

**GAMES:** Console-worthy titles coming to iPhone 12 **Page 18**

**MUSIC:** Robin Thicke sees the light **Page 28**

**MLB:** New year, but same COVID-19 protocols **Page 48**

EUROPE  
& PACIFIC

WEEKEND

EDITION

**MOVIES**

House-less woman finds a home on the road in 'Nomadland'

**Page 15**

# STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 79 Edition 218 ©SS 2021

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)  
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥100

\$1.00

## NATO allies to expand Iraq mission

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — NATO allies agreed Thursday to significantly expand their training mission in Iraq, a move that will bolster the alliance's position in the Middle East and potentially ease demands on U.S. forces in the country.

The non-U.S. NATO mission will grow from its current 500 service members to about 4,000, and its efforts will extend to regions beyond the greater Baghdad area, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said at the end of a two-day meeting of alliance defense ministers.

The U.S., which began drawing down its forces last year, has about 2,500 troops in Iraq in a separate mission.

Stoltenberg said the expansion would start in the coming months.

"Increases in troop numbers will be incremental," he said.

NATO has been in Iraq since 2004, when it deployed a small number of advisers who worked with Iraqi security forces both in

SEE NATO ON PAGE 3



TRAVIS MUELLER / U.S. Army

Spanish troops salute during a transfer of authority ceremony in Iraq in December. NATO's expansion of its training mission in Iraq could ease some of the demands on American forces in the country.

## CORONAVIRUS



ANTHONY NELSON, U.S. AIR FORCE/AP

An American service member receives a COVID-19 vaccination at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, on Feb. 9. Thousands of U.S. troops are refusing or putting off the vaccine as frustrated commanders look for ways to convince them to take the shot.

# One-third of troops offered vaccine refused, DOD official tells Congress

Pentagon wants more service members to accept shots, which are voluntary

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — About one-third of U.S. troops offered the coronavirus vaccine as of Wednesday have refused the inoculation, top Defense Department officials told House lawmakers.

The Defense Department has fully vaccinated about 147,000 of its troops across the force, including active-duty, National Guard and re-

■ In largest drop since WWII, US life expectancy shortened by a full year **Page 7**

serves, Robert Salesses, the Pentagon's homeland defense chief, told the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday. Another

roughly 212,000 service members have received their first of two doses of the vaccine, he said.

Pentagon officials in recent weeks had declined to provide information about the number of troops vaccinated or an estimate of how many have declined the vaccination. Salesses provided the numbers at the request of Rep.

SEE THIRD ON PAGE 7

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## EUROPE GAS PRICES

Europe gas prices were not available before press time

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	\$2.579	..	\$3.219	\$2.959
Japan	..	\$3.209	..	\$2.939	Change in price	+4.0 cents	..	+4.0 cents	+8.0 cents
Change in price	..	+4.0 cents	..	+7.0 cents	Guam	\$2.579	\$2.969	\$3.219	..
Okinawa	\$2.569	..	..	\$2.939	Change in price	+4.0 cents	+5.0 cents	+4.0 cents	..
Change in price	+4.0 cents	..	..	+7.0 cents					

\*DieselEFD \*\*Midgrade  
For the week of Feb. 19-25

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		South Korea (Won)	1108.65
Euro costs (Feb. 19)	\$1.18	Switzerland (Franc)	.8971
Dollar buys (Feb. 19)	0.8068	Thailand (Baht)	30.01
British pound (Feb. 19)	\$1.36	Turkey (NewLira)	6.9732
Japanese yen (Feb. 19)	103.00		
South Korean won (Feb. 19)	1076.00		
Commercial rates		(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.)	
Bahrain(Dinar)	.3770		
Britain (Pound)	1.3955		
Canada (Dollar)	1.2701		
China(Yuan)	6.4782		
Denmark (Krone)	6.1598		
Egypt (Pound)	15.6599		
Euro	.8283		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7528		
Hungary (Forint)	297.62		
Israel (Shekel)	3.2664		
Japan (Yen)	105.91		
Kuwait(Dinar)	.3026		
Norway (Krone)	8.4833	Prime rate	3.25
Philippines (Peso)	48.56	Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Poland (Zloty)	3.72	Federal funds market rate	0.04
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7504	3-month bill	0.04
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3284	30-year bond	2.07

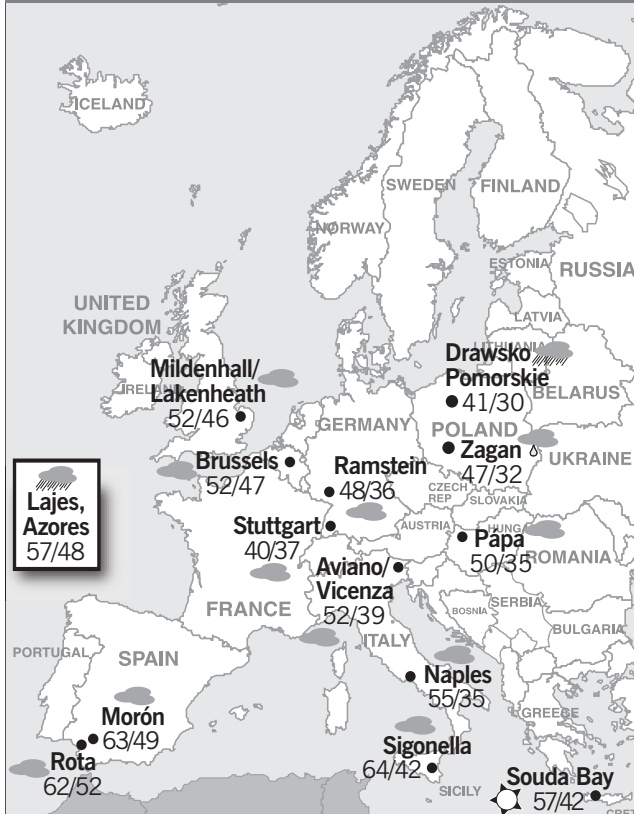
## INTEREST RATES

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

### FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



### FRIDAY IN EUROPE



### SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

## TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup ..... 36
- Classified ..... 37
- Comics ..... 38-39
- Crossword ..... 38-39
- Faces ..... 35
- Opinion ..... 40
- Sports ..... 41-48

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## MILITARY



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

**Air Force Master Sgt. Jim Burke, an airfield manager and jump master with the 435th Contingency Response Group at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, ensures Senior Airman Cody Paynter's parachute equipment is secure and ready to go before a rare jump Thursday.**

## Paratroopers jump at Ramstein despite lousy weather, pandemic

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

For the Air Force and Army paratroopers on the C-130J aircraft that took off from Ramstein on Thursday, the day was good enough for a jump — and that's all they needed.

German weather, coronavirus restrictions and maintenance issues had forced the Ramstein-based 435th Contingency Response Group to scratch several jumps, including one earlier this month at a field near the city of Worms.

They were “getting close to being non-current,” said Master Sgt. Jim Burke, a jumpmaster and airfield manager with the unit.

“That's not a good situation,” he said.

Paratroopers in the 435th have to acquire and maintain the skills needed to jump into an austere environment where there may be enemy activity, and then conduct airfield operations. They need to jump about every three months to stay current.

They knew it wouldn't be possible to get an off-base drop zone approved on short notice, Burke said. So with their critical skills needing a refresher, the group's jumpmaster team sought permission from Ramstein's 37th Airlift Squadron and 86th Operations Support Squadron to use the



**Tech. Sgt. Dwight Stalter folds his parachute after landing Thursday.**

base's busy airfield.

Working with the squadrons, and with some cooperation from the German weather, they made the jump happen. Airborne service members from other units in Germany were invited to participate, Burke said.

The C-130 took off from Ramstein early Thursday, made a loop to the west and then headed back to base, making three low passes over the grassy drop zone where 30 paratroopers jumped out, 10 at a time.

It was Burke's 72nd jump and one of his last in the Air Force. The 44-year-old has been para-

chuting from planes since 2012 and is retiring this summer.

For Senior Airman Cody Paynter, 25, it would be the first time he'd deploy his parachute since graduating from jump school last fall.

He nailed the jump. Everyone else landed safely, too, although one person sprained an ankle after landing on concrete.

“It feels good, yeah,” Paynter said after he'd landed. “Once they open up those doors, that's when the blood starts flowing.”

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# Marines resume Arctic exercises in frigid Norway

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

About 1,000 U.S. Marines left in limbo in Norway after Arctic drills were canceled because of coronavirus concerns will now be staying on until spring, the Corps said Thursday.

“The Marines will carry out their field training in accordance with Norwegian and U.S. COVID safety protocols,” Maj. Adrian J.T. Rankine-Galloway, Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa spokesman, said in a statement.

The Marines had traveled to Norway last month for the long-planned Joint Viking and Reindeer I exercises, only to see them canceled soon after arrival when case levels spiked in the country.

The number of new daily cases throughout the country dropped from highs of about 900 per day in early January to about 250 per day as of mid-February, Norway's public health agency reported Thursday.

The Marines say they will now press ahead with their Arctic mission.

“Norway offers challenging, rugged terrain that hones our cold-weather and mountain warfare skills with top specialists in fighting and winning in arctic conditions — the Norwegian military,” Rankine-Galloway said.

The pandemic has complicated military training efforts in Europe for nearly a year. Numerous exercises have been canceled or curtailed, including the Marine-led Cold Response exercise in Norway last year.

The Camp Lejeune, N.C.-based Marines are part of a rotational force that trains with the Norwegian military and other NATO allies.

The Marines have been a regular presence in Norway since the Cold War and continue to keep large stockpiles of weapons in Norwegian caves.

The mission expanded three years ago when the Corps launched six-month rotations that kept Marines in Norway all year, with back-to-back rotations.

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## NATO: Iraq's government wants additional trainers

FROM PAGE 1

the country and in neighboring nations.

In 2018, the alliance began its current training mission aimed at helping Iraqi forces prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State, which a few years earlier controlled large swathes of the country.

NATO got involved in Iraq at the urging of the Trump administration, which had pressured the alliance to share more of the security burden.

The U.S. strike that killed Iran's Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in January 2020 prompted allies to suspend the training mission, which consisted of about 500 troops.

But NATO now appears poised to do more by vastly expanding the initial effort. The request for additional trainers came from the Iraqi government, Stoltenberg said.

The two days of high-level talks

that concluded Thursday were the first attended by U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in his new role.

Allies also discussed the way forward in Afghanistan, but no decision was announced on whether the U.S. and other allied forces intend to meet a May 1 deadline for exiting the country, in connection with a peace deal with the Taliban.

Increased violence in the country and the prospect of a spring Taliban offensive have raised concerns that the deal could be derailed.

“The talks are fragile and progress is slow,” Stoltenberg said. “We are faced with many dilemmas.”

The Biden administration also is in the midst of a review of U.S. force levels and the role of its troops in Afghanistan.

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## WAR/MILITARY

# 30 Taliban die in bombmaking accident

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — About 30 Taliban militants were killed when they detonated a bomb they were learning how to assemble, the Afghan Defense Ministry said.

The blast occurred last week at a bombmaking course in Afghanistan's northern Balkh province, the statement said.

Six foreign fighters were among the militants who died in

the incident, the Afghan military said. While the foreigners were not identified, militants from abroad — some affiliated with al-Qaida — have trained Taliban fighters to make bombs during the last two decades of war in Afghanistan.

The Taliban are supposed to prevent Afghanistan from being a base for terrorist groups such as al-Qaida, under the terms of a deal signed last year that would

lead to a U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

But the Taliban leadership continues to maintain ties with al-Qaida, with members of the terrorist organization integrated into Taliban forces and command structures, a new report said Thursday.

Last year, the guerrillas launched repeated attacks against Afghan forces as U.S. troops started to withdraw, in order to gain

leverage in negotiations with the Kabul government, the report to Congress by the Lead Inspector General for Operation Freedom's Sentinel said.

The Biden administration is weighing whether the Taliban are meeting their commitments as it decides whether to withdraw all troops from the country by May 1.

Gen. Scott Miller, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, told Reuters this week that Taliban vi-

olence is too high and could hinder peace negotiations if not curbed.

"Taliban violence is much higher than historical norms ... it just doesn't create the conditions to move forward in what is hopefully a historic turning point for Afghanistan," Miller said.

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## PETA pushes Pentagon to end the drinking of cobra blood

By ERICA EARL  
*Stars and Stripes*

An animal rights group has petitioned the Pentagon to end the practice of Marines and soldiers decapitating snakes and consuming their blood during survival training at the annual Cobra Gold exercise in Thailand.

U.S. service members gathering for a taste of cobra blood is "ritualistic rather than instructive" and may be a health risk, according to the plea Wednesday from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

"Cobra Gold is not a practical sustenance procurement training exercise but rather a cruel method of attempting to build camaraderie among troops," said the petition signed by PETA vice president Shalin Gala.

A Pentagon spokesman reached Wednesday said the department would not be able to respond until the following day.

This is PETA's second attempt to shut down that aspect of survival training. Last March, the or-

ganization wrote Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger asking him to end the practice of killing cobras and other animals during Cobra Gold. The Marines did not respond at the time.

Cobra Gold is a multinational exercise co-hosted by the United States and Thailand. It is the largest joint military exercise in Southeast Asia and includes training in disaster response and cyber-threat response and humanitarian assistance.

Part of its jungle survival training involves Thai military instructors preparing native insects and snakes for consumption. U.S. military photographers typically record the vivid scenes.

"Despite the extreme cruelty inflicted during Cobra Gold, the photographs and videos document a complete indifference to the suffering of the animals," the PETA petition said. "Instead, participants revel in the torture and deaths, in what can only be described as a party-like atmosphere."

The exercise is usually staged

in the spring, but with the coronavirus pandemic, Cobra Gold is postponed until fall, Indo-Pacific Command spokesman Army Maj. Randy Ready said Wednesday. The command is still planning the exercise and figuring out what it will look like, he said.

PETA also called attention to the potential health risk of drinking cobra blood, saying it "poses a zoonotic disease threat akin to the COVID-19 pandemic currently wreaking havoc across the world."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Feb. 10 that while the coronavirus originated in an animal, likely a bat, no current findings suggest that animals perpetuate the virus' spread.

"At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, to people," the CDC website says. "The first reported infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person to



MICAH ANTHONY/U.S. Marine Corps

**A Marine drinks cobra blood during Cobra Gold jungle survival training in Sattahip, Chonburi province, Thailand, in February 2018.**

person."

In 2011, the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in California curtailed its use of live animals in survival training after discussions with PETA, the petition states.

And prior to that, the U.S. Army Dugway Proving Ground in Utah did the same after PETA ap-

pealed to then-Secretary of Defense Les Aspin.

As an alternative, PETA in its petition proposed virtual training or using plant-based foods in the survival food procurement portion of the exercise.

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## Okinawa governor calls for reduction of US military footprint

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
AND HANA KUSUMOTO  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki is urging Tokyo and Washington to slash the U.S. military footprint on the island where some 30,000 U.S. troops are stationed.

Okinawa accounts for 70.3% of the total area in Japan occupied by U.S. bases, Tamaki told the prefectural assembly Tuesday in Naha, according to a copy of his remarks. He wants that number reduced to less than 50%, he told the assembly.

Tamaki for the first time set a target for an acceptable U.S. military footprint, an Okinawa prefectural spokesman for base af-

fairs told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

"Noise and environment issues and U.S. military-related incidents and accidents continue to occur because 70.3% of U.S. military facilities and areas continue to be concentrated on Okinawa, which is 0.6% of Japan's land area," the governor told the assembly.

Tamaki said he understands the necessity of the U.S.-Japan security alliance, but Okinawa shoulders an inordinate share of that burden.



Tamaki

"It is absolutely unacceptable," he said.

Tamaki does not plan to target specific installations on the island for closure and has no timeline to make the reduction, his spokesman told Stars and Stripes. It's customary in Japan for some government officials to speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

At a news conference Wednesday in Tokyo, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato declined to comment on Tamaki's statement. However, Kato said he takes Okinawa's burden "seriously."

"The Japanese government will make its best efforts to ease the burden," he said.

Tamaki is up for reelection in

2022.

Next year, the prefecture will mark the 50th anniversary of its reversion to Japan from U.S. administration. The U.S. and Japanese governments have quietly been consolidating, closing and returning military land for years.

In 2016, the U.S. handed back nearly 10,000 acres of Okinawa's Northern Training Area to the prefecture, an area twice the size of Kadena Air Base. That transfer reduced the American footprint on the island by 20%, U.S. officials said at the time.

That handover and a number of base closures were agreed upon during U.S.-Japan negotiations in 1996, among them Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

The Marines plan to relocate the airfield from densely populated Ginowan city farther north to Camp Schwab along the coast of Oura Bay where a runway is under construction.

Tamaki said the moves, including the Futenma relocation, are "far from appropriate" and returning all bases south of Kadena would only reduce the occupancy rate to 69%. MCAS Futenma should be closed immediately and Marine air operations moved outside the prefecture, he told the assembly, a position he's long held.

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MILITARY

# Army War College leader faces sexual assault inquiry

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The commandant of the Army War College was suspended last week over allegations of sexual assault, Pentagon officials said Thursday.

The Army's Criminal Investigation Command is investigating an allegation of "inappropriate touching" by Maj. Gen. Stephen Maranian, who was suspended Feb. 9 from his duties as War College commandant, said Cynthia Smith, an Army spokeswoman.

The Army announced last week that Maranian had been suspended pending an investigation but declined at that time to disclose the allegations against

him or what entity was investigating them.

Smith and a CID spokesman declined Thursday to provide further information about the allegations, including when or where they might have occurred. Smith said they were unrelated to Maranian's duties as War College commandant, a job he started in July.

"No further information will be released at this time to protect the integrity of the investigative process," Smith said in a statement issued Thursday. "These are allegations at this time and Maranian is presumed innocent until and if proven otherwise."

Maranian was temporarily re-

placed as the school's commandant by Army Maj. Gen. David C. Hill, who had been serving as the deputy commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The sexual assault allegations were first reported Thursday by Task & Purpose, which reported a protective order was issued Feb. 9 against Maranian citing the CID investigation of an "abusive sexual contact."

A defense official confirmed Thursday that the misconduct allegations against Maranian were "sexual in nature." The official was not authorized to discuss the investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The military has pledged to

stamp out its decades-old problem with sexual misconduct within its ranks.

An outside investigation of problems at Fort Hood, Texas, launched after the April 2020 on-post killing of Spc. Vanessa Guillen found a command climate and culture that was permissive of sexual assault and harassment as a result of poor leadership.

Since the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee released its findings in November, Army officials have said they believed such problems existed across many of its installations and have vowed to do all they can to improve.

Maranian became the War Col-

lege's 52nd commandant in July, after leaving Fort Leavenworth, Kan., where he had served as the Army Combined Arms Center's deputy commanding general for education.

He commissioned into the Army in 1988 as a field artillery officer and had served in Iraq and Afghanistan, according to his official biography.

The War College in Carlisle, Pa., trains lieutenant colonels and colonels to lead at the military's highest levels, granting graduates master's degrees in strategic studies.

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# Bombing attached to car kills 2 Kabul University lecturers

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — An explosion in the Afghan capital on Thursday killed two lecturers at the Kabul University, after a bomb attached to the car they were traveling in went off, a police spokesman said.

The attack took place around noon near the university, said Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz.

No group immediately claimed respon-

sibility for the bombing.

The two lecturers, Mubasher Muslimyar and Marouf Rasikh, taught at the university's Islamic studies faculty, according to an Afghan official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Two years ago, Muslimyar had been briefly arrested by the Afghan intelligence agency over allegations of promoting mili-

tant propaganda by the Islamic State group among university students. No charges were raised and he was later released.

Kabul police said an investigation team had arrived at the scene of the explosion.

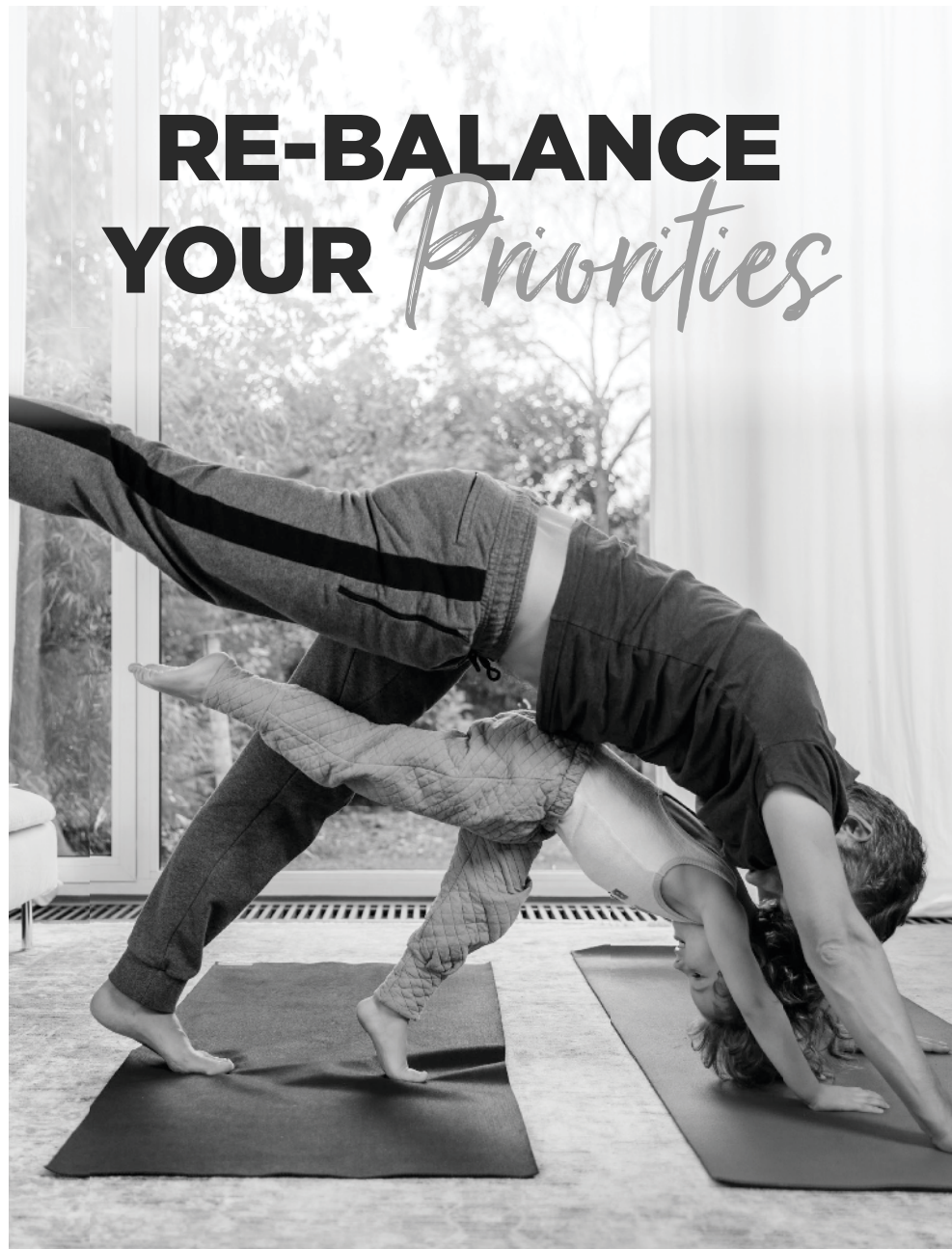
This was the second explosion on Thursday in Kabul. An earlier one had targeted police in the District 10 area of Kabul but caused no casualties.

Afghanistan has seen a nationwide spike

in bombings, targeted killings, and violence on the battlefield as peace negotiations in Qatar between the Taliban and the Afghan government have stalled.

The Islamic State's local affiliate has claimed responsibility for some of the attacks, but many go unclaimed, with the government putting the blame on the Taliban.

The insurgents have denied responsibility for most of the attacks.



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## VIRUS OUTBREAK

# Most Germany DODEA schools set to reopen

*Stars and Stripes*

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Most schools on U.S. bases in Germany will reopen for in-person classes beginning Monday, the Department of Defense Education Activity said in a statement.

U.S. Army Garrison Baumholder schools are the only exception, the statement said Thursday. Baumholder schools will continue exclusively with online classes through at least Feb. 26 because of a recent increase in coronavirus cases in the area, the statement said.

Students enrolled in DODEA's virtual school aren't impacted by the change, school officials said.

The openings coincide with falling coronavirus case rates across most of Germany, where DODEA's 34 schools have been closed for in-class learning since mid-December.

Many German classrooms are also slated to reopen Monday after closing in accordance with the country's strict lockdown measures.

Masks will be required while in school, while riding buses and at school drop-off locations, DODEA said.

Unlike off-base locations, where German authorities require surgical masks at places such as grocery stores, cloth coverings are still acceptable at base schools, DODEA said.

"We also ask that you remind your students of the importance of



BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

**A student walks to class in August on the first day of school at Vogelweh Elementary School, Germany.**

wearing face coverings, maintaining social distancing and following the instructions of school leadership," DODEA said in a message to parents.

In Rheinland-Pfalz and Baden-Wuerttemberg, two states with many U.S. base schools, the seven-day coronavirus average incidence rates per 100,000 people on

Thursday stood at 45 and 44, respectively.

Rates in Bavaria and Hesse were both at 55 per 100,000 people, according to the Robert Koch Institute, Germany's national health agency.

Rates above 50 per 100,000 people are considered to be in the country's "red" high-risk category.

Health officials have emphasized that infection rates can change quickly.

In the city and district of Kaiserslautern, home to tens of thousands of Americans, the incidence rates were 15 and 21.7 cases per 100,000 people as of Thursday, respectively. The same rates were between 100 and 200 cases per

100,000 people for much of January.

The Birkenfeld district rate, which includes Baumholder, remained just over a weekly average 100 cases per 100,000 people as of Thursday, according to state data.

news@stripes.com

## USFK reports 14 new cases; none for military in Japan

By JOSEPH DITZLER

*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — The U.S. military command in South Korea on Thursday reported that 14 people have tested positive for the coronavirus since Jan. 19, all of them new arrivals to the peninsula.

South Korea reported 621 new infections Wednesday, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency. Seoul accounted for 179 and Gyeonggi province, home of the country's largest U.S. base, Camp Humphreys, had 237.

New infections in the country

have nearly doubled since 326 were reported Sunday, according to the World Health Organization. Its one-day peak so far occurred on Dec. 25 at 1,235 new cases.

According to U.S. Forces Korea, 11 of its new patients tested positive upon arrival and before going into mandatory quarantine; the remaining three turned up positive on the test required before exiting quarantine.

Of the 14, six service members arrived at Osan Air Base on the Patriot Express, the government-chartered air passenger service, on Feb. 8, Saturday, Sunday, Tues-

day and Wednesday, a USFK news release said. Another seven service members and one Defense Department civilian employee arrived on commercial flights at Incheon International Airport on Jan. 19, Feb. 3, 6, 8, 12, Sunday and Monday.

All are in quarantine at either Osan or Humphreys, according to USFK.

Meanwhile, U.S. commands in Japan reported no new cases Thursday.

Tokyo announced that 445 people tested positive for the coronavirus, breaking a six-day run of

daily reports below 400, according to public broadcaster NHK and Tokyo metro government data.

The city has reported 108,782 infections during the pandemic and more than 1,180 deaths due to complications from COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease.

On the vaccine front, the Defense Department has so far shipped more than 200,000 doses overseas and over 800,000 doses inside the United States, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said at a press briefing in Washington on Wednesday.

DOD expects to vaccinate nearly all its service members, civilian employees and other beneficiaries by late July or early August, Robert G. Salesses, interim assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and global security, told the House Armed Services Committee earlier in the day.

Anyone in the U.S. military may decline the vaccine because the Food and Drug Administration has only approved it for emergency use.

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## More than 10,000 Veterans Affairs patients have died from COVID-19

By NIKKI WENTLING

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The coronavirus has killed 10,000 Department of Veterans Affairs patients — a grim milestone just 11 months after the first veteran's death was reported.

A 70-year-old man at the VA hospital in Portland, Ore., was the

first VA patient and the first person in Oregon to die of the virus, on March 14. As of Wednesday — 340 days later — 10,059 VA patients and 128 employees have died, about 30 deaths per day.

Active cases of the virus were falling across the VA system after peaking last month in what experts called a "second wave" of in-

fections related to the holiday season. Death rates were also slowing. The department reached a high point in mid-January, with more than 1,100 VA patients dying during a two-week period. In contrast, about 650 patients died during the first two weeks of February.

The VA's data reflects global trends. The World Health Organi-

zation reported Tuesday that new coronavirus cases fell for the fifth consecutive week, and deaths fell 10% from last week. The ebb comes as countries continue their rollouts of coronavirus vaccines.

The VA has established 215 vaccination sites across the United States. As of Wednesday, the department had administered vac-

cines to more than 1.8 million people, 1 million of whom were veterans. The rest were VA employees or other federal workers. Of the 1.8 million people, 550,000 have received both doses, making them fully vaccinated.

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## VIRUS OUTBREAK

# US life expectancy drops by a year during pandemic

Associated Press

Life expectancy in the United States dropped a staggering one year during the first half of 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic caused its first wave of deaths, health officials are reporting.

Minorities suffered the biggest impact, with Black Americans losing nearly three years and Hispanics, nearly two years, according to preliminary estimates Thursday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"This is a huge decline," said Robert Anderson, who oversees the numbers for the CDC. "You have to go back to World War II, the 1940s, to find a decline like this."

Other health experts say it shows the profound impact of COVID-19, not just on deaths directly

due to infection but also from heart disease, cancer and other conditions.

"What is really quite striking in these numbers is that they only reflect the first half of the year ... I would expect that these numbers would only get worse," said Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, a health equity researcher and dean at the University of California, San Francisco.

This is the first time the CDC has reported on life expectancy from early, partial records; more death certificates from that period may yet come in. It's already known that 2020 was the deadliest year in U.S. history, with deaths topping 3 million for the first time.

Life expectancy is how long a baby born today can expect to live, on average. In the first half of last

year, that was 77.8 years for Americans overall, down one year from 78.8 in 2019. For males it was 75.1 years and for females, 80.5 years.

As a group, Hispanics in the U.S. have had the most longevity and still do. Black people now lag white people by six years in life expectancy, reversing a trend that had been bringing their numbers closer since 1993.

Between 2019 and the first half of 2020, life expectancy decreased 2.7 years for Black people, to 72. It dropped 1.9 years for Hispanics, to 79.9, and 0.8 years for white people, to 78. The preliminary report did not analyze trends for Asian or Native Americans.

"Black and Hispanic communities throughout the United States have borne the brunt of this pan-



DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

Gravedigger Thomas Cortez watches as a refrigerated trailer is delivered to keep pace with a surge of bodies arriving for burials, mostly those who died from coronavirus, in New York in April.

demic," Bibbins-Domingo said.

They're more likely to be in frontline, low-wage jobs and living in crowded environments where it's easier for the virus to spread, and "there are stark, pre-existing health disparities in other conditions" that raise their risk of dying of COVID-19, she said.

More needs to be done to distribute vaccines equitably, to im-

prove working conditions and better protect minorities from infection, and to include them in economic relief measures, she said.

Dr. Otis Brawley, a cancer specialist and public health professor at Johns Hopkins University, agreed.

"The focus really needs to be broad spread of getting every American adequate care," he said.

## US jobless claims jump to 861,000 as layoffs stay high

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans applying for unemployment aid rose last week to 861,000, evidence that layoffs remain painfully high despite a steady drop in the number of confirmed viral infections.

Applications from laid-off

workers rose 13,000 from the previous week, which was revised sharply higher, the Labor Department said Thursday. Before the virus erupted in the United States last March, weekly applications for unemployment benefits had never topped 700,000, even during the Great Recession of 2008-09.

The job market has stalled, with employers having added a mere 49,000 jobs in January after cutting workers in December. Nearly 10 million jobs remain lost to the pandemic. Though the unemployment rate fell last month from 6.7%, to 6.3%, it did so in part because some people stopped look-

ing for jobs. People who aren't actively seeking work aren't counted as unemployed.

Fraudulent claims may be pushing up the totals. Last week, Ohio reported a huge increase in applications, and said it had set aside about half the increase for additional review out of concern

over fraud.

Two federal unemployment aid programs — one that provides up to an extra 24 weeks of support and another that covers self-employed and gig workers — were extended until March 14 by a \$900 billion rescue package that was enacted late last year.

## Third: Defense Department ramps up support of civilian vaccinations

FROM PAGE 1

Mike Rogers of Alabama, the committee's top Republican.

Pentagon officials want to see more service members and other members of the Defense Department community accept the vaccinations, said Air Force Maj. Gen. Jeff Taliaferro, the Joint Chiefs of Staff vice operations director.

"We believe, of course, the vaccine is the right thing to do," Taliaferro said. "It's clearly safe for service members, and we need to continue to educate our force about its safety and ensure leadership is involved in the discussion

of the benefits of these vaccines."

However, the general said that because the vaccines manufactured by medical giants Pfizer and Moderna have only been authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on an emergency basis, the Pentagon cannot mandate its personnel accept the vaccine, as it does other inoculations.

"The services and combatant commands have worked hard to make sure we can operate in a [coronavirus] environment," Taliaferro said. "The addition of vaccines should make us more capable in that environment. But, we've already demonstrated over the last year we're fully capable of

operating in a [coronavirus] environment."

In all, the Pentagon has conducted 916,575 injections through Wednesday throughout its community, a number that includes service members, their family members, department civilians and contractors, Salesses said. It has focused primarily on inoculating front-line health care workers and so-called Tier 1 troops, focused on the nation's most strategically vital missions, he said.

