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for striking  
'Sinners'  
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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## DOD to end rape tests for civilians overseas

BY LARA KORTE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Defense Department civilian employees and contractors abroad can no longer get rape test kits done at military medical facilities, a decision that attorneys say will likely make it easier to get some evidentiary exhibits levied against accused service members excluded at court-martial.

The Military Health System said the recently issued guidance is meant to clear up confusion around who can receive the forensic evidence collection tests under existing policy.

It requires non-Tricare beneficiaries, which would include most civilian workers who aren't married to service members, to seek testing at foreign clinics, which may have different standards for processing evidence.

The March 13 memo from the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs states that military health care providers only can treat civilians who say they were sexually assaulted in emergency situations — where life, limb or eyesight are put at risk.

"Forensic healthcare examination or follow-up care is not included in the definition on limited emergency services," the memo states.

The memo also says military facilities must establish a process that ensures non-Tricare beneficiaries are stabilized and transferred to a civilian facility should they request a forensic exam.

Regardless of eligibility, patients who seek care at military facilities after interpersonal violence should be treated as emergencies, the memo said.

About 35,000 civilian em-

SEE CIVILIANS ON PAGE 6



PHOTOS BY LYDIA GORDON/Stars and Stripes

**U.S. soldiers at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, take part in the final day of Spectrum Blitz on Tuesday. Dozens of Army electronic warfare specialists spent five days training with assorted high-tech equipment.**

## Army convenes specialists in Germany for electronic warfare gamut

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

HOHENFELS, Germany — Dozens of U.S. soldiers specializing in electronic warfare gathered at an Army training ground in Bavaria in recent days, looking to gain mastery of high-tech systems that helped them locate, track and destroy their simulated enemy.

The Spectrum Blitz exercise took place over five days at the Joint Multinational Training Center in Hohenfels before wrapping up Tuesday evening.

Against the center's resident opposition force, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment and its small, off-the-shelf drones, the exercise



**A Beast+ electronic warfare system leans against a Versatile Radio Observation and Direction Modular Adaptive Transmission system.**

participants tested their mettle in offensive and defensive operations involving geolocation and communications signal jamming.

Spectrum Blitz brought together about 100 electronic warfare specialists from the Vilseck-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment and rotational soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division, 101st Airborne Division and 1st Armored Division.

Electronic warfare "is something that people outside of our field and environment, they don't really think of," Spc. Anton Stigler said as he stood near a Stryker vehicle mounted with a large an-

SEE SPECTRUM ON PAGE 6



BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES									
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel					
Germany	\$3.598	\$4.173	\$4.533	\$4.009	Azores	..	..	\$4.391	..
Change in price	-7.5 cents	-7.2 cents	-7.1 cents	-6.0 cents	Change in price	..	..	-7.1 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.603	\$5.175	\$4.749	Turkey	..	..	\$4.183	\$4.269*
Change in price	..	+3.4 cents	+5.5 cents	+2.9 cents	Change in price	..	..	-7.1 cents	No change
U.K.	..	\$4.185	\$4.545	\$4.021	Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective April 18. The change in price is from April 11.				
Change in price	..	-7.2 cents	-7.1 cents	-0.6 cents					

PACIFIC GAS PRICES									
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel					
Japan	..	\$4.169	..	\$3.649	South Korea	\$3.259	..	\$4.199	\$3.679
Change in price	..	-7.0 cents	..	-6.0 cents	Change in price	-8.0 cents	..	-7.0 cents	-6.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.379	..	..	\$3.649	Guam	\$3.289**	\$3.869	\$4.229	..
Change in price	No change	..	..	-6.0 cents	Change in price	-8.0 cents	-7.0 cents	-7.0 cents	..
*DieselEFD **Midgrade									
Pacific prices for the week of April 19-24									

EXCHANGE RATES									
Military rates									
Euro costs (April 18)				0.86	Switzerland (Franc)				0.8175
British pound (April 18)				\$1.29	Thailand (Baht)				33.31
Japanese yen (April 18)				139.00	Turkey (NewLira)				38.0916
South Korean won (April 18)				1385.00	(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.)				
Commercial rates					INTEREST RATES				
Bahrain (Dinar)				0.3769	Prime rate				7.50
Britain (Pound)				1.3257	Interest Rates Discount rate				4.50
Canada (Dollar)				1.3855	Federal funds market rate				4.38
China (Yuan)				7.3483	3-month bill				4.31
Denmark (Krone)				6.5722	30-year bond				4.75
Egypt (Pound)				51.1130					
Euro				0.8801					
Hong Kong (Dollar)				7.7638					
Hungary (Forint)				359.13					
Israel (Shekel)				3.6853					
Japan (Yen)				142.17					
Kuwait (Dinar)				0.3066					
Norway (Krone)				10.5161					
Philippines (Peso)				56.76					
Poland (Zloty)				3.77					
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)				3.7524					
Singapore (Dollar)				1.3110					
South Korea (Won)				1416.43					

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MILITARY

# Third DOD official implicated in leak probe

**By MATTHEW ADAMS**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A third Pentagon official on Wednesday has been placed on administrative leave as part of an ongoing investigation into leaks at the Defense Department, a defense official confirmed.

Colin Carroll, chief of staff to Deputy Defense Secretary Stephen Feinberg, was placed on leave a day after two senior political appointees — Dan Caldwell, a senior adviser to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, and Darin Selnick, the Pentagon’s deputy chief of staff — were placed on leave for

“unauthorized disclosures.”

Defense officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity did not provide more information about the officials placed on leave or the investigation into leaks.

Carroll previously worked at Anduril Industries, a defense technology company that makes drones, and the Defense Department’s Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, according to his LinkedIn page.

Hegseth on Wednesday did not answer shouted questions from reporters about his advisers being implicated in the leak scandal as the defense secretary held a bilat-

eral meeting at the Pentagon with El Salvador Defense Minister René Francis Merino Monroy.

Caldwell was escorted from the Pentagon on Tuesday, according to a Reuters report. Selnick was also escorted out of the building, according to Politico.

The three men being placed on leave was a result of the investigation requested by Joe Kasper, Hegseth’s chief of staff.

He signed a memo March 21 calling for an investigation into “recent unauthorized disclosures of national security information involving sensitive communications.”

Kasper added the use of polygraphs in executing the investigation would be “in accordance with applicable law and policy.”

Last month, the top editor of The Atlantic magazine, Jeffrey Goldberg, revealed he was mistakenly included in a conversation on the Signal messaging app in which national security officials for President Donald Trump discussed plans for airstrikes against Houthis targets in Yemen.

During the Signal chat, Hegseth named Caldwell as the best point of contact from his staff for the National Security Council as the U.S. prepared for the launch of the

Houthi strikes.

Caldwell, a Marine Corps veteran, deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to Defense Priorities, a Washington think tank.

Prior to becoming the deputy chief of staff, Selnick performed the duties of undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness and oversaw changes in the Pentagon’s personnel policy. Among other things, his efforts included rolling out the ban and removal of transgender service members and the dismissal of probationary employees.

## Lancers arrive for mission in Japan

**By SETH ROBSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

American B-1B Lancers arrived this week at Misawa Air Base for their first rotational bomber task force mission in Japan, Pacific Air Forces said Tuesday.

The aircraft, along with airmen and support equipment from the 9th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, landed at the northern Japan air base that day, according to a PACAF news release.

The number of bombers and airmen, as well as the expected duration of their stay, were not cleared for release by PACAF, Capt. LeeRoy Stark, a spokesman for the 35th Fighter Wing at Misawa, said Thursday.

The bomber mission supports strategic deterrence as well as training with allies, partners and joint forces, according to the PACAF statement.

The Air Force routinely deploys Lancers, B-52 Stratofortress bombers and B-2 Spirit stealth bombers around the world on task force missions. The deployments began in 2018 and have continued regularly since 2020.

“While the missions for each [bomber task force] may vary, the overall goal remains the same: assure allies and deter adversaries,” says the Air Force Global Strike Command website.

Bomber task force deployments are also intended to familiarize aircrews with bases and operations in various parts of the world. The mission “showcases the U.S. commitment to deterring threats and maintaining regional stability,” Lt. Col. Christopher Travelstead, director of oper-



A B-1B Lancer from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, arrives at Misawa Air Base in Japan, Tuesday.

ations for the 9th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, said in PACAF’s release.

North Korea threatened unspecified retaliation after U.S. B-1B bombers on Tuesday flew over South Korea with South Korean warplanes, The Associated Press reported Thursday.

In February, two Lancers from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, flew through South Korean airspace alongside three U.S. F-16s from Osan Air Base, South Korea; four Marine Corps F-35Bs from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan; and four South Korean F-35As and F-15K Slam Eagles.

In January, Japanese F-2s and South Korean F-15Ks escorted a pair of Lancers over the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea.

The Air Force has not permanently stationed bombers in Japan for decades, retired Marine Col. Grant Newsham, a senior re-

searcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, said by email Thursday.

Yokota Air Base, an airlift hub in western Tokyo, operated as a bomber base before 1971.

Faced with China’s growing military power and regional ambitions, Japan has reinterpreted its pacifist constitution to permit counterstrike capabilities in the event of war.

Despite years of increased defense spending, Japan does not field strategic bombers of its own, Newsham wrote.

“Besides the practical challenges to operating a heavy bomber fleet, there’s the problem that bombers almost by definition are ‘offensive’ weapons — that Japan decided it would not possess,” he said.

Air Force F-16 multirole fighters at Misawa are trained to strike enemy air-defense systems.

“A B-1 (the type that went to Misawa) and B-52s can carry much bigger bomb and missile loads than the F-16s,” Newsham wrote. “And the aircraft have much longer ranges as well than F-16s. B-1s are also reasonably survivable given their stealth capability.”

Deploying heavier, more powerful aircraft sends an implicit message, Newsham added.

“You’re adding to an existing ‘force level’ and implicitly saying that, if necessary, you are going to inflict even more serious harm on the enemy if he misbehaves,” he said.

Rotational deployments also signal to potential adversaries such as North Korea, Russia and China that the U.S. has multiple deployment options, Ralph Cossa, former president of the Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii, said by email Thursday.

## 2 Marines killed in accident at border

**By ROSE L. THAYER**  
*Stars and Stripes*

Investigators are working to determine what caused a single-vehicle accident Tuesday morning in New Mexico that killed two Marines deployed to the southwest border mission and critically injured a third.

The Marines involved in the accident were deployed to the area from the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, Calif., as part of Joint Task Force Southern Border — a mission to deter illegal activity at the U.S. border with Mexico, according to 1st Marine Division.

The names of the two Marines killed will be released 24 hours after families have been notified.

The troops were on duty when the accident occurred at about 8:50 a.m. along N.M. Highway 9 near the Santa Teresa Border Patrol Station, according to the division and local law enforcement.

At the time, the three Marines were driving a civilian vehicle to El Paso, Texas, about 20 miles east of the Border Patrol station.

The accident involved a silver Jeep Gladiator four-door truck, according to video from the scene taken by KFOX, a local TV station.

The task force assumed control of the southern border mission on March 14 as part of President Donald Trump’s emphasis on controlling the flow of people and materiel crossing the border.

However, troops have been working in support of Customs and Border Protection since Trump first deployed them in 2018.

The mission continued under former President Joe Biden with National Guard troops rotating to the southern border.



## MILITARY

## Fort Benning ceremony marks name change

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
Stars and Stripes

FORT BENNING, Ga. — Fred Benning was a humble, small-town man who rarely spoke of his exploits as a teenage soldier in Europe, where he earned the Army's second highest honor for battlefield heroism during World War I, his granddaughter said Wednesday.

Most of what his family knew of his service was from artifacts that Benning discarded in old containers in his home in Neligh, Neb., Sue Conger-Williams, the granddaughter, said at the Georgia Army post now named for her late grandfather. Top Fort Benning officials gathered with Conger-Williams and her family to mark the change of the major training post from Fort Moore to Fort Benning — a name the installation held for decades in honor of a different Benning who had served the Confederacy.

"My grandpa, Fred G. Benning, was truly a special man," Conger-Williams told a small crowd gathered just outside Fort Benning's Maneuver Center of Excellence. "He was a man of integrity who knew the value of hard work. He lived a life of service, dedicating himself to his family, his country and his community. He loved helping people, and that's how I will always remember him. He is my hero."

Benning enlisted in the Army at 17 years old in 1917 within two weeks of the U.S. declaring war against Germany. Within months, he was sent to France to serve in the infantry. Within a year, Benning had risen to corporal and leading a machine gun team, said Army Maj. Gen. Colin Tuley, Fort Benning's top commander.

On Oct. 19, 1918, as his platoon faced heavy fighting, Benning's machine gun team was ordered to move to a strategic hill. The fighting cost the unit its commander and a string of additional casualties.

"After his platoon commander had been killed and two noncommissioned officers disabled, Cpl. Benning took command of the platoon, and by his leadership and by his courage, he conducted it through heavy fire to its assigned position on Hill 240," his Distinguished Service Cross citation reads.

As the war wound down in the months after that battle, Benning was made a sergeant and stayed in Europe as part of the U.S. occupying force in Germany. In 1919, just 19 years old, Benning was honorably discharged from the service, and he returned to his Nebraska hometown where he opened a bakery with brother, Henry, who had also served in the Great War. In 1948, Benning was elected mayor of Neligh.

Conger-Williams said Wednes-



PHOTOS BY COREY DICKSTEIN/Stars and Stripes

**Danielle Proskovec, left, and her mother, Sue Conger-Williams, great-granddaughter and granddaughter of World War I Army Sgt. Fred Benning, help unveil a new base sign Wednesday as officials gathered to mark the change of the former Fort Moore to Fort Benning. Once named for Confederate Gen. Henry Benning, the Georgia Army training post became Fort Moore in 2023, but Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered it changed back to Fort Benning last month, this time in recognition of the World War I veteran.**



**A painting of World War I Army Sgt. Fred Benning hangs inside Fort Benning's Maneuver Center of Excellence.**

day that she had learned a great deal about her grandfather's military service since it was revealed last month Fort Benning would bear his name. There were many aspects of his military service that meshed well with the man she knew, with whom she cherished fishing trips and backyard tea parties.

"My grandpa was always about integrity, doing the right thing when nobody's looking, being the best person you can be," she said. "I think he was always really focused on the importance of teamwork. I think he thought of his community as a team, like, this is the team I'm supporting. And I feel that was part of who he was as a soldier when he was completing his mission."

Tuley said those values Benning encompassed should encourage the thousands of American sol-

diers who train every day on Fort Benning to aim to live up to the post's new — and old — name.

The ceremony on Wednesday came less than two years after the short-lived name Fort Moore was bestowed on the 182,000-acre Army post, which is home to the service's infantry and armor training programs, basic training units, the 75th Ranger Regiment headquarters, its 3rd Battalion and the 1st Security Forces Assistance Brigade. It is the home station to some 13,500 soldiers, and more than 25,000 additional troops train on the post every week, Fort Benning official said.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on March 3 ordered the renaming of Fort Moore back to Fort Benning, honoring the World War I Benning instead of the installation's original namesake, Confederate Gen. Henry Benning. A 2020 law barred Hegseth or other defense officials for naming military posts or other assets for those who served the Confederacy.

The Army officially implemented the change just hours after Hegseth's order and began quickly replacing signs and other objects on the post reflecting the change in names.

The move came shortly after Hegseth ordered Fort Liberty, N.C., back to the name Fort Bragg in February in honor of another little-known Army hero, Pfc. Roland L. Bragg, whose lifesaving antics to escape custody of German forces during World War II's Battle of the Bulge earned him a Silver Star.

Hegseth, a former Fox News anchor and Army National Guard infantry officer who served in Iraq

and Afghanistan, has blasted the efforts to renamed Fort Bragg and Fort Benning and seven other Army posts as "woke" and damaging to the military's intergenerational bonds between those who serve on the installations.

The defense secretary has not announced further name changes for other Army posts, but defense officials have not ruled out such moves.

The name Fort Moore was chosen after a congressionally created panel studied for months the issue of ridding the U.S. military of honors for Confederate officials. It honored the late Lt. Gen. Hal Moore and his wife, Julia, a well-known and highly respected couple who had huge impacts on the Army and deep ties to Fort Benning. Both are buried in the post cemetery.

It was the only Army post named for a soldier and their spouse.

Hal Moore was a revered warrior who served in the Korean War and earned the Distinguished Service Cross in Vietnam for lifesaving heroics during the war's first major battle before rising to a three-star general. His wife, Julia, meanwhile held their family together through more than two dozen moves and served as an activist for Army families. The daughter of an Army officer, she was a lifelong volunteer for the American Red Cross, and she is also credited with revamping the Pentagon's casualty notification process to ensure such news was delivered by uniformed Army officers, after she witnessed families being notified of Vietnam casualties by telegrams delivered by

taxi drivers.

The installation embraced the name Fort Moore as a reminder to take care of soldiers and their family members, adopting the phrases "Be Moore" and "Welcome Home" as installation sayings.

The Moores' children have said they were disappointed by Hegseth's decision to remove their parents' name from the post, where they once lived and some of them later served.

"Renaming Fort Benning as Fort Moore created a unique opportunity to honor Army families, reinforce the warrior ethos and inspire generations of combat leaders," said Dave Moore, the couple's youngest child and a retired Army colonel who served in Panama, Iraq and Afghanistan. "The legacy of Hal and Julie Moore remains a powerful testament to moral character and selfless service, continuing to inspire all who lead, serve and support the United States Army."

Tully, the installation's top general, said he personally broke the news to the Moores, and he promised the post would continue to honor Hal and Julia Moore. The couple's portrait will remain displayed prominently in the Maneuver Center of Excellence's foyer, near a new portrait of Fred Benning.

"They are a part of the fabric of this installation," the general said. "Whatever the name may be on an installation board, the Moores are an interwoven part of this installation. And that will never go away."

The initial name-changing efforts cost taxpayers some \$60 million, including about \$830,000 to change signs and other items at Fort Benning. Officials at the post on Wednesday said they estimated the new change would cost about \$653,000.

For Fred Benning's family, the honor came as a surprise, said Conger-Williams, a school principal who had never visited an Army installation before this week and was unaware of the recent efforts to change the names of some of the service's posts.

She said she would not concern herself with the politics involved in the name change and would focus on how the name Fort Benning would now help keep her grandfather's memory alive.

"This has been the greatest honor I think a family could receive," Conger-Williams said after the ceremony. "Realizing that the information [about Benning's military service] was never really shared with us growing up, so I just didn't know the impact of what my grandpa did serving in the Great War."

"So, listening and learning his story, having it come to life, it has been ... truly a blessing."



MILITARY

Ex-Pacific commander urges clarity on Taiwan policy

By Wyatt Olson  
*Stars and Stripes*

WAIKIKI BEACH, Hawaii — America should abandon its policy of “strategic ambiguity” toward Taiwan and instead declare outright whether it will or will not defend the island if attacked by China, a former head of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said Tuesday.

“There is no country more clear about what it intends to do about Taiwan than China,” retired Adm. Harry Harris said in the keynote speech at an event marking the 50th anniversary of the Honolulu-based Pacific Forum, a foreign policy research institute.

“We should be equally clear, and we should never allow China to dictate America’s foreign policy with regard to Taiwan,” he said.

Harris retired from a 40-year Navy career after heading INDO-PACOM from 2015 to 2018. He then served as U.S. ambassador to South Korea until 2021.

“China seeks to isolate and then dominate Taiwan, and that runs counter to American interests,” Harris said.

He cited recent statements by Adm. Samuel Paparo, current IN-DOPACOM commander, that Chi-

na’s ever-growing naval maneuvers in waters off Taiwan are rehearsals for actual invasion.

China regards Taiwan, a self-governed democracy lying just off its southeast coast, as a renegade province that must be brought under Beijing’s control.

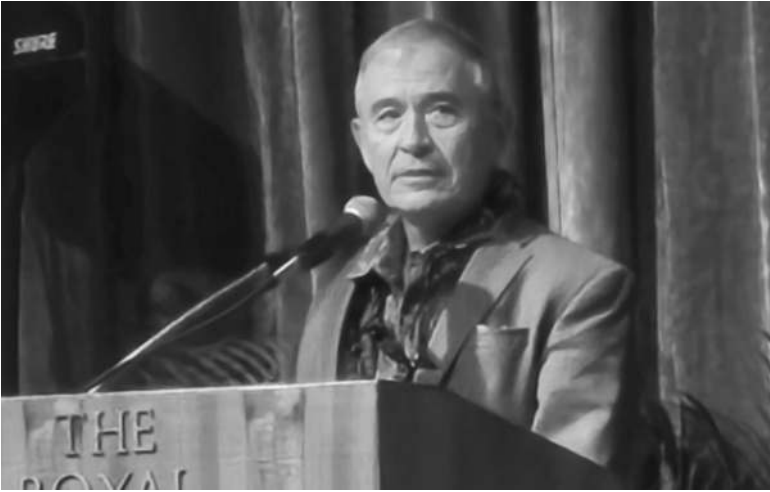
The U.S. has for decades maintained “strategic ambiguity” about what military actions it would take in the event China moved to take the island by force.

During his first trip to Japan as president in May 2022, Joe Biden seemed to suggest that the policy of ambiguity was ending. But a month later, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin declared the policy “unchanged and unwavering.”

Harris said he advocates clarity because “there are three constituents that deserve to know if the United States is going to defend Taiwan or not and not leave it up to some ambiguous agreement or promise at the time of impact.”

“The first constituent is Taiwan,” he said. “They ought to know so they can make the decision whether to arm up or capitulate.

“China ought to know so they can make a decision whether



Retired Adm. Harry Harris speaks during a Pacific Forum event in Waikiki Beach, Hawaii, on Tuesday.

they’re going to invade Taiwan or not. I mean, if they invade Taiwan, they’re going to lose hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines, whatever they have, in a pitched battle over Taiwan.”

The third and most important constituent is the American citizenry, he said.

“You ought to know that your daughters and sons who are wearing the uniform of our nation are

going to fight and potentially die over Taiwan,” he said.

Although the U.S. in 1979 switched formal recognition from Taiwan to China, it continues to supply arms to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act, passed by Congress the same year.

Under its “One China” policy, the U.S. acknowledges Beijing’s view that it has sovereignty over Taiwan, which split from the mainland in 1949, but considers

Taiwan’s status as unsettled.

President Donald Trump has not clarified where his second administration stands on the issue of defending Taiwan.

Trump was uncharacteristically mum in February when asked if his policy would not allow China to take Taiwan by force.

“I never comment on that,” he said. “I don’t comment on it because I don’t want to ever put myself in that position.”

During last year’s presidential election campaign, Trump said Taiwan needed to “pay us for defense” and increase its own defense expenditures.

In the March/April issue of the journal Foreign Affairs, authors Jennifer Kavanaugh and Stephen Wertheim argue that America must reject “the misguided idea that the United States’ survival and prosperity turn on Taiwan’s political status.”

“Washington must make a plan that enables Taiwan to mount a viable self-defense, allows the United States to assist from a distance, and keeps the U.S. position in Asia intact regardless of how a cross-strait conflict concludes,” the authors wrote.

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EUROPE

Civilians: Policy may lead to legal complications, experts say

**FROM PAGE 1**

ployees support 172,000 active-duty service members stationed overseas, according to Defense Department data from December 2024, with the largest civilian populations living in Germany, Japan and South Korea.

Proper evidence collection can be an important part of a victim's legal argument in the event they accuse a service member of sexual assault and the case leads to a court-martial.

The U.S. military has detailed protocols for the handling of evidence after an assault allegation, including rules about the chain of custody.

Outside the military, collection methods vary by country.

A foreign test kit may be easier to discredit in court compared with one collected on a U.S. base, said retired Lt. Col. Will Helixon, a former special victims prosecutor who now works as a civilian military defense lawyer in Wiesbaden, Germany.

"Any skilled defense lawyer is going to be able to ask the questions that would exclude a lot of that evidence," Helixon said in an interview.

Some nations, particularly in parts of the Middle East and Africa, also view the concept of sexual assault very differently, which can dissuade victims from seeking help off base.

Defense Department employees already face challenges

when it comes to accessing health care in their host nations.

Medical facilities overseas offer limited care for those who aren't active-duty service members, providing care for a fee depending on capacity.

Services offered can vary vastly from month to month.

In Japan, DOD-affiliated civilians and families cite language barriers, complex billing and differences in approach to care as common hurdles for those seeking care, according to a recent report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Pete Kageleiry Jr., a retired lieutenant colonel and former judge advocate who now works as a private military defense lawyer

in Virginia, said the memo raises questions about the reliability of evidence.

Kageleiry said that he has seen civilian employees receive test kits at military facilities.

The memo is a step backward compared to recent improvements the military has made to its handling of sexual assault, and it's likely to impact overseas cases, he said.

"I know from experience that these cases arise in every environment, like a contingency operation," Kageleiry said. "There's civilians with the force everywhere."

Peter Graves, a spokesperson for the Military Health System, said forensic evidence collection

policies were developed for the treatment of service members and their dependents and do not include testing for people who are not insured by Tricare.

"There are significant gaps in policy and processes that contribute to risk, revictimization, and confusion when persons from outside the system present to (military health facilities) after a sexual assault," Graves said in a statement. "This is compounded in overseas locations where host nations may not provide or recognize (sexual assault forensic exams)."

"The Department will continue to explore potential policy changes that mitigate risks associated with providing (such exams) to these persons," Graves said.

Spectrum: Annual exercise sees new methods as field grows

**FROM PAGE 1**

tenna called a Tactical Electronic Warfare System.

"When people aren't thinking about that and they're using the radios a lot ... my system can hear you from ranges that I wouldn't even be able to see you at," he said.

Electronic warfare refers to the combat use of high-tech equipment that operates on the electromagnetic spectrum, according to the Army.

This can mean finding a concealed enemy unit through electromagnetic or radio signals, jamming their communications or knocking an attacking drone out of the sky before it reaches soldiers on the ground.

This was the second iteration of the annual exercise, which is growing along with the career field because of the importance of detecting electronic signatures on modern battlefields.

Next year, the exercise will involve multinational partners and allies, readiness center commander Col. Christopher Kirkpatrick said.

Innovative use of drones has been a hallmark of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, and the U.S. military is broadly pushing to train its personnel in such tactics.

Capt. Bradley Byrd, a military intelligence trainer at the center, said the U.S. is behind peer adversaries when it comes to electronic warfare.



PHOTOS BY LYDIA GORDON/Stars and Stripes

**U.S. soldiers learn how to use the Versatile Radio Observation and Direction Modular Adaptive Transmission system during Spectrum Blitz in Hohenfels, Germany, on Tuesday.**

During Spectrum Blitz, soldiers fielded backpack-mounted systems such as the Beast+ and Versatile Radio Observation and Direction Modular Adaptive Transmission system, or VMAX, in addition to vehicle-mounted systems, like the one Stigler was using.

The systems work as nodes that can spread out and feed information to a centralized collection point to triangulate an enemy position.

The soldiers saw more success as the exercise progressed. After locating only two enemy targets on the first day, they upped that



**A U.S. soldier at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, participates in Spectrum Blitz, a five-day electronic warfare exercise that wrapped up Tuesday.**



**A U.S. Army Stryker mounted with a Tactical Electronic Warfare System-Infantry provides support to soldiers.**

number to 51 out of 67 on Tuesday, trainer Sgt. 1st Class Louie Lau said.

On Tuesday, while Stigler manned the Stryker system, officers from all of the participating units took a quick course on the backpacks to better understand how to use the electronic warfare soldiers under their command.

Capt. Edgar Orellana, an analyst at the readiness center, donned the VMAX and tried to find a man with a radio somewhere in the grassy hills before him.

Waves indicating an anomaly spiked on a tablet in his hand.

"It's hard to employ something when you lack the knowledge; we're inadequate at it," Orellana said. "War is evolving. As these modernization efforts get pushed out, we have to adapt with them."



MILITARY

Navy’s top enlisted leader makes Bahrain visit

BY SHANNON RENFROE  
*Stars and Stripes*  
MANAMA, Bahrain — Navy recruiting is making progress toward easing a long-standing manning shortage at sea, the service’s top enlisted leader told sailors in Bahrain this week.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Honea praised recruiters during an all-hands meeting Wednesday at the service’s base in Bahrain, where he expressed optimism that strengthening the ranks will ease the burden on deployed crews.

“Last year, we met our contracting goals, and this year, we’re going to exceed those,” Honea said.

Honea’s comments come amid years of undermanning at sea. Most of the service’s surface ships, aircraft carriers and submarines can’t complete regular routine maintenance and repairs while underway, a Government Accountability Office report said in September.



SHANNON RENFROE/Stars and Stripes  
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Honea addresses sailors and Marines on Wednesday at an all-hands call in Manama, Bahrain.

Inadequate crewing of ships also keeps sailors working longer hours, limiting their available time for sleep and contributing to fatigue.

At an April 15 awards ceremony

honoring the Navy Midshipmen football team, President Donald Trump highlighted the significant rise in the service’s recruitment since his second administration took office.

“Today, I’m proud to announce that in February, the US Navy had its best recruiting numbers since 2002, that’s a long time ago and under my administration, the Navy is on track to have the best recruiting year since the start of the war and the war on terror, but going back further than that, probably 25 to 30 years,” Trump said.

The Navy met its 2024 recruiting goal with 40,000 contracts and expects to have those recruits deployed by year’s end, narrowing the 20,000-sailor-at-sea shortfall to 18,000. It aims to fill 10,000 more sea-duty billets, with 100% of billets filled by 2027, Vice Adm. Richard Cheeseman said during Senate testimony on April 9.

Cheeseman, the Navy’s top personnel officer, said that progress is being made but that it takes at least nine months for recruits to move through the full training pipeline.

During the all-hands call, Honea explained that the service has

adapted its training pipeline to handle the influx of new sailors “so we don’t end up with any kind of bottleneck along the way.”

The Navy credits recent recruiting gains to cultural shifts, including the “Every Sailor a Recruiter” initiative and the appointment of a two-star admiral to oversee recruiting operations.

It also eased pressure on recruiters by shifting from monthly quotas to annual goals, promoting steadier performance in what is already a mentally demanding assignment.

Boosting training capacity at boot camp and technical schools ensures that the Navy can “flow people as quickly as possible out to the fleet,” Honea said.

But reaching the point where ships are fully crewed again is not going to happen in the near term, he cautioned, saying that “it takes a couple of years for us to get that water spigot turned back on” and fill the ranks.

Eighth Army leader departs S. Korea for Pentagon post

BY DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*  
CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea – After just a year leading American ground forces in South Korea, Lt. Gen. Christopher LaNeve relinquished command of the Eighth Army this week as he prepares for a new post as senior military assistant to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

During a Wednesday ceremony at Eighth Army headquarters, LaNeve formally passed command to Brig. Gen. Sean Crockett, his deputy, who will serve in an acting capacity until a permanent successor is nominated by President Donald Trump and confirmed by the Senate.

