to throttle production or halt it completely because plunging water levels on the Rhine River are making it harder to transport cargo.

Water levels on the Rhine at Emmerich, near the Dutch border, dropped by 1.6 inches in 24 hours, hitting zero on the depth gauge.

Authorities have said the shipping lane itself still has a depth of almost 6.5 feet, but the record low

measurement Tuesday morning highlights the extreme lack of water caused by months of drought affecting much of Europe.

“The ongoing drought and the low water levels threaten the supply security of industry,” said Holger Loesch, deputy head of the business lobby group BDI.

Loesch said shifting cargo from river to train or transport was difficult because of limited rail capacity and a lack of drivers.

“It’s only a question of time before facilities in the chemical and steel

industry have to be switched off, petroleum and construction materials won’t reach their destination, and high-capacity and heavy-goods transports can’t be carried out anymore,” he said, adding that this could lead to supply bottlenecks and short-time work might result.

He echoed concerns that climate change could make droughts more frequent in the future, and urged the government to help closely monitor water levels and react early to potential transportation problems on Germany’s waterways.

EXCHANGE RATES		
Military rates		
Euro costs (Aug. 17)	\$0.99	
Dollar buys (Aug. 17)	0.9610	
British pound (Aug. 17)	\$1.17	
Japanese yen (Aug. 17)	130.00	
South Korean won (Aug. 17)	1,276.00	
Commercial rates		
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770	
Britain (Pound)	1.2093	
Canada (Dollar)	1.2869	
China (Yuan)	6.7855	
Denmark (Krone)	7.3084	
Egypt (Pound)	19.1303	
Euro	.9827	
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8412	
Hungary (Forint)	396.90	
Israel (Shekel)	3.2648	
Japan (Yen)	134.50	
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3069	
Norway (Krone)	9.6722	
Philippines (Peso)	55.79	
Poland (Zloty)	4.61	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7546	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3785	
South Korea (Won)	1,311.48	
Switzerland (Franc)	.9492	
Thailand (Baht)	35.44	
Turkey (New Lira)	17.9633	
(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	5.50	
Interest Rates Discount rate	3.00	
Federal funds market rate	2.32	
3-month bill	2.68	
30-year bond	3.10	

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PACIFIC

Navy shoots down short-range missile in drill

By Wyatt Olson
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The Navy and its Pacific allies recently demonstrated their ability to use the Aegis Combat System to down ballistic missiles of the type tested by North Korea this year.

The Navy for the first time in the Hawaii-based Pacific Dragon exercise used a Standard Missile 3 Block 1A from an Aegis-equipped destroyer to shoot down a short-range ballistic missile. North Korea tested at least 13 short-range missiles in January, May and June.

The Aegis trial took place during the weeklong missile-defense exercise in Hawaii that concluded Sunday, the Navy said in a news release the next day. Japan, South Korea, Australia and Canada also employ the Aegis Weapon System and took part in Pacific Dragon.

The exercise was held at Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands on Kauai and off the island’s

coast.

The Navy’s Aegis Weapon System can search for, track and destroy more than 100 targets.

The United States, Japan and South Korea all have expressed concerns about North Korea’s record 17 rounds of tests — more than 30 missiles — so far this year, and have maintained a high level of military cooperation throughout the summer.

The nations met for a trilateral ministerial meeting in Singapore in June, and in July they were among the 26 countries participating in the monthlong Rim of the Pacific exercise in Hawaii.

The Kauai exercise underscores the shared goals among the three, the Defense Department said in a news release Monday.

“[T]his missile warning and ballistic missile search and tracking exercise demonstrated the commitment of the U.S., [South Korea], and Japan to furthering trilateral cooperation to respond

to [North Korean] challenges, protecting shared security and prosperity, and bolstering the rules-based international order,” the release said.

North Korea has stepped up its pace of test firing missiles in the past year as it seeks to develop intermediate- to long-range ballistic missiles capable of reaching Guam, Hawaii and the U.S. West Coast.

Ships participating in Pacific Dragon included the U.S. Navy guided-missile destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS William P. Lawrence; Australian guided-missile destroyer HMAS Sydney and the replenishment vessel HMAS Supply; Canadian frigate HMCS Vancouver; Japanese guided-missile destroyer JS Haguro; and South Korean guided-missile destroyer ROKS Sejong the Great.

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U.S. Navy

The guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald launches a Standard Missile 3 Block 1A as part of the Pacific Dragon exercise near Kauai, Hawaii, on Aug. 9.

Admiral decries ‘unsafe’ China military actions

By Philip J. Heijmans
The Washington Post

The top American naval commander in Asia criticized what he said were unsafe and provocative actions by Chinese warplanes, reiterating U.S. complaints about behavior that officials argue could prompt a clash.

Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, commander of the U.S. Navy’s Japan-based 7th Fleet, expressed concern Tuesday about increasingly assertive efforts by the People’s Liberation Army to intercept U.S. and allied military aircraft in the skies over the Pacific. He cited the firing of flares near planes and shortening the distance between aircraft as they pass as risky actions.

“There has been an increase in what we would consider unsafe, unprofessional or non-standard intercepts, and it’s not just United States aircraft, it’s also our allies and partners aircraft,” Thomas told reporters in Singapore, where the U.S. was taking part in a regional training exercise. “It’s the provocative nature of the intercepts that’s got our attention.”

The admiral’s warning comes as China ramps up drills and patrols around Taiwan in response to U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taipei earlier this month. As part of its efforts to hit back at Washington over the trip, Beijing canceled three separate military-to-military talks intended to, among other

things, set up systems to reduce the risk of escalation and miscalculation between the two nuclear powers.

While Thomas broadly characterized interactions with the PLA as “fairly professional,” he also said the Chinese military had become more aggressive during the U.S.’s freedom-of-navigation operations or when allied aircraft approach areas that Beijing considers sensitive.

Earlier this year, Australia and Canada similarly accused China of conducting dangerous intercepts of patrol aircraft during surveillance and sanctions-monitoring missions over the East and South China seas.

“If you’re trying to send a flare out of your plane to get somebody’s at-

tention because maybe they’re going to go into your territorial airspace or something, that might be one thing, but if you’re operating in international airspace, that’s that’s another thing,” Thomas said. “When you start doing things — eject things from your aircraft — you start crossing lines that are unacceptable, quite frankly.”

While the Biden administration argues congressional trips including Pelosi’s have no bearing on the U.S.’s 50-year-old agreement to cut formal ties with Taipei, Beijing increasingly sees them as a threat to its claims on Taiwan. Besides suspending some talks with the U.S., China responded to Pelosi’s trip by firing 11 missiles in to the seas

around Taiwan and sanctioning the speaker. On Sunday, Sen. Ed Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat, arrived in Taiwan as part of a five-member congressional group, prompting China to announce the fresh military patrols. Unlike earlier this month when China conducted live-fire exercises and likely fired ballistic missiles over Taiwan’s main island, Beijing didn’t immediately specify exclusion areas for commercial planes or ships to avoid.

“I know that the gorilla in the room is launching missiles over Taiwan,” Thomas said on Tuesday. “If we just allow that to happen, and we don’t contest that, that’ll become the next norm, and that’s not acceptable.”

Exercise: Drills meant to reinforce alliance with South Korea

FROM PAGE 1

next year. Exact troop numbers and equipment used for the upcoming exercise have not been publicly released by U.S. Forces Korea or the Ministry of Defense. During Ulchi Freedom Guardian in 2017, around 50,000 South Korean and 17,500 U.S. service members were used for the air, land and sea drills.

The military will take precautions to combat the spread of COVID-19, Defense Ministry officials said at a news briefing on Thursday. All participants are required to test negative on a PCR test prior to the start date and a self-test two

to three times a week during the exercise.

USFK spokesman Wesley Hayes Thursday said he could not comment on upcoming training as a matter of policy but added that “protection of the force remains our number one priority.”

The two annual exercises were downgraded to computer simulations in 2018 as then-Presidents Donald Trump and Moon Jae-in of South Korea negotiated with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for the denuclearization of his country.

The North’s propaganda outlets frequently bristle at the U.S.-South Korea military exercises

and claim they are a rehearsal for an invasion.

Planning for the large-scale military drills resumed after the collapse of the Trump-Kim summit at Hanoi, Vietnam, in 2019 and the inauguration of South Korean President Yoon Seok Yul in May. Following his first meeting with President Joe Biden in July, Yoon, a member of the conservative People Power Party, said the two leaders would “step up” their joint military training.

The U.S. and South Korea characterize the drills as defensive exercises meant to reinforce their alliance in light of North Korea’s provocations.

“We could say that there is a big meaning in this joint exercise — that South Korea and the U.S. are rebuilding the alliance between them and establishing a firm combined defense posture by normalizing the [South Korean-U.S.] joint drills and field training exercises,” the Defense Ministry said in a news release Tuesday.

Ulchi Freedom Shield comes roughly two months after North Korea last conducted a missile test. Pyongyang, which continues to accuse Washington and Seoul of destabilizing the region, is also believed to be preparing for a nuclear test, according to U.S. and South Korean officials.

State Department spokesman Ned Price in a news briefing Monday told reporters that loosening existing sanctions against North Korea “is a complete hypothetical at this point because [North Korea] has heretofore not demonstrated any indication that they are interested in diplomacy or dialogue.”

“We have continued to make clear that, for our part, for the part of some of our allies and partners, we are prepared for that dialogue and diplomacy” with North Korea, Price said.

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MILITARY

Air Force F-35As back in service

Ejection seat concerns led to inspections

By KYLE ALVAREZ
Stars and Stripes

All of the Air Force's F-35A Lightning IIs have returned to service, roughly three weeks after concerns over faulty ejection seats grounded most of them, the service said.

Air Combat Command made the shutdown decision in late July amid similar moves by other services in response to problems with cartridge-actuated devices in the ejection seats. A CAD is an explosive component used to launch the seat out of the cockpit in cases of emergency.

There was "little to no impact" on F-35 operations during the shutdown, Alexi Worley, an Air Combat Command spokeswoman, told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

The Air Force inspected 706 cartridges, which came from 349 F-35s as well as additional supply, Worley said Monday, according to Air Force Times. Four cartridges were found to be suspect and replaced, she said.

The first military to ground planes over the ejection seat issue was Britain's. On July 22, the Royal Air Force halted flights in-

volving Red Arrows and Typhoon fighter jets, U.K. news agencies reported.

The shutdown for the United States began July 27, when the Navy and the Marine Corps started grounding several planes that use U.K. ejection seats manufactured by the British company Martin-Baker.

The 19th Air Force's Air Education and Training command followed suit shortly thereafter, grounding nearly 300 of its training planes, which also use Martin-Baker's CADs in their ejection seats. The command has since returned to flying the planes following inspections.

Steve Roberts, Martin-Baker's head of business development, told news website The Aviationist last month that an anomaly had been discovered in an F-35 cartridge at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, in April.

It was traced back to a "gap in the manufacturing process, which was addressed and changed," Roberts told The Aviationist.

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CALEB WORPEL/U.S. Air Force

Airmen guide an F-35A Lightning II ejection seat onto a cart at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., on Jan. 11, 2018.



MICHAEL DAVIS/U.S. Air Force

An airman assigned to the 158th Fighter Wing taxis in an F-35A Lightning II after it landed at the Vermont Air National Guard Base, South Burlington, Vt., on Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Osprey: Aircraft deviated from preapproved flight plan before crash

FROM PAGE 1

amined and dismissed other potential contributing factors, such as weather and environmental conditions, adherence to predeployment training requirements and possible inexperience in mountainous environments.

The investigation could not determine which crew member was piloting the Osprey. The four Marines killed were Capt. Matthew Tomkiewicz, the aircraft commander; Capt. Ross Reynolds, the co-pilot; Gunnery Sgt. James Speedy, the aerial observer; and

Cpl. Jacob Moore, the crew chief.

"Their loss continues to be felt across the Marine Corps, and our condolences remain with the family and friends of the fallen," the Corps said in a statement.

Five Marines were also killed in June when their Osprey crashed

in California during training.

The hybrid Osprey, which takes off like a helicopter and can fly like a plane, has attracted criticism over safety concerns ever since it began replacing the CH-46 helicopter in the 2000s.

Navy and Marine Corps offi-

cials, however, have repeatedly stated that the Osprey is fit to fly. The aircraft also played a key role for the Corps during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Philippines eyes US helicopters after scrapping Russian deal

By JIM GOMEZ
Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine officials are considering a U.S. offer to provide heavy-lift helicopters like its widely used Chinooks after Manila scrapped a deal to buy military choppers from Russia due to fears of Western sanctions, the Philippine ambassador to Washington said Monday.

Then-President Rodrigo Duterte approved the cancellation of the signed deal to buy 16 Russian Mi-17 helicopters due to concerns over possible Western sanctions, which could hamper fast bank transfers of the income Filipino workers send home

from the U.S. and other Western countries, Ambassador Jose Romualdez said.

Romualdez said Washington did not pressure the Philippines to drop the \$227 million deal with the Russians.

But following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, countries that would purchase Russian equipment could face Western sanctions, he said.

"I think it was really prudent specially for President Duterte to approve the cancellation of that contract because it can save us a lot of trouble," Romualdez told an online news conference organized by Manila-based foreign correspondents.

The U.S. offer to sell Boeing CH-47 Chinooks was discussed as early as last year by former Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and his American counterpart, Lloyd Austin, in Washington even before Duterte was persuaded by key Cabinet members to cancel the deal, Romualdez said.

One of Duterte's Cabinet members, Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez, warned Duterte then that Western countries may withhold assistance that could help the Philippines deal with and recover from coronavirus outbreaks, two Philippine officials told The Associated Press on condition of anonym-

ity because of a lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly.

Romualdez said the Philippine government under Duterte made an initial payment of about \$38 million to secure the Russian military transport helicopters and he would recommend President Ferdinand Marcos J. Marcos Jr. and his top defense and foreign officials try to ask the Russians to provide other weapons or equipment that would be covered by that down payment.

"Definitely we will not just simply say goodbye to that money," Romualdez said. "It's still a big amount as far as we're concerned."

A Filipino military official has

said the helicopter deal would undergo a "termination process" after the Philippine decision to cancel it was made since a contract has already been signed. The Russians can appeal but there is little room for the Philippine government to reconsider, said the official.

Under the scrapped helicopter purchase agreement, which was signed in November, the first batch of the multi-purpose helicopters would have been scheduled for delivery by Russia's Sovtechnoexport in about two years. Aside from the 16 helicopters, one unit should have been given for free to the Philippines, defense officials said.

MILITARY

Guillen’s family files wrongful death claim

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

The family of Spc. Vanessa Guillen has filed a \$35 million claim against the Army, seeking damages for her death at Fort Hood in 2020, and the sexual harassment and “mental anguish” that she faced while assigned to the central Texas base.

The claim, which was filed Friday, alleges Guillen faced sexual harassment and abuse, rape, sodomy and physical assault and is an administrative precursor to a lawsuit that the family intends to file, said Natalie Khawam, attorney for the Guillen family.

“We will continue to fight for justice for Vanessa Guillen, and all victims of sexual assault,” she said in a statement.

Guillen, 20, went missing from Fort Hood in April 2020. Her remains were found three months later buried off the base, but it is believed a fellow soldier, Spc. Aaron Robinson, killed her on the base. He then moved her body, dismembered and burned it be-



ROSE L. THAYER/Stars and Stripes

A memorial honors Spc. Vanessa Guillen in Killeen, Texas, just outside Fort Hood in October 2020.

fore burying her remains. Robinson died by suicide when confronted by police.

“Vanessa did not deserve to be sexually harassed, to be murdered, to be cut up into pieces, to be burned, to be buried into cement ... to be taken away from life, from her family,” her sister Mayra

Guillen wrote in an affidavit filed with the claim. “We have a huge emptiness in our hearts ever since.”

Investigations by the Army following Guillen’s death found she was sexually harassed at Fort Hood by another soldier and leaders failed to take appropriate ac-

tion when Guillen reported the harassment. The affidavit describes two incidents of sexual harassment and the soldier’s death, but it does not describe instances where the other allegations occurred.

Gloria Guillen, Vanessa Guillen’s mother, and Mayra Guillen are named in the paperwork filed with the Army on Friday. It states Vanessa Guillen “suffered mental anguish, fear, emotional distress, physical injury and death” from October 2019 until April 2020, and her heirs have lost her livelihood and income.

Mayra Guillen wrote her sister’s behavior began to change in January 2020 because she was sexually harassed multiple times by “higher ups in her chain of command,” and she wanted to die by suicide. In February 2020, Vanessa Guillen was hospitalized on base due to a suicide attempt, her sister wrote.

Friday’s personal injury filing against the Army was a necessary step to filing a lawsuit under the Federal Tort Claims Act, a federal

law that allows citizens to file civil lawsuits against the government.

The Army declined to confirm receipt of the paperwork or to comment on the matter, citing a policy against commenting on ongoing litigation.

The Guillen family’s filing follows a decision Thursday in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals stating a law that bars service members from seeking damages for injuries during service does not apply to sexual assault. The ruling by the three-judge panel will allow an Army colonel to continue her civil lawsuit against a retired Air Force general.

“My law firm ... Khawam Ripka, LLP, has been receiving dozens of inquiries about this new ruling and requests to represent these courageous victims of sexual assault. This monumental decision by the 9th Circuit has given victims hope and an opportunity to be made whole,” Khawam said.

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US flies paratroopers from 3 countries in multinational mission

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

PALENMBANG, Indonesia — U.S. airlifters from Japan for the first time dropped airborne troops of three armies into drop zones during an exercise this month in Indonesia.