All service members who want to be vaccinated should be able to get their shots by late July or August, Taliaferro said.

Meanwhile, the Defense De-

partment is ramping up its support to the broader effort to inoculate the U.S. civilian population. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has requested up to 10,000 troops to support up to 100 mass-vaccination sites that it plans to set up throughout the country. By next week, more than 700 active-duty troops will have deployed to support vaccine locations in California, Texas and New York. Salesses said the Defense Department would continue to provide additional troops, vowing it would "move further and faster to help end the [coronavirus] pandemic."

Another 28,430 National Guard

troops are now deployed in dozens of states to help with coronavirus operations, including providing inoculations, distributing vaccines and manning testing locations, said Air Force Maj. Gen. Steven Nordhaus, the National Guard Bureau's operations director.

Nordhaus expected those deployments to continue through at least the spring, he told House lawmakers.

"We'll continue to see states utilize guardsmen to get after these vaccination efforts," he said.

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## VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

# Calif. plan for aid would pay \$600 each to millions

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Millions of low-income Californians would receive \$600 checks under a \$9.6 billion coronavirus aid package announced by Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislative leaders.

The plan announced Wednesday would cut checks to about 5.7 million people who earn less than \$30,000 per year, as well as some immigrants living in the country illegally who were excluded from federal COVID-19 relief payments made during the Trump administration.

The plan also provides a new round of small business grants and more housing assistance for farmworkers infected by the virus.

The plan “will help those who are hurting most,” Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon said in a joint statement. “We are building an economic foundation for the recovery of jobs, small businesses and, indeed, our everyday lives.”

The Legislature plans to quickly take up the measure, with votes expected as early as Monday after budget committee hearings starting Thursday. Legislators are hoping that money for some of the largest segments of the plan can be distributed in April.

## New York

NEW YORK — A woman said she was fired from her server job at a New York City restaurant over not yet wanting to get the coronavirus vaccine, which the restaurant said was a requirement.

Bonnie Jacobson, 34, told The New York Times she was fired Monday from the Red Hook Tavern in Brooklyn, after she told management that she wanted to hold off because she and her husband are trying for a child and it's unclear if the vaccines could have any impact on that.

She said employees received an email from the restaurant that getting vaccinated was a requirement, and when she said she wanted to wait, she received an email saying, “At this time your employment will be terminated. We are sad to see you go. If you do change your mind, please do not hesitate to let us know.”

The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has said employers can require employees to get vaccinated.

In a statement, restaurant owner Billy Durney said, “Once New York state allowed restaurant workers to receive the COVID-19

vaccine, we thought this was the perfect opportunity to put a plan in place to keep our team and guests safe.”

## Arizona

PHOENIX — Arizona reported COVID-19 pandemic totals of over 800,000 confirmed cases and more than 15,000 deaths, passing the two grim milestones Wednesday after nearly 13 months since the coronavirus outbreak was first reported in the state.

The Department of Health Services on Wednesday reported 1,315 additional confirmed cases and 82 new deaths, increasing the state's pandemic totals to 801,055 cases and 15,063 deaths.

Arizona was a national hot spot in both last summer's surge and the larger one that began last fall, accelerated during the winter holidays and began declining in January.

The number of people occupying inpatient beds in Arizona peaked at 5,082 on Jan. 11 and dropped to 1,941 as of Tuesday. The summer surge's hospitalization peak was 3,517 on July 13.

The numbers of daily new cases and daily deaths also continued to drop, with decreases in seven-day rolling averages in the past two weeks, according to data from The COVID Tracking Project.

The rolling average of daily new cases dropped from 4,634.3 on Feb. 2 to 1,781.7 on Tuesday, and the rolling average of daily deaths dropped from 130.6 to 99.3 during the same period.

## Vermont

MONTPELIER — Vermont's congressional delegation says the New Jersey vendor picked for the latest round of a federal food distribution program in Vermont is failing to meet the needs of hungry residents amid the pandemic.

Democratic U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, U.S. Rep. Peter Welch and independent U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders sent a letter to U.S. Agriculture Secretary-designate Tom Vilsack on Friday saying that Global Trading Enterprises, LLC, which won the contract for the latest round of Farmers to Families Food Box Program, “submitted a bid that is seemingly too low for them to deliver food boxes to the areas promised under the contract.”

Global Trading Enterprises is only delivering food boxes to seven locations in just five of the state's 14 counties, the delegation



WOODY MARSHALL, (GREENSBORO, N.C.) NEWS & RECORD/AP

Janice Newsom makes a cross with ash on the forehead of her husband, David Newsom, in the lawn of the First Baptist Church in Greensboro, N.C., on Wednesday.

said.

“This will leave nearly 250 towns, and hundreds Vermont families, without the food assistance they were promised under this federal program,” they wrote in the letter.

## Missouri

O'FALLON — Rural Missouri counties are both the most and least successful at getting the COVID-19 vaccine into the arms of residents, according to data from the state's coronavirus dashboard on Wednesday.

Shelby County, with just 6,400 residents in a remote area of northeast Missouri, has provided at least one dose of the vaccine to 20.7% of residents. Atchison County, with just under 6,000 residents in Missouri's far northwestern corner, has vaccinated 20.2% of residents, followed by Worth County at 18.2%.

Among the top 15 counties for vaccinations, just one — Cape Girardeau County — has more than 50,000 residents. Cape Girardeau County is tied for fourth with Gasconade County, where 17% of residents have received a dose.

Pulaski County, which is home to Fort Leonard Wood and has 52,000 residents, has the lowest vaccination rate at just 4.2%, followed by other outstate counties — Newton at 4.4%, McDonald at 4.7%, Crawford at 5.2% and Pemiscot at 5.5%.

Overall, 10.6% of Missourians have received at least one dose, and data shows the two urban ar-

reas lag behind.

## Wyoming

CASPER — The Wyoming Department of Health has warned residents about phone scammers who are promising quicker access to a coronavirus vaccine in exchange for personal information.

The health department reiterated that all coronavirus vaccines are free and recipients will not be asked for their health insurance information or Social Security number over the phone, the Casper Star-Tribune reported Tuesday.

Insurance is not needed to receive a vaccine. The most county health departments may ask for a person's insurance or Medicare information.

The state is currently in Phase 1B of its vaccination tier system, which includes residents 65 and older, people with certain pre-existing conditions and some frontline workers.

## Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is facing a temporary shortage of booster shots of the Moderna vaccine because providers inadvertently used them as first doses, setting back the state's already stumbling vaccine rollout.

The error could mean more than 100,000 people will need appointments rescheduled, state health officials said Wednesday.

About 30,000 to 60,000 appointments for the COVID-19 booster shot will need to be pushed back by one or two weeks, said Alison

Beam, the state's acting health secretary. Delivery of another 30,000 to 55,000 initial doses of the Moderna vaccine will need to be delayed, as well, as officials scramble to get Pennsylvania back on track.

The second-dose shortage does not affect the Pfizer vaccine.

## Wisconsin

MADISON — More than 1 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine have been administered to more than 740,000 people in Wisconsin, the state Department of Health Services reported Wednesday.

Gov. Tony Evers praised the milestone, calling it “exciting news” while also urging people to remain vigilant.

To date, nearly 264,000 people have received both doses and 740,450 have gotten at least one, the state health department reported.

Wisconsin ranked seventh in the percentage of its population that has received at least one dose through Tuesday, according to the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. In Wisconsin, 12.7% of the population had gotten at least one dose, ahead of the national average of 12%.

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Wisconsin continues to decline, with the seven-day average as of Wednesday at 731. A month ago, the seven-day average was 2,129. The average is now at its lowest point since early September.



## NATION

# Texas outages drop but water crisis persists

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Power was restored to more Texans on Thursday, with fewer than a half-million homes remaining without electricity, and many still were without safe drinking water after winter storms wreaked havoc on the state's power grid and utilities this week.

Meanwhile, the Appalachians, northern Maryland and southern Pennsylvania braced for heavy snow and ice. Snow fell in Connecticut, New Jersey and New York, and the National Weather Service predicted up to 8 inches in the New York metropolitan area Thursday and Friday.

Little Rock, Ark., got 15 inches of snow in back-to-back storms, tying a record for snow depth set in 1918, the weather service said.

More than 320,000 homes and businesses were without power in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama as storms dumped as much as 4 inches of snow and ice across the region.

In Tennessee, 12 people were rescued from boats after a dock weighed down by snow and ice collapsed on the Cumberland River on Wednesday night, the Nashville Fire Department said.

The extreme weather has been blamed for the deaths of more than 30 people, some of whom perished while struggling to keep warm.

In the Houston area, one family succumbed to carbon monoxide from car exhaust in their garage. A woman and her three grandchildren died in a fire that authorities said might have been caused by a fireplace they were using.

In Texas, just under 500,000 homes and businesses remained without power, down from about 3 million on Wednesday. The state's grid manager, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, said the remaining outages are largely weather-related, rather than forced outages that were made early Monday to stabilize the power grid.

"We will keep working around the clock until every single customer has their power back on," said ERCOT Senior Director of System Operations Dan Woodfin.

Adding to the misery, the weather jeopardized the state's drinking water systems.

Texas officials ordered 7 million people — a quarter of the population of the nation's second-largest state — to boil tap water before drinking it, following days of record low temperatures that damaged infrastructure and froze pipes.

Some Austin hospitals faced a loss in water pressure and heat.

"Because this is a state-wide emergency situation that is also impacting other hospitals within



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

People wait in line to fill propane tanks Wednesday, in Houston.



BRONTE WITTPENN, AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN/AP

James Anyaegvu, who lived in the burned home, speaks with a fire fighters on East 12th Street in Austin on Wednesday. Around noon, Austin Fire Department and ATCEMS responded to a house fire that killed two people and left several with critical and minor injuries.

the Austin area, no one hospital currently has the capacity to accept transport of a large number of patients," said David Huffstutler, CEO of St. David's South Aus-

tin Medical Center.

Water pressure has fallen because lines have frozen, and many people left faucets dripping in hopes of preventing pipes from

icing over, said Toby Baker, executive director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Gov. Greg Abbott urged residents to shut off water to their homes, if possible, to prevent more busted pipes and preserve pressure in municipal systems.

Weather-related outages also struck Oregon, where some customers have been without power for almost a week.

A Portland supermarket threw its perishable food into dumpsters, leading to a clash between scavengers and police.

The damage to the power system was the worst in 40 years, said Maria Pope, CEO of Portland General Electric.

At the peak of the storm, more than 350,000 customers in the Portland area were in the dark. More than 100,000 customers remained without power Thursday in Oregon.

## 'Complete bungle': Texas' energy pride goes out with cold

By PAUL J. WEBER

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Anger over Texas' power grid failing in the face of a record winter freeze continued to mount Wednesday as millions of residents in the energy capital of the U.S. remained shivering with no assurances that their electricity and heat — out since Monday in many homes — would return soon or stay on once it finally does.

"I know people are angry and frustrated," Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said Tuesday. "So am I."

In all, nearly 1.9 million customers in Texas still had no power Wednesday after historic snowfall and single-digit temperatures created a surge in demand for electricity to warm up homes unaccustomed to such extreme lows, buckling the state's power grid and causing widespread blackouts. A large swath of Texas was under yet another winter storm warning Wednesday.

Making matters worse: Expectations that the outages would be a shared sacrifice by the state's 30 million residents quickly gave way to a cold reality, as pockets in some of America's largest cities, including San Antonio, Dallas and Austin, were left to shoulder the lasting brunt of a catastrophic power failure, and in sub-freezing conditions that Texas' grid operators had known was coming.

The breakdown sparked growing outrage and demands for answers over how Texas — whose Republican leaders as recently as last year taunted California over the Democratic-led state's rolling blackouts — failed such a massive test of a major point of state pride: energy independence. And it cut through politics, as fuming Texans took to social media to highlight how while their neighborhoods froze in the dark Monday night, downtown skylines glowed despite desperate calls to conserve energy.

"We are very angry. I was checking on my neighbor, she's angry, too," said Amber Nichols in north Austin. "We're all angry because there is no reason to leave entire neighborhoods freezing to death."

She crunched through ice wearing a parka and galoshes, while her neighbors dug out their driveways from 6 inches of snow to move their cars.

"This is a complete bungle," she said.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott called for an investigation Tuesday of the grid manager, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. His indignation struck a much different tone than just a day earlier when he told Texans that ERCOT was prioritizing residential customers and that power was getting restored to hundreds of thousands of homes.

But hours after those assurances, the number of outages in Texas only rose, at one point exceeding 4 million customers.

Ed Hirs, an energy fellow at the Univer-

sity of Houston, said the problem was a lack of weatherized power plants and a statewide energy market that doesn't incentivize companies to generate electricity when demand is low. In Texas, demand peaks in August, at the height of the state's sweltering summers.

He rejected that the storm went beyond what ERCOT could have anticipated.

"That's nonsense. It's not acceptable," Hirs said. "Every eight to 10 years we have really bad winters. This is not a surprise."

Joshua Rhodes, an energy researcher at the University of Texas in Austin, said the state's electric grid fell victim to a cold spell that was longer, deeper and more widespread than Texas had seen in decades.

Climate change should be factored in too, he said.

"We're going to have to plan for more of this kind of weather. People said this would never happen in Texas, and yet it has."

## NATION



SANDRA SEBASTIAN/AP

**Honduran migrant children raise white flags in front of a Honduran and an American flag, as they are blocked by Guatemalan soldiers and police from advancing toward the U.S.-Mexico border, on the highway in Vado Hondo, Guatemala, on Monday.**

## Dems' immigration bill has pathway, no new security

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden's administration is joining Democrats on Capitol Hill to unveil a major immigration overhaul that would offer an eight-year pathway to citizenship to the estimated 11 million people living in the U.S. without legal status.

The legislation, to be released in detail Thursday, will reflect the broad priorities for immigration reform that Biden laid out on his first day in office, including an increase in visas, funding to process asylum applications and new technology at the southern border.

But while the plan offers one of the fastest pathways to citizenship of any proposed measure in recent years, it does so without offering any enhanced border security, which past immigration negotiations have used as a way to win Republican votes. Without enhanced security, it faces tough odds in a closely divided Congress.

The bill would immediately provide green cards to farm workers, those with temporary protected status and young people who ar-

rived in the U.S. illegally as children. For others living in the U.S. as of Jan. 1, 2021, the plan establishes a five-year path to temporary legal status, if they pass background checks, pay taxes and fulfill other basic requirements. Then, after three years, they can pursue citizenship.

The plan would raise the current per-country caps for family and employment-based immigrant visas. It would eliminate the penalty barring those immigrants who live in the U.S. without authorization and who then leave the country from returning for three to 10 years. It also would provide resources for more judges, support staff and technology to address the backlog in processing asylum seekers.

The bill would expand transnational anti-drug task forces in Central America, enhance technology at the border, and set up refugee processing in Central America to try to prevent some of the caravans that have overwhelmed border security in recent years.

The plan includes \$4 billion

spread over four years to try to boost economic development and tackle corruption in Latin American countries, to try to address some of the root causes of migration to the U.S.

A dozen Democratic lawmakers, including lead sponsors California Rep. Linda Sanchez and New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez, were set to unveil the full text.

Comprehensive immigration reform has struggled to gain traction in Congress for decades. Menendez was part of the bipartisan Gang of Eight senators who negotiated a 2013 immigration reform bill that ultimately collapsed. Prior to that, a bill backed by President George W. Bush failed in Congress as well.

While Biden is pushing a comprehensive bill, during a town hall Tuesday he said that while a pathway to citizenship would be essential in any immigration bill, "there's things I would deal by itself." That could leave the door open to standalone bills focused on providing a pathway to citizenship for various populations.

## With bill on Hill, Biden OK with reparations study

BY KEVIN FREKING

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden's White House is giving its support to studying reparations for Black Americans, boosting Democratic lawmakers who are renewing efforts to create a commission on the issue amid the stark racial disparities highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A House panel heard testimony Wednesday on legislation that would create a commission to examine the history of slavery in the U.S. as well as the discriminatory government policies that affected former slaves and their descendants. The commission would recommend ways to educate the American public of its findings and suggest appropriate remedies, including financial payments from the government to compensate descendants of slaves for years of unpaid labor by their ancestors.

Biden backs the idea of studying the issue, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Wednesday, though she stopped short of saying he would sign the bill if it clears Congress.

"He certainly would support a study of reparations," Psaki said at the White House briefing. "He understands we don't need a study to take action right now on systemic racism, so he wants to take actions within his own government in the meantime."

Biden captured the Democratic presidential nomination and ultimately the White House with the strong support of Black voters. As he campaigned against the backdrop of the biggest reckoning on racism in a generation, Biden backed the idea of studying reparations for the descendants of slaves. But now, as he tries to win congressional support for other agenda items including a massive coronavirus relief package, he faces a choice of how aggressively

to push the idea.

Even with Democrats controlling both chambers of Congress and the White House, passing a reparations bill could prove difficult. The proposal has languished in Congress for more than three decades.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, said the descendants of slaves continue to suffer from the legacy of that brutal system and the enduring racial inequality it spawned, pointing to COVID-19 as an example. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that Black people are nearly three times as likely to be hospitalized because of COVID-19 as white people and nearly twice as likely to die from the illness.

"The government sanctioned slavery," Jackson Lee said. "And that is what we need, a reckoning, a healing reparative justice."

But polling has found longstanding resistance in the U.S. to reparations to descendants of slaves, divided along racial lines. Only 29% of Americans voiced support for paying cash reparations, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll taken in the fall of 2019. Most Black Americans favored reparations, 74%, compared with 15% of white Americans.

Rep. Burgess Owens, a first-term Republican from Utah, argued against a reparations commission. He noted that his great-great-grandfather arrived in America in the belly of a slave ship but went on to escape slavery through the Underground Railroad and become a successful entrepreneur. He criticized the "redistribution of wealth" as a failed government policy.

"Though it is impractical and a nonstarter for the United States government to pay reparations, it is also unfair and heartless to give Black Americans the hope that this is a reality," Owens said.

## US charges N. Korean computer programmers in global hacks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department has charged three North Korean computer programmers in a broad range of global hacks, including a destructive attack targeting an American movie studio, and in the attempted theft and extortion of more than \$1.3 billion from banks and companies, federal prosecutors said Wednesday.

The newly unsealed indictment builds off an earlier criminal case brought in 2018 and adds two additional North Korean defendants. Prosecutors identified all three as members of a North Korean military intelligence agency, accusing them of carrying out hacks at the behest of the government with a goal of using stolen funds for the benefit of the regime. Alarming to U.S. officials, the defendants

worked at times from locations in Russia and China.

Law enforcement officials say the prosecution highlights the profit-driven motive behind North Korea's criminal hacking, a contrast from other adversarial nations like Russia, China and Iran who are generally more interested in espionage, intellectual property theft or even disrupting democracy.

The indictment unsealed

Wednesday charges Jon Chang Hyok, Kim Il and Park Jin Hyok with crimes including conspiracy to commit wire and bank fraud. Park was previously charged in 2018 in a criminal complaint linking him to the hacking team responsible for the hack of Sony Pictures and the WannaCry global ransomware attack, among other acts. The indictment accuses the hackers of participating in a con-

spiracy that attempted to steal more than \$1.3 billion of money and cryptocurrency from banks and businesses, unleashed a sweeping ransomware campaign and targeted Sony Pictures Entertainment in 2014 in retaliation for a Hollywood movie, "The Interview," that the North Korean government didn't like because it depicted a fictionalized assassination of leader Kim Jong Un.

## NATION

# First lady recommits to helping military children and families

BY NIKKI WENTLING  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — First Lady Jill Biden held a listening session Wednesday as part of her plan to recommit to military families.

Biden is renewing her Joining Forces initiative, which she started with former First Lady Michelle Obama in 2011 to help military families with employment and education. Part of the effort included “Operation Educate the Educators,” which trained future teachers how to support military children in their classrooms.

Biden held a listening session Wednesday with the Military

Child Education Coalition and teaching colleges as a way to renew the effort. Military children face unique issues, she said, such as frequently changing schools and feeling isolated from their peers.

“I’m proud of the progress we made, and I know the needs of military kids and their parents have evolved in the past 10 years, so our work is far from finished,” Biden said. “The Bidens have a saying: ‘If you have to ask for help, it’s too late.’ We can’t expect our military students to ask for help. We need to lift them up so they don’t have to.”

Focusing on military children helps families and also improves

national security, Biden said.

“When your child is suffering, nothing in your world is right,” she said. “That’s why giving military-connected kids what they need to thrive isn’t just a nice thing to do, it’s critical to our national security.”

Wednesday’s event was one of multiple listening sessions Biden is planning regarding military families. The first was a meeting with military teens held just days after President Joe Biden was inaugurated.

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EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden arrive at Joint Base Andrews, Md., on Monday, after spending the weekend at Camp David, Md.

## Bob Dole to be treated for advanced lung cancer

BY NIKKI WENTLING  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Former U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, a World War II veteran, said he was diagnosed with advanced-stage lung cancer and would begin treatment Monday.

Dole, 97, shared his diagnosis on Twitter. He has stage-four lung cancer, the most advanced stage of the disease. In his statement, he acknowledged those suffering from the coronavirus pandemic.

“Recently, I was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer. My first treatment will begin Monday,” Dole tweeted. “While I certainly have some hurdles ahead, I also know that I join millions of Americans who face significant health challenges of their own.”

Dole became known as a hero of World War II who survived and overcame debilitating injuries to become one of the country’s most prominent and influential politicians. He represented Kansas in the House from 1961 to 1969, followed by a 27-year tenure as a senator. He held the role of Republican leader of the Senate during his final 11 years in that chamber before he launched his second and final presidential run in 1996.

After his political career, Dole championed a movement to memorialize WWII on the National Mall. In 1997, one year after his final failed presidential bid, he took over as the national chairman of the fundraising campaign for the National World War II Memorial.

In a 2019 interview with Stars and Stripes, Dole said: “I’ve had a lot of public service, and most of it, I enjoyed. I’ve had a good life.”

★ ★ ★

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## WORLD

# Killings surge in Syria camp housing ISIS families

By BASSEM MROUE  
Associated Press

BEIRUT — The deaths stacked up: a policeman shot dead with a pistol equipped with a silencer, a local official gunned down, his son wounded, an Iraqi man beheaded. Last month, 20 men and women were killed in the sprawling camp in northeastern Syria housing families of Islamic State.

The slayings in al-Hol camp — nearly triple the deaths in previous months — are largely believed to have been carried out by ISIS militants punishing perceived enemies and intimidating anyone who wavers from their extremist line, say Syrian Kurdish officials who run the camp but say they struggle to keep it under control.

The jump in violence has heightened calls for countries to repatriate their citizens languishing in the camp, home to some 62,000 people. Those repatriations have slowed dramatically because

of the coronavirus epidemic, officials say. If left there, the thousands of children in the camp risk being radicalized, local and U.N. officials warn.

“Al-Hol will be the womb that will give birth to new generations of extremists,” said Abdullah Su-leiman Ali, a Syrian researcher who focuses on jihadi groups.

It has been nearly two years since the U.S.-led coalition captured the last sliver of territory held by ISIS, ending their self-declared caliphate that covered large parts of Iraq and Syria. The brutal war took several years and left U.S.-allied Kurdish authorities in control of eastern and northeast Syria, with a small presence of several hundred American forces still deployed there.

Since then, remaining ISIS militants have gone underground in the Syrian-Iraqi border region, continuing an insurgency. Though attacks in Syria are lower than

they were in late 2019, ISIS sleeper cells continue to strike Syrian government troops, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and civilian administrators.

Al-Hol houses the wives, widows, children and other family members of ISIS militants — more than 80% of its 62,000 residents are women and children. The majority are Iraqis and Syrians, but it includes some 10,000 people from 57 other countries, housed in a highly secured separate area known as the Annex. Many of them remain die-hard ISIS supporters.

The camp has long been chaotic, with the hardcore militants among its population enforcing their will on others and seeking to prevent them from cooperating with Kurdish authorities guarding it.

ISIS cells in Syria are in contact with residents of the camp and support them, said senior Kurdish



MAYA ALLERUZZO/AP

Boys watch a Kurdish guard in 2019 at Al-Hol camp, at the gate to the section where foreign families from Islamic State-held areas are housed, in Syria.

official Badran Cia Kurd. “Anyone who tries to reveal these contacts or stops dealing with Daesh is subjected to death,” he said, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS.

Of the 20 killings at al-Hol in January, at least five of the dead were female residents of the camp, according to the Rojava Information Center, an activist collective that tracks news in areas controlled by the SDF. All the victims were Syrian or Iraqi citizens, including a member of the local

police force, and most were killed in their tents or shelters at night, RIC said.

Most of the victims were shot in the back of the head at close range, according to RIC and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based opposition war monitor.

The immediate cause for the jump in killings was not known.

Whatever the cause, the bloodshed points to the ISIS strength within the camp.

## Migrants again on the move

Associated Press

TENOSIQUE, Mexico — In the first Mexican shelter reached by migrants after trekking through the Guatemalan jungle, some 150 migrants are sleeping in its dormitories and another 150 lie on thin mattresses spread across the floor of its chapel.

Only six weeks into the year, the shelter known as “The 72” has hosted nearly 1,500 migrants, compared to 3,000 all of last year. It has halved its dormitory space due to the pandemic. That wasn’t a problem last year because few migrants arrived, but this year it’s been overwhelmed.

“We have a tremendous flow and there isn’t capacity,” said Gabriel Romero, the priest who runs the shelter in Tenosique, a town in southern Tabasco state. “The situation could get out of control. We need a dialogue with all of the authorities before this becomes chaos.” In particular, he would like the government to assist with migrants who camp outside while they are full.

Latin America’s migrants — from the Caribbean, South America and Central America — are on the move again. After a year of pandemic-induced paralysis, those in daily contact with migrants believe the flow north could return to



ISABEL MATEOS/AP

Central American migrants rest last week at “The 72” shelter in Tenosique, Mexico. Six weeks into the year, the shelter has hosted nearly 1,500 migrants compared to 3,000 all of last year.

the high levels seen in late 2018 and early 2019. The difference is that it would happen during a pandemic.

The protective health measures imposed to slow the spread of COVID-19, including drastically reduced bedspace at shelters along the route, mean fewer safe spaces for migrants in transit.

Some shelters remain closed by local health authorities and almost all have had to reduce the number of migrants they can assist. Applications for visas, asylum or any other official paperwork are delayed by the government’s reduced capacity due to the pandemic to process them.

“This is not a post-COVID migration; it is a migration in the mid-

dle of the pandemic, making it all the more vulnerable,” said Ruben Figueroa, an activist with the Mesoamerican Migrant Movement.

Some migrants have expressed hope of a friendlier reception from the new U.S. administration or started moving when some borders were reopened.

Others are being driven by two major hurricanes that ravaged Central America in November and desperation deepened by the economic impact of the pandemic.

Isabel Chávez, one of the nuns who work at the migrant shelter in Palenque, some 60 miles from Tenosique, said they had to reduce the number of days migrants could

stay to two because of the “avalanche” of migrants who arrived in January. There would be as many as 220 migrants there compared to the 100 they would see before the pandemic began in March 2020, she said.

In Tapachula, the largest Mexican city near its border with Guatemala and home to Mexico’s biggest detention center, there are signs of the increase as well.

Now, more than 1,300 miles to the southeast, some 1,500 migrants spread across various camps in Panama have their sights set on getting to Tapachula, either as a temporary stopover en route to the U.S. border or to begin the asylum process in Mexico.

## Facebook blocks news access in Australia

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — In a surprise retaliatory move Thursday, Facebook blocked Australians from sharing news stories, escalating a fight with the government over whether powerful tech companies should have to pay news organizations for content.

Australia’s government condemned the step, which also blocked some government communications, including messages about emergency services, and some commercial pages.

The digital platforms fear that what’s happening in Australia will become an expensive precedent for other countries as governments revamp laws to catch up with the fast changing digital world.

Facebook acted after the House of Representatives passed legislation that would make it and Google pay for Australian journalism, said Treasurer Josh Frydenberg. He said he was given no warning before Facebook acted. The legislation must be passed by the Senate to become law.

Australian news organizations could not post stories and people who tried to share existing news stories got notifications saying they were blocked from doing so.

# WEEKEND



Robin Thicke finds the light  
Music, Page 28



Frances McDormand gives a riveting performance as a house-less person learning to navigate her new life on the road in festival favorite and Golden Globe nominee 'Nomadland'

Movies, Page 15

Searchlight Pictures, iStock photos; Stars and Stripes illustration

## WEEKEND: GADGETS &amp; TECHNOLOGY

## Sanitization overkill

UV phone sanitizers work; that doesn't mean you need one

BY HELEN CAREFOOT

*The Washington Post*

Almost a year into the coronavirus pandemic, the United States is a little cleaning obsessed. Disinfectant wipes were a hot-ticket item for most of 2020. Face masks, first a DIY project, are now a staple for seemingly every brand. Air purifiers saw a bump as more was learned about how the virus spreads.

And one long-used but perhaps lesser-known disinfecting technology — ultraviolet light — got a big boost as consumers sought to protect the one item they touch the most: their phone.

Personal UV sanitizing devices can run from as little as \$10 for a wand-style model to more than \$100 for an enclosed box that will also charge your phone, with room to spare for your wallet and keys.

If you've been considering buying a UV phone sanitizer, consider this: Although the experts we spoke to say that this type of device works if it produces UV-C light in the appropriate dose, they still don't recommend buying one.

Ultraviolet light can indeed neutralize viruses, said Arthur Reingold, head of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California at Berkeley's School of Public Health. "There's a long history of using ultraviolet light on infectious agents to reduce transmission." It's widely used to deactivate pathogens in hospital rooms, either through aerial or direct exposure, on surgical tools and surfaces, and to decontaminate and treat wastewater.

"It attacks the genetic material of an organism and basically ties knots in the DNA and RNA of viruses, so they can't reproduce," said Karl Linden, a professor of environmental engineering and sustainable development at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

UV sanitization can happen in seconds if the device has enough power, Linden said. In a health-care setting, rooms and tools can be sanitized in seconds, because they're operating at high strength and are pow-

ered by mercury, excimer, pulsed xenon lamps or LED lights. Many of the popular devices on the market say they sanitize in about five to 10 minutes; a longer incubation period means they could use lower-powered lights.

One important caveat: Depending on the material you put into the chamber, Linden said, repeated exposure could decay some materials over time.

The real question, Reingold and other experts say, is whether these devices are necessary to prevent transmission of viruses — and they said no. "It's not a question of whether the UV works; that's not the issue. The question is: 'Does it actually translate into a health benefit?'" said Amesh Adalja, an infectious-disease physician and senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security.

Some studies have found that viruses, such as coronavirus and norovirus, can survive on surfaces such as keyboards and cellphones. But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that surfaces are not thought to be a common way that the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads. "I think there are a lot of people who are trying to capitalize on people's concern about germs and transmission of disease," Adalja said. "Yes, you could do that to your phone, but I don't know that it does much to decrease your risk of infection. I'm someone who takes care of COVID patients, and I've never once done that to my phone, because I don't have to."

A common claim (often repeated by companies selling cleaning devices) is that phones are much dirtier than other household objects, such as toilets. But the presence of microbes doesn't mean anything in terms of whether it can make you sick, said Paula Cannon, professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine. "It doesn't mean you had any danger. If you took a tiny pinch of yogurt and put it on a plate, you would have hundreds of microbes, and nobody is going to say that's more dangerous than a toilet seat," she said. "It's using semi-truthful scientific facts out of context to build a narrative to sell a product."

And trying to get rid of all the microbes that could be present on your phone isn't a worthwhile goal, Adalja said, because it's impossible; microbes are everywhere and on every surface or object you could touch — even on your body. Many of them aren't harmful to humans, he said, and transmission risk from your phone is probably low. "Not all microbes are major transmission risks, but most of them can be obviated by just washing your hands."

Many products on the market claim to effectively sanitize small items, such as this iHome iUVBT1 Pro UV-C sanitizer, but since they're unlikely to make users sick, their usefulness is debatable.

iHOME/TNS



BINATONE/TNS

Binatone, a UK-based company, claims that MaskFone is the world's first wireless headphone and mask combination.

## The world's first wireless headphone/mask combo

BY GREGG ELLMAN

*Tribune News Service*

Wearing a mask in these uncertain times has become a way of life to prevent exposure to harmful bacteria, viruses and pollution. It's no surprise that technology is making its way into the face coverings.

At last month's CES virtual conference, UK-based telecommunication company Binatone showed the **MaskFone**, claiming it's the world's first wireless headphone and mask combination, stating it combines safety, fashion, technology and entertainment.

Along with the mask, which includes a medical-grade N95 filter, there are built-in (and removable) microphone and wireless earbuds. Now when the situation isn't conducive to removing your mask to make a hands-free call or listen to music, the MaskFone is the solution.

The mask is made with durable machine-washable twill fabric, which can easily conform to most face features and shapes. Add the disposable and replaceable interchangeable N95 filters to ensure a high level of protection with 95 percent virus filtration. The medical-grade filters will last up to 200 hours before a replacement is required.

But what makes the MaskFone an item worth talking about is the rechargeable electronic technology. The wireless Bluetooth earbuds produce decent sound and will be good for up to 12 hours of playtime and handsfree calls before a USB charge is needed.

If you're not in a mask-wearing environment, you'll want to use better-sounding earbuds, but for what these are and the environments they work in, the MaskFone is a great product.

The integrated and removable microphone lives in a pocket inside of the mask along with the controls, which line up with

matching control symbols on the outside, so adjusting the mask isn't needed to be heard on a call. Access to voice assistance is done by double-clicking the play button.