LaNeve assumed command April 5, 2024, and was nominated for his new role on March 25. His predecessor, Lt. Gen. Willard Burleson, served for four years, following nearly three years under Lt. Gen. Michael Bills.

Speaking at the ceremony, LaNeve emphasized the enduring partnership between the United States and South Korea, a cornerstone of security on the peninsula since the end of the Korean War, according to a

statement emailed Thursday by command spokesman James Choe.

“It is not just a military friendship,” LaNeve said, according to the statement. “It is a bond between our two countries that has been earned in blood and sacrifice. This alliance is our legacy.”

LaNeve’s departure comes as the United States and South Korea continue to conduct regular joint military exercises, including the large-scale Freedom Shield and Ulchi Freedom Shield drills.

In January, LaNeve and members of his staff made a virtual appearance at the Commander-in-Chief Ball on inauguration day in Washington, D.C. Speaking with Trump via video call, LaNeve described the Eighth Army as “the bedrock of unmistakable land power on freedom’s frontier in Asia.”

Trump, known for his flair for showmanship, responded by calling LaNeve a “man from central casting,” adding, “If I’m doing a movie, I pick him to play my lead.”

Before coming to Korea, LaNeve commanded the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., and served in senior roles at Army Forces Command and the Seventh



LEE KINYUK/U.S. Army  
Lt. Gen. Christopher LaNeve, right, relinquishes the Eighth Army guidon to Lt. Gen. David Iverson at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Wednesday.

Army Training Command in Europe. A 1989 graduate of the University of Arizona, LaNeve has spent more than three decades in uniform.

Established in June 1944, the Eighth Ar-

my has played a defining role in U.S. military history, from fighting in the Pacific during World War II to its pivotal role in the Korean War and ongoing presence on the peninsula.

Air Force commands begin unveiling which family days they’ll keep

BY ZADE VADNAIS  
*Stars and Stripes*  
Air Force major commands have begun rolling out family day calendars for the rest of the year, after the service ended its blanket schedule of an extra day off tacked on to a federal holiday.

Air Mobility Command and Air Force Global Strike Command published separate calendars in internal memos last week, each of-

fering six family days but centered on different holidays in some cases.

Air Mobility Command’s plan skips family days attached to Labor Day and Veterans Day, while Air Force Global Strike Command’s omits the one near June-teenth. Neither matches the eight family days that had been scheduled across the Air Force for the remainder of 2025 before the pol-

icy was rescinded.

The four-day weekends that often result from family days are intended to improve quality of life for airmen. Civilian employees of the Air Force are generally not eligible for family days.

With the service’s eight other major commands yet to release their calendars, the full impact of the policy shift remains to be seen.

The two calendars recently is-

sued were created with both mission requirements and quality-of-life considerations in mind, representatives from both commands said via email.

Installation commanders have long held the authority to adjust or override family day observances based on mission needs, meaning the major command guidance serves as the default until superseded locally.

That flexibility means large groups of airmen may be off duty at some major commands while others remain regularly staffed.

The schedules put out by Air Mobility Command and Air Force Global Strike Command apply to airmen assigned directly to their respective headquarters as well as to installations under them, unless local commanders publish their own.



NATION

# Revoked student visas bring about legal challenges

By ANNIE MA  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Several international students who have had their visas revoked in recent weeks have filed lawsuits against the Trump administration, arguing the government denied them due process when it suddenly took away their permission to be in the U.S.

The actions by the federal government to terminate students' legal status have left hundreds of scholars at risk of detention and deportation. Their schools range from private universities like Harvard and Stanford to large public institutions like the University of Maryland and Ohio State University to some small liberal arts colleges.

At least 901 students at 128 colleges and universities have had their visas revoked or their legal status terminated since mid-March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements and correspondence with school officials.

In lawsuits against the Department of Homeland Security, students have argued the government lacked justification to cancel their visa or terminate their legal status.

Visas can be canceled for a number of reasons, but colleges say some students are being singled out over infractions as minor as traffic violations, including some long in the past. In some cases, students say it's unclear why they were targeted.

"The timing and uniformity of these terminations leave little question that DHS has adopted a nationwide policy, whether writ-

ten or not, of mass termination of student (legal) status," ACLU of Michigan attorneys wrote in a lawsuit on behalf of students at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan.

In New Hampshire, a federal judge last week issued a restraining order in the case of a Dartmouth College computer science student from China, Xiaotian Liu, who had his status terminated by the government.

Attorneys have filed similar challenges in federal court in Georgia and California.

Homeland Security officials did not respond to a message seeking comment.

In some high-profile cases, including the detention of Columbia University activist Mahmoud Khalil, President Donald Trump's administration has argued it should be allowed to deport non-citizens over involvement in pro-Palestinian activism. But in the vast majority of visa revocations, colleges say there is no indication affected students had a role in protests.

"What you're seeing happening with international students is really a piece of the much greater scrutiny that the Trump administration is bringing to bear on immigrants of all different categories," said Michelle Mittelstadt, director of public affairs at the Migration Policy Institute.

Students in other countries must meet a series of requirements to obtain a student visa, usually an F-1. After gaining admission to a school in the U.S., students go through an application and interview process at a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad.



**Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen speaks to the press Wednesday in La Libertad, El Salvador, where he arrived regarding Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran citizen who was living in Maryland and deported to El Salvador by the Trump administration.**

## Senator travels to El Salvador in push for Abrego Garcia's release

Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR — Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen traveled to El Salvador on Wednesday and met with the country's vice president to push for the release of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a man who was sent there by the Trump administration in March despite an immigration court order preventing his deportation.

Van Hollen said at a news conference in San Salvador that Vice President Félix Ulloa said his government could not return Abrego Garcia to the United States and declined to allow Van Hollen to visit him in the notorious gang prison where he is being held.

"Why is the government of El Salvador continuing to imprison a man where they have no evidence that he's committed any crime and they have not been provided any evidence from the United States that he has committed any crime?" Van

Hollen told reporters after the meeting. "They should just let him go."

Van Hollen's trip became a flashpoint in the U.S. The Trump administration sharply criticized it, while Democrats have rallied around Abrego Garcia.

President Donald Trump and Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele said this week that they have no basis to send him back, even as the U.S. Supreme Court has called on the administration to facilitate his return.

Trump officials have said that Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran citizen who was living in Maryland, has ties to the MS-13 gang, but his attorneys say the government has provided no evidence of that and Abrego Garcia has never been charged with any crime related to such activity.

"We have an unjust situation here," said Van Hollen, a member

of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "The Trump administration is lying about Abrego Garcia. The American courts have looked at the facts."

Trump officials reiterated Wednesday that he would not be returned to the United States. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt held a press briefing with the mother of a Maryland woman, Rachel Morin, who was killed by a fugitive from El Salvador in 2023.

"It's appalling and sad that Sen. Van Hollen and the Democrats applauding his trip to El Salvador today are incapable of having any shred of common sense or empathy for their own constituents and our citizens," Leavitt said at the briefing.

Republicans have focused on the victims of crime committed by people in the U.S. illegally in arguing for Trump's promised immigration crackdown and mass deportations.

## Immigration judge denies bond for university student from Turkey

Associated Press

An immigration judge denied bond for a Tufts University student from Turkey who has been detained by authorities in Louisiana for three weeks over what her lawyers say is apparent retaliation for an op-ed piece she co-wrote in the student newspaper.

Meanwhile, Rumeysa Ozturk's lawyers filed a new request with a federal judge in Vermont considering whether to take jurisdiction of her detention case. The lawyers asked the judge to order her to be brought to the state by Friday and hold a hearing next week. They said that would allow

better communication with her legal team and a doctor to evaluate her. They say Ozturk has suffered five asthma attacks in detention.

Lawyers for Ozturk, 30, had asked an immigration judge that she be released on bond as her immigration case proceeds. That judge denied her request Wednesday, the same day Ozturk had a hearing, they said in a statement released Thursday morning.

The Department of Homeland



Ozturk

Security presented one document to support their opposition to Ozturk's bond request: a one-paragraph State Department memo revoking her student visa, her lawyers said in the new court filing.

The memo says that Ozturk's visa was revoked on March 21 following an assessment that she had been involved in associations "that may undermine U.S. foreign policy by creating a hostile environment for Jewish students and indicating support for a designated terrorist organization" including co-authoring an op-ed that found common cause with an or-

ganization that was later temporarily banned from campus."

Ozturk's lawyers said the immigration judge denied bond based on the "untenable conclusion that Ms. Ozturk was both a flight risk and a danger to the community."

Messages seeking comment Thursday were emailed to the department and to ICE.

Ozturk, a doctoral student studying child development, was taken by immigration officials as she walked along a street in the Boston suburb of Somerville on March 25. After being taken to New Hampshire and then Vermont, she was put on a plane the

next day and moved to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Basile, Louisiana.

Ozturk is among several people with ties to American universities whose visas were revoked or have been stopped from entering the U.S. after they were accused of attending demonstrations or publicly expressed support for Palestinians. A Louisiana immigration judge has ruled that the U.S. can deport Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil based on the federal government's argument that he poses a national security risk.



NATION

# White House escalates battle with Harvard

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s administration has escalated its ongoing battle with Harvard, threatening to revoke the university’s ability to host international students as the president called for withdrawing Harvard’s tax-exempt status.

The Department of Homeland Security ordered Harvard late Tuesday to turn over “detailed records” of its foreign student visa holders’ “illegal and violent activities” by April 30. International students make up 27% of the campus.

The department also said it was canceling two grants to the school totaling \$2.7 million.

The moves deepen the crackdown on Harvard, which on Monday became the first university to openly defy the administration’s demands related to activism on campus, antisemitism and diversity. The federal government has already frozen more than \$2 billion in grants and contracts to the Ivy League institution.

Trump suggested Tuesday on social media that Harvard should lose its tax-exempt status “if it keeps pushing political, ideological, and terrorist inspired/supporting ‘Sickness?’”

The hold on federal money for research at Harvard marked the seventh time the administration has taken such a step at one of the nation’s most elite colleges. The government is attempting to force compliance with Trump’s political agenda at schools he accuses of pushing “woke” policies and allowing antisemitism to fester.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

A student walks through the courtyard outside Eliot House at Harvard University on Tuesday in Cambridge, Mass.

In a letter to Harvard on Friday, Trump’s administration called for broad government and leadership reforms at the university, plus changes to its admissions policies. It also demanded that the university audit views of diversity on campus and stop recognizing some student clubs.

Harvard President Alan Garber said Monday that the university would not bend to the government’s demands. Later that

day, the White House announced the freeze of more than \$2.2 billion in multi-year grants and \$60 million in contracts.

Conservative strategist Christopher Rufo said the government should respond to Harvard’s defiance by cutting all federal money and stripping nonprofit status at Harvard and other Ivies that defy federal orders. Rufo urged the government to use the same tools it used during the Civil Rights Move-

ment to force desegregation.

“Trump needs to follow through on his threat to defund one of the Ivy League universities,” Rufo said on social media Tuesday. “Cut the funding and watch the university implode.”

Rufo said Harvard has discriminated against white and Asian American students, citing events such as graduation celebrations specific to certain ethnic groups, along with a 2021 theater performance exclusively “for Black-identifying audience members.”

For the Trump administration, Harvard presents the first major hurdle in its attempt to force change at universities that Republicans say have become hotbeds of liberalism and antisemitism.

Trump’s campaign started at Columbia University, which initially agreed to several demands from the Trump administration but took a more emboldened tone after Harvard’s defiance. Columbia’s acting president, Claire Shipman, said in a campus message Monday that some of the demands “are not subject to negotiation” and that she read of Harvard’s rejection with “great interest.”

Trump has targeted schools accused of tolerating antisemitism amid a wave of pro-Palestinian protests on U.S. campuses. Some of the government’s demands touch directly on that activism, calling on Harvard to impose tougher discipline on protesters and to screen international students for those who are “hostile to the American values.”

## Trump gripes about interest rates, hints at termination of Fed chair

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump slammed Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Thursday, reiterating his frustration that the Fed has not aggressively cut interest rates and saying that the central bank leader’s “termination cannot come fast enough.”

Trump hinted at moving to fire Powell, whose term does not expire until May 2026. The Republican president’s broadside comes a day after Powell signaled that the Fed will keep its key interest rate unchanged while it seeks “greater clarity” on the impact of policy changes in areas such as immigration, taxation, regulation and tariffs.

Powell also reiterated that Trump’s tariffs would likely raise inflation and slow the economy, which could make it harder for the Fed to cut rates anytime soon. The Fed chair also suggested that the central bank will focus on fighting inflation in the wake of the tariffs, even if the duties did weaken the economy. Powell’s comments contributed to a drop in stock prices Wednesday.

“Oil prices are down, groceries (even eggs!) are down, and the USA is getting RICH ON TARIFFS,”

Trump said in a social media post.

Referring to the European Central Bank, he added that Powell “should have lowered Interest Rates, like the ECB, long ago, but he should certainly lower them now. Powell’s termination cannot come fast enough!”

The European Central Bank on Thursday lowered its key interest rate from 2.5% to 2.25%.



Powell

Powell was initially nominated by Trump in 2017, and he was appointed to another four-year term by President Joe Biden in 2022. At a November news conference, Powell indicated he would not step down if Trump asked him to resign.

He has also said that the removal or demotion of top Fed officials was “not permitted under the law.”

Trump’s comments come with the backdrop of a legal case at the Supreme Court that could determine whether presidents can fire the heads of independent agencies such as the Fed.

The case stems from Trump’s firings of officials from two independent agencies. The Supreme

Court last week let the firings stand while it considers the case. It could issue a broader ruling this summer that would enable the president to fire Fed officials, including the chair.

Powell said the Fed is watching the case closely, adding that it might not apply to the Fed.

“It is difficult to overstate the consequences at this stressed moment of a Court ruling that found that President Trump ... does have the authority to dismiss the heads of independent agencies and did not establish a clear carve-out for the Fed,” Krishna Guha, an analyst at investment bank Evercore ISI, wrote on Thursday. “If you liked the tariff debacle in markets, you’d love the loss-of-Fed-independence trade.”

Powell started Trump’s second term in a relatively secure spot with a low unemployment rate and inflation progressing closer to the Fed’s 2% target, conditions that could have spared the U.S. central banker from the president’s vitriol.

But Trump’s aggressive and haphazard tariffs have increased the threat of a recession with both higher inflationary pressures and slower growth, a tough spot for Powell, whose mandate is to stabilize prices and maximize employment.

## Executive order on elections challenged

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal judge on Thursday was to hear arguments in three cases from national Democrats and voting rights groups that are challenging President Donald Trump’s recent executive order on elections, which, among other changes, would require proof of citizenship to register to vote in federal elections.

The Democratic National Committee, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the League of Women Voters Education Fund and others are seeking to block Trump’s sweeping overhaul of federal election processes, alleging that the changes he wants are unconstitutional.

The Republican president’s executive order says the U.S. has failed “to enforce basic and necessary election protections” and calls on states to work with federal agencies to share voter lists and prosecute election crimes. It threatens to pull federal funding from states where election officials don’t comply.

It also aims to mandate major changes to election processes, including adding a proof-of-citizenship requirement to the federal voter registration form and requiring all mail ballots to be received, rather

than just postmarked, by Election Day nationwide.

The plaintiffs argue Trump’s order is illegal because it asserts power that he does not have over an independent agency. That agency, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, sets voluntary voting system guidelines and maintains the federal voter registration form.

The plaintiffs also argue the order violates the Constitution, which says that states — not the president — get to decide the “times, places and manner” of how elections are run. The Constitution’s so-called Elections Clause also gives Congress the power to “make or alter” election regulations, at least for federal office, but it doesn’t mention any presidential authority over election administration.

U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly in Washington, D.C., will consider the plaintiffs’ pleas for a preliminary injunction, temporarily blocking the order as the lawsuits play out. She instructed the parties to be prepared to discuss a range of topics, including whether the Election Assistance Commission can comply with Trump’s demands while following the law and whether the plaintiffs have standing to raise each of their claims.



NATION

Trump: ‘No rush’ to end tariffs

By COLLEEN BARRY AND JOSH BOAK  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Thursday that he is in “no rush” to reach any trade deals because of the revenues his tariffs are generating, but suggested while meeting with Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni that it would be easy to find an agreement with the European Union and others.

His administration has indicated that offers are coming from other countries and it is possible to do 90 deals during the 90-day tariff pause, but the president played down the likelihood of an accelerated timeline, saying any agreements would come “at a certain point.”

“We’re in no rush,” said Trump, hinting that he has leverage because other countries want access to U.S. consumers.

Meloni’s meeting with Trump will test her mettle as a bridge between the EU and the United States. She is the first European leader to have face-to-face talks with him since he announced and then partially suspended 20% tariffs on European exports.

Meloni secured the meeting as Italy’s leader, but she also has, in a sense, been “knighted” to represent the EU at a critical juncture in the fast-evolving trade war that has stoked recession fears. She was in close contact with EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen before the trip, and “the outreach is ... closely coordinated,” a commission spokeswoman said.

“We know we are in a difficult moment,” Meloni said this week in Rome. “Most certainly, I am well aware of what I represent, and what I am defending.”

The EU is defending what it calls “the most important commercial relationship in the world,”

with annual trade with the U.S. totaling \$1.8 trillion. The Trump administration has said its tariffs would enable trade negotiations that would box out China, the world’s dominant manufacturer. But Trump maintains that rivals and allies alike have taken advantage of the U.S. on trade.

Trade negotiations fall under the authority of the EU Commission, which is pushing for a zero-for-zero tariff deal with Washington. Trump administration officials, in talks with the EU, have yet to publicly show signs of relenting on the president’s insistence that a baseline 10% tariff be charged on all foreign imports. Trump paused for 90 days his initial 20% tax on EU products so that negotiations could occur.

Meloni’s margins for progress are more in gaining clarity on the Republican president’s goals rather than outright concessions, experts say.

As the leader of a far-right party, Meloni is ideologically aligned with Trump on issues including curbing migration, promoting traditional values and skepticism toward multilateral institutions. But stark differences have emerged in Meloni’s unwavering support for Ukraine after Russia’s invasion.

The two leaders are expected to discuss the war and Italy’s role in an eventual postwar reconstruction of Ukraine. Trump is expected to press Meloni to increase Italy’s defense spending, which last year fell well below the 2% of gross domestic product target for countries in the NATO military alliance. Italy’s spending, at 1.49% of GDP, is among the lowest in Europe.

Despite the differences on Ukraine and defense spending, Meloni is seen by some in the U.S. administration as a vital bridge to Europe at a difficult moment for trans-Atlantic relations.



REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP  
A baby manatee swimming beside its mother comes to the surface to breathe, at Manatee Lagoon, in Riviera Beach, Fla., on Jan. 10.

Proposed rule changes leaves many concerned for endangered species

By TAMMY WEBBER  
*Associated Press*

The Trump administration plans to eliminate habitat protections for endangered and threatened species in a move environmentalists say would lead to the extinction of critically endangered species because of logging, mining, development and other activities.

At issue is a long-standing definition of “harm” in the Endangered Species Act, which has included altering or destroying the places those species live. Habitat destruction is the biggest cause of extinction, said Noah Greenwald, endangered species director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service said in a proposed rule issued Wednesday that habitat modification should not be considered harm because it is not the same as intentionally targeting a species, called “take.” Environmentalists argue that the definition of “take,” though, has always included actions that harm spe-

cies, and the definition of “harm” has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The proposed rule “cuts the heart out of the Endangered Species Act,” Greenwald said. “If (you) say harm doesn’t mean significant habitat degradation or modification, then it really leaves endangered species out in the cold.”

For example, he said spotted owls and Florida panthers both are protected because the current rule forbids habitat destruction. But if the new rule is adopted, someone who logs in a forest or builds a development would be unimpeded as long as they could say they didn’t intend to harm an endangered species, he said.

The proposed rule was expected to be published in the Federal Register on Thursday, kicking off a 30-day public comment period.

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokeswoman referred The Associated Press to the Department of Interior, which declined to comment.

Environmental groups will

challenge the rule in court if it is adopted, said Drew Caputo, an attorney at Earthjustice.

He said the proposal “threatens a half-century of progress in protecting and restoring endangered species,” including bald eagles, gray wolves, Florida manatees and humpback whales.

He said that is because the current rule “recognizes the common-sense concept that destroying a forest, beach, river, or wetland that a species relies on for survival constitutes harm to that species.”

The question is whether the Trump administration is entitled to repeal a rule that was upheld specifically by the Supreme Court and therefore subject to precedent, said Patrick Parenteau, an emeritus professor at the Vermont Law and Graduate School who has handled endangered species cases.

Because of the current definition of harm, “many, many millions of acres of land has been conserved” to help keep species alive, he said.

Suspect reportedly in custody in Florida State mass shooting

Associated Press  
TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A suspect has been taken into police custody and multiple victims were reported in a shooting Thursday at Florida State University, a person familiar with the matter said.

The extent of the victims’ injuries was not immediately known and there were no additional details about the person who was in custody.

The person was not authorized to publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

At least six people have been hospitalized, including one person in critical condition, a spokesperson for Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare said. The other patients were in serious condition, the spokesperson said.

Ambulances, fire trucks and patrol vehicles from multiple law enforcement agencies raced toward the campus that sits just west of Florida’s state capital after the university issued an active shooter alert midday Thursday, saying police were responding near the student union.

“Our prayers are with our FSU family and state law enforcement is actively responding,” Gov. Ron DeSantis wrote on X.

Hundreds of students streamed away from the direction of the student union.

Students were glued to their phones, some visibly emotional, while others hugged each other. Dozens gathered near the music school waiting for news.

Ryan Cedergren, a 21-year-old communications student, said he and about 30 others hid in the bowling alley in the lower level of

the student union after seeing students running from a nearby bar.

“In that moment, it was survival,” he said.

After about 15 minutes of hiding, university police escorted the students out of the union and he saw a person getting emergency treatment on the lawn, he said.

Junior Joshua Sirmans, 20, was in the university’s main library when he said alarms began going off warning of an active shooter.

Law enforcement officers escorted him and other students out of the library with their hands

over their heads, he said.

Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a social media post that the Justice Department was in touch with FBI agents who were on the scene.

In a social media post, FBI Director Kash Patel said that he and his team had been briefed on the shooting and that agents from the bureau’s Jacksonville field office were at the school.

“We will provide full support to local law enforcement as needed,” Patel said. “Please keep the FSU community in your prayers.”



WORLD

# Ukraine’s future focus of US, Europe talks in Paris

Associated Press

PARIS — France hosted a series of talks Thursday about Ukraine and its security, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and presidential envoy Steve Witkoff and top Ukrainian and European officials.

After hours of separate meetings at the French presidential palace with U.S., Ukrainian and European officials, French President Emmanuel Macron brought them all together for a final round of talks at the end of the day.

The outcome of the negotiations wasn’t immediately clear.

The meetings come as concerns grow about President Donald Trump’s readiness to draw

closer to Russia, and after weeks of U.S. efforts to broker a ceasefire in Ukraine.

There is also frustration over the Trump administration’s other moves, from tariffs on some of its closest partners to rhetoric about NATO and Greenland.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Andrii Yermak said the Ukrainian delegation discussed with European partners next steps toward achieving a “just and lasting peace,” including a full ceasefire, the deployment of a multinational military contingent, and the development of an effective security architecture for Ukraine.

“It was a very substantive conversation. We continue our

work,” he wrote.

Rubio and Witkoff met Macron and held “talks with European counterparts to advance President Trump’s goal to end the Russia-Ukraine war and stop the bloodshed,” State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said.

Trump’s special envoy to Ukraine and Russia, retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, also joined the talks.

Other participants included Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, the German government’s foreign policy adviser and German Foreign Ministry’s political director.



French President Emmanuel Macron, left, welcomes US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for a meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris, Thursday.

## UN: US-Iran talks at a ‘very crucial’ stage

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Talks between Iran and the United States over Tehran’s rapidly advancing nuclear program are “in a very crucial” stage, the head of the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog said Thursday while on a visit to the Islamic Republic.

The comments by Rafael Mariano Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Tehran included an acknowledgment his agency likely would be key in verifying compliance by Iran should a deal be reached. Iran and the U.S. will meet again Saturday in Rome for a new round of talks after last weekend’s first meeting in Oman.

Grossi’s visit also coincided with Saudi Arabia’s defense minister, Prince Khalid bin Salman, visiting Tehran as the highest-ranking official from the kingdom to visit Iran since the two countries reached a Chinese-mediated détente in 2023. That’s as Saudi Arabia tries to end its decadelong war against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen — even as a new, intense campaign of U.S. airstrikes targets them.

The stakes of the negotiations Saturday and the wider geopolitical tensions in the Mideast are high, particularly as the Israel-

Hamas war rages on in the Gaza Strip. President Donald Trump repeatedly has threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran’s nuclear program if a deal isn’t reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn that they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels.

Grossi arrived in Iran on Wednesday night and met with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who now is in Moscow for separate talks likely over the negotiations. On Thursday, Grossi met with Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, then later toured a hall featuring some of Iran’s civilian nuclear projects.

“We know that we are in a very crucial, I would say, stage of this important negotiation, so I want to concentrate on the positive,” Grossi told Iranian media. “There is a possibility of a good outcome. Nothing is guaranteed. We need to make sure that we put all of the elements in place ... in order to get to this agreement.”

Since the nuclear deal’s collapse in 2018 with Trump’s unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the accord, Iran has abandoned all limits on its program.

### Cable car deaths near Naples

Associated Press

MILAN — Officials in southern Italy say that a cable car carrying tourists south of Naples has crashed after the cable snapped, killing at least four people and injuring one.

Italy’s alpine rescue was responding to the accident on Monte Faito, which is popular for its views of Mount Vesuvius.

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# WEEKEND



Page, Black Crowes  
revamp 2000 album  
**Music, Page 28**



## ‘Sinners’: Coogler’s big swing

Director’s latest film blends elements of his cinematic inspirations into fresh swirl of gangster drama, blues music and vampire horror

**Movies, Pages 16-17**



Millie Turner, Invision/AP  
Ryan Coogler, inset, directs “Sinners,” starring Michael B. Jordan, right, in a dual role.

WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP



# WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE & GADGETS



Peeps marshmallow treats move through the manufacturing process at the Just Born factory in Bethlehem, Pa., April 10. The process takes less than six minutes.

## A Peep inside its process

How the marshmallow delicacies are hatched

**L**ove them or hate them, those marshmallow Peeps that come in blindingly bright colors and an array of flavors are inescapable around the Easter holiday.

Millions are made daily in Bethlehem, Penn., by Just Born Quality Confections, a family-owned candy manufacturer that also churns out Hot Tamales, Mike and Ike fruit chews and Goldenberg's Peanut Chews.

Peeps is Just Born's most recognizable brand and one of a handful of candies that evoke strong reactions — good and bad. Some say an Easter basket isn't complete without Peeps while others deride them as being indestructible. Some use them in recipes or even artwork.

"Even if you're not usually one to gravitate to eating the Peeps, there's always so many other fun ways to include them in your celebrations," said Caitlin Servian, brand manager for Peeps.

**How many Peeps are made each year?**

On average, about 5.5 million are made each day. That adds up to 2 billion a year — or roughly six Peeps for every man, woman and child across the U.S.



Sugar is unloaded during the Peeps marshmallow treats manufacturing process at the Just Born factory. A whopping 400 pounds of sugar is used per batch for Peeps' colored sugars.

**Different varieties, colors**

First hatched in yellow, the sugary chicks and bunnies come in nine colors this Easter season, including pink, blue and lavender. And there are even more flavors — 14 for Easter — from cookies and cream, to fruit punch and sour watermelon. The varieties and colors vary throughout the year with different holiday seasons.

**How long does it take to make a Peep?**

Before the early 1950s, making the candies by hand took 27 hours.

Bob Born, who became known as the "Father of Peeps," came

up with a way to speed up the process. He and a company engineer designed a machine to make them in less than six minutes. The same process is used today.

**How are they made?**

The main ingredients — sugar, corn syrup and gelatin — are cooked and combined to create marshmallows, which are then shaped and sent through a "sugar shower."

A whopping 400 pounds of sugar is used per batch for Peeps' colored sugars.

Freshly made Peeps — each chick weighs one-third of an ounce — then move along a conveyor so that they can cool before being packaged.

## Aurzen releases the 1st trifold portable projector

**BY GREGG ELLMAN**  
*Tribune News Service*

When hand-held, trifold 3-in-1 chargers came out, I thought they were so cool and efficient. Now I can hold a projector. I'm referring to the Aurzen ZIP Tri-Fold Portable Projector, which transforms any space into your personal cinema by mirroring your smartphone, tablet or computer.

Aurzen claims to have created the world's first trifold portable projector. Who knows if it is the world's first, but it's the first I've seen. It delivers a full 1280 x 720p quality on the go.

Folded up, it measures 3.3 by 3.1 by 1 inches and weighs just 9.88 ounces. Inside is a quick-charging 5000 mAh (USB-C) battery, Bluetooth 5.4, dual 1-watt speakers and a 100-lumen brightness. The Aurzen ZIP projector opens up like a deck of cards in a second. Aurzen recommends not exceeding 90 degrees.

Once you pair it via Wi-Fi to your device (Android, Windows, iOS, macOS), it's ready to go; both the focus and keystone are automatically set. An internal battery powers it and can remain connected to a power source. It's rated to get about 90 minutes of play on its own before it needs a power boost.

It projects in a 16:9 aspect ratio and has a plus/minus 25-degree automatic keystone correction. The content you stream is limited to the source. Due to copyright restrictions from services such as Disney+, Hulu and Netflix, their content cannot be wirelessly mirrored.

I plug-and-play mirrored iPhone via AirPlay. The ZIP projects crisp, clear images from what Aurzen says is the world's thinnest 8mm HD optical engine and tiniest DLP microchip. I had it projected playing YouTube videos and other content from

my phone (off of my iCloud) from about 4 feet to a white wall with the autofocus and keystone working well. The hinges on the ZIP are easy to adjust, and as previously mentioned, the autofocus and keystone are corrected automatically.

The sound is more than acceptable from the internal speakers, but it is much better connected to a portable Bluetooth speaker or headphones.

The Aurzen CastPlay Wireless HDMI Dongle for ZIP, which will be available soon, makes it even easier to access other streaming services. It plugs into gaming units or TV boxes to stream to the ZIP. The MagPlay Dual-Sided Mount for ZIP helps it attach to walls or other flat surfaces securely.

Aurzen ZIP is available for \$399.99. It's available in dark gray or titanium gold.