Five C-130J Super Hercules and an MC-130J Commando II flew missions in support of regular Army and Special Forces troops from the United States, Indonesia and Japan during Super Garuda Shield.

The largest installment yet of an exercise held annually for 16 years involved 2,000 U.S. and 2,000 Indonesian troops and a handful from other nations and ran from Aug. 1 until Sunday.

Four of the C-130Js, from Yokota Air Base’s 36th Airlift Squadron, were involved in an airborne operation at the start of the drills, the squadron chief of tactics, Capt. Zebulon Kimball, 30, of Denver, said Tuesday after returning to Japan.

The planes collected 200 paratroopers from the U.S. Army, Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and Indonesian army on Guam and flew them to Borneo to stage for the Aug. 3 mission, Kimball told Stars and Stripes by phone.

The paratroopers, including members of the Army’s 11th Infantry Division (Airborne),

jumped into Baturaja Training Area on the island of Sumatra. The training area is covered in dense jungle inhabited by snakes and tigers. However, the paratroopers landed in a designated drop zone, Kimball said.

U.S. Army Pacific commander Gen. Charles Flynn observed the jump from the ground, according to an Aug. 3 Army news release.

“It’s the first time I’ve been involved in a jump with troops from three countries,” Kimball said.

The 36th Airlift Squadron works regularly with U.S. and Japanese troops but rarely interacts with Indonesian counterparts, he said.

The Indonesians approached the airborne mission with “enthusiastic aggression,” Kimball said.

“Garuda Shield was an excellent opportunity for us to get down and dirty and work together,” he said.

Four of the Yokota C-130Js returned to Japan after the jump while the fifth stayed behind in Indonesia, Kimball said.

The Super Hercules was parked Wednesday next to the MC-130J Commando II at Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II International Airport in the Sumatran city of Palembang.

The Commando II pilot, Maj. Jacob McCauley, 33, of Mechanicsville, Va., said that day that 25



MATTHEW CRANE/U.S. Army

Paratroopers from the U.S., Indonesia and Japan team with the 36th Airlift Squadron to practice airborne operations during the Super Garuda Shield exercise in Baturaja, Indonesia, on Aug. 3.

members of the 353rd Special Operations Wing out of Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, traveled to Indonesia for the exercise.

“We did HALO (high altitude, low opening) and HAHO (high altitude, high opening) training with Special Forces from the U.S. and Indonesia” on the island of Java, he said. “We’ve been working with their pilots and JTACs.”

AJTAC, or joint terminal attack controller, directs aircraft providing close support to ground troops from a forward position.

At Palembang, the special operations airmen practiced trans-

porting an Army High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, inside the aircraft.

“We are demonstrating agile combat employment,” McCauley said.

Agile combat employment focuses on the ability to move aircraft rapidly to a network of smaller airfields in the Western Pacific to avoid being targeted by Chinese missiles in the event of war.

Another member of the special operations squadron at Palembang, Senior Master Sgt. Michael Hoffmaster, 43, of Port Charlotte,

Fla., said the 37,000-pound HIMARS is one of the heaviest objects a C-130J can carry.

Only the 21,600-pound GBU-43B Massive Ordnance Air Blast munition, or MOAB, also known as the “mother of all bombs,” may be heavier, he said.

The MOAB, which was dropped on a network of Islamic State caves in eastern Afghanistan in April 2017, may be the most powerful conventional weapon ever used in combat.

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EUROPE

Explosions, fires hit 2nd military depot in Crimea

By PAUL BYRNE
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Massive explosions and fires hit a military depot in Russia-annexed Crimea on Tuesday, forcing the evacuation of more than 3,000 people, the second time in recent days that the Ukraine war’s focus has turned to the peninsula.

Russia blamed the blasts at an ammunition storage facility in Mayskoye on an “act of sabotage” without naming the perpetrators. As with last week’s explosions, they led to speculation that Ukraine may be behind the attack on the peninsula, which Russia has controlled since 2014.

Separately, the Russian business newspaper Kommersant quoted local residents as saying that plumes of black smoke also rose over an air base in Crimea’s Gvardeyskoye.

Ukraine has stopped short of publicly claiming responsibility for any of the fires or explosions, including last week’s at another air base that destroyed nine Russian planes. If Ukrainian forces were, in fact, responsible for any

of the explosions, they would represent a significant escalation in the war.

Crimea holds huge strategic and symbolic significance for Russia and Ukraine. The Kremlin’s demand that Kyiv recognize the peninsula as part of Russia has been one of its key conditions for ending the fighting, while Ukraine has vowed to drive the Russians from the peninsula and all other occupied territories.

Videos posted on social media showed thick plumes of smoke rising over raging flames in Mayskoye, and a series of explosions could be heard in the background. The Russian Defense Ministry said the fires at the depot caused damage to a power plant, power lines, rail tracks and some apartment buildings. It said in a statement that there were no serious injuries.

Earlier, Russia’s state news agency RIA Novosti reported a fire at a transformer substation after “a loud thump sound” in what appeared to be a result of the blasts at the depot.

The Dzhankoi district, where



Rising smoke can be seen from the beach at Saky after explosions were heard from the direction of a Russian military air base near Novofedorivka, Crimea, on Aug. 9. More massive explosions and fires hit another air base in Russia-annexed Crimea on Tuesday.

the blasts happened, is in the north of the peninsula, about 30 miles from the Russian-controlled region of Kherson in southern Ukraine. Kyiv has recently mounted a series of attacks on various sites in the region, targeting supply routes for the Russian military there and ammunition depots.

Last week’s explosions at Crimea’s Saki air base sent sunbathers on nearby beaches fleeing as huge flames and pillars of smoke rose over the horizon.

Ukrainian officials emphasized Tuesday that Crimea — which is a popular destination for Russian tourists — would not be spared the ravages of war experienced

throughout Ukraine.

Rather than a travel destination, “Crimea occupied by Russians is about warehouses explosions and high risk of death for invaders and thieves,” Ukraine presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter, though he did not claim any Ukraine responsibility for the blasts.

Crimea’s regional leader, Sergei Aksyonov, said that two people were injured and more than 3,000 evacuated from the villages of Mayskoye and Azovskoye near Dzhankoi following the munitions depot explosions.

Because the explosions damaged rail tracks, some trains in northern Crimea were diverted to other lines.

The Russian military blamed last week’s blasts at the Saki air base on an accidental detonation of munitions there, but it appeared to be the result of a Ukrainian attack.

Ukrainian officials at the time stopped short of publicly claiming responsibility for the explosions, while mocking Russia’s explanation that a careless smoker might have caused the ammunition to catch fire. Analysts also said that explanation doesn’t make sense and that the Ukrainians could have used anti-ship missiles to strike the base.

Location of 1st ship to leave Ukraine carrying grain unknown

Associated Press

BEIRUT — The first grain ship to leave Ukraine under a wartime deal has had its cargo resold several times and there is now no information about its location and cargo destination, the Ukrainian Embassy in Beirut said Monday.

The Sierra Leone-flagged ship Razoni, which left Odesa on Aug. 1, and moved through the Black Sea carrying Ukrainian corn, later passed inspection in Turkey.

It was initially heading for Lebanon with 26,000 metric tons of corn for chicken feed.

The corn’s buyer in Lebanon later refused to accept the cargo, since it was delivered much later than agreed.

The Razoni hasn’t had its tracker on for the last three days and it appeared off the east coast of the Mediterranean island of Cyprus at last transmission.

It was not clear if the Razoni had its tracker off because it was heading to a port in Syria, a strong ally of Russia that Ukraine had accused of importing grain stolen from Ukraine.

Syria is also under Western



The Sierra Leone-flagged cargo ship Razoni sails under Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge after being inspected by Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish and U.N. officials at the Bosphorus Strait entrance in Istanbul on Aug. 3.

sanctions because of the 11-year conflict there that has killed hundreds of thousands. Syrian port officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

“Our task has been to reopen seaports for grain cargo and it has been done,” Ukraine’s embassy in Beirut said in a statement in English, adding that to date, 16 vessels have left Ukraine carrying more than 450,000 tons of agricultural products since a breakthrough agreement was brokered by Turkey and the United Nations with Russia and Ukraine.

The embassy said the Razoni was the first vessel that left Ukraine under the agreement and later successfully passed inspection in Istanbul before moving toward its destination.

“We don’t have any information about (the) position of the vessel and cargo destination,” it said. “We have also information that cargo has been resold a few times after that.”

The embassy said: “We are not responsible for (the) vessel and cargo, especially when it left Ukraine, moreover after vessel’s departure from foreign port.”

Putin blasts US, predicts end to ‘unipolar’ world

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the United States of trying to encourage extended hostilities in Ukraine as part of what he described Tuesday as Washington’s alleged efforts to maintain its global hegemony.

Addressing a security conference attended by military officials from Africa, Asia and Latin America, Putin reaffirmed his long-held claim that he sent troops into Ukraine in response to Washington turning the country into an “anti-Russia” bulwark.

The speech represented the latest attempt by the Russian leader to rally support amid Western sanctions. The Russian leader claimed that “Western globalist elites” were trying “to shift the blame for their own failures to Russia and China,” adding that “no matter how hard the beneficiaries of the current globalist model try to cling to it, it’s doomed.”

“The era of the unipolar world order is nearing its end,” he said.

NATION

Cheney braces for outcome in Wyo. House race

Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, a leader in the Republican resistance to former President Donald Trump, is fighting to save her seat in the U.S. House on Tuesday as voters weigh in on the direction of the GOP.

Cheney's team is bracing for a loss against a Trump-backed challenger in the state in which he won by the largest of margins during the 2020 campaign.

Win or lose, the 56-year-old daughter of a vice president is vowing to remain in national politics as she contemplates a 2024 presidential bid. But in the short term, Cheney is facing a dire threat from Re-

publican opponent Harriet Hageman, a Cheyenne ranching industry attorney who has harnessed the full fury of the Trump movement in her bid to expel Cheney from the House.

"I'm still hopeful that the polling numbers are wrong," said Landon Brown, a Wyoming state representative and vocal Cheney ally. "It'll be a crying shame really if she does lose. It shows just how much of a stranglehold that Donald Trump has on the Republican Party."

Tuesday's contests in Wyoming and Alaska offer one of the final tests for Trump and his brand of hard-line politics ahead of the November general election. So far, the former president has largely dominated the

fight to shape the GOP in his image, having helped install loyalists in key general election matchups from Arizona to Georgia to Pennsylvania.

In Alaska, a recent change to state election law gives a periodic Trump critic, U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, an opportunity to survive the former president's wrath, even after she voted to convict him in his second impeachment trial.

The top four primary Senate candidates in Alaska, regardless of party, will advance to the November general election, where voters will rank them in order of preference.

In all, seven Republican senators and 10 Republican House members joined every Democrat in support-

ing Trump's impeachment in the days after his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol as Congress tried to certify President Joe Biden's victory.

Just two of those 10 House members have won their GOP primaries this year. The rest have lost or declined to seek reelection. Cheney would be just the third to return to Congress if she defies expectations Tuesday.

Murkowski is facing 18 opponents — the most prominent of which is Republican Kelly Tshibaka, who has been endorsed by Trump — in her push to preserve a seat she has held for nearly 20 years. Trump railed against Murkowski

on social media and in her home state of Alaska, where he hosted a rally with Tshibaka last month in Anchorage.

In contrast to vulnerable Republican candidates who cozied up to Trump in other states this summer, Murkowski has continued to promote her bipartisan credentials.

"When you get the ideas from both sides coming together, little bit of compromise in the middle, this is what lasts beyond administrations, beyond changes in leadership," the Republican senator said in a video posted on social media over the weekend. "This is what allows for stability and certainty. And it comes through bipartisanship."



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NATION

Companies facing 1st tax on stock buybacks

By MARCY GORDON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats have pulled off a quiet first in their just-passed legislation addressing climate change and health care: the creation of a tax on stock buybacks, a cherished tool of Corporate America that had long seemed untouchable.

Under the bill President Joe Biden was scheduled to sign into law Tuesday, companies will face a new 1% excise tax on purchases of their own shares, effectively paying a penalty for a maneuver that they have long used to return cash to investors and bolster their stock price. The tax takes effect in 2023.

Buybacks have ballooned in recent years — they're forecast to reach \$1 trillion in 2022 — as companies have swelled with cash from sky-high profits.

Democrats say that instead of returning cash to shareholders, big companies should use the money to increase employees' wages or invest in the business. They are hoping the excise tax — it's projected to bring the government an additional \$74 billion in revenue over 10 years — will cause a major shift in corporate behavior.

But some experts are skeptical that the tax will work as intended. They note that businesses have

other methods for rewarding shareholders, raising the prospect that legislation aimed at halting one corporate stock practice could instead facilitate another, with new and unpredictable effects on the economy.

How it all plays out could be significant for the future landscape of big U.S. companies, their employees and their shareholders, and for the political staying power of one of the signature legislative initiatives of Biden and his Democratic majorities in Congress.

Where stock buybacks stand as the Democratic bill becomes law:

Buyback bonanza

The major companies in the S&P 500 index bought a record amount of their own stock last year, \$882 billion. Their buybacks reached \$984 billion in the 12 months ended in March, another record.

Among the biggest repurchasers of stock are Big Tech companies such as Apple, Facebook parent Meta and Google parent Alphabet.

Companies have been plowing more of their cash into buying their own stock even as they've grappled with rising inflation, higher interest rates and the potential for stunted economic growth. They've faced higher expenses for raw materials, ship-



RICHARD DREW/AP

The Federal Hall statue of George Washington overlooks the New York Stock Exchange.

ping and labor.

Buybacks can increase companies' earnings per share because there are fewer shares universally held by shareholders. The buybacks can also signal confidence from executives about a company's financial prospects.

What's next?

"I hate stock buybacks," Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., told reporters as the legislative package advanced through Congress. "I think they're one of the most self-serving things that Corporate America does, instead of investing in workers and training and research and equipment."

That makes for appealing election-year rhetoric, but whether the Democrats' aspiration will translate into different business behavior is less clear.

It's an admirable policy goal, says Steven Rosenthal, senior fellow at the nonpartisan Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, who calls the new excise tax on buybacks "efficient, fair and easily administered."

But will the goal be achieved? Rosenthal noted that in the wake of the 2017 Republican tax law, which gave companies a cash windfall by slashing the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21%, a wave of buybacks ensued. After the

new excise tax goes into effect, companies might use some of the money they would have spent on buybacks to pay more dividends to shareholders instead, he suggested. The new tax puts buybacks closer to an equal tax footing with dividends.

Rosenthal doesn't rule out, though, that companies decide to put some of the saved money into raising workers' pay or investing in the business.

A modest hit?

Because the new excise tax will be calculated on the smaller, net amount of a company's buybacks — total repurchases minus shares issued during the year — some companies may see it as modest hit worth taking and continue purchasing stock.

The tax won't apply to stock contributed to retirement accounts, pensions and employee stock-ownership plans.

After surveying its analysts about the tax, RBC Capital Markets suggested that companies may grumble about it, but "it's unlikely to impact planning."

One thing is all but certain: With the new tax scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, companies have a deadline for buying back their stock tax-free. That means a flurry of buybacks could come in the months ahead.

What's in big Biden bill? Health, climate goals become law

By LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden arrived at the White House promising to "build back" America, and legislation he's signing Tuesday delivers a slimmer, though not insignificant, version of that once sweeping idea.

Approved by the divided Congress, the bill brings the biggest investment ever in the U.S. to fight climate change. Also in the legislation is a \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for Medicare recipients as well as a new 15% corporate minimum tax to ensure big businesses pay their share. And billions will be left over to pay down federal deficits.

Democrats alone supported the package, as Republicans lined up against it.

Voters will be left to sort it out in the November elections, when control of Congress will be decided.

Not as robust as Biden's initial ideas to rebuild America's public infrastructure and family support systems, here's what's in the estimated \$740 billion package — made up of \$440 billion in new spending and \$300 billion toward easing deficits.

Lower prescription drug costs

Launching a long-sought goal, the bill would allow the Medicare program to negotiate some prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies, saving the federal government some \$288 billion over the 10-year budget window.

The result is expected to lower costs for older adults on medications, including a \$2,000 out-of-pocket cap for older adults buying prescriptions from pharmacies.

The revenue raised would also be used to provide free vaccinations for seniors, who now are among the few not guaranteed free access, according to a summary document.

Tackling health insurance

The bill would extend the subsidies provided during the COVID-19 pandemic to help some Americans who buy health insurance on their own.

Under earlier pandemic relief, the extra help was set to expire this year. But the bill would allow the assistance to keep going for three more years, lowering insurance premiums for some 13 million people who are purchasing their own health care policies through the Affordable Care Act.

Investment in climate change

The bill would infuse nearly \$375 billion over the decade in climate change-fighting strategies that Democrats believe could put the country on a path to cut greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030, and "would represent the single biggest climate investment in U.S. history, by far."

For consumers, that means tax rebates to buy electric vehicles — \$4,000 for used vehicle purchase and up to \$7,500 for new ones, eligible to households with incomes of \$300,000 or less for couples, or single people with income of \$150,000 or less.

For businesses, the bill has \$60 billion for a clean energy manufacturing tax credit and \$30 billion for a production tax credit for wind and solar, seen as ways to boost and support the industries that can help curb the country's dependence on fossil fuels.

How to pay for all this?

One of the biggest revenue-raisers in the bill is a new 15% minimum tax on corporations that earn more than \$1 billion in annual profits.

It's a way to clamp down on some 200 U.S. companies that avoid paying the standard 21% corporate tax rate, including some that end up paying no taxes at all.