For times when you want the mask on but without the earbuds, just pull the cable clip to hold the earbuds with the magnetic earbud holder to keep them in place.

When the mask needs to be washed, the earbuds, controls and microphone are easily removable. After washing the mask, they snap back in, and there was no shrinking or remodeling of the mask needed to get it back to its original setup. Both before and after the washing, cellphone calls were heard fine on both ends of the call.

Online: maskfone.com; \$49.99

Raptic has released the rugged, yet attractive **Shield** line of protective smartphone cases for Samsung's new Galaxy S21.

The cases are loaded with protective features including tests to survive 10-foot drops on concrete, which exceeds U.S. military MIL-STD-810G standards. This testing covers all sides, faces, edges and corners.

But even with these features, the attractive smartphone is not hidden. The front and back coverages are clear, allowing full functionality to the touchscreen, controls and cameras. The back panel is made from shatterproof clear polycarbonate.

Both the front and back have soft rubber bumpers around the perimeter and raised lips on the edge, to help prevent the screen from shattering in the event of a drop. Built-in antimicrobial protection is there to kill germs.

The cases are wireless charging compatible and are available for all the Galaxy S21, Galaxy S21 Ultra, and Galaxy S21 Plus models in a variety of colors.

Online: rapticstrong.com; \$29.99

## WEEKEND: MOVIES



Searchlight Pictures photos

“Nomadland” follows Fern (Frances McDormand, above and below right), a woman navigating life on the road and adjusting to a new normal. Also pictured above: David Strathairn.

# Putting misconceptions in the rearview mirror

‘Nomadland,’ starring Frances McDormand, explores life on the road with broad strokes and attention to fine details

BY PETER SBLENDORIO  
New York Daily News

“Nomadland,” a new film starring Frances McDormand, provides an intimate window into the roving lifestyle by showing the experiences of a community of people who live in their vans and travel the United States.

The authenticity of “Nomadland” impressed Bob Wells, a real-life nomad who plays himself in the movie.

“It’s remarkable,” Wells told the Daily News. “It captures the life extremely well, in fine detail and in broad strokes.”

McDormand portrays a fictional character, Fern, whose life is upended by her husband’s death and the 2011 closure of the U.S. Gypsum plant where she worked in Empire, Nev.

While enduring her financial and emotional struggles, Fern attends the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous, an annual gathering for nomads hosted by Wells, before beginning her new life driving state to state in a van and working temporary jobs.

“If you ask any nomad why you do this, what’s important to you about it, it’s always freedom,” said Wells, whose economic situation initially caused him to adopt the lifestyle in 1995. “You are in as much control as a person can be in our time and location. You have control during the day over what you do and what you think.”

Directed and written by Chloé Zhao, the movie premieres Friday on Hulu. It’s based on the 2017 book “Nomadland” by Jessica Bruder, who lived as a nomad for up to two months at a time during the three years she worked on the project.

“The film is very intimate and brings you close to them, and that sort of empathetic work really makes it hard to have prejudices or misconceptions just when you can get close to people like that,” Bruder told The News. “It makes it easier to imagine yourself into someone else’s life. That was my great hope for the book, and I think the film is going in that direction as well.”



McDormand, left, consults with director Chloé Zhao on the set of “Nomadland.”

The movie earned the top award last year at the Venice Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival, and is up for best drama motion picture at the Golden Globes on Feb. 28.

A number of real-life nomads appear in the movie and are introduced during McDormand’s character’s journey.

“Her character creates this path that we get to watch,” Bruder said. “She’s kind of the proxy for the viewer in some way, in terms of just entering in these worlds that we get to see other people, and that means often stepping back and having them tell their stories.”

Wells hopes “Nomadland” shows that “alternatives” exist beyond the way of life much of society is accustomed to, and credits the film for depicting a strong sense of community.

“Fern makes all these friends ... and you keep coming back. The bungee cord keeps pulling you together,” Wells said.

“You find solutions to all the little problems. Fern is offered, multiple times, a way out, like people need to rescue her from this life, but there’s this healing. ... The movie is all about healing of her grief. Nomadism is just part of the healing process. It’s really very moving because of that. You’re seeing healing and hope.”

## MOVIE REVIEW



## McDormand perfect as a house-less nomad

BY MOIRA MACDONALD  
The Seattle Times

Watching Frances McDormand in a movie is like watching someone you know, an old friend, someone with whom you can feel completely at ease. She’s the kind of actor who seems to bring home with her, and therefore she’s perfect as Fern in Chloé Zhao’s wondrous “Nomadland”: This is a character for whom home isn’t a place, but something you carry.

Like Zhao’s previous film “The Rider,” “Nomadland” has a haunting, dreamlike quality; also like “The Rider,” its drama takes place in the face and voice of its main character, who’s figuring out a new kind of life. Fern, a recent widow, leaves her longtime home in rural Nevada, in a former company town that’s now an empty shell after the plant that employed Fern and her husband closed years ago. She becomes a nomad, living in her van and finding seasonal work when and where she can, discovering the American West along the way. She’s not homeless, Fern corrects an acquaintance —

she’s house-less. And she’s not particularly unhappy; drifting, like in the lake where we see her briefly floating blissfully, seems to suit her.

“Nomadland,” based on a non-fiction book by journalist Jessica Bruder, is primarily about Fern’s journey, but we also meet a host of other people in similar straits, many of whom are played by nonactors who are themselves nomads. (Watch for David Strathairn as a gentle loner who’s drawn to Fern.) It’s a movie about people who are often invisible; older people, without much money, who’ve chosen — or had chosen for them, when the social safety net fails — an alternative way of life. This is a woman of remarkable strength, making a new plan on the fly after her old life floated away.

Zhao shows us the difficulty of this life — the endless laundromats, the cramped bed in the van, the cold, the possessions left behind — but also its beauty and freedom.

“Nomadland” is rated R for some nudity. Running time: 107 minutes. Now playing in select theaters and streaming on Hulu.

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

# 'Transforming that anger into strength'

Tahar Rahim stars as Mohamedou Ould Slahi in Guantanamo Bay in "The Mauritanian."

STXFilms

## How actor Tahar Rahim reflected the mental, physical prisons of 'The Mauritanian'

BY MICHAEL ORDOÑA  
*Los Angeles Times*

**F**or Tahar Rahim, "The Mauritanian" was about prisons — at Guantanamo Bay, and of the mind.

"It's about the horrors he has been through, but also there's a light inside of this character," French-born Rahim says of playing longtime detainee and now bestselling author Mohamedou Ould Slahi. "The way he was able to go through this ... he became so wise to be able to not hold a grudge against anybody after all of this. It's almost incredible for a human being."

Slahi (also spelled "Salahi") was accused by American intelligence of being a "significant al-Qaida operative" involved in not only the 1999 millennium plot, but the 9/11 terrorist attacks. After initially claiming innocence, Slahi "confessed" under torture and was held without charge for 14 years. The film depicts his confinement and the legal battle waged by civil libertarians (played by Jodie Foster and Shailene Woodley) on his behalf. Slahi wrote the memoir on which "Mauritanian" is based, "Guantánamo Diary," while in captivity. Rahim and Foster have received Golden Globe nominations for their performances.

Rahim met with Slahi and came away impressed: "That he came out as he is right now, a wise man and a good person .... He had faith in the fact that he is innocent, and he's been fighting to tell people that.

"That's why he's saying at the very end [of the film, while still incarcerated but finally before a court], 'Your honor, even

here I can be free because now everybody could hear me.'"

When Slahi joined al-Qaida's jihad against Russian invaders in Afghanistan, he was fighting on the side backed by the CIA. According to him, he walked away from the organization in the early 1990s. However, his cousin became a top adviser to Osama bin Laden. Slahi's rare contacts with the cousin, and an occasion in which he allowed travelers from near his hometown to stay the night — only to learn they were al-Qaida soldiers — were among the circumstantial facts that convinced American intelligence he was an active al-Qaida recruiter. Investigators never, however, found sufficient evidence to file charges.

"It's 16 years, I think, from when he was arrested. If there was some proof, we would have found it," Rahim says.

"The Mauritanian" isn't actually about whether Slahi helped recruit or fund terrorists. It's about the human spirit surviving brutality and incarceration, and also about the rule of law: specifically, the writ of habeas corpus, prohibiting unlawful and indefinite detention.

"We're living in democracies, and there is the law, you know, except at Guantanamo Bay," Rahim says of the infamous military detention center. "It's so crazy that those type of things are happening in our free countries. Everybody has the right to have a lawyer, to be judged; this is our main foundation. It has to be respected."

During the period covered by the film, Slahi was in a rough state, physically.

"I went on a drastic diet because he said, 'I was as thin as a stick.' I lost

[around 25 pounds] within 20 days. ... I ate so much boiled eggs that I almost turned into a chicken, man. At some point that state leads you to an emotional place you wouldn't know could exist."

A devout Muslim, Slahi admitted to Rahim that he struggled with profound anger at his predicament but that it had no outlet because it was directed at God and not people.

"The only way to let it out is it has to evolve into something stronger, bigger, that could help you, finally. And this is wisdom," Rahim says of his character's journey. "Transforming that anger into strength. Yeah, I think that helped me the most."

Of a scene in which, under extreme physical duress, Slahi hallucinates that his mother has been detained and tortured, Rahim says he couldn't imagine the phys-

ical torture that brought Slahi to that point, but "we shared something very intimate, Mohamedou and I: the love of our mothers.

"I started to sob. My heart was broken, because I could see my mom here — I got goose bumps [right now, remembering it] — and I could shoot it just one time. Then I fell down, and I said, 'I'm dead. I just can't keep going. I hope you have it.'

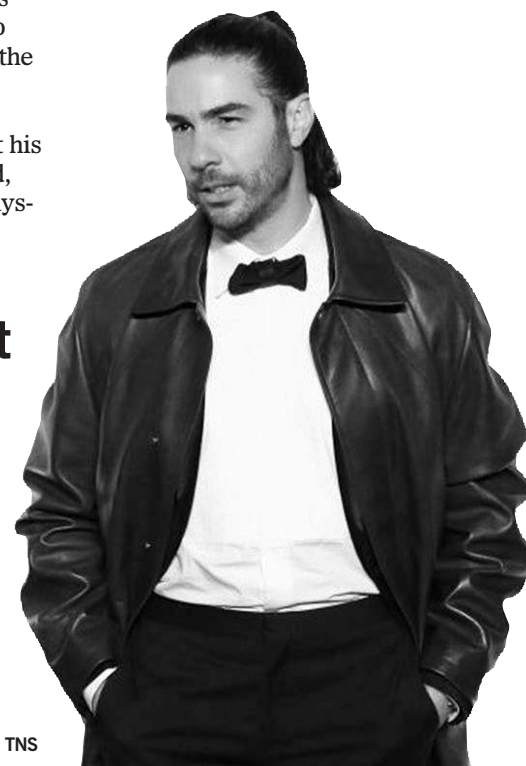
"At this moment, I think I touched with the tip of my finger a little bit of what he's been through. It was so heavy."

### "There is the law, you know, except at Guantanamo Bay."

Tahar Rahim  
actor who played longtime detainee  
Mohamedou Ould Slahi

Tahar Rahim, shown in April 2019, says he lost 25 pounds in about 20 days for his role as a Guantanamo Bay prisoner in "The Mauritanian."

TNS





## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

## Joy under pressure

'The Mauritanian' engages with the help of Rahim and real-life footage of Slahi — not its prominent actors

By JOCELYN NOVECK  
Associated Press

It's often the case that movies based on true stories offer a glimpse of the real-life characters at the end. In "The Mauritanian," the story of former Guantanamo Bay detainee Mohamedou Ould Slahi's 14 years behind bars, that real-life footage is the most engaging part of the film.

That's not entirely the fault of the filmmakers, who do an earnest and thoughtful if less than absorbing job of telling Slahi's story based on the best-selling memoir he wrote in prison, "Guantanamo Diary."

It's just that nothing can beat this intimate view of the real man, smiling and singing joyfully to Bob Dylan, no less. One wonders how he even managed to stay sane, let alone joyful, after 14 years at Guantanamo without being formally charged or tried. And in conditions that included a brutal stretch of torture: severe cold, sexual humiliation, sleep deprivation, a mock drowning, waterboarding, and threats to imprison his own mother.

Luckily, "The Mauritanian," directed by Kevin Macdonald, gets one thing very right: Tahar Rahim's masterful central performance. The French actor achieves something his big-name costars — Jodie Foster, Benedict Cumberbatch and Shailene Woodley — do not, presenting a multi-layered, subtly shaded and deeply moving portrayal that proves hard to forget. Rahim deserves the awards buzz he's

getting; he also deserves more big roles.

Macdonald is known for documentaries (the Oscar-winning "One Day in September") as well as features ("The Last King of Scotland"), and "The Mauritanian" has a quasi-documentary feel at times. Partly that's because there's a lot of dry information to get across, namely the ins and outs of Slahi's legal case. The film tries to achieve this by juxtaposing the stories of defense lawyer Nancy Hollander (Foster), who works to gain Slahi's release based on lack of evidence, and U.S. military prosecutor Stuart Couch (Cumberbatch.)

Both Foster, in her brittle, crusty portrayal of Hollander, and Cumberbatch, sporting a southern drawl as a devoted military man with a conscience, are welcome presences in any movie. But the script doesn't give them a lot to work with — we learn almost nothing about them as people outside of the case.

Rahim, though, has plenty of room to shine. The actor infuses almost every scene with humor and humanity. We meet Slahi at a wedding celebration in Mauritania, two months after 9/11. The police show up to question him about ties to al-Qaida. "The Americans are going crazy," they say. He assures his mother he'll be back soon — and asks her to save him some food. It's clear she fears she may never see him again (in fact, she didn't.)

Four years later in Albuquerque, lawyer Hollander is approached to use her security clearance to help find Slahi, on behalf of



STXFilms

The script of "The Mauritanian" doesn't give big-name stars Shailene Woodley (left), Jodie Foster (right) and Benedict Cumberbatch, who play lawyers, much to work with.

his desperate family. She has no idea of his innocence or guilt, but asks: "Since when did we start locking people up without a trial in this country?" She enlists a junior colleague, Teri Duncan, to help (Woodley, underused).

Meanwhile we meet Couch (Cumberbatch, also a producer here), who's tapped by superiors to lead the prosecution. They know he has skin in the game: His good buddy was a pilot on one of the planes that hit the World Trade Center. He asks: "When do we start?" It's made clear that the goal is the death penalty.

The film tracks these two as they pursue their cases, each stymied by government restrictions on information. Hollander receives cartons of fully redacted documents; Couch seeks crucial details about interrogations. For each, the discovery of the torture Slahi went through will change

the dynamics of the case.

But the most accessible scenes feature Slahi himself, whether they involve the dreaded interrogations or the prisoner's basic efforts at making a friend at Guantanamo, a French detainee he speaks to through a green mesh fence, and who dubs him "The Mauritanian."

The film has the rhythm of a legal thriller heading toward a dramatic courtroom trial. The true climax is hardly that climactic: Slahi testifies by video at his habeas corpus hearing. He learns by mail that he's won.

He whoops with joy. He's going home.

And then, the closing credits tell us, he remains imprisoned at Guantanamo for seven more years.

"The Mauritanian" has been rated R "for violence including a sexual assault, and language." Running time: 129 minutes. Available in select theaters.

## 'Barb and Star' comedy weakened by Bond-inspired villainy

By MICHAEL PHILLIPS  
Chicago Tribune

Comedywise, Ian Fleming — not a funny man — has been a dubious influence on screen comedy for decades. Quite apart from full-on James Bond spoofs in the "Austin Powers" vein, elements and whole slabs of spoo-fy, outlandish Bond-inspired villainy have a way of popping up and weighing down all sorts of movies, the latest dispiriting example being "Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar," now available to stream.

Is it a spoiler to mention who plays the evil genius causing all the grief in debut feature director Josh Greenbaum's film? Let's assume so. We'll stay mum out of respect for the chief creatives on this project: Kristen Wiig and Annie Mumolo, who rightly secured Oscar nominations for their "Bridesmaids" screenplay a decade ago.

Here they've created a promising showcase inspired by any number of sketches Wiig and Mumolo cooked up in their Groundlings improv years in Los Angeles. Best friends forever, Barb and Star have never trav-



LIONSGATE/AP

Kristen Wiig, left, and Annie Mumolo star in "Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar" as two friends who leave Nebraska for the first time.

eled outside their small Nebraska town called Soft Rock (clever name). Chipper, good-natured, they've been finishing each other's sentences since childhood. They are case studies in Midwestern hard-r's and borderline-Canadian vowel sounds, especially "a," pronounced "aaaayyyy." (I know the sound well; if you grow up in Wisconsin and then move to Minnesota, it's basically too late to ever change the results.)

Thanks to sudden unemployment and a tip from a friend, Barb and Star decide to bust out of Soft Rock and fly to the (fictional) Vista Del Mar resort on Florida's gulf coast. Here, the men are plentiful and ogling, and the boardwalk trinkets are faaaaaaabalous.

That's a decent premise for a comedy. Around it, though, "Barb and Star" preoccupies valuable screen time with its wearying

Bond-movie contraption. The prologue deals with a paperboy (Reyn Doi) entering a secret lair to join an icy villainess in her plan to uncork a torrent of genetically modified mosquitoes on an entire city — the very city where Barb and Star are vacationing.

Five minutes into this thing, I was, like: What the hell? Why? I mean, I know why: "Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar" needs a peg on which to hang its characters and its situations, and to include the evil genius' boy-toy Edgar (Jamie Dornan, pretty funny) who gets mixed up bed-wise and danger-wise with our heroines. Star, Wiig's character, is reeling from a cheating ex. "Men find me disgusting. And I'm OK with that!" she notes, brightly if unconvincingly.

Mumolo's Barb, meantime, finds Dornan's Edgar as enticing as Star does. There's some implied, crazy, drug-fueled three-way sex, and a fair bit of raunch suggesting that this was an R-rated project that got revised downward to secure the PG-13 rating, if anyone even looks at those ratings anymore in lockdown.

Director Greenbaum works with a pretty heavy hand, though to the degree "Barb and Star" is really a frustrated musical, it's a movie that benefits from that frustration and its occasional bursts of song and dance. Cameo day-players include Andy Garcia and Reba McEntire, plus Morgan Freeman providing the voice of a talking crab. All that is more fun than everything to do with lost microchips and genetically modified killer mosquitoes and a misunderstood villainess' backstory.

Wiig and Mumolo work so easily and smoothly together, you feel like an ingrate for not enjoying their efforts more in these script circumstances (especially since they wrote it). Now and then, though, the payoffs arrive. And with Mumolo in particular, a sentence such as "I'm Barb and this is Star — and you are?" turns into a rhapsodic ode to Minnesota-speak, a la "Fargo," but in this case, it's one state down and to the left.

"Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar" is rated PG-13 for rude sexual content, drug use and some strong language. Running time: 106 minutes. Now available on demand.

## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Riot Games adapts its popular League of Legends title to mobile and console systems with League of Legends: Wild Rift, shown at left and below. A compressed map and shorter matches are among the alterations to make the game better suited to a smaller screen and shorter bursts of playing time.

RIOT GAMES/TNS

# Console-worthy but compact

League of Legends: Wild Rift headlines complex, high-quality games coming to iPhone 12

BY GIESON CACHO  
The Mercury News

Smartphones have quickly closed the gap between handheld devices and consoles. As Genshin Impact has shown, the gaming machine in your pocket can produce graphics that are equal to anything you'd see on the past generation of machines.

The iPhone 12 emphasizes this point with three games that are on their way or already on the smartphone. The device's A14 Bionic chip and 5G support means that it can handle more complex games and players can enjoy them at home or on the road. Gaming has come a long way from Bejeweled being played in a browser window.

Here's a look at three titles that are expected to draw some buzz on the platform.

## League of Legends: Wild Rift

After years of being solely on PC, Riot Games is bringing its famed MOBA to mobile devices and consoles albeit with a few changes. This custom version has tweaks that tailors it for a different audience. Executive producer Michael Chow said, "We rebuilt everything from the ground up."

Although Riot Games makes changes to its multiplayer online battle arena formula in Wild Rift, Chow said many of the alterations are so subtle that the new version feels close to the original. Many tweaks will be imperceptible save for one — the map is substantially smaller, and that reduction cuts the match time.

Chow said the average League of Legends games take 40 minutes while Wild Rift contests average 17 minutes. "That allows the game to better fit different parts of the day and different parts of life," he said. That means players can get in a quick game during their commute or lunch break.

Wild Rift has the same rhythm and typography, but everything happens much faster, Chow said. Because of the compact dimensions, it also means that actions are magnified in a match. Mistakes are more devastating, and the swings in matches are much more drastic.

With that said, it could mean that playing Wild Rift could have an impact on play in League of Legends. Chow said the talent and skill sets in one can translate to another and vice versa. "Playing one makes you better at the other," he said.

On mobile devices, Chow said the touchscreen works well, but the game can support controllers. He said Wild Rift will have a full esports ecosystem and that it is scheduled to have a regional open beta in the Americas next month.

Online: [wildrift.leagueoflegends.com](http://wildrift.leagueoflegends.com)

## Crash on the Run!

Picking up on the theme of console games on mobile devices, Activision is bringing the Crash Bandicoot franchise to smartphones with the help of Candy Crush-maker King.



The project takes elements of the endless runner genre popularized by the likes of Temple Run and applies it to the beloved franchise. In doing so, they removed the "endless" part and created a level-based format that players would see in a typical Crash Bandicoot game. The hero travels to different worlds and

biomes, overcoming obstacles and even defeating bosses.

The game doesn't skimp on the visuals and looks as good as a title one would see in the PlayStation 3 era. King's Bob Woodburn said Crash on the Run! offers a sense of exploration and discovery as the bandicoot runs and leaps across a linear path with different levels of height and obstacles. He said the team has been looking to see if they could do a side-scrolling portion, but it's still undetermined so far.

Like other Crash games, players will unlock skins, but in the mobile game, they're more than just decorative. The skins have different attributes. Some may boost resource gathering while others may give players an extra Aku Aku so they can handle tougher levels.

In addition to the core runner gameplay, players will find some light base-building that incorporates the ex-

pertise of Crash's sister, Coco. Players tackle levels to get material to build new structures that unlock weapons and other goodies.

Lastly, Crash on the Run! has three modes with the plans to introduce seasonal content. Players can check out survival runs, which has asynchronous multiplayer. They also have time trials and challenge runs for players who have the need to collect or speed run everything.

Expect to play Crash on the Run! in the spring. Players can preregister the game on iOS and Android.

Online: [king.com/game/crashontherun](http://king.com/game/crashontherun)

## Marvel Realm of Champions

Not to be confused with Kabam's other Marvel product, Marvel Contest of Champions, this action role-playing game lets players control their favorite comic book characters in an open arena.



The game takes place on a planet called Battleworld, where the environment is in disarray after its emperor, the Maestro, was assassinated. His death leads to conflict among the Champion Houses. The gameplay is easy to pick up with players moving around and fighting with light, heavy and special attacks. They also have a dash to

help them dodge attacks.

It has MOBA feel, but it's more direct as players battle over a center of arena to get supercharged so that they can defeat the other houses' battlefield leader. Players can level up and earn new gear to customize their heroes.

Ethan Young, Kabam's development director, said Marvel Realm of Champions will get a 2.0 build with alliance events, new game modes, world quests and the introduction of a narrative mission. Later in a subsequent update, the game will also have a new map called Pleasant Hill and an eighth champion — Thor. News on Thor and the new map will be shared at a later time.

The game is out right now, but unfortunately it doesn't have controller support, though it's something that "we're talking about," Young said.

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



## WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

# Some assembly required

Plastic model kits offer temporary solace from pandemic anxieties

By JOHN LEICESTER  
Associated Press

**H**e hunches at the dining room table, putting the finishing touches on his miniature World War II tank. Deep in concentration, he keeps his hand steady as he works to make the scaled-down plastic model look as realistic as possible.

And as he does so, Maxime Fannoy — locked-down husband and father riding out the coronavirus with his family in Belgium — feels the outside world's unremitting pandemic nightmare slip thankfully out of focus.

"It's an escape. When you are building a kit or a scene, you really plunge into it," Fannoy says. "Everything else loses its importance, and in the current context, that is a real help."

Rejuvenated by quarantines and lockdowns, the old-school pastime of creating miniature worlds by assembling and decorating scaled-down models or running mini trains on mini tracks is enjoying a revival — plastic therapy against the pandemic blues.

Sales are booming as families shorn of their social lives keep idle hands and minds busy by making models and dusting off train sets. British brand Airfix saw a run on plastic kits for Spitfires, the iconic World War II fighter plane. Hornby, which owns Airfix and also makes an array of model trains and cars under other brands, has become profitable again with sales soaring.

The analog pleasures of gluing and painting, fixing and fiddling, are also peeling some members of the digital generation away from their screens. Teens are catching the modeling bug from parents and grandparents who suddenly find themselves with time again to indulge in hobbies many had been too busy to pursue since childhood.

In France, 70-year-old retiree Guy Warein says his lockdown-time renovations on a model train set that had been gathering dust in his attic have helped him connect with his video-gaming grandkids, pulling them "from the virtual world to reality."

On a visit when school was out, the eldest, aged 16, said: "Come on, Grandpa, let's go and see the trains and make them work." So we put them together and did things together," Warein says. "It's a coming together of generations, and that can only be beneficial."

So he repaired the HO-scale locomotives and rolling stock inherited from his father-in-law and fixed up the room where he intends to run them on a U-shaped track layout that he's designing. The activity helped Warein, a former educator and municipal councilor, tune out the pandemic and its anxieties.

"You fill your time and forget what's happening around you," he says. "Turning on the radio or the television is like being hit with a truncheon, because they systematically talk about the virus and the misfortunes it has brought. ...



PHOTOS BY MICHEL SPINGLER/AP

Guy Warein, a 70-year-old retiree, works on model trains Jan. 27 in his home in Richebourg, northern France.



Sales are booming as locked-down families glue and paint models and dust off train sets.



Model trains are on display on tracks in Warein's home.

**"It's an escape. When you are building a kit or a scene, you really plunge into it. Everything else loses its importance, and in the current context, that is a real help."**

Maxime Fannoy

Having a hobby allows me to think of other things."

Manufacturers have struggled to meet the global surge in interest. Hornby's CEO, Lyndon Davies, says he had to airfreight 10,000 Spitfire kits from a factory in India when Airfix's stocks ran dry for the first time in the company's 71-year history.

"What you don't want of your kids, your grandchildren, is them sitting watching the TV or staring at phones all the time. This pandemic has really brought families together at home," he says. "They have used the types of products we make to try and forget what was going on in the outside world."

Another British manufacturer, Peco, has hired extra staff to satisfy surging orders — up by 50% in some markets — for its miniature trains, tracks and modeling accessories.

"This is happening everywhere: Our markets in the UK, across Europe, in Australia, North America, in China," says

Steve Haynes, the sales manager. "People are making far greater use of their spare time, their free time, their enforced time stuck at home to tackle the boredom, to tackle the isolation and do something creative."

In Belgium, Fannoy calls himself a "model-maker made from lockdown." He had long bought plastic kits, because they reminded him of childhood, but had never had time to build them. Instead, he hoarded them away in a wardrobe.

When the pandemic shut down his busy life and forced



The old-school pastimes of making scale models and playing with miniature trains are making a comeback as a form of therapy against the pandemic blues.

him to do his job as a business developer from home, he set to work on his stash, stocking up on brushes and paints in the final days before lockdown.

He first completed a series of 1/24th-scale rally cars. A WWII Tiger tank, painted to look weathered and mounted in a wintry scene with troops and a jeep, followed at the end of 2020. He posted photos of the diorama, the fruit of 50 hours of handiwork, on Facebook.

"I generally start in the evenings at around 8 p.m. and stop around 11 p.m. to midnight," Fannoy says. "I can no longer do the things I would normally do. So what do I do? I open a kit and work on it. In fact, it's my wife who comes and pulls me out of this mini-world I live in."

"The hours fly by. It's a form of meditation," he says. "It has helped enormously in getting me through the past year."

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Residents, tourists share sunny Salema

As we've had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. Here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe at the other end of this crisis.

The flatbed fish truck rambles into the village blaring the "1812 Overture" on its horn. Today's my beach day and I was ready to just sleep in. But it's market day in Salema, and the parking lot that separates the jogging shorts from the black shawls fills up, one vehicle at a time, with horn-tooting merchants. First the fish truck rolls in, then the bakery trailer steaming with fresh bread, followed by a fruit-and-vegetable truck, and finally a five-and-dime truck for clothing and odds and ends. Groggy yet happy, I quickly get dressed and join the scene — savoring one of the last true villages on the Algarve.

Any place that's famous as a "last undiscovered tourist frontier" probably no longer is. But the Algarve of my dreams survives — just barely. It took me three tries to find it. West of the big city of Lagos, Luz and Burgau both offered only a corpse of a fishing village, bikini-strangled and Nivea-creamed. Then, just as darkness turned couples into peaceful silhouettes, I found Salema.

It's my kind of resort: three beachside streets, a dozen restaurants, a few hotels, time-share condos up the road, a couple of bars, English and German menus, a clas-

sic beach with a paved promenade, and endless sun.

Where a small road hits the beach on Portugal's southwestern tip, Salema is an easy 15-mile bus ride from the closest train station in Lagos. Still a fishing village — but only barely — Salema has a split personality: The whitewashed old town is for residents, and the more utilitarian other half was built for tourists.

Residents and tourists pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence at the beach, luxurious with powder-fine sand and framed by steep vivid-yellow cliffs. Tractors pull in and push out the fishing boats, 2-year-olds toddle in the waves, topless women read German fashion mags, and old men really do mend the nets. British and German connoisseurs of lethargy laze in the sun, while locals grab the shade.

While the days of black-clad widows chasing topless Nordic women off the beach are gone, nudity is still risqué. Over the rocks and beyond the view of prying eyes, Germans grin and bare it.

Unwritten tradition allocates different chunks of undersea territory to each Salema family. The pottery jars stacked everywhere are traps, which are tied about a yard apart in long lines and dropped offshore. Octopi, looking for a cozy place to set an ambush, climb inside, unaware they've made their last mistake.



Rick Steves



Rick Steves

### Local fishermen in Salema, Portugal, easily coexist with visitors on the beach.

Whatever's caught is served up by the wives of fishermen in huge pots of Portugal's beloved seafood stew (cataplana) inside steamy hole-in-the-wall eateries, where tourists slurp it up.

Restaurateurs are allowed to build a temporary, summer-only beachside restaurant if they provide a lifeguard and run a green/yellow/red warning-flag system for swimmers.

Tourism chases the sun and quaint folksiness. And the folksiness survives only with the help of tourist dollars. Fishermen boost their income by renting spare bedrooms (quartos) to the ever-growing stream of tan fans from Europe's drizzly

north.

At the end of the day, after enjoying a nice plate of fish, I take a glass of white wine and sip it with the sunset. Nearby, a withered old woman shells almonds with a railroad spike, dogs roam the beach like they own it, and a man catches short fish with a long pole. Beyond him is Cape Sagres — 500 years ago, it was the edge of the world. As far as the gang sipping port and piling olive pits in the beachside bar is concerned, it still is.

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

## Tradition of strong beer at its height during Lenten season

Aside from the odd Easter egg market and celebrations welcoming spring, the Lenten season tends to be rather sedate across much of Germany. In ordinary times, Munich bucks the trend with a festival city residents treasure as something they keep largely to themselves.

Starkbier feasts honor a strong beer with its roots deeply planted in Bavarian tradition. Centuries back, monasteries were the major players in the practice of brewing beer. During Lent, the pious monks largely stayed away from solid foods, gaining their calories instead from Fastenstarkbier, a dark, strong beer with a malty flavor and a typical alcohol content of 7% or above. A daily ration of five liters of the potent stuff was not unheard of.



Karen Bradbury

This style of beer, a double bock, was first brewed in 1629 by Paulaner monks in a monastery on the outskirts of Munich. But the production of strong beer could only take place with the consent of the pope. A barrel of this special beer for fasting was dispatched to Rome, but its long journey over the Alps did it no favors. When the Holy Father tasted the now-spoiled beer, he saw no reason to forbid the consumption of such a dubious treat.

Although the annual strong beer festival that's opened each year by the mayor of Munich himself won't be taking place, the breweries themselves have no need to break with tradition. In addition to Paulaner's starkbier, which bears the name Salvator, a number of other such beers, whose names also end in the "-ator" suffix, are available for purchase at this time of the year.

Pick up one or several and celebrate at home this year. Dancing on your table is optional.

While beer-brewing monasteries are rightly considered bastions of tradition, several are moving with the times. Here's a look at some of the latest developments in monastic brewing tradition in Europe.



iStock

### Much sought-after Westvleteren Trappist Beer is brewed at the St. Sixtus Abbey by monks in Belgium.

### Belgium: Sale of prized beer goes online

For many beer lovers, a trek to the St. Sixtus Abbey in Westvleteren, Flanders, represents the ultimate pilgrimage. The three types of beer brewed here consistently garner nearly perfect scores on beer consumer websites. To obtain these precious drops, one must appear in person at the abbey gates at a previously booked date and time. A maximum of two wooden crates containing 24 bottles each can be purchased.

For many years, ordering the beer meant hours trying to get through to the brewery by phone. In the spring of 2019, the brothers began taking orders online. Procuring the beer still means appearing in person, and providing personal details including the registration number of the vehicle in which the beer will be picked up. The strict measures combat unauthorized resale and profiteering.