Online: [aurzen.com](http://aurzen.com)

**Assistive Audio Sleep Ear-plugs** are available to help you get a peaceful night's sleep.

The low-profile earplugs are said to work great for those who sleep on their front, side or back. While using them, you should expect an approximate noise reduction level of 17dB.

You can choose multiple tips (small, medium and large) that conform to the ear's natural shape to ensure a comfortable and secure fit. They are made with hypoallergenic, medical-grade silicone for comfort, so they will not irritate your ear canals while in place.

A lightweight, pocket-sized spring-loaded carry case is included, handy for travel. According to Assistive Audio, the earplugs meet the EN 352 Hearing Protection Standard for certified protection and reliability.

Online: [assistive-audio.com](http://assistive-audio.com), \$14.99



Folded up, the Aurzen ZIP Tri-Fold Portable Projector measures 3.3 by 3.1 by 1 inches and weighs just 9.88 ounces.



WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

# The Switch 2 is all about the games

A few takeaways after hours spent with the new Nintendo console

**BY GENE PARK**  
*The Washington Post*  
**A**fter several hours of play, I can confidently say the Nintendo Switch 2 is an expected but welcome upgrade to Nintendo’s console capabilities, as the entertainment company finally enters the 4K high-definition era.

The biggest surprise is the console’s newest feature: mouse functionality, enabled by turning its detachable controllers on their sides. While the slim build of the controllers will cause discomfort for extended play like this, they operate as smoothly as any computer mouse. Aiming lasers in *Metroid Prime 4*, the long-awaited entry in the firm’s sci-fi series, feels just as crisp and precise as in a PC game.

Kouichi Kawamoto, producer of the new console, said because gaming with a mouse requires a desk, Nintendo tinkered with the optical features so players can use it on their pants.

Nintendo introduced *Drag x Drive*, a multiplayer basketball game where every player is in a wheelchair. To move, you drag the controllers across a mouse pad (or your pants) to get around as you would in a wheelchair. It reminds me of how players of Nintendo’s *Wii Sports* would perform realistic movements for playing tennis or bowling when the game only required a mere flick of the wrist. Same here with your pants. You don’t need to “push” the controllers far. But like the exaggerated movements of *Wii Sports*, it’s kind of more fun to do it anyway.

*Donkey Kong Bananza* and *Mario Kart World* are easily the best and most exciting games demonstrated at a recent live preview event for media and fans in New York City.

*Mario Kart World*, launching with the system June 5, lives up to its moniker, offering a fast, seamless open world to drive around and play out battles. The “free roam” mode may seem familiar to fans of the Xbox series *Forza Horizon*, which offers similar gameplay except with realistic cars and environments. But it’s breathtaking to see classic Mario levels like ghost houses and ice palaces shimmer off in the distance with full knowledge that you can drive there in minutes.

The game’s potential as a “platform” for Nintendo to build



Nintendo photos

**Drag x Drive uses the Switch 2 controllers’ new mouse capability to control athletes in wheelchairs. To move them, you turn the controllers on their sides and drag them across a mouse pad or your pants.**



**Donkey Kong Bananza, a launch-season exclusive out July 17, features slapstick action and deformable environments. The 3D platformer is reminiscent of some Nintendo 64 titles.**

upon for years is obvious, just as its \$80 price tag is eye-popping. It’s the first game from the publisher to hit that price, although other games like *Donkey Kong Bananza* stay at the standard retail price of \$70.

*Bananza*, the other launch-season exclusive out July 17, is another showstopper with destructible environments that allow player freedom and expression on how to move through its open worlds. It’s a 3D platformer that harks back to the Nintendo 64 days of silly mascot games powered by impressive terrain deformation rarely seen in games.

Nintendo announced a gaggle of other games that weren’t available for preview, including the return of celebrated developer

Masahiro Sakurai to his Kirby series with *Kirby Air Riders*, a long-dormant racing franchise. The *Duskblooms* is a multiplayer game by *Elden Ring* developer FromSoftware, probably the biggest non-Nintendo game announcement for the console. (Weary *Hollow Knight* fans might give that honor to the teased 2025 release for that game’s long-awaited sequel *Silksong*.)

The Switch 2 will finally host some of the biggest modern games in recent years, including *Elden Ring*, *Final Fantasy VII Remake* and *Cyberpunk 2077*. I got to try *Cyberpunk*, a game very dear to me, and it was delightful to see it performing well on a Nintendo console, even if the visuals don’t match what’s avail-



**The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom gets a Switch 2 edition with enhanced performance: a blazing-fast frame rate with much sharper visuals. The original version pushed the Switch to its limits.**

able on PlayStation 5 and Xbox consoles, machines that are still more powerful.

Another expected but welcome feature is increased performance and visuals for older games. The *Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom* was an ambitious game that pushed the old Switch to its limits. On the Switch 2, it runs at a blazing-fast frame rate with much sharper visuals. We’ve finally been granted the long-held wish of *Zelda* fans to see this series in high fidelity.

At more than 150 million sold, the first Switch is the third most successful video game device of all time, after Sony’s PlayStation 2 and Nintendo’s DS hand-held console. The Switch’s legacy will be that it only further cemented Nintendo at the pole position in

the video games industry when it came to popularity and critical acclaim.

The Switch also hardened the market for dedicated video game handhelds. Obituaries for hand-held gaming started when smartphones became the dominant hand-held electronic device. But the mobile phone gaming industry never successfully captured players who prefer dedicated gaming devices with controller or keyboard inputs. Instead, the Switch offered a welcome compromise between the portability of handhelds and the full functionality of a dedicated gaming device.

In that sense, the Switch 2 is a logical next step. As always for Nintendo, it’s the games that make the difference.



# WEEKEND: MOVIES



WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP photos

Michael B. Jordan portrays identical twins Smoke and Stack in Ryan Coogler's 1932-set "Sinners," the director's first original film.

## 'Sinners' pours out bloody payback

Coogler's 1st original film, which mixes blues, supernatural horror and romance, a testament to his cinematic inspirations

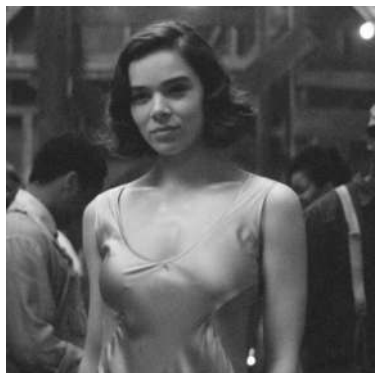
By LINDSEY BAHR  
Associated Press

**R**yan Coogler only makes personal movies. "Fruitvale Station" was set in his hometown of Oakland, Calif., and explored the last day of Oscar Grant. "Creed" was dreamed up for his father, who loved "Rocky" unabashedly. And "Black Panther" let him grapple with the idea of what it means to be African.

In just four features, he'd established himself as one of the top filmmakers working today. It hardly mattered if it was based on a real-life incident, or part of the Marvel machine: Coogler made the movies his own and audiences followed. But one thing he hadn't yet done was a movie that came entirely from his own imagination.

"Sinners," now in select on-base theaters, is just that: Coogler's first original film blends elements of supernatural horror, gangster drama, romance, blues music and action across one eventful day in 1932 in Clarksdale, Miss. The plot: a community opens a juke joint and then has to defend it from a vampire army growing outside.

It's something that needs to be seen to be believed, right down to Coogler's longtime collaborator Michael B. Jordan playing identi-



Hailee Steinfeld plays Stack's ex Mary, who is biracial but "passing" as white.

cal twins. And it's already a critical hit.

### A love letter to his influences

"Jurassic Park" is probably not a film that anyone would categorize first as horror, Coogler knows, but there were terrifying moments that imprinted on his consciousness. Films like "Get Out" and "The Shining" did the same. He wanted to give audiences that feeling too, and he threw everything he loved into "Sinners."

"I pulled from a lot of films that inspired me," Coogler said. "I wanted to pay back the theatrical audience the same things that I feel were poured into me."

The setting of the film was also inspired by his family's ties to a



Wunmi Mosaku plays Smoke's longtime love, Annie.

Mississippi of the past. One was his maternal grandfather who originated from Merrill, Miss., and moved to Oakland, where the family remains. The other was the man who introduced him to blues music, his Uncle James, who died while Coogler was making "Creed."

Fitting for the scale of the story, "Sinners" was shot on large format film including IMAX 65 mm and Ultra Panavision 70 (65 mm film shot on Panavision lenses in the widest aspect ratio, which Quentin Tarantino famously resurrected for "The Hateful Eight").

"I knew it would be a period piece and a horror movie, so I knew film made the most sense for that," Coogler said. "But after getting into the research of the project and learning the epic



Miles Caton, center, as Sammie or Preacher Boy, a blues prodigy who doesn't want to follow his father to the church.

scale of the contribution of Delta Blues when it comes to global popular culture, how this music kinda launched pop music as we know it ... I realized that this was a larger-than-life story."

### Not one but two Michael B. Jordans

Coogler called on Jordan, who has appeared in all of his films, to play the identical twins Smoke and Stack. Their characters served in the war and worked with Chicago gangsters, but have come back to Mississippi with plans to open the juke joint.

Though having Jordan as twins was great in theory and even the final product, the execution was challenging. On some days, both felt like they were making a

movie for the first time. Some scenes were shot traditionally, while others used cutting-edge technology called the halo rig that allowed them to digitally place Jordan's head on the body of a double. Jordan might have looked a bit like "RoboCop" on set while in the contraption, but the end result is seamless even on unforgiving large format film.

For the performance, it required a certain nimbleness to be able to switch back and forth. Jordan had fun with both characters but said that a preference for one over the other, "really depended on how tired I was that day."

It won't take audiences long to distinguish between the two: Smoke is a little grumpier, a little more serious and haunted by a loss. Stack is a little lighter — a charmer who smiles through the pain. Jordan gave both different postures, mannerisms and even slightly different voices to help. And he praised his co-stars Hailee Steinfeld, who plays Stack's ex Mary, and Wunmi Mosaku who plays Smoke's longtime love Annie for dealing with his "crazy ass personalities and mood swings."

Mosaku said the times he was Smoke and the times he was Stack felt "clear as day" to her.

**SEE COOGLER ON PAGE 17**



WEEKEND: MOVIES

Coogler: Film presents a more accurate version of Deep South in early '30s than is often shown

FROM PAGE 16

“There was no confusion when he was Smoke. He was so Smoke, and he was mine,” Mosaku said. “We would just kind of gravitate towards each other. And when he was Stack, he was so Mary’s.”

A mix of new and veteran talent

One of the things Coogler always loved about going to the movies was the feeling of discovering a fresh face. Here, he hopes that comes in the form of Miles Caton, a 19-year-old newcomer who’s essentially third lead to Jordan’s twins as Sammie (or Preacher Boy), a blues prodigy who wants to play music and not follow his father to the church.

Caton was singing backup for H.E.R when she told him about the top-secret role, and he made an audition tape. It was, he laughed, bad, but Coogler saw something in him.

“Ryan had sent me an essential blues playlist and that’s where I started to discover some of the great blues artists that we know today,” Caton said. “I learned about Howlin’ Wolf and Charley Patton, Buddy Guy. Those were the guys I kind of studied for this role.”

Delroy Lindo is the other side of the blues spectrum as Delta Slim, an older man in town who he said recognizes Sammie as the future, “not just musically, but of our culture.”

The film’s ensemble is vast, with some faces you know and others you might be meeting for the first time, including Jayme Lawson as a local singer, Omar Benson Miller as a sharecropper and Jack O’Connell as, well, an Irish vampire. “Sinners” also presents a more accurate version of the Deep South at the time than audiences may be used to seeing in Hollywood films, with

Li Jun Li and Yao as Asian American shop owners.

All seemed to learn a bit about themselves in the process, including Steinfeld, whose character is biracial but “passing” as white.

“This film brought me closer to my family and my family history,” said Steinfeld, whose grandfather was half-Black and half-Filipino. “I think that it will serve as such an amazing conversation starter for people and maybe encourage them to look into their genealogy.”

The Ryan Coogler effect

There was a shared sense of purpose on “Sinners” that no wool costumes in 100+ degree temperatures, chiggers or stray alligators wandering onto the Louisiana set could spoil.

The cast and crew, many of whom Coogler worked with before including composer Ludwig Göransson, costume designer Ruth E. Carter, production designer Hannah Beachler and cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw, knew they were part of something special.

“When this man picks up the phone, says you want to come play? You sort of don’t give it a second thought,” Lindo said. “This is a particular cat, this is a particular filmmaker, this is the particular storyteller in our culture and in world culture because it’s cinema and cinema is international.”

Miller took it a step further. He said it’s working with an auteur at the height of his powers.

“This is the first fully original piece that Ryan has written and produced, and he made that clear to us at the beginning how much that meant to him,” Miller said. “This was his big swing for an original piece and man, did he hit the home run. This is Shohei Ohtani out the park for a walk-off homer.”



WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP

One of the identical twins played by Michael B. Jordan, center, and members of their Jim Crow South Mississippi town must fight off vampires, a metaphor for systemic racism and exploitation, in “Sinners.”

‘Sinners’ has ample bite

Coogler’s sexy, violent vampire film not subtle, but is wholly entertaining

By KATIE WALSH  
Tribune News Service

In “Sinners,” his bloody new historical blockbuster, writer/director Ryan Coogler feels unleashed in a way he hasn’t been before — and that’s a good thing. Free from the shackles of proving himself, respectability politics and four-quadrant appeal, the “Black Panther,” “Creed” and “Fruitvale Station” filmmaker delightfully revels in what he’s allowed to do within this hypersexy, hyperviolent, R-rated vampire movie.

The characters in “Sinners” are as advertised: flawed in a deeply human kind of way. They’ve made mistakes, hurt others, defied social norms and are grieving, traumatized, horny, driven by money. And that’s just the twin brothers, Smoke and Stack, played in a dual performance by star Michael B. Jordan. It’s 1932, and after seven years learning the gangland trade from Irish and Italian mobsters in Chicago, these World War I vets have rolled back into their Mississippi hometown ready to raise hell with their latest venture, a juke joint stocked with stolen booze.

Under an enormous sky filled with fluffy white clouds stretching over fields of fluffy white cotton, Smoke and Stack run their errands, reconnecting with friends, family and former flames, before everyone convenes at the old sawmill they’ve secured for a party. As the sun slips below a low horizon, strange dangers emerge in the dusk, heralded by flocking vultures and warnings from Choctaw trackers, though the group of revelers can’t hear anything above the sound of blues music

and stomping feet.

“Sinners” is a period piece about the Jim Crow South, and it’s also a damn good vampire movie, because Coogler understands that the best vampire movies embrace their metaphorical nature, whether it’s using the monster to manifest fears of addiction, illness, invasion or otherwise. But Coogler’s vampire metaphor is entirely original and deeply cutting, using the monster myth to address the foundation of systemic racism and exploitation upon which this country was built, a system that drains the life and labor (and culture and music) from the enslaved Africans who became Black Americans.

Music provides the connecting thread for Coogler’s argument about the sprawling web of oppressive colonization, in which indigenous cultures are ransacked, pillaged and repurposed. Beautiful music might emerge from this vampiric relationship, a song or tune shared, but that doesn’t erase the violence behind it. “Sinners” is a rich text to unpack, stuffed with surprising and unexpected cultural histories.

With regard to the music of the film itself, the collaboration with longtime creative partner, composer Ludwig Göransson, soars in “Sinners.” Coogler’s filmmaking thrums with energy, keeping time with Göransson’s blues-based score, which references everything from African percussion to Irish hymns. As Sammie, aka Preacher Boy (singer and first-time actor Miles Caton), takes the stage at Club Juke, channeling spirits from the past and future, Coogler dabbles in magical realism, visualizing the lineage of the blues in a long, sweeping shot that roams around

the space with a spectral grace. His work with cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw and editor Michael P. Shawver creates an intoxicating tempo, pairing long takes with sharp cuts.

If there’s any criticism that can be levied, it’s that Coogler doesn’t bother with subtlety, and there are moments that feel a bit indulgent or overwrought. Still, this is a horror movie; why would you want it to be subtle anyway? Coogler often gets weird with it, and the moments of surrealism and camp in “Sinners” are what mark the film as a project from a filmmaker with a singular point of view, one that hasn’t been neutered or sanded down.

“Sinners” grapples with ideas of cultural vampirism, and poses questions about money, power and the salvation of spiritualism. These complex concepts are layered into a rip-roaring, sexy, violent, profane and wholly entertaining vampire movie. Coogler knows that as much as a horror movie like this needs a meaty metaphor, it also needs pops of humor and surprise; he isn’t afraid of campy, operatic flourishes — a huge full moon and a big bloody grin? That’s the stuff.

Moments like this make moviegoing in the theater, with a crowd, worth the price of admission (there’s one jaw-dropping moment that requires that this film be seen on the biggest screen possible).

Coogler has delivered one of the best blockbusters of the year, and that it has a heart and brain behind all the blood-drenched thrills just makes it that much more satisfying. Open wide, and get ready to take a big old bite.

“Sinners” is rated R for strong bloody violence, sexual content and language. Running time: 137 minutes. Now playing in select on-base theaters.



WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP

From left, Peter Dreimanis, Jack O’Connell, Hailee Steinfeld and Lola Kirke in a scene from “Sinners.” O’Connell plays an Irish vampire.



WEEKEND: BOOK REVIEWS

Pursuing a maritime mystery

Mark Synnott heads ‘Into the Ice’ to trace the doomed expedition of Sir John Franklin

**By ROB MERRILL**  
*Associated Press*

Mark Synnott admits in the introduction to his new book that “it is out in the high and wild places in this world that I’ve always felt the closest to whoever it is that I really am.” While not exactly poetry, it’s a good summary of the best parts of “Into the Ice,” Synnott’s third work of long-form nonfiction after “The Impossible Climb” and “The Third Pole.” Part travelogue, part historical mystery and part memoir, “Into the Ice” will appeal to fans of extreme adventure stories, nearly all of whom will never sail a boat through the Northwest Passage.

The travelogue moments of the book are the best written, as Synnott and his crew sail his 47-foot boat Polar Sun east to

west through the passage, from Nuuk, Greenland, to Nome, Alaska. “When the sun shone directly into the bay, the light reflected off the faces of the ice in infinite shades of blue and green, like a polar disco ball,” Synnott writes on a summer evening in 2022 while conjuring likenesses for icebergs with his son. (Tommy and Synnott’s wife, Hampton, join the crew for a couple of weeks at the start of the trip.)

The 6,736-mile journey takes 112 days, which provides plenty of time for readers to learn the story of British Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin and the 128 men he led on an expedition to discover the passage in the mid-19th century. The mystery of what happened to Franklin and all of his men has never been entirely solved, though the

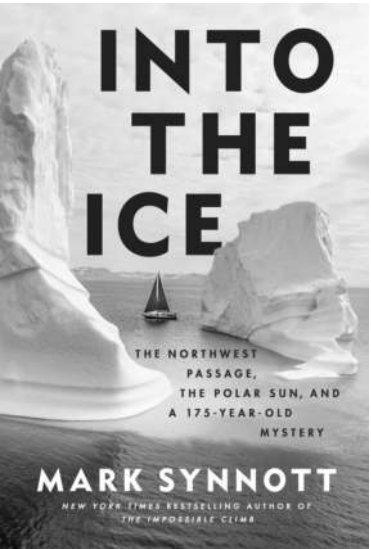
wrecks of both his ships were discovered earlier this century. Synnott sets out “in the wake of Erebus and Terror, (to) anchor in the same harbors, see what Franklin and his men saw ... Maybe if I fully immersed myself into the Franklin mystery, I might discover what really happened to him and his men.”

Spoiler alert: He doesn’t. You would have heard about it by now. But he does dive deep into the historical record, and that’s where the book loses some momentum. At times it reads like an academic paper, as Synnott references the work of various historians who have investigated the Franklin expedition. He takes us back nearly two centuries to recount Franklin’s career and what is known about his third attempt to map the Northwest

Passage from 1845-1847.

The tale is more compelling when Synnott is engaging with living Franklin-ologists like Canadian Tom Gross, who has been searching for Franklin’s tomb and collecting evidence of what happened for decades. Gross was scouting King William Island in a small plane in 2015 when he observed “two black stones standing up vertically on a ridge” that did not belong a few miles inland. But in their excitement at the discovery, he and his co-pilot forgot to note the GPS coordinates, and he’s still looking for what he believes were markers of Franklin’s tomb a decade later.

If all this sounds like it might be better watched on TV, you’re in luck. National Geographic funded Synnott’s voyage, as it has many of his previous adventures,



and the stunning scenery and drama on the high seas is available to view on Disney+ as “Explorer: Lost in the Arctic.”

If you’re not a subscriber, the best parts of the book let readers travel in their mind “beneath massive waterfalls that cascaded from the heights ... thousands of feet tall, and where they poured into the sea, clouds of fulmars, cormorants and kittiwakes circled in the salty mist.”

Make Sure You Die Screaming

Zee Carlstrom

If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em on a multi-day, drunk-driving road trip in middle-class middle of America to find a missing father with a garbage goth girl named Yivi.

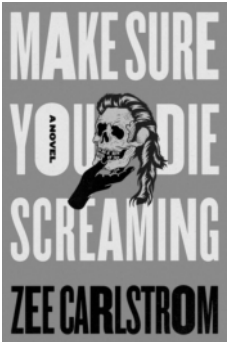
That seems to be the mantra for “Make Sure You Die Screaming,” Carlstrom’s debut novel from Flatiron Books. The first-person narration follows no-name Gunderson, a nonbinary queer person, at what surely must be their rock-bottom. They stole their ex-boyfriend Clinton’s car to drive from Chicago to Arkansas. Also, the protagonist has killed their best friend, lost their job and taken an oath of radical honesty.

So, yes, if you were immediately skeptical about this fun road trip adventure novel due to a clear lack of morals, you’d be right to hesitate. But it’s not all drunken rages and horrible decisions.

The protagonist, while an exceptionally unlikable character at their worst — disrespecting everyone like it’s going out of fashion, in the name of honesty — is also full of heart. Sometimes a nasty, festering, raw-emotions heart; more of a self-destructive time bomb. Still, Carlstrom manages to shine the light back on the protagonist’s humanity and salvage reader sympathy when it matters most.

Carlstrom’s debut has almost everything: comedy, action, adventure, philosophical musings, banter, alcoholism, crimes, weird cult-y things and even some modicum of closure. And while the ending is abrupt, it’s also comforting, as well as oddly convincing given the sheer absurdity that precedes it.

— Donna Edwards/AP



Murder by Cheesecake

Rachel Ekstrom Courage

In 1985, a sitcom about four women who were considered past their prime debuted in prime time. “The Golden Girls” turned out to be a ratings hit for NBC for seven seasons. After 40 years, people of all ages are still thanking Bea Arthur, Rue McClanahan, Estelle Getty and Betty White for being their friends. The comedy continues to find fans on Hulu and has spawned a pop-up restaurant and a fan convention. A whodunnit read doesn’t seem like a far-fetched tie-in.

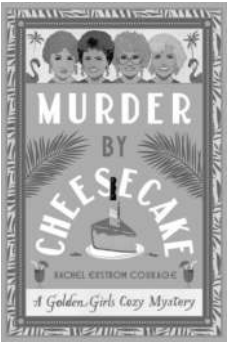
The central mystery arises when a man Dorothy meets through a video dating service turns up dead in a hotel freezer face-down in cheesecake. It’s the hotel where Rose is days away from staging a giant wedding for relatives from her often-mentioned hometown of St. Olaf, Minn. The homicide, of course, throws everything into disarray.

Because Dorothy was the last person to see the man, she becomes suspect No. 1 with Miami police.

Be forewarned: “Murder By Cheesecake” feels more like a mix of “Murder, She Wrote” and “Miami Vice” than a “Golden Girls” episode. Rarely do the characters talk in sitcom rhythms of two lines, a beat and punchline. Sarcasm and sass is still present, but it’s not as sharp.

Still, the plot does a decent job of leading readers on a twisty chase. The women decide to play amateur detectives to clear Dorothy’s name. And it’s a hoot while reading to picture it. Even though their climactic showdown with the culprit seems outrageous, it’s fun to see four “old ladies” get an action-hero moment.

— Terry Tang/AP



I See You’ve Called In Dead

John Kenney

Sometimes a book comes along at just the right moment in life, aligning with what’s happening and offering eye-opening commentary. This book is one of those.

It’s not a self-help guide, or a “Hall-mark card,” as protagonist Bud Stanley says to his friend Tim — a bit of a guru in a wheelchair — while they sit in a church after a funeral. It’s a reminder that we’re all going to die, but we don’t live as if we know it.

Bud ought to know. He’s a writer who has penned 724 obituaries in the years he has worked for United World Press.

Bud advocates thinking about what you would write in your own obituary as an exercise in figuring out who you are and what truly matters: “Because it’s your life and there’s still time to write it. Before I have to.”

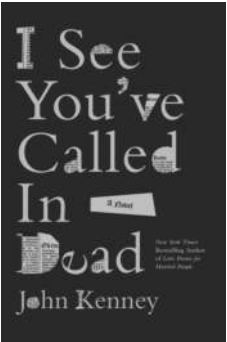
Then he makes the supreme mistake of writing his own. Late at night. After a really bad blind date, an email from his ex-wife and a drink or two or three of 16-year-old Lagavulin whisky.

By the time he’s done with his obituary, Bud has invented whoppers such as having been married four to nine times and included a career as a porn script doctor.

In a moment of whisky-induced insanity, he posts the obit to the news outlet’s website. The fallout is immediate.

Bud narrates his story, but it’s the conversations in “I See” that are most enlightening, especially those between Bud and Tim. As a man who has reckoned with an accident that left him paralyzed, Tim’s insights are particularly poignant.

— Maren Longbella  
The Minnesota Star Tribune



Yoko: A Biography

David Sheff

In September 1966, John Lennon, who had just finished what would be the Beatles’ last world tour, visited an exhibition, “Unfinished Paintings and Objects.” Featuring the work of Japanese-born American artist Yoko Ono, it was scheduled to open in London the next day.

Spying a stand with a note saying “Apple,” Lennon took a bite. When he realized he had wrecked Ono’s sculpture and hoping to atone, Lennon asked if he could participate in “Painting to Hammer a Nail (No.9).”

“It’s so symbolic, you see — the virginal board,” Yoko explained, before agreeing to let him bang it for five shillings. “Well, I’ll give you an imaginary five shillings and hammer an imaginary nail in,” Lennon replied. “And that’s when we really met,” he subsequently said. “That’s when we locked eyes and she got it and I got it.”

In “Yoko,” author Sheff examines the life and work of a multifaceted woman. Her name is recognized around the world, but little is known about her life, outside of her connection to Lennon.

Sheff interviewed the couple in 1980, shortly before Lennon was murdered, and remained friends with Ono. His biography manages to be celebratory without losing sight of her idiosyncrasies and failures.

After Lennon was murdered, Ono often said her only goal was survival. She has accomplished far more than that, Sheff concludes, creating work “that edified, enlightened and inspired,” while challenging millions of people to imagine “a better world.”

— Glenn C. Altschuler  
The Minnesota Star Tribune





WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Where Jane reigns: England fetes author

Jane Austen was born 250 years ago this year, and to celebrate, England is rolling out the Regency red carpet for throngs of ardent Austen fans. If your 2025 travel plans include Britain — Bath, in particular — you might encounter larger-than-usual crowds at Austen hot spots, with some visitors sure to be sporting high-waisted gowns, petticoats and long white gloves.

The author of widely adored novels — including “Pride and Prejudice,” “Sense and Sensibility” and “Emma” — Austen is one of England’s most famous writers. She played an outsize role in the evolution of England’s social norms by featuring strong, independent heroines whose views often mirrored her own. Though set in Regency-era England, her books’ brilliant blend of realism, romance and memorable characters still resonate with readers today. “Pride and Prejudice” alone has inspired countless film and TV adaptations, from multiple BBC shows to “Bridget Jones’s Diary.”

Austen’s birthday is December 16, but England is celebrating with special events and programs throughout 2025. The biggest happenings are centered in Bath and across Hampshire.

Bath is the mecca for Austen devotees, with various “Austen points” scattered across town and multiple initiatives dedicated to the city’s most famous resident. (Austen lived in Bath for



Rick Steves

five years around 1800 and set two of her novels there.) A big hit with Austen fans in Bath is the Jane Austen Center, which offers visitors the chance to try on period costumes, play parlor

games the author enjoyed and even go all out by taking “Mr. Darcy’s Afternoon Tea.” The center also organizes Bath’s annual Jane Austen Festival, which unfolds in genteel fashion every fall with costumed promenades and parties. Beyond its primary dates (Sept. 12-21 this year), the festival is celebrating Austen 250 with a pair of book-themed balls — and traditional dance training — on May 31 and June 28, and an opulent “Yuletide Birthday Ball” in December. Whether you fancy a dance or are merely going to be in Bath around those times, anticipate heavy crowds.

Beyond Bath, a trio of sites in southern England’s Hampshire



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Bath holds an annual Jane Austen Festival to celebrate the author’s time living in the English city.

— the Jane Austen House in Chawton, the village of Steventon and Winchester Cathedral — are the other main ports of call for Austen die-hards. Located about 90 minutes southwest of London (on the way to Southampton), and each a 30-minute drive from one another, all three sites can easily be seen in one day.

The best is probably the Jane Austen House, the building

where she lived her final years (and where she wrote most of her novels). The house sports a good collection of artifacts, including personal letters, first editions of her books and her (very small) writing table.

Far from Austen’s native Hampshire is Chatsworth House, a regal estate in the Midlands, near Nottingham, that was supposedly Austen’s inspiration for

Mr. Darcy’s Pemberley mansion in “Pride and Prejudice” (and was the location used for the 2005 film adaptation). It doesn’t hold as much Austen heritage as the other sites, but it’s still fun to visit — and will likely be popular with Jane-iacs this year.

This article is used with the permission of Rick Steves’ Europe (www.ricksteves.com). Rick Steves writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours.

King’s Day, medieval fest offer reasons to celebrate in April

The Dutch are considered a fun-loving people, and what better reason to throw a party of epic proportion than a royal birthday? On April 26, the Netherlands will celebrate the big day of its reigning monarch, King Willem-Alexander, in the form of a national holiday. The dress code for this particular birthday celebration is decidedly unfussy: one’s outfit should be suitable for spending many hours outside and embrace the color orange.