The new corporate minimum tax would kick in after the 2022 tax year and raise more than \$258 billion over the decade.

There will also be a new 1% excise tax imposed on stock buybacks, raising some \$74 billion over the decade.

Savings from allowing Medicare's negotiations with the drug companies is expected to bring in \$288 billion over 10 years, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office.

The bill sticks with Biden's original pledge not to raise taxes on families or businesses making less than \$400,000 a year.

Yet money is also raised by boosting the IRS to go after tax cheats.

The bill proposes an \$80 billion investment in taxpayer services, enforcement

and modernization, which is projected to raise \$203 billion in new revenue — a net gain of \$124 billion over the decade.

Extra money to pay deficits

With some \$740 billion in new revenue and around \$440 billion in new investments, the bill promises to put the difference of about \$300 billion toward deficit reduction.

Federal deficits spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic when federal spending soared and tax revenues fell as the nation's economy churned through shutdowns, closed offices and other massive changes.

The nation has seen deficits rise and fall in recent years.

But overall federal budgeting is on an unsustainable path, according to the Congressional Budget Office, which recently put out a new report on long-term projections.

What's left behind?

The package, nowhere near the sweeping Build Back Better program Biden once envisioned, remains a sizable undertaking and, along with COVID-19 relief and the GOP 2017 tax cuts, is among the more substantial bills from Congress in years.

While Congress did pass and Biden signed into law a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill for highways, broadband and other investments that was part of the White House's initial vision, the Democrats' other big priorities have slipped away.

NATION

US against unsealing Mar-a-Lago warrant affidavit

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department on Monday rebuffed efforts to make public the affidavit supporting the search warrant for former President Donald Trump’s estate in Florida, saying the investigation “implicates highly classified material” and that the document contains sensitive information about witnesses.

The government’s opposition came in response to court filings by several news organizations, including The Associated Press, seeking to unseal the underlying affidavit the Justice Department submitted when it asked for the warrant to search Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate earlier this month.

Trump, in a Truth Social post early Tuesday, called for the release of the unredacted affidavit in the interest of transparency.

The court filing — from Juan Antonio Gonzalez, the U.S. attorney in Miami, and Jay Bratt, a top Justice Department national security official — argues that making the affidavit public would “cause significant and irreparable damage to this ongoing criminal investigation.”

The document, prosecutors have said, details “highly sensitive information about witnesses,” including people who have been interviewed by the government, and contains confidential grand jury information.

The government told a federal magistrate judge that prosecutors believe some additional records, including the cover sheet for the warrant and the government’s request to seal the documents,



STEVE HELBER/AP

An aerial view of former President Donald Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate last week in Palm Beach, Fla.

should now be made public.

A property receipt unsealed Friday showed the FBI seized 11 sets of classified documents, with some not only marked top secret but also “sensitive compartmented information,” a special category meant to protect the nation’s most important secrets that if re-

vealed publicly could cause “exceptionally grave” damage to U.S. interests. The court records did not provide specific details about information the documents might contain.

The Justice Department acknowledged Monday that its ongoing criminal investigation “im-

plicates highly classified material.”

The search warrant, also unsealed Friday, said federal agents were investigating potential violations of three different federal laws, including one that governs gathering, transmitting or losing defense information under the

Espionage Act. The other statutes address the concealment, mutilation or removal of records and the destruction, alteration or falsification of records in federal investigations.

The Mar-a-Lago search warrant, carried out last Monday, was part of an ongoing Justice Department investigation into the discovery of classified White House records recovered from Trump’s home earlier this year. The National Archives had asked the department to investigate after saying 15 boxes of records it retrieved from the estate included classified records.

It remains unclear whether the Justice Department moved forward with the warrant simply as a means to retrieve the records or as part of a wider criminal investigation or an attempt to prosecute the former president. Multiple federal laws govern the handling of classified information, with both criminal and civil penalties, as well as presidential records.

But the Justice Department, in its filing Monday, argued that its investigation is active and ongoing, and that releasing additional information could not only compromise the probe but also subject witnesses to threats or deter others from coming forward to cooperate with prosecutors.

“If disclosed, the affidavit would serve as a roadmap to the government’s ongoing investigation, providing specific details about its direction and likely course, in a manner that is highly likely to compromise future investigative steps,” the government wrote in the court filing.

Trump executive Weisselberg in plea talks to resolve tax case

Bloomberg News

NEW YORK — Allen Weisselberg, the Trump Organization’s longtime chief financial officer, is in plea talks with state prosecutors to resolve tax fraud charges and avoid an October trial, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Weisselberg and the Trump Or-

ganization were charged last year, accused of conspiring to avoid income taxes by giving some employees perks that weren’t reported to state tax authorities. Weisselberg, 75, was accused of being the main beneficiary, receiving more than \$1.7 million in benefits including a free Manhattan luxury apart-

ment and Mercedes-Benz cars for both him and his wife.

At an Aug. 12 hearing, New York State Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan rejected requests from the company and Weisselberg to dismiss the charges and ordered both to trial beginning Oct. 24.

Weisselberg’s lawyers met with

prosecutors on Monday to discuss a resolution ahead of the trial, said the people who weren’t authorized to speak because the matter isn’t public. The New York Times reported the plea talks earlier.

If Weisselberg’s plea goes forward, it would still leave former President Donald Trump’s compa-

ny facing the tax fraud case alone. The trial could be underway during the November midterm elections and is one of several legal threats facing Trump.

Monday’s conference appeared on a New York court database. Another hearing has been scheduled for Thursday, records show.

Giuliani being targeted in Georgia criminal probe of 2020 election

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Rudy Giuliani is a target of the criminal investigation into possible illegal attempts by then-President Donald Trump and others to interfere in the 2020 general election in Georgia, prosecutors informed attorneys for the former New York mayor on Monday.

The revelation that Giuliani, an outspoken Trump defender, could face criminal charges from the investigation by Fulton County Dis-



Giuliani

trict Attorney Fani Willis edges the probe closer to the former president. Willis has said she is considering calling Trump himself to testify before the special grand jury, and the former president has hired a criminal defense attorney in Atlanta.

Giuliani, who spread false claims of election fraud in Atlan-

ta’s Fulton County as he led election-challenging efforts in Georgia, was set to testify Wednesday before a special grand jury that was impaneled at Willis’ request. Giuliani’s lawyer declined to say whether he would answer questions or decline.

Special prosecutor Nathan Wade alerted Giuliani’s team in Atlanta that he was an investigation target, Giuliani attorney Robert Costello said Monday. News of the disclosure was first reported

by The New York Times.

Speaking on a New York radio show Monday, Giuliani said he had been serving as Trump’s attorney in Georgia.

“You do this to a lawyer, we don’t have America anymore,” he said.

Earlier Monday, a federal judge said U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham must testify before the special grand jury. Prosecutors have said they want to ask Graham about phone calls they say he made to Georgia Secretary of State Brad

Raffensperger and his staff in the weeks following the election.

Willis’s investigation was spurred by a phone call between Trump and Raffensperger. During that January 2021 conversation, Trump suggested that Raffensperger “find” the votes needed to reverse his narrow loss in the state.

Willis last month filed petitions seeking to compel testimony from seven Trump associates and advisers.

NATION

Man arrested for threatening federal agents

By JEREMY ROEBUCK
The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — A Pennsylvania man who threatened to slaughter FBI agents and “water the trees of liberty” with their blood on social media last week after the search of former President Donald Trump’s Florida estate was arrested by federal authorities on Monday.

Adam Bies, 46, of Mercer, faces one count of influencing, impeding or retaliating against federal law enforcement officers — a charge punishable by up to six years in prison.

His arrest comes amid heightened concern over the violent rhetoric spreading on pro-Trump internet forums against FBI agents, which may have played a role in two attacks last week involving other men with Pennsylvania ties.

Bies, who works as a “travel and adventure photographer” under the professional alias Adam Kenneth Campbell, first came to the FBI’s attention due to a series of threats he began posting on the right-wing platform Gab two days after the Mar-a-Lago search. It was not clear from court filings whether he’d retained an attorney.

According to a criminal complaint filed in his case, the bureau’s domestic terrorism tracking group flagged posts from his account “BlankFocus,” including one in which said his only goal was to kill as many agents as he could before he dropped.

“Every single piece of s — who works for the FBI in any capacity, from the director down to the janitor who cleans their f — ing toilets deserves to die,” he wrote last Wednesday, according to the filing. “You’ve declared war on us and now it’s open season.”

Moments later, he added: “HEY FEDS. We the people cannot WAIT to water the trees of liberty with your blood.”

Gab, popular with far-right extremists and believers of the QAnon conspiracy theory due to its loose moderation, has come under attack in recent years among critics who say it fosters the type of inflammatory rhetoric that can lead to violence.

Still, Bies appeared to make no effort to hide his extremist views on the platform.

“I threw away my 25-year career in software and marketing af-

ter refusing the (coronavirus) vaccine, in order to pursue a career as an internet troll funded by my own art,” he wrote in his bio on the site.

Bies’ posts are just one example of what federal officials have described as an “unprecedented” level of violent threats and calls for “civil war” or “armed rebellion” following the Aug. 8 Mar-a-Lago search as part of an investigation into Trump’s alleged possession of classified documents.

Federal authorities say concern about the potential for right-wing violence is particularly acute in Pennsylvania, home to several extremist groups and more than 70 of those charged with participating in the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol riot.

On Friday, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security issued a joint intelligence briefing warning of specific threats lodged on social media, including one to place a “dirty bomb” outside of the bureau’s headquarters in Washington.

That followed an attack Thursday on the FBI’s offices in Cincinnati by Pennsylvania-native Ricky Shiffer, 42, who was killed in a standoff with authorities after trying to breach the building with a nail gun and an AR-15 style rifle.

The Washington Post reported that Shiffer was a Navy veteran who had manned sensitive equipment aboard an attack submarine, according to his service record provided by the military. He served in the Navy for five years as a fire control technician aboard the nuclear-powered USS Columbia, according to his record.

On Sunday, another man with Pennsylvania ties — Richard Aaron York III, 29 — shot himself after ramming his car into barricades outside the Capitol building and firing several shots into the air. He’d lived in Northampton County before moving in with his mother in Delaware following a 2020 conviction for assault.

Like them, Bies predicted in his postings that he’d meet a violent end.

“I’m ready for the inevitable,” he wrote on Thursday, just hours after Shiffer’s attack on the FBI office in Cincinnati. “I already know I’m going to die at the hands of these ... law enforcement scumbags. My only goal is to kill more of them before I drop.”

He added: “I will not spend one second of my life in their custody.”



This photo provided by Gerry Keene shows a 13-year-old dog named Abby that was found by cavers on Aug. 6, in a cave in Perryville, Mo.

Dog missing for 2 months is found alive, saved inside Missouri cave

By JIM SALTER
Associated Press

Jeff Bohnert had all but given up on seeing his poodle-hound mix again after she went missing in early June. Two months later, he got a text from a neighbor: People exploring a nearby cave found a dog. Could it be Abby?

Bohnert doubted it, but still curious, he went to the cave site near his rural Missouri home. That’s when he saw the picture one of the rescuers took.

“I said, ‘That’s my dog,’ ” Bohnert recalled Monday.

Making Abby’s tale even more amazing is the fact that she’s just weeks shy of turning 14. Yet somehow, she managed to survive nearly 60 days out on her own, apparently much or all of it in a barren, pitch-dark, 58-degree Fahrenheit cave.

Abby and Bohnert’s other dog, Summer, do everything together, including misbehave.

On June 9, the pair ran away from home, Bohnert recalled. It had happened before, and in the rural area near Perryville in eastern Missouri, it was generally no big deal. The dogs would scamper through the fields, maybe chase something, then head home.

When Bohnert awoke the next



This image provided by Jeff Bohnert and taken by his wife, Kathy Bohnert, shows him and his dog, Abby, this month.

morning, Summer was back home but Abby was not.

Bohnert posted about his missing dog on Facebook, reached out to neighbors and contacted police, but no one had seen Abby.

On Aug. 6, Gerry Keene and five other adults, along with five children, had just entered the Berome Moore Cave, planning a day of exploring. One of the kids ran ahead of the group and yelled back to his dad, “There’s a dog in here.”

“Their dad was like, no there’s not,” Keene said.

Yes, there was.

“She was just lying there curled up in a ball,” Keene recalled. “She lifted her head and looked at us but she didn’t respond to verbal commands. She looked like she was pretty close to being done.”

Keene enlisted the help of another caver who happened to be there, Rick Haley. They knew Abby couldn’t make the estimated 500-foot walk back to the entrance, especially since it was through tight passageways and up a steep incline.

Haley was trained in cave rescues, and he retrieved a duffel bag and a blanket from his truck. They put the blanket inside the bag, then the dog, who immediately took to the warm blanket after weeks laying in the cold mud.

Still, getting Abby out was tricky given her fragility. In the rocky areas through small passageways, “we would carry her short distance, set her down, then kind of move in front of her, reach back, pick her up, and put her in front of us,” Haley said. He described it as “kind of a leap-frog kind of thing.”

These days, Abby is wagging her tail again, showing she’s putting the trauma behind her.

“It’s amazing how she’s springing back already,” Bohnert said.

Ex-ITT students get \$3.9B in debt cancellation

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Students who used federal loans to attend ITT Technical Institute as far back as 2005 will automatically get that debt canceled after authorities found “widespread and pervasive misrepresentations” at the defunct for-profit college chain, the Biden administration announced Tuesday.

The action will cancel \$3.9 billion in federal student debt for 208,000 borrowers, the Education Department said.

The debt is being forgiven using a federal rule known as borrower defense, which is meant to protect students from colleges that make false advertising claims or otherwise commit fraud.

“The evidence shows that for years, ITT’s leaders intentionally misled students about the quality of their programs in order to profit off federal student loan programs, with no regard for the hardship this would cause,” Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said recently.

President Joe Biden supported debt cancellation as a presidential candidate and for months has been considering erasing up to \$10,000 per borrower. He recently promised a decision by the end of August, but Tuesday’s announcement cast no new light on his thinking.

The new policy will automatically cancel any remaining federal student debt that was used to attend ITT Tech from Jan. 1, 2005, through its closure in 2016.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

British regulator 1st to OK Moderna's booster

By MARIA CHEN
Associated Press

LONDON — British drug regulators have become the first in the world to authorize an updated version of Moderna's coronavirus vaccine that includes protection against the omicron variant, which the government said would be offered to people aged 50 and over starting in the fall.

In a statement on Monday, the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency said it had given the green light to Moderna's combination "bivalent" vaccine, which will be used as an adult booster shot.

Each dose of the booster shot will target both the original COVID-19 virus that was first detected in 2020 and the omicron BA.1 variant that was first picked up in November.

British regulators said the side effects were similar to those seen for Moderna's original booster shot and were typically "mild and self-resolving."

"What this (combination) vaccine gives us is a sharpened tool in our armory to help protect us against this disease as the virus continues to evolve," said Dr June Raine, the head of Britain's health care and medicines regulator.

British health secretary Steve Barclay said the new shot will be part of the country's booster program roll-out from September, based on advice from the government's vaccine experts.

"This safe and effective vaccine will broaden immunity and potentially improve protections against some variants as we learn to live with this virus," Barclay said.

Such an approach, combining protection against several strains of the same disease is used with flu shots, which are adjusted each year depending on the variants that are circulating and can pro-



A man wearing a face mask walks past a health campaign poster from the One NGO, in an underpass leading to Westminster underground train station, in London in January.

MATT DUNHAM/AP

tect against four influenza strains.

Stephane Bancel, Moderna's Chief Executive, said in a statement that it was the first regulatory authorization for a vaccine aiming to fight the omicron variant, predicting the booster would have an "important role" to play in protecting people against COVID-19 in the winter.

On Friday, Germany's health minister said the European Medicines Agency might clear tweaked COVID-19 boosters next month.

In June, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration told vaccine makers that any booster shots tweaked for the fall would have to include

protection against the newest omicron variants, meaning BA.4 and BA.5, not the BA.1 subvariant included in Moderna's latest shot.

Last month, the FDA said it was no longer considering authorizing a second COVID-19 booster for all adults but would instead focus on revamped vaccines for the autumn that target the newest viral subvariants.

Both Moderna and Pfizer are currently brewing updated versions of their vaccine to include BA.5 in addition to the original COVID-19 virus.

According to the World Health Organization, the latest global surge of COVID-19 has been dri-

ven by omicron subvariant BA.5, which is responsible about 70% of the virus samples shared with the world's largest public virus database. The subvariant BA.5 is even more infectious than the original version of omicron and has some genetic differences that earlier vaccines might not address.

Scientists have warned that the continued genetic evolution of COVID-19 means drugmakers will likely be one step behind the virus in their efforts to tailor their vaccines.

"The virus is unlikely to stand still and Omicron-targeted immunity, might push the virus down other evolutionary paths," warned



ROGELIO V. SOLIS/AP

A vial of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine rests on a table at an inoculation station next to Jackson State University in Jackson, Miss., on July 19.

Jonathan Ball, a professor of virology at Britain's University of Nottingham. Still, he said the new Moderna vaccine would likely still be protective against severe disease.

Other experts said it was still unknown how effective the new combination vaccine would be.

Beate Kampmann, director of the Vaccine Centre at London's School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said the shot would most likely only offer "partial protection" against the latest omicron variants including BA.5 since it was developed based on earlier versions of COVID-19.

"How much difference such (combination) vaccines can actually make remains to be seen," she said, noting that the shots have not yet been widely tested in different populations.