Now, the only way to obtain Trappist Westvleteren is via its web store, which has limited hours, listed on a

calendar on the shop's website. The pick-up time is also indicated. In order to limit the spread of coronavirus, the abbey is serving only customers with an address in Belgium, but hopes to begin serving its European customers soon. Online: [trappistwestvleteren.be/en/beer-sales](http://trappistwestvleteren.be/en/beer-sales)

### Italy: Former monastery brewery rises again

The Montecassino Abbey, located in the Lazio region some 80 miles south of Rome, was founded in 529 and began brewing beer in the 15th century. Production ceased when the monastery was bombarded during World War II. The complex was rebuilt in the same style.

Since 2018, barley sown on land surrounding the abbey has been reaped and used to produce Montecassino abbey beer at a nearby brewing establishment. A small brewery established on one of the monastery's old farms now offers samples. Beer-making, which takes place in collaboration with Birra Peroni, one of the Italy's biggest brewers, is just one part of a larger project aiming to restore the ancient agricultural traditions of the region. Online: [birramontecassino.it](http://birramontecassino.it)

### Italy: Buying beer revives a monastery

In 2000, a handful of American monks arrived at the site of the Basilica of St. Benedict in the Umbrian region of Nursia, abandoned in 1810 when Napoleon suppressed monastic orders. They successfully reestablished the monastery, but an earthquake in 2016 left most of it in ruins. One of the few things left standing was a brewery in which the monks had been making a beer they called Nursia, a reference to the city's Latin name, since 2012.

The monastery's beer has an enthusiastic following. It's sold in local shops and restaurants, and is available online in both Europe and in the United States. Purchase of Birra Nursia helps ensure that the monks will have a place to sing their old Latin chants and continue to build up their brewing industry. Online: [birranursia.it](http://birranursia.it)

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

The hamburgers on the special takeout menu at Zum Kaaser, including a standard cheeseburger, make for a tasty meal.

# Only missing the atmosphere

The dine-in experience at Zum Kaaser in Erzenhausen is memorable, but takeout will do well enough for now

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN  
Stars and Stripes

If we ever get to eat in restaurants again, Zum Kaaser, tucked away in a village northwest of Kaiserslautern, is at the top of my list.

The restaurant is spread out inside a spacious, restored stone building that's been in the same family for more than 100 years, and exudes country charm. In winter, a table near the fireplace is the best seat in the house, while the beer garden is ideal for soaking up Germany's long summer nights.

Zum Kaaser, pronounced "Kay-zer" here and meaning "to the emperor," offers classic German fare like schnitzel and spaetzle (egg noodle pasta) as well as less-traditional meat, fish and vegetarian dishes made with seasonal ingredients.

The few times I was there before the pandemic, the service was prompt and pleasant, and the owner recommended one of the best Bordeaux wines I've ever had.

It's hard to capture the essence of the place, in both quality of food and atmosphere, in takeout boxes. But that's the only way Zum Kaaser has stayed afloat during the coronavirus lockdown, offering a limited to-go menu during dinner hours on most days and delivery service to neighboring villages.

When ordering takeout earlier this month, my family and I opted for burgers



over the other menu staples, pasta and salad.

My kids each ordered a cheeseburger with a side of French fries. The one meat patty with melted cheese on a sesame bun with lettuce was satisfying, about the right size for older kids.

I went for the vegetarian burger, a patty made with lentils and pumpkin in a red bun, with a side of fried potato wedges that quickly lost their crispiness in the takeout box. The honey mustard sauce paired well with the burger.

Those with hearty appetites could try the Texas burger — about half a pound of ground beef topped with gouda cheese and bacon. Other meat options include a grilled chicken burger with tomato, pineapple and curry sauce. Some of the burgers are on the pricey side at about 13 euros.

On a whim, we ordered bruschetta, an appetizer of meal-size proportions. The base had a thin, flaky crust, similar to flammkuchen, a pizza-like meal popular in Germany and France's Alsace region. It was topped with diced tomato, cucumbers

## Zum Kaaser

**Location:** Schulstrasse 1, D-67685 Erzenhausen  
**Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.; closed on Thursday.

**Prices:** Appetizers start at 4.50 euros. Burgers run from about 4-13 euros. Expect to pay more than 10 euros for most salads and specials. Kids menu has chicken nuggets, hamburger, schnitzel and pasta, all under 7 euros. Credit cards are accepted.

**Parking:** available across the street from the restaurant.

**Information:** Phone: (49) (0) 6374-1647; email: info@kaeaeser.de; online: zum-kaeaeser.de

Jennifer Svan



Zum Kaaser, a restaurant and inn in rural Erzenhausen, a village northwest of Kaiserslautern, has a special takeout menu during the lockdown and offers delivery service to neighboring villages.



A vegetarian burger at Zum Kaaser in Erzenhausen, made with lentils and pumpkin and served on a red bun, is a hearty alternative to a traditional hamburger.

and onion, and drizzled with balsamic vinegar. It was a good choice.

While we still much prefer the dine-in experience, we enjoyed our food and rejoiced at not having to cook or do dishes, at least for a night. When the restaurant reopens, I plan to try their ice cream — I

found some rave reviews about it on Trip Advisor — and celebrate the end of lockdown there with either prosecco or a dark beer.

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## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY NANCY MONTGOMERY/Stars and Stripes

The Santuario della Madonna di Monte Berico, first built in the 15th century and rebuilt over the next two centuries as a tribute and offering to the Virgin Mary to save the faithful from the plague, stands high on a hill above Vicenza.

# A divine pilgrimage

## Heavenly views wait at the end of a steep climb to Vicenza's 15th century Sanctuary of Saint Mary of Mount Berico church

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY  
*Stars and Stripes*

Millions of pilgrims have made their way over the centuries up the hill from Vicenza to the Sanctuary of Saint Mary of Mount Berico, sometimes on their hands and knees.

The church, built originally in the 15th century to persuade Mary to use her influence with God to stop a plague resurgence, is a Marian shrine that overlooks the city.

Every first Sunday of the month, thousands have made the climb “to ask for a grace or to give thanks for having received one, or simply to pay a visit to the Virgin Mary,” according to 30 Giorni magazine. The church was open most days to tourists and worshippers alike.



The winding road up to the Santuario della Madonna di Monte Berico is popular with bikers and motorcyclists. Motorists can marvel at the 150 arches alongside the road meant to shelter pilgrims.

The newest plague, the coronavirus pandemic, has put such pilgrimages on hold. The church is now closed weekdays.

But fitness devotees can still make the trek. Those up for the steep climb can arrive at the sanctuary via a 700-meter-long, two-sectioned archway built in the 18th century. The design, consisting of 150 arches, grouped in sets of 10, symbolizes various Roman Catholic traditions such as the 150 Hail Marys of the Rosary.

Another route begins at the “Arch of the Little Stairs,” designed by Palladio and built in 1596, which leads to 192 steps divided into 32 flights. It formed the only access path to the Sanctuary until the construction of the arcade made the hike easier.

It's an altogether more leisurely drive, on a broad, winding motorway, eight minutes from the city center. The white marble church comes impressively into view, with the graceful arches off to the side.

Even the capacious parking lot — also called the Piazzale della Vittoria — is something to see. From there, a full view of the city awaits, along with views of Monte Grappa, the foothills of the Alps and the Venetian lagoon.

There's also a little park with a sweet statue of a mother joyously holding aloft her baby and a toddler clinging to her hip. The title is “Grazie, Mama.”

The park, called the Garden of Victory, also features a monument to the Alpini, the Italian Army's specialist mountain infantry, known for their World War I heroism.

Just up the street on the Viale Dieci Giugno is another bigger park on the grounds of the Museo del Risorgimento e della Resistenza. It's a green, quiet space with trails laid among huge conifers and interspersed with sunny glades.

montgomery.nancy@stripes.com  
Twitter:@montgomerynancy



Hiking up the hill to the Santuario della Madonna di Monte Berico takes the hiker through a series of 150 arches built in the 18th century to shelter pilgrims.

### On the QT

**Directions:** The church is at Viale X Giugno, 87, 36100 Vicenza. From the Tribunale di Vicenza, where there's a nearby paid parking lot, there are several walking routes. Each, between about 1.5 miles and 2 miles, takes 20-30 minutes. A drive takes four minutes.

**Hours:** In keeping with pandemic rules, the church is currently open only for weekend mass.

**Cost:** Free

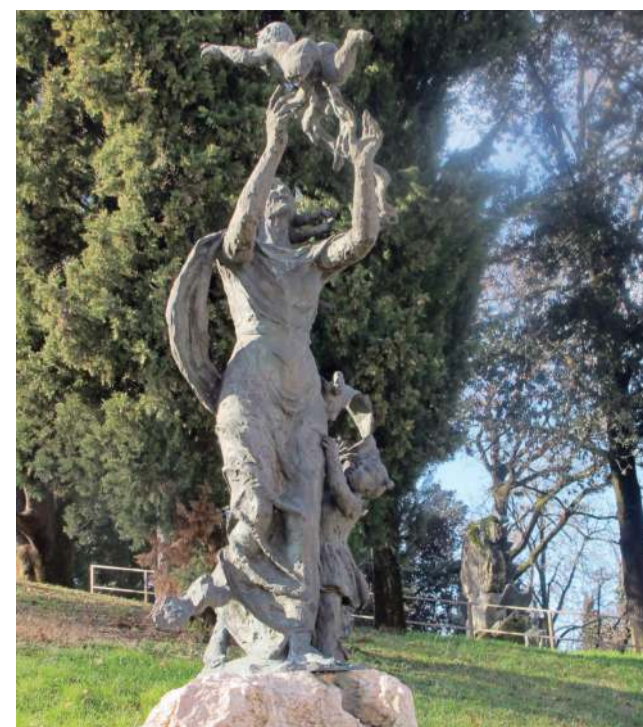
**Food:** Several snack bars are currently closed. Al Pellegrino 1926, a restaurant on site, is open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends.

**Website:** monteberico.it, in Italian.

Nancy Montgomery



The view extends for miles at the parking lot of the church, from the city of Vicenza to Monte Grappa, the foothills of the Alps and the Venetian Lagoon.



A small park across from the church honors mothers and the Alpini, the Italian Army's mountain troops known for their exploits in World War I.

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Freedom to move about

These European destinations are allowing tourists vaccinated for COVID-19 — but Americans are still not welcome at most

BY SHANNON McMAHON  
*The Washington Post*

**W**ith coronavirus vaccination efforts mounting in many parts of the world, some travelers may be looking forward to their inoculation in hopes of traveling again. And while there are growing arguments against vaccine passports, some nations have begun allowing vaccinated travelers to bypass the usual entry requirements, like a 14-day quarantine.

European nations and remote tropical islands are among the destinations welcoming vaccinated travelers even though health experts remain uncertain about coronavirus vaccines' ability to prevent transmission of the virus.

Most vaccines “have not proven that they decrease transmission, so the patient may still get mild or asymptomatic versions of the disease and they may then be able to transmit it,” said Carlos Acuna-Villaorduna, an infectious-disease physician at Boston Medical Center. “We don't know yet, but there are groups studying that.”

The risk associated with allowing vaccinated travelers, for now, is that they might carry a contagious amount of the virus without being sick and infect unvaccinated people in the destination they are visiting. Perhaps for that reason, some nations allowing vaccinated visitors are still requiring coronavirus tests before arrival.

Here are the destinations that have announced they will allow vaccinated travelers, and what the terms of entry are.



**Bucharest, the capital city of Romania, awaits foreign visitors who have been vaccinated against COVID-19.**



iStock photos

**Travelers to Nicosia, Cyprus, will soon be able to bypass coronavirus entry requirements such as a 14-day quarantine by showing proof of vaccination. Cyprus is one of seven countries open, or soon to be open, to vaccinated travelers.**

## The Seychelles

The islands of the Seychelles now allow “all visitors from any part of the world who have been vaccinated” to enter without quarantining. The Seychelles' list of permitted countries for incoming travel no longer applies to those who are fully vaccinated at least two weeks before their arrival.

Vaccinated visitors will still be required to supply a negative coronavirus test result in the form of a PCR test taken less than 72 hours before travel. Those vaccinated, tested visitors are “allowed free movement throughout their stay in Seychelles,” the islands' tourism board said in a statement.

## Georgia

The non-EU nation of Georgia reopened this month to travelers who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus. It will not require testing or prevent those from high-risk nations from entering.

“Citizens of all countries, traveling by air from any country, may enter Georgia if they present the document confirming the full course (two doses) of any COVID-19 vaccination at the border checkpoints of Georgia,” the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

## Estonia

The government of Estonia, which does not permit U.S.-based travelers because of EU entry restrictions, recently announced it will now allow individuals from lower-risk countries who have recovered from the coronavirus or have received an approved coronavirus vaccine, both in the past six months, to visit without quarantining. Proof of previously testing positive for the coronavirus or a vaccination certificate in English, Russian or Estonian will be accepted for entry.

## Romania

The EU nation of Romania, which does not permit Americans to enter, lifted quarantine requirements for vaccinated travelers on Jan. 18, according to U.K. officials. Travelers from permitted countries such as England will be allowed entry without testing or quarantine after 10 days from their final dose of the vaccine.

## Iceland

Beginning in May, travelers from low-risk countries in



**Husavik, on the eastern shore of Iceland, shines in the late-afternoon light. The country plans to open its borders in May to non-U.S. travelers who can show proof that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19.**

Europe may enter Iceland, an E.U. member, without restrictions if they are fully vaccinated.

Travelers “who are in possession of valid documentation that proves prior infection or vaccination against COVID-19” can skip Iceland's screening and quarantine measures, the country's government says. The country also notes that its “unique geographical position” may contribute to “measures at the border [that] will most likely be stricter than those prescribed by the EU.”

## Cyprus

The island of Cyprus, which is considered European territory by the European Union and is not allowing U.S. travelers to enter, has also announced that starting in March, it will welcome vaccinated travelers who are permitted to visit Europe.

## Poland

The government of Poland, which is also subject to EU rules denying Americans entry until further notice, allows travelers from European Union nations to enter with proof of vaccination.

“Persons who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 are exempted from the obligatory quarantine (on the basis of a certificate confirming vaccination against COVID-19),” Poland's entry rules state. The permissions for vaccinated travelers have been in place since Dec. 28.

# WEEKEND: FOOD & TRAVEL

# It's like school lunch in a bun

## The mac 'n' cheese sandwich at Mos Burger introduces Japan to a uniquely Western flavor

BY THERON GODBOLD  
*Stars and Stripes*

Japan's second largest burger chain, Mos Burger, added a new flavor to its menu Feb. 10, a potato croquette covered in macaroni and cheese and stuffed between burger buns.

The sandwich, available for a limited time only, is introducing the Japanese public to a very Western flavor.

Mac 'n' cheese, a staple comfort dish in the United States and some European countries, is still a mystery to 88% of Japanese people, according to a survey by Market Development Institute from Oct. 27.

A hot croquette is laid on lettuce, then drizzled with Mos Burger's special meat sauce and covered in creamy macaroni and cheese that is sprinkled with kishi nanko plum, a Japanese plum that adds a tangy taste, and dried bonito flakes that add a salty, smoky flavor from the Bonito tuna they are made from, to make up the center of the sandwich.

It is a "hot and voluminous burger perfect for the cold season," Mos Burger says on its website.

At 978 yen, or about \$9.35, for a large meal set that includes a fries and a drink, the new burger reminded me of a school lunch in the 1980s — a Friday special of mac 'n' cheese and tater tots that tasted so good during childhood, but just OK as you get older.



Theron Godbold/Stars and Stripes

A new sandwich from Mos Burger, one of Japan's most popular fast-food burger chains, pairs macaroni and cheese with a potato croquette. The mac 'n' cheese burger is only available for a limited time.

A hint of horseradish heat in Mos Burger's secret meat sauce flavors the sandwich, but the overall taste was a bit bland and could use a little salt.

The portions are rather large for Japanese fast food, but smaller than a typical American portion. The large meal set is about the same size as a small combo at U.S. chain restaurants.

The Mos Burger website doesn't say when the mac 'n' cheese-croquette burger will be discontinued.

If you are looking for something a little different but somehow familiar, this sandwich might hit the spot.

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# Discount rail passes will soon be available for US troops in Japan

BY HANA KUSUMOTO  
*Stars and Stripes*

Expats and foreign workers, including those in Japan under the status of forces agreement, have long grumbled about people on tourist visas being able to ride the country's rails on discounted fares.

Starting April 1, a couple of these low-cost passes will be available to foreign residents, too, according to a news release from East Japan Railway. They'll offer unlimited rides for five consecutive days on some JR East lines, including the high-speed shinkansen, and other designated trains and buses.

However, only tourists can purchase the popular Japan Rail Pass, which offers unlimited rides nationwide.

The passes that will be offered to foreign residents are called "JR East Pass (Tohoku area)" and "JR East Pass (Nagano, Niigata area)."

The Tohoku pass will be available for travel in the Tohoku region in the northern

part of Japan's mainland, Honshu, and in the Kanto region, which includes Tokyo and the surrounding prefectures.

The pass for Niigata and Nagano will be available for travel in the Kanto region and in the Nagano and Niigata prefectures in the central and western parts of the island.

The Tohoku passes cost 20,000 yen (about \$191) for adults and 10,000 yen (\$95) for children. Nagano, Niigata passes are 18,000 yen for adults (\$172) and 9,000 yen (\$86) for children.

The passes will be sold at Narita International Airport and most major stations with passport-reader ticketing machines: Tokyo, Ueno, Shinjuku, Ikebukuro, Shibuya, Shinagawa, Hamamatscho, Yokohama, Mito, Sendai, Yamagata, Fukushima, Morioka, Hachinohe, Aomori, Akita, Niigata, Nagano and Matsumoto.

The change comes as the company revises the rail passes, which were available only as paper tickets. The new passes will be machine-readable to let pass holders



Aaron Kidd/Stars and Stripes

U.S. troops stationed in Japan will soon be able to get discounted ride passes usually reserved for tourists for the shinkansen, or high-speed bullet train.

use automatic ticket gates. Current passes must be shown to station staff to pass the gates.

The two passes will supplement the already available JR Tokyo Wide Pass, which offers unlimited use of trains in the

Kanto region for three consecutive days. The passes cost 10,180 yen (\$97) for adults and 5,090 yen (\$49) for children.

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WEEKEND: FOOD

# Power up with Mario snacks

7-Elevens in Japan are celebrating Nintendo star's 35th birthday with 6 limited-time treats

BY THERON GODBOLD  
Stars and Stripes

Japan's ubiquitous 7-Elevens are marking 35 years of Nintendo's plucky plumber Mario smashing Goombas, knocking Bowser into lava and saving Princess Peach with themed snacks and a giveaway.

Present the 7-Eleven app on your mobile phone when purchasing one of the six items and you're entered to win coupons, tote bags or even a Nintendo Switch gaming system.

Like the prizes, the snacks can be sweet, but also savory.



Light and airy, the taste of Princess Peach's Dolce floats across your tongue, just as she floats across the screen in Super Mario Bros. 2.

## Mario's Mixed Roll

This snack named for the franchise's hero harkens to his possible Italian heritage. The sandwich is stuffed with a Neapolitan mushroom pasta and tomato sauce, a croquette and egg salad. The seemingly strange combination results in a multi-leveled flavor experience.

## Bowser's Fire Breathing Super Spicy Karaage Roll

Bowser's snack pays homage to his spicy life in the video game world. The fried chicken that fills the roll is flavored with a chili sauce that has a curry-like aftertaste, and when you finish, like playing the game, you feel accomplished.

## Princess Peach's Dolce

Light and airy, the taste of Princess Peach's Dolce, a double-layered confection of smooth strawberry cream cheese and sweet-and-sour strawberry jelly, floats across your tongue, just as she floats across the screen in Super Mario Bros. 2. Like her character, the sweet snack is designed to mimic her look, crowned with golden stars and clothed in pink and red.

## Super Star's Agar

Power up with this mildly sweet milk pudding with a creamy pineapple topping. This golden-topped snack can cleanse the palate after you have a go at Bowser or the three-course Mario sandwich.

## Yoshi's Green Melon Bread

The green melon bread, drizzled with a sugary topping, is filled with a whipped melon cream. "Womp-pow," the sound echoes through my mind when I bite into this tasty treat, like I'm hopping on my first Yoshi playing Mario as a kid on Super Nintendo.

## Fire Flower Fiery Curry Steamed Buns

Stamped with a Fire Flower emblem on top, this steamed bun is filled with a red tomato chicken curry, but according to Nintendolife.com, it's apparently less spicy than Bowser's chicken sandwich.

Each item in the Mario snack buffet costs on average 125 yen, about \$1.25. Make a speed run to 7-Eleven before Feb. 24, because after that the snack promotion is GAME OVER.

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PHOTOS BY AARON KIDD/Stars and Stripes

Japan's ubiquitous 7-Elevens are celebrating 35 years of Nintendo's plucky Italian plumber Mario with several themed snacks and a giveaway.



Mario's Mixed Roll features a Neapolitan mushroom pasta and tomato sauce, a croquette and egg salad resulting in a multileveled flavor experience.



The fried chicken that fills Bowser's Fire Breathing Super Spicy Karaage Roll is flavored with a kicky chili sauce that has a curry-like aftertaste.



Bowser's Fire Breathing Super Spicy Karaage Roll pays homage to his spicy life in the video game world. When you finish, like playing the game, you feel accomplished.

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## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## ‘Ultimate pilgrimage’

Disney fans have their post-pandemic sights set on Tokyo Disney Resort

BY CARLYE WISEL  
Bloomberg

As some families eagerly await COVID-19 vaccinations so they can get their Mickey-loving kids back to the Magic Kingdom, the most passionate Disney fans are looking forward to something else entirely: a trip to Japan.

Tokyo Disney Resort will emerge from the pandemic bigger and better than before. And it’s already a nostalgia feast — the idyllic Disney of childhood as preserved in one’s mind, where soap is magically dispensed in the shape of Mickey Mouse and families efficiently board versions of Space Mountain and Big Thunder Mountain Railroad that somehow always look as good as new.

Only-in-Japan rides and unique experiences, such as a Big Band revue with Mickey Mouse playing the drums live, amp up the charm. Whimsical snacks — including mochi shaped as Toy Story’s Little Green Men aliens, soft-boiled eggs with Mickey-shaped yolks, and a rotating variety of popcorn flavors that include garlic shrimp, curry and honey-soy — can’t be found anywhere else. And on souvenir stands, kawaii culture makes for Disney keepsakes unlike any others.

That’s why 3 million visitors to the parks each year (in normal times) come from overseas — 10% of its total attendance. In 2019, Tokyo Disney Resort reported record-setting visits while its sibling parks in the U.S. and Hong Kong saw 3% declines in attendance.

“It truly does feel like the ultimate pilgrimage,” says Geoffrey Koester, a higher education administrator, content creator and lifelong Disney fan.

That’s partially because the two theme parks, Disneyland and DisneySea, four hotels, and shopping district located at Tokyo Disney Resort are wholly owned by the deep-pocketed Oriental Land Co.; in addition to licensing and royalty fees, it contracts Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI) to bring its next-level visions to life.

Unlike Walt Disney Co., OLC’s business entities almost completely revolve around the theme park resort, resulting in well-funded experiences, along with forward-thinking expansions that celebrate nostalgic Disney icons rather than flashy commercial acquisitions. (That comes with a flip side; a less-diversified balance sheet means the company lost its only real source of income during its four-month closure in 2020.)



Japan News-Yomiuri

Visitors wearing masks pose at Tokyo Disneyland July 20 in Urayasu, Japan. The Tokyo park offers attractions found nowhere else.

Cutting-edge technology combined with a reverence for classic Disney stories, rather than its more recently acquired Star Wars and Marvel franchises, is the fairy dust to Tokyo Disney’s appeal. A \$720 million “Beauty and the Beast” expansion completed in 2020, for instance, gives guests a ride through Beast’s castle from aboard an enchanted teacup; a further \$2.4 billion will soon bring “Peter Pan” and “Tangled” attractions to DisneySea in a more significant way than at parks in the U.S. There’s a caveat, though: While it’s all familiar intellectual property, the storytelling is primarily in Japanese, be it on rides, shows or parades.

“I often find myself wishing I could erase all of my memories and experience our Disney parks again for the first time,” says Alexa Starkey, dental hygienist and self-proclaimed Disney adult. “Tokyo Disney Resort represents a way to get that first-time Disney feeling again.”

Tokyo DisneySea tends to astonish Americans most. Taking inspiration from the seven seas, its “ports” meld shockingly realistic scenery wherein a Venetian gondola drifts past a fiery volcano, or an elevated train bypasses turn-of-the-century Manhattan as it curls toward a steam-powered ocean liner.

“So many of the attractions at Tokyo are not found at any other park, and even those that share a name with another park aren’t nearly the same experience,” Koester says.

The Jules Verne-inspired Journey to the Center of the Earth, for instance, puts

passengers face-to-face with a ghastly, oversized lava monster before bursting through a volcano; the Japanese take on Tower of Terror drops its original “Twilight Zone” theme for a fresh storyline about the disappearance of a wealthy hotelier. On the entertainment side, the nighttime Electrical Parade Dreamlights puts a modern spin on the illuminated Main Street Electrical Parade floats of yesteryear, while stage shows include the Mardi Gras dance revue, Let’s Party Gras.

The parks are also a proving ground for technology. Pooh’s Hunny Hunt — in which a sweet but slightly psychedelic story unfolds from a seemingly self-driving vehicle — pioneered “trackless” rides nearly two decades before one arrived at Walt Disney World. Now Disney’s U.S. parks are using this system for many of their freshest attractions, such as the Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance ride that opened in 2019 at Disney’s Hollywood Studios.

Daniel Jue, WDI portfolio creative executive for Tokyo Disney Resort, has a further theory regarding the parks’ devout fandom: its Japanese guests. Here, they don matching outfits and character headbands, mimic parade choreography, and simply let loose in a way that doesn’t happen elsewhere in Japan’s day-to-day society. It’s participation as attraction.

“My hypothesis is that there is a kind of a human, essential need that Tokyo Disney Resort fulfills for our Japanese guests,” he says.

Take Duffy the Disney Bear, a stuffed

animal that received a lukewarm reception in American parks but is perhaps the greatest Tokyo Disney phenomenon. Japanese audiences dress up Duffy dolls in costumes, push them in strollers, and commandeer high chairs for the dolls in restaurants.

Duffy’s crew of a half-dozen gleefully simplistic animals, known as Duffy & Friends, have such strong appeal that they paved the way for OLC to generate roughly \$8 billion a year in merchandise spending in 2018 and 2019.

Cultural beliefs such as omotenashi — the Japanese philosophy of intuitive hospitality — only further Disney’s own core values of service with a smile. Such little things as the fact that bags left in one’s room can be seamlessly transferred to another hotel are commonplace Japanese amenities that would come across (at best) as unconventional consumer demands at American theme parks.

Tokyo Disney Resorts closed for months at the start of the pandemic, then reopened on a limited basis in July, with fewer available shops and restaurants in order to facilitate social distancing. By the time international borders reopen, operations should be closer to normal.

Rules and regulations, including bookings and ticket sales, are ever-changing amid the pandemic.

Generally, first-time guests are encouraged to book hotels roughly six months in advance, with rooms at Hotel MiraCosta — facing the visual spectacle of Tokyo DisneySea — in highest demand.

“So many of the attractions at Tokyo are not found at any other park, and even those that share a name with another park aren’t nearly the same experience.”

Geoffrey Koester

higher education administrator, content creator and lifelong Disney fan

## WEEKEND: BOOKS

# ‘Your life doesn’t have to be just sports’

Basketball coach’s wife writes children’s book to reinforce that Black people can be successful in any career

By **EMILY GIAMBALVO**  
*The Washington Post*

**Y**ears ago, when two of Tierra Haynes’ three children were still toddlers and the family lived in Toledo, Ohio, she shuttled her kids around in a minivan with a DVD player in the back seat. The youngest two boys, Devon and Dallas, loved “Mr. Peabody & Sherman,” repeatedly watching the movie that follows a boy and a dog as they time travel to visit historical figures. One day, Haynes thought to herself: Why do these characters rarely meet anybody Black?

Around the same time, Haynes’ oldest son, DeAndre Jr., realized he was one of the only Black kids in his class. Conversations during Black History Month felt uncomfortable when the other third graders looked toward him. That planted the idea in Haynes’ mind. Her kids — and all kids — needed to know more about important Black figures in American history. She imagined writing a children’s book to help fill the void. But her life was busy, raising three boys and investing in dozens of others who played basketball for her husband’s teams, so the thought remained nothing more than an unfinished idea.

DeAndre Haynes’ job took the family from Toledo to Michigan and now to the University of Maryland, where he’s an assistant basketball coach.

His family’s life orbits sports. Little Dre, 13, plays AAU basketball, and 7-year-old Devon loves football. Their childhood has been packed with role models by way of their dad’s basketball teams. They consider former Michigan player Jordan Poole a brother, and when Devon recently gave his mom a list of people to invite to his virtual birthday party, he included former Terps Anthony Cowan Jr. and Jalen Smith. Ask Little Dre what he wants to be when he grows up, and he will say an NBA player. If not that, maybe he would coach like his dad.

Tierra Haynes half-hoped she would pass a bookstore and see that somebody else had written the books she envisioned, but the void remained. And then this spring, following the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and too many others, she realized she couldn’t wait.

“It became painfully clear to me that these were stories that needed to be told,” Haynes said. “It became very important to me for my boys to not only have the news or the NBA to see images of other Black men.”



Kelsey Price

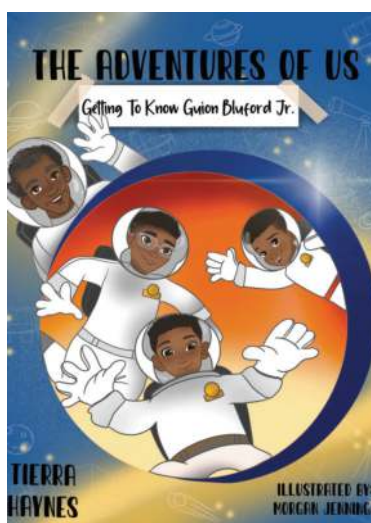
**Tierra Haynes, the wife of Maryland basketball assistant coach DeAndre Haynes, wrote a children’s book about the first African American astronaut, Guion Bluford Jr. Haynes’ children — Dre, Devon and Dallas — are the main characters in the book, “The Adventures of Us: Getting to Know Guion Bluford Jr.”**

While at home during the pandemic, Haynes wrote for months. She long ago landed on Guion Bluford Jr., the first African American to go to space, as an ideal character. By the fall, Haynes had finished a manuscript for a book that follows her three sons on a trip to space, where they meet and learn about Bluford. A couple of weeks ago, she finally held a hardback copy of her book, “The Adventures of Us: Getting to Know Guion Bluford Jr.,” and now it’s landing in the hands of other children.

Tierra and DeAndre Haynes want their boys to see an array of career paths. Little Dre has lately become interested in videography, and his parents have pointed out the member of Maryland basketball’s staff who does that work. Devon enjoys art, and 6-year-old Dallas loves animals.

“We try to tell them that: Your life doesn’t have to be just sports,” DeAndre Haynes said. “You look at it out here, man, there are so many successful people who are not doing something with a basketball, with a ball, on a field, on a court. And we want them to know that.”

When Haynes was a kid in Detroit, he watched the Pistons and their rival Michael Jordan.



“I didn’t see other successful Black people,” he said, and basketball launched Haynes to the life he has now. He was a stand-out point guard for Kent State before playing overseas. But even decades later, during team conversations about racial injustice last summer, Haynes realized some of his players were unaware of important Black individuals in American history.

As parents, Haynes and his wife found books with diverse characters for their kids to read, “but it had to be intentional,” Tierra said. “It wasn’t typically something that you would just

stumble upon.” In the room where they now attend virtual school, she hung posters of Thurgood Marshall and Bessie Coleman. It’s all part of the effort to reinforce that they can do anything. That’s the purpose of the book, which Haynes hopes is the first in a series.

After Haynes had the idea while living in Ohio, then settled on Bluford as the character while living in Michigan, her husband found an illustrator because of his ties at the University of Maryland. Nearly two years ago, an assistant coach for the Terrapins’ women’s basketball team posted a digital drawing of her staff, noting that her friend Morgan Jennings had created the image. DeAndre, who had long believed in his wife’s idea for a book, immediately contacted Jennings and Kaitlynn Fratz, the Maryland assistant. The first question he asked Jennings: “Can you draw Black people?” Realistic illustrations were nonnegotiable.

Jennings played college basketball at California University of Pennsylvania, where she became close friends with Fratz. During college, Jennings gravitated toward art and incorporated Black characters and culture into her work — “all I had ever want-

ed to do was work for Disney so that I could see myself as a character,” she said.

When working on this book, Haynes wanted the three boys to undoubtedly look like her sons. Jennings said she drew the spacesuits specifically so they would not cover the boys’ hair. When Dallas dreams of being an astronaut on the final page, Jennings didn’t want the thought bubble to show a silhouette or the back of a head. It needed to be “him as a Black man on the moon,” she said. “That’s important. They need to see that. It’s little details that we really focused on to make sure the idea of representation is definitely there.”

Haynes’ children had a role in the design process, offering feedback to Jennings. Little Dre wanted his character to also wear glasses, and they made sure Devon had the gap between his front teeth. Dallas said he wants to learn how to do a backflip soon, so Jennings drew him upside-down while floating through space.

Haynes chose Bluford as the subject of her first book a few years ago because, at the time, her boys were interested in space. She knew that would be a visually appealing topic to make learning fun. She wants her boys to become even more involved moving forward, letting them choose possible topics to explore. Little Dre suggested the next book be about an important woman in Black history “so that it could be equal,” the 13-year-old said, explaining how a young Black girl could see herself in these books, too.