In several cities and towns, the fun and games actually begin on the eve of the day. In The Hague, the party takes the form of a massive, open-air concert known as the Life I Live Festival. From 7 p.m. April 25 until 2 a.m. the following day, local and international acts perform and DJs play their sets on temporary stages set up throughout the city center. Trucks selling street foods and beverages keep the masses fueled and spirits high. Entry is free. Online: [tinyurl.com/msrr29xs](http://tinyurl.com/msrr29xs)



Karen Bradbury

The lively student city of Utrecht is known as the ideal place to seek out secondhand treasure. As is custom throughout the country, a so-called “vrijmarkt,” in which anyone can haul their unwanted possessions out onto the sidewalk and sell them for a nominal price, takes place. Even children get into the act, setting up their own stalls. Utrecht’s market is known for its vast size and long hours of operation. The bargaining gets underway from 6 p.m. April 25 and continues until 6 p.m. the following day. Free live music also makes up a large part of the day’s festivities. Online: [koningsdaginutrecht.nl](http://koningsdaginutrecht.nl)

King’s Day in Amsterdam is not only a massive street party, but a festival on water. On the day, boat owners deck out their crafts, install sound systems and cram as many friends as they can fit on board before cruising up and down the canals at a snail’s pace. Meanwhile, those



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On April 26, the Dutch will wear lots of orange and celebrate their reigning monarch throughout the land.

bound to the land stand alongside the canals or atop bridges, waving and cheering on the revelry. Parks are also bustling places, and good venues for watching or, better yet, partaking in traditional street games such as trying to eat a cookie dangling from a string with one’s hands tied. The traditional snack to reach for is the “oranje tompouce,” a puff pastry stuffed with custard and cream and topped with orange glaze. Online: [tinyurl.com/4484jskh](http://tinyurl.com/4484jskh)

Easter weekend happenings

While those in search of fun things to do on Easter weekend might have to search a little harder than usual to find public events and cultural happenings, a few places will be laying on some forms of entertainment.

**Middle Ages-themed fun by the Rhine:** The sound of pounding hooves will fill the air above Germany’s fantas-

tically scenic Upper Middle Rhine Valley over the weekend, as a jousting competition to find the bravest knight plays out. In addition to the equestrian show, a lively marketplace showcases handcrafted goods and curiosities. Musicians, jugglers, minstrels and other characters add to the days-of-yore ambiance. The “Oster Ritterturnier” takes place Saturday-Monday in the municipality of Bornich. Opening hours are from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday; on Monday, the market closes at 7 p.m. Adult admission costs 15 euros while entry for children ages 6-16 costs 5 euros. Visitors clad in convincing historical costume enter for the reduced price of 10 euros. Online: [tinyurl.com/h8a3tmwx](http://tinyurl.com/h8a3tmwx)

**Folk culture in Namur, Belgium:** Namur, the capital city of southern Belgium’s French-speaking Wallonia region, shows pride in its heritage with Folknam, a day for celebrating traditions and folklore, this Saturday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Folk music and dancing groups, along with historical reenactors, will converge on the Place d’Armes to present programs showcasing their connections with their forefathers. A crafts market offers quality hand-made goods. The day’s highlight, a historical parade of costumed marchers, takes place at 2 p.m. Entry is free. Online: [folknam.be](http://folknam.be)

**Reggae music on the slopes in Ischgl, Austria:** At the start and end of each ski season, the Silvretta Arena ski area welcomes internationally known artists to perform live on outdoor stages. The tradition continues on Sunday, when the Jamaican-American reggae musician Shaggy is set to perform surrounded by mountain peaks. Entry to the concert is free to all those holding a valid ski pass for the day. Non-skiers are also welcome to attend, although they still have to buy the pass in order to ride the lift to the concert venue. The single-day pass goes for 76 euros for adults when purchased online in advance. Online: [tinyurl.com/2x3kvnkh](http://tinyurl.com/2x3kvnkh)



# WEEKEND: TRAVEL



# Around the world in 58 hours

Top travel tips from the man who broke a 25-year-old record for fastest circumnavigation on scheduled flights

BY ANDREA SACHS  
*The Washington Post*

After a January work trip to Singapore, Mike Robinson could’ve spent a relaxing holiday weekend at home in Melbourne, Australia. Instead, he turned around and flew nearly 28,500 miles over four days.

Robinson, a 65-year-old who works for a software company, wasn’t chasing miles. He was in hot pursuit of a Guinness World Record.

On Jan. 28, he succeeded, breaking the 25-year record for the fastest circumnavigation by scheduled flights through exact antipodal points. (Antipodes are points on Earth that are directly opposite each other.) He completed the route in 58 hours, 8 minutes, about four hours faster than the previous titleholders, a pair of Englishmen.

“The pole vault record was out of my reach,” Robinson quipped on a recent video call from Melbourne.

Robinson’s first step in his record chase was locating diametric destinations. The 2000 winners had chosen Madrid and Ti Tree Point in New Zealand.

Robinson discovered that he could draw a straight line from the Auckland Airport in New Zealand to Fuente del Duque, a historical site between Madrid and Málaga, Spain. He turned to FlightConnections.com to plot the itinerary.

For the record-setting journey, he booked five legs, starting in New Zealand, using about 130,000 points on Oneworld carriers. (Round-trip air from his home airport in Melbourne to the start/end point in New Zealand didn’t count.) From Auckland, he would fly to New York, then to Madrid and Málaga, where he’d drive 90 minutes each way to the grail in Andalusia. For the return, he would travel from Málaga to Doha, Qatar, back to Auckland.

Though he was racing against the clock, he still needed to allow himself enough time to make his connections, especially in the event of a plane delay or cancellation. His biggest concern was missing the flight to Madrid, because New York City’s John F. Kennedy International Airport requires all international passengers, including ones in transit, to pass through customs and immigration and security.

“It was all in the preparation,” he said. “Once I was sitting on that first plane, I couldn’t do anything.”

His longest flight was 15½ hours from

New Zealand to New York; the lengthiest layover was nearly seven hours in Málaga, which granted him enough time for the road trip, plus a quick bite to eat on the return to the airport. That meal, Manchego cheese on toast, was his only meal not prepared in an airplane galley or airport lounge.

Fortuitously, all of the planes arrived early. He was able to squeeze in showers in New York, Doha and Auckland.

Robinson, who travels frequently to Europe and the United States, is accustomed to inordinately long flights. “Living in Australia, you get used to it,” he said.

With a record to his name, he shared his top tips for enduring long flights.

## Make PDFs of key documents

Though many people helped Robinson on his journey, including independent witnesses required by Guinness, Robinson made sure he was self-sufficient. He used TripIt to keep track of his itinerary. In addition to organizing his flights, the handy app (free for basic services) would inform him of any delays or changes and provide him with alternatives.

In case he couldn’t connect to WiFi, he created PDFs of his important documents, such as his travel insurance policy, and emailed them to his Kindle. “It’s easier to look at things than on the phone,” he said.

He also packs a pen for filling out travel-related paperwork, such as customs declaration or entry forms.

“The number of people that don’t carry a pen with them, and they’re asking to borrow pens from the flight attendant,” he said. “What were they thinking?”

## Have a backup plan

Don’t count on a smooth trip, especially when you have multiple flights in several countries.

Concerned that he might miss the flight from New York to Spain, Robinson made a mental note of later departures to Madrid. He also confirmed that the airlines frequently fly from the Spanish capital to Málaga.

“One of the mitigations was an American Airlines flight leaving two hours [later],” he said. “So, I probably could have eaten into this time” and still achieved his goal.

He also recommends using time-saving tools such as the free Mobile Passport Control app for entering the U.S. He filled out the information in advance. At JFK in New York, the app directed him to an open lane.

“There wasn’t a soul there,” he said. “I just walked up.”

## Wear a breakfast shirt

If you have a morning flight, don’t wear your travel outfit to breakfast. If you dribble coffee or drop scrambled eggs on your shirt, you will have to sacrifice a clean garment early in your trip or get stuck staring at the stain for your entire flight. Instead, wear what Robinson calls a “breakfast shirt.”

“I will always wear yesterday’s shirt to the breakfast buffet,” he said. “Then after breakfast, I will go put the new shirt on.”

## Watch a TV series, not movies

You can fill the hours with a movie marathon, but that involves several

interruptions, including scrolling through the long list of titles for a few good films. A better way to pass the time is to binge a TV series.

“It goes for like 10 hours instead 90 minutes,” he said.

Be sure to read the show’s description before pressing play. On his Qantas flight from Auckland to New York, he watched a miniseries called “Red Eye,” a British thriller that might not be the best for squeamish fliers.

“The whole thing is set on an aircraft where people were being killed,” he said.

## Ask for a seat belt extender

In case you score an open row, Robinson recommends asking a flight attendant for a seat belt extender — as long as you are not taking it away from someone who truly needs it. With the attachment, you can stretch out across the seats and sleep while keeping your seat belt fastened around your waist or blanket.

On the nearly seven-hour flight from Málaga to Doha, Robinson slept like a baby strapped in a cradle.



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WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



Winston, an Airedale terrier and cigarette snatcher, was McKellar's initiation into the pup au pair life.

When the pandemic shuttered the world, photographer Leslie Ryann McKellar found herself caught in an unexpected scene that she never would have framed: grieving the loss of her beloved Labrador retriever mix Dignan while battling a baffling illness — later revealed to be the work of toxic mold in her South Carolina apartment. Forced to flee her fungus-infested home, McKellar faced a choice: Settle down again in the Lowcountry where she'd lived for 20 years or reframe her story entirely.

"I just wanted a reset button," she says. So she hit it — hard. After off-loading her belongings and taking a year to save every penny, the freelance photographer set off for Florence in January 2022, ready to indulge her lifelong wanderlust with a year of European travel. But one year turned into three, and 18 countries (and, thankfully, a myriad number of mold-free accommodations) later, her adventure continues. The secret to sustaining it? A dog. Or, well, dogs.

"I think I've looked after about 30 dogs now," McKellar, 48, tells me via Zoom from Greece.

McKellar watches dogs in exchange for a place to stay, a gig she coordinates through Trusted Housesitters, a United Kingdom-based pet care network that pairs devoted animal lovers like McKellar with pet parents across the globe. (And I do mean pet parents — McKellar's seen requests for sitters for cats, bunnies, horses, even an alpaca.) Aside from an annual membership fee to the company, no money changes hands.

But dog-sitting wasn't initially how she planned to subsidize her time abroad. McKellar stumbled upon Trusted Housesitters by chance. Early in her travels, while wandering through Inverness, Scotland, she struck up a conversation with someone walking an especially adorable pup. When she told them that she was traveling around Europe for a year, they asked her whether she'd considered using the service.

"I think the first words out of my mouth were, 'That site was made for me!'" she says.

Pooch pointers

Enter Winston, an Airedale terrier in Beaconsfield, England, who became McKellar's first official sit in July 2022.

A fluff ball on four legs, Winston was McKellar's initiation into the pup au pair life, which came with its own hazing. One memorable evening, during a routine walk, Winston gobbled up what appeared

Pup au pair life

American trades pet-sitting for places to stay in Europe

By KINSEY GIDICK  
Special to The Washington Post



Photos by Leslie Ryann McKellar

Photographer Leslie Ryann McKellar watches dogs in exchange for a place to stay when traveling. She spent almost a month with Dearg the cockapoo in England's Yorkshire Dales. "I think I've looked after about 30 dogs now," she said via Zoom from Greece.

to be a cigarette butt. The ordeal left McKellar shaken.

"I was on the phone with his pet parents and the emergency vet at 9 p.m. on a Saturday," she recalls.

Fortunately, Winston emerged unscathed, ready for his next adventure. McKellar recovered, too, and started compiling a growing list of lessons a seasoned traveling dog sitter would understand.

Rule No. 1: Never leave the house without a key. Not even for a quick dash to the trash bin. McKellar learned the hard way in Guildford, England, when an autolocking door clicked shut behind her, trapping her outside and leaving Rosie — the cautious Romanian rescue she was watching for the week — stuck inside for a few moments before McKellar found the spare key.

A subtler, equally critical lesson is to always have a backup plan. Before a sit in Switzerland, McKellar was thrown into logistical chaos when a labor strike brought the French rail system to a halt. Every train was canceled, forcing her to improvise her journey from Avignon on the fly.

"I took a very cramped, very smelly,

very long eight-hour bus ride," she says. She made it on time.

Canine culture shock

Then there's canine culture shock. Just as customs vary from country to country, so do local attitudes toward dogs. For an upcoming sit, an Australian expat living in Switzerland gave McKellar a heads-up about Peanut, the host's exuberant labradoodle.

"She said the Swiss prefer dogs to be seen and not heard," McKellar explains. Peanut's playful energy, it turns out, often earns him more side-eyes than smiles.

Back in the U.K., dogs are treated as full-fledged family members, granted the freedom and affection that comes with such a status.

"That shows up in how Brits tend to bring their dogs everywhere, like shops and pubs," McKellar says.

Case in point: Lenny, a West London goldendoodle and proud regular at the Dodo Micropub, who kindly introduced McKellar to his neighborhood's craft beer scene.

How dogs operate abroad can also differ.



Lenny, a goldendoodle from West London, introduced McKellar to his favorite local pub, Dodo Micropub.

"Especially outside of London, a lot of people walk their dogs off-lead — or off-leash, as we'd say," McKellar explains.

Adjusting to this level of pooch independence takes time, especially when a dog is accustomed to such liberty.

Obi, a black Labrador McKellar watched in St. Albans, England, is a prime example.

"I could take him off the lead, and he would immediately run off in search of a stick. As soon as he found the perfect stick — I'm still not sure what his exact criteria were — he would step in line behind me and follow close behind me for the rest of the walk," McKellar says.

Letting Lassie lead

That same self-assured spirit reappeared during a sit in Brighton, where Lolly, a confident and leashed Westie, strolled straight to a bus stop and sat, waiting patiently — like she did it every day.

"So we boarded the next bus that came by," McKellar says. "I'm glad she knew where she was going, because I sure didn't! We ended up at the seaside."

Gone are the days when McKellar mapped out her itinerary. Now, she often lets the dogs lead the way, an approach that almost always results in unexpected excursions and photos that turn out far better than she could have planned.

Such was the case with Dearg (Gaelic for "red"), a clever cockapoo who stole McKellar's heart during a monthlong stay in the market town of Richmond, nestled in the Yorkshire Dales. It was Dearg who introduced her to Easby Abbey, the haunting ruins of a 12th-century monastery.

Back home, Dearg proved just as impressive.

"All I had to say was, 'Dearg, will you fetch my slippers?' and he'd trot off, find them and bring them to me," McKellar recalls. "Of course, he expected a treat for that. Well deserved, I say!"

But dog-sits come with a lot of responsibility, so McKellar likes to build in breaks between assignments, making the most of her time and the money she saves. With the house-sitting platform's accommodations cutting an estimated 40% of her travel budget, she's turned pet-sitting into a passport to the world.

As I wrap up our Zoom conversation, I wonder whether McKellar's dog-sitting travels will be a phase, a fling no longer necessary after fleeing that fungus back home.

"How long do you think you'll keep it up?" I ask.

"I get to travel and hang out with dogs?" she says. "I'll do this as long as I can."



WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



The abbey church in Otterberg has a length of 262 feet. It is the the second-largest church in the Pfalz region after the cathedral in Speyer.

Unexpected wonders

Pfälzer Land bike trail a gateway to Otterberg’s church and its imposing structure, animal-shaped door handles

BY HEATHER BENIT  
Stars and Stripes

On our first family bike riding adventure of the season, we spent more time sightseeing in the southwestern German town of Otterberg than cycling the path that led us there.

The plan was to make our way along a roughly 2.5-mile section of the Pfälzer Land cycle path from the Otterbach train station to neighboring Otterberg, a historic town of about 5,000 about 6 miles north of Kaiserslautern.

The Pfälzer Land route runs east-west for about 30 miles from Altenglan to Enkenbach, and the moderately difficult dirt terrain of the stretch we chose passes streams and almond trees, which were in full bloom.

Once in Otterberg, we intended to take a break while exploring its 12th-century Abteikirche, the second-largest church in the Pfalz region after the cathedral in Speyer.

Instead of being just a brief respite, the church impressed us so much that we ended up devoting part of the afternoon to exploring it, along with the surrounding old town.

The church’s well-preserved facade stands out downtown, which appears run-down in places. With a total length of 262 feet, the imposing structure eclipses nearby buildings.

My son’s favorite treasures were the door handles carved in the shapes of animals represented in the Bible or church life: a mouse, a pigeon and a rooster as a “symbol of sincerity” from the New Testament, according to an online guided tour.

Some of the intricacies of the church are challenging to uncover with an untrained eye. The stacks of both English and German brochures at the entrance were empty, so we walked slowly around, breathing



A pigeon door handle on the outside door of the Otterberg abbey church is one of many animals representing church life throughout its interior and exterior.

On the QT

Address: Hauptstrasse 58, Otterberg, Germany  
Hours: Daily, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.  
Information: otterberg.de

Heather Benit

in the damp smell and contemplative quiet.

I admired the natural light streaming in through the stained glass windows, which had a faint yellow hue but no bright colors.

Built between 1168 and 1254 on the former site of a monastery belonging to the Cistercians, a Catholic religious order known for its austerity and strictly regulated monastic life, the church served both Catholics and Protestants after the Reformation.

The nave, or main part of the interior, was reserved for Protestants, while the transept, which crosses the nave at right angles, was for use by Catholics.

A wall installed to separate the two was removed during renovations in 1979. Today, worshippers of both denominations



PHOTOS BY HEATHER BENIT/Stars and Stripes

The 12th century Abteikirche, or abbey church, in Otterberg, Germany, has undergone several renovations between 1979 and 1991. It was built between 1168 and 1254 on the former site of a monastery belonging to the Cistercians, the Catholic religious order.



A Baroque-period granite sculpture adorns the square in front of the abbey church. It depicts historic church life.

share the space.

Public tours of the church are available from April to October on the first Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m. Individual guided tours for up to five people can be booked online in English.

We exited the sanctuary through a fish-handled door, stepping onto the charming square, with its carved granite sculpture depicting historic church life and a Baroque town hall-turned-history museum, which also houses the tourist information center. The square is the modern setting for church concerts and markets.

We explored the town using a map of

the historic district as a guide to buildings dating back to the 17th century, including well-maintained half-timbered structures and the old town hall. A QR code tour in German is also available.

More ambitious wanderers can continue their two-wheeled journey to other points on the Pfälzer trail, but we were exhausted and consequently opted to finish our cycling tour by bus.

Luckily for us, Otterberg’s main street abounds in bus stops with direct lines back to Otterbach train station and Kaiserslautern.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



Potro Lounge in Newmarket, England, has the capacity to comfortably seat close to 100 people.



Potro Lounge is located on High Street, a main road that runs through the center of Newmarket, England.



Potro Lounge

**Address:** 58-60 High St., Newmarket, England  
**Hours:** Sunday through Thursday, 9 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m.-midnight  
**Prices:** 10-15 pounds for brunch, burgers, flatbreads and entrees; desserts, 2-7 pounds  
**Information:** Phone: +44 1638 262005 Online: thelounges.co.uk/potro

Loretto Morris

Salmon, feta and peas make a joyful meal

**By ELLIE KRIEGER**  
*Special to The Washington Post*  
This dish propels salmon into spring by plating it on a creamy, verdant spread of feta and peas, and topping it with a pile of lemony, leafy greens.  
It's a compelling and nourishing meal that makes a memorable dinner, and would also be lovely for Easter brunch.

**Roasted Salmon with Whipped Feta and Peas**  
4 servings  
Total time: 35 minutes  
**Ingredients**  
1 large lemon  
4 (6-ounce) center-cut salmon fillets (skin-on or skinless)  
3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons olive oil, divided  
¼ teaspoon plus ⅛ teaspoon fine salt, divided  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
4 ounces feta cheese  
1 cup fresh peas  
¼ cup fresh parsley leaves  
3 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt  
1 small garlic clove  
3 cups (3 ounces) packed watercress leaves and tender stems

**Directions**  
Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees. Line a large sheet pan with parchment paper.  
Finely zest the lemon to get 1 teaspoon of zest. Halve the lemon, and squeeze juice from one of the halves. Cut the remaining lemon half into wedges; set aside.  
Thoroughly pat the salmon dry and place it on the prepared sheet pan. Brush the tops of the fillets with 2 teaspoons of the oil, and sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon each of the salt and pepper. Roast for 12 to 15 minutes.  
While the fish is roasting, in a food processor, pulse the feta, peas, parsley, yogurt, garlic, lemon zest and 1 teaspoon of the lemon juice until combined. Drizzle in 2 tablespoons of the oil.  
In a medium bowl, toss the watercress with the remaining 1 tablespoon each of oil and lemon juice, and ⅛ teaspoon of salt.  
Spread about ¼ cup of the whipped feta on each serving plate. Top with the salmon, then the watercress, adding the lemon wedges on the side.



TOM MCCORKLE/For The Washington Post

Crying fowl during lunch at Potro

Quality, taste of food lacking at Newmarket outpost of Lounges

**By LORETTO MORRIS**  
*Stars and Stripes*  
**A**rare sunny day in early spring had me in the mood for comfort food while walking along High Street in the English town of Newmarket.  
The eclectic food focus of Potro Lounge, the local outpost of the small Lounges chain originating in Bristol, appeared to fit the bill. The restaurant lies about 10 miles from RAF Mildenhall.  
I chose a table by a window so I could enjoy the sun during a late lunch. While I hunkered down for a multicourse meal, I noticed that most of the 20 or so patrons were socializing in groups while enjoying small baked treats and coffee.  
After a friendly greeting and a long look at the menu, I waited only about 10 minutes for my first order to arrive.  
I was impressed by the clean, organized presentation as well as the amount of food served in what was billed as an appetizer.  
The plate had four tacos, two fried vegetables, chips, cabbage, pico de gallo, guacamole and birria sauce in the center.  
While the beef in the tacos was tender, nothing about them



The Sri Lankan curry: a coconut curry with coriander rice, lime and spring onions, pictured here with chicken and garlic flatbread.



The birria tacos: four beef tacos served with guacamole, pico de gallo, two fried vegetables, chips, cabbage and a cup of birria sauce.

screamed birria until the sauce was added.  
Birria meat at its best is braised in ancho and guajillo chiles and other spices for at least three hours. But these tacos had very little flavor on their own. The paired sauce, while mild, did a lot more to get the dish going.  
The pico de gallo and chips were exceptional and fresh. The guacamole, however, could have used some more seasoning.  
I also ordered harissa honey chicken skewers, which were

recommended by the server. But I didn't taste any honey, nor did I care for the mint and yogurt combination, and the thin strips of chicken were quite dry. A side of garlic mayo was instrumental in helping me finish them.  
In contrast to the speedy appetizer service, the entree took just over half an hour to arrive despite there being fewer patrons than when I had walked in.  
Out came a bowl of Sri Lankan curry, coconut milk-based with coriander rice, lime and spring onions with an add-on of chicken and garlic flatbread.  
The curry was only mildly spicy but still gave a wonderful burst of tangy flavor that I could tell used fresh coconut. The coriander was prominent in the steaming hot rice, the spring onions had a satisfying crunch and the flatbread served as a great base to sandwich food.  
The chicken, however, was so dry that it was a chore to chew. I even tried just leaving it in the sauce in hopes it would gain some moisture.  
I washed everything down with an elderflower cooler. Refreshing and delicious, it wasn't watered down or exceedingly sweet.  
While Potro Lounge had many options, I didn't discover anything that would rank my lunchtime experience above a casual outing with middling expectations.

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY JUAN KING/Stars and Stripes

The Sakura Festival at Tenbou Park in Tokyo features faux cherry blossoms suspended from real branches, offering the look of hanami without the pollen.

Sakura without sneezes

Tokyo’s Sunshine 60 observatory hosts indoor cherry blossom display

BY JUAN KING  
Stars and Stripes

Visitors looking to enjoy Tokyo’s cherry blossoms without braving allergy season or battling crowds can take in the view — indoors — at a seasonal exhibit atop one of the city’s tallest buildings.

The Sakura Festival at Tenbou Park on the 60th floor of Sunshine City’s Sunshine 60 skyscraper runs through May 11. Located in Tokyo’s Ikebukuro entertainment district, the indoor display features faux cherry blossoms suspended from real branches, offering the look of hanami without the pollen.

Sunshine 60 is a popular destination throughout the year, hosting wedding events and seasonal exhibits. Its high-rise observatory provides sweeping views of the Tokyo skyline, especially on clear days, and is a short walk from Ikebukuro Station.

Visitors are greeted by staff at the observatory entrance, where they can either buy tickets or have QR codes scanned if purchased online.

Inside, attendees are welcomed by pink blossoms and natural light flooding through the observatory’s large windows. Visitors stroll along a short pathway beneath imitation sakura, past white benches and illuminated photo spots. The experience lasts about 20 minutes, though many linger to enjoy the view and take photos.

In the evening, the blossoms are lit from above, creating a different atmosphere for nighttime visitors.

On the QT

**Directions:** A 12-minute walk from Tokyo’s Ikebukuro Station. Google Plus code: PPH9+HR Toshima City, Tokyo  
**Times:** Open 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. through May 11; last entry at 8 p.m.  
**Costs:** Adult admission is 700 yen (about \$4.65) on weekdays and 900 yen on weekends. Children in elementary and middle school pay 500 yen and 600 yen, respectively. Prices during peak periods rise to 1,200 yen for adults and 800 yen for children.  
**Food:** Tenbou Park Cafe offers an assortment of treats, and the Sunshine City complex has more than 100 food establishments.  
**Information:** Online: [sunshinecity.jp/en](http://sunshinecity.jp/en)

Juan King

The adjacent Tenbou Park Cafe sells themed snacks, including sakura-flavored treats, sandwiches and smoothies. While tempting, some guests may opt to explore additional dining options within Sunshine City’s large shopping complex.

The exhibit offers a scenic and tranquil experience suitable for solo visitors, couples or families seeking a cherry blossom outing without the unpredictability of spring weather or reactions to pollen.

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Visitors to the Sakura Festival at Tenbou Park in Tokyo are welcomed by pink blossoms and natural light flooding through the observatory’s large windows.



The Sakura Festival at Tenbou Park on the 60th floor of Sunshine City’s Sunshine 60 skyscraper in Tokyo runs through May 11. Sakura-themed snacks are available.



WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

A love letter to New York

Henry’s Pizza in Osaka avoids usual kitsch, lets its crust and toppings do all the talking

By Aaron Kidd  
Stars and Stripes

Near a quiet corner of Osaka’s Tanimachi neighborhood — just a stroll away from the city’s famous castle — sits a pizzeria that feels like it was airlifted straight out of Brooklyn. But this isn’t the Big Apple. It’s Henry’s Pizza, and it might just serve the best New York-style slice in Japan.

This three-story shop is minimalist and unpretentious — white tiles, stainless steel counters, a glowing oven and a playlist that veers from Billie Eilish to Billy Idol. There’s no faux-New York kitsch here. Henry’s lets the crust and toppings do the talking.

And people are listening. Recent customers include pop stars Bruno Mars, Pharrell Williams, Tyla, and Blackpink members Rosé and Jennie. Henry’s was delivered backstage ahead of Green Day’s performance in Osaka in February. Billie Joe Armstrong, in a social media video, called it “the best New York pizza in all of Japan.”

The pizza itself lives up to the hype. The crust walks that holy line between chewy and crispy, folding just right. The sauce is tart and tomato-rich, and the cheese tastes like a blend of mozzarella and provolone.

The pepperoni slice — 550 yen, or about \$3.85 — is the showstopper. There are no frills here — no corn, mayonnaise or seaweed. Just a classic done right.



Henry’s Pizza

**Location:** 4-2-2 Tanimachi, Chuo-ku, Osaka, 540-0012  
**Hours:** Open daily, 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.  
**Prices:** Slices start at 450 yen for plain cheese, up to 600 yen for the weekly special.  
**Directions:** A short walk from Tanimachi 4-chome Station on the Tanimachi and Chuo metro lines. About 20 minutes on foot from Osaka Castle.  
**Information:** Phone: 06-6766-4312;  
**Online:** [instagram.com/henrys\\_pizza\\_osaka](https://www.instagram.com/henrys_pizza_osaka)

Aaron Kidd

While Henry’s specializes in slices, you can also get a whole pie. A special birthday pizza — with “Happy Birthday” carefully spelled out in pepperoni — was delivered to a table near mine.

An art gallery on the third floor called Rise Above was closed during my visit. Henry’s is the brainchild of graphic artist Verdy, of Girls Don’t Cry fame, according to an article on [eyescream.jp](https://www.eyescream.jp), a Japanese fashion, music, art and culture website.

“The Henry in Henry’s Pizza is apparently named after Henry Rollins (of Black Flag),” the report said. “This is where you can definitely feel Verdy’s roots.”

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[@kiddaaron](https://www.instagram.com/kiddaaron)



AARON KIDD/Stars and Stripes

The pepperoni slice is the showstopper at Henry’s Pizza, a no-frills three-story shop in Osaka, Japan.



AARON KIDD/Stars and Stripes

Henry’s has become a go-to place for celebrity spotting in Osaka, including (at right) pop stars Rosé of Blackpink, and Bruno Mars.



Instagram

Tex-Mex cheese enchiladas with chili sauce irresistible, satisfying

By Gretchen McKay  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Like a lot of Mexican food fans, I could stuff my face with tacos every day of the week and consider myself satisfied. But you’ve got to shake it up every now and again to keep flavors fresh and interesting. Especially if the ingredients you reach for again and again — in this case, chili peppers, onions, tomatoes and corn tortillas — don’t vary much.

Enchiladas offer a more “saucy” version of the humble, folded taco. This Tex-Mex dish made with rolled tortillas is one I first made years ago for my youngest son, a teenager, at the time, who had a bottomless appetite. I was looking for something that would be both flavorful and filling, as well as fairly easy to make on a busy weeknight. It also had to reheat well for inevitable midnight snacking.

Stuffed with cheese and slathered with a hearty, home-made beef chili con carne gravy, this dish delivers.

Tex-Mex Cheese Enchiladas with Chili Sauce

**Ingredients**  
For filling:  
10 dried ancho chili peppers  
2 or 3 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce  
3 cups beef broth, divided  
2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon dried Mexican oregano  
2 white onions, chopped  
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
3 garlic cloves, chopped  
1 pound ground beef  
For enchiladas:  
18 6-inch yellow corn tortillas  
4 cups shredded Mexican-blend cheese  
Chopped tomato, shredded lettuce and sour cream  
**Directions**  
Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Pour boiling water over dried chilies in a bowl. Let sit 15 minutes or until tender; drain. Remove and discard stems and seeds. Process peppers, 1 cup broth, 1 teaspoon salt, cumin and oregano in a food processor until smooth.

Saute onion and remaining 1 teaspoon salt in 2 tablespoons hot oil in a pot over medium heat for 6 minutes. Add garlic and saute 2 minutes. Add beef and cook 8 minutes, or until no longer pink.

Stir pepper mixture into beef mixture, and cook 3 minutes. Stir in remaining 2 cups broth. Bring to boil; reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, 30 minutes.