Defense secretary tests positive for coronavirus

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Monday tested positive for coronavirus and is experiencing mild symptoms, he said in a statement.

Austin will continue his normal work schedule from home while quarantining for the next five days, he said.

"I will retain all authorities and plan to maintain my normal work schedule virtually from home," Austin said. "My last in-person contact with President [Joe Biden] was on July 29."

Biden recently had the virus, testing positive on July 21 and again with a rebound case on July 30, according to the White House.

Austin last tested positive in January for the virus. He is fully vaccinated against the illness, according to the Pentagon.

"Now, as in January, my doctor told me that my fully vaccinated status, including two booster shots, is why my symptoms are less severe than would otherwise be the case," he said.

Austin, who mandated the vaccine for all service members in August, said vaccinations "continue to both slow the spread of (coronavirus) and to make its health effects less severe."

"Vaccination remains a medical requirement for our workforce, and I continue to encourage everyone to get fully vaccinated and boosted," he said.



Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin

Austin's illness comes after Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough tested positive for the coronavirus Friday.

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Jill Biden tests positive for COVID-19, has 'mild' symptoms

Associated Press

KIAWAH ISLAND, S.C. — First lady Jill Biden tested positive for COVID-19 and was experiencing "mild symptoms," the White House announced Tuesday. President Joe Biden continues to test negative after recently recovering from the virus but will wear a mask indoors for 10 days as a precaution.

The Bidens have been vacationing in South Carolina since Aug. 10, and the 71-year-old first lady began experiencing symptoms on Monday. Jill Biden, like her husband, has been twice-vaccinated and twice-boosted with the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. She has been prescribed the antiviral drug Paxlovid and will isolate at the vacation home for at least five days.

"Close contacts of the First Lady have been notified," her communications director, Elizabeth Alexander, said in a statement "She is currently staying at a private residence in South Carolina and will return home after she receives two consecutive negative COVID tests."

The president tested negative for the virus on Tuesday morning, the White House said, but would be wearing a mask indoors for 10 days.

He planned to return to Washington on Tuesday to sign Democrats' landmark climate change and health care bill in the afternoon, before continuing to his home in Wilmington, Del.

He recovered from a rebound case of the virus on Aug. 7.

WORLD

Kenya opposition figure plans to challenge results of election

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — Opposition figure Raila Odinga said Tuesday that he would challenge the results of Kenya's close presidential election with "all constitutional and legal options" after Deputy President William Ruto was declared the winner, bringing new uncertainty to East Africa's most stable democracy.

Now the country faces weeks of disputes and the possibility that the Supreme Court will order another election. Religious and other leaders have pleaded for calm to continue in a nation with a history of dead-

ly post-election violence.

"Let no one take the law into their own hands," Odinga said to his often-passionate supporters.

It was Odinga's first appearance since Kenya's electoral commission chairman declared Ruto the winner Monday with almost 50.5% of the votes. Four of the seven commissioners abruptly announced that they couldn't support the results, and Odinga supporters scuffled with the remaining commissioners at the venue where the announcement was made.

Shortly before Odinga spoke, the four commissioners asserted to

journalists that the chairman's final math added up to 100.01% and that the excess votes would have made a "significant difference." They also said he didn't give them a chance to discuss the results before making his declaration.

"What we saw yesterday was a travesty and blatant disregard of the constitution," Odinga said, calling the election results "null and void."

The president-elect has called the commissioners' allegations a "sideshow" and said they had no effect on the declaration's legality. A U.S. Embassy statement on Mon-



BEN CURTIS/AP

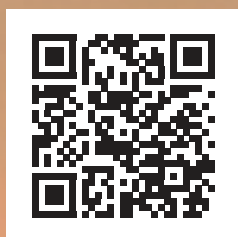
A supporter of presidential candidate Raila Odinga holds a placard next to a roadblock of burning tires in Nairobi, Kenya, on Monday. Protests erupted in some cities after Deputy President William Ruto was declared the winner in Kenya's presidential election.

day called the declaration "an important milestone in the electoral process."

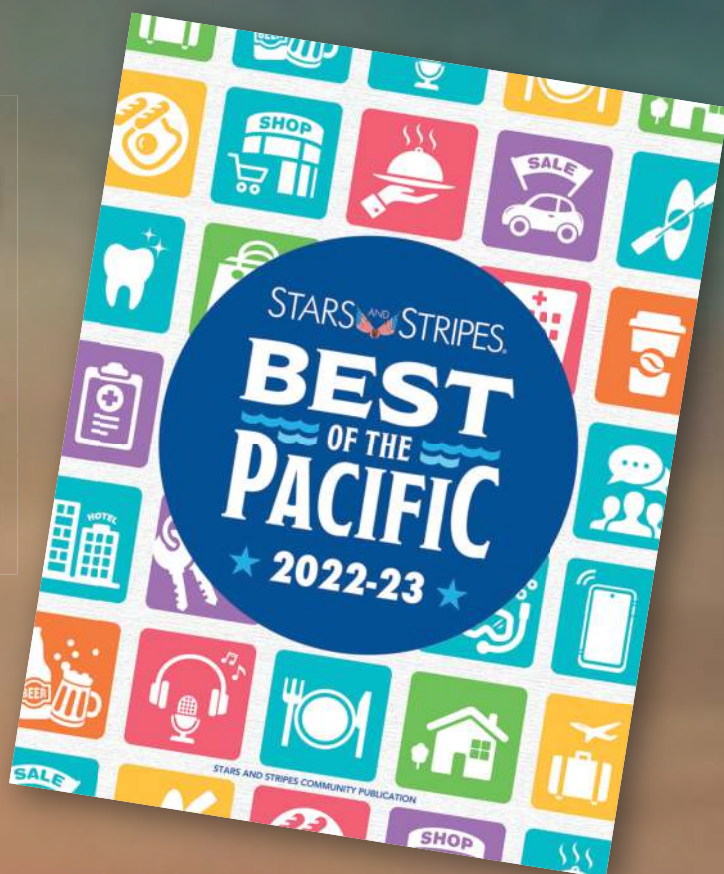
The 77-year-old Odinga has pursued the presidency for a quarter-century.

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WORLD

Britain says monkeypox outbreak showing signs of slowing down

Associated Press

LONDON — British health officials say the monkeypox outbreak across the country “shows signs of slowing” but that it’s still too soon to know if the decline will be maintained.

In a statement on Monday, the Health Security Agency said authorities are reporting about 29 new monkeypox infections every day, compared with about 52 cases a day during the last week in June. In July, officials estimated

the outbreak was doubling in size about every two weeks. To date, the U.K. has recorded more than 3,000 cases of monkeypox, with more than 70% of cases in London.

The agency also said more than 27,000 people were immunized with a vaccine designed against smallpox, a related disease.

“These thousands of vaccines, administered by the (National Health Service) to those at highest risk of exposure, should have a significant impact on the trans-

mission of the virus,” the agency said. It said the vast majority of cases were in men who are gay, bisexual or have sex with other men and that vaccines were being prioritized for them.

Last month, Britain downgraded its assessment of the monkeypox outbreak after seeing no signs of sustained monkeypox transmission beyond the sexual networks of men who have sex with men; 99% of infections in the U.K. are in men.

One dead in Germany after self-driving BMW veers into traffic

Associated Press

BERLIN — Police in Germany said Tuesday that one person has died and nine were seriously injured after a self-driving test car veered into oncoming traffic, triggering a series of collisions involving four vehicles Monday afternoon.

A spokesman for police in the southwestern town of Reutlingen said the electric BMW iX with five people on board, including a young child, swerved out of its lane at a bend in the road and into incoming traffic, brushing an oncoming Citroen.

The BMW then hit a Mercedes-

Benz van head-on, resulting in the death of a 33-year-old passenger in that vehicle.

Meanwhile, the 70-year-old driver of the Citroen lost control of her car and crashed into another vehicle with two people on board, pushing it off the road and causing it to burst into flames. Reutlingen police spokesman Michael Schaal said four rescue helicopters were involved in the medical response and the injured were taken to several hospitals. They included the 43-year-old driver of the BMW, three adults aged 31, 42 and 47, and an 18-month-old child — all of whom were in the test vehicle.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Ex-employee shut down PD website over dispute

MA NEWTON — Officials in a Boston suburb are investigating a former city employee they say shut down the police website during a pay dispute.

Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller said the former employee, who was the police department information technology director, took down the department website in late June and July. The website instead directed visitors to a message that called on them to contact Fuller and ask the mayor to restore it, The Boston Globe reported.

Fuller said the employee controls access to the site and has not turned it over to the city. Newton has created a new police department website in its place. The old website was no longer active.

The Globe reported that the employee felt he was owed \$137,000 in compensatory time at the time he shut down the website, the paper reported.

2 people dead after SUV crashes into restaurant

NC WILSON — A sport utility vehicle crashed into a North Carolina fast-food restaurant, killing two sibling customers, police said.

The single-vehicle crash occurred at a Hardee's restaurant in Wilson, around 40 miles east of the state capital, Raleigh.

The Lincoln Aviator struck brothers Christopher Ruffin, 58, and Clay Ruffin, 62, both from Wilson, according to a police news release. Christopher Ruffin was pronounced dead at the scene, while his brother died at ECU Health Medical Center in Greenville.

Police identified the driver as Jesse Lawrence, 78, of Wilson, who was treated at Wilson Medical Center and released. The investigation was still ongoing, but police said they didn't believe the crash to be medical- or impairment-related.

Deputy frees bear who was trapped inside car

TN COSBY — A Tennessee deputy responded to reports for a bear in a car.

A Cocke County Sheriff's Office deputy responded to the call. After failed attempts to reach wildlife officials, the deputy shot out a rear passenger window with two 12-gauge bean bag rounds, breaking the glass. The bear climbed out and away without any apparent injuries, WATE-TV reported.

The owner of the SUV told officials that she heard a car door shut, and then checked the car and found the bear.

While inside the car, the bear chewed most of the upholstery and electronics, breaking the locking mechanism, according to the police report. There was no



JAE C. HONG/AP

Horse-ing around

Moe Merrill, 8, pats her horse while watching a calf roping competition at Jackson Hole Rodeo in Jackson, Wyo.

cause for the bear to enter the car, such as food or trash, police reported.

Authorities capture fugitive after 9 months

WI MADISON — Authorities have captured a Wisconsin fugitive in Ohio after a nine-month search.

The U.S. Marshals Service said a task force of marshals and police found Robert Johnson Jr. at a residence in Toledo. Johnson fled in a vehicle but crashed it as police gave chase and was apprehended.

The marshals service said Johnson escaped from custody in November 2021 while a private company was transporting him from Laredo, Texas, to jail in Janesville, Wis.

He asked to have his handcuffs removed so he could use the bathroom at Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, according to the marshals service. Once he was uncuffed, he punched his transporter and escaped.

Johnson is wanted on charges of escape, drug possession, a sex offender registration violation and a parole violation.

Lawsuit filed after death from exploding airbag

MI HOUGHTON — The family of a Michigan woman who was killed after an airbag module exploded in her SUV following a crash filed a law-

suit alleging negligence.

The complaint was filed in Houghton County Circuit Court and names Arc Automotive Inc., General Motors and Toyoda Gosei North America Corp. It seeks a jury trial and more than \$25,000 in damages.

The lawsuit claims that pieces of the airbag inflator, steering wheel and steering column from Marlene Beaudoin's Chevy Traverse pierced her chest, neck and head after her vehicle was struck Aug. 15, 2021, by a car in Calumet in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Police reports showed that a metal inflator fragment hit her neck in the crash. Beaudoin, 39, died at a hospital.

Man's plan to ambush cops thwarted by training

SC COLUMBIA — A 25-year-old man with a hand-drawn map that included "dead pigs" written at the bottom tried to ambush deputies from his home but his plan was stopped when the deputies followed training and got out of the firing zone, a South Carolina sheriff.

One deputy was slightly injured when one of 16 rounds fired by the man hit and shattered the windshield of his patrol car, Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said at a news conference.

Other bullets were found in nearby homes and cars in the densely packed suburban neighborhood northeast of Columbia. The

shooter walked outside and killed himself, but no one else was hurt, Lott said.

The deputies came to the home after the man called 911 twice to say a woman was being beaten by a man. While several officers responded since it was a potentially life-threatening call, only one deputy approached the home, ruining the shooter's plans, the sheriff said.

"His intent was to kill as many Richland County deputies as he could," Lott said.

Lott showed a hand-drawn map the shooter made of the floor plan of his parents' home. It indicated at least four points where he could fire on deputies with outside trees and other obstructions drawn as well.

Angler wins record prize at White Marlin Open

MD OCEAN CITY — An angler from suburban Washington, D.C., got a record prize at the annual White Marlin Open on Maryland's Eastern Shore, who with the boat on which he landed the winning fish earned more than \$4.5 million.

Jeremy Duffie, of Bethesda, Md., reeled in a 77.5-pound white marlin on Friday's final day of the open while fishing on the Ocean City boat Billfisher. That exceeded Thursday's 71.5-pound white marlin caught by Keeley Megarity, of Houston, while on the C-Student boat from Southside Place,

Texas. They received \$197,000 for second place, open officials said.

There were several other contest categories.

The winning 511-pound blue marlin was landed by Bill Britt from Sandy Spring, Md., who was on board the Cabana out of Fenwick Island, Del. The tuna winner was Jason Hersh, of Maple Glen, Pa., who fished aboard the Southern C's out of Ocean City to reel in a bigeye of 247.5 pounds.

State offering online service to speed REAL ID

WV CHARLESTON — The West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles is making it easier for residents to get a REAL ID ahead of the May 3 federal deadline.

The department recently announced a new online service that offers a guided path through pre-enrollment and cuts the time spent at the DMV, according to a news release.

REAL ID Headstart allows applicants to verify their identities, upload required documents, and schedule their REAL ID appointments online.

While the federal REAL ID Act requires documents be presented in-person, a change is in progress. Once the act is amended, the DMV aims to enhance REAL ID Headstart so that no in-person visit is needed.



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OPINION

Rushdie attack is a warning about where we’re headed

By MATT BAI
Special to The Washington Post

When the Iranian Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini declared a death sentence for the writer Salman Rushdie in 1989, his fatwa was seen as a direct challenge to the most basic of American values.

But by the time a black-clad assailant stabbed Rushdie multiple times at a speaking engagement last week, the attack felt less like an affront to our shared ideals than a premonition of where we’re headed.

If you’re too young to remember the late ’80s, you might not understand what a pervasive symbol of Western freedom Rushdie became. This was after he published his novel “The Satanic Verses,” with its portrayal of the Prophet Muhammad that so infuriated Iran’s radical clerics.

Rushdie stayed mostly out of sight for many years, though he reemerged one night in 1991 at Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism, where he spoke on the sanctity of the First Amendment. Every public appearance he made in the decade or so after the fatwa, with private security lurking nearby, constituted an act of remarkable courage.

If there was debate in this country over the rightness of Rushdie’s cause, I don’t recall it; even Jimmy Carter, who condemned the book in a pusillanimous New York Times op-ed, defended Rushdie’s right to be heard. Back then, pretty much everyone agreed that democracy demanded basic tolerance and free expression, even if we sometimes argued vehemently over what kind of speech was appropriate in the public square.

Those were the days when the ACLU defended the rights of Nazi sympathizers to march down the street in Illinois. And when even Republican presidents exalted the American press as a contrast to communist re-

pression and theocratic rule — despite their evident disdain for what journalists wrote.

Those were also the times when the leadership of both parties rejected violent rhetoric — let alone actual violence such as the Oklahoma City bombing — in response to political or religious grievance. You may recall that former President George H.W. Bush resigned from the National Rifle Association, an important political constituency, in 1995 after it referred to federal agents as “jack-booted thugs.” (The NRA apologized; Bush didn’t relent.)

What a different society from the one we have now, when the most basic propositions in American life are up for debate — if anyone even knows how to do that anymore.

Now the movement conservatives who once proclaimed themselves a bulwark against mob rule can’t even find the spine to distance themselves from an armed attack on the Capitol. They grovel, instead, before a leader who would have joined the uprising himself if anyone had been willing to drive him.

Two days after Kevin McCarthy, the Republican House leader, responded to the FBI search of Mar-a-Lago last week by saying that the Justice Department was in “an intolerable state of weaponized politicization,” an armed man, and apparent Donald Trump supporter, tried to enter the FBI headquarters in Cincinnati.

How close is this to a political fatwa? How long until Trump and McCarthy’s holy war starts taking the lives of political opponents and journalists?

Meanwhile, as my Washington Post colleague Margaret Sullivan notes, cultural conservatives around the country are doubling as school librarians, rooting out books by such authors as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou and Maurice Sendak. Mainstream Republicans cheer them on.

The moment demands a brave, intellectual-

ly liberal response. Good luck with that. The left’s commitment to open debate has all but disappeared when we need it most, as a stunning number of activists and academics embrace the idea that free speech is a tool of oppression, wielded by the white elite.

Even the ACLU isn’t really in the free speech business anymore, preferring instead to enforce social justice orthodoxies. First Amendment rights are still celebrated on campuses and social media — so long as you adhere to the accepted lexicon of identity and a sanctioned version of American history.

(Yeah, I know: “Both sidesism!” Give it a rest.)

Is any of this as egregious as urging on violent extremists? On the sliding scale of anti-democratic behaviors, no. But ask yourself this: If Rushdie had written his book in 2022 instead of 1988, and if the blasphemy had revolved not around Islam but around, say, the left’s notion of gender fluidity, how many leading Democrats would be standing up to champion his artistic freedom?