Basketball will always be an integral piece of their lives. And if Little Dre wants to be a professional basketball player, his parents are going to help him get there. Subtle reminders of the sport appear in the book: Little Dre is holding a ball on one page, and later, Dallas calls Bluford “the Michael Jordan of astronauts.” But basketball — and dreams of becoming an astronaut, an architect or a doctor — can intersect.

At some of her husband’s previous coaching stops, the team’s players have read books at local schools. That’s one of the visions she has with the book — to have the Jordan Pooles and Jalen Smiths of the world read to kids, highlighting these paths of possibility.

“That would be such a full-circle moment,” Haynes said, “for all the pieces of our lives to be able to come together in that way.”

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

Q&amp;A



# Finding the light amid the darkness

CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Singer-songwriter Robin Thicke poses for a portrait at Gold Diggers Sound in Los Angeles on Feb. 3 to promote his eighth album, "On Earth, and in Heaven."

## Robin Thicke discovers humility and happiness while coping with hard times

BY MESFIN FEKADU  
Associated Press

A tabloid-heavy divorce and monstrous lawsuit about his biggest hit was hard enough, but then life hit Robin Thicke beyond the gossip column.

His father, "Growing Pains" actor Alan Thicke, died. The following year, his popular manager Jordan Feldstein — actor Jonah Hill's brother who also oversaw Maroon 5's career — died at just 40.

Thicke's Malibu, Calif., home burned down a year later because of the Woolsey fire. And last year his champion and mentor Andre Harrell, the record executive who launched the careers of Sean "Diddy"

Combs and Mary J. Blige, died.

"I've always been a pretty positive person and obviously this five, six years I just went through challenged all of my preconceived notions of faith and positivity," Thicke said.

While trying to live life and find the light, Thicke also grew distant from music — a hard realization for the Grammy-nominated performer who typically takes one to two-year breaks between albums.

Then he wrote a song about his father. And another about Harrell.

"I just kind of woke up out of the fog, the creative fog I was in and personal fog I was in. Just started seeing the world a little differently, finally," he said.

"On Earth, and in Heaven," Thicke's eighth album, was released Feb. 12. The 11-track set is a breezy, acoustic R&B journey about his hard and heavy times, though hope is at the center of it.

"That's What Love Can Do," which closes the album, was written after his father passed; "Look Easy," the new single, is dedicated to "the front line workers and our moms and our teachers"; "Out of My Mind" touches on depression and anxiety as well as finding peace; and "Beautiful" is about finding the light in a sea of darkness.

In an interview with The Associated Press, edited for clarity and brevity, Thicke talks about writing about his loved ones, getting rid of his ego, fatherhood and what he learned from the gift and curse that was "Blurred Lines."

**AP: You've been through a lot in the past few years, but the album is positive. Is that the message you wanted to send?**

**Thicke:** That's what the album really is: when everything hits the wall. And some of these things I could not control — my father, Andre, my manager Jordan Feldstein, my house burning down. But there were other things that happened like getting a divorce, getting sued, getting bad public press. There were things that I did and that I could have done much better, that I could have handled much better that made all of these problems come into play at one time. My vanity. My ego. My arrogance. All the things that needed to be met all were met over this period of time. They all shook hands and they fought it out. Right now, the good angel is winning and is enjoying music and his family. ... I'm really just going through a gratitude period for everything I have. I'm happier because of it.

**What helped you get out of that dark place?**

I think we all reach our breaking point in some way. The world is telling you, "You need to make some changes." The people that love you, the people that don't, somehow you're getting a recurring message that change needs to happen. For me, I had to strip down my selfishness, my vanity, my self-importance. My sensitivities of being made fun of or being called names.

I think that is one of the great superpowers, to be able to laugh at yourself, to not take yourself too seriously and to enjoy the room, even when they're teasing you. I didn't have that before. I held on to my music and my art too tight. I held on to everything I had worked so hard for too tight. Then I couldn't take any negativity —

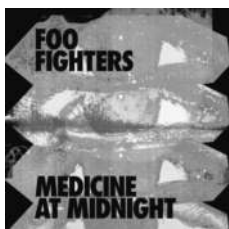
SEE LIGHT ON PAGE 29

## WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

## Foo Fighters

Medicine at Midnight  
(Roswell/RCA)

“Medicine at Midnight” is what happens when Foo Fighters embrace grooves instead of riffs. Who asked for that? No one, really. But we should have.



The nine-track album clocks in at a swift 36 minutes and it's the band's coolest in years, throwing out sounds they've rarely shown before — David Bowie, hair metal and glam rock. The band sounds like it's having fun.

Adele and Kelly Clarkson producer Greg Kurstin — who also helmed the band's 2017 album “Concrete and Gold” — has turned the often dour Foo Fighters leader Dave Grohl into a party songwriter with an album that sometimes veers toward parody but never crosses the line.

“Making a Fire” has finger snaps and na-na-na lyrics (listen for Grohl's 14-year-old daughter, Violet, on backing vocals).

“Cloudspotter” sounds like Warrant's “Cherry Pie” and has a Jimi Hendrix-style riff along with a nod to him in the lyrics (“Refuse me while I kiss the sky”).

“Holding Poison” has a Hüsker Dü feeling, and “Chasing Birds” is like a psychedelic mood-changer that The Flaming Lips could have recorded, with Grohl singing: “The road to hell is paved with broken parts / Bleeding hearts like mine.”

The anti-war “No Son of Mine” has a Metallica feel and the title track, we swear, has a slinky Roxy Music vibe and a guitar solo reminiscent of Bowie's “Let's Dance.” Speaking of Bowie, there's more than a touch of The Thin White Duke to “Shame Shame” — a little “Fame” at least.

The old Foes are not entirely erased. The last song, “Love Dies Young,” is a classic rocker that could have come from any of the band's previous nine albums.

But the fact that they can still surprise and create great new sounds after 10 albums is enough to cheer. “Go and put that record on,” Grohl sings in one song — and you should.

— Mark Kennedy  
Associated Press

## COMMENTARY

## Taylor Swift's remade 'Love Story' is still a classic, but now it's all hers

BY MIKAEL WOOD

Los Angeles Times

Thirteen years ago, Taylor Swift opened her song “Love Story” with a memory: “We were both young when I first saw you,” the precocious country star, then 18, sang in the lead single from her 2008 “Fearless” album, “I close my eyes and the flashback starts.”

Now she's remembering that memory — and her recall is pretty close to total.

On Feb. 11, Swift, now 31 and one of the world's biggest pop acts, released a rerecorded version of the Romeo and Juliet-themed “Love Story” as the first sampling from a highly anticipated overhaul of “Fearless,” due April 9. The new “Love Story” — officially titled “Love Story (Taylor's Version)” — is virtually indistinguishable from the rendition that gave Swift her first Top 10 hit.

That fidelity is by design, of course. Incensed by music exec Scooter Braun's purchase of her old label Big Machine in 2019, Swift said that year that she planned to rerecord her first six albums as a way to potentially diminish the value of the master recordings newly held by Braun, known among other things for his work with Swift's longtime nemesis Kanye West. (Ownership of an artist's masters, which is typical of a major label, is what enables the label to profit from sales and streams and to control the use of the artist's music in movies, television and commercials.)



JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

**Taylor Swift is rerecording her early material so she can own the rights to the new versions of her songs.**

Last year, Braun sold Swift's catalog to Shamrock Capital for more than \$300 million. According to the singer, Shamrock offered to work with her, but she declined when she learned that Braun would retain a financial interest in her music. In a letter she posted on Twitter, Swift told Shamrock's partners that she intended to proceed with rerecording her old music — the idea being that her new versions would supplant the originals in the marketplace.

So why remake “Fearless,” her second studio album, first? By some measures it's her most successful LP, having sold more than 10 million copies and won four Grammy Awards, including album of the year.

But any Swift super-fan would also recognize the significance of her famous lucky number, 13, in the timing.

The new “Fearless” will feature 26 songs, including previously unre-

leased cuts and hits like “Fifteen” and “You Belong With Me.” In a statement, Swift said “Fearless” chronicled “the adventures and explorations of a teenage girl who was learning tiny lessons with every new crack in the facade of the fairytale ending she'd been shown in the movies.”

In a way, the faithfulness of the new “Love Story” is a disappointment. Swift's 2020 albums, “Folklore” and “Evermore,” are full of grown-up musings on romance and compromise.

One longs to hear what she might make of the starry-eyed idealism of “Love Story.” But then to veer too far from the original would be to endanger the chance that some music supervisor might license this rendition instead of the one Shamrock owns.

Does that make the whole enterprise sound more calculating than we want to believe pop stars are? If so, give Swift credit for talking about her dealings with Braun in starkly emotional terms — “Scooter has stripped me of my life's work,” she said when he bought Big Machine — that have recast a business conflict as a battle over art.

Ditto the way she's framing her remake of “Fearless” — a process, she said, that “has been more fulfilling and emotional than I could've imagined and has made me even more determined to rerecord all of my music.”

Don't doubt that she'll get it done.

## Light: Thicke rebuilds life after personal losses, 'Blurred Lines' lawsuit

FROM PAGE 28

any apples, oranges and tomatoes being thrown at me. At this point in my life, luckily, I've learned to embrace all parts of the culture of fame and entertainment.

**Was it difficult writing about your father on this album?**

It's cathartic for me. It's therapeutic. It helps me get through my tough times. It definitely helped me. If it helps me, then maybe it'll help somebody else. Maybe it'll comfort them.

**Did writing about your father and Andre open the floodgates so you could write the rest of the album?**

Yeah. I spoke with Andre about a week before he passed. We went over my album and he wasn't very impressed, to say the least. He was like, “Where's all the horns and the strings and the vocal production and the background you do? All the bass lines and stuff?” Then he passed away, so I went to work. I realized that he'd already given me so much life and fuel to my fire. He supported me and believed in me and had some new place to take my talents. I wanted to honor him and also honor my father, of course, by finishing it.

**What do you remember most about Andre?**

He was just nonstop positive, fun, generous with his energy, patient with people and inspiring. He really could look around the room and see where everybody was at and give them some little tidbit, some little piece, some little nugget that'll help push them forward. He was almost like an angel in disguise that way. He even taught me that, he said, “You never know if that guy on the street that just handed you his mixtape is the next Jay-Z.” He

saw magic come from the most unlikely of places. He went to the projects and signed Mary J. Blige and told her mother right after she sang, “Your daughter is going to sing for kings and queens someday.” She did. He did that for me. He believed in me more than anybody else did.

**Andre's son, Gianni Credle-Harrell, is listed as a co-writer on “Beautiful.” What was it like working with him?**

That was actually just a fun evening. I had crafted the song, but I didn't have the lyrics finished and I didn't have some of the message finished. I had the chorus, the base of it and the musical structure, but I hadn't connected to what made that song stand apart. Gianni came and he gave me some ideas for some melody flows (and) I ended up keeping a little part.

It wasn't until George Floyd happened that I brought the song back. It was actually sitting still for four years. When George Floyd happened, I went back to the song and I rewrote it because there's a line that says, “I look in your eyes, your smile reminds me what love's about.” That famous picture of George Floyd, where he's smiling, the lyric came back to my head when I saw him smiling in the midst of the situation. I wanted to write a song about tearing down the existing system and rebuilding something that's beautiful, something better.

**What's it like being a father of four?**

We are all in a situation where we are being dealt the hand and whatever hand we're given we have got to make

the most of those playing cards. My house burned down and I saw that as an opportunity to show my son the value of family and laughter and music and dance and movies over material items. OK, we lost our stuff. Our house burned down, but we have each other and we have every day an opportunity to make the most of our days and have a great time together. Laugh and sing and dance and play. It gave me an opportunity to show him how to walk through those things. And with losing the people you love, we all have to learn how to walk through those things on our own. It's nice to know that you're not alone and that somebody out there, or your family friends, can help you walk through it.

**Years later, how do you look at what happened with “Blurred Lines”?**

It was a necessary part of my personal growth. I was partying too much that year. I was celebrating 20 years of hard work and the success that had finally come with it. Some bad routines, some bad habits caught up with me. Then I made some bad decisions. People got hurt. It was time to go away for a little while. Get my perspective. Get my head back on straight. Focus on my son. Focus on what was most important in my life. Then out of that, I started to build back my soul. Started to build back my faith and my confidence very slowly by doing the right thing. I just try to wake up every day and give to my family, give to my friendships and give to my music and do the right thing. I built back some strength inside of me.

## WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

BY GEOFF EDGERS

*The Washington Post*

One morning not so long ago, Sarah Silverman needed some weed. So she drove to Santa Monica and pulled into a parking space outside a dispensary.

That's when the trouble started. A man in an Escalade got out of the car and started screaming: "What's wrong with you? You hit my car, you b——."

Whoa. Silverman was sure that she hadn't so much as smudged his bumper. But, even if she had, did this man's response match the crime? Standing there, Silverman had a choice: shout back or try one of her social experiments. Could kindness convert this negative energy into something positive?

"I'm so sorry," Silverman said without a tinge of sarcasm. "Show me where the scratch is? I'll pay for it."

That's all it took. The man was disarmed. He told her to forget about it; life would move on.

Except that Sarah Silverman knew the story was perfect material — not necessarily comedy gold, but funny enough and with a deeper message. She told her sister, Laura, about it in a Zoom, mentioned it to her producer, Raj Desai, and then recounted it on "The Sarah Silverman Podcast" a few days later.

The interaction is about human behavior and our ability to reshape even the ugliest confrontations by trying just a bit harder. It also highlights Silverman's special superpower, the ability to use her glow and an awwcomeonbuddy nudge to convert all sorts of nasty mojo.

She would be delivering this story on-stage now, except that there's a pandemic and, therefore, no gigs. Or she might be telling it on TV, except that Hulu canceled her "I Love You, America" series in 2019 and HBO passed on her latest pilot last year. Then again, it makes cosmic sense that this is being told on her podcast, because it's hard to imagine Silverman's pot-fueled parable getting space to breathe on those other platforms. The HBO bigwigs would have told her to tighten up the anecdote. The rules of standup would have required the setup to be met by a punchline.

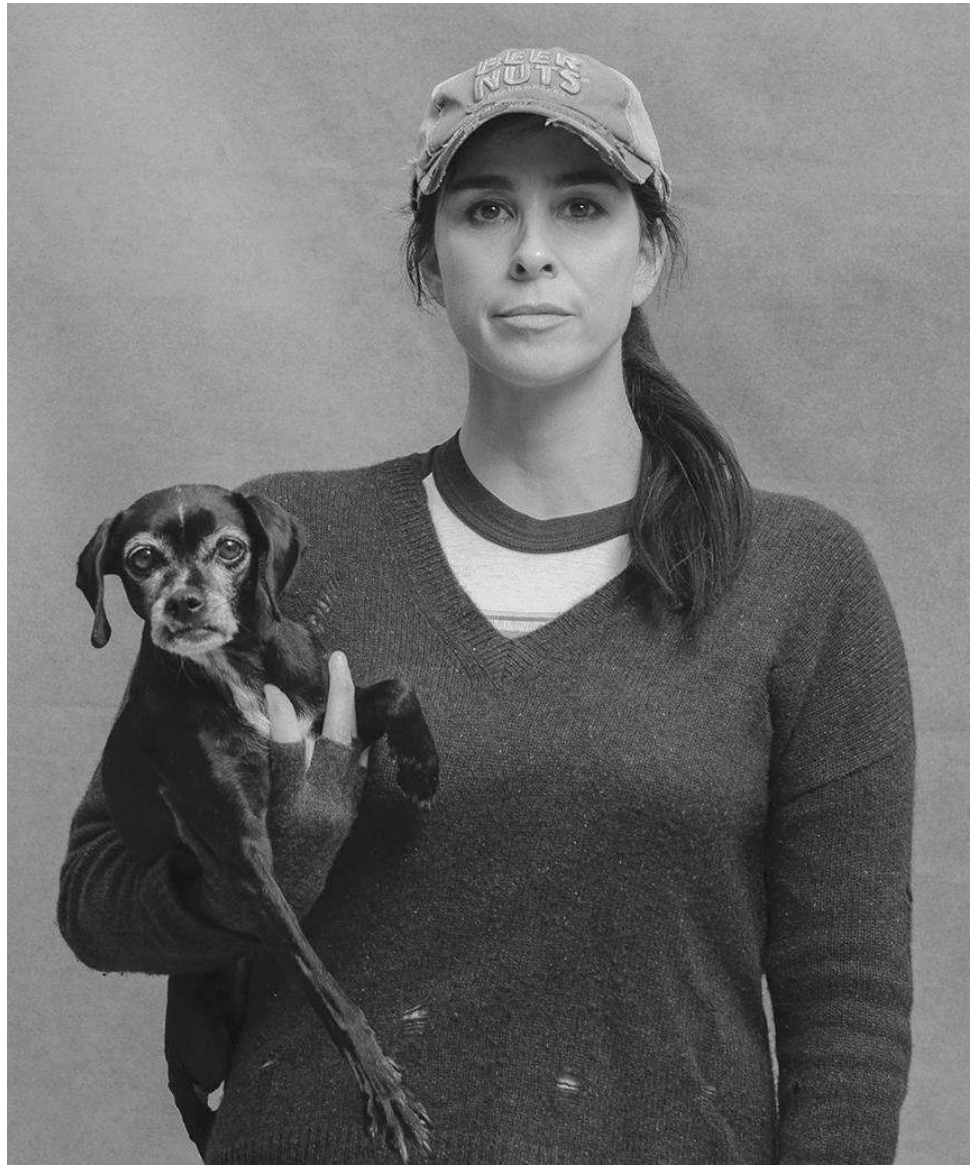
Which is why "The Sarah Silverman Podcast," launched by the longtime comedian a few months ago with little fanfare and a sense of resignation, may be one of the sneakiest successes of the pandemic.

"I mean, yeah, I came to it because my hands were bound," Silverman says in a recent Zoom interview from her apartment in Los Angeles. "I couldn't do stand-up and I had no place to put stuff. But now I realize this was really what I needed to do. I just can't believe the freedom and the messiness and the looseness. It's maybe something I didn't realize I was missing."

Everybody has a podcast, she'd grumble when the subject would come up.

"And I get it," says director Adam McKay ("The Big Short," "Anchorman"), a longtime friend and one of those nudging her. "You want to do a TV show. It certainly seems bigger and cooler, but that's changing. I honestly don't know anyone out there right now with the reach that Joe Rogan has."

Rogan, the former "Fear Factor" host and second-tier standup before he launched "The Joe Rogan Experience" in 2009, chums around with Elon Musk and signed a \$100 million deal with Spotify last year. Rogan says the podcast has 190 mil-



CARMEN CHAN/For The Washington Post

Sarah Silverman, pictured Jan. 22 in Los Angeles, quietly launched a podcast months ago to little fanfare. But it may be one of the sneakiest successes of the pandemic.

## More than a mouth

Silverman's podcast has provided an opportunity for self-analysis and a lifeline during the pandemic

lion downloads each month.

Still, Silverman had other plans for 2020.

Her big project was "The Bedwetter," a musical adaptation of her bestselling 2010 memoir. It was set to open off-Broadway in May at the Atlantic Theater Company with a cast that included Linda Lavin and Stephanie J. Block.

In early March, Silverman was in New York with playwright Joshua Harmon, who co-wrote the book, and Adam Schlesinger, the Fountains of Wayne founder and Emmy winner, who wrote the music.

Schlesinger, years earlier, had been the one who pitched the idea of a musical after reading the memoir, a freewheeling, origin story of the anxious young girl — she struggled with enuresis, or bed-wetting, until she was 16 — who became a comic star.

In mid-March, after the NBA shutdown, the Atlantic closed its doors and postponed the show. "And two or three days later, Adam texts: 'You won't believe this, I think I have this thing. I have a super high fever and a cough,'" Silverman says. "And then, April 1, he was dead. Dead."

By then, HBO had already passed on "Silvershow."

Over the past decade, Silverman's pen-

chant for shocking, potty-mouthed material has evolved to embrace more of what she calls social politics. She's still not above discussing, in detail, her internet porn search words. But she also addressed the Democratic National Convention. Her philosophy, onstage and off, is that not everybody is stupid, not only her views are right, and if we listen to those we disagree with instead of rolling our eyes, we might get somewhere. Imagine being as clever as John Oliver without the snark.

"I Love You, America," which ran from 2017 to 2019, embraced that evolution. In one early segment, Silverman traveled to Louisiana to visit a family of rabid Donald Trump supporters. During the visit, she led a discussion about health insurance, and it became clear that the family, which had been mercilessly bashing Obama, was covered by "Obamacare."

"That moment was the crystallizing moment for me," says Amy Zvi, Silverman's longtime manager and an executive producer on the show. "Rather than say, 'You realize that you're wrong and I'm right,' Sarah didn't correct them."

"I don't want to make people look dumb," Silverman says. "Those aren't the people I care to show up. I think people can be changed, but they're never going to

be changed by feeling judged."

"Silvershow" set a similar tone. Silverman filmed the HBO pilot early last year on a bare-bones set. It opens with a monologue and gives way to a video spoof about censorship of women's nipples set to Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire." Silverman then leads a lively discussion about the ills of social media with Sacha Baron Cohen and journalist Sheera Frenkel.

"Silvershow" was exactly what Silverman wanted: a spot for her brand of commentary and comedy in the same territory as Oliver and Bill Maher. Without explanation, HBO passed.

"I think it's madness," Baron Cohen says. "I saw that show and I thought, she's fantastic. She's incredibly outspoken, incredibly intelligent and amazingly funny. So it seems bizarre that she's not fronting a show that is primarily political."

One of Silverman's most illuminating exchanges did not take place on a TV set or a stage. In 2017, early in Trump's first term, she tweeted about her desire to connect and communicate more with the president's supporters. Jeremy Jamrozy, a San Antonio man, did not appreciate the idea. He responded with a nasty epithet that began with the letter "c." Silverman could have slammed or blocked him. Instead, she scrolled through Jamrozy's online history and contacted him.

"I believe in you," she responded on Twitter. "I read ur timeline & I see what ur doing & your rage is thinly veiled pain. But u know that. I know this feeling. Ps My back ... sux too. see what happens when u choose love. I see it in you."

Jamrozy opened up. He told her that he had been molested as a boy and felt alone. He also apologized for the hostility.

"Dood I don't care," Silverman tweeted. "I'm fine. I see something in you. My gut tells me you could have a great life. My shrink says we don't get what we want, we get what we think we deserve. I'm telling you, you deserve so much more than you know."

"It's really one of the more inspiring things I've seen, like the mouse pulling the thorn out of the tiger's paw," McKay says.

The exchange with Jamrozy may have seemed unusual, but for those closest to Silverman, it made perfect sense.

Sister Laura thinks Silverman's natural inclination to think of others is rooted in her childhood and, specifically, her relationship with her mother.

Silverman was 6 when her parents, Beth Ann and Donald, divorced. Instead of the four girls staying together, she, the youngest, chose to stay with Mom. Her sisters moved in with Dad.

Silverman's mother was beautiful, intelligent and artistic. She directed plays in their native New Hampshire and, after her divorce, at age 42, enrolled in college. But she was also distracted and flaky. There would be food in the house, but Sarah would be left to make her own meals. Laundry would pile up. She would often find herself waiting at school to be picked up; Beth Ann had forgotten.

"She was alone, she was little; my mom was out a lot, absent a lot, depressed a lot," says Laura, one of Sarah's three older sisters. "When my mom went back to school, Sarah would come home from school and she would hide under a blanket until someone came home."

Silverman has spent years justifying her mother's behavior. Even now, she worries

SEE PODCAST ON PAGE 31

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION

## Podcast: Show allows for freedom, messiness

FROM PAGE 30

that “The Bedwetter,” rescheduled to open in early 2022, puts too much emphasis on her mother’s depression. She knows so much of what made her childhood difficult is also what helped her find her voice onstage.

“Like my shrink says, if it’s hysterical, it’s historical,” Silverman says. “My mom was kind of hard on me. And I don’t know if it was frustration or jealousy. But I feel frustrated for her, because I feel like she could have been a Broadway director. She had so many dreams and they were just so crushed by every person around her.”

The podcast has been more than an opportunity for self-analysis. It has become a lifeline. Silverman’s last gathering with friends was in early December, a masked, socially distanced poker game to celebrate her 50th birthday. (This included scheduling multiple coronavirus tests for the participants in the lead-up.) Now her physical circle has shrunk to her boyfriend, Rory Albanese, a comedy writer and television producer who moved to LA from New York last year, and her dog, Mary.

Sister Jodyne listens to each episode eagerly.

“I’m amazed at how honest she’s been,” she says. “It’s like she’s discovering new parts of herself and we’re listening to how it all unfolds.”

“The Sarah Silverman Podcast” shies away from celebrity guests, preferring to have the host interact with the listeners who leave voicemails. Some, she simply answers. Others, she has followed up on.

Back to the angry Escalade man. The incident did not end when she killed him with kindness. No, Silverman insisted, “I want to make this right.”

Then she asked what he smoked.

“I like a full-bodied high,” he told her.

With that, Silverman, Emmy-winning standup, TV host and now podcaster, walked into the dispensary and acquired a spliff of Indica for her antagonist. He smiled at the olive branch, but they were already at peace. While she was inside, he had paid her parking meter.

“I haven’t shaken someone’s hand in a year, but I gave him a big handshake,” Silverman says. “And I go, ‘Look at us. We were arch enemies and now we’re best friends.’”



Netflix

From left to right: Amanda C. Miller as Jo, Jack Fisher as Kid, Tom Kenny as Chuck and Keith Ferguson as Papa G in “Kid Cosmic.”

# ‘Heroes help, not hurt’

‘Powerpuff Girls’ creator’s latest show, ‘Kid Cosmic,’ focuses on ‘the people, not the powers’

BY ROBERT LLOYD  
*Los Angeles Times*

**A**nimator Craig McCracken, who gave the world “The Powerpuff Girls,” “Foster’s Home for Imaginary Friends” and “Wander Over Yonder,” has an exhilarating new cartoon series, “Kid Cosmic,” which premiered Feb. 2 on Netflix. Set on a thinly populated stretch of American desert — there’s a diner, a motel, a junkyard — it concerns a kid, called only the Kid (Jack Fisher), who comes across some powerful stones dropped by an alien on the lam. While they confer powers on the bearer, they also bring in their wake a host of unfriendly ETs trying to get their hands, claws, etc. on them.

Haphazardly, an unlikely team of heroes comes together: The Kid, Jo (Amanda C. Miller), a waitress; Rosa (Lily Rose Silver), a toddler; Papa G (Keith Ferguson), the Kid’s grandfather; and Tuna Sandwich (Fred Tattasciore), a cat. Tom Kenny, the narrator and Mayor on “Powerpuff,” plays Chuck, an extraterrestrial enemy kept close.

Along with friend and sometime collaborator Genndy Tartakovsky (“Dexter’s Laboratory”), McCracken was at the forefront of a second wave of innovative, creator-driven television animation, whose first wave began in the 1990s with the likes of Ralph Bakshi’s “Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures” and John Kricfalusi’s “The Ren & Stimpy Show.” With “The Powerpuff Girls,” which ran from 1998 to 2005 on Cartoon Network under McCracken’s watch (it was rebooted in 2016 without him), he hit a sweet spot that combined action, humor, historical allusiveness and multigenerational appeal; “Kid Cosmic” strikes those same notes in a completely different way, with a more naturalistic, highly detailed look and a serialized approach to storytelling.

Its first season has as much to do with a live-action miniseries like “Stranger Things” as it does with anything we’ve seen in cartoon form.

**“Kid Cosmic” seems to straddle the past and the present — there are cellphones, but also landlines, videocassettes, 45s, cathode ray TV ...**

**McCracken:** The main idea is that the kid grew up in this junkyard with his grandpa, and a lot of that stuff he has is just stuff his grandpa had around; he’s kind of a poor kid, and he’s made the best of a bad situation. His grandpa collects junk and so there’s old video games, old comics, old records, and Kid has just kind of consumed all this media from different eras. Even his bike is made out of parts of other bikes. And also I like that design aesthetic; I like antiques and junk, and I’m a big “American Pickers” fan. My grandparents were collectors and my mom and all my uncles were collectors — I’ve been growing up with that stuff my whole life.

**There is a hand-drawn look to the series, a kind of sketchbook aesthetic, with detail many cartoons would leave out.**

The drawing style came from the fact that the show conceptually is grounded in reality — these aren’t cartoon characters, per se; they’re real people. So I started looking at other forms of cartooning that had that nice balance between iconic, caricature cartoon characters, but also placed in the real world. And I gravitated toward Hank Ketcham’s Dennis the Menace, but more specifically Hergé’s Tintin. I grew up with Tintin and I love the fact [that] those were definitely cartoon characters but felt like real people; and the environments those stories would inhabit were really tactile and believable. Because the show is about regular people thrust into this extreme situation who aren’t really good at what they’re doing, I wanted the show visually to have a human, homemade component; I wanted you to see drawings on the screen — like, people made this. This isn’t like slick, CG, super-polished.

**Are there themes that tie your series together, do you think?**

I definitely do. “Kid Cosmic” is an amalgam of a lot of things I’ve done. It’s got super-

heroes like “Powerpuff,” it’s got science fiction like “Wander Over Yonder,” it’s an odd assemblage of misfit characters like “Foster’s” — it’s sort of all the things I like in one thing. There are also character archetypes: My father passed away when I was 7, so I was raised by a single mother, and that’s kind of an ongoing theme that’s not really been conscious, but it’s been in all my shows. “The Powerpuff Girls” only had Professor; Mac [in “Foster’s”] only had his mom; the Kid has his grandpa. And also the dynamic between Frankie and Mac and Kid and Jo is very similar to my relationship with my older sister; my sister’s 11 years older than me, and she’s the one who introduced me to the Beatles and Star Wars and Monty Python. And so the idea of being a young kid growing up with a cool older girl is just part of me growing up — that thread runs through my shows as well.

**Goodness seems to me a recurring theme in your work.**

That’s how I see the world. I like positivity, I like kindness, I like that hippie-dippy type of a guy. I didn’t want to make a show about violence, and I didn’t want to make a show about if somebody’s different from you and you label them a bad guy, just beat them up and you win. The theme of the show was “Heroes help, not hurt.” Even Papa G says, “Evil’s just a cry from a heart that’s hurting.” I believe those things. I believe that there are reasons people become evil — there’s always something broken deep down — and that you can try to help people. And that’s what being a hero’s really all about. It’s not about just being the cool fighter. And I wanted the Kid to learn that. And also, Kid has experienced some loss in his life. He wants to stop bad things from happening because bad things did happen to him. But it’s sort of accepting, like, “Well, that’s a part of life.” There’s suffering, and it’s how you cope with it and grow through it. I wanted to do a different type of kids’ show that wasn’t just about “Hey, what neat powers.” I always say it’s about the people, not the powers.

## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# Mind your mask

Learn how to ensure that your mask fits properly and offers enough protection against COVID per the CDC's latest guidance

BY JEMAL R. BRINSON, KORI RUMORE  
AND JONATHON BERLIN  
*Chicago Tribune*

**N**ew mask advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — connected with a new study — focuses on making sure masks fit correctly to better prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The CDC studied whether wearing two masks provided more protection than one and found that it did. The researchers found that wearing one mask — surgical or cloth — blocked about 40% of the particles coming toward the head that was breathing in. When a cloth mask was worn on top of a surgical mask, about 80% were blocked.

Here is a look at the CDC's advice and some tips on how to mask properly:

## Double mask

**What to do:** Layer a cloth mask on top of a surgical or medical procedure mask. This helps the entire setup fit more snugly and eliminates gaps around the sides of the face or nose. Make sure the fit is comfortable and doesn't have gaps.

**What not to do:** Do not combine two disposable masks, which are not designed to fit tightly. Wearing more than one disposable mask at a time will not improve fit. Also, do not wear a KN95 mask, a type of filtering face-piece respirator that is commonly made in China, with any other mask.

**Cloth mask dos:** Choose a cloth mask made of multiple layers of tightly woven, breathable fabric that also includes a nose wire, which can help improve the mask's fit. Does the mask block light when you hold it up to a bright light source? Then it's a good construction.

**Cloth mask don'ts:** Stay away from any cloth mask that includes an exhalation valve or vent, which can allow respiratory droplets to leak into or out of a mask.

## Knotted ear loops

**What to do:** The CDC recommends knotting, folding then tucking the ear loops of 3-ply masks for a better fit — making the edges of the mask fit more tightly to your face. First, fold the mask in half lengthwise, lining up the corners and edges. Second,

tie a knot with the elastic loops, as close as you can to the mask, according to an instructional video from the University of North Carolina's UNC Health. Next, bend the metal nose mold so it fits the shape of your nose. Next, the knot will make the sides of the mask near the tied ear loops puff out. Fold those puffed-out edges in a pleat so it lays flat on your cheek. When putting on the mask, make sure it fits snugly.

**What not to do:** Don't wear more than one disposable mask at one time; it will not improve fit. Handle the mask only by its ear loops, cords or head straps — not the surface of the mask itself.

**What about KN95s:** A KN95 shouldn't need any modifying of the straps. Ideally, this type of mask can filter up to 95% of particles in the air, however, counterfeit KN95 masks make it hard to distinguish real KN95s from fake ones just by looking at them. Do not wear a KN95 mask with an exhalation valve, which can allow respiratory droplets to leak into or out of the mask. If you have facial hair, then this type of mask might not make a good fit. Do not combine a KN95 mask with another KN95 mask or any other type of mask.