Heat tortillas in hot skillet 10-20 seconds on each side until softened. Remove and keep warm.

Spoon scant ¼ cup cheese on edge of 1 tortilla, and roll up. Place in greased 13-by-9-inch baking dish, seam sides down. Repeat with remaining tortillas.

Pour beef mixture over top.

Sprinkle can with remaining shredded cheese. Bake, covered, 10 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes more. Let stand 5 minutes before serving with garnishes.



WEEKEND: TRAVEL



DAVID RISING/AP

Vietnamese flags fly on the Hien Luong Bridge on Feb. 22, 2024, at the former border between North and South Vietnam, Quang Tri province. This year is the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon to the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong guerrilla troops, and the 30th anniversary of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.

# Revisiting Vietnam

Fifty years later, country’s wartime sites draw retrospective veterans

BY DAVID RISING AND HAU DINH  
*Associated Press*

**H**amburger Hill, Hue, the Ia Drang Valley, Khe Sanh: Some remember the Vietnam War battles from the headlines of the 1960s and 1970s, others from movies and history books. And thousands of Americans and Vietnamese know them as the graveyards of loved ones who died fighting more than a half-century ago.

Today the battlefields of Vietnam are sites of pilgrimage for veterans from both sides who fought there, and tourists wanting to see firsthand where the war was waged.

“It was a war zone when I was here before,” reflected U.S. Army veteran Paul Hazelton as he walked with his wife through the grounds of the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, which was known as Saigon when he served there.

Hazelton’s tour just shy of his 80th birthday took him back for the first time to places he served as a young draftee, including Hue, the former Phu Bai Combat Base on the city’s outskirts, and Da Nang, which was a major base for both American and South Vietnamese forces.

“Everywhere you went, you know, it was occupied

territory with our military; now you just see the hustle and bustle and the industry, and it’s remarkable,” he said. “I’m just glad that we’re now trading and friendly with Vietnam. And I think both sides are benefiting from it.”

## The history and the museum recounting it

Vietnam’s war with the United States lasted for nearly 20 years from 1955 to 1975, with more than 58,000 Americans killed and many times that number of Vietnamese.

For Vietnam, it started almost immediately after the nearly decadelong fight to expel the colonial French, who were supported by Washington, which culminated with the decisive defeat of French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

The end of French Indochina meant major changes in the region, including the partitioning of Vietnam into Communist North Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh, and U.S.-aligned South Vietnam.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon to the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong guerrilla troops, and the 30th anniversary of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.

Tourism has rebounded rapidly since the COVID-19 pandemic and is now a critical driver of Vietnam’s



HAU DINH/AP

**A tourist looks at a U.S. Air Force fighter jet used during the Vietnam War on display at the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Feb. 22. The museum’s exhibits focus on American war crimes and atrocities committed during the war.**

growth, the fastest in the region, accounting for roughly 1 in 9 jobs in the country. Vietnam had more than 17.5 million foreign visitors in 2024, close to the record 18 million set in 2019 before the pandemic.

The War Remnants Museum attracts some 500,000 visitors a year, about two-thirds of whom are foreigners. Its exhibits focus on American war crimes and atrocities like the My Lai massacre and the devastating effects of Agent Orange, a defoliant widely used during the war.

**SEE VIETNAM ON PAGE 27**



WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Vietnam: Tourists also get ‘alternate perspective’ on conflict

FROM PAGE 26

The U.S. was to open the first exhibit of its own at the museum this year, detailing Washington’s extensive efforts to remediate wartime damage, but it is indefinitely on hold after the Trump administration slashed foreign aid.

Other wartime sites in Saigon, which was the capital of South Vietnam, include the South Vietnamese president’s Independence Palace where North Vietnamese tanks famously crashed through the gates as they took the city and the Rex Hotel where the U.S. held press briefings derisively dubbed the Five O’Clock Follies for their paucity of credible information.

On the northern outskirts of the city are the Cu Chi tunnels, an underground warren used by Viet Cong guerrillas to avoid detection from American planes and patrols, which attract some 1.5 million people annually.

Today, visitors can climb and crawl through some of the narrow passages and take a turn at a firing range shooting targets with war-era weapons like the AK-47, M16 and the M60 machine gun known as “the pig” by American troops for its bulky size and high rate of fire.

“I can understand a bit better now how the war took place, how the Vietnamese people managed to fight and protect themselves,” said Italian tourist Theo Buono after visiting the site while waiting for others in his tour group to finish at the firing range.

Former North Vietnamese Army artilleryman Luu Van Duc remembers the fighting firsthand, but his visit to the Cu Chi tunnels with a group of other veterans provided an opportunity to see how their allies with the Viet Cong lived and fought.

“I’m so moved visiting the old battlefields — it was my last dying wish to be able to relive those hard but glorious days together with my comrades,” the 78-year-old said. “Relics like this must be preserved so the next generations will know about their history, about the victories over much stronger enemies.”

**Outside the city**

The former Demilitarized Zone where the country was split between North and South in Quang Tri province saw the heaviest fighting during the war, and drew more than 3 million visitors in 2024.

On the north side of the DMZ, visitors can walk through the labyrinthine Vinh Moc tunnel complex, where civilians took shelter from bombs that the U.S. dropped in an effort to disrupt supplies to the North Vietnamese.

The tunnels, along with a memorial and small museum at the border, can be reached on a day trip from Hue, which typically also includes a stop at the former Khe Sanh combat base, the site of a fierce battle in 1968 in which both sides claimed victory.

Today, Khe Sanh boasts a small museum and some of the original fortifications, along with tanks, helicopters and other equipment left by U.S. forces after their withdrawal.

Hue itself was the scene of a major battle during the Tet Offensive in 1968, one of the longest and most intense of the war. Today the city’s ancient Citadel and Imperial City, a UNESCO site on the north bank of the Perfume River, still bears



PHOTOS BY HAU DINH/AP

A tourist takes photos of a mural March 26 at the Hoa Lo prison museum in Hanoi, Vietnam. The former French prison was used to hold American prisoners of war, primarily pilots shot down during bombing raids. Its most famous resident was the late Sen. John McCain after he was shot down in 1967.



Tourists pose for photos Feb. 20 at Independence Palace, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Here, North Vietnamese tanks famously crashed through the gates as they took the city.

signs of the fierce fighting but has largely been rebuilt. West of Hue, a little off the beaten path near the border with Laos, is Hamburger Hill, the scene of a major battle in 1969.

About 300 miles to the southwest near the Cambodian border is the Ia Drang valley, where the first major engagement between American and North Vietnamese

forces was fought in 1965.

Fighting in North Vietnam was primarily an air war, and today the Hoa Lo Prison museum tells that story from the Vietnamese perspective.

Sardonically dubbed the “Hanoi Hilton” by inmates, the former French prison in Hanoi was used to hold American prisoners of war, primarily pilots shot down



A tourist moves in a narrow tunnel passage Feb. 23 in the relic site of Cu Chi tunnels in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The tunnels were used by Viet Cong guerrillas to avoid detection.

during bombing raids. Its most famous resident was the late Sen. John McCain after he was shot down in 1967.

“It was kind of eerie but fascinating at the same time,” said Olivia Wilson, a 28-year-old from New York, after a recent visit. “It’s an alternative perspective on the war.”



## WEEKEND: MUSIC



From left: Rich and Chris Robinson, of The Black Crowes. "Jimmy Page & The Black Crowes: Live at the Greek" offers a more complete picture of the band's live collaboration with the Led Zeppelin guitarist.

Red Light Management

# Celebration day

The Black Crowes and Jimmy Page revisit a unique 25-year-old live set

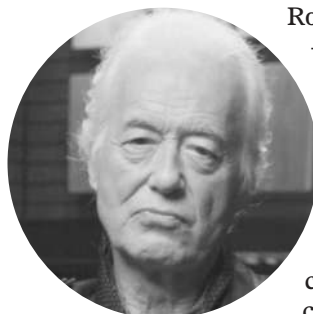
BY MARK KENNEDY  
Associated Press

One of the more puzzling live albums of all time came out in 2000. It featured songs from a two-night stand with The Black Crowes and Led Zeppelin icon Jimmy Page. But fans hoping to hear "Hard to Handle" or "She Talks to Angels" were out of luck. Bizarrely, not a single Black Crowes song was on it.

Twenty-five years later, that misstep

has been fixed. The 36-track "Jimmy Page & The Black Crowes: Live at the Greek" restores 16 previously unreleased songs and offers a better window into a unique trans-Atlantic rock combination.

"The whole project was special, very electric for us, very something very alive," says singer-songwriter Chris



Page

Robinson. "I think we were all — for lack of a better word — just abuzz with what we were doing as a band, as an outfit together."

The live tracks were recorded at The Greek Theatre in Los Angeles over two nights in October 1999. It captured musicians who were cooking after previous stops at New York City's Roseland

Ballroom; the Centrum in Worcester, Mass.; and The Palace of Auburn Hills in Michigan.

"I think we really felt like it wasn't the Black Crowes with Jimmy Page. It was one thing, it was one group," says Chris Robinson. "We really felt connected and tied. I just think we just had a really high energy level, and we knew we were onto something that was powerful."

SEE CROWES ON PAGE 29



WEEKEND: MUSIC



Ross Halfin/AP  
Chris Robinson, left, and Rich Robinson, of The Black Crowes, appear with Jimmy Page in London on April 2. “Jimmy Page & The Black Crowes: Live at the Greek” revisits their 2000 album.

Crowes: Re-release comes amid creative stretch for band

FROM PAGE 28  
An album missing something

The album that came out had Zeppelin tunes like “Celebration Day,” “In My Time of Dying” and “Whole Lotta Love,” as well as old blues and R&B standards like “Woke Up This Morning,” “Sloppy Drunk,” “Mellow Down Easy” and “Shake Your Money Maker,” plus the Yardbirds’ “Shape of Things to Come” and Fleetwood Mac’s “Oh Well.”

But no Black Crowes songs were included due to contractual reasons: The band had just left their label and weren’t allowed to use anything from their catalog.

“We were happy with what came out. We were bummed that we weren’t able legally to put our songs on the record,” says songwriter and guitarist Rich Robinson.

Adds his brother Chris: “I wasn’t surprised by how inept that decision was.”

“I felt really bad about that because they extended this hand of friendship that I could come and join the band,” says Page. “I felt really sad because I knew the versions that we did were really good of their songs.”

The anniversary edition of “Live at the Greek” includes the once-dropped Black Crowes’ tunes “No Speak No Slave,” “Hard to Handle,” “Wiser Time,” “Remedy” and a version of “She Talks to Angels,” which Rich Robinson says Page took “to a totally different direction and a new level.” Zeppelin tunes like “Misty Mountain Hop” and “Bring It on Home” are also included.

In addition to Page and the brothers, the band on stage included Sven Pipien on bass, Eddie Harsch on keyboards, Audley Freed on guitar and Steve Gorman on drums. Page says he felt loose and connected with the guys.

“In the past, whenever I knew it was going to be recorded, say in the Zeppelin days, I’d always get really nervous,” he says. “But with this, I didn’t have any of that anxiety or anything. We were on a wave.”

Hits and some soundchecks

Fans will delight in the re-stored songs but also in some outtakes, including five songs at soundcheck and the never-before-released song Rich Robinson and Page wrote while jamming, called simply “Jams.”

“I think the surprises are the things that really excite us as well,” says Chris Robinson. “We didn’t even know that we had this extra material or the other things that we hadn’t really thought about until this project came around.”

The concerts at The Greek capture a partnership that would endure. Page and the Crowes would go on a full-length American tour in the summer of 2000 and are friends today.

“We were all then joined in the hip when we were playing, and it was just such a joyful event to for me to be playing with these guys, and I guess them to be playing with me, too,” says Page.

The album re-release comes as The Black Crowes are enjoying a creative patch, earning their second career Grammy nod last year for “Happiness Bastards,” nominated for best rock album alongside the Rolling Stones.

Chris Robinson is philosophical about the timing of the anniversary release. Despite the songs sitting in a vault for a quarter of a century, he’s just happy they can now be heard.

“I do have a firm belief that things happen when they’re supposed to happen because they’re supposed to happen,” he says. “And if you play around with that too much, it might not have the same resonance, you know?”

Mariah Carey is ready for ‘Emancipation’ celebration

Singer talks anniversary reissue, Rock Hall and her lost grunge album

By MARIA SHERMAN  
Associated Press

It may be hard to conceive of now, but there was once a lull in Mariah Carey’s superstar career. In 2001, her film “Glitter” was a commercial flop; the album that followed, 2002’s introspective “Charmbracelet,” was met with a muted response. She was at a crossroads.

And then everything changed. Carey released “The Emancipation of Mimi” in 2005. It joined her athletic R&B-pop with synth-y hip-hop and fun, flirty, enduring hits — she was now only belting when she wanted to, thank you very much. She sounded free, as the title suggested, and the world embraced her for it once again.

On April 12, the album turned 20. To celebrate, Carey is gearing up to release deluxe, expanded editions of the album on May 30, featuring bonus tracks, new remixes and much more — including the official release of “When I Feel It,” a song fans have been waiting for since 2005. It was originally planned for “The Emancipation of Mimi” but was ultimately shelved because of clearance issues with its sample of The Dynamic Superiors’ “Here Comes That Feeling.”

“These are new gems, as far as I’m concerned,” Carey says. “It’s exciting to me.”

Carey discussed “The Emancipation of Mimi,” her recent nomination to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Rihanna and plans for new music with The Associated Press. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Has your relationship to “The Emancipation of Mimi” changed over the years?

Carey: It’s still one of my favorite albums that I’ve done. And, you know, back then when it first came out, everybody was calling it a comeback album. ... I didn’t really agree, because you never think you’ve gone anywhere. You know what I mean?

I just always really loved the songs and the performances. People seem to really be into it. And new fans came from that album.

I hear a lot of creative freedom on that album. Do you think it revitalized your career?

I do think it’s got a fun feeling to it and it definitely feels free. I guess it sort of revitalized my career. I spent a while making that album ... working with some great people, some great collab-



AP

Mariah Carey is celebrating the 20th anniversary of her “comeback” album “The Emancipation of Mimi” with the May 30 release of a deluxe edition that includes bonus tracks, new remixes and more.

orators. ... It was an experience that I’ll never forget, creating that album.

In June, you’ll celebrate another anniversary. Your self-titled debut turns 35. When you think back on that time, did you envision this career?

I don’t know. I really was just so involved and entrenched in making the music and this new career that I was embarking on. And it was amazing. I mean, it’s what I had wanted to do for my whole life. And then I was doing it.

You’re also a 2025 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame nominee.

That’s a huge honor. I don’t know if I’m going to win it, so I don’t want to get too excited about it. So, I just want to say that, again, it’s a huge honor and I guess I didn’t expect it. I wasn’t really thinking about it. And here we are.

It seems like the Rock Hall has become more fluid in their definitions of genre over the years. Missy Elliott was inducted in 2023, for example.

I don’t really know if genre matters. I feel like people are more open to all different genres, much more than they were, you know? But I feel like a rock star sometimes.

You know, after Dolly Parton was inducted, she released a rock album. If and when you are

inducted, will you finally release your ’90s grunge album? Fans have been waiting.

I mean, I really want to, but I want to do videos, and I have just so many ideas for that.

I don’t think I’ll be able to pull it together by the summer (before the Rock Hall ceremony) but maybe, maybe I’ll release a few songs from it.

During your Christmas Time tour last holiday season, your children Monroe and Moroccan joined you onstage. They played guitar and drums; they were really rocking. Would you ever consider a family rock ’n’ roll album?

I would love to. They just have a lot of their own things that they’re doing, and I don’t want to force them to do anything.

And at your final date in Brooklyn, Rihanna was in the front row of the audience. Would you ever work with her?

I would love to. Did you see what happened? She wanted me to sign her breasts. I was trying to do it neatly, and it didn’t come out right. So, I tried.

Your last album of original music, “Caution,” came out in 2018. It’s been a minute! Are you working on a new album?

I’m not supposed to talk about it. ... But I’m working on something. We won’t say what it is, but something new.



WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

# Message in a bottle

Express your personality with designer ones or high-tech ones that track your sips, self-clean

By **KIM COOK**  
*Associated Press*

If you like to stay hydrated no matter where you go, chances are you’ve got a reusable water bottle or two. Or 10. (The collectors know who they are.) Whether you’re a tech enthusiast, fashion trendsetter, hiker, commuter or just an eco-conscious consumer, there’s a bottle out there for you. There are bottles that sterilize themselves. Bottles that remind you when to drink. Bottles designed for sustainability. And bottles transformed by a paint box of colors and imagery into mini-art-works. Hydration’s become more than a necessity. It’s got a personality.

### Bottle basics

Kit Dillon, a writer for Wirecutter, says four things make a good water bottle: “It’s the right size. It’s leakproof. It feels good. It insulates well.” Which one works for you depends on what you use it for, he says. Eva Bleyer, who tests kitchen appliances for the Good Housekeeping Institute, agrees.

Some people go for a favorite sipping straw while others value a comfortable carrying handle. For collectors, social media feeds light up with the launch of new colors and patterns.

“While I can confidently recommend which ones performed best in our tests, choosing the right water bottle is incredibly personal,” she says.

### Hydro history

It’s all a far cry from the mundane mugs of yesteryear. An early maker of light, plastic water bottles was Nalge, in Rochester, N.Y., which found that the unbreakable containers it was making for science laboratories in the ’60s were being used by employees on backpacking trips. The Nalgene reusable water bottle soon went on the market. Hundreds of plastic and bioplastic versions from various makers have been joined over the decades by stainless steel and aluminum versions, with as many iterations of the lids — straws, screw-ons, flip-ups.

### Smart sips

The tech keeps evolving,

Bleyer says. “I’ve seen and tested everything from filtering water bottles to the Air Up, which uses flavor pods to enhance the taste, as well as newer options that carbonate your water or track your sips.”

### Some examples

Self-cleaning bottles could be helpful in countries or wilderness areas where water quality is questionable. Philips’ GoZero UV Self-Cleaning Smart Water Bottle got top ratings in Men’s Health magazine’s testing lab for self-cleaning bottles. Its monthlong battery life might make it useful for off-grid camping or trekking. LED technology automatically sanitizes the bottle every two hours, or whenever you push the cap button.

The LARQ PureVis 2 is another self-cleaning water bottle. The company says the plant-based filter in the lid removes chlorine, forever chemicals (PFAS) and bacteria. The bottle also tracks your consumption. It’s now part of the Museum of Modern Art’s design store and its spring new product collection.

The HidrateSpark Pro comes with a Bluetooth tracker to keep you updated on consumption, based on your age, weight, activity level and other factors you code into the app.

Low tech but reliable: Wirecutter has put the Hydro Flask on its “best” list since it started testing water bottles in 2014, citing simple yet dependable features like good insulation, sturdy steel



S'WELL/AP

One of S’well’s newest collections for its insulated bottles and tumblers is a deep, moody floral called **Midnight Botanical**, which features a dramatic chrysanthemum pattern.



KIM COOK/AP

Some people prefer simpler bottles like these insulated **BioLoco** ones by German brand **Chic.Mic**.

construction, wide or narrow mouth options and dishwasher-cleanability.

### Hydration, but make it fashionable

New color and design drops generate the kind of buzz that fashion drops get. Owala’s FreeSip bottles usually go for about \$25-\$40, but limited-edition designs can sell in the \$400 range. A Valentine’s Day pattern, and a St. Patrick’s Day pattern called “Clover the Rainbow” that was released on leap day 2024 (Feb. 29), are now on eBay for more than \$200.

S’well has collaborated with illustrator Steffi Lynn, known for her cheery, youthful prints and murals that feature upbeat messages like “What’s the Best That Could Happen?” and “Have a Nice Day,” and also with Crayola for a series of bottles that look like giant crayons. New patterns for the brand include a deep, moody floral called Midnight Botanical.

S’well also offers customization, perhaps for an event, team or a gift for a special someone.

Italian company YouBottles did a collab with Banksy; the artist’s “Girl with Balloon” and “Flower Thrower” murals are a



KIM COOK/AP

Water bottles by Italian company **You Bottles**, in collaboration with street artist **Banksy**, are displayed at the **Ambiente** homewares trade fair in Frankfurt, Germany in February 2025.



KIM COOK/AP

**Legami Milano** also sells insulated bottles in various designs.

couple of the patterns. Color trend giant Pantone has its own collection of bisphenol A (BPA)-free bottles in eight vibrant colors, including aubergine, red, yellow and greenery.

### Bags for the bottled bevs

Snazzy carry bags for your water bottle include insulated ones that keep the drink cold or hot. PackIt has one with a cross-

body strap in sturdy nylon. Versions come in sunflower or starry-night prints, and feature a phone pouch attachment. WanderFull’s bag has made “Oprah’s Favorite Things” list twice. The bag, available in colorful puffer-coat fabric, comes with a nylon crossbody strap. There’s a vegan leather version as well, with an additional chain strap for dressier occasions.



# WEEKEND: TELEVISION



APPLE TV+/AP photos

In “Your Friends & Neighbors,” Jon Hamm plays a Princeton-educated hedge fund star Andrew Cooper, who suddenly finds himself unemployable. Drowning in debt, he starts stealing from his neighbors.

## The stuff of social status

Hamm-starring ‘Your Friends & Neighbors’ explores wealth, self-worth

**BY MARK KENNEDY**  
*Associated Press*

**A**pple TV+’s “Your Friends & Neighbors” begins with a once high-flying hedge fund manager waking up in someone else’s luxurious house, next to a dead body and in a pool of blood. How he ended up there consumes the first season of this compelling new series, which stars Jon Hamm and takes a peek at the lives of the ultrarich in a leafy New York suburb. “I was interested in writing about the status symbols, about the way wealth informs community,” says creator, showrunner and producer Jonathan Tropper. “And then at the same time, what I really wanted to do is subvert it a little bit and talk about how impermanent it all is.”

Like “White Lotus” and “Big Little Lies” before it, “Your Friends & Neighbors” revolves around the woes of the wealthy and questions why we chase social status. “Why is more always better?” Hamm asks. “Is the only metric really the accumulation of these larger and larger piles of stuff, whether it’s money or goods or houses or wives or what have you? We’re kind of arrived at this time where this story is particularly resonant.”

### A cat burglar is born

Hamm plays Princeton-educated hedge fund star Andrew Cooper, who finds himself divorced and unemployable.

Drowning in debt, he turns to petty crime: Breaking into neighbors’ homes to steal \$350,000 watches, Hermès handbags and \$32,000 bottles of chardonnay. He rationalizes the thefts are just a quick fix until he figures out a way to get his money faucet back on. Plus, he’d never be a suspect. “I figured, ‘What’s the worst that can happen?’” he thinks. “It’s the old story about what happens when you go bankrupt. It happens very slowly and then all of a sudden,” Hamm says. “Coop’s at the all-of-a-sudden part.”

Tropper says his show is exploring the notion of entitlement and how self-worth can be wrapped up in what people own. He’s also showing how close to disaster we all really are. “We’re all handed a script: Do well in school, go to these colleges, get these jobs, and you’ll be set. And you can do all that and excel and get it all right, and the system may still spit you out. That’s really what this show is about. It’s about this man who is in a simmering rage that the system he bought into spit him out.”

There’s a perverse delight in watching Hamm’s Cooper saunter into mansions when he knows the owners are away and make off with luxury goods, becoming a sort of down-on-his-luck burglar sticking it to the rich.

### Quiet desperation

Cooper becomes acutely aware

that life in this well-to-do suburb is fueled by conspicuous consumerism and country club boasting. “It’s not like I’d never noticed,” he says as the narrator. “But I guess now I was seeing it differently.”

Among the things he sees are the ways people have monetized the emptiness some men feel when they reach the top of the mountain — career, marriage, kids and prestige — and yet feel unfulfilled. “Scotch, cigars, smoked meats, custom golf clubs, high-end escorts — entire industries built to cash in on the quiet desperation of rich, middle-aged men,” Cooper notes.

Cooper soon grapples with the underworld to fence his stolen merchandise while also hooking up with a divorcée (Olivia Munn) and scheming to get his old job back. His kids resent him and his unstable sister needs him.

Munn says it’s great to see Hamm tap into one of his most loved roles — Don Draper in “Mad Men,” a complex character with a flawed personal life. “In this case, he’s this, like, finance bro for whom everything has come so easily. And he’s sort of despicable, but you kind of feel sorry for him at the same time, somehow,” she says. “It’s really fun to go on the spiral with him.”

### The origin of ‘Your Friends & Neighbors’

Tropper came up with the premise after living for many



After losing his job, Cooper becomes acutely aware that life in his well-to-do suburb is fueled by conspicuous consumerism and country club boasting. “It’s not like I’d never noticed,” he says as the narrator. “But I guess now I was seeing it differently.”



Amanda Peet, left, plays Mel, Cooper’s ex wife.

years in New York’s Westchester County, in which communities like Scarsdale and Larchmont are among the nation’s wealthiest. Tropper was in a community adjacent to the kind of super-wealthy one depicted in the series and watched the financial upswings where “people started to make stupid amounts of money.”

“I was a novelist. I was just feeling that it can’t possibly be sustainable,” he says. “As a non-finance person living amongst financial people, I had an insider’s access but an outsider’s point of view.”

He’d drive down the pristine blocks and wonder what troubles were going on behind the closed doors of the megamansions: “What you realize is a lot of these are built on foundations of rot.”

### Getting his man

Tropper pitched the series to Hamm and didn’t write the show until the actor was on board. In his head, Cooper was always played by Jon Hamm. “He’s an actor who really walks the line perfectly between comedy and drama. And, as a result, he can behave badly and you will still sympathize with him,” Tropper says. “Hamm is a classically handsome man who people still find relatable. And maybe that’s because everyone’s delusional, or

maybe it’s because he has a certain quality that he exudes that still makes him an Everyman, even though he’s an Everyman who looks like Jon Hamm.”

Hamm, who was a fan of Tropper’s novels and TV shows that include “Banshee,” “Warrior” and the science fiction drama “See,” calls the writer a gifted storyteller and jumped aboard. “He pitched this idea to me, which I thought had a lot of potential, not just to be an entertaining vehicle but to think about where are we as a culture and society,” Hamm says.

### What’s next?

Season 2 of “Your Friends & Neighbors” was greenlit even before the first episode premiered. Tropper doesn’t know how far the series will go, but it can’t stand still. “I don’t believe we do five seasons of a man robbing houses,” he says. “Once we’ve got the viewer buying into this neighborhood, in this world, Coop’s survival tactics will change. “I think the important thing with his journey is that he will never trust the system again. So we watch him struggle between wanting to keep up this lifestyle but rejecting the traditional ways of achieving it,” he adds. “I think we’ll continue to be able to explore this community in this neighborhood and the wealth divide in our country.”



## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS



Do you eat a meal in 20 minutes or less? It might be time to slow down.

ILLUSTRATION BY NOGA AMI-RAV  
Stars and Stripes

# Chew on this for better health

Experts say speed of ingestion is an important consideration: Eat too fast and you may overeat or get indigestion

BY MARIA CHENG  
Associated Press

**Y**ou can have your cake and eat it too — just do it slowly. Experts tend to focus on the kinds of foods you can eat to improve your health. But the speed at which you devour your dinner also matters. There are risks with eating too fast — think stuck food and the potential to overeat before your brain tells you to stop. (Inhaling your food also risks annoying your slower-paced dining companions or the person who took the time to cook your meal.)

Here are some tips from scientists on how to slow down and take a more mindful approach to consuming your diet:

## How fast is too fast?

If you're the kind of person who can regularly polish off breakfast, lunch or dinner in less than 20-30 minutes, you are eating too fast.

"It takes about 20 minutes for the stomach to communicate to the brain via a whole host of hormonal signals that it's full," said Leslie Heinberg, at the Center for Behavioral Health at the Cleveland Clinic. "So when people eat rapidly, they can miss these signals and it's very easy to eat beyond the point of fullness."

## Why is that a problem?

People who eat quickly are likely to swallow more air,

Heinberg said, which could lead to bloating or indigestion. Not chewing your food properly can also compromise digestion, meaning you won't get all of the nutrients from your food. Unchewed pieces of food also could get stuck in your esophagus.

Some previous studies have suggested that people who eat quickly have the highest risk of obesity, while the slowest eaters were the least likely to be obese.

## How can you slow down when eating?

For starters, turn off the TV and put down your phone. "If you're eating while you watch TV, people tend to eat until there's a commercial or the show is over," Heinberg said, adding that people are less inclined to pay attention to the body's own signals that it's full. "When we do things while we're eating, we're eating less mindfully. And that often causes us to eat more."

She said that when people focus exclusively on eating, they tend to enjoy the meal more and eat less.

Heinberg also acknowledged the pace at which you eat is often an ingrained habit, but said change is still possible. She suggested things like using your nondominant hand to eat, trying utensils you might not ordinarily use like chopsticks or taking a deliberate break to drink water when your plate is partially empty.

If you have a busy life, it might be unavoidable to eat lunch at a work meeting or snack while running errands. But Sarah Berry, chief scientist at the British nutritional

company ZOE, said when possible, "be mindful of what the food tastes and feels like."

"If we're not fully present, it's very easy to eat more quickly and not notice how much we've consumed," Berry said.

## Chew your food, just like mom told you to

One of the simplest things to do is to increase the number of bites you take, said Helen McCarthy, a clinical psychologist with the British Psychological Society.

"If you chew each mouthful a little bit longer, that will slow down your eating," she said.

The kind of food you eat may also make a difference. McCarthy points out that it's much easier to eat ultraprocessed or fast foods quicker, because they typically have a softer texture.

"It's hard to eat vegetables and protein at the same rate as something that's highly processed and requires less chewing," McCarthy said.

Some of her patients also reported an unintentional side effect once they began eating more slowly, referencing one woman who often ate a tube of potato chips every evening.

When McCarthy told her to slow down and eat every single chip individually, her patient told her "it was like having a mouthful of claggy chemicals."

"She didn't find (the chips) enjoyable anymore," McCarthy said.



# WEEKEND: FAMILY



## Give a financial head start

Kids can learn how to invest wisely, have a healthy attitude toward spending

By RACHEL CHRISTIAN  
*Bankrate.com*

Jonathan and Jacqueline Sanchez didn't grow up learning about money. But now, at ages 41 and 42, they've built a million-dollar net worth and are making sure their two kids have a financial head start most adults never get.

The couple built their wealth through a strategic mix of real estate and traditional investments. The Sanchez family takes an open-book approach when it comes to money conversations, using everyday life to teach their 11-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter about investing, delayed gratification and financial independence.

"We're a very open-communication-type family," Jonathan said. "And no, they're not too young to learn about finances."

Instead of waiting for their kids to figure it out later, they're showing them how wealth-building works in real time.