The answer is: very few. And that’s a problem, because the only winning response to lawlessness and censorship is a rededication to bedrock democratic ideals — and not only when it reaffirms your worldview.

Rushdie lies hospitalized in a country that still reviles Islamist extremists but that adopts, increasingly, the violence and anti-intellectualism underlying their ideology. In Tehran, newspapers hailed Rushdie’s assailant as God’s hero — a reaction that would have confounded us 30 years ago. But now we have our own ayatollahs, whipping up true believers and punishing dissent.

Rushdie wasn’t safe in America, after all. And neither, I fear, are the rest of us.

Matt Bai, a Washington Post contributing columnist, is a journalist, author and screenwriter.

Republicans should welcome Dems’ GOP-focused strategy

By HENRY OLSEN
Special to The Washington Post

Democrats have made clear they intend to make the midterm elections a battle between them and “MAGA Republicans.” The GOP should accept the challenge and respond with a tactic not used in decades: Television advertising focused on the party as a whole.

Campaigning was fiercely party-driven for most of U.S. history. Candidates would, of course, try to make their own mark, but the thrust of campaigning was carried out by organized parties on behalf of the entire ticket. The result was that voters often backed a party’s slate rather than pick and choose between individuals in each race. The party whose presidential candidate won the popular vote also won control of the House in every vote during a presidential election year between 1852 and 1956.

That changed as partisan identities forged in the crucibles of the Civil War and Great Depression began to fade. As a result, voters began increasingly to split their tickets between candidates of either party. An ancestral Democrat, for example, might vote for Ronald Reagan for president and back Democrats for most other offices. Heritage Republicans moved in the opposite direction, backing Democrats for higher offices but Republicans for lower ones.

This ushered in the modern age of campaigning that focuses on personalities rather

than parties. Candidates, perceiving that they could stand apart from their parties, started to raise money to fund their own advertising and distinct brands. This, in turn, created the modern campaign experience, where endless candidate ads blur into one another during election season.

But this approach no longer makes much political sense. Hyper-partisan polarization has dramatically reduced the number of voters willing to split their tickets between candidates of opposing parties. This is evidenced by the small number of House districts that vote for one party for Congress and another party for president. As recently as 2008, this was the case for 20% of House seats. In 2020, only 16 of the 435 districts — or less than 4% — returned a member from a different party from the top of the ticket.

The Senate is following the same pattern. In 2016, every state elected a senator of the same party as that of the presidential candidate who won the state, the first time that had happened since the 17th Amendment mandated the direct election of senators in 1913. In 2020, only Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, won in a state that the other party’s nominee won. Simply put, voters today first decide which party they favor and then look to see who that party is putting up for office.

This means Republicans must fight fire with fire. Lacking control of either chamber of Congress, they cannot use their offices to push their messages. That leaves only one option:

Large-scale television campaigns.

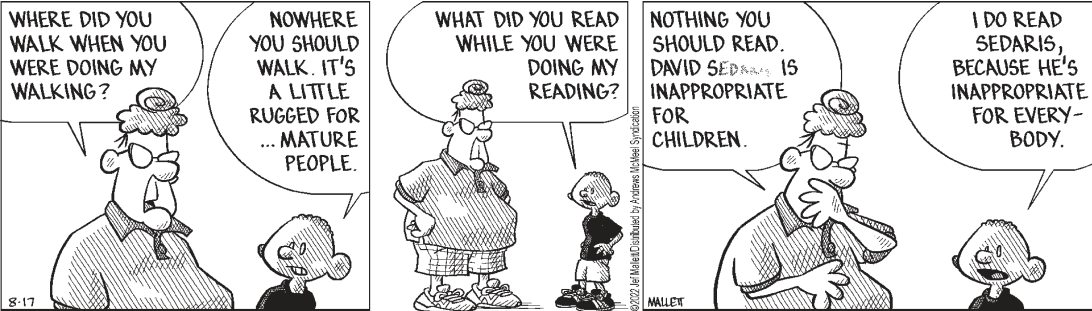
Those ads would, like any good campaign, strike both positive and negative poses. The positive ads would extol what — and who — Republicans are. A good GOP ad campaign would play up the many officeholders and voters from all genders and ethnic backgrounds and send the message that the Republican Party welcomes all.

The positive messages should also be broad and aspirational, evoking the desire to renew the American promise for our troubled times. They should resist the urge among many in the base to strike tones of fear of the future and a return to the past. That might resonate among the party’s devout, but if those beliefs were widespread, Republicans would already be the majority.

Party-focused campaigns have helped deliver some of the GOP’s largest election wins. Its 1946 midterm campaign, also fought in a time of rampant inflation, used the slogan “Had Enough?” and resulted in a large Republican wave. The 1980 GOP effort funded party-focused ads that both appealed to unease with the country’s direction and addressed people who had rarely if ever voted Republican with the cute slogan “Vote Republican. For a Change.” A 2022 GOP campaign could recycle these two winners, which are still presciently relevant to the times.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

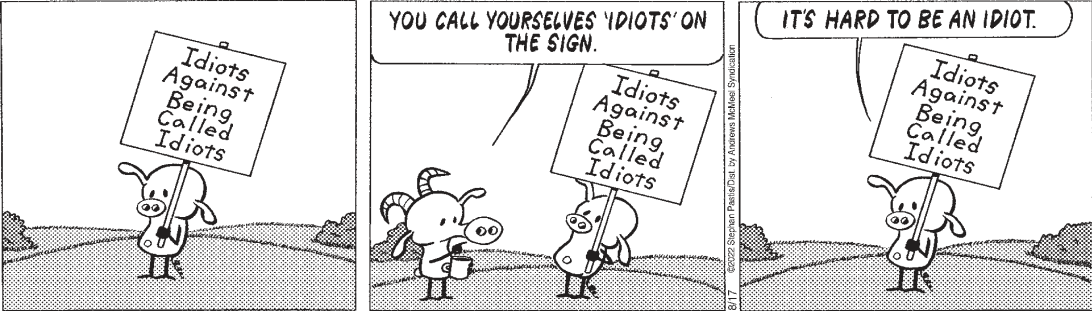
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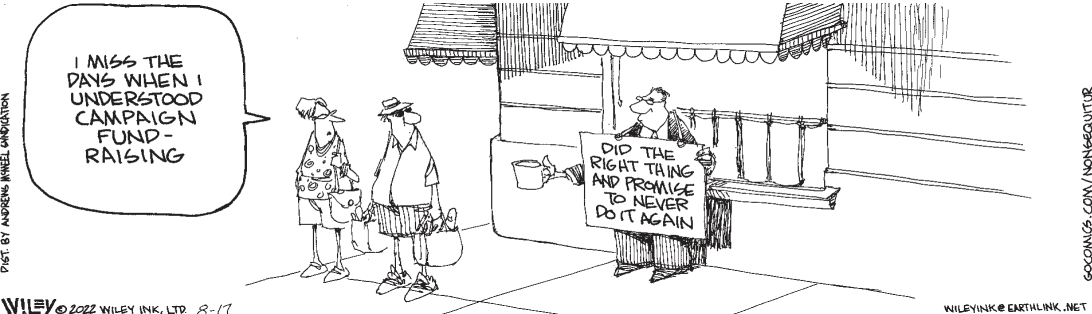
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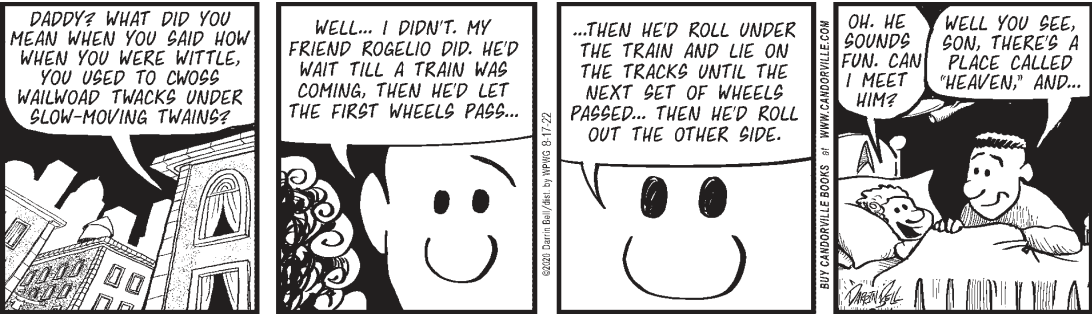
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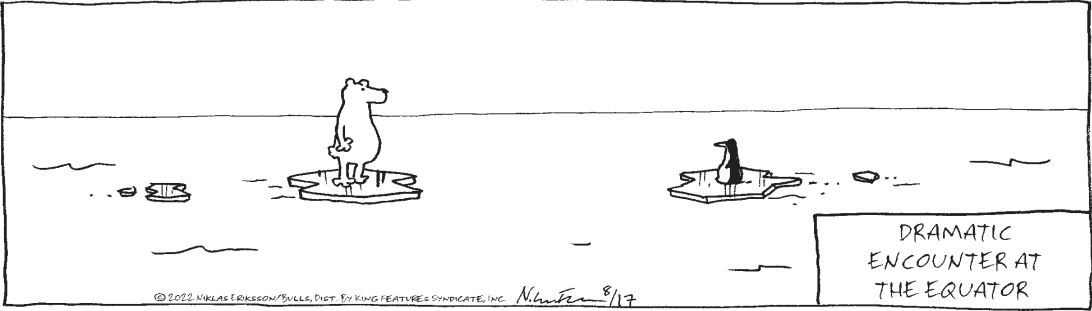
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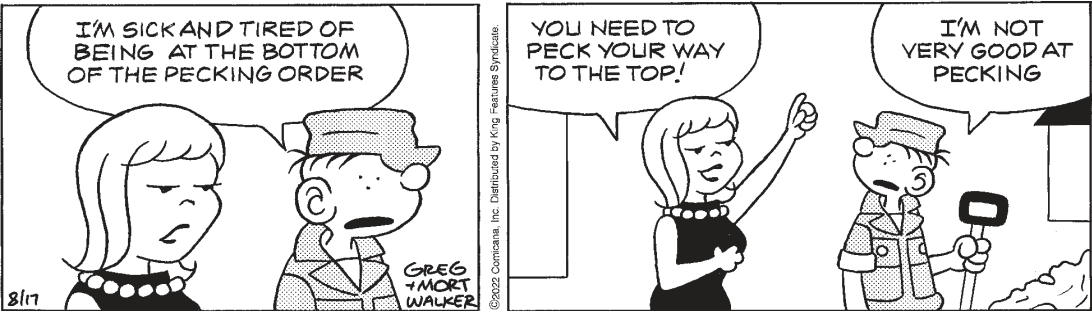
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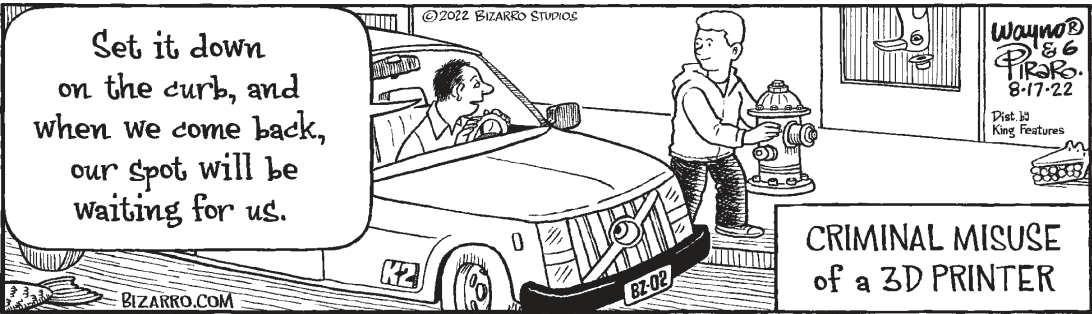
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60 Love god
61 "— a Rebel"
- DOWN
- 1 Heath
2 Activist Parks
3 Raced
4 Angel with a trumpet
5 Zero
6 Commotion
7 Labels
8 Parade attractions
9 Cyclades island
10 Decay
11 UFO engineers
17 Diner dessert
19 Sound booster
22 Handle
23 Poker payments
- 25 Medal earner
26 Actor Clive
27 Hitch
28 — Raton, Fla.
29 From the start
30 Lady of Spain
31 Belgian river
35 Stirrs up
38 "We hold these — to be ..."
40 Letter addenda, for short
42 Sixth sense
45 Top-notch
47 Beehive State
48 Get up
49 Tibetan herd
50 "Kapow!"
51 Before
52 Play segment
53 Where Lux. is
54 Ring decision

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	E	R	I		S	L	I	M		A	S	P
U	L	A	N		L	I	N	A		P	O	O
B	O	Y	F	R	I	E	N	D		P	B	S
			L	O	T	S		O	P	R	A	H
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S	L	E	W		B	U	N	N	Y	H	O	P
T	L	C		L	A	N	K	A		E	D	O
I	S	O	L	A	T	E	S		M	N	O	P
		M	A	Y	S			P	A	D	R	E
T	E	M	P	E		S	E	A	T			
O	L	E		T	R	A	N	S	C	E	N	D
L	I	N		T	U	F	T		H	A	I	R
L	A	D		E	T	E	S		A	R	T	S

8-17 CRYPTOQUIP

JZWMC BRBTDZG WTPVQ PVUAMG

IKR IZP ZU MOBMGS ZS

MOSGZQSVUA DMZC RGM JGRW

WVUMP: AZDMUZ KRGUM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT COULD YOU CALL PEOPLE WHO SEEM TO MAKE DUMB MISTAKES AT EVERY TURN? BLUNDER-ACHIEVERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals P

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FACES

New this week: ‘House of the Dragon,’ Lakers doc

Associated Press

Here’s a collection curated by The Associated Press’ entertainment journalists of what’s arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Television

■ The high-stakes drama is off the court in “Legacy: The True Story of the LA Lakers,” a 10-part docuseries that debuted Monday on Hulu. The series promises to detail how real estate magnate Jerry Buss’ 1979 acquisition of the team led to its transformation into a championship, multibillion-dollar franchise — business and family conflict included. There’s a Buss connection to the series: Jeanie Buss, his daughter and the Lakers CEO and controlling owner, is an executive producer. Antoine Fuqua (“Training Day”) directed, with Shaquille O’Neal, Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar among those interviewed.

■ Tatiana Maslany won a lead actress Emmy in 2016 for playing a half-dozen characters in “Orphan Black.” A nine-episode Disney+ comedy series set in the Marvel universe gives her two sides of one coin to work with. In “She-Hulk: Attorney at Law,” Jennifer Lewis’ career takes a turn after a transfusion from her cousin Bruce Banner, aka the Hulk, makes her a reluctant superhero and courtroom advocate for her peers. Familiar Marvel faces in the series debuting Thursday, include Mark Ruffalo as Smart Hulk, Tim Roth as Emil Blonsky-the Abomination, and Benedict Wong as Wong.

■ It’s been three years-plus since “Game of Thrones” called it a wrap, but who’s counting? The fans who’ve awaited its prequel, “House of the Dragon,” finally arriving Sunday, on HBO. The story of the House of Targaryen, set two centuries before “Game of Thrones,” is based on George



HBO

Matt Smith stars as Prince Daemon Targaryen in “House of the Dragon.” The “Game of Thrones” prequel, set two centuries prior, premieres Sunday on HBO.

R.R. Martin’s “Fire & Blood.” The cast includes Paddy Considine as King Viserys Targaryen, whom the lords of Westeros picked to succeed his grandfather, and Matt Smith as Prince Daemon Targaryen, his younger brother with “the true blood of the dragon.” Could there be trouble brewing?

— AP Television Writer Lynn Elber

Movies

■ In the almost 25 years since Princess Diana died, there has never been any shortage of content examining the enormous impact and intrigue of her short life. But a new documentary from director Ed Perkins, “The Princess,” which debuted this year at the Sundance Film Festival and is available on HBO (and HBO Max), turns the lens back on us. The film doesn’t have any talking heads or voiceover, but instead uses only archival footage to tell a different kind of

story. It is a meditative, transportive experience that is surprisingly effective.

■ Two of this summer’s most delightful theatrical releases, “Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris” and “Mr. Malcolm’s List,” are quietly now available to rent on demand and watch from home. The former is a grounded fantasy adorned with mid-century designer lore, featuring Lesley Manville as a post-WWII British housekeeper and widow. She dreams of owning a Christian Dior gown and must travel to Paris to get one (and her middle-age Sabrina moment). “Mr. Malcolm’s List,” meanwhile, is an ode to Jane Austen — a Regency-era romance full of gossip, intrigue and high society hijinks starring Freida Pinto, Zawe Ashton and Sophie Dirisu as the titular Mr. Malcolm.

■ On the other streamers, Lili Reinhart, of “Riverdale” fame, leads a Netflix pic called “Look Both Ways” about a college se-

nior whose life splits into parallel realities on graduation night. In one, she gets pregnant and has to move home to Texas. In another, she heads to Los Angeles to start her career. Co-starring “Top Gun: Maverick’s” Danny Ramirez, “Look Both Ways” hits Netflix on Wednesday. And for those looking for a scare, Paramount+ is debuting “Orphan: First Kill” on Friday. The film is a prequel to Jaume Collet-Serra’s 2009 horror “Orphan” and follows Esther as she escapes from an Estonian psychiatric facility and makes her way to America.

— AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr

Music

■ Demi Lovato’s next album flirts with NSFW. “Holy Fvck” is a track and the title of the 16-song album, out Friday. “I felt like it was a great, eye-catching title track for the rest of the album,” the pop star told SiriusXM. “And especially because there’s songs on the album that have, like, kind of religious undertones, there’s songs on the album that have this dichotomy of good and bad, and that song kind of represented both.” The first punky single, “Skin of My Teeth,” is about Lovato’s struggles with sobriety. “The reaper knocks on my door / ‘Cause I’m addicted to more,” she sings.

■ Don’t panic, Brendon Urie is back. His band Panic! At The Disco offers the album “Viva Las Vengeance” on Friday, led by the sugary single “Middle of a Breakup” and the high-energy title track. “‘Viva Las Vengeance’ is a look back at who I was 17 years ago and who I am now with the fondness I didn’t have before. I didn’t realize I was making an album and there was something about the tape machine that kept me honest,” Urie says. It’s Panic’s first music since the 2018 release of “Pray for the Wicked.”

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

Rapper A\$AP Rocky charged with felony assault with a firearm

Associated Press

Rapper A\$AP Rocky was charged with two felonies Monday for pulling a gun on a former friend and firing in Hollywood last year, prosecutors said.



A\$AP Rocky

The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office charged the 33-year-old New York native, whose legal name is Rakim Athelaston Mayers, with two counts of assault with a semiautomatic firearm. Prosecutors allege that during an argument on Nov. 6, 2021, Mayers pointed the handgun at the victim, then in a subsequent confrontation drew the gun again and fired twice in the direction of the man, who sustained a minor injury. His name has not been released.

Mayers has not entered a plea to the charges. He is scheduled to be arraigned Wednesday. An email seeking comment from representatives was not immediately returned.

Mayers and two other men fled the scene after he fired the gun, police said. He was first arrested for the incident at Los Angeles International Airport on April 20, and was released on bail the same day.

Mayers is in a relationship with Rihanna, and the two had a son in May.

He was the focus of international attention in 2019 after being detained for nearly a month in Sweden following a street brawl. He was found guilty of assault and given a “conditional sentence” that meant no additional time in jail.

Ezra Miller seeks treatment for ‘mental health issues’

After a string of arrests and erratic behavior that spanned Hawaii to Vermont, “Flash” actor Ezra Miller said they have begun treatment for “complex mental health issues.”

Miller, 29, who identifies as non-binary, issued a statement late Monday. On Sept. 26, Miller is due to appear for arraignment in Vermont Superior Court after being cited for felony burglary in Stamford, Vt. Authorities last week said Miller had taken several bottles of alcohol from a residence while the homeowners weren’t present.

“Having recently gone through a time of intense crisis, I now understand that I am suffering complex mental health issues and

have begun ongoing treatment,” Miller said in a statement. “I want to apologize to everyone that I have alarmed and upset with my past behavior. I am committed to doing the necessary work to get back to a healthy, safe and productive stage in my life.”

Miller was arrested twice this year in Hawaii, including for disorderly conduct and harassment at a karaoke bar. The second incident was for second-degree assault.

Miller’s personal troubles have been a particularly pressing issue for Warner Bros. and DC Films. After appearing in several “Justice League” movies as the Flash, Miller stars in an upcoming standalone film about the speedy superhero due out next summer.

‘The Horse Whisperer’ author Nicholas Evans dies at 72



Evans

Nicholas Evans, the British author of the bestselling novel “The Horse Whisperer,” has died at 72, his representatives said Monday.

United Agents said Evans died on Aug. 9 following a heart attack.

Published in 1995, “The Horse Whisperer” was Evans’ debut novel and sold more

than 15 million copies worldwide. The story of a trainer hired to help an injured teenager and her horse back to health was adapted into a Hollywood movie starring Robert Redford as the title character and Scarlett Johansson playing young rider Grace MacLean in her breakout role.

Born in 1950 in Worcestershire, England, Evans studied law at Oxford University and worked as a journalist in the 1970s. His other books include “The Loop,” “The Smoke Jumper,” “The Divide” and “The Brave.”

Other news

■ ESPN’s Stephen A. Smith has a memoir coming out next year. 13A, an imprint of Gallery Books, announced Tuesday that Smith’s “Straight Shooter: A Memoir of Second Chances and First Takes” is scheduled for January 2023.

■ Nearly 50 years after Sacheen Littlefeather stood on the Academy Awards stage on behalf of Marlon Brando to speak about the depiction of Native Americans in Hollywood, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences has apologized to her for the abuse she endured. The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures on Monday said that it will host Littlefeather, 75, for an evening of “conversation, healing and celebration” on Sept. 17.

SCOREBOARD/MLB

PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	13	3	9	48	45	19
CF Montréal	13	8	4	43	43	41
NYCFC	12	6	6	42	45	27
New York	10	8	7	37	38	31
Columbus	8	6	10	34	32	27
Orlando City	9	10	6	33	28	36
Inter Miami CF	9	10	6	33	32	41
New England	8	7	9	33	36	34
Cincinnati	8	8	9	33	42	45
Chicago	8	11	6	30	28	34
Charlotte FC	9	14	2	29	30	39
Toronto FC	8	12	5	29	37	43
Atlanta	7	9	8	29	33	36
D.C. United	6	14	4	22	28	48

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LAFC	17	4	3	54	53	24
Austin FC	14	5	6	48	54	34
FC Dallas	10	7	9	39	38	28
Minnesota	11	9	5	38	40	35
Real Salt Lake	10	8	7	37	33	34
LA Galaxy	10	11	3	33	37	34
Nashville	8	9	9	33	34	36
Portland	7	7	12	33	42	40
Seattle	10	13	2	32	32	31
Colorado	8	9	7	31	35	37
Vancouver	8	11	6	30	29	44
Houston	7	14	4	25	31	42
San Jose	5	11	9	24	40	53
Sporting KC	6	15	5	23	26	48

NOTE: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Sunday, Aug. 14
Minnesota 2, Nashville 1
Real Salt Lake 2, Seattle 1

Tuesday's game
D.C. United at Los Angeles FC

Wednesday's games
New York at Atlanta
New England at Toronto FC
Charlotte FC at New York City FC
Philadelphia at FC Dallas
Colorado at Vancouver

Friday's game
Seattle at LA Galaxy

Saturday's games
Cincinnati at New York
Philadelphia at D.C. United
New England at CF Montréal
Toronto FC at Miami
Austin FC at Minnesota
Houston at Colorado
Vancouver at Real Salt Lake
Los Angeles FC at San Jose

Sunday's games
Atlanta at Columbus
New York City FC at Chicago
Orlando City at Charlotte FC
Portland at Sporting Kansas City
FC Dallas at Nashville

Friday, Aug. 26
Los Angeles FC at Austin FC
Seattle at Portland

Saturday, Aug. 27
Houston at Minnesota
Miami at New York
Toronto FC at Charlotte FC
Columbus at Cincinnati
Colorado at Philadelphia
CF Montréal at Chicago
San Jose at Sporting Kansas City
Real Salt Lake at FC Dallas
Nashville at Vancouver

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	7	1	7	28	36	15
Kansas City	7	4	4	25	20	20
San Diego	7	5	4	25	21	14
Houston	7	4	4	25	26	17
OL Reign	6	4	6	24	20	15
Chicago	6	4	5	23	22	18
Angel City	6	5	3	21	15	16
Orlando	4	5	6	18	17	30
Louisville	2	6	8	14	16	22
Gotham FC	4	9	0	12	10	28
Washington	1	6	9	12	16	21
North Carolina	2	6	4	10	23	26

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Sunday, Aug. 14
OL Reign 4, Gotham FC 1
Angel City 1, Chicago 0

Wednesday's game
Gotham FC at Houston

Friday's game
Angel City at Kansas City

Saturday's games
Orlando at Gotham FC
Chicago at North Carolina
Houston at San Diego

Wednesday, Aug. 24
Portland at North Carolina

Friday, Aug. 26
OL Reign at Orlando

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

AP Top 25

The Top 25 teams in The Associated Press college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, final records, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote, and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prv
1. Alabama (54)	0-0	1566	2
2. Ohio St. (6)	0-0	1506	6
3. Georgia (3)	0-0	1455	1
4. Clemson	0-0	1292	14
5. Notre Dame	0-0	1242	8
6. Texas A&M	0-0	1212	—
7. Utah	0-0	1209	12
8. Michigan	0-0	1203	3
9. Oklahoma	0-0	956	10
10. Baylor	0-0	884	5
11. Oregon	0-0	831	22
12. Oklahoma St.	0-0	814	7
13. NC State	0-0	752	20
14. Southern Cal	0-0	711	—
15. Michigan St.	0-0	631	9
16. Miami	0-0	476	—
17. Pittsburgh	0-0	383	13
18. Wisconsin	0-0	365	—
19. Arkansas	0-0	348	21
20. Kentucky	0-0	332	18
21. Mississippi	0-0	324	11
22. Wake Forest	0-0	303	15
23. Cincinnati	0-0	265	4
24. Houston	0-0	263	17
25. BYU	0-0	234	19

Others receiving votes: Tennessee 180, Texas 164, Iowa 163, Penn St. 160, LSU 55, Fresno St. 32, Minnesota 31, UCF 27, Purdue 17, Mississippi St. 15, Auburn 15, Florida 14, Kansas St. 14, North Carolina 9, Boise St. 5, Air Force 4, Appalachian St. 4, South Carolina 2, UCLA 2, San Diego St. 2, Utah St. 2, Nebraska 1.

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball
MLB — Suspended Kansas City LHP Amir Garrett for three games and fined him an undisclosed amount for throwing a drink on a spectator in the stands during a game against the Chicago White Sox on August 2.

American League
BOSTON RED SOX — Optioned OF Jaylin Davis to Worcester (IL).

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Reinstated RHP Vince Velasquez from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Matt Foster to Charlotte (IL).

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Designated RHP Jake Jewell for assignment. Reinstated RHP James Karinchak from the restricted list. Selected the contract of RHP Xzavion Curry from Columbus (IL). Returned RHP Peyton Battenfield to Columbus.

DETROIT TIGERS — Agreed to terms with C Alonzo Rubalcaba on a minor league contract. Recalled RHP Bryan Garcia from Toledo (IL).

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Placed 1B Hunter Dozier on the paternity list. Recalled SS Maikel Garcia from Omaha (IL).

TEXAS RANGERS — Dismissed manager Chris Woodward. Named Tony Beasley interim manager for the remainder of the season.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Reinstated OF George Springer from the 10-day IL. Designated OF Bradley Zimmer for assignment.

National League
ATLANTA BRAVES — Optioned RHP Bryce Elder to Gwinnett (IL). Recalled LHP Danny Young from Gwinnett.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Reinstated C Austin Barnes from the 15-day IL. Designated C Tony Wolters for assignment.

NEW YORK METS — Placed INF Luis Guilorme and C Tomas Nido on the 10-day IL. Recalled C Michael Perez from Syracuse (IL). Selected the contract of INF Deven Marrero from Syracuse.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Designated LHP Andrew Vasquez for assignment. Reinstated RHP Sam Coonrod from the 60-day IL. Placed RHP Corey Knebel on the 15-day IL.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Recalled SS C.J. Abrams from Rochester (IL). Placed INF Luis Garcia on the 10-day IL, retroactive to August 13. Sent LHP Evan Lee to FCL on a rehab assignment.

FOOTBALL

National Football League
BALTIMORE RAVENS — Reinstated CB Marcus Peters and S Ar'Darius Washington from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Released RB Corey Clement and DB Robert Jackson.

CAROLINA PANTHERS — Placed LB Kam Martin on injured reserve after clearing waivers. Released DB Devin Jones.

CHICAGO BEARS — Waived DL Carson Taylor.

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Placed C Ben Brown on injured reserve.

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Reinstated CB Denzel Ward from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Waived WR Derrick Dillon from injured reserve with a settlement.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Released CB Kyrion Brown, RB Ryan Nall, TE Ian Bunting, WR Ty

TENNIS

Odium Brown VanOpen

Monday
At Hollyburn Country Club
Vancouver
Purse: \$115,000
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Women's Singles
Round of 32

Heather Watson, Britain, def. Elisabetta Cocciaretto (8), Italy, 3-6, 7-5, 6-2.
Catherine Harrison, United States, def. Despina Papamichail, Greece, 6-1, 6-3.
Valentini Grammatikopoulou, Greece, def. Astra Sharma, Australia, 6-2, 6-2.
Victoria Jimenez Kasintseva, Andorra, def. Misaki Doi (7), Japan, 6-3, 6-2.
Maddison Inglis, Australia, def. Harmony Tan, France, 7-6 (3), 1-6, 6-1.
Jodie Anna Burrage, Britain, def. Maja Chwalinska, Poland, 6-7 (2), 6-2, 7-6 (4).
Chloe Paquet, France, def. Carol Zhao, Canada, 6-4, 6-2.
Lucia Bronzetti (2), Italy, def. Yuriko Lily Miyazaki, Britain, 6-2, 6-2.

Women's Doubles
Round of 16
Lizette Cabrera and Priscilla Hon, Australia, def. Misaki Doi, Japan, and Rebecca Peterson (2), Sweden, 7-5, 6-3.

AP SPORTLIGHT

Aug. 17

1933 — Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees plays his 1,308th straight game to break Everett Scott's record of 1,307.

1938 — Henry Armstrong wins the lightweight title with a 15-round decision over Lou Ambers and becomes the only boxer to hold world championship titles in three weight divisions simultaneously. Armstrong won the featherweight (126-pound) title by knocking out Petey Sarron in six rounds on Oct. 29, 1937. On May 31, 1938, he won the welterweight (147-pound) championship from Barney Ross by a decision.

1960 — Flash Elorde knocks out Harold Gomes at 1:20 in the first round to win the world junior lightweight title.

1969 — Ray Floyd beats Gary Player by one stroke to win the PGA championship.

Fryfogle with injury designations. Waived DL Austin Faolui.

DENVER BRONCOS — Reinstated OLB Randy Gregory and RT Billy Turner from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Signed LB Joe Schobert. Waived G Ben Braden.

DETROIT LIONS — Waived TE Nolan Givan and C Ryan McCollum. Released TE Garrett Griffin.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Released OLB Randy Ramsey. Waived C Cole Schneider and CB Donte Vaughn. Claimed TE Nate Becker off waivers from Carolina. Placed K Gabe Brkic on injured reserve after clearing waivers.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Released DE Jordan Jenkins and WR Chad Beebe. Waived LS Harrison Elliott and RB B.J. Emmons.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Reinstated WR Mike Strachan from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list.

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Released RB Matt Colburn, QB Jake Luton, WR Ryan McDaniel and OLB Wyatt Ray. Waived K Elliott Fry with an injury designation.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Released DB Lonnie Johnson, WRs Omar Bayless and Gary Jennings and OL Evin Ksziezarczyk.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Waived WR Maurice Ffrench, QB Brandon Peters, S Skyler Thomas, DL Forrest Merrill and C Isaac Weaver.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed CB Mackensie Alexander and DT Niles Scott. Placed CB Trill Williams on injured reserve.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Claimed CB Olajiah Griffin off waivers from Buffalo.

NEW YORK JETS — Signed LT Duane Brown. Released WR Keshunn Abram.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Signed DE Niko Lalos, LB Jon Bostic and re-signed DT Jaleel Johnson. Waived DBs Jordan Brown, Isaiah Pryor with injury designations.

Waived DB Jack Koerner, DL T.J. Carter, DE Scott Patchan, K John Parker Romo and WR Easop Winston Jr. Waived DB Bryce Thompson from injured reserve with a settlement. Placed OT Ethan Greenidge on injured reserve.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Traded WR J.J. Arcega-Whiteside to Seattle in exchange for DB Ugo Amadi.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Signed OLB James Vaughters. Waived LB Tuzar Skipper.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Released CB Darqueze Dennard, RB Josh Hokit, WR KeeSean Johnson and DL Tomasi Lauilile.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Placed WR Cody Thompson on injured reserve. Waived CB Josh Valentine-Turner, DT Antonio Valentino, G Eric Wilson and WR Deontez Alexander. Reinstated T Liam Ryan from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Signed RB Patrick Laird. Placed RB Kenjon Barner on injured reserve.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Waived DB Michael Griffin from injured reserve with a settlement.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Reinstated OT Cornelius Lucas from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list.

SOCCER

Major League Soccer
VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC — Loaned M Caio Alexandre to Fortaleza EC (Brazilian Serie A).



LM OTERO/AP

Texas Rangers manager Chris Woodward, left, congratulates Marcus Semien after Semien hit a solo home run against the Seattle Mariners on June 5 in Arlington, Texas. Woodward was fired Monday.

Struggling Texas fires Woodward

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — The Texas Rangers fired fourth-year manager Chris Woodward on Monday, a move made in hopes of building momentum toward next year, when the team has long expected to win again after a seasonslong rebuilding effort.

The Rangers are on pace for their sixth consecutive losing season since their last AL West title in 2016. While better than last year's 102-loss team, they haven't made the desired progress this year, or even had a winning record at any point since spending a half-billion dollars last winter to sign shortstop Corey Seager and second baseman Marcus Semien.

"We did not come into this season thinking we had put together a championship roster. We thought we'd taken a major step forward in talent from where we were a year ago," said Jon Daniels, the team's president of baseball operations. "We've certainly had aspirations maybe to overachieve some and still do have those, but we were, and continue to be, realistic about about where we are. ... That said, we did think that we'd be better than our record, and better than the way that we've played at times."

After peaking at 24-24 at the end of May, Texas lost its next three games and five of six. The Rangers, who were 6-24 in one-run games under Woodward, beat Oakland 2-1 on Monday night in third base coach Tony Beasley's first game as interim manager. Texas improved to 52-63 and has won three straight for the first

time in two months.