## Nylon cover

**What to do:** Other studies have found that placing a sleeve made of sheer nylon hosiery material around the neck and pulling it up over either a cloth or surgical mask significantly improved the wearer's protection by fitting the mask more tightly to the face and reducing edge gaps.

## Mask brace

**What to do:** Air leaks around the edges of a cloth or surgical mask can be reduced by layering one of these devices on top of a cloth mask for a better fit. A recent study showed that when either a solid or elastic fitter is worn over a surgical mask, then it can potentially increase the wearer's protection by 90% for aerosols. A mask brace can be purchased online or made out of rubber bands. Former Apple product design engineer Sabrina Paseman, behind [fixthemask.com](https://www.fixthemask.com), posted a tutorial that lays out the steps: First, chain three rubber bands together. Second, place the center rubber band in front of the mask around the chin and nose. Adjust the fit and do a CDC seal check.

## Other mask advice to keep in mind

### When to wear one

- Wear a mask any time you are in a public setting. Children under the age of 2 and people who cannot wear a mask safely due to a disability or an underlying medical condition should not wear a mask.

- Masks are required on planes, buses, trains and other forms of public transportation when traveling into, within or out of the United States, as of Feb. 2.

- If you will be near people who do not live with you, wear a mask.

- If someone you live with is sick with symptoms of COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19, then wear a mask inside your home.

### How to wear one

- Always wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on your mask and don't touch the mask while you are wearing it.

- If you wear glasses, then find a mask that

fits closely over your nose or has a nose wire to help reduce fogging. You might also try to use an antifogging spray made for eyeglasses.

- Don't use a mask that is made out of fabric that makes it hard to breathe. Pass on any mask that includes an exhalation valve or vent, which could allow virus particles to escape. And, leave the N95 respirators for health care workers, the CDC says.

### What to do in cold weather

- Wear a mask underneath your scarf, ski mask or balaclava — these items are not replacements for a mask.

- Change your mask when it becomes wet. A wet mask is harder to breathe through, is less efficient at filtering and vents more around the edges of the mask. Keep a spare mask to replace one that becomes wet from moisture in your breath due to snow or rain.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Tribune reporting



JEMAL R. BRINSON, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS photos

Layer a cloth mask on top of a surgical or medical procedure mask.



The CDC recommends knotting, folding then tucking the ear loops of 3-ply masks for a better fit.



A mask brace can be purchased online or made out of rubber bands.



Studies have found that placing a sleeve made of sheer nylon hosiery material around the neck and pulling it up over either a cloth or surgical mask significantly improved the wearer's protection.



## WEEKEND: FAMILY



KRISTEN PRITCHARD/AP

**Kayleigh and Cody Cousins hold hands during their Dec. 27 wedding ceremony accompanied by their son, River, at home in San Diego, Calif. They initially planned an April 2020 wedding, postponed it after the pandemic took hold, rescheduled it for December, then had to shift gears again when a new lockdown was imposed.**

# For better or for worse

The pandemic has challenged couples' patience, resiliency, teamwork

BY DAVID CRARY  
Associated Press

**F**or many U.S. couples yearning to be married, the pandemic has wreaked havoc on their wedding plans while bolstering their teamwork and resilience. For couples already married, it has posed a host of new tests, bringing some closer, pulling others apart.

Spending more time together — a common result of lockdowns, furloughs and layoffs — has been a blessing for some couples who gain greater appreciation of one another. For other spouses, deprived of opportunities for individual pursuits, the increased time together “may seem more like a house arrest than a fantasy,” suggested Steve Harris, a professor of marriage and family therapy at the University of Minnesota and associate director of a marriage counseling project, Minnesota Couples on the Brink.

Gregory Popcak, a psychotherapist in Steubenville, Ohio, who specializes in marriage counseling for Catholics, says the pandemic has been particularly troublesome for spouses whose coping strategies have been disrupted.

“For couples who had a tendency to use their business to avoid problems, the pandemic has made things infinitely worse,” he said. “The lockdown has raised the emotional temperature a few notches. ... Things that were provocative before are now catastrophic.”

Overall, people have become more cautious amid the pandemic, said sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia.

“This caution is making them less likely to get divorced, less likely to get married, less likely to have a child,” he said.

Comprehensive national statistics on marriage and divorce during the pandemic won't be compiled for many months, but the numbers available thus far from a few states suggest there's a notable decline in each category.

In Oregon, divorces in the pandemic months of March through December were down about 24% from those months in 2019; marriages were down 16%. In Florida, for the same months, divorces were down 20% and marriages were down 27%. There also were decreases, though smaller, in Arizona.

One reason for fewer divorces: In many states, access to courts for civil cases was severely curtailed during the pandemic's early stages. Another reason, according

to marriage counselors, is that many couples backed off from a possibly imminent divorce for fear it would only worsen pandemic-fueled financial insecurity.

The Rev. Russ Berg, who runs a faith-based marriage counseling ministry in Minneapolis, tries to encourage that kind of hesitancy among the couples he advises.

“Some come in saying they're overwhelmed, fighting over finances, their kids' education,” Berg said. “Without going to work, they don't have that buffer of being physically gone. They feel they're on top of each other.”

“I try to put it in perspective, that everyone is stressed out right now and it's not a good time to make decisions about the future of your marriage,” he said. “I say, ‘Let's work on it for six months and make sure you don't add the pain of regret to the pain of divorce. Explore all your options before you decide.’”

For countless couples on the brink of marriage, the pandemic plunged fine-tuned wedding plans into disarray due to restrictions on large gatherings and wariness about long-distance travel.

In San Diego, Kayleigh and Cody Cousins initially planned an April wedding, postponed it after the pandemic took hold, rescheduled it for December, then had to shift gears again when a new lockdown was imposed.

“That was devastating,” Kayleigh said. “We said, ‘Let's just do it on Zoom.’”

So they set up an altar at home, recruited a friend to officiate virtually, and had a wedding ceremony Dec. 27 watched remotely by about 40 of their friends and family.

Professionally, Kayleigh helps her husband run a tree-cutting service, so they understand each other's work demands. For other couples, there's work-related friction.

Danielle Campoamor, a freelance writer in New York City, says she and her partner of seven years find themselves arguing frequently as the pandemic complicates the challenges of raising their two children and earning needed income. She works from home; he commutes to an Amazon fulfillment center.

“He goes to work for 12-hour shifts,” said Campoamor, 34. “I'm left alone helping my 6-year-old with online learning, potty-training my 2-year-old, cooking and cleaning.”

“There are days when I think, ‘Yes, we can do this,’ and other days I say, ‘No way that I can do this,’” she said. “We don't have time to discuss our relationship, to work on improving it, or on separating. Sometimes I don't have the capacity to remember what day it is.”

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



# Don't throw honorable out with the bathwater

Recently, the reputation of the military has been tarnished by Capitol riot reports indicating that a significant number of those arrested have served. Although extremism in the ranks is not a new problem, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin saw the riot as a “wake-up call.” On Feb. 3, Austin ordered a 60-day stand-down for all military commanders to meet with troops to discuss racism and extremism.

Even though “DOD policy expressly prohibits military personnel from actively advocating supremacist, extremist or criminal gang doctrine, ideology or causes,” the mandatory stand-down is an aggressive step in figuring out why one in three active service members reported evidence of white supremacy and/or extremism within their units in a 2019 poll, up from the previous year.

I applaud the aggressive stance being taken by DOD leadership. Racism and violence has no place in our military. Regardless of statistics, even one bigot or extremist in our incredibly diverse and talented service is one too many.

However, while reading reports on the Capitol attack, I've been disheartened that the idiocy of a few has damaged the reputation of 1.3 million active duty and 18 million veterans. As a Navy spouse whose husband served proudly for 28 years, I know that “guilt by association” affects the morale of military family members, too.

It doesn't take a military strategist to figure out that an all-volunteer force is only effective if — in a country where less than one-half of one percent of the population is willing to serve — the risk-reward proposition offers positive recognition. However, some reporting on the military-connected Capitol rioters have failed to mention that the vast majority of men and women who serve do so honorably.

In fact, a few have implied that military folks are not to be trusted at all.

On Jan. 18, 2021, as 25,000 National Guard troops were assembling to protect the Capitol Building, the president-elect, Congress and all those gathering for Inauguration Day, U.S. Representative Steve Cohen said in a CNN interview, “The [National] Guard is 90-some-odd percent male ... they're probably not more than 25% of the people that are protecting us who voted for Biden. The other 75% ... might want to do something.” When CNN reporter Jim Sciutto asked if Cohen had seen any evidence of insider threats in the military, he said, “Actually not, Jim, but you draw a circle ... the people who were for Trump and not for Biden ... the zone of folks who you'd be suspect of. The suspect group is large.”

Although Cohen was hit with widespread criticism for his inaccurate statements, I wondered, “How many watched that CNN morning show and believed what they heard?”

Then, on the Jan. 21 episode of “All Things Considered,” NPR reported that 20% of defendants in Capitol riots cases served in the military.

My heart sank. Can this be true?

Not quite.

On the Feb. 10 episode of “Morning Edition,” NPR claimed that 31 of 212 defendants are “military veterans [who] account for about 15% of those criminally charged in the Capitol riot.” However, NPR's searchable database indicates that NPR lumped two law enforcement defendants with no military service into the pool of 31 “military” defendants and included three veterans who were only arrested for violating the city curfew. One veteran was not at the Capitol building, but was charged for allegedly threatening statements he made on social media. Another “veteran” had enlisted in the Marines but separated during basic training. Only two defendants are serving currently, both in the Army Reserves.

Details are important when the morale of millions who serve our country honorably is at stake.

Read more at [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com), and in Lisa's book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*. Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com)

# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

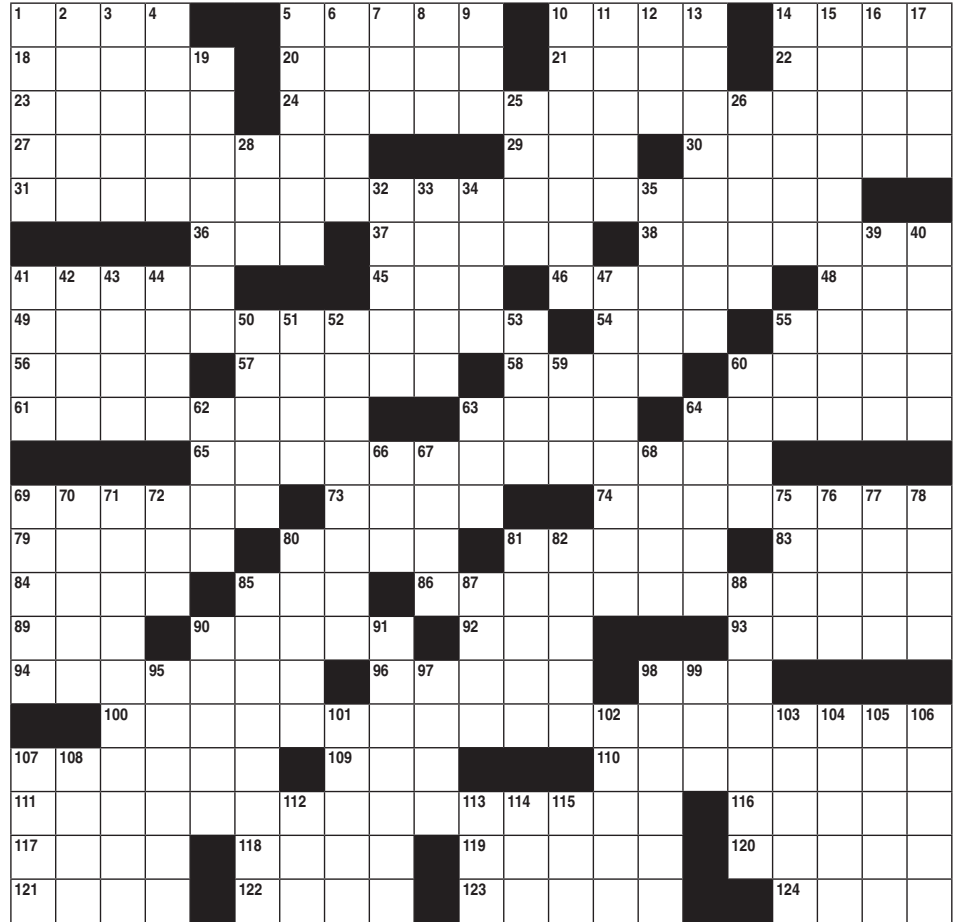
### TODDLER TALK

BY KATIE HALE AND CHRISTINA IVERSON / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Katie Hale, of London, and Christina Iverson, of Ames, Iowa, are stay-at-home moms. Katie is also co-founder of a community organization that recycles children's books. They connected online after Katie read about Christina's first Times puzzle and reached out for mentoring. This is Christina's seventh crossword for the paper. It is Katie's debut. — W.S.

#### ACROSS

- 1 Unloading point
- 5 Trait for a ballerina
- 10 "Wanna hear a secret?" preceder
- 14 Not much
- 18 The "O" of OWN
- 20 Portrayer of Captain Davies in "Roots"
- 21 Bind with rope
- 22 Abacus column
- 23 Helpful
- 24 Accept payment from Batman?
- 27 Eponymous Irish city
- 29 \_\_\_ pickle
- 30 Counterparts of faunas
- 31 Cause for celebration at a pachyderm sanctuary?
- 36 \_\_\_ lecithin (chocolate additive)
- 37 What most pens can't do
- 38 Jane portrayer in 1981's "Tarzan, the Ape Man"
- 41 Worry about, informally
- 45 Flip (out)
- 46 Rock band that you might think would always be an opening act, with "the"?
- 48 Ex-Giants QB Manning
- 49 Finish scooping out a big stir-fry?
- 54 Signal approval
- 55 Inexplicably missing, say
- 56 Brontë who wrote "Agnes Grey"
- 57 Target of permethrin cream
- 58 Not very convincing
- 60 Highly skilled
- 61 Rare race outcome
- 63 Unimaginative birthday gift
- 64 Is stertorous
- 65 Puritan's goal in 17th-century Salem?
- 69 Changes topics in a debate, perhaps
- 73 Scrapes (out)
- 74 The Rose Bowl, e.g.
- 79 Czar who co-ruled with Peter I
- 80 Goes head to head
- 81 Indiana athlete
- 83 Sunburn soother
- 84 Specialist publication, for short
- 85 Monopolize
- 86 Something a Parmesan vendor might offer?
- 89 Unflappable state of mind
- 90 Baron Cohen of film
- 92 One of all fours?
- 93 Container words
- 94 2019 film whose title means "to the stars"
- 96 A dance and a dip
- 98 Cartoonist's Olive \_\_\_
- 100 What a stoner actor smoked during rehearsal?
- 107 Beginning and end of "America"
- 109 "Ha-ha!"
- 110 Noise heard during the London Blitz
- 111 Domain for Jameson and Maker's Mark?
- 116 Curl target, informally
- 117 Manual alternative
- 118 Soul singer Bridges
- 119 Bank investment?
- 120 Spanish dagger or Adam's needle is a variety of it
- 121 New York football team, informally
- 122 Apt rhyme for "crude" and "rude"
- 123 It may need to be broken to move
- 124 Lucretia \_\_\_, abolitionist and women's rights advocate
- 15 One creating draft after draft?
- 16 Andean empire member
- 17 Some clicks of the tongue
- 19 Slice of toast?
- 25 Comes out ahead
- 26 Dolts
- 28 Market launch, for short
- 32 Amphibians that may have toxic skin
- 33 Clichéd
- 34 Shakespeare villain with more lines than the title character
- 35 Kindle download
- 39 Skip the big ceremony, say
- 40 They're found around Scots
- 41 Bony fish with prized eggs
- 42 "Bottled poetry," according to Robert Louis Stevenson
- 43 Active Sicilian volcano
- 44 Filled with wonder
- 47 Without concrete evidence
- 50 "Ad Parnassum" and "Fish Magic," for two
- 51 Metaphor for a shared experience
- 52 Be more important than
- 53 Exaggerated kiss sound
- 55 Fuss
- 59 Legal title: Abbr.
- 60 He wrote lyrics to "My Way" for Sinatra
- 62 Channel with a lot of house renovation shows
- 63 Keeps in the loop, in a way
- 64 Give a start
- 66 Prez with a rhyming campaign slogan
- 67 Lab work
- 68 Cause of some brain freeze
- 69 It comes in California and New York styles
- 70 Covered in vines
- 71 Celebrity who holds the Guinness world record for "Most Frequent Clapper"
- 72 Half and half?
- 75 Gallivants
- 76 On the safe side
- 77 Ancient kingdom in modern-day Jordan
- 78 Elusive, in a way
- 80 Words to learn, briefly
- 81 In itself: Lat.
- 82 "Oh, come on!"
- 85 Aggressive pitch
- 87 Physically fit
- 88 Rock song?
- 90 Big cut of tuna
- 91 Fill with wonder
- 95 Attaches, as a button
- 97 Some shop tools
- 98 "Now it makes sense!"
- 99 "\_\_\_ So Bad" (Tom Petty song)
- 101 Flying \_\_\_ drop (pro wrestling move)
- 102 Shocks, in a way
- 103 Hip bone
- 104 Classic brand of wafers
- 105 Upright
- 106 The Apostle of Ireland, familiarly
- 107 It might come in a branded tote bag
- 108 Buddy
- 112 "\_\_\_-haw!"
- 113 Laid up
- 114 Formerly called
- 115 Perón of politics

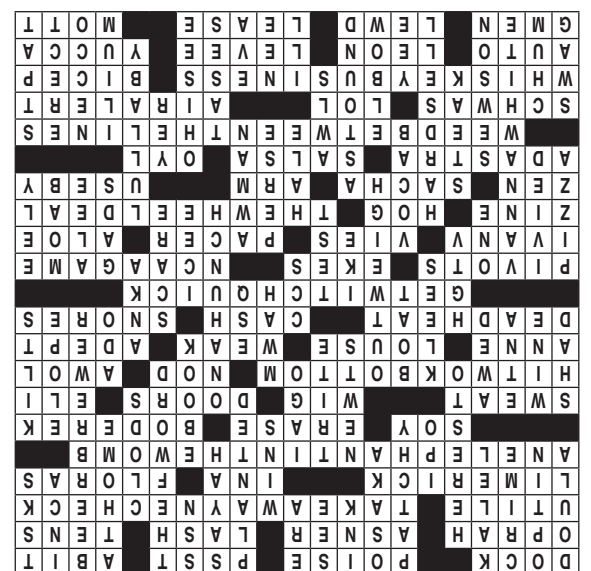


## GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

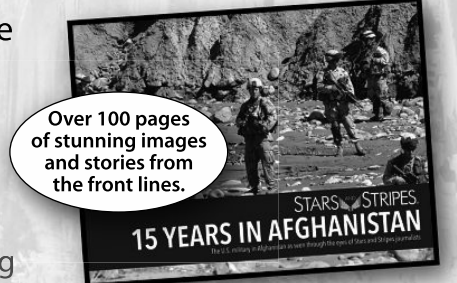
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## FACES



SONY PICTURES CLASSICS/TNS

Valerie Mahaffey (center), with Danielle Macdonald (left) and Imogen Poots in a scene from "French Exit."

# 'Close to perfect'

## 'French Exit' was 'gratifying' experience for Valerie Mahaffey

BY PETER SBLENDORIO  
New York Daily News

Making "French Exit" was a magnificent experience for Valerie Mahaffey.

The Emmy-winning actress stars in the movie as a widow living in Paris who's eager to befriend Michelle Pfeiffer's character, an ostentatious heiress who moves to the City of Light once she loses her fortune.

"In such a wonderful way, as opposed to Michelle's character Frances, she is a person who in spite of being a widow (is) not ready to give up on life," Mahaffey told the Daily News. "She's enthusiastic and grabbing at life with both hands, and I kind of loved that about her."

The comedy-drama, out now in select theaters before a nationwide release April 2, introduces Pfeiffer's Frances Price as a famous socialite who's forced to move from New York City to a friend's apartment in Paris after learning she'll soon be out of money.

Mahaffey's Madame Reynard is a longtime admirer of Frances, who is also a widow, and invites the celebrity and her son over to her house in hopes of getting to know them.

Although Pfeiffer's character is initially standoffish and downbeat about her future, her true personality begins to come through over the course of the film.

"Most of us can't relate to that kind of wealth, but you absolutely do see her humanity and can relate, ultimately," Mahaffey said.

"Frances even softens toward people that she would've just run over in the past."

Mahaffey, 67, moved to New York after attending the University of Texas and emerged as a Broadway actress during the 1970s. Her dream of becoming a performer started at a young age.

"My dad loved plays, and he would order plays from the States and help put them on," she recalled of her childhood in Indonesia. "I went just rabid for anything to do with dance, or 'Can I be in the choir? Is there a child part in that play?' On Saturdays, the oil company that my dad worked for would order movies from the States. They would play a movie on Saturday night for the grown-ups, but in the afternoon, us kids could go and see the movie. It was just like, 'Oh my God, I want to do all of this.'"

Mahaffey joined the long-running soap opera "The Doctors" in 1979 and starred on the show for several years. She then won the Emmy for best supporting actress in a drama for "Northern Exposure" in 1992.

Now, Mahaffey is earning awards-season buzz for her portrayal of the enthusiastic and earnest Madame Reynard in "French Exit," and got a nomination for best supporting actress at April's Independent Spirit Awards.

"I've had some wonderful experiences as an actress, and I've been around a while," Mahaffey said. "This one, this experience, was as close to perfect as it gets. ... The doing of it was perfect, and then now that people are reacting like this ... it's so gratifying."

## Demi Lovato reveals 2018 overdose caused brain damage

Demi Lovato says that her drug overdose in 2018 resulted in the singer having three strokes and a heart attack, leaving her with physical limitations that still affect her.

Lovato reveals publicly for the first time details about the near-fatal incident in "Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil," a four-part docuseries debuting March 23 on YouTube Originals.

"I was left with brain damage, and I still deal with the effects of that today," she said in a video call on Wednesday. "I don't drive a car because I have blind spots in my vision. For a long time, I had a really hard time reading. It was a big deal when I was able to read a book, which was like two months later, because my vision was so blurry."

Lovato said the lasting repercussions "are still there to remind me of what could happen if I ever get into a dark place again."

"My purpose in putting this out is to help people who have been on the same path as I have," she said. "I wanted to set the record straight, and I wanted to reveal it all for my fans."

Despite her near-death experience, Lovato said she wouldn't change what happened to her.

"Everything had to happen in order for me to learn the lessons that I learned," she said. ... "I'm so proud of the person that I am today. One of the main reasons I'm coming forward is so I never have to live that life again."

## Paris Hilton announces engagement

Paris Hilton announced her engagement to entrepreneur Carter Reum in her social media post on Wednesday — the same day as her 40th birthday.

"There's no one I'd rather spend forever with," she said in the post.

The couple have been dating since 2019.

Compiled from Associated Press

# Sisterhood rules in first Spanish Peacock series

BY LYNN ELBER  
Associated Press

Sisterhood and survival are the themes of a dark comedy coming to Peacock, a first step into Spanish-language fare created for the streaming service.

The Miami-set "Armas de Mujer," which translates in English as "Women's Weapons," also is a switch for its stars, including Kate del Castillo of "La Reina del Sur" drama series fame.

"I'm very happy to be doing this amazing genre that I'm not familiar with as an actress," del Castillo said Wednesday. "Actually, in Latin America we're not used to doing this kind" of dark humor.

Production is underway on eight episodes of the series, which also stars Roselyn Sánchez ("Devious Maids," "Grand Hotel") and Sylvia Sáenz and Jeimy Osorio, who appeared together in "Betty en NY." A premiere date has yet to be announced.

The characters' affluent lives are upended after their husbands are arrested for links to the same crime cartel, whether as accountant, assassin or a top boss.

The women search for ways to support themselves and their families in style — an exercise in bonding that mirrors their own on-set relationship, the actors said in reply to a question about how they work together.

There's a tendency to pit women against each other as competitors, said Sáenz, calling that a sharp contrast with reality.

Her castmates are "just generous people ... that's the thing I admire the most in artists today, in human beings in general," she during a panel discussion with TV critics.

Although the series is in Spanish (with English-language subtitles), its universal story makes the language irrelevant, Sánchez said. The actors also emphasized it's not a crime drama, despite the fact their characters married men in the business.

"This is going to be able to translate to any language, any country, any culture, because it's about empowering women, and how these four ladies are thrown into these incredible ... circumstances and they need to survive," she said. "And they do it through friendship and loyalty."



Kate del Castillo



Roselyn Sanchez

# Luke Combs apologizes for Confederate flag imagery

BY KRISTIN M. HALL  
Associated Press

Country star Luke Combs has apologized for appearing with Confederate flags, saying he is now aware of how painful that flag is.

The apology came weeks after another top country star, Morgan Wallen, was removed from radio stations and suspended by his label after being caught on video using a racial slur.

"There's no excuse for those images," said Combs, a 30-year-old North Carolina singer-songwriter who has had two multiplatinum albums and several hit country songs.

Combs said the images were from seven or eight years ago and as a younger man, he did not understand what that flag meant.

"And as I have grown in my time as an artist and as the world has changed drastically in the last five to seven years, I am now aware of how painful that image can be to someone else," Combs said. "I would never want to be associated with something that brings so much hurt to someone else."

He said he was addressing the



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

**Luke Combs at the Billboard Music Awards in 2020 in Los Angeles. Combs has apologized for appearing with Confederate flags in the past.**

old images now because he wanted to show as a highly visible country artist that people can change and learn from their mistakes. He also wanted to encourage more people in the country music industry to have those hard conversations.

The genre has been having a racial reckoning even before Wallen's actions, but top artists have often been reluctant to talk about race, both in the genre's present and its past.

"I am trying to learn. I am trying to get better," Combs said.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Gambler scores \$1.1M jackpot, tips dealers

**NJ** ATLANTIC CITY — A gambler who hit a \$1.1 million jackpot on a progressive poker game after placing a \$5 wager at an Atlantic City casino celebrated his win by offering a \$50,000 tip to the dealers on shift.

Frank Nagy, who lives in Monmouth County, scored his big win Saturday afternoon at the Tropicana, where he has played for many years.

The win marked the largest jackpot on a progressive poker game in the history of the casino's parent company, Caesars Entertainment. The last time the jackpot was hit was in August 2019.

## Argument over barking dog leads to fatal shooting

**AZ** PHOENIX — A 71-year-old man has been arrested in connection with a fatal shooting in west Phoenix that allegedly stemmed from an argument over a barking dog, according to authorities.

Phoenix police said Manuel De La Cruz-Rodriguez has been booked into Maricopa County Jail on suspicion of second-degree murder.

Police said Xavier Henriquez, 19, was on his cellphone Monday afternoon when a man came up to him and started arguing with him. The person who was on the other end of the phone call reportedly said the man was yelling at Henriquez about his dog barking, according to police. The person said a shot was heard.

Arriving police officers found Henriquez with a gunshot wound to the head. He was rushed to the hospital and doctors later pronounced him dead.

Police said investigators found evidence connecting De La Cruz-Rodriguez to the shooting.

## Ice fishing derby includes impromptu wedding

**NH** MEREDITH — A 2.62-pound white perch won the grand prize and a couple got married at this year's Great Meredith Rotary Fishing Derby at Lake Winnepesaukee, one New Hampshire event that wasn't canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Cameron MacDonald, 23, of Pittsfield, Mass., caught his winning fish on Saturday for the \$15,000 grand prize, The Laconia Daily Sun reported.

Also Saturday, Eric Peterson and Shannon Tinker decided to get married on Meredith Bay, in front of their Bud Light-themed bobhouse.

"We both wanted something simple, we both like being down there on the ice even though we never catch anything," Peterson said.

When the time came, about 75 anglers put down their fishing poles and walked over to be part of the impromptu — and socially distanced — wedding party.



REBECCA SANTANA/AP

## Suit fit for the pedestal

Crowds stop to look at an elaborately embroidered Mardi Gras Indian suit that was placed Tuesday on a pedestal on Canal Street in New Orleans, which until 2017 held a statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The suit was put there by Demond Melancon, who heads the Young Seminole Hunters. Melancon is known for his meticulous hand-sewn beadwork used to create massive Mardi Gras Indian suits depicting actual and imagined events from African and American history.

## 11 rescued from streets after water main break

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — At least 11 people were rescued Tuesday evening after a large water main break in Philadelphia left cars submerged and the area completely flooded, authorities said.

The 48-inch break occurred around 6 p.m. in the Nicetown area of North Philadelphia, news outlets reported.

Floodwaters consumed the streets, swamping cars and leaving workers and customers of a nearby U-Haul storage facility trapped inside, authorities said.

Philadelphia Fire Commissioner Adam Thiel said one woman was freed from her car, which was immersed in the floodwater, and 10 others were rescued from the U-Haul facility. No injuries were reported.

It's unclear what caused the rupture.

## West Coast quake warning system to finish rollout

**CA** LOS ANGELES — The earthquake early warning system known as ShakeAlert will be capable of delivering alerts directly to wireless devices in Oregon on March 11 and to Washington state in May, completing the West Coast rollout, the U.S. Geological Survey said Tuesday.

The ShakeAlert system, which

## THE CENSUS

**2** The approximate weight, in pounds, of cocaine police officers in Iowa say they found in a car during a traffic stop. The stop happened last week on Interstate 80 in Dallas County, television station KCCI reported. The sheriff's office said Eddie Ponce, 32, of Maplewood, Minn., was stopped on suspicion of speeding. Court records show a drug-sniffing police dog alerted to drugs inside the car, and officers say they found the cocaine, marijuana and \$4,000 in the vehicle. Ponce now faces several charges.

warns of significant quakes, has been enabled in California since October 2019. The system uses a network of sensors that detect the start of an earthquake and calculate magnitude, location and the expected amount of shaking. It sends the information in real time to distributors that send out alerts to cellphones and the internet.

The information moves so quickly that people may have valuable seconds to protect themselves before shaking arrives, trains can be slowed or industrial processes stopped.

## Boy escapes trash truck blade thanks to driver

**FL** TAMPA — A young Florida boy was nearly crushed when the garbage can he was hiding in was emptied into a garbage truck, authorities said.

Elias Quezada, 7, had climbed into his grandmother's garbage can while he was playing outside, last Tuesday.

Thankfully, garbage truck driver Waldo Fidele was monitoring the trash being emptied into the

truck and noticed something unusual being dropped in. He turned off the blade and called 911.

"I come outside, I see him, he seemed happy," Fidele said. "I said OK, you're OK now."

It's an experience the boy won't soon forget.

"I got picked up and thrown to where I was going to be a mashed potato," the boy told WFLA in Tampa.

## Overnight fire kills 100 animals at pet store

**IN** INDIANAPOLIS — An estimated 100 animals died when an overnight fire filled an Indianapolis pet store with thick smoke and deadly gases, fire officials said.

It took firefighters about an hour to extinguish the blaze at Uncle Bill's Pet Center on Monday night because they had difficulty accessing the fire in the building's back roof area, the Indianapolis Fire Department said.

After dousing flames that had filled the building with thick, black smoke, crews discovered

"what can only be described as a horrible tragedy" inside, with about 40 dogs, 25 parakeets, rabbits and other animals dead from smoke inhalation, Battalion Chief Rita Reith said in a news release.

Multiple reptiles, fish, an office cat and "a resilient guinea pig" that survived the fire were removed from the building and were being evaluated by pet store staff.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

## Graceland plans in-person events during Elvis Week

**TN** MEMPHIS — On the 44th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death, fans will get to celebrate the musician once again at the annual Elvis Week event in Memphis, Tenn.

Presley's Graceland is preparing to host visitors and offer in-person events for Elvis Week from Aug. 11 through Aug. 17. Organizers said public health protocols will be in place, including the requirement of masks, temperature screenings and socially distanced seating.

Since Presley's death on Aug. 16, 1977, fans have flocked to Memphis to commemorate his life and career in the week leading up to his death anniversary. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, Elvis Week events were mostly held online last year.