Jonathan and Jacqueline weren't born into wealth — both were raised by frugal single moms. Jonathan worked a corporate job as a software engineer, while Jacqueline pursued a career as a pharmacist before pivoting to become a financial coach.

In 2022, they launched Parent Portfolio, a website that helps families learn to grow their wealth and raise financially responsible kids.

Through intentional decisions, they built financial security. Now, they're making sure their kids understand those principles early on.

A few investing lessons they're teaching their kids:

**Give hands-on experience**

The Sanchez kids don't just hear about investing from their parents — they actively participate. Both children have custodial investment accounts, where they buy shares with their allowance. Instead of simply learning about asset allocation or diversification, the Sanchez kids are practicing it firsthand.

"We hold a weekly budget meeting where we give them their allowance based on chores they do," Jonathan says. "Then they decide what to do with it."

Each child has their own approach.

Jonathan notes the different financial personalities of his two children. "My son, he invests in index funds, so he's like, 'OK, I'm going to set aside more money toward my investing,' whereas my daughter's like, 'I'm going to set it aside for my wants and needs.'"

**Take a long-term mindset**

Jonathan believes successful investing isn't about quick wins — it's about patience. He encourages his kids to think in terms of decades, not days.

"We're going to buy a share with the idea that over time, it will grow," he tells them. "We try to train them: Don't check it every day. Don't even check it every month."

The goal is to shift their mindset from short-term fluctuations to long-term growth.

Those teachings align with a tried-and-true investing principle recommended by many financial advisers: Time in the market beats timing the market. Legendary investors like Warren Buffett have championed the power of long-term investing for decades, emphasizing that consistency, not luck, builds wealth.

To simplify investing for their children, the couple focuses on low-cost index funds — a strategy backed by financial experts as a way to diversify and reduce risk in a portfolio.

"We don't want them to feel intimidated by investing," Jacqueline says. "If they learn to ignore the noise, they'll see that investing is about steady growth, not get-rich-quick schemes."

**Don't invest in what you don't understand**

Speculative investments — from meme stocks to zero-day options — have flooded the market with get-rich-quick promises in recent years.

But a golden rule in the Sanchez household: If you don't understand it, don't invest in it.

That's why, despite the hype around cryptocurrency, they steer clear of it.

"We're familiar with the high-level concepts of crypto, but we don't invest in it because we don't feel we understand it well enough," Jonathan explains.

Instead, they focus on areas where they have deep knowledge — real estate and index funds. That's the same philosophy they pass on to their kids: Invest where you have confidence, not just curiosity.

**Learn to delay gratification**

Jacqueline believes financial habits start with how money is spent.

"We're not swayed by instant gratification ourselves," she says. "Our kids see us being intentional with our money and purchases."

To reinforce this lesson, she asks them a simple question before making purchases: "Do I need this, or do I want this?"

Jonathan adds that their kids have started thinking differently about spending.

"Instead of buying a book, they'll ask, 'Do we have it at the library?' or 'Can I build this thing instead?'" he says.

This approach shifts the mindset from consumerism to resourcefulness, an important trait for investors.

### THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## Finally getting a leg up on driver's license lunacy

I grabbed the bundle of letters in my mailbox and walked directly to the recycling can, expecting all junk. "So wasteful," I muttered judgmentally, tossing them one by one into the blue bin.

"You've been approved!" a credit card offer read. "Free gift inside!" two charity solicitations promised, one containing return address labels with my last name spelled wrong, and the other with a small notepad printed with cartoon butterflies. There were postcards from realtors, grocery store fliers and retail ads. I was about to throw the whole thing in the bin (I kept the notepad for my commissary shopping lists), when an official envelope caught my eye.

"Rhode Island Department of Motor Vehicles," it formally announced in the upper left corner. I tore it open, my guilty conscience predicting that past parking and speeding tickets had finally caught up with me. But, rather than a warrant for my arrest, the envelope contained a driver's license renewal form. Relieved while simultaneously annoyed by memories of long waits at the DMV, my mind wandered to my driver's licenses of the past.

The first one when I was 16, the fake one I ordered from an ad in the back of a magazine, the many that I lost during my 20s and the ones with no photograph that I had while I was a military spouse and Pennsylvania was our home of record.

Then I remembered the unique driver's permit I obtained in 1996. We'd been stationed in England, where Americans couldn't drive more than a year without a supplemental permit issued after passing the required testing. Although I'd have preferred a poke in the eye after our complicated overseas military family move with a baby and cat needing six months of quarantine, the testing is a good idea for Americans unfamiliar with driving on the left side of the road, right side steering wheels, the metric system and roundabouts.

After learning road rules in a course given in a base classroom, my husband and I showed up for the required written exam just as test booklets were being passed out.

Francis was seated two rows behind me, where I saw him carefully considering each of the 50 questions with a furrowed brow. I got to work, reading questions and scribbling in the tiny ovals, eager to retrieve our 10-month-old son from the sitter. Deep in thought about overtaking on the right, I hadn't noticed that my left leg was falling asleep.

The minutes ticked by on the classroom wall clock as my brain swirled with carriageways, box junctions, give way signs and centre lines. With the final oval filled, I closed my test booklet, uncrossed my legs and headed to the proctor's desk at the front of the room.

But upon taking a step, my left leg buckled. I stumbled, falling into a young Army guy seated across the aisle. "Sorry!" I whispered, grasping his seat back to steady myself.

It was then that I realized that my leg was in a deep coma, completely numb and unresponsive.

Using my hands to lock my left knee backward, I balanced on my right leg, and using my torso, I swung the dead appendage forward, grabbing the shoulders of testers who looked up at me, startled and confused.

I knocked uncontrolled into test-takers, whispering awkward apologies as I made my way forward. Finally, I gripped the proctor's desk and breathlessly handed her my score-sheet, which she graded while eyeing me with suspicion.

Somehow, the proctor didn't fail me for being drunk or disorderly, and I passed. After a period of painful tingling, my left leg awoke from its most untimely slumber, which was a good thing, because I needed it for the clutch of our hand-me-down Renault Vesta.

Thankfully, I won't have to take any tests to renew my Rhode Island driver's license, but I'll definitely remember not to cross my legs while waiting at the DMV.



WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

COURSE CORRECTION

BY KAREEM AYAS / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Kareem Ayas is a high school teacher of English literature in Harlem. He grew up in Syria and Lebanon, where he attended Arabic schools until the fifth grade. He says he learned English from watching “The Simpsons” (“when my mom wasn’t looking”) and from reading and rereading the “Goosebumps” novels. His favorite part of this puzzle is 102-Down, his favorite food, which, amazingly, has never been an answer in a Times puzzle before. — W.S.

ACROSS

1 At bay, say?

6 One directive in preparing a turkey

11 Onetime Volvo competitor

15 Actress Gadot

18 “‘Oh, what’s the point?’”

19 Alternative

20 Mexican dish with ahi

22 Look (like)

23 Hears, in a way

24 Tripe

25 Light, short-sleeved, collared garment

28 Ringing endorsements?

29 Pointy parts of a Batman costume

30 Uses one’s employee badge to enter, say

32 Get straight

34 \_\_\_\_-Tiles (kids’ building toy)

35 \_\_\_\_ favor

36 Tourney sponsor since 1939

38 \*Voids

39 Nails

40 Iowa college town

42 Break before college

44 Counterpart of “‘thx’”

45 Like some mindless entertainment

48 Wail

50 Dirtball

53 Descendants

54 It’s an affront

57 Bit of curling equipment

59 Young fellow

60 Bit of casino equipment

62 Words of remembrance

64 Parts of one’s history, say

65 Binding agent in baking

66 Amazon Handmade competitor

69 Intense cycling sessions . . . or what you must do to complete the answers to this puzzle’s starred clues

72 “‘My word!’”

73 1980s TV star in the W.W.E. Hall of Fame

74 Work hard

75 Star turn, often

76 Word before milk or over

78 Member of la familia

79 Throws, informally

81 Beach bird

83 Bestow, as a quality

84 Adware detection program

86 Nickname that drops -ney

88 You might walk on this at night

90 Lincoln or Ford

92 Brown beer

95 What “:.” might mean

99 \*Number with 18 zeros

100 Animal in the Premier League logo

101 Chinese two-stringed fiddle

104 Satisfied

105 Built like the Hulk

106 Colorado’s \_\_\_\_ Park

108 Canine teeth

110 Legend has it

111 Word before rain or wash

113 Toy with one’s food, perhaps?

115 Made nutritious choices

117 Gave support

118 Blue, in a way

121 Language from which we get “‘cashmere’”

122 \*Recap

123 Nursery rhyme name that’s said twice in a row

124 Superlative finish

125 Like 1-2-3

126 Historic Vegas casino where the Rat Pack performed

127 Affliction treated with a hot compress

7 Pieces of the heart

8 \_\_\_\_ Chisholm, first Black woman elected to Congress

9 Caddie’s appointment

10 Sounds of hesitation

11 Wall support

12 Post-mortem order

13 Tiny exemplars of collaboration

14 Honey

15 Events for bargain hunters

16 Stereotypical squirrel’s stash

17 Plenty o’

21 Cloying sentimentality

26 \_\_\_\_ Explorer, classic web browser

27 Gets caught (on)

28 They’re just for openers

30 Masseur’s employer

31 \*Part of the funnies page

33 Student transcript figs.

34 Sources of some syrup

37 Sounds in massage parlors

41 Floor

43 Traffic marker

46 Retrovirus molecule

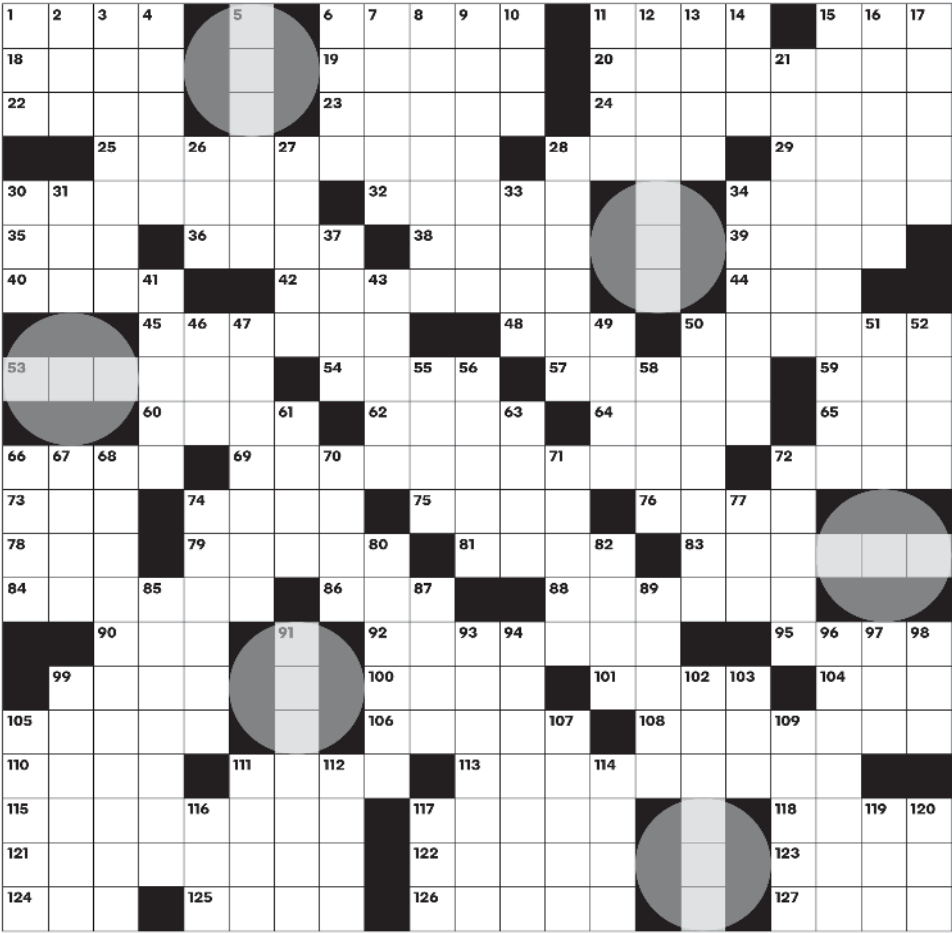
47 Invites to a movie, say

49 A/C capacity

50 “‘Wayne’s World’” or “‘MacGruber,’” informally

51 \*Like restaurants in a famed dining guide

52 Testing humor’s boundaries



55 Preschool basics

56 Trial program

58 Chromite and hematite

61 Grandiloquent

63 Account

66 First responders, for short

67 Set off, as an alarm

68 Be up on the latest news

70 Types

71 Cousin of kinda

72 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame architect

74 Like some stems and situations

77 Texter’s qualification

80 Moved like a crab

82 Shade of green

85 Ones suddenly canceling plans

87 Roast rostrum

89 “\_\_\_\_ Jackson & the Olympians” (fantasy series)

91 Chinese fruits with leathery rinds

93 Tax-advantaged savings plan

94 Incorporate before shaping and baking, say

96 Find amusing

97 Poet Hughes

98 Tense parts of games, for short

99 Allotments

102 Pita dip made from chickpeas and tahini

103 Bring into play

105 Apathetic

107 Distance ÷ time

109 Chiromancers read them

111 Historic Indian city

112 \_\_\_\_-bitty

114 Many email attachments

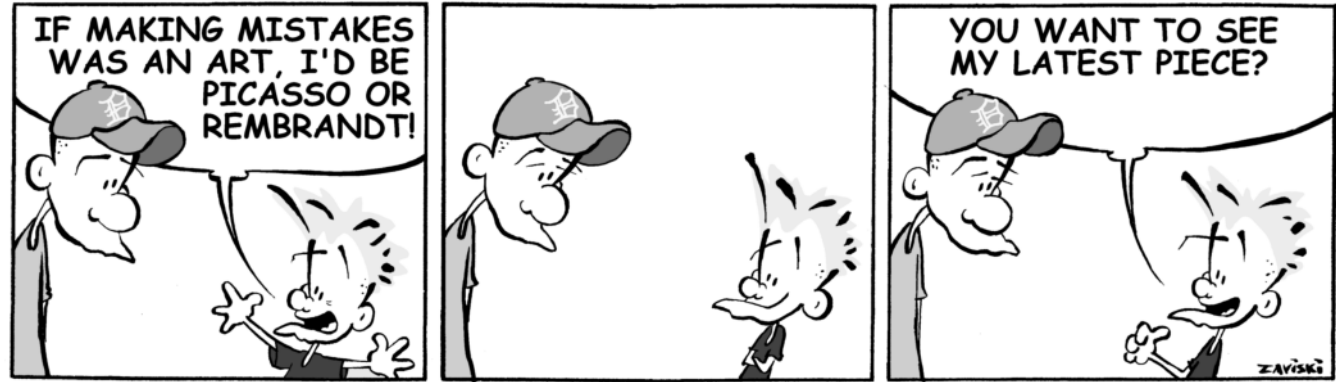
116 Kyle’s little brother on “‘South Park’”

117 Hard core features, informally

119 Like some humor

120 Turn to ash, perhaps

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



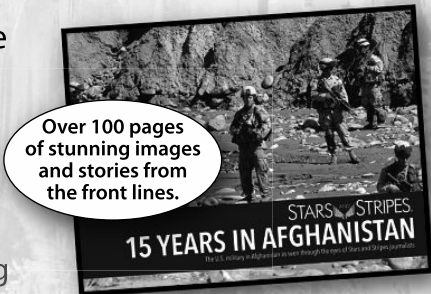
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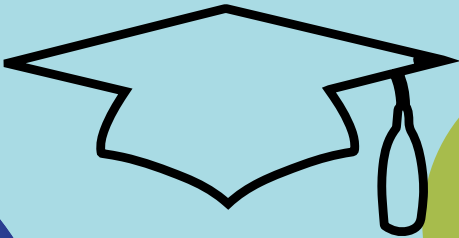
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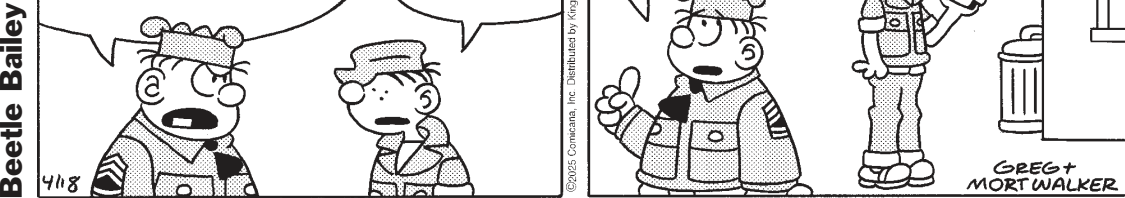
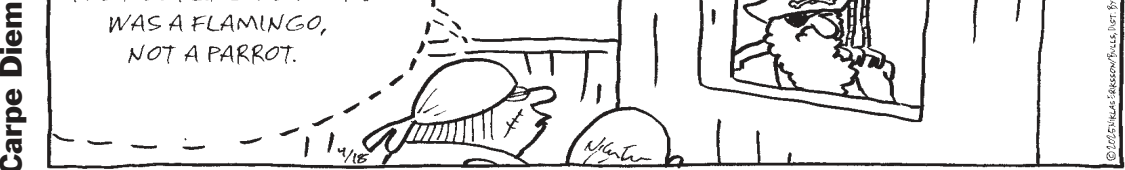
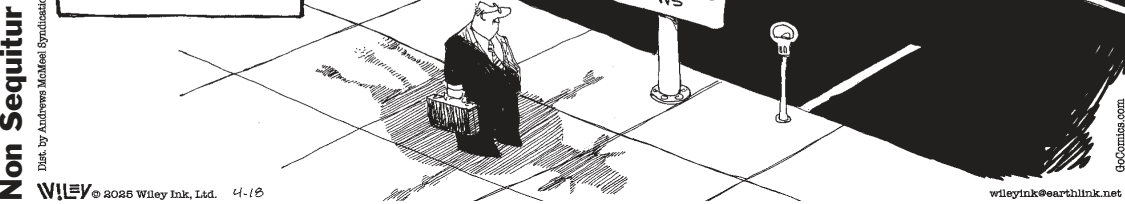
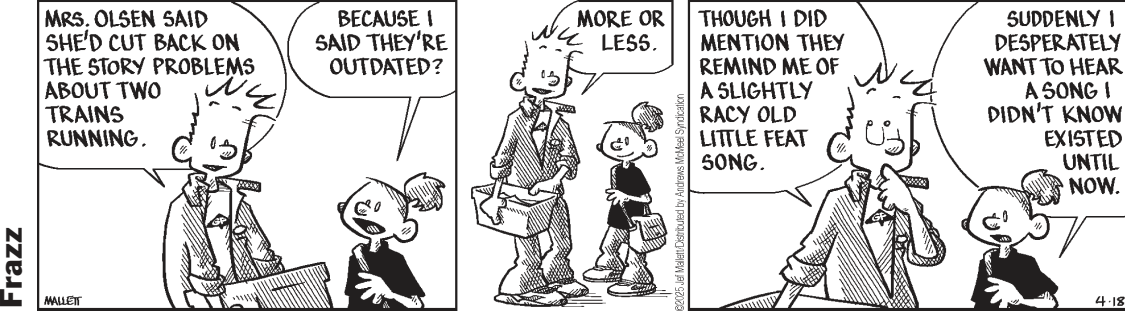




Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18						19				
20	21				22	23						
24				25					26	27	28	
29			30						31			
32			33						34			
		35						36				
37	38	39					40					
41				42	43					44	45	
46				47					48			
49				50					51			

- ACROSS
- 50 Hardens
- 51 Ballot markings
- 23 "Star Trek" captain
- 25 Go to sea
- 26 Seating at a performance of "Aida"
- 27 Caspian Sea feeder
- 28 Brady and Hanks
- 30 Gourmet cook
- 33 Sporty Fords
- 34 Walrus tooth
- 36 Clues
- 37 Missile shelter
- 38 "Zounds!"
- 39 Libertine
- 40 Half quart
- 42 Boob tubes
- 43 Haw preceder
- 44 British verb ending
- 45 Gloomy guy
- DOWN
- 1 Watch chain
- 2 Bird (Pref.)
- 3 Beagle's reward
- 4 Label anew
- 5 Send forth
- 6 Actor Cage, to friends
- 7 Antlered grazer
- 8 Port city of Poland
- 9 Octavia's spouse
- 10 Help in a crime
- 11 Sagacious
- 16 Harbor arrival
- 19 Bon Jovi drummer Torres
- 20 "Scram!"
- 21 Andean land
- 22 Service period
- 1 Passing craze
- 4 Russo of "The Intern"
- 8 Chew (on)
- 12 Egg (Pref.)
- 13 Actor Jannings
- 14 Mazar of "Younger"
- 15 What to carry, per Teddy Roosevelt
- 17 Man of war?
- 18 Yonder thing
- 19 Govt. security
- 20 Parsley piece
- 22 Aspen gear
- 24 Dickens' Uriah
- 25 Project
- 29 Man-mouse link
- 30 Egypt's capital
- 31 Expert
- 32 Defeat via brain power
- 34 Squad
- 35 Karate level
- 36 Flings
- 37 Helvetica lack
- 40 Tower city
- 41 Mr. Stravinsky
- 42 "Shoot for the stars!"
- 46 Praise
- 47 Air outlet
- 48 Buckeyes' sch.
- 49 Rhyming tributes

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	H	O	D			H	A	L		S	G	T	S
P	E	D	I			I	T	O		T	O	I	L
A	L	I	A			N	E	A		A	T	M	S
S	I	N	G	E	D		T	A	R	E			
				R	O	U	G	H	D	R	A	F	T
S	E	D	A	N		R	E	V		M	A	A	
A	D	A	M			R	E	D		U	G	L	I
G	A	M			B	E	A			K	N	O	L
S	M	O	O	T	H	T	A	L	K				
			C	A	S	E		I	M	N	E	X	T
A	I	L	S			A	D	D		O	R	E	O
Z	W	E	I			T	I	A		W	I	N	G
T	O	S	S			S	I	N		N	C	A	A

4-18

CRYPTOQUIP

EJYO BKZAR KBTQKBYYQVT CIZ  
XVQE QV XVBPRJPJSM KBRRJSM  
WAVJSM WZCSXZAVT: "TCJSMJS'  
JS RIQ VBJS."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I DOUBTED MY ABILITY TO PREPARE THE FLUFFY POTATOES, BUT IT ENDED UP BEING A MASHING SUCCESS.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals B



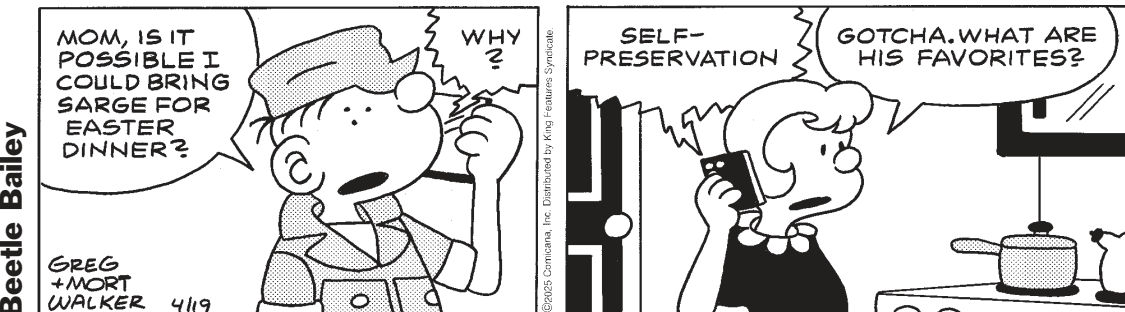
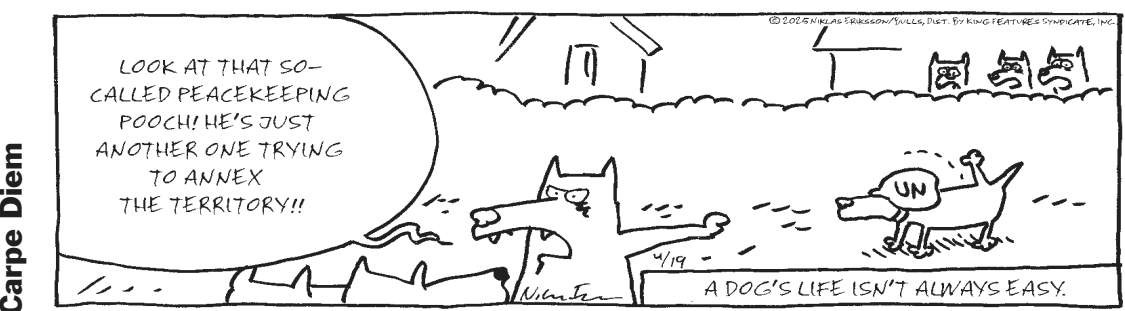
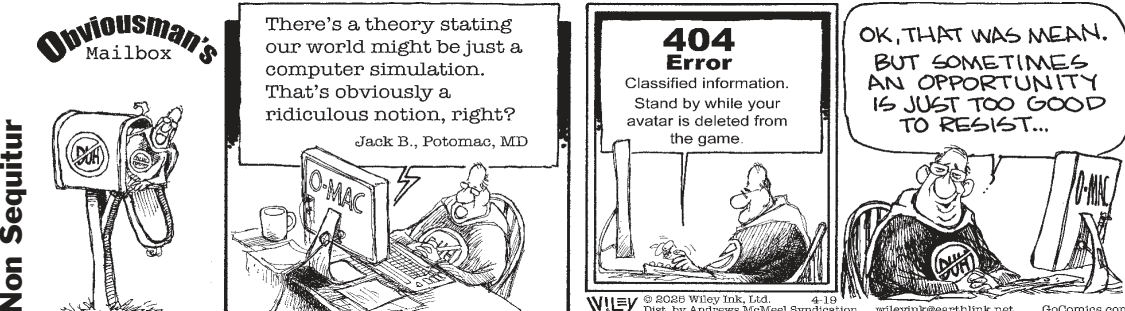
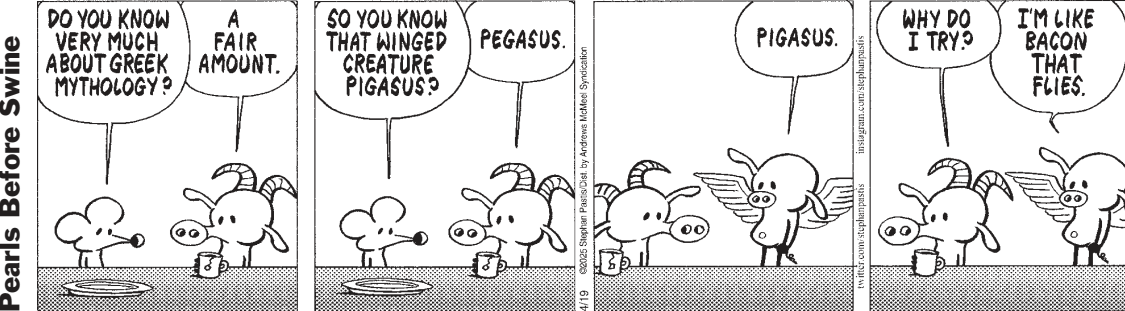
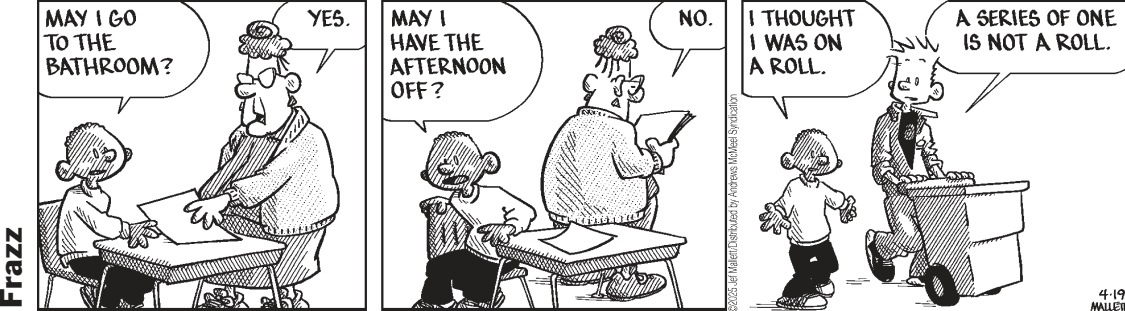
Bizarro

Loose Parts

Eugene Sheffer Crossword



1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
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48				49					50			
51				52					53			
54				55					56			



- ACROSS
- 1 Dress designer Vera
- 5 Dandies
- 9 Opening
- 12 "Understood"
- 13 Burden
- 14 Swiss canton
- 15 John and Yoko's son
- 16 Finito
- 17 Hit hard
- 18 Canape spread
- 19 Julius Erving's nickname
- 20 Capital of South Sudan
- 21 Misery
- 23 Rushmore face
- 25 Ritzy appetizer
- 28 "Donnie —" (Johnny Depp film)
- 32 Cockeyed
- 33 Noted 2001 bankruptcy
- 34 Sluggish
- 36 Wheedle
- 37 Language suffix
- 38 Alias abbr.
- 39 Calendar span
- 42 Malia, to Sasha
- 44 Rep on the street
- 48 100 percent
- 49 Craving
- 50 Narc's measure
- 51 Free (of)
- 52 Sad
- 53 Coup d' —
- 54 "The Matrix" hero
- 55 Disorder
- 56 Till bills
- DOWN
- 1 Trace of smoke
- 2 Sailing
- 3 Spruced up
- 4 "Blazing Saddles" actor
- 5 Chow for cows
- 6 — about (circa)
- 7 State of India
- 8 Compass dir.
- 9 Mentor
- 10 Saudi native
- 11 Fine cotton
- 20 Denim garment
- 22 Author Joyce Carol —
- 24 Take five
- 25 — Tech
- 26 Devoured
- 27 By way of
- 29 Hit show letters
- 30 Army rank (Abbr.)
- 31 Undivided
- 35 Get snug
- 36 Redeems, as a check
- 39 Knitter's need
- 40 Writer Wiesel
- 41 Designer Gucci
- 43 Hosp. areas
- 45 Ceremony
- 46 Flair
- 47 Pixels
- 49 Co. that created Watson

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

4-19

CRYPTOQUIP

CP TQGQWKWFWYCHGH JLXQ

TZAJ ILGL WM KLCMPLFF

HGLGCHGCAH, GJQR WZYJG GW

HLXQ CG GW GJQ AFWZI.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FILM ABOUT BASEBALLERS WHO PREFER PRACTICING BATTING DURING DOWNPOURS: "SWINGIN' IN THE RAIN."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals H





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OPINION

Our military can handle books in a library

BY THEODORE R. JOHNSON

The Washington Post

One evening 25 years ago, in the wardroom of our guided-missile destroyer, some fellow officers and I joked before dinner about who took the weakest classes in college.