Woodward, the fourth big league manager to be fired this season, was two games shy of managing his 500th game for the Rangers. He finished with a 211-287 record, which came during the extended rebuilding process that also included the pandemic-shortened 2020 season and the MLB lockout last winter after the team had signed Seager and Semien.

Philadelphia's Joe Girardi was replaced by Rob Thomson on June 3, the Los Angeles Angels' Joe Maddon by Phil Nevin four days later and Toronto's Charlie Montoyo by John Schneider on July 13.

Daniels, who was the general manager when Woodward was hired, and current GM Chris Young both spoke about making the managerial change now to start addressing items such as how the team prepares and its style of play.

"I think it's just the overall structure, the environment. It's not necessarily the content of the preparation, but the way it's utilized," Young said. "The way we utilize meetings, the way we utilize different resources throughout the day, creating a structure that's really tailored towards winning a game every single day when we come in, and we felt like at times that got a little loose."

Woodward, who was the third base coach for the Los Angeles Dodgers before landing his first managerial job, was under contract through next season. The team held an option for 2024.

Seager spent his first seven big league seasons with the Dodgers, and was the National League rookie of the year in 2016, the first of Woodward's three seasons as the third base and infield coach in Los Angeles.

MLB

ROUNDUP

Urías, Dodgers blank Brewers

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Julio Urías continued his career-long pattern of shutting down lineups after the All-Star break.

The NL West-leading Los Angeles Dodgers hope he can stay hot all the way through the postseason.

Freddie Freeman and Gavin Lux homered to back Urías’ five solid innings, and the Dodgers blanked the Milwaukee Brewers 4-0 on Monday night. Urías (13-6) is 10-0 with a 1.99 ERA over his last 11 starts.

“We’ve got to be getting close to him being in the Cy Young race here,” Freeman said. “Every single time he goes out there, it’s a chance for us to win. And it’s a chance for him to throw a scoreless outing it seems like every single time.”

Urías has a career 1.87 ERA after the All-Star break, the lowest in major league history by anyone who has pitched at least 180 innings after the Midsummer Classic.

He came through again for Los Angeles on a day when it announced two-time All-Star right-hander Walker Buehler will have season-ending elbow surgery. Buehler’s injury had prevented him from pitching for the last two months.

Rays 4, Yankees 0: New York was shut out in consecutive games for the first time since 2016, losing to Ryan Yarbrough and visiting Tampa Bay.

The Yankees failed to provide any run support for ace Gerrit Cole (9-5), whose only run allowed followed a misplay in center field by Aaron Hicks.

The AL East leaders were blanked for the fourth time in nine games and dropped to 8-16 since the All-Star break after a 64-28 start.

Yarbrough (1-7) pitched four innings as a bulk reliever for his first win in nearly a year, striking out six without a walk.



MORRY GASH/AP

Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Julio Urías threw five shutout innings in a 4-0 win at Milwaukee on Monday. Urías has a career 1.87 ERA after the All-Star break.

Orioles 7, Blue Jays 3: Ryan Mountcastle hit a two-run home run in his return to the lineup, Ryan McKenna had his first three-hit game, and surging Baltimore won at Toronto to improve to 9-4 in August.

Mountcastle homered off Blue Jays left-hander Yusei Kikuchi (4-7) in the third. He sat out Sunday’s loss at Tampa Bay after being hit on the left wrist by a pitch Saturday.

Braves 13, Mets 1: William Contreras and Eddie Rosario hit back-to-back homers off Carlos Carrasco in the second inning, Ronald Acuña Jr. doubled three times and drove in three runs, and host Atlanta routed New York.

The Braves scored eight runs in the sixth inning, including a three-run homer by Travis d’Arnaud. They won their seventh straight and moved within 4½ games of the NL East-leading Mets.

White Sox 4, Astros 2: Yoán Moncada hit a tiebreaking two-run single as host Chicago rallied with four runs in the eighth to beat Houston.

The White Sox have won four straight. Their winning rally started after José Urquidy retired the first two batters. Urquidy was pulled after AJ Pollock’s infield hit, and Chicago jumped all over Rafael Montero (4-2).

Tigers 7-1, Guardians 5-4: Jonathan Schoop and rookie Kerry Carpenter hit back-to-back homers in the sixth inning, and Detroit rallied to split a doubleheader with host Cleveland and snap an eight-game skid.

All-Star Andrés Giménez belted a go-ahead, three-run homer in the seventh inning of the opener. Giménez added a two-run homer in the nightcap, finishing with four hits and five RBIs on the day.

Tigers starter Bryan Garcia (1-0) gave up three runs in six innings in the second game. Gregory Soto allowed one run in the ninth but picked up his 21st save.

Marlins 3, Padres 0: Sandy Alcantara threw seven innings of four-hit ball and host Miami beat San Diego.

Alcantara (11-5) walked two and struck out seven on 108 pitches.

Rangers 2, Athletics 1: Marcus Semien homered, rookie Bubba Thompson had a tiebreaking RBI single and host Texas beat Oakland.

Rangers manager Chris Woodward was fired earlier in the day with Texas on pace for its sixth straight losing season.

Twins 4, Royals 2: Max Kepler went 3-for-4 with a slump-busting

RBI and host Minnesota beat Kansas City.

Kepler snapped an 0-for-29 skid with his one-out single in the second inning against Royals starter Kris Bubic (2-7) that scored Jorge Polanco.

Phillies 4, Reds 3: Noah Syndergaard won for the second time in three starts since being traded to Philadelphia and Edmundo Sosa drove in three runs in a win at Cincinnati.

Syndergaard (7-8) allowed three runs on eight hits in seven innings, throwing only 77 pitches. Seranthony Dominguez worked the ninth for his ninth save.

Nationals 5, Cubs 4: Nelson Cruz hit a tiebreaking homer in the eighth inning as host Washington beat Chicago.

Cruz, who hit a two-run double in the fifth, smacked a 1-1 pitch from Brandon Hughes (1-1) to center to snap a 4-all tie.

Carl Edwards Jr. (4-3) pitched a scoreless eighth inning and Kyle Finnegan worked the ninth for his fifth save.

Giants 6, Diamondbacks 1: Evan Longoria hit a two-run homer and Alex Cobb pitched six solid innings to lead San Francisco past visiting Arizona.

The Giants are 18-2 at home against Arizona since the start of the 2020 season.

Mariners 6, Angels 2: Los Angeles star Shohei Ohtani struck out eight and allowed two runs in six innings, before visiting Seattle scored four runs in the ninth and took advantage of shoddy fielding.

Jesse Winker (homer) and J.P. Crawford each had two hits and two RBIs for the Mariners.

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	72	44	.621	—
Tampa Bay	61	53	.535	10
Toronto	61	53	.535	10
Baltimore	60	55	.522	11½
Boston	57	59	.491	15
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	62	54	.534	—
Minnesota	59	55	.518	2
Chicago	60	56	.517	2
Kansas City	48	69	.410	14½
Detroit	44	74	.373	19
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	75	42	.641	—
Seattle	63	54	.538	12
Texas	52	63	.452	22
Los Angeles	51	65	.440	23½
Oakland	41	75	.353	33½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	75	41	.647	—
Atlanta	71	46	.607	4½
Philadelphia	64	51	.557	10½
Miami	51	65	.440	24
Washington	39	78	.333	36½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
St. Louis	63	51	.553	—
Milwaukee	61	53	.535	2
Chicago	47	67	.412	16
Cincinnati	45	69	.395	18
Pittsburgh	45	70	.391	18½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	80	34	.702	—
San Diego	65	53	.551	17
San Francisco	58	57	.504	22½
Arizona	53	62	.461	27½
Colorado	51	66	.436	30½

Monday's games

Cleveland 4, Detroit 1, 1st game
Detroit 7, Cleveland 5, 2nd game
Tampa Bay 4, N.Y. Yankees 0
Baltimore 7, Toronto 3
Minnesota 4, Kansas City 2
Chicago White Sox 4, Houston 2
Texas 2, Oakland 1
Seattle 6, L.A. Angels 2
Philadelphia 4, Cincinnati 3
Miami 3, San Diego 0
Washington 5, Chicago Cubs 4
Atlanta 13, N.Y. Mets 1
L.A. Dodgers 4, Milwaukee 0
San Francisco 6, Arizona 1

Tuesday's games

Boston at Pittsburgh
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Yankees
Baltimore at Toronto
Detroit at Cleveland
Kansas City at Minnesota
Oakland at Texas
Houston at Chicago White Sox
Seattle at L.A. Angels
Philadelphia at Cincinnati
San Diego at Miami
Chicago Cubs at Washington
N.Y. Mets at Atlanta
Colorado at St. Louis
L.A. Dodgers at Milwaukee
Arizona at San Francisco

Wednesday's games

Kansas City (Lynch 4-7) at Minnesota (Mahle 6-7)
Baltimore (Voth 3-1) at Toronto (Stripling 5-3)
Seattle (Kirby 4-3) at L.A. Angels (TBD)
Boston (Hill 4-5) at Pittsburgh (Brubaker 2-10)
Tampa Bay (Kluber 7-7) at N.Y. Yankees (Germán 1-2)
Detroit (Norris 0-4) at Cleveland (Quantrell 9-5)
Oakland (Oller 1-5) at Texas (Ragans 0-1)
Houston (Valdez 11-4) at Chicago White Sox (Kopech 4-8)
Philadelphia (Suárez 8-5) at Cincinnati (Lodolo 3-4)
Chicago Cubs (Smyly 5-6) at Washington (Abbott 0-2)
San Diego (Clevinger 4-4) at Miami (López 7-7)
N.Y. Mets (Scherzer 8-2) at Atlanta (Odorizzi 4-4)
Colorado (Márquez 6-9) at St. Louis (Montgomery 5-3)
L.A. Dodgers (Gonsolin 14-1) at Milwaukee (Lauer 8-4)
Arizona (Davies 2-4) at San Francisco (Rodón 11-6)

Calendar

Aug. 21 — MLB Little League Classic, Boston Red Sox vs. Baltimore Orioles, Williamsport, Pa.



ADAM HUNGER/AP

The Tampa Bay Rays' Yandy Diaz watches his two-run single during the ninth inning of a 4-0 win Monday over the Yankees in New York.

WNBA/SPORTS BRIEFS



SAM MORRIS/AP

Forward A'ja Wilson, right, and the Las Vegas Aces host the Phoenix Mercury in a best-of-three WNBA quarterfinal beginning Wednesday. The league changed the playoff format this season.

Aces are top playoff seed, WNBA debuts new format

DOUG FEINBERG
Associated Press

A'ja Wilson and the Las Vegas Aces will begin their quest for their first WNBA title a lot sooner than top seeds have done in previous few years.

The Aces clinched homecourt throughout the playoffs on the regular season's final day by earning the top seed in the WNBA postseason that begins Wednesday.

Before this year, Las Vegas would have a bye until the semifinals. The league changed the playoff format to best-of-three series in the quarterfinals instead of the single-elimination games in the opening two rounds it had been using since 2016.

"We're not done yet. This is the beginning," Wilson said after the Aces clinched the top seed on Sunday. "The regular season was nice, but now it's real. It doesn't matter what number is by your name in the playoffs. It could be anybody's night on any given day."

"It's playoffs. Either you want it or you don't."

The top four seeds — Las Vegas, Chicago, Connecticut and Seattle — will all host the first two games of their series with a potential decisive game three on the home court of the lower seed.

Breanna Stewart was happy that the league changed the playoff format.

"I think in the WNBA all teams are deserving of a series," she said. "It's a respect for the teams that make it. Striving for greatness

Scoreboard

WNBA Playoffs	
(x-if necessary) First Round (Best-of-three)	
No. 1 Las Vegas vs. No. 8 Phoenix	
Wednesday: Phoenix at Las Vegas	
Saturday: Phoenix at Las Vegas	
x-Tuesday, Aug. 23: Las Vegas at Phoenix	
No. 2 Chicago vs. No. 7 New York	
Wednesday: New York at Chicago	
Saturday: New York at Chicago	
x-Tuesday, Aug. 23: Chicago at New York	
No. 3 Connecticut vs. No. 6 Dallas	
Thursday: Dallas at Connecticut	
Sunday: Dallas at Connecticut	
x-Wednesday, Aug. 24: Connecticut at Dallas	
No. 4 Seattle vs. No. 5 Washington	
Thursday: Washington at Seattle	
Sunday: Washington at Seattle	
x-Wednesday, Aug. 24: Seattle at Washington	
Semifinals (Best-of-five)	
Las Vegas/Phoenix winner vs. Seattle/Washington winner	
Chicago/New York winner vs. Connecticut/Dallas winner	
Finals (Best-of-five)	
Semifinal winners	

throughout the whole season shouldn't finish with one game on the line. We're a professional league. It should be exciting and will be interesting with the 2-1 best-of-three."

Stewart will try to help teammate Sue Bird head into retirement with a fifth WNBA championship. The fourth-seeded Storm have a tough first-round matchup against Washington.

"This league continues to elevate the game and get better and better," Stewart said. "Everybody knows there's players on each team that can go off."

Health status

Dallas played without Arike Ogunbowale (abdominal issue) the last few games and Phoenix's Diana Taurasi was sidelined down the stretch with a quad injury. Both teams will be hard-pressed to advance without them in the lineup. Phoenix also could still be without guard Skylar Diggins-Smith, who missed the last couple of games because of personal reasons.

Back-to-back?

Chicago is trying to become the first team to repeat as champion since Los Angeles won consecutive titles in 2001 and 2002. The Sky host New York in the opening round.

Exciting finish

New York and Phoenix didn't secure postseason berths until the final day of the regular season. The Liberty knocked off Atlanta and Phoenix advanced when Minnesota lost to Connecticut earlier in the day, ending the career of WNBA great Sylvia Fowles.

Under the radar

The Connecticut Sun finished with the league's third-best record, behind Las Vegas and Chicago. The Sun closed out the season with eight wins in their final 10 games and will try to capture the franchise's first title.

BRIEFLY

Seahawks send Amadi to Eagles for Arcega-Whiteside

Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — The Seattle Seahawks agreed Monday to trade defensive back Ugo Amadi to the Philadelphia Eagles for wide receiver/tight end J.J. Arcega-Whiteside.

The deal involves players who haven't completely lived up to the expectations their teams had when they drafted them. Amadi has played mostly as a nickel cornerback and backup safety for the Seahawks. Arcega-Whiteside has struggled to get involved offensively for the Eagles and was switched to tight end this offseason.

Seattle is likely to keep Arcega-Whiteside as a wide receiver due to the team's depth at tight end.

Amadi was a fourth-round pick in 2019 and has started 12 of 47 regular-season games. Seattle signed nickel cornerback Justin Coleman in the offseason and has used rookie Coby Bryant in that spot during training camp.

Arcega-Whiteside was a second-round selection in 2019 and has been maligned for his lack of production while the likes of DK Metcalf, Dionte Johnson and Terry McLaurin were selected after him.

CFP championships back in Atlanta, Miami

Atlanta and South Florida have been selected to host College Football Playoff national championship games for the second time.

The CFP announced Monday that Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla., would be the site of the title game scheduled to be played in January 2026, the final game of the current 12-year media rights deal with ESPN.

Miami Gardens hosted the 2021 game, following the 2020 pandemic-altered season.

"South Florida was a great host for the 2021 national championship game despite the event having to be scaled back because of COVID-19, and we look forward to returning in 2026 with a full complement of events and activities during national championship weekend," CFP Executive Director Bill Hancock said in a statement.

The game between Alabama and Ohio State at Hard Rock Stadium, home to the Miami Dolphins, was limited to about 15,000 fans because of COVID-19 restrictions. The stadium holds more than 65,000.

In its announcement, the CFP said the host of the 2025 game also was selected and would be announced at a later date.

A person familiar with the decision, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the official announce-

ment had not been made, said Mercedes-Benz Stadium would be the site of the 2025 game.

In other college football news:

■ The University of Texas says Steve Worster, the powerful fullback in a bruising wishbone offense that led the Longhorns to the undisputed national championship in 1969, has died. He was 73. Worster rushed for 2,353 yards and 36 touchdowns from 1968 to 1970. Texas won three Southwest Conference titles with a 30-2-1 record over that span. Worster was a consensus All-American in 1970 and finished fourth in the Heisman Trophy balloting that season.

Princeton coaching great Carril dies at 92

Pete Carril, the rumped, cigar-smoking basketball coach who led Princeton to 11 appearances in the NCAA Tournament, where his teams unnerved formidable opponents and rattled March Madness with old-school fundamentals, died Monday. He was 92.

Carril, a Hall of Famer, schooled his teams in a distinct and throwback brand of ball — the Princeton offense, a game marked by patience, intelligence, constant motion, quick passing and backdoor cuts that often ended in layups.

Woods, players meet regarding LIV Tour

WILMINGTON, Del. — The PGA Tour is in Delaware for the first time and the buzz still surrounded Tiger Woods, even if he didn't have clubs and might not be seen.

Woods was scheduled to come to Wilmington Country Club on Tuesday for a private meeting of top players to discuss the threat of Saudi-funded LIV Golf, according to two people aware of the plans at the BMW Championship.

They spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the privacy of the meeting. One person invited to the meeting said it was to get on the same page against LIV Golf, along with taking more ownership in the direction of the PGA Tour.

Stewart named top WNBA player again by AP

Breanna Stewart becomes first two-time winner of The Associated Press WNBA Player of the Year award. A'ja Wilson was voted AP Defensive Player of Year for first time and Atlanta's Tanisha Wright becomes the first former player to be named coach of the year. The Dream's Rhyné Howard has been chosen as the rookie of year. A 10-member media panel that covers the league voted on the awards.