Once we’d had our fun, the conversation turned political. “What I want to know,” one officer began, “is why some schools offer women’s studies as a major! I mean, why isn’t there a men’s studies?” Before I could bite my tongue, my flippant response rolled out: “There is. It’s called history.” After some jostling, the group took the point: The prevailing stories are not the only ones that matter.

The Pentagon’s assault on diversity initiatives brought this memory to mind. The latest casualty is the library at the United States Naval Academy. Officials at the college confirmed that nearly 1,000 books were flagged for potentially violating President Donald Trump’s executive order that requires schools to promote “patriotic education” and avoid those deemed to champion diversity, equity and inclusion. Ultimately, 381 titles were removed, charged with sowing division and pushing “anti-American, subversive” ideologies. Multiple books by Hitler survived the purge; a midshipman’s honors paper on police violence did not.

The rationale for banning these books and articles is as flimsy as the process by which they were chosen. As with other efforts to scrub federal websites by searching for specific keywords — ranging from

“Black” and “women” to “equality” and “cultural differences” — the academy undertook a similar practice to identify books for removal from the library. Books by authors whose titles contained words such as “racial inequality” were taken off the shelves, while other books on the same subject — by the same authors but with less explicit titles — remain in circulation. The point of these executive actions isn’t to deny students information that can be easily accessed elsewhere, but to communicate whose history is notable and an example to us all — and whose is not.

The White House and Pentagon appear to believe that students — even midshipmen who swear an oath to the nation — will love the nation less if presented with its checkered history, discriminatory political interests and constitutional shortcomings. A close read of some of the banned books would show those concerns are unfounded. They contain histories of men and women who answered the call for service even though they could not vote, serve in combat under the American flag, seek equal justice in the courts, or access veterans’ benefits. People who volunteer for military service don’t do so because the nation is perfect, they do so even though it is not — that sacrifice is what makes patriotism resilient.

Instead, the Pentagon is exercising a thin-skinned nationalism that bans books, fires senior military leaders who are disproportionately Black or female, and believes diversity introduces weakness. In doing so, it mistakes colorblindness for the removal

of unflattering histories and the refusal to acknowledge racial inequality. And it acts as though avoiding discussions of gender or race or injustice is a precondition for meritocracy. Not only is this wrong, but it also undermines military strength, readiness and cohesion.

Most of all, it messages a lack of faith in the men and women who wear the uniform, suggesting that they are capable of facing the ugliness of war but not the quietude of the university library. And that while they can put guided missiles on targets many miles away, they are helpless against the prose of an author with whom they might disagree. Again, a trip to the Naval Academy’s library stacks will put those attitudes to rest: Writing about the importance of an educated military, British general William Francis Butler observed that “the nation that will insist upon drawing a broad line of demarcation between the fighting man and the thinking man is liable to find its fighting done by fools and its thinking by cowards.”

The wardroom conversation turned to stories from our day at sea just as one of the ship’s two female officers walked in and joined us for dinner. This was the ship’s first deployment with women on board and integrated by race and gender at every level of leadership and operations. It was a historic deployment, filled with unit awards and commendations. And perhaps small evidence of two things the country should remember: Diversity offers strategic advantages to smart nations, and the histories of the people who constitute it matter, too.

America is in no shape to weather a recession

The Washington Post Editorial Board

Economist Paul Samuelson once quipped that stock markets had predicted nine of the last five recessions. Predictions are hard, of course, so especially about the future. So it would be foolish to assert with certainty that the U.S. economy is headed for one. Nevertheless, an economic contraction looks much more likely than it did a few months ago, thanks to the cost and chaos of President Donald Trump’s tariff shock.

What can be said with confidence is that the United States is ill-positioned to weather another economic storm, because of feckless policy decisions made during the past decade.

Whenever gross domestic product begins to shrink, a number of things happen at once. Tax revenue declines, and spending rises as automatic fiscal stabilizers such as unemployment insurance kick in. Politicians scramble to deliver extra fiscal stimulus. And as the budget deficit gapes wider, the Treasury needs to borrow more money.

All of this will be basically familiar to readers of The Post. Unfortunately, if this cycle soon repeats, unfamiliar fiscal constraints stand to complicate things.

Until the 2008 financial crisis, U.S. government debt generally amounted to less than half America’s gross domestic product. The sole exception was during World War II, when borrowing briefly drove the debt to 106% of GDP. As soon as the war ended, however, fiscally responsible legislators raced to bring the debt down to a sustainable level, and by 1956, it was once again back in the safe zone. As late as 2007, it was still roughly one-third of GDP. This gave

the government room to maneuver in emergencies, such as the shocks that followed the 9/11 attacks.

The response to the global financial crisis dramatically altered this math. By the time President Barack Obama left office, the national debt was hovering around 75% of GDP. It expanded still further during the pandemic, approaching 100% of GDP in 2020.

Like the World War II debt, most of this was incurred because the government was responding to an extraordinary emergency, and borrowing as needed to fund many stimulus measures. After the emergency ended, though, policymakers made no effort to pare the debt load. The Biden administration and its congressional enablers chose instead to worsen the situation, running bigger and bigger deficits even as the economy recovered: 5.3% in 2022, 6.1% in 2023, 6.3% in 2024.

They — and the Trump administration, which borrowed to fund its tax cuts — acted as though demand for U.S. Treasurys was an unlimited resource, a money tree in America’s backyard. They paid little attention to the risk that, if interest rates did rise (perhaps because investors began to wonder if the U.S. would actually repay them), the cost of rolling over such a huge debt load would eat away at the country’s fiscal capacity. America risked entering a new crisis without the ability to borrow cheap money to mount an effective government response.

Thanks to this political irresponsibility, the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio has declined only slightly since the pandemic — and this small recovery occurred only because eco-

nomic growth and inflation boosted the nominal value of GDP. The debt has continued to grow apace, from \$21.7 trillion in the fourth quarter of 2020 to \$28.9 trillion today. As the bills for entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare grow to accommodate retiring baby boomers, even more debt will accumulate. The Congressional Budget Office projects that, over the next 10 years, the debt-to-GDP ratio will balloon another 20 percentage points to 118% of GDP. And this is *before* accounting for the budget-busting tax cuts that Congress is considering, which would add even more trillions to the staggering debt load.

In 2019, the yield on a 10-year inflation-adjusted Treasury bond was hovering close to zero. Today, it is roughly 2%. Interest on the debt now costs the treasury more than Medicare or national defense.

Nor can we necessarily count on these rates to fall as the economy contracts. Normally, this happens because, as GDP declines, so does the stock market, and when the stock market falls, nervous investors engage in a “flight to safety”: They buy U.S. government bonds. But the Trump administration’s tariff adventures have investors questioning whether U.S. debt is safe. Rather than decline as the stock market has sold off, Treasury yields have risen.

This means that if Trump’s punishing tariff policy leads to a recession, as it might, the government might not be able to finance economic relief with cheap debt. Like many a chronic over-spender, the U.S. has depleted its emergency reserves to pay for things politicians wanted, rather than things the country needed. When the bill comes due, it is apt to prove costly indeed.



# SCOREBOARD/GOLF

## DEALS

### Wednesday’s transactions

#### BASEBALL

##### Major League Baseball American League

**BOSTON RED SOX** — Placed INF Alex Bregman on the paternity list. Recalled UTL Nick Sogard from Worcester (IL). Sent RHP Brayan Bello to Portland (EL).

**CHICAGO WHITE SOX** — Selected the contract of RHP Steven Wilson from Charlotte (IL). Designated RHP Mike Clevinger for assignment.

**DETROIT TIGERS** — Optioned RHP Brennan Hanifree to Toledo (IL). Recalled RHP Keider Montero from Toledo.

**MINNESOTA TWINS** — Acquired INF Jonah Bride from the Miami Marlins in exchange for cash considerations.

**NEW YORK YANKEES** — Optioned RHP Allan Winans to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL). Activated RHP Clarke Schmidt from the IL.

**SEATTLE MARINERS** — Recalled RHP Will Klein from Tacoma (PCL). Optioned RHP Gregory Santos to Tacoma.

**TEXAS RANGERS** — Released RHP JT Chargois from a minor league contract. Recalled LHP Jacob Latz from Round Rock (PCL). Optioned RHP Marc Church to Round Rock.

#### National League

**ATLANTA BRAVES** — Activated RHP Spencer Strider from the IL. Optioned RHP Zach Thompson to Gwinnett (IL).

**LOS ANGELES DODGERS** — Sent LHP Clayton Kershaw on a rehab assignment to Oklahoma City (PCL). Recalled RHP Bobby Miller to Oklahoma City. Optioned RHP Landon Knack to Oklahoma City.

**NEW YORK METS** — Recalled RHP Justin Hagenman from Syracuse (IL). Optioned RHP Max Kranick to Syracuse.

**PITTSBURGH PIRATES** — Activated INF Jared Triolo from the IL. Optioned INF Tsung-Che Cheng to Indianapolis (IL).

**ST. LOUIS CARDINALS** — Optioned RHP Roddery Munoz to Memphis (IL). Recalled RHP Matt Svanson from Memphis.

**WASHINGTON NATIONALS** — Recalled INF Trey Lipscomb from Rochester (IL). Placed INF Paul DeJong on the 10-day IL.

#### BASKETBALL

##### Women’s National Basketball Association

**CHICAGO SKY** — Signed Gs Tilly Boler and Sammie Puiis to training camp contracts.

**MINNESOTA LYNX** — Signed F Ajae Petty and G Reigan Richardson to training camp contracts.

#### FOOTBALL

##### National Football League

**NFL** — Suspended San Francisco 49ers OL Isaac Alarcon 6 games for violating the league’s policy of performance-enhancing substances.

**CINCINNATI BENGALS** — Signed QB Logan Woodside to a one-year contract.

**TENNESSEE TITANS** — Waived DTs McTelvin Agim and Isaiah Iton, G Logan Bruss and DB Gervarrius Owens. Terminated the contracts of LB Curtis Bolton and WR Stanley Morgan Jr.

#### HOCKEY

##### National Hockey League

**BOSTON BRUINS** — Reassigned D Frederic Brunet, RW Fabian Lysell and Cs John Farinacci, Fraser Minten and Vinni Lettieri to Providence (AHL). Placed D Ian Mitchell on waivers.

**CALGARY FLAMES** — Recalled C Sam Morton and D Hunter Brzustewicz from Calgary (AHL).

**CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS** — Reassigned Ds Kevin Korchinski and Artyom Levshunov to Rockford (AHL).

**DALLAS STARS** — Activated C Tyler Seguin from long-term injured reserve. Reassigned Ds Lian Bichsel and Alexander Petrovic to Texas (AHL).

**FLORIDA PANTHERS** — Reassigned D Matt Kiersted, C Rasmus Asplund and RW Jesse Puljujarvi to Charlotte (AHL).

**NASHVILLE PREDATORS** — Reassigned D Ryan Ufko to Milwaukee (AHL).

**NEW JERSEY DEVILS** — Signed F Shane Lachance to a two-year, entry-level contract. Recalled C Mike Hardman and G Nico Daws from Utica (AHL).

**OTTAWA SENATORS** — Reassigned LW Angus Crookshank to Belleville (AHL).

**SAN JOSE SHARKS** — Placed D Lucas Carlsson on waivers.

**SEATTLE KRAKEN** — Reassigned D Ville Ottavainen to Coachella Valley (AHL).

**ST. LOUIS BLUES** — Reassigned C Dalibor Dvorsky to Springfield (AHL).

**TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING** — Recalled F Cam Atkinson from Syracuse (AHL).

**UTAH HOCKEY CLUB** — Reassigned G Matt Villalta and RW Kailer Yamamoto to Tucson (AHL).

**WASHINGTON CAPITALS** — Signed C Nic Dowd to a two-year contract extension.

**WINNIPEG JETS** — Signed LW Alex Iafallo to a three-year contract extension.

#### SOCCER

##### Major League Soccer

**ORLANDO CITY SC** — Signed Head Coach Oscar Pareja to a three-year contract extension.

## AP SPORTLIGHT

**April 18**

**1987** — Philadelphia’s Mike Schmidt hits his 500th home run with two outs in the ninth to rally the Phillies to an 8-6 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates.

**1995** — Future Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana announces his retirement from football.

**1999** — Wayne Gretzky ends his NHL career at Madison Square Garden with an assist. Before the game, commissioner Gary Bettman announces the league is retiring No. 99 in honor of “The Great One”.

## PRO SOCCER

### MLS

#### Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Columbus	5	0	3	18	12	6
Charlotte FC	5	2	1	16	13	7
Cincinnati	5	2	1	16	10	9
Inter Miami CF	4	0	3	15	12	6
Philadelphia	4	3	1	13	13	9
Nashville	4	3	1	13	12	8
Orlando City	3	2	3	12	15	12
Chicago	3	2	3	12	14	12
New York	3	2	3	12	9	7
NYC FC	3	3	2	11	11	11
Atlanta	2	3	3	9	11	13
New England	2	4	1	7	4	7
D.C. United	1	4	3	6	9	18
Toronto FC	0	4	4	4	7	13
CF Montréal	0	6	2	2	4	13

#### Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	6	1	1	19	17	6
Minn. United	4	1	3	15	11	7
San Diego FC	4	2	2	14	15	9
Portland	4	2	2	14	13	10
Colorado	4	2	2	14	11	11
Austin FC	4	3	1	13	6	8
LA FC	4	4	0	12	10	11
FC Dallas	3	3	2	11	10	11
San Jose	3	4	1	10	16	12
Real Salt Lake	3	5	0	9	8	13
Seattle	2	3	3	9	9	11
St Louis City	2	4	2	8	5	6
Houston	1	4	3	6	6	12
Sporting KC	1	6	1	4	10	16
LA Galaxy	0	5	3	3	6	15

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

#### Saturday’s games

LA Galaxy at Austin FC  
Miami at Columbus  
San Diego FC at Charlotte FC  
Orlando City at CF Montréal  
New York City FC at New England  
D.C. United at New York  
Atlanta at Philadelphia  
Nashville at Seattle  
Cincinnati at Chicago  
Colorado at Houston  
FC Dallas at Minnesota  
Vancouver at St Louis City  
Toronto FC at Real Salt Lake  
Los Angeles FC at Portland  
Sporting Kansas City at San Jose

#### Saturday, April 26

Sporting Kansas City at Cincinnati  
New York City FC at Toronto FC  
CF Montréal at New York  
D.C. United at Philadelphia  
Atlanta at Orlando City  
New England at Charlotte FC  
San Jose at Columbus  
FC Dallas at Miami  
Real Salt Lake at San Diego FC  
Austin FC at Houston  
Vancouver at Minnesota  
Chicago at Nashville  
Seattle at Colorado

#### Sunday, April 27

St Louis City at Los Angeles FC  
Portland at LA Galaxy

### NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Orlando	4	0	0	12	11	1
Kansas City	4	0	0	12	10	1
Washington	3	1	0	9	6	3
Angel City	2	0	2	8	7	4
Gotham FC	1	1	2	5	4	4
Portland	1	1	2	5	3	4
Bay FC	1	2	1	4	4	5
Seattle	1	2	1	4	4	5
San Diego	1	2	1	4	5	7
Houston	1	2	1	4	4	6
Louisville	1	2	1	4	2	5
Chicago	1	3	0	3	3	10
North Carolina	0	2	2	2	3	6
Utah Royals FC	0	3	1	1	3	8

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

#### Friday’s games

Chicago at Utah Royals FC  
Portland at Seattle  
Gotham FC at Angel City

#### Saturday’s games

San Diego at Louisville  
Washington at Orlando  
Bay FC at North Carolina  
Houston at Kansas City

#### Tuesday, April 22

Gotham FC at Portland

#### Friday, April 25

Utah Royals FC at Houston  
Angel City at Orlando

#### Saturday, April 26

Gotham FC at Washington  
Kansas City at North Carolina  
San Diego at Chicago  
Seattle at Bay FC



JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP

Justin Rose shows his disappointment after missing an eagle putt on the 13th hole of the final round at the Masters last Sunday in Augusta, Ga. Rose lost the tournament in a sudden-death playoff for the second time.

# Rose coping with ‘torment’ of close calls at Masters

By DOUG FERGUSON  
*Associated Press*

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — The farther Justin Rose drove from Augusta National only made him realize how close he came to winning the Masters.

Rose’s phone kept buzzing on the way to Hilton Head Island, one text after another, all of them with the same message that applauded his remarkable rally and offered commiseration and condolences for his runner-up finish to Rory McIlroy.

Rose started the final round seven shots out of the lead, too far back to think about winning. He made a 20-foot birdie putt on the 18th for a 66. He was in a sudden-death playoff. He lost on a great shot by McIlroy, who hit gap wedge to 3 feet for birdie.

It was a lot to process. “A lot of outpouring from people with a lot of positive comments coming at me, so trying to absorb that, trying to absorb the week,” Rose said Wednesday at the RBC Heritage. “But at the same time, looking at my phone and just wishing there was a different message there.”

This is a path he knows well. Rose had a two-shot lead with six holes to play in the 2017 Masters when Sergio Garcia — like McIlroy, a good friend — made a most improbable rally to force a playoff and beat Rose on the first extra hole.

Rose was classy in defeat that day in 2017. He lovingly patted Garcia’s cheek, they embraced, and then Rose tapped Garcia on

the heart. He knew what it meant for a talented Spaniard who had played 70 majors before winning.

Rose was equally gracious Sunday, telling McIlroy when it was over that he was happy to witness such a momentous occasion of the career Grand Slam.

It still hurts. Rose searched for the right words. He was proud of how he played to match the low score of the final round with a 66. In one of those must-make moments in a major, he poured in a birdie on the last hole. There was a lot that went right. But there was no green jacket.

“Just sort of ... don’t know what the right word is,” Rose said. “Tormented, probably, by the thought of what might have been.”

Rose joined Ben Hogan as the only player to lose a playoff twice at the Masters, and it might have stung worse for him because both his losses were in sudden-death. He now has had at least a share of the lead after 12 rounds at the Masters, fourth on the list behind Jack Nicklaus (19), Arnold Palmer (18) and Gary Player (12), who have combined to win 13 green jackets.

Rose has 23 wins worldwide, including a major at the U.S. Open and an Olympic gold in Rio. He also has the distinction of congratulating a Masters champion on the 18th green three times in the last 10 years — Jordan Spieth in 2015, Garcia and McIlroy.

The last time Rose lost the Masters in a playoff, he said it lingered for about a month. Sure, he made a few bogeys he’d like to have back

from the final round Sunday. That’s true for anyone at any golf tournament. There’s still the sting of seeing someone else win.

Rose would rather look back to what followed after that 2017 loss. He went on to win three more times that year, including his second World Golf Championships title. He won the FedEx Cup the following year and rose to No. 1 in the world for the first time.

“If I look back to my best golf, 2017 August through to the end of ‘18 is probably the most consistently good golf that I’ve ever played,” Rose said.

Rose, who turned pro as a teenager in 1998, will be 45 at the end of July.

“But I don’t see any reason why that can’t be the same this time around,” he said. “I’m working well. I’m working hard. I’m feeling good about my game. I’ve been saying all year that my game is good. I’ve just got to make sure that I’m playing consistently well enough to give myself those opportunities, because majors come around ... only four times a year.”

What keeps him going at this stage?

It’s moments like Sunday, being in the thick of it, delivering clutch moments. There was the birdie putt on the 18th at Augusta. There was that 8-foot putt on the 18th hole at the Ryder Cup in 2023 that earned a key halve. There was that walk up the 18th at Royal Troon last summer with thousands on their feet showing appreciation.

“I’m close to kind of some seriously good stuff,” Rose said.





SETH WENIG/AP

New York Yankees outfielder Jasson Domínguez makes a leaping catch during the fourth inning against the Kansas City Royals on Monday in New York. The 22-year-old rookie, who struggled when he was moved from center to left field, has shown much improvement.

# Domínguez flashing some defense

Yankees rookie shows improvement playing left field and is also delivering at the plate

By RONALD BLUM  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The Martian is tracking down fly balls on Mother Earth.

Maligned for dubious defense when the New York Yankees first moved him to left field last year, Jasson Domínguez made their best catch of the early season when he robbed Salvador Perez of an extra-base hit in Monday night’s 4-1 win over the Kansas City Royals.

Domínguez’s leaping, backhand grab at the warning track of Perez’s 106.4 mph, 347-foot drive had a 60% catch probability, according to MLB Statcast. That was the lowest of any Yankees catch this season.

“Got a good jump on it, the speed, the action of the ball,” Domínguez said. “At that point, you don’t even know how tough. You just come get it.”

The 22-year-old rookie added a running catch to the glove side on the warning track of Jonathan India’s 102.9 mph shot in the sixth.

“Those are two really good ones. What I like is the ease in the routes and the ease that he’s getting to those balls,” Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. “I feel like that’s where he’s really — even since the start of the season, I feel like he’s grown and just the right footwork, the right move to the ball, and that’s when you’re going to start to see his range with his speed show up.”

Domínguez followed up his strong game in the field with a big night at the plate Tuesday, going 3-for-3 with a three-run double in the sixth inning that turned a one-run deficit into a 4-2 victory over Kansas City.

“He never seems panicked or rushed and

that’s one of the things you always like about him,” Boone said. “You know the situation is not too big for him.”

Nicknamed “El Marciano” as a teenager in the Dominican Republic for his out-of-this-world talent, Domínguez signed with the Yankees as a 16-year-old in 2019 for a \$5.1 million bonus.

A center fielder as he moved through the minors, he made an instant impact at the plate two years ago. But following his shift to left, Domínguez’s defensive struggles made highlight shows in 2024 and ’25.

“He talks about winning a Gold Glove,” said Luis Rojas, the Yankees third base and outfield coach. “I think he has the tools to do it and we just got to keep working.”

The switch-hitting Domínguez was promoted to the Yankees on Sept. 1, 2023, and became the fifth-youngest player to homer in his first plate appearance, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. He had four homers and seven RBIs in his first eight games, then tore a ligament in his right elbow and had Tommy John surgery that Sept. 20.

He returned to the minors last May 14, but was sidelined between June 15 and July 26 by an oblique strain and was limited to two homers and four RBIs in 18 late-season games with New York. He made 13 appearances in left and four in center, and struggled to a minus-3 Outs Above Average, according to Statcast.

Domínguez reported early to spring training and worked on defense at the Yankees minor league complex with minor league outfield and infield coordinator Dan Fiorito and minor

league infield and outfield coordinator Ryan Hunt.

“He really wants it,” teammate Anthony Volpe said. “He wants to be the best.”

Domínguez was criticized by Yankees fans, though, when he lost Colt Keith’s fly ball in the sun on Feb. 23 against Detroit, then let Andy Ibáñez’s shot one inning later drop for an RBI double. A ball hit by Philadelphia’s Edmundo Sosa fell for an RBI double on Feb. 27.

Adjusting to left was a slow process. Boone said Domínguez would be fine with time as he learned to judge balls.

“Left field is nothing like center field. Center field you get less action,” Rojas said. “The sound. The exit velo(city), those things, the more accurate he’s going to be with his reads and the routes and the angles that he needs to take to the ball according to a kind of action the ball is going to have off the bat.”

Jazz Chisholm Jr. understood what Domínguez was going through. An All-Star second baseman in 2022, Chisholm was moved to center field by Miami in 2023. He was traded last summer to the Yankees, who shifted him to third and back to second this spring training.

“You hear a crack of the bat and you might think it’s 110 miles per hour and it’s 86 miles per hour,” he said. “It’s making that adjustment with your eyes and always being ready out there. I would say that, and first step.”

Domínguez is hitting .275 with one homer and eight RBIs. Boone has removed him for a defensive replacement or pinch hitter in six of 13 left-field starts.

Domínguez’s Outs Above Average has improved to 0 this season and Monday’s game boosted his defense from the 18th to 36th percentile. He’s confident he will get better.

“I had a tough moment at first,” Domínguez said, “but I knew with the reps it would be good.”

## Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	11	7	.611	—
Toronto	11	8	.579	½
Boston	10	10	.500	2
Tampa Bay	8	10	.444	3
Baltimore	7	10	.412	3½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	10	8	.556	—
Cleveland	9	8	.529	½
Kansas City	8	11	.421	2½
Minnesota	7	12	.368	3½
Chicago	4	13	.235	5½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	11	7	.611	—
Los Angeles	9	8	.529	1½
Seattle	9	9	.500	2
Athletics	8	10	.444	3
Houston	8	10	.444	3
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	11	7	.611	—
Philadelphia	10	8	.556	1
Miami	8	9	.471	2½
Washington	7	11	.389	4
Atlanta	5	13	.278	6
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	12	9	.571	—
Milwaukee	10	9	.526	1
Cincinnati	9	9	.500	1½
St. Louis	9	9	.500	1½
Pittsburgh	7	12	.368	4
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Diego	15	4	.789	—
San Francisco	13	5	.722	1½
Los Angeles	14	6	.700	1½
Arizona	11	7	.611	3½
Colorado	3	15	.167	11½
Wednesday's games				
Milwaukee 5, Detroit 1				
St. Louis 4, Houston 1				
Toronto 3, Atlanta 1				
Minnesota 4, N.Y. Mets 3, 10 innings				
Baltimore 9, Cleveland 1				
Boston 1, Tampa Bay 0				
N.Y. Yankees 4, Kansas City 3				
Seattle 5, Cincinnati 3				
Athletics 3, Chicago White Sox 1				
Texas 3, L.A. Angels 1				
San Diego 4, Chicago Cubs 2				
Pittsburgh 6, Washington 1				
Arizona 6, Miami 2				
San Francisco 11, Philadelphia 4				
L.A. Dodgers 8, Colorado 7				
Thursday's games				
Seattle at Cincinnati				
Athletics at Chicago White Sox				
Cleveland at Baltimore				
Kansas City at Detroit				
N.Y. Yankees at Tampa Bay				
L.A. Angels at Texas				
Arizona at Miami				
Washington at Pittsburgh				
San Francisco at Philadelphia				
St. Louis at N.Y. Mets				
Friday's games				
Cleveland (Ortiz 1-2) at Pittsburgh (Mlodzinski 1-2)				
Kansas City (Ragans 1-0) at Detroit (Jobe 1-0)				
Cincinnati (Abbott 1-0) at Baltimore (TBD)				
N.Y. Yankees (Rodón 1-3) at Tampa Bay (Rasmussen 1-0)				
Seattle (Woo 2-0) at Toronto (Francis 1-2)				
Chicago White Sox (Pérez 1-0) at Boston (TBD)				
Minnesota (Paddock 0-2) at Atlanta (Elder 0-1)				
L.A. Dodgers (Yamamoto 2-1) at Texas (deGrom 0-0)				
Athletics (Ginn 1-0) at Milwaukee (Peralta 1-1)				
San Diego (Hart 2-0) at Houston (Gusto 1-1)				
San Francisco (Webb 2-0) at L.A. Angels (Anderson 1-0)				
Arizona (Burnes 0-1) at Chicago Cubs (Rea 0-0)				
Miami (Alcantara 2-0) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 1-1)				
St. Louis (Mikolas 0-2) at N.Y. Mets (Peterson 1-1)				
Washington (Gore 1-2) at Colorado (Dolanter 1-1)				
Saturday's games				
Kansas City at Detroit				
Seattle at Toronto				
Cincinnati at Baltimore				
Cleveland at Pittsburgh				
L.A. Dodgers at Texas				
Chicago White Sox at Boston				
N.Y. Yankees at Tampa Bay				
Athletics at Milwaukee				
San Diego at Houston				
Minnesota at Atlanta				
San Francisco at L.A. Angels				
Miami at Philadelphia				
Arizona at Chicago Cubs				
Washington at Colorado				
St. Louis at N.Y. Mets				



NFL DRAFT



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP  
Travis Hunter takes part in passing drills during Colorado's pro day on April 4. Hunter wants to continue to play both ways in the NFL.

Giants open to Hunter playing both WR, CB if they draft him at No. 3

Associated Press

The New York Giants are open to allowing Colorado standout Travis Hunter to play on both sides of the ball if they wind up using the third overall pick in next week's NFL draft on the cornerback and wide receiver.

Giants general manager Joe Schoen said during the team's pre-draft news conference Wednesday that it "would not be afraid to play him on both sides of the ball." Hunter has made it clear he intends to play both offense and defense in the NFL, telling CBS Sports recently that his response to any team trying to limit him would be "never playing football again."

Hunter not only won the Heisman Trophy, the most prestigious award in college football, he also took home the Bednarik Award as college football's top defensive player and was selected as The Associated Press player of the year. He caught 96 passes for 1,258 yards and 15 touchdowns while also making 35 tackles, breaking up 11 passes and picking off four.

That has some NFL scouts rating him as both the best wide receiver and best cornerback available in this year's draft.

Still, playing both ways in college is much different than the NFL, where Schoen said the mental demands could be more taxing on Hunter as the physical toll in playing the majority of the snaps that take place during a game.

"Offense is very hard to learn and then the defense on a weekly

basis — it's not college anymore where, 'Hey, these are our basic plays, this is our basic defense and we're going to go play cover-3h against Kansas, we're going to play cover-3 against Nebraska," Schoen said. "There's a lot more week-to-week matchup type-stuff that our coaches are doing."

"So, just how much can you handle mentally where you can go out there and execute and they can trust you to do your job?"

Hunter insisted in a recent interview with The AP that he was capable of handling the load.

"I wouldn't doubt the kid. He's that type of athlete," Schoen said.

"He's had that type of production, the number of snaps he plays in a game, doesn't sit down, goes over, gets a drink of water and gets back out on the field."

The Giants aren't necessarily where Hunter will land, either.

They have temporarily solidified their quarterback room with Russell Wilson, Jameis Winston and Tommy DeVito on the roster, but they could be interested in a long-term solution such as Hunter's teammate, Shedeur Sanders. They also could go after the top edge rusher, Abdul Carter of Penn State, who many consider the best player in the entire draft.

"We feel like we're in a pretty good spot. There's still some work to do, some loose ends we're going to tie up," Schoen said. "We will still do Zooms with prospects. We're not there yet. But we're close. I feel pretty good about where we are."

"I wouldn't doubt the kid. He's that type of athlete."

Joe Schon  
Giants GM

Teams no longer shy away from older draft prospects

By ROB MAADDI  
Associated Press

Bo Nix has turned 25. Michael Penix Jr. will get there in May.

Both quarterbacks were first-round picks last year. They were among 56 players age 24 or older drafted in 2024.

That was up from 54 in 2023, 44 in 2022, 16 in 2021 and 19 in 2020.