NFL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL



BARRY REEGER/AP

Steelers wide receiver George Pickens, left, makes a 26-yard touchdown catch as Seattle Seahawks cornerback Coby Bryant defends during their preseason game on Aug. 13 in Pittsburgh. Pickens finished the game with three receptions for 43 yards.

Promising Pickens

Steelers rookie WR impressive in first game

By DAN SCIFO
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH
The secret might be out about Pittsburgh Steelers rookie wide receiver George Pickens.

Pickens has been the talk of the team’s training camp, as he has turned heads with his big-play ability through three weeks of workouts at St. Vincent College.

The promising rookie was just as impressive in his professional debut, helping the offense to three first-half scoring drives during Pittsburgh’s preseason-opening win against Seattle on Saturday.

Pickens was pleased with his first preseason game, but he’s far from satisfied.

“It’s like a dream come true, but I feel like if you look at it like a dream come true, you’ll kind of get stuck in your dream,” Pickens said. “I don’t really pay no mind. I just kind of keep working.”

Pickens finished the game with

three receptions for 43 yards, including a highlight-reel 26-yard touchdown catch.

“I’ve been doing the same thing I’ve been doing at practice,” Pickens said. “Just to get the feel of the game ... that’s really the most important part.”

Pickens has quickly built chemistry and trust with Mitch Trubisky, Mason Rudolph and Kenny Pickett, the three quarterbacks vying for the opportunity to replace the retired Ben Roethlisberger as the Steelers’ new starter.

Pickens had five targets on Saturday, tied for the most among all players. Trubisky immediately put Pickens into the mix with a 9-yard short pass on the first play of the game and another deep target later in the drive. Pickens later made a spinning 8-yard grab near the sideline in tight coverage.

Trubisky has certainly noticed the young rookie.

“He’s standing out,” Trubisky

said. “He’s making plays and he’s definitely a guy you want to go to. He’s been really impressive up to this point.”

The most impressive moment came during his 26-yard touchdown reception from Rudolph late in the first quarter. Pickens rushed past Seahawks rookie cornerback Coby Bryant, created separation near the goal line and barely kept his toes inbounds, as he pulled in a high-arcing, over-the-shoulder pass at the back pylon.

Rudolph has witnessed it throughout training camp, not only Pickens’ innate ability to separate, but also the capability to come down with a reception while battling with a defender.

“We’ve seen it where it’s a 50-50 shot and he makes those plays,” Rudolph said. “It was good to connect and build some confidence. He made a great play and got his toes down when we needed it.”

Caution: Alabama hasn’t finished out of top 10 since 2007

FROM PAGE 24

No. 1 Alabama (13-2 last season)

Opener: vs. Utah State, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The surest bet in sports is the Crimson Tide, who have only missed the playoff once. Alabama has not finished outside the top 10 since 2007, coach Nick Saban’s first season. No reason to think it’s happening this season.

No. 2 Ohio State (11-2)

Opener: vs. No. 5 Notre Dame, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Buckeyes hired former Oklahoma State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles to fix a defense that was badly exposed against their best opponents. QB C.J. Stroud, WR Jaxson Smith-Nijigba and a potent offense probably make Ohio State flop-proof, though.

No. 3 Georgia (14-1)

Opener: vs. No. 11 Oregon in Atlanta, Sept. 3.

Reality check: Most of last season’s all-time great defense is now in the NFL. The Bulldogs are too talented to take a big step backward, but assuming Alabama-level consistency from any team is a lot to ask.

No. 4 Clemson (10-3)

Opener: vs. Georgia Tech in Atlanta, Sept. 5.

Reality check: Coming off their first non-ACC championship season in seven years, the Tigers are maybe the most intriguing team in the country. Clemson has two new coordinators and a former five-star quarterback (D.J. Uiagalelei) trying to recover from a puzzlingly poor season. Voters are leaning toward last season being a blip for Dabo Swinney’s team and not the start of a trend.

No. 5 Notre Dame (11-2)

Opener: at No. 2 Ohio State, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Fighting Irish have established lofty standards with five straight 10-win seasons, but coach Marcus Freeman’s first season as Brian Kelly’s replacement has a lot of transition-year vibes.

No. 6 Texas A&M (8-4)

Opener: vs. Sam Houston, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Aggies won the offseason with the No. 1 recruiting class and coach Jimbo Fisher going off on his former boss, Saban. They are also a team relying heavily on sophomores and those five-star freshmen and one with no established starting quarterback or big-play receivers.

No. 7 Utah (10-4)

Opener: at Florida, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Utes are coming off their first Pac-12 title and Rose Bowl appearance, and have enough pieces back to do it again. But repeating a magical season is difficult for the vast majority of programs that don’t regularly sign top-10 recruiting classes.

No. 8 Michigan (12-2)

Opener: vs. Colorado State, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Wolverines broke through for coach Jim Harbaugh with a Big Ten title and victory over Ohio State in 2021. Now, with two new coordinators and a defense replacing three first-round draft picks, a repeat seems unlikely.

No. 9 Oklahoma (11-2)

Opener: vs. UTEP, Sept. 3.

Reality check: New coach (Brent Venables), new quarterback (Dillon Gabriel) and more uncertainty in Norman than there has been in years. The Sooners have been one of the most reliable teams in the country for two decades, finishing unranked only twice. But turnover often comes with volatility.

No. 10 Baylor (12-2)

Opener: vs. Albany, Sept. 3.

Reality check: Another one of 2021’s surprise breakout teams, the defending Big 12 champions hope to keep it up with strong line play. Still, the Big 12 is all about winning close games and the difference between playing for the title and finishing fourth is thin.

No. 11 Oregon (10-4)

Opener: vs. No. 3 Georgia in Atlanta, Sept. 3.

Reality check: Another highly ranked team with a new coach and quarterback. Former Georgia DC Dan Lanning inherits the most talented roster in the Pac-12. Transfer Bo Nix will try to bring stability to the quarterback position, which was not really his thing at Auburn.

No. 12 Oklahoma State (12-2)

Opener: vs. Central Michigan, Sept. 1.

Reality check: The Cowboys, a team buoyed by super seniors — especially on defense — in 2022, will need to lean heavily on their experienced offense. QB Spencer Sanders has had a long career filled with peaks and valleys.

No. 13 North Carolina State (9-3)

Opener: at East Carolina, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Wolfpack enter one of the most

highly anticipated seasons for the program in recent history, with a loaded defense and star quarterback in Devin Leary. This is also a program that has one double-digit victory season — ever.

No. 14 USC (5-7)

Opener: vs. Rice, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The star power for the Trojans has not been this bright in a while with coach Lincoln Riley, QB Caleb Williams and WR Jordan Addison providing hope for an immediate turnaround. But the game is still about blocking and tackling and there are plenty of questions about USC’s ability to do either well.

No. 15 Michigan State (11-2)

Opener: vs. Western Michigan, Sept. 2.

Reality check: Coach Mel Tucker parlayed the Spartans’ surprising surge last year into an enormous contract and the elevated expectations that go with it. Will regression come for them in 2022?

No. 16 Miami (7-5)

Opener: vs. Bethune-Cookman, Sept. 4.

Reality check: The Hurricanes brought back hometown hero Mario Cristobal to help build the program back to its powerhouse past. He’s got a pro prospect in QB Tyler Van Dyke to work with, but this is a lot of optimism for a team that has only finished ranked once in the last four seasons.

No. 17 Pitt (11-3)

Opener: vs. West Virginia, Sept. 1.

Reality check: Coming off an ACC title, the Panthers are hoping USC transfer Kedon Slovis can replicate Kenny Pickett’s stellar 2021. He will have to do it without the departed Jordan Addison. Pitt hasn’t finished consecutive seasons ranked since 1983.

No. 18 Wisconsin (9-4)

Opener: vs. Illinois State, Sept. 3.

Reality check: In three of the last four seasons, the Badgers have started the season ranked and finished it unranked. The formula of star running back (Braelon Allen) and staunch defense appears to be in place again, but can QB Graham Mertz finally find his blue-chip form?

No. 19 Arkansas (9-4)

Opener: vs. No. 23 Cincinnati, Sept. 3.

Reality check: Life in the SEC West is hard. The Razorbacks were overachievers last year, but things can flip fast. Especially facing a schedule that also includes Cin-

cinnati and No. 25 BYU with a rebuilt defense.

No. 20 Kentucky (10-3)

Opener: at Miami (Ohio), Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Wildcats have found success in bullying teams up front. Turnover on both lines could make that tougher this season, even while QB Will Levis’ NFL prospect status rises. The last time Kentucky finished ranked in consecutive seasons: 1977.

No. 21 Mississippi (10-3)

Opener: vs. Troy, Sept. 3.

Reality check: After the first 10-win regular season in school history, Ole Miss coach Lane Kiffin dived back into the transfer portal to rebuild his offense with QB Jaxson Dart, RB Zach Evans and OT Mason Brooks. Do the pieces come together again for the Portal King?

No. 22 Wake Forest (11-3)

Opener: vs. VMI, Sept. Sept. 1.

Reality check: The Demon Deacons have 13 starters returning from one of the best teams in school history. But as good as Wake was last year, the defense fell apart late and now the Deacs will have to make do for an indefinite stint without QB Sam Hartman.

No. 23 Cincinnati (13-1)

Opener: at No. 19 Arkansas, Sept. 3.

Reality check: Any remaining doubts about last year’s Bearcats were buried on NFL Draft night. Cincinnati had nine players selected, including five in the top 100. That’s a mountain of difference-makers for any program not named Alabama to replace.

No. 24 Houston (12-2)

Opener: at UTSA, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Cougars filled the promise of the Dana Holgorsen hire last year by playing for the American Athletic Conference title and are poised to be this season’s G5 King. They also face a tricky early schedule that includes Texas Tech, and have to replace two big-time playmakers in DB Marcus Jones and DL Logan Hall.

No. 25 BYU (10-3)

Opener: at USF, Sept. 3.

Reality check: The Cougars won 10 games with a young team last year, which bodes well for this season. But, oh that schedule. BYU’s last season as an independent before joining the Big 12 includes games against No. 10 Baylor, No. 11 Oregon, No. 5 Notre Dame, No. 19 Arkansas, Boise State and Stanford.

NFL



PHOTOS BY AARON DOSTER/AP

Above: The Cincinnati Bengals' Joe Burrow was back in full uniform on Monday and participating in practice for the second straight day since having an appendectomy on July 26. Below: Burrow looked crisp in seven-on-seven drills Monday, Bengals coach Zac Taylor said.

Bengals' Burrow returns, should be ready for opener

By MITCH STACY
Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Three weeks after having an appendectomy, Joe Burrow is fully participating in training camp with an eye toward getting ready for the regular-season opener next month.

The Bengals quarterback was in full uniform as he threw crisp passes in seven-on-seven drills for a second day Monday. He had surgery July 26, a day before the first workout of camp.

“The seven-on-sevens are more just mentally getting back in the groove of things, the timing of the throws, the accuracy, going against the defense and trying to see some of the disguises,” Coach Zac Taylor said before practice Monday.

“I got a chance to see him throw the ball farther than I’d seen him throw (Sunday),” Taylor said. “He looked crisp on that, he played on time, he was aggressive with his decision-making. I thought he moved well, and so again, we’ll just take it day by day.”

Taylor said he’s satisfied with the practice schedule moving forward with his franchise quarterback, who hasn’t talked to reporters since his surgery.

“We’ve got a good plan in place now,” Taylor said. “As we narrowed it down to what it’s going to look like over this week, we feel like we’ve got a good timeline on the rest of training camp and what we can do on offense to make sure he’s getting all the looks he needs to see. For him, it’s (about getting ready for) Pittsburgh. Be ready for Week 1 of the season.”

Receiver Tee Higgins is also back at practice after rehabbing from the shoulder surgery he had after the Super Bowl loss to the Los Angeles Rams in February.

The starting trio of receivers — Ja’Marr Chase, Tyler Boyd and Higgins — were back on the field together, along with the new starter at tight end, Hayden Hurst.

“It’s good to see Tee out there running around for sure,” Taylor said. “He’s such a big target, a game-changer. He does bring a lot of energy to the huddle



as well. They all bring certain energy, but then when you combine them all it’s just one big ball of energy. They really play off each other, and it’s pretty cool to see that group together.”

Higgins, who rehabbed on the sidelines all the way through the organized team workouts in May and June, said he’s back to 100%.

“It felt good to be tired and actually running routes, just being out there with the guys, huffing and puffing. It felt good,” he said.

Taylor said few, if any, of the starters will play Sunday against the New York Giants as evaluation continues for rookies and players on the bubble.

Cincinnati will practice against the Rams for two days before the final preseason game Aug. 27. The regular-season opener is at home against AFC North rival Pittsburgh on Sept. 11.

Notes: RT La’el Collins did not practice Monday. ... Participating was backup quarterback Brandon Allen, who went out after the first series in Friday’s preseason loss to the Cardinals with a suspected concussion. ... Rookie cornerback Cam Taylor-Britt, who missed the preseason opener because of a core muscle injury, was still absent Monday. It’s unknown how much time he will miss.

Dad jokes aside, Flacco, 37, steps in at QB for Jets

By DENNIS WASZAK JR.
Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — There are moments — and they seem to be increasing by the year — when Joe Flacco knows his teammates are laughing at him.

Not for anything he’s doing on the field. But the New York Jets quarterback is 37 years old, and that’s practically ancient when you consider he’s on a roster filled with guys who were still learning how to add, subtract and read when he was starting his NFL career.

“I don’t view myself as an old person,” Flacco said with a smile. “But every now and then, when these guys come up to you and say something to you, I’m like, ‘Oh, OK, you think I’m like 50 years old. I got it.’”

Still a kid at heart with the arm of a youngster, Flacco is the Jets’ QB1 while New York awaits the results of Zach Wilson’s arthroscopic knee surgery Tuesday in Los Angeles. Wilson is expected to miss two to four weeks with a torn meniscus and bone bruise in his right knee, but it could be more if doctors discover additional damage.

While Wilson playing in the season opener on Sept. 11 against Baltimore remains a possibility, it would seem more likely that Flacco is under center against the Ravens — his old team — and perhaps a few opponents beyond. It all depends on Wilson’s knee.

Until then, Flacco is preparing just as he always has.

“I’m happy with what I’m doing and I love helping out a young guy and playing my role on this team,” Flacco said. “But I wouldn’t be doing this if I didn’t have the desire to still be really good at what I do and didn’t still believe that I could still play this game.”

Coach Robert Saleh has raved about Flacco since the team re-

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Players on the Jets’ 90-man roster who are 30 or older, led by Joe Flacco, who at 37 is the oldest on the team.

SOURCE: Associated Press

signed him in March to be Wilson’s backup. Saleh has run down the list of accomplishments, which include winning the Super Bowl and the game’s MVP award to cap the 2012 season with the Ravens. He has thrown for 41,269 yards and 227 touchdowns in his 14 NFL seasons.

Flacco has been a starter and, at one time, the highest-paid quarterback in league history. He also has been a backup and mentor. Now, he needs to be a starter again, at least for the next few weeks — and possibly the start of this season.

“He’s a veteran,” Saleh said, “and I just expect him to approach it like he has his entire career.”

Flacco realizes he’s part of an older generation of players — especially in his own locker room. After all, Wilson is 23. Cornerback Sauce Gardner, the Jets’ top draft pick in April, is a mere 21. There are only eight players out of 90 even in their 30s, with Flacco topping the list — and newly signed left tackle Duane Brown right behind him, with his 37th birthday on Aug. 30.

“Every now and then, you think about the fact that I’m the oldest person in the room and it’s tough to wrap my head around because when you’re in the locker room and around a bunch of ... I mean, Sauce is like 20 or 21 years old,” Flacco said. “I view myself as 25, 26 at max, so it’s just one of those things you just get used to it and you develop relationships and all that other stuff just goes out of the window.”



ADAM HUNGER/AP

New York Jets quarterback Joe Flacco, 37, is expected to step in as the team’s starter with Zach Wilson sidelined with a knee injury.

SPORTS



Rangers fire manager
Woodward becomes fourth skipper cut loose this season » **MLB, Page 19**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Mix caution with optimism

Top 25 brings promise, but expectations rarely pan out

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

Low expectations rarely disappoint. That's not to say your favorite team will fail to live up to the promise that comes with landing a spot in The Associated Press preseason Top 25 college football poll presented by Regions Bank that was released Monday.

But numbers suggest it is best to sprinkle a healthy amount of caution on that optimism as you gear up for the 2022 season.

Lear year was especially volatile for the Top 25, with 14 teams that started the season ranked finishing unranked. From 2010-20, on average, 9.5 teams that appeared in the preseason Top 25 finished unranked — about 38% of the picks. During that time, the most was 12 in 2010.

In the preseason top 10 last year, three teams (Texas A&M, Iowa State and North Carolina) failed to make it into the final poll. That's double the average (1.5) from 2010-2020.

Time to temper expectations for the preseason Top 25 this season — except for Alabama.

SEE CAUTION ON PAGE 22



KEITH SRAKOCIC, ABOVE, AND VASHA HUNT, LEFT/AP

Above: Clemson hopes five-star quarterback D.J. Uiagalelei recovers from a puzzlingly poor season and puts the Tigers back atop the Atlantic Coast Conference. Left: Running back Jahmyr Gibbs and No. 1 Alabama may be the surest bet in sports, having missed the College Football Playoff just once.

Aces top seed as new playoff format debuts » WNBA, Page 21