There have been more older prospects drafted recently because the COVID-19 pandemic gave players an option to stay in school an extra year. That window is ending, but the transfer portal and NIL deals might continue to keep players in school longer.

Teams used to shy away from older prospects. Scouts and general managers once considered the age of 24 a red flag in some cases.

But the success of guys like Nix and Jayden Daniels, who turned 24 during an outstanding rookie season, shows that experience can help players make an immediate impact in the pros.

"I came from BYU, where kids go on missions for a couple years, and so people go: 'Well, they're too old,'" Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "Well, then they come in and they do a pretty good job. So, and really, if you start taking averages of careers, career length, there's maybe a cutoff somewhere, but the careers aren't very long as it is. But we do look at (age), though."

A majority of the older players taken last year were Day 3 picks, an indication that teams are more likely to overlook age later in the draft.

"It's just unique to where we're at right now in kind of the football world," Raiders general manager

John Spytek said. "You got guys with sixth and seventh years really, and so you've got to talk about a value of are we going to have a problem with the 25- or 26-year-old? Some people have more problems with that. I'm just looking for good football players, and I'm trying to impress that upon our scouts, too."

"You go into these schools like Georgia and Michigan, Ohio State, and they've got a list of 30 guys that can potentially come out. ... I mean it used to just be like here's these 10 juniors, maybe half of them come out. Now it's like, you got a fourth-year, fifth-year senior, and he might take another year. So it adds a lot more names to it and uncertainty and a lot more work that has to get done in a finite amount of time. And that's why the scouts' jobs are so critical to go through all that in an efficient way and present the players the right way."

This season there are 46 players 23 or older who are draft eligible, including 17 who are 24 or older.

Louisville quarterback Tyler Shough, who turns 26 in September, was the oldest player at the combine. He spent seven years at three colleges, including Oregon, where he backed up Justin Herbert in 2019, and Texas Tech.

Tennessee wide receiver Bru McCoy, San Jose State wideout Nick Nash and Arkansas receiver Andrew Armstrong were among the 24-year-olds at the combine.

Teams that stick to the old philosophy of avoiding older players limit their talent pool.

"I think sometimes you have to ask yourself, are you trying to get

this guy for 12 years? If you're looking for that, it's a small percentage," 49ers general manager John Lynch said. "Or are you looking for one contract and then hopefully more? It's an interesting topic. It's one we constantly discuss. There are pluses and minuses to both sides."

College experience is most valuable for quarterbacks. Nix and Daniels proved it last year when they led their teams to the playoffs. Meanwhile, Anthony Richardson threw just 393 passes in college before the Colts drafted him No. 4 overall in 2023. He has struggled to adjust at the NFL.

The oldest player ever selected in the draft was quarterback Chris Weinke. He was 28 years and 264 days old when the Panthers selected him in the fourth round of the 2000 draft. Weinke started just 20 games in the NFL, going 2-18.

Quarterback Brandon Weeden was the oldest player ever drafted in the first round. He was 28 years and 195 days old when the Browns chose him 22nd overall in 2012. Neither Wenke nor Weeden had much NFL success.

Depending on the position of a player and the round, age can be a determining factor when a team is choosing between two guys.

"When two players are level, even, same grade, you start weighing what they have," Chargers general manager Joe Hortiz said about age. "OK, he's a three-year starter and he's a four-year starter. Great leader, team captain, those little things give them a bump. It's not intentional but you talk through it and it shakes out that way."



GEORGE WALKER IV/AP

Louisville quarterback Tyler Shough runs a drill at the scouting combine on March 1. Shough, who turns 26 in September, was the oldest player at the combine. He spent seven years at three colleges.



NHL

# East features Ovechkin’s 2nd Cup chase, battles for Florida, Ontario

BY JOHN WAWROW  
*Associated Press*

Alex Ovechkin has a new chase to focus on, trading his pursuit of Wayne Gretzky’s NHL goals record for a second Stanley Cup title as he and the Eastern Conference’s top-seeded Washington Capitals prepare to open the playoffs against Montreal.

The defending champion Panthers and Tampa Bay Lightning are set for their latest all-Florida faceoff. Toronto and Ottawa are rekindling their provincial playoff rivalry. And then there’s the matter of the Carolina Hurricanes seeking to overcome their string of playoff shortfalls, with the New Jersey Devils first up.

All that was missing in the East — aside from a New York team for just the second time since the league’s expansion era began in 1967 — was the Capitals’ opponent, with the Canadiens out-racing Columbus to clinch their spot as the eighth seed on Wednesday.

Of more concern in Washington, perhaps, is the Caps regaining their groove after limping down the stretch with a string of losses.

“We obviously can score goals but we need to be sharper in our D-zone,” defenseman Martin Fehervary said of Washington, which is 4-6-1 in its past 11, including a 7-0 loss to the Blue Jackets. “Those details are really important and need to be sharper.”

## Teams to beat

No matter who they faced, the Capitals are favored following their sixth season with 50 or more wins while no longer having to deal with the hype involving Ovechkin.

“Him getting the goals record is incredible to say the least,” goalie Charlie Lindgren said. “What we do in the playoffs is what matters. That’s the most important thing.”

Auston Matthews and the Maple Leafs are surging into the post-season, appearing ready and eager to put behind their decadelong past of early playoff exits. Toronto won eight of nine and outscored its opponents by a combined 28-12 in clinching its first Atlantic Division title.

“Obviously, we can’t change what’s happened in the past. I think you wear that,” Matthews said of a team that’s advanced beyond the first round just once in its past nine playoff appearances.

“I feel really confident in this group,” he added. “Earning our division here is a big step for us. But we just want to push forward.”

Bolstering the Leafs’ confidence is adopting a more respon-



Washington’s Dylan Strome, right, and Alex Ovechkin celebrate with teammates after Strome scored Tuesday against the New York Islanders. Even during their late slide, the Capitals have scored plenty of goals.

sible defensive style under first-year coach Craig Berube, who led St. Louis to the Cup in 2019. There’s also the emergence of journeyman goalie Anthony Stolarz, who is 12-3-1, including eight wins in a row with three shutouts, since missing a 24-game stretch with a knee injury.

In avoiding the division’s usually tough 2-3 matchup, Toronto will rekindle its Battle of Ontario playoff rivalry with the Senators.

In Carolina, the Hurricanes have the talent but not the consis-

tent playoff results. Qualifying for the postseason in each of coach Rob Brind’Amour’s seven years, Carolina has lost the East finals twice and been bounced in the second round three times, including last year.

“We always have confidence — it’s been a tough couple of bounces the last few years,” forward Seth Jarvis said. “Especially in the playoffs when it gets tighter, you can’t be giving other teams a lot of chances and it’s tough to score, so I think that bodes well for us.”



Florida Panthers center Nico Sturm, back, and Tampa Bay Lightning center Zemgus Girgensons fight Tuesday. The teams are meeting in the playoffs for the fourth time in five years.

## Even up

Not much separates the Lightning and Panthers, who have combined to win three of the past five Cups. The teams are meeting in the playoffs for the fourth time in five years, with Tampa Bay winning the first two and Florida last year.

“Certainly the eyes in Florida and the fans in both cities will be wired into it, so it’s great for hockey,” Panthers coach Paul Maurice said.

The good news in Florida is the possibility of Matthew Tkachuk’s return after being sidelined by a lower-body injury during 4 Nations Face-Off in February. Defenseman Aaron Ekblad is due to return in Game 3 after serving a 20-game suspension for violating the league’s performance-enhancing drugs policy.

The Lightning are making their 11th playoff appearance in 12 years under coach Jon Cooper but first over that span without captain Steven Stamkos, following his departure in free agency last year.

“For sure he’s missed and never forgotten,” Cooper said of Stamkos. “But he’s not with us now, so we’ve found a way to move on without him. But there was definitely some growing pains.”

## Underdogs

Ottawa qualified for the playoffs for the first time since 2017 under first-year coach Travis Green, who is very familiar with the Battle of Ontario history. He played for the Maple Leafs in 2001-02, when Toronto rallied to

## Scoreboard

Eastern Conference									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
z-Washington	81	51	21	9	111	286	227		
y-Toronto	81	51	26	4	106	264	228		
x-Tampa Bay	81	47	26	8	102	294	215		
x-Carolina	81	47	29	5	99	261	226		
x-Florida	82	47	31	4	98	252	223		
x-Ottawa	81	44	30	7	95	236	229		
x-New Jersey	82	42	33	7	91	242	222		
x-Montreal	82	40	31	11	91	245	265		
Columbus	81	39	33	9	87	267	267		
Detroit	81	39	35	7	85	235	255		
N.Y. Rangers	81	38	36	7	83	252	255		
N.Y. Islanders	81	35	34	12	82	223	254		
Pittsburgh	81	33	36	12	78	238	291		
Buffalo	81	35	39	7	77	264	285		
Philadelphia	81	33	38	10	76	234	281		
Boston	82	33	39	10	76	222	272		

Western Conference									
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
z-Winnipeg	82	56	22	4	116	277	191		
y-Vegas	82	50	22	10	110	275	219		
x-Dallas	82	50	26	6	106	277	224		
x-Los Angeles	81	48	24	9	105	249	201		
x-Colorado	82	49	29	4	102	277	234		
x-Edmonton	82	48	29	5	101	259	236		
x-Minnesota	82	45	30	7	97	228	239		
x-St. Louis	82	44	30	8	96	254	233		
Calgary	81	40	27	14	94	220	237		
Vancouver	82	38	30	14	90	236	253		
Utah	82	38	31	13	89	241	251		
Anaheim	82	35	37	10	80	221	263		
Seattle	82	35	41	6	76	247	265		
Nashville	82	30	44	8	68	214	274		
Chicago	82	25	46	11	61	226	296		
San Jose	82	20	50	12	52	210	315		

x-clinched playoff spot  
y-clinched division  
z-clinched conference

**Note:** Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

### Wednesday’s games

Winnipeg 2, Anaheim 1, OT  
Montreal 4, Carolina 2  
Detroit 5, New Jersey 2  
Nashville 5, Dallas 1  
Vegas 4, Vancouver 1  
Edmonton 3, San Jose 0

### Thursday’s games

Carolina at Ottawa  
Detroit at Toronto  
N.Y. Islanders at Columbus  
Philadelphia at Buffalo  
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Rangers  
Washington at Pittsburgh  
Calgary at Los Angeles

### Friday’s games

No games scheduled

### Playoffs

#### Saturday’s games

St. Louis at Winnipeg, **AFN-Sports2, 12 a.m. Sunday CET, 8 a.m. Sunday JKT**  
Colorado at Dallas, **AFN-Sports2, 2:30 a.m. Sunday CET, 10:30 a.m. Sunday JKT**

eliminate the Senators in a seven-game second-round series.

“Exciting is downplaying it a little bit,” Green said. “Really everything you want in a playoffs series, and players are going to love it. Fans are going to love it.”

The Devils also feature a new coach in Sheldon Keefe, making just their third playoff appearance since losing the Stanley Cup Final to the Kings in 2012. New Jersey will be without star center Jack Hughes (shoulder surgery) but welcomed back defenseman Dougie Hamilton, who returned Wednesday after getting knocked out of the lineup by a lower-body injury in early March.

Montreal, meantime, is ahead of GM Kent Hughes’ rebuilding timetable and features a young but relatively untested playoff core from the team that lost to Tampa Bay in the 2021 Stanley Cup Final.



NHL PLAYOFFS



JEFFREY T. BARNES/AP

In his first season as head coach, Toronto's Craig Berube led the Maple Leafs to their first Atlantic Division title in franchise history and first division title overall in a full season since 1999-2000.

Leafs seek better luck after first Atlantic Division title

By JOHN WAWROW  
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — For everything he's done since his celebrated arrival in 2016, Auston Matthews can't change the Toronto Maple Leafs' history of early round playoff collapses. Perhaps a better future lies directly ahead for a team playing a more responsible defensive style under new coach Craig Berube, and after Toronto secured several individual and franchise achievements in clinching its first Atlantic Division title with a 4-0 win at Buffalo on Tuesday night. "I think we're prepared," Matthews said after scoring his 400th career goal. "Obviously, we can't change what's happened in the past. I think you wear that," the No. 1 pick in the 2016 NHL draft added. "So I feel really confident in this group. I think we put in a lot of work over the season. Obviously, earning the division here is a big step for us. But we just want to continue to push forward." With the victory, the Maple Leafs (51-26-4) won their team-record 25th road game and were set to finish with their second-most wins and third-most points. In the meantime, Mitch Marner set a career-high with his 100th point, while goalie Anthony Stolarz stopped 35 shots to extend his career-best winning streak to eight. In securing the Eastern Conference's second seed, Toronto will face provincial rival Ottawa in the

first round and rekindle the so-called "Battle of Ontario." The Maple Leafs have won all four playoff series meetings against the Senators, the most recent a seven-game first-round win in 2004. Toronto, however, is also carrying the weight of its more recent playoff history. The team has advanced past the first round just once — a 4-2 series win over Tampa Bay in 2023 — in its past nine postseason appearances. What's different is how the Maple Leafs are playing in riding a 12-2-1 run, including a nine-game stretch in which they've won eight times while outscoring opponents by a combined margin of 28-12. "The whole season's a learning curve, especially with a new coach coming in, new systems. It's different from the style of play that this team's played with in previous seasons," said forward Steven Lorentz, who signed with Toronto after winning a Stanley Cup with Florida last year. "It might not be as exciting when you win the game 2-1 rather than 7-6," Lorentz added. "But you know, that's championship hockey and that's what it takes if you want to play into June." The Maple Leafs certainly haven't lost their offensive touch. With 263 goals, Toronto is closing in on finishing its ninth straight season ranked among the NHL's top 10. What's changed is the team's goals-against numbers. The Ma-

ple Leafs entered their final game ranked 10th in the NHL in allowing 226 goals. Only twice over the past nine seasons have they finished with a better ranking. The players credit their goal-tending tandem that includes Joseph Woll, and with Stolarz picking up his fourth shutout of the season, third in four starts and 12th of his career. "He was lights out last year," Lorentz said of Stolarz, who also spent last season with the Panthers. "He just brings it. He's a gamer. He doesn't take anything super seriously. And I think that's what makes him so good." Stolarz placed the emphasis on how the team's playing soundly in front of him. "I feel good, but I think at the end of the day, the guys are really committing to a complete two-way game up and down the ice," the 31-year-old said. "It's what it's gonna take to go far in the playoffs. I just think that we have to continue this trend." Berube, who won a Cup coaching the St. Louis Blues in 2019, said the key to this season has been the buy-in from players. "You're always trying to work on your identity. And that hasn't stopped throughout the season," he said. "I think our guys have done a good job of it," Berube added. "So yeah, I think we're in a good spot, but we've got to keep making sure we're pounding away at it and keep working on it and be ready to go."

War: Kings look for revenge after 3 straight exits vs. Oilers

FROM PAGE 48

This was always the punishment for whoever didn't win the Central, and Winnipeg gets to start against wild-card St. Louis instead. Avalanche-Stars is another animal. "We played them last year in the second round, so back at it again this year," Dallas general manager Jim Nill said. "Our attitude is if you're going to win it, you've got to beat all the good teams, so it doesn't matter. They're a good team, and it's going to be a battle." The Golden Knights have been through the gauntlet and come out the other side, winning the Cup in 2023. The guy who was their playoff MVP then has since left for Nashville, but still thinks Vegas can make a long run. "I don't see anyone stopping them until the top four," Jonathan Marchessault said. "I think they're going to get out of their division. It's going to be a pretty good battle against the Central Division. I think there are three really good teams. I follow them and am going to cheer for them, for sure."

Underdogs

The Kings have gotten knocked out by the Oilers each of the past three years. They have home-ice advantage this time against Connor McDavid, Leon Draisaitl and Edmonton, which will be missing top defenseman Mattias Ekholm for at least the first round because of injury. The West wild cards came down to the tail end of the regular season to determine, with Minnesota coming back in its final game to clinch the first spot and a matchup against the Knights. The Blues got in as the eighth seed and face the Jets in the first round. "I'm excited for guys to experience it that haven't experienced it before," St. Louis captain Brayden Schenn said. "This locker room, some young guys have been champing at the bit to get that feel-

ing. And it's important. That's how you build a winning culture. That's how you build a winning mindset." Storylines to watch The Avs-Stars series is even more tantalizing after Colorado traded longtime star winger Mikko Rantanen to Carolina in late January only to see him boomerang back to the Central when the Hurricanes sent him to Dallas at the trade deadline. "To see him and play him in the first round? That's probably not what the Avalanche were thinking when they tried to send him out East," said retired player Anson Carter, now a TNT analyst. "That series is going to be crazy." Colorado's Logan O'Connor, who won it all alongside Rantanen in 2022, called it a "no-friends-on-the-ice type thing." "We obviously all respect him as a player, a great friend to a lot of us," O'Connor said. "Tons of good things to say about him, but I think the second that puck drops, it sort of goes out the window for the time being. We all have got a job to do in here, and he's in the way of that." There's also McDavid and Draisaitl's collective pursuit of their first championship after losing to Florida in Game 7 last year after erasing a 3-0 series deficit. The Oilers and Jets have the chance to end Canada's Cup drought that dates to 1993. Predictions First round: Colorado beats Dallas in seven games; Winnipeg beats St. Louis in six; Vegas sweeps Minnesota in four; Los Angeles beats Edmonton in six. Second round: Colorado beats Winnipeg in six; Vegas beats Los Angeles in five. Conference final: Colorado beats Vegas in seven. "The West is stacked," Avalanche winger Miles Wood said. "But we're a stacked team, as well."



DARRYL DYCK, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

The Vegas Golden Knights have put themselves in position to get back to the Stanley Cup Finals after winning the title two years ago.



NBA PLAYOFFS

# Giannis grateful to be healthy this time

**By STEVE MEGARGEE**  
*Associated Press*

MILWAUKEE — As he discusses his excitement about finally being healthy for the start of a postseason run, Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo compares himself to a certain action movie star.

“I love playing in, how can I say, pressure, stressful situations,” Antetokounmpo said this week as the Bucks prepare to open the playoffs Saturday at Indiana. “I’m like Tom Cruise. Have you ever seen the movies, the Tom Cruise movies that he does all the stunts? I think he gets an adrenaline rush. I love being there again.”

After missing all of Milwaukee’s postseason run last year and part of it the year before — with his absence leading to consecutive first-round exits — Antetokounmpo is back to lead the Bucks as he pursues his second career title.

If it’s not quite a mission impossible, it certainly seems improbable.

Milwaukee is expected to open the playoffs without seven-time all-NBA guard Damian Lillard, who has been out for the last month with deep vein thrombosis in his right calf. The Bucks are seeded fifth in the Eastern Conference, their lowest playoff position since 2018. BetMGM Sportsbook gives Milwaukee only a 37% chance of even getting past their first-round series with the fourth-seeded Pacers.

Yet the Bucks believe they can compete with anyone as long as Antetokounmpo is available. They remember how much the two-



AARON GASH/AP

**Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo, right, will look to stay healthy in the playoffs this year. He missed the postseason last year and got hurt in the first round two years ago, with the Bucks exiting early both times.**

time MVP’s absence was felt last year in their 4-2 series loss to Indiana.

“Let’s be honest,” Milwaukee coach Doc Rivers said. “Take the best player off of every team and it hurts them. Take one of the best players of our generation off your team, it’s going to crush you. It’s just nice having him on the floor.”

Antetokounmpo, 30, missed last year’s Pacers series after straining his left calf in the 79th game of the regular season. A year earlier, he bruised his lower back in the first quarter of the Bucks’ opening playoff game against Miami and didn’t return to action until Game

4 of a series top-seeded Milwaukee eventually lost 4-1.

At the end of last season, Antetokounmpo said he’d have to ponder changing his offseason program or make other adaptations to assure he’d stay healthy for the playoffs. He now enters the playoffs in peak form after leading the Bucks to an eight-game winning streak to close the regular season.

“I made a lot of adjustments — that I’ll keep private — but luck definitely plays a role, too,” Antetokounmpo said. “You can be unlucky. Going down three games, or six games, I don’t even remember, before the playoffs last year,

that’s being unlucky. But yeah, I think we made a lot of adjustments, me and my team, and I’m here today, so I’m happy.”

The last time Antetokounmpo played in an entire playoff series, he averaged 33.9 points, 14.7 rebounds and 7.1 assists in Milwaukee’s 4-3 Eastern Conference semifinal loss to Boston in 2022. He became the first player in NBA history to collect 200 points, 100 rebounds and 50 assists in a single playoff series.

A year before that, Antetokounmpo missed the final two games of the Eastern Conference finals with a hyperextended left

knee but came back to earn NBA Finals MVP honors and score 50 points in a title-clinching Game 6 victory over the Phoenix Suns.

Now he’s back and leading a new-look Bucks roster.

Antetokounmpo, Brook Lopez, Bobby Portis and Pat Connaughton are the only players remaining from Milwaukee’s 2021 championship team. Kyle Kuzma, acquired at the trade deadline, was on the Los Angeles Lakers’ 2020 championship team but last made the playoffs in 2021. Kevin Porter Jr. and Ryan Rollins, whose roles expanded due to Lillard’s health issues, have never played in a postseason game.

Lillard’s absence has resulted in more ball-handling responsibilities for Antetokounmpo, who has been playing particularly well even by his lofty standards.

The 6-11 forward ended the regular season second in scoring (30.4), sixth in rebounding (11.9) and 13th in assists (6.5). He is the only player ever to average 30 points while shooting at least 60% from the floor, and he’s done that each of the last two seasons.

Now he gets a chance to try carrying that over to the postseason, a stage he missed dearly last year.

“Watching the game on the bench is not fun,” Antetokounmpo said. “It’s not fun. Maybe in 20 years, I can put on a polo or a suit — I don’t know what the coaches wear — and watch it from the bench. But now I’m just happy that I’m out there and I’m in the heat of the battle and I’m able to get my hands dirty and help my team win.”

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NBA



NAM Y. HUH/AP

Miami Heat guard Tyler Herro drives to the basket against Bulls forward Matas Buzelis, left, guard Kevin Huerter and center Nikola Vucevic during the first half of a play-in game in Chicago on Wednesday night.

# Herro scores 38 as Heat dominate Bulls to advance

**BY ANDREW SELIGMAN**  
*Associated Press*

CHICAGO — Tyler Herro and the Heat had it going right from the start. Another performance like that could catapult Miami into the playoffs.

Herro scored 38 points as the Heat dominated the Chicago Bulls 109-90 on Wednesday night to advance in the Play-In Tournament.

Herro scored 23 points as Miami grabbed a 71-47 halftime lead, and the Heat knocked the Bulls out of the play-in for the third year in a row. They play at Atlanta on Friday for a chance to meet top-seeded Cleveland in the first round of the Eastern Conference playoffs. The Hawks lost to Orlando on Tuesday.

“We’re only halfway there,” Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. “We didn’t have the luxury of having the one game and then you’re automatically in. Guys feel great about this win and really put a lot into this. This is not something that could just happen overnight. I feel like there’s been some good things happening the last several weeks.”

Getting to this point hasn’t been easy for the Heat. There was the standoff with Jimmy Butler that ended with a trade-deadline deal

to Golden State in February, and a 10-game losing streak in March. Miami then won eight of 12 to close the regular season and finish 10th in the East at 37-45.

Andrew Wiggins had 20 points and nine rebounds. Bam Adebayo added 15 points and 12 rebounds, and Davion Mitchell chipped in with 15 points and nine assists. The Heat had 10 steals and seven blocks, and it added up to payback for a three-game sweep in the regular season.

Josh Giddey had 25 points and 10 rebounds for the Bulls. Coby White scored 17, though he shot 5 of 20.

“We didn’t really have game-plan discipline,” White said. “We beat them in the regular season. We thought if we just do what we normally do, then we’ll be good. But obviously, they’ve got guys that have been to the finals. They’ve got guys that know what it takes. They got a head coach who’s one of the best head coaches in the league. They came in and they were the better team tonight.”

Chicago got within 13 early in the fourth quarter, only to get shut down the rest of the way.

“A lot of us made big-time buckets at the right time,” Adebayo said.

## Scoreboard

Play-In Tournament	
Seven vs. Eight seed Tuesday, April 15	
Orlando 120, Atlanta 95	
Golden State 121, Memphis 116	
Nine vs. 10 seed Wednesday, April 16	
Miami 109, Chicago 90	
Dallas 120, Sacramento 106	
Friday, April 18	
Miami at Atlanta, <b>AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Saturday CET, 9 a.m. Saturday JKT</b>	
Dallas at Memphis, <b>AFN-Sports, 3:30 a.m. Saturday CET, 11:30 Saturday JKT</b>	
Playoffs	
First round Saturday, April 19	
Eastern Conference	
No. 6 Detroit at No. 3 New York, <b>AFN-Sports, 12 a.m. Sunday CET, 8 a.m. Sunday JKT</b>	
No. 5 Milwaukee at No. 4 Indiana, <b>AFN-Sports, 7 p.m. Saturday CET, 3 a.m. Sunday JKT</b>	
Western Conference	
No. 5 Minnesota at No. 3 L.A. Lakers, <b>AFN-Sports, 2:30 a.m. Sunday CET, 10:30 a.m. Sunday JKT</b>	
No. 5 L.A. Clippers at No. 4 Denver, <b>AFN-Sports, 9:30 p.m. Saturday CET, 5:30 a.m. Sunday JKT</b>	
Sunday, April 20	
Eastern Conference	
No. 8 Atlanta/Miami at No. 1 Cleveland, <b>AFN-Sports, 1 a.m. Monday CET, 9 a.m. Monday JKT</b>	
No. 7 Orlando at No. 2 Boston, <b>AFN-Sports, 9:30 p.m. Sunday CET, 5:30 a.m. Monday JKT</b>	
Western Conference	
No. 8 Memphis/Dallas at No. 1 Oklahoma City, <b>AFN-Sports, 7 p.m. Sunday CET, 3 a.m. Monday JKT</b>	
No. 7 Golden State at No. 2 Houston, <b>AFN-Sports, 3:30 a.m. Monday CET, 11:30 a.m. Monday JKT</b>	

# Thompson fuels surge as Mavericks top Kings

**By JOSH DUBOW**  
*Associated Press*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Klay Thompson scored 16 of his 23 points in Dallas’ dominant second quarter to get redemption for his dud in Sacramento a year ago, helping the Mavericks beat the Kings 120-106 on Wednesday night to advance in the Play-In Tournament.

One year to the day when Thompson missed all 10 of his shots in his final game for the Golden State Warriors during their play-in loss in Sacramento, Thompson fueled the victory with four 3-pointers in Dallas’ 44-point second quarter. That turned the game into a laugh and kept the Mavs’ chaotic season alive for at least one more game.

“Human nature, when you end a season on a sour note like that you want to come out and prove people wrong,” Thompson said. “But I thought I did a good job to start the game of trying to dish, rebound, play defense. The shots came to me after that.”

Dallas advanced to play at Memphis on Friday night for the chance to get into the playoffs as the eighth seed in the West. The winner of that game will open the playoffs on Sunday at top-seeded Oklahoma City.

As for the Kings, soon after the game, the team and general manager Monte McNair agreed to part ways. A person familiar with the decision said the sides mutually agreed on the breakup. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team hadn’t announced the move.

The Mavericks have undergone a rough season after trading young superstar Luka Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers on Feb. 2 in a seismic deal that brought An-

thony Davis to Dallas and vitriol from the fan base to the organization.

Star point guard Kyrie Irving went down with a season-ending knee injury shortly after that trade, seemingly ending any realistic hopes of another deep playoff run after making it to the NBA Finals last season.

“We’ve had a tumultuous season to say the least,” Thompson said.

“The injury bug has struck us like I’ve never seen before. But we’re still here playing postseason basketball. We can really give the city of Dallas some hope, especially if we go to Memphis and repeat this type of performance.”

The Mavs opened the second quarter with a 20-6 run fueled by back-to-back 3s from Thompson. He hit two more 3s later in the quarter as Dallas built the lead to 23 points at the half, removing any drama.

“We shot it very well, get stops on defense and were able to run,” said Davis, who led the Mavericks with 27 points. “Offense was clicking. We had what, 44 in the quarter? We played with a lot of pace and opened up the game.”

DeMar DeRozan scored 33 points for Sacramento, and Zach LaVine added 20.

It was a disappointing ending to an underwhelming season for the Kings, who fired coach Mike Brown in December and traded star point guard De’Aaron Fox to San Antonio in February. It all led to Sacramento missing the playoffs for the 18th time in 19 seasons, raising questions about the team’s future.

“This is where I want to be,” interim coach Doug Christie said. “You guys know that. I need to finish what I started.”



GODOFREDO A. VASQUEZ/AP

Dallas Mavericks guard Klay Thompson celebrates after making a 3-point basket against the Kings during the second half of a play-in game Wednesday in Sacramento, Calif. The Mavericks won 120-106.



# SPORTS



**Rolling along**  
Heat, Mavs get closer to playoffs  
with play-in victories » **NBA, Page 47**



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Colorado and Dallas finished with two of the top point totals in the NHL this season, but their opening matchup ensures only one of them will make it past the first round of the playoffs.

## War of attrition

Road through Western Conference features matchups of league's most fearsome teams

**BY STEPHEN WHYNO**  
*Associated Press*  
**F**ive of the top eight teams in the NHL this season play in the Western Conference. Two of them have to face off in a first-round showdown between Dallas and Colorado.

Presidents' Trophy-winning Winnipeg has its own demons to slay, from elite goaltender Connor Hellebuyck on out, to get over the playoff hump that has been a recent roadblock. Defending West champion Edmonton is banged up

going into a fourth consecutive opening series against Los Angeles. And don't forget about Vegas, just two years removed from winning the Stanley Cup and looking as imposing as ever.

The path through the West is a brutal one, though the tests along the way could be fit for a champion.

"It's a war of attrition," said six-time Cup champion and Hall of Famer Mark Messier, now an ESPN analyst. "For any team that's going to come through the West this year, they're going to

have to be a big, strong team that can withstand that kind of not only physical stress but the emotional stress because we know the games are going to be close."

### Teams to beat

The Jets had the best regular season, but the Stars are 3-1 favorites to come out of the West, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. Next up are the Avalanche — likely getting Gabriel Landeskog back for the first time since he captained them to the Cup three years ago — even though the Central Di-



JOHN WOODS, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

**No. 1 seed Winnipeg captured the Presidents' Trophy with 116 points and hope to ride that success to the Jets' first Stanley Cup title.**

vision rivals ranked fourth and eighth in the league are locked in to playing each other because of the playoff format.

"It certainly makes it difficult, but that's the road that we have," Colorado coach Jared Bednar

said. "We finished where we finished, they finished where they are, playing a really good team, one of the top teams in the league right away."

**SEE WAR ON PAGE 45**

**Older prospects draw more consideration** » **NFL Draft, Page 43**