From wire reports

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Announcements 040

Automotive 140

Tax Assistance

940

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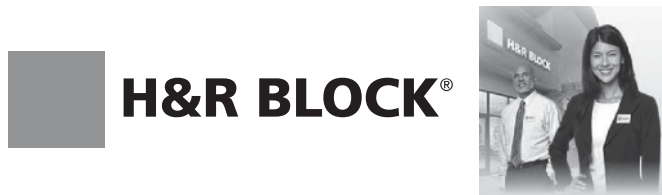
Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam fads are:

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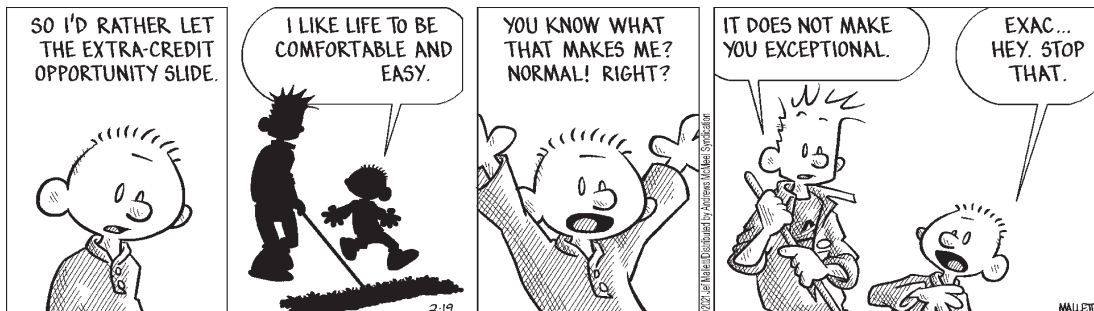
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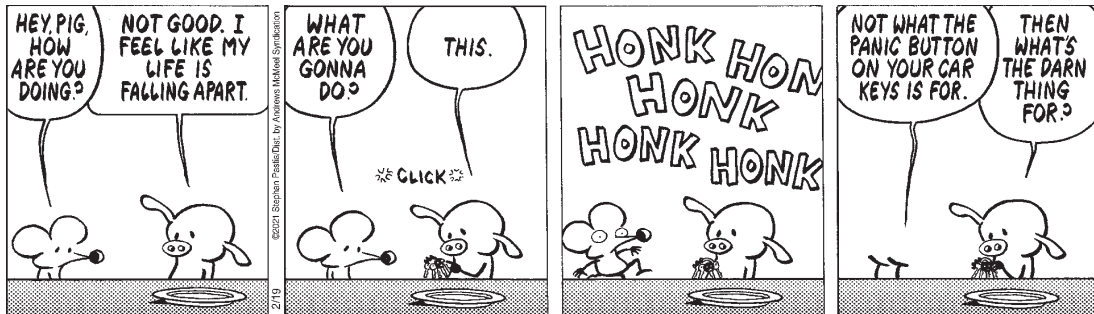
Frazz



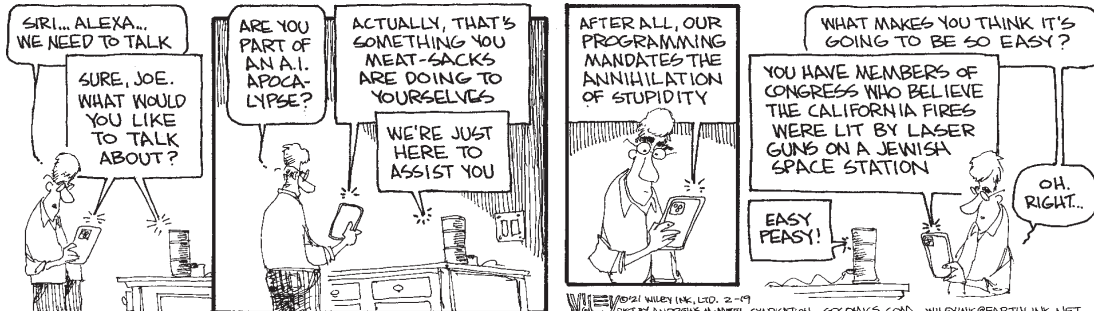
Dilbert



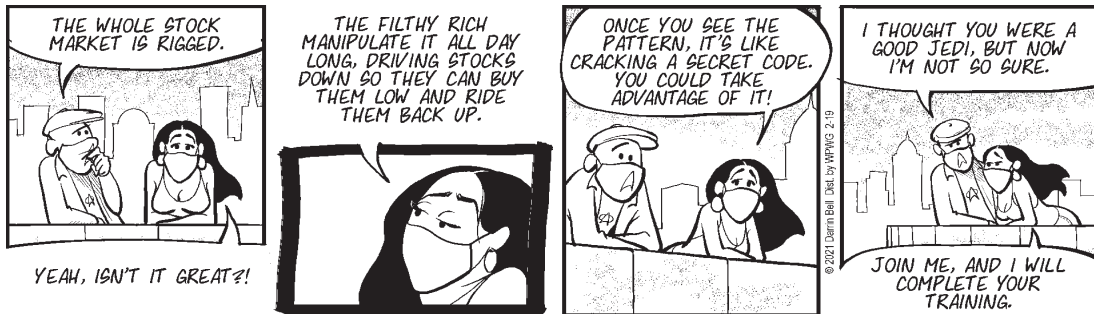
Pearls Before Swine



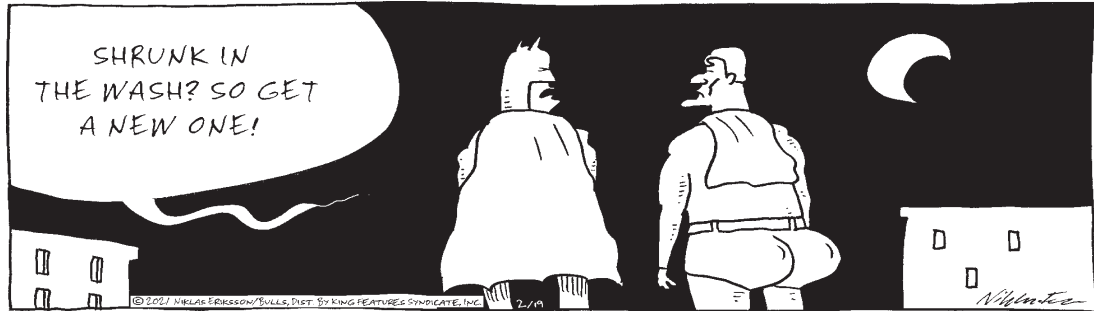
Non Sequitur



Candorville



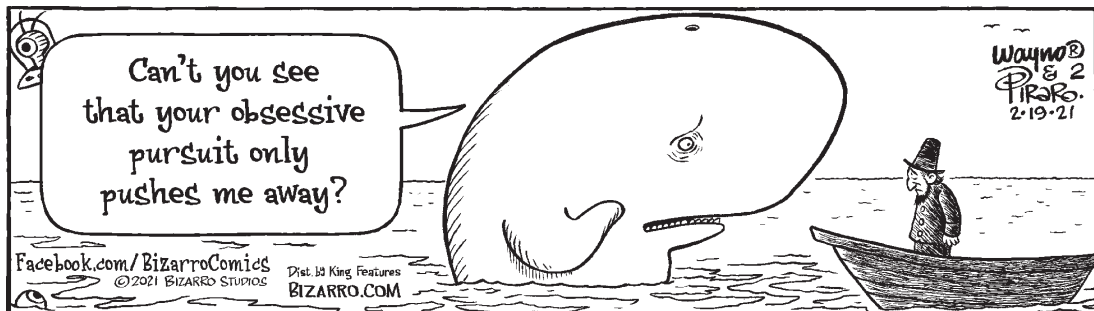
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



### Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
18							19	20				
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37			38				39					
			40				41			42	43	44
45	46	47				48	49					
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pac. counterpart
  - 4 "Stay" singer Lisa
  - 8 Postal delivery
  - 12 Dad on "Black-ish"
  - 13 Bullets
  - 14 Hotel chain
  - 15 "Jurassic Park" creature
  - 17 Video-streaming brand
  - 18 Free of bumps
  - 19 Discoverer's call
  - 21 "Isn't — bit like you and me?"
  - 22 Vienna's river
  - 26 Run in the wash
  - 29 Band's booking
  - 30 R&B singer Des'—
  - 31 "— Lang Syne"
  - 32 Baltimore paper
  - 33 Ump's call
  - 34 Dundee denial
  - 35 ACLU issues
  - 36 Boston team, for short
  - 37 — clock
  - 39 Male cat
  - 40 Year in Madrid
  - 41 Puts into law
  - 45 Mentor
  - 48 Sound of a ringing bell
  - 50 On the Baltic, say
  - 51 Furniture brand
- DOWN**
- 1 Totals
  - 2 Decorate
  - 3 Comic Jay
  - 4 Endured
  - 5 Nebraska city
  - 6 Flightless bird
  - 7 "Prince Igor" composer
  - 8 Blockhead
  - 9 I love (Lat.)
  - 10 Squid squirt
  - 11 Lucy of "Kill Bill"
  - 16 Reacted to a light show
  - 20 Witch
  - 23 Caspian Sea feeder
  - 24 Karate level
  - 25 Morays
  - 26 French seat
  - 27 Maui meal
  - 28 Power co. supply
  - 29 Gloomy guy
  - 32 Substituted (for)
  - 33 Hit the roof
  - 35 Harry Potter pal
  - 36 Party dances
  - 38 Island of Hawaii
  - 39 Doctrine
  - 42 Refer to
  - 43 Threaded fastener
  - 44 LAPD ranks
  - 45 Ozone, for one
  - 46 Employ
  - 47 "The One I Love" band
  - 49 White House nickname

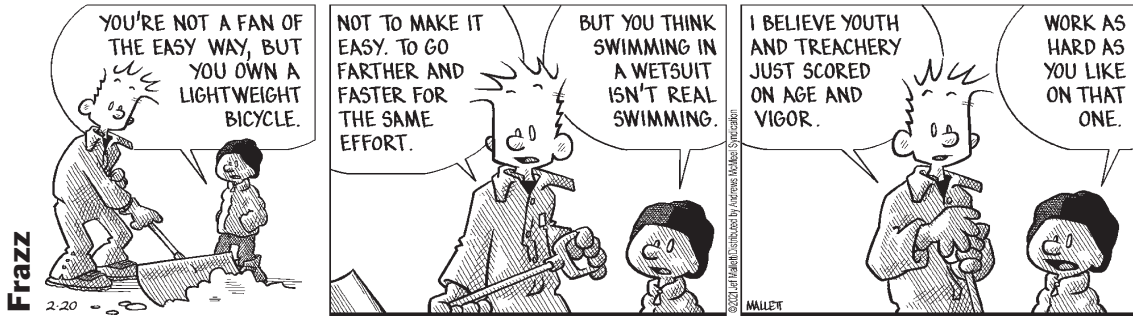
### Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

2-19

### CRYPTOQUIP

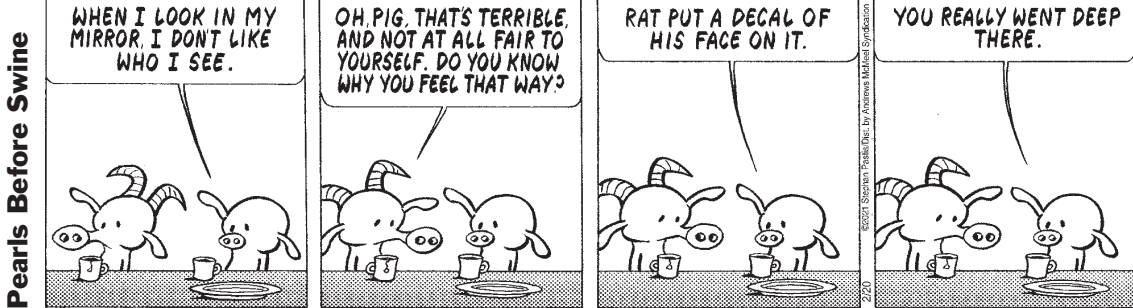
BZOD MK XKY ZONT RU XKY  
 REDTEHTVX ZODT RD BZTE  
 GTKGVT KNTAYHT DYAEH KU  
 GZAOHT? RMRKP KMRY P.  
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: LONGTIME CARTOON CHARACTER WHO HAS AN UNUSUAL OBSESSION WITH PARTING HIS HAIR: COMBER SIMPSON.  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals P



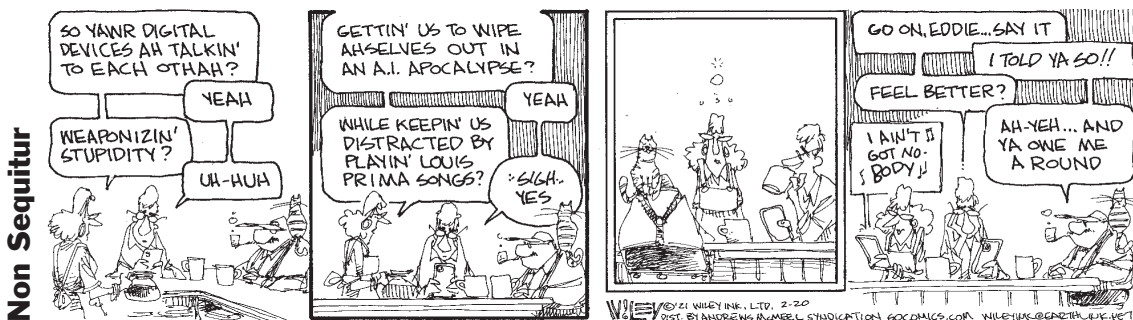
Frazz



Dilbert



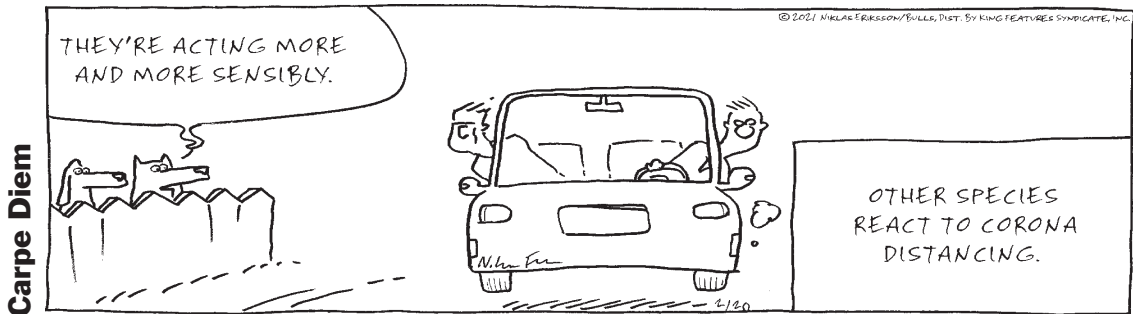
Pearls Before Swine



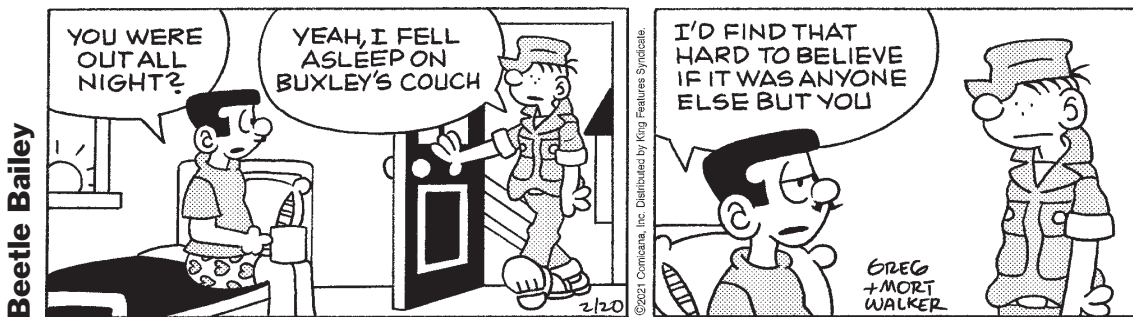
Non Sequitur



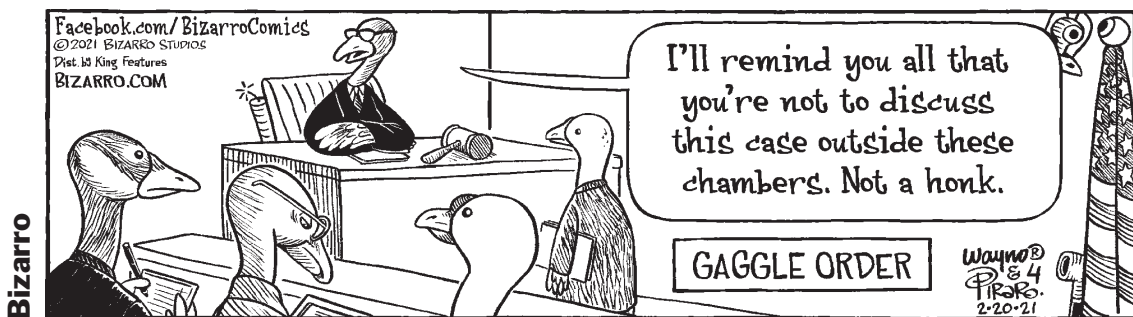
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

Eugene Sheffer Crossword

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11
12							13					
14							15					
16					17	18				19		
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42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50			51				52	53				
54							55					
56							57					

ACROSS

- 1 Discover
- 6 South American prairies
- 12 Physician
- 13 Italian cheese
- 14 Golden Arches burger
- 15 Roil
- 16 Cruising
- 17 Despot
- 19 Small batteries
- 20 Track tipster
- 22 Hooter
- 24 Tummy muscles
- 27 French cheese
- 29 Skin soother
- 32 Prime Minister's address
- 35 Actress Falco
- 36 911 responders
- 37 Mormon church, for short
- 38 Refusals
- 40 God of war
- 42 Annex
- 44 — Nostra
- 46 Pismires
- 50 After-shower powder
- 52 Arizona tribe
- 54 Texas city
- 55 Abuse oneself
- 56 Director Scorsese
- 57 Haunting

DOWN

- 1 Floral rings
- 2 Rim
- 3 Shoot for
- 4 Nipper's co. composition
- 6 "Qué —?" ("What's going on?")
- 7 Houston player
- 8 Roman 1002
- 9 Kind of parking
- 10 Water, to Juan
- 11 Bribes
- 12 CEO's deg.
- 18 Marks of shame
- 21 Japanese sash
- 23 Kids' card game

- 24 Citric beverage
- 25 Physique
- 26 Scam artist
- 28 Alienate
- 30 British ref. work
- 31 UFO fliers
- 33 "The Matrix" character
- 34 Mao — -tung
- 39 Italian for "Pardon me"
- 41 Relish
- 42 Fermi's bit
- 43 Baby's father
- 45 Yemen neighbor
- 47 "Avatar" race
- 48 Biblical pronoun
- 49 Scale member
- 51 Chicago winter hrs.
- 53 "All bets — off"

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	T	L		L	O	E	B		M	A	I	L
D	R	E		A	M	M	O		O	M	N	I
D	I	N	O	S	A	U	R		R	O	K	U
S	M	O	O	T	H		O	H				
			H	E	A		D	A	N	U	B	E
B	L	E	E	D		G	I	G		R	E	E
A	U	L	D		S	U	N		B	A	L	L
N	A	E		R	T	S		C	E	L	T	S
C	U	C	K	O			T	O	M			
			A	N	O		E	N	A	C	T	S
G	U	R	U		D	I	N	G	D	I	N	G
A	S	E	A		I	K	E	A		T	U	T
S	E	M	I		N	E	T	S		E	T	S

2-20

CRYPTOQUIP

DC RNLW REDJV XNTDRDMGM  
 CNNQ DR JNLEXWFWXV NTF  
 NC FSW NZQDGMZV, DR DF  
 JZWNXW MGQ TGTRTMX?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DO YOU HAVE IF YOU INTENSELY HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE OVERUSE TURNS OF PHRASE? IDIOM ODIUM.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals Y

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## OPINION

## Biden ignoring group of grateful US allies

BY HENRY OLSEN

Special To The Washington Post

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin offered a nice theoretical defense of the United States' involvement with our NATO allies in a recent op-ed for The Washington Post. That's fine as far as it goes; America needs strong allies to remain safe and secure. The trouble is that neither Austin nor the Biden administration seems to grasp that our old, unreformed alliances are ill-suited to meet the threats facing the United States today.

Austin argues that allies such as those in NATO are essential to our national security, and that they have too often felt that the United States has ignored them or failed to consult them. This is clearly an oblique swipe at former President Donald Trump, whose un-diplomatic manner and open disregard for many traditional allies, such as Germany, harmed relations. But for all of his bluster and errors, Trump grasped something that eludes Austin and others: Tensions with our allies exist because there are fundamental disagreements regarding the nature of the alliance itself, not solely because of one man's clumsy foreign policy.

NATO was formed in 1949 as part of a global strategy to contain the Soviet Union. Its mission was to ensure that Soviet forces could not conquer Western Europe and dominate the North Atlantic. The United States formed other regional alliances to perform similar roles elsewhere. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization was established in 1954 to battle Communist expansion in that region, while the Central Treaty Organization arose in 1955 to contain Soviet expansion in the Middle East. U.S. bilateral defense treaties with South Korea and Japan served to contain Communist designs in

the Northern Pacific. All of these separate alliances were geared toward stopping one threat, which all allies faced equally.

Neither the United States nor its myriad allies face a unitary threat today. While our Pacific allies are consumed with Communist China's rise, many NATO allies do not share this anxiety. Israel and our Arab allies fear Iran's nuclear program, something apparently of little concern to many in East Asia and Europe. Even among NATO allies, there are different perceptions of the threat from Russia. Eastern European countries that border Russia and countries harboring Russian troops spend more on their national defense than most central European countries, such as Germany and Italy. The first set of NATO allies wonder whether Russian President Vladimir Putin will treat them like he has treated Ukraine; the second set, hundreds of miles away from the nearest Russian military bases, don't share the same level of concern.

It's no wonder, then, that citizens of our allied nations feel very differently about Trump than the Biden administration seems to believe. A 2019 poll released at former NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen's Copenhagen Democracy Summit showed that people in Western Europe, Canada and Australia thought U.S. leadership under Trump was a negative force for global democracy. Citizens elsewhere, however, thought the United States played a positive role. These views were especially strong in Asia and in the Middle East, where Israelis and Arabs thought the United States was a force for good. Eastern Europeans also were strongly positive toward the United States. It's clear that Trump's unilateral and often bellicose approach to Iran, China and Russia — which

Western Europeans often disliked — was music to the ears of other allies.

Austin also needs to grasp how unwilling citizens in many NATO countries are to fulfill their treaty obligations. A Pew Research Center poll conducted in 2019 asked thousands of Europeans in NATO countries whether their country should use military force to defend another NATO country against a Russian attack. A median of 50% opposed using their country's military to defend another NATO ally, the central promise contained in the NATO Treaty's Article 5. Only 34% of Germans and a paltry 25% of Italians supported upholding their country's treaty obligations. Perhaps that's why Germany's already-shrunken military is utterly unprepared to fight; many Germans don't want it to.

Whispering sweet nothings in diplomatic ears will not solve this conundrum, nor will it help bridge the wide gap in views between our allies. Simply put, our Asian, Middle Eastern and Eastern European allies want the United States to confront dangerous foes and are willing to back our efforts with their own. Many of our Western European allies don't and are more willing to temporize with China than join a global effort to contain it.

The United States needs allies, but it also needs allies that agree on the alliance's purpose and are willing to carry their share of the load. We desperately need to reform our alliances and restructure our military to meet our urgent challenges. That gargantuan task would tax any administration. It's troubling that the Biden administration seems not to understand that it needs to do so.

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

## Japanese public needs to know SDF to appreciate it

BY JEFFREY W. HORNUNG

Special to Stars and Stripes

China's increased military activity against Taiwan and recent passage of a law that allows the Chinese coast guard to use weapons against foreign ships that Beijing sees as illegally entering its waters is a reminder that Japan's security environment is not getting any safer. While it may be unthinkable, it is possible that someday China will use force against Japan. If so, the Self-Defense Forces will be called upon to defend the country. In this situation, does the Japanese public fully appreciate what the SDF would be expected to do?

According to surveys conducted by the Cabinet Office, a large majority of the Japanese public maintain a positive opinion of the SDF, but a majority also believe the current defense capabilities of the SDF are sufficient and do not need to be strengthened. And when given multiple options for what they think the role of the SDF is, the largest response is disaster relief operations, not defending the country from external threats.

Although Japan does not call the SDF a military, externally, it is viewed as such. This is for good reason. It is widely respected as a modern armed force fielding advanced defense capabilities. This respect is particularly strong from its U.S. ally. Yet, the Japanese public tends to receive a largely sanitized view of the SDF and the alliance. Instead of seeing the sacrifices SDF families are forced

to make or of SDF training to defend Japan against Chinese aggression, the main image of the SDF is one of non-military disaster relief. Even with the alliance, instead of images of U.S. and Japanese armed forces closely cooperating, the public view of the alliance tends to be that of frequent visits between political leaders or ministers. The alliance's core role of warfighting is rarely, if ever, seen in full public view.

And yet, as was the case after Joe Biden became America's 46th president, Japanese leaders will often seek a verbal commitment from a new U.S. administration to defend the Senkaku Islands. While this gets widely reported, often lost in the public dialogue is what that exactly means, including the fact that the SDF may be responsible for using force. Importantly, there is never any mention that Japanese and Americans are risking their lives to defend Japan. And that they may even die in that cause.

The aversion to public discussion of the SDF is understandable given Japan's history and that segments of the Japanese public maintain strong feelings of pacifism and are highly sensitive to the idea of Japan using force, even in the defense of Japan.

The public debate surrounding the security legislation that eventually passed in 2015 is a good example. Instead of public discussions on the role of the SDF, the military relationship with the United States, and the expectations of what the SDF should do to defend Japan, all parties to the public debate

spoke past each other. The government took an overly legalistic approach and occasionally referenced hypothetical scenarios. The media and opposition parties sensationalized the legislation as "war acts" and avoided substantive discussion about the contents.

Given the threats facing Japan, however, it may benefit the Japanese public to better understand the value of the SDF as an armed force and the military cooperation that takes place with the United States. Doing so could begin to move discussions beyond purely legalistic or emotional arguments to engage in the important security issues facing Japan. This, in turn, could help Japanese leaders publicly debate the objectives of important policies with a more engaged public.

Should a strong public aversion to the SDF's role or use of force permeate society, it could mean weak public support for the operations themselves, making the job of the SDF that much more difficult. After all, asking armed forces to protect a public that does not support it could sap those forces of morale. Japan is no exception.

The threats facing Japan are not going away, which means the SDF's role will increase in importance. Having a better appreciation and understanding of the SDF, and Japan's alliance with the U.S., may benefit not just the SDF, but the leaders who will be called upon to make difficult decisions.

Jeffrey W. Hornung is a political scientist at the Rand Corp., a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization.



# SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE SPORTS

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

### Wednesday's men's scores

#### EAST

Boston U. 78, Holy Cross 69  
 Charleston (WV) 109, Davis & Elkins 74  
 Concord 96, W. Virginia St. 81  
 Daemen 85, Roberts Wesleyan 69  
 Fairmont St. 94, Notre Dame (Ohio) 84  
 Maryland 79, Nebraska 71  
 NC State 74, Pittsburgh 73  
 Quinnipiac 74, Iona 70  
 Sacred Heart 82, CCSU 70  
 Seton Hall 60, DePaul 52  
 St. Francis (NY) 90, Fairleigh Dickinson 87

#### SOUTH

Carson-Newman 76, Mars Hill 56  
 Catawba 86, Newberry 83  
 Chattanooga 89, W. Carolina 81, OT  
 Duke 84, Wake Forest 60  
 Flagler 98, Lander 91, OT  
 Furman 78, Samford 64  
 Gardner-Webb 69, Radford 57  
 Georgia Southwestern 80, Clayton St. 59  
 Kentucky 82, Vanderbilt 78  
 Mercer 71, ETSU 64  
 Montevallo 83, Auburn-Montgomery 74  
 North Carolina 82, Northeastern 62  
 SC-Aiken 71, Augusta 69  
 Tennessee 93, South Carolina 73  
 Tusculum 90, Lincoln Memorial 74  
 UCF 81, South Florida 65  
 VCU 68, Richmond 56  
 VMI 88, UNC-Greensboro 77  
 Virginia-Wise 71, Lenoir-Rhyne 10  
 Wingate 76, Anderson (SC) 69  
 Wofford 81, The Citadel 67

#### MIDWEST

Cedarville 74, Walsh 70  
 Chicago 54, Valparaiso 52  
 Drake 77, N. Iowa 69  
 Hillsdale 65, Ohio Dominican 54  
 Indiana 82, Minnesota 72  
 Indiana St. 87, Evansville 73  
 Kansas 59, Kansas St. 41  
 Lake Erie 77, Tiffin 72  
 Marquette 73, Butler 57  
 Missouri St. 68, S. Illinois 53

#### FAR WEST

Boise St. 79, Utah St. 70  
 Southern Cal 89, Arizona St. 71  
 Wyoming 83, New Mexico 74, OT

### Men's Top 25 schedule

#### Friday's games

No games scheduled

### Wednesday's women's scores

#### EAST

Ball St. 76, Buffalo 63  
 Boston U. 71, Holy Cross 53  
 Bryant 83, Merrimack 80, OT  
 Fairfield 63, Iona 56  
 Maryland 103, Illinois 58  
 Navy 55, Lafayette 53  
 Quinnipiac 84, Siena 63  
 Rutgers 83, Minnesota 56  
 UConn 77, St. John's 32

#### SOUTH

South Florida 69, Cincinnati 65, OT  
 UCF 63, Tulane 61

#### MIDWEST

Bowling Green 76, Cent. Michigan 67  
 DePaul 83, Xavier 75  
 Iowa St. 84, Kansas 82  
 Miami (Ohio) 62, Toledo 60  
 Nebraska 71, Northwestern 64  
 W. Michigan 71, Kent St. 58

#### SOUTHWEST

Oklahoma St. 59, Kansas St. 46  
 Temple 68, Tulsa 46

## COLLEGE HOCKEY

### Wednesday's score

#### MIDWESTERN

Michigan 8, Ala.-Huntsville 2

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

### Friday's games

#### SOUTH

Lincoln University (MO) at Nicholls  
**MIDWEST**  
 W. Illinois at South Dakota, ppd.  
 S. Dakota St. at N. Iowa

### Saturday's games

#### SOUTH

VMI at Chattanooga (0-1), ppd.  
 Morehead St. at James Madison  
 Mercer (0-3) at Wofford  
 Samford at ETSU  
 Davidson at Elon  
 W. Carolina (0-3) at Furman  
**MIDWEST**  
 S. Illinois (1-0) at North Dakota  
 Illinois St. at Missouri St. (0-3)

#### SOUTHWEST

Sam Houston St. at Incarnate Word, ppd.  
 Northwestern St. at Lamar  
**FAR WEST**  
 Tarleton State (0-1) at New Mexico St.

### Sunday's games

#### SOUTH

E. Illinois at UT Martin  
 Edward Waters at Jackson St.  
 Austin Peay (0-3) at Tennessee Tech.  
 Jacksonville St. (3-1) at Tennessee St.

#### MIDWEST

Murray St. at SE Missouri (0-1)  
 Youngstown St. at N. Dakota St. (1-0)

## DEALS

### Wednesday's transactions

#### BASEBALL

##### Major League Baseball American League

**BALTIMORE ORIOLES** — Agreed to terms with RHP Matt Harvey on a minor league contract.

**BOSTON RED SOX** — Acquired C Ronaldo Hernandez and minor league INF Nick Sogard from Tampa Bay in exchange for LHP Jeffrey Springs, RHP Chris Mazza and undisclosed money. Placed C Kevin Plawecki on the COVID-19 related IL.

**NEW YORK YANKEES** — Agreed to terms with RHPs Kyle Barraclough, Jhoulys Chacin, Luis Garcia, Nick Goody, Adam Warren and Asher Wojciechowski, OFs Michael Belfre, Socrates Brito, Jay Bruce, Ryan Larmar and Thomas Milone, Cs Rob Brantly, Robinson Chirinos and Kellin Deglan, LHP Nestor Cortes, Lucas Luetge and Tyler Lyons, INFs Derek Dietrich, Chris Giffens and Andrew Velazquez on minor league contracts.

**TAMPA BAY RAYS** — Placed LHPs Jalen Beeks and Colin Poche on the 60-day IL. Traded RHP John Curtiss to Miami in exchange for minor league LB Evan Edwards. Agreed to terms with LHP Rich Hill and RHP Oliver Drake on one-year contracts.

##### National League

**CHICAGO CUBS** — Agreed to terms with RHP Jake Arrieta on a one-year contract. Placed LHP Kyle Ryan on the COVID-19 related IL.

**MIAMI MARLINS** — Agreed to terms with OF Adam Duvall on a one-year contract. Placed RHP Jeff Brigham on the 60-day IL. Designated OF Harold Ramirez for assignment.

**NEW YORK METS** — Announced the retirement of OF Tim Lincecum.

**PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES** — Agreed to terms with INF Brad Miller on a one-year contract. Placed RHP Seranthony Dominguez on the 60-day IL. Agreed to terms with LHP Tony Watson on a minor league contract.

**PITTSBURGH PIRATES** — Agreed to terms with LHP Tyler Anderson on a one-year contract. Placed RHP Jose Soriano on the 60-day IL.

**SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS** — Agreed to terms with LHP Jake McGee on a two-year contract. Placed RHP John Brebbia on the 60-day IL. Agreed to terms with RHPs Jay Jackson and Nick Tropeano on minor league contracts.

**WASHINGTON NATIONALS** — Signed LF Gerardo Parra and LHP T.J. McFarland to minor league contracts.

#### FOOTBALL

##### National Football League

**ARIZONA CARDINALS** — Signed OL Brandon Bowen.

#### HOCKEY

##### National Hockey League

**BUFFALO SABRES** — Loaned F Rasmus Asplund and D William Borren to the taxi squad. Reassigned Fs Seven Fogarty, Andrew Oglevie, C.J. Smith and D Jacob Bryson to Rochester (AHL).

**CALGARY FLAMES** — Recalled RW Brett Ritchie and G Evan Cormier from loan to Stockton (AHL).

**MONTREAL CANADIANS** — Recalled LW Grandon Baddock from Laval (AHL).

**NEW JERSEY DEVILS** — Loaned Fs Nick Merkley and Mikhail Maltsev to the taxi squad. Reassigned G Evan Cormier and D Jeremy Groleau from the taxi squad to Binghamton (AHL).

**VEGAS KNIGHTS** — Recalled G Logan Thompson from Henderson (AHL).

#### SOCCER

##### Major League Soccer

**CF MONTREAL** — Signed F Erik Hurtado to a one-year contract.

**CHARLOTTE FC** — Signed D Jan Sobocinski.

**LA GALAXY** — Signed MF Carlos Harvey from Tauro FC (Panama).

**NASHVILLE SC** — Signed D Robert Castellan.

**REAL SALT LAKE** — Announced MF Luke Mulholland is retiring and being named club's scout. Named Kurt Schmid technical director.

**SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES** — Signed RB Luciano Abecasis to a one-year contract.

**VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC** — Signed LB Javain Brown.

##### National Women's Soccer League

**ORLANDO PRIDE** — Agreed to terms with F Marta on a one-year contract.

#### COLLEGE

**TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY** — Announced MF Mari Liis Lillemae was called up to join the Estonian National Soccer Team for the UEFA Women's Championship Qualification.

## AP SPORTLIGHT

### Feb. 19

**1928** — Canada wins the gold medal in hockey at the Winter Olympics in St. Moritz, Switzerland. Canada, represented by the 1926 Toronto University team, receives a bye to the final round. The Canadians then beat Sweden 11-0, Britain 14-0 and Switzerland 13-0.

**1955** — Bernie Geoffrion of the Montreal Canadiens scores five goals in a 10-2 victory over the New York Rangers.

**1977** — Rod Gilbert of the New York Rangers gets his 1,000th career point with a goal in a 5-2 loss to the New York Islanders.

**1982** — Atlanta's 127-122 four-overtime win over Seattle equals the fourth-longest game in NBA history and the second longest since the 24-second clock.

**1984** — Phil and Steve Mahre of the United States become the first brothers to finish 1-2 in an Olympic event, the men's slalom, at the Winter Games in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union beats Czechoslovakia 2-0 to win the gold medal in hockey.



GEORGE NIKITIN / AP

Loyola Chicago competes against Lewis University during the championship match of the 2015 NCAA Men's Volleyball Tournament in Stanford, Calif. Fairleigh Dickinson Athletic Director Brad Hurlbut announced recently his school will add men's volleyball in 2021-22 and women's lacrosse the following year.

# Against the norm

## Fairleigh Dickinson adding, not axing sports

By TOM CANAVAN

Associated Press

285

TEANECK, N.J.

Brad Hurlbut took over as athletic director at Fairleigh Dickinson in 2019, planning to increase the number of sports played at the small Division I school a short ride from New York City.

In a little over two years, Hurlbut has taken his first step, announcing last month that men's volleyball will be added in 2021-22 and women's lacrosse would follow the next year. The additions will give the private school in northeast New Jersey 21 sports.

While that wasn't unexpected, the timing was.

The announcement occurred as many schools and universities have cut sports programs as part of the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

The most recent data from The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center shows a 4.4% decrease in undergraduate enrollment this fall over the year before. Public, four-year universities are down 1.9%, private, four-year universities are down 2.1% and two-year colleges are down 9.5%.

Sports has been hit hard in many places. Through Jan. 19, The Associated Press found some 285 NCAA and NAIA athletic teams had been eliminated because of budget cuts or school

board in all departments to balance the budget.

"That was an easy way to make ends meet," he said. "We didn't want to do that. We wanted to look at it from a different lens and say: 'Hey, if we use this formula, we'll actually be able to be starting to be revenue drivers and help in the enrollment process, which so many schools like ours that are out there need.'"

Andrew Schwarz, a sports economist with the California-based firm of OSKR, worked with FDU — enrollment 8,944 at its four campuses — on the expansion. He said the concept is not new for schools driven by enrollment, provided they had space in the classrooms and dormitories for the athletes. Many Division III schools have employed the concept to increase tuition and room and board revenue.

Schwarz said it will work on the Division I level, where schools get extra money from the NCAA for every sport they offer over the minimum of 14. In men's volleyball, there are roughly 20 players on a team. The Knights would be allowed to give 4 1/2 scholarships. The other 15 1/2 players will pay for tuition, books, room and board, if needed, and whatever fees are associated with attending the school.

The exercise was similar for women's lacrosse. It will give a maximum of 12.6 scholarships for a roster of about 40 players.

Games and matches have been held in mostly empty arenas and stadiums, drastically reducing ticket revenue. Professional and college leagues have had to deal with daily COVID-19 testing, postponements and cancellations, the biggest in college being the decision not to hold the money-making NCAA basketball tournaments a year ago. It's the lifeblood for many schools.

Hurlbut says FDU President Christopher Capuano, a proponent of sports expansion, gave him an odd look when he told him it was time to expand. "He wanted to see the economics behind it," Hurlbut said. The spreadsheet Capuano got was an eye-opener. It suggested that adding sports at a mid-major Division I school would end up adding hundreds of thousands of dollars to the ledger in time.

Hurlbut said many schools have been cutting 20% across the

## NBA

# Hayward enjoying more prominent role in Charlotte

By STEVE REED  
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — In a time when many veteran NBA players are doing anything they can to join a “super team” in hopes of winning a championship, Gordon Hayward is a bit of an anomaly.

Hayward took the road less traveled this offseason when he opted out of his contract with the high-profile Celtics and chose to come to Charlotte to take on a more prominent role and the opportunity to help build a young Hornets team into a playoff contender.

So far, so good.

The 11-year NBA veteran is averaging a career-high 22.3 points along with 5.5 rebounds and 3.8 assists per game for the playoff-starved Hornets, who are 13-15 and in the thick of the Eastern Conference playoff race. Hayward, an All-Star in 2017, is ninth in All-Star balloting among front-court players in the East.

“I wanted to go somewhere where I could maximize who I am as a basketball player again,” he said. “Certainly the responsibility here is more, and I’m embracing that.”

Hayward said the decision to leave Boston and sign a four-year, \$120 million contract with Charlotte wasn’t easy, given it meant

uprooting his family again.

But after talking with Hornets owner Michael Jordan, general manager Mitch Kupchak and coach James Borrego, he felt it was a chance worth taking.

“The challenge of going to a team that is really young but really talented and trying to help them get to that next level was something that was really enticing to me,” Hayward said. “I just decided to go for it — and it has been great ever since.”

Jordan tried to lure Hayward to Charlotte before, signing him to a four-year, \$63 million offer sheet in 2014 when he was a restricted free agent, but Hayward’s first team, the Utah Jazz, matched the offer.

The Hornets were thrilled when he decided to come to Charlotte this time around.

“The biggest thing is that he’s been a gem as a playmaker,” Borrego said of the 6-foot-7 Hayward. “He’s got the size. In this league, we needed someone with size that can make plays and his play-making is the best thing that he does. He loves to share the ball, move the ball. He loves passing the ball.”

Hayward said he likes how unselfishly the Hornets play.

Charlotte is second in the league in assists, averaging 27.5 per



BRANDON DILL/AP

**Charlotte Hornets forward Gordon Hayward (20) handles the ball against Memphis Grizzlies guard Desmond Bane (22) in the second half of Wednesday's game in Memphis, Tenn.**

game. And he’s thriving in his role, shooting 51.5% from the field and 42.2% from three-point range.

“I’m loving the style of play,” Hayward said. “We are moving the ball, I’m able to cut, play with the ball and off the ball ...”

When the Hornets need a basket in the fourth quarter, they often defer to Hayward. And he’s been there to rescue them from bad possessions with the shot clock winding down on a number of occasions.

“The system, the way they’re using him, clearly he doesn’t look like he’s been there a short time,” Jazz coach Quin Snyder said. “He looks like he’s very comfortable. I’m happy that he’s fallen into a mindset and an opportunity where he has because he’s worked hard to get where he is.”

Hayward jokes that at 30, he’s now “an old guy” in basketball years, but said that being around young players like rookie LaMelo Ball, Devonte Graham, P.J. Washington and Miles Bridges has

helped reenergize him.

He said it was the “fresh start” that he needed.

“It seems like yesterday that I was these guys — I was the young guy,” Hayward said with a laugh. “I think Raja Bell was 34 when I was a rookie and I remember thinking, ‘Man, he is old.’ And now I have a family and kids and these guys are the young guns.”

Hayward said his sole focus is on helping the Hornets end a four-year playoff drought.

With a shortened offseason, it took some time for everyone to fall into their roles, he said.

But he believes the team is getting better as the season progresses.

“We have had some flashes of being really good,” Hayward said. “We have beaten some good teams and had successful moments. And then we have had some bad moments as well. And that is a product of us being young. We have to learn to be more consistent, me included.”

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	19	10	.655	—
Brooklyn	18	12	.600	1½
Boston	14	14	.500	4½
New York	14	16	.467	5½
Toronto	13	15	.464	5½

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	13	15	.464	—
Atlanta	12	16	.429	1
Miami	11	17	.393	2
Orlando	11	18	.379	2½
Washington	9	17	.346	3

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	16	12	.571	—
Indiana	15	14	.517	1½
Chicago	12	15	.444	3½
Cleveland	10	19	.345	6½
Detroit	8	20	.286	8

### Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	16	11	.593	—
Memphis	12	12	.500	2½
Dallas	13	15	.464	3½
New Orleans	12	16	.429	4½
Houston	11	17	.393	5½

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	24	5	.828	—
Portland	18	10	.643	5½
Denver	15	13	.536	8½
Oklahoma City	11	17	.393	12½
Minnesota	7	22	.241	17

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	22	7	.759	—
L.A. Clippers	21	9	.700	1½
Phoenix	17	10	.630	4
Golden State	16	13	.552	6
Sacramento	12	15	.444	9

#### Tuesday's games

Boston 112, Denver 89  
Portland 115, Oklahoma City 104  
New Orleans 144, Memphis 113  
L.A. Lakers 112, Minnesota 104  
Toronto 124, Milwaukee 113  
Brooklyn 128, Phoenix 124  
San Antonio at Detroit, ppd

#### Wednesday's games

Orlando 107, New York 89  
Atlanta 122, Boston 114  
Philadelphia 118, Houston 113  
Chicago 105, Detroit 102  
Washington 130, Denver 128  
Indiana 134, Minnesota 128, OT  
Portland 126, New Orleans 124  
Memphis 122, Oklahoma City 113  
Utah 114, L.A. Clippers 96  
Golden State 120, Miami 112, OT  
Chicago at Charlotte, ppd  
San Antonio at Cleveland, ppd  
Detroit at Dallas, ppd

#### Thursday's games

Toronto at Milwaukee  
Brooklyn at L.A. Lakers  
Miami at Sacramento

#### Friday's games

Denver at Charlotte, ppd  
Denver at Cleveland  
Golden State at Orlando  
Atlanta at Boston  
Chicago at Philadelphia  
Dallas at Houston  
Detroit at Memphis  
Oklahoma City at Milwaukee  
Phoenix at New Orleans  
Toronto at Minnesota  
Utah at L.A. Clippers

#### Saturday's games

San Antonio at New York, ppd  
Golden State at Charlotte  
Indiana at Houston  
Miami at L.A. Lakers  
Phoenix at Memphis  
Sacramento at Chicago  
Washington at Portland

#### Sunday's games

Boston at New Orleans  
Minnesota at New York  
Philadelphia at Toronto  
Oklahoma City at Cleveland  
Detroit at Orlando  
Denver at Atlanta  
Brooklyn at L.A. Clippers  
Sacramento at Milwaukee

## ANALYSIS

# Griffin, Pistons break-up will be a win-win

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

Blake Griffin has jumped over cars to win dunk contests, smacked his head on the sides of backboards, and once turned three consecutive passes from Chris Paul all into alley-oop slams in a span of about 30 seconds.

These days, we can only assume that he can still dunk. He hasn’t in a game since Dec. 12, 2019. More than 440 NBA players have gotten at least one slam down in that span, but none are from Griffin, and there might not be another anytime soon.

The Detroit Pistons and Griffin are going to be splitting up sometime in the coming weeks, after the sides revealed Monday that they’ve decided it best to go their separate ways. For now, much of the talk is about seeking a trade. But, eventually and not surprisingly, it will come down to money.

Griffin is making about \$36.8 million this season, has an option for about \$39 million next season, and it’s hard to imagine that any team would be willing to trade for someone with the NBA’s eighth-highest salary and 128th-highest scoring average of 12.3 points this season.

So, if the Pistons are really going to move on, they’ll probably have to just take the hit, negotiate a buyout and truly start fresh.

“Blake’s track record, his playing resume, speaks for itself,” Pistons coach Dwane Casey said. “Someday, the guy’s going to be a Hall of Famer. He’s one of the players that I’ve respected over the years. ... He can be a piece to a contending team. I’ve been with contending teams and you’d love to have a guy like Blake Griffin on your team.”

The days of Griffin terrorizing opponents and rims are over; he’s no longer elite, no longer a sky-

walker, but still could be very good in certain roles on certain teams — assuming, of course, that he’ll want to accept a diminished role. He turns 32 next month. That’s hardly washed-up.

And there’s always a market for the veteran who is liked, respected, good in the locker room, good in the community.

Dwyane Wade came off the bench toward the end of his career in Miami. Vince Carter was primarily a reserve for his last eight seasons. The Los Angeles Lakers won a title last season thanks in large part to Rajon Rondo’s veteran savvy off the bench. Title-contenders want veterans who are smart and can help, and Griffin now gets to pick his spot.

Griffin has already reinvented himself once, so it’s not like he can’t do so again. Like many players in this three-point era, he added that shot to his repertoire a few years

back and it helped catapult him back to All-Star level in 2018-19.

The good news here is that if he wants his freedom right away, if he and his representation are able to pick his next destination, he could probably talk the Pistons into speeding up the process of getting to that team by leaving a few million on the bargaining table.

There’s also good news for the Pistons. General manager Troy Weaver told ESPN on Monday that the team “will work to achieve a positive outcome for all involved.”

This decision comes a week or so after Detroit traded Derrick Rose to New York, clearing another veteran so younger players can log more minutes and develop. Rose got to be reunited with the Knicks and coach Tom Thibodeau, and has a better chance of reaching the postseason. A win-win.

It’s time for Griffin to find his win-win.

## OLYMPICS/AUTO RACING/NFL

## Tokyo appoints new boss

By STEPHEN WADE  
Associated Press

TOKYO — Seiko Hashimoto has appeared in seven Olympics, four in the winter and three in the summer — the most by any “multiseason” athlete in the games.

She made even more history on Thursday in Japan, where women are still rare in the boardrooms and positions of political power.



Hashimoto

The 56-year-old Hashimoto was named president of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee after a meeting of its executive board, which is 80% male. She replaces 83-year-old Yoshiro Mori, a former Japanese prime minister who was forced to resign last week after making sexist comments about women.

Essentially, he said women talk too much.

“Now I’m here to return what I owe as an athlete and to return back what I received,” Hashimoto told the board, according to an interpreter.

Hashimoto had been serving as the Olympic minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. She also held a portfolio dealing with gender equality and women’s empowerment. She said she would be replaced as Olympic minister by Tamayo Marukawa.

She brought up the issue of gender equality repeatedly, and focused on problems at the organizing committee, which is male-dominated, has no female vice presidents and has an executive board made up of 80% men. It employs about 3,500 people.

“Of course, it is very important what Tokyo 2020 as an organizing committee does about gender equality,” she said, sitting between two males — CEO Toshiro Muto and spokesman Masa Takaya. “I think it will be important for Tokyo 2020 to practice equality.”

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach said Hashimoto was “the perfect choice” for the job.

“With the appointment of a woman as president, the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee is also sending a very important signal with regard to gender equality,” Bach said in a statement.

Hashimoto competed in cycling in three Summer Olympics (1988, 1992 and 1996) and in speedskating in four Winter Olympics (1984, 1988, 1992 and 1994). She won a bronze medal — her only medal — at the 1992 Albertville Games in speedskating.



JOHN RAOUX / AP

Michael McDowell celebrates with a burnout after winning the Daytona 500 on Monday at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla.

# McDowell hopes Daytona win brings more success

By JENNA FRYER  
Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.

Michael McDowell was best known for years as the guy who barrel-rolled eight times at Texas while trying to qualify for just the second race of his Cup Series career.

He’d driven through the remnants of an oil spill when McDowell’s car made a hard right turn into the wall. The car rebounded, flipped onto its roof and went airborne for eight rolls before the flaming wreckage finally came to a stop on its wheels.

“It’s just one of those things that happened,” McDowell said. “But you definitely hope that people would know you for something better than that.”

It took 13 years for him to change the narrative: McDowell is now a Daytona 500 champion.

The journeyman earned the first win of his career — he was 0-357 before Daytona — by zipping past two crashing cars on the final lap. McDowell led for less than a mile in the wee hours Monday morning but it was all he needed to validate a career spent driving inferior cars.

Daytona is unlike any race on NASCAR’s schedule in that underdogs have a chance if they can make it to the finish. It takes understanding the nuances of superspeedway racing — managing the draft, knowing who to push and how to do it, and using instinct to plot strategy at almost 200 mph.

McDowell has had the hang of it



JOHN RAOUX/AP

McDowell is interviewed after the first victory of his NASCAR Cup Series career, which gives him an automatic berth in the playoffs.

since at least 2013, when he scored his first career top-10 finish at Daytona. He has been a fixture near the front of the field since, particularly after he moved to Front Row Motorsports in 2018.

Although FRM is considered one of NASCAR’s third-tier teams, it has a strong program for superspeedways and road courses, circuits that somewhat level the playing field. In four Daytona 500s driving the No. 34 Ford, McDowell finished fifth, ninth, 14th and, finally, first.

“This is definitely no fluke,” said three-time Daytona 500 winner Denny Hamlin. “I’ve said many times this is a skill game. He’s got the skill set to win these, and he finally got it done.”

The victory was just the third in 17 years for Front Row and owner Bob Jenkins. David Ragan won FRM’s first race, in 2013 at Talladega Superspeedway, and Chris Buescher won at Pocono in 2016.

Jenkins doesn’t think the sporadic success is indicative of the team he’s built.

“I know the average fan is surprised when we win a race, but it never surprises me,” Jenkins said. “It’s taken a long time to get our third win and our first Daytona 500 win, but people don’t realize this is our third top-five in the Daytona 500. You want to win championships, but you’ve got to win races first.”

McDowell earlier this month said he doubted FRM could make the 16-car playoffs on points, so the priority had been earning an automatic berth via a race win. The schedule this year has a NASCAR-high seven road courses — the first is this Sunday at Daytona — and four superspeedways, which theoretically gave FRM a fighting chance to compete against NASCAR’s elite.

FRM now has its first playoff berth in team history. More importantly, crew chief Drew Blickensderfer has 25 weeks to prepare for the championship rounds. He can overhaul his strategy to fixate less on decent finishes and instead aggressively chase stage points and victories in hopes of a deeper playoff run.

“All that matters right now is winning the stage or winning the race for us,” Blickensderfer said.

# Source: Wentz headed to Colts

By ROB MAADDI  
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Philadelphia Eagles have agreed to trade Carson Wentz to the Indianapolis Colts, according to a person familiar with the deal.

The Eagles will receive a third-round pick in this year’s draft and a conditional second-round pick in 2022 that can turn into a first-round pick if Wentz plays 75% of the snaps this year or 70% and the Colts make the playoffs.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal hasn’t been announced.

Wentz is coming off the worst season of his five-year career and was benched for rookie Jalen Hurts after 12 games. He finished third in NFL MVP voting in 2017 when he led the Eagles to an 11-2 record before a knee injury ended his season and Philadelphia went on to win its only Super Bowl title.

The deal reunites Wentz with Colts coach Frank Reich, who served as Philadelphia’s offensive coordinator his first two seasons in the league. The Colts are turning to their fourth starting quarterback in Reich’s four years. Andrew Luck retired abruptly before the 2019 season and Jacoby Brissett took over. Philip Rivers led the team to the playoffs in his only season in Indianapolis in 2020.

Wentz is entering the first season of a four-year, \$128 million contract he signed in June 2019. The Eagles will absorb a significant salary cap hit of \$33.8 million in dead money on their 2021 cap.

The Eagles traded up twice in the 2016 NFL Draft to select Wentz with the No. 2 overall pick. He started all 16 games as a rookie and had a breakout sophomore season before he tore two knee ligaments in Week 14 and watched Nick Foles lead the Eagles to a Super Bowl win over New England.

A back injury ended Wentz’s season early in 2018 and Foles led the Eagles to a playoff victory.

Wentz started every game in 2019 and helped the Eagles win the NFC East with an excellent four-game stretch in December.

But he was knocked out of his first career playoff start after nine snaps because of a concussion.



Wentz

## MLB

# Border still an obstacle for Toronto

Blue Jays will open at 'home' in Florida

By **ROB GILLIES**  
Associated Press

TORONTO — The Toronto Blue Jays will play their first two homestands of the season at their spring training facility in Dunedin, Fla., because of Canadian government restrictions during the pandemic.

The team said Thursday it has been planning different scenarios for home games and had hoped to see improvements in public health.

The Blue Jays cited the “ongoing Canada-U.S. border closure” in making the “difficult decision.” The team added in its statement that it “hopes of a return to play at Rogers Centre as soon as possible.”

After starting the season with three-game series at the New York Yankees and Texas Rangers, Toronto’s schedule has a homestand with four games against the Los Angeles Angels from April 8-11 and the Yankees from April 12-14.

The Blue Jays follow with a trip to Kansas City, Boston and Tampa Bay, then have home games against Washington on April 27-28 and Atlanta from April 30 to May 2. After that, a 10-game trip to Oakland, Houston and Atlanta.

It remains unlikely they would gain approval to play May games in Toronto. A return home



STEVE NESIUS/AP

**The Toronto Blue Jays will play their first two homestands of the regular season at their TD Ballpark spring training facility in Dunedin, Fla., due to Canadian government restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic.**

in the second half may be more realistic, after players and large segments of the population in the U.S. and Canada are vaccinated.

The TD Ballpark in Dunedin seats about 8,500 fans and had a major renovation in 2019-20. The Blue Jays will limit capacity to 15%.

Toronto last played at 49,000-capacity Rogers Centre on Sept. 29, 2019, an 8-3 win over Tampa Bay.

“We hope for warm summer nights under the open Rogers Centre roof,” the team said.

The Blue Jays played home games during the shortened 2020 season in Buffalo, N.Y., and were 17-9 at Sahlen Field, home of their Buffalo

Bisons Triple-A farm team. The Canadian government didn’t allow the team to play at home because of the risk of spreading COVID-19, citing frequent travel required during a baseball season.

Last year’s Major League Baseball regular season was played without fans.

The border remains closed to nonessential travelers who are not Canadian citizens. Canada requires those entering the country to isolate for 14 days. And starting Monday, air travelers who arrive in Canada will be forced to quarantine in a hotel for up to three nights as they await the result of a coronavirus test.

# AP: Tatis Jr., Padres agree on 14-year, \$340M deal

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Fernando Tatis Jr. has helped make baseball fun again in San Diego.



Tatis Jr.

In return, the Padres have agreed to give the electrifying shortstop a \$340 million, 14-year deal that could keep him with San Diego until he’s 35 years old, according to two people familiar with the situation.

The two people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Wednesday night because the deal hadn’t been announced.

It will be the longest contract signed in MLB history. Giancarlo Stanton, now with the New York Yankees, signed a 13-year, \$325 million deal with Miami in 2015. Bryce Harper signed a 13-year, \$330 million deal with Philadelphia in 2019. The biggest deal by dollars remains Mike Trout’s \$426.5 million, 12-year contract signed with the Angels in 2019.

The 22-year-old Tatis has bloomed into a superstar in less than two full seasons with the Padres, hitting .301 with 39 home runs, 98 RBIs and 27 stolen bases in 143 games. He helped San Diego end a 13-year playoff drought in 2020 and win a wild-card series against the St. Louis Cardinals before the Padres were swept by the rival Los Angeles Dodgers in the NL Division Series.

He has quickly become one of the faces of baseball. He stands out because of his flair, easy smile, blond dreadlocks flowing from under his cap, a uniform dirtied by his hard-charging play and his dance moves in the dugout after hitting home runs.

Tatis was literally raised in the game at the feet of his father, who played 11 seasons in the big leagues. He has dared to challenge old-school norms — after hitting his second home run in an 11-9 win in Game 2 of the wild-card series against the Cardinals, he unleashed an emphatic bat flip. A photo of Tatis in that moment is on the cover of the video game MLB The Show ’21.

In August, Tatis caused a stir when he hit a grand slam on a 3-0 count with the Padres leading the Texas Rangers by seven runs. The furor died down and the Padres became the first team in MLB history to hit grand slams in four straight games and five in six games.

Tatis comes from San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic, also known as the Cradle of Shortstops.

# Protocols: 162-game season under pandemic

FROM PAGE 48

ited-capacity crowds are expected at many stadiums, autographs will remain a no-no.

Other 2020 changes have been put on the bench. The universal designated hitter is gone, and no deal has been reached to reexpand the postseason. Of course, last year’s agreement to fatten the playoff field from 10 to 16 teams wasn’t finished until hours before the first pitch on opening day, so there’s precedent for a late change.

Then again, the league and union have agreed on little lately — hardly a promising sign with the collective bargaining agreement set to expire Dec. 1. Expect chatter about that this spring, too.

Scheduling figures to remain a headache. There were 45 games postponed for coronavirus-related reasons last year, and all but two were made up.

Players will again be tested 3-4 times per week for COVID-19 and heavily restricted in what they can do during their time off. Lester, signed by Washington as a free agent in January after six seasons with the Cubs, compared the exhaustion of last year’s protocols to a deep playoff run.

“Mentally, you don’t realize



TNS photo

**Detroit Tigers catcher Grayson Greiner stands near a batting cage during the first day of spring training Wednesday in Lakeland, Fla.**

how draining it is until you’re done,” he said. “I think last year was that. It was two months of that mental grind of the testing, worrying about the testing, making sure you’re doing all the right things.”

And now it’s time to start all over, beginning soon in Clearwater, Tempe and all the familiar camp sites.

Spring rosters will be limited to 75 players, with minor league camps delayed until the big leaguers leave town for opening day April 1. For fans accustomed to exploring the backfields, there won’t be much to see.

The good news for all involved — spread of the virus has slowed near camps. Arizona has dropped

# 45

Number of MLB games postponed for coronavirus-related reasons last year. All but two were made up.

SOURCE: Associated Press

from a peak of nearly 14,000 cases in one day to under 2,000, while Florida went from a high of 19,000 cases to under 8,000.

Still, MLB has adopted extra spring precautions. The Grapefruit League schedule was reworked to limit travel, and clubs won’t play exhibitions against local colleges — usually a spring staple. Some early games may be shortened to five or seven innings, and half-innings can be called off before three outs if a pitcher has thrown at least 20 pitches.

While many recent changes haven’t been wholly popular with fans, the consensus is that all these adaptations are baseball’s best chance at normalcy.

“I actually liked both the seven-inning doubleheaders and the runner on second,” Oakland manager Bob Melvin wrote in a text to the AP.

“I was skeptical at first, but they both were successful in my opinion.”

## MLB

# La Russa feels fortunate to manage White Sox

By **ANDREW SELIGMAN**  
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Tony La Russa feels fortunate.

The Chicago White Sox gave the Hall of Famer the opportunity to manage again despite a lengthy absence from the dugout and stuck with him when news of a drunken driving arrest broke shortly after his hiring.

At that point, he knew. There was no way he was stepping down. "Once they knew and they wanted to keep me, then I haven't had the first thought that I shouldn't back off," he said Wednesday.

La Russa is locked in now, with spring training under way. He is trying to push the White Sox toward a championship and add another ring to the one he earned with Oakland and two in St. Louis.

At 76, he is the oldest manager in the majors. He hasn't filled out a lineup card since he managed the Cardinals to a World Series championship in 2011.

The White Sox turned a few heads when they hired him for a second go-around in October, 34 years after they fired him. And that was before his arrest became

**"I embrace the challenge, mostly because I love the job and I'm excited about the potential of this team."**

**Tony La Russa**  
Chicago White Sox manager

public knowledge.

La Russa was charged with misdemeanor drunken driving in Arizona last February after dining with friends from the Los Angeles Angels. The charges were filed Oct. 28, a day before the White Sox hired him.

La Russa alerted chairman Jerry Reinsdorf about the case when the team started interviewing him in October and talked to general manager Rick Hahn and executive vice president Ken Williams about it "once they found out." Hahn would not say when, exactly, he became aware.

"I'm sure Jerry must have told Rick and Kenny," La Russa said. "He and they decided to stay with me."

But now he's back in his element, leading a team coming off a breakout season.

Hahn said working with La Russa the past few months has him even more excited. And he wasn't interested in discussing the arrest

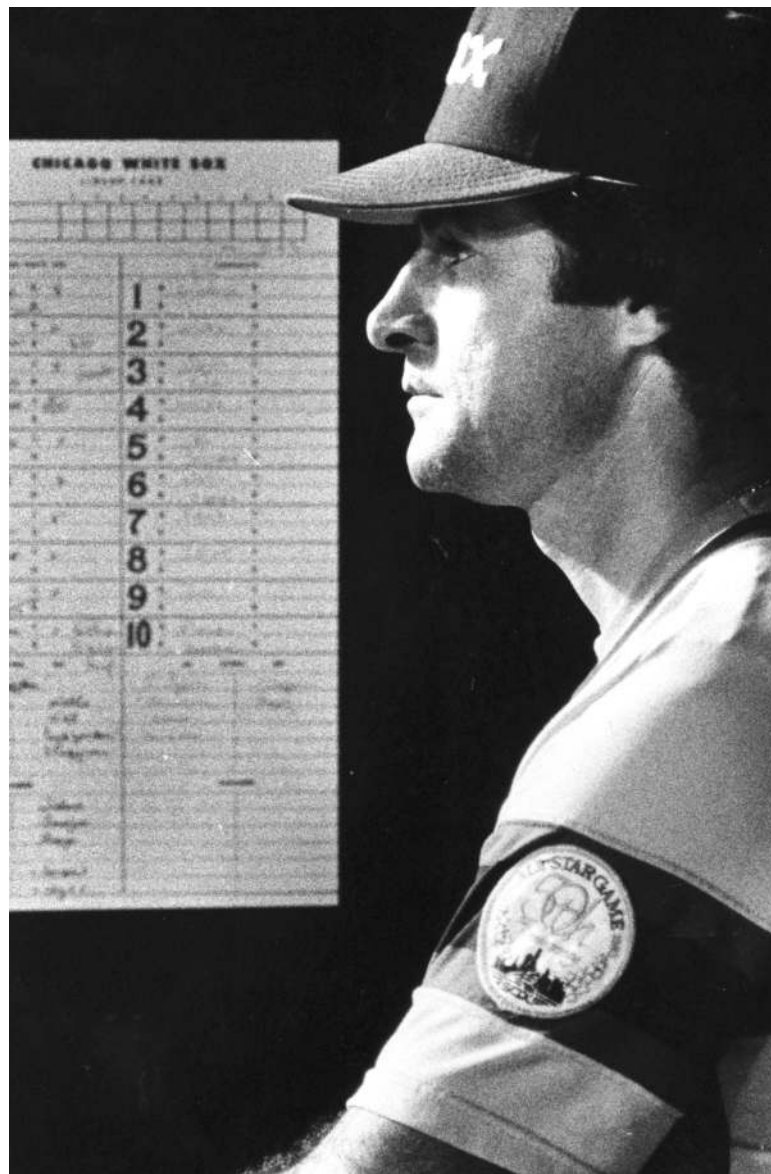
and when he found out in the hiring process.

"My focus is not on rehashing something that happened four or five months ago," Hahn said. "It's about the excitement we feel as we get ready to try to win a championship."

The White Sox made the playoffs last year for the first time since 2008 at 35-25 and ended a string of seven losing seasons.

The White Sox added starter Lance Lynn and star closer Liam Hendriks to a team that already included AL MVP José Abreu, 2019 batting champion Tim Anderson and ace Lucas Giolito. They're banking on La Russa to show he still has the touch to push a team to the top.

"There are some legitimate questions about what I have to offer, my age and not being current," La Russa said. "I embrace the challenge, mostly because I love the job and I'm excited about the potential of this team."



Chicago Tribune archive

**White Sox manager Tony La Russa in 1983. The Chicago White Sox gave the Hall of Famer the opportunity to manage again despite a lengthy absence, hiring him for a second go-around in October.**

# Phillies seek end to 9-year postseason drought

By **ROB MAADDI**  
Associated Press

Joe Girardi held up the Philadelphia Phillies' roster on a sheet of paper and made it clear improvements in the offseason don't matter once players hit the field.



**Girardi**

"This paper doesn't mean a lot, right? We have to go out and prove it and guys have to play up to their potential," Girardi said during a virtual session with reporters on Wednesday. "And that's what spring training is all about, getting guys in the best possible position to go

out and compete starting April 1. And we will work very, very hard at that. But I like the improvements that we've made."

Pitchers and catchers reported to camp and the first full team workout is scheduled for Monday. The Phillies fell one win short of qualifying for the expanded postseason last year and haven't had a winning record since they last reached the playoffs in 2011.

The team suffered its third straight September collapse, going 1-7 in the final eight games. Their failure cost general manager Matt Klentak his job. David Dombrowski was hired to run baseball operations and Sam Fuld was promoted to GM.

Re-signing two-time All-Star catcher J.T. Realmuto and shortstop Didi Gregorius were their biggest offseason moves. The



ALEX BRANDON/AP

**The Philadelphia Phillies finalized a \$28 million, two-year contract with shortstop Didi Gregorius this month.**

Phillies also added several veteran relievers and starters to try to bolster a bullpen that was the worst in baseball last season.

"They're making a commitment to winning and telling the fans we're going for it," Girardi said of ownership. "I applaud them for that because obviously they had (revenue) losses last year. Everybody had losses

last year, but they've really stepped up. And now it's our job to reward them."

With Realmuto and Gregorius back, scoring shouldn't be a problem for an offense that finished tied for fifth in runs last season. Bryce Harper, Andrew McCutchen, Rhys Hoskins and Alec Bohm make the lineup deep top to bottom.

Right-handers Aaron Nola, Zack Wheeler and Zach Eflin form a solid trio atop the rotation. New arms Chase Anderson and Matt Moore will compete with veteran Vince Velasquez and prospect Spencer Howard for the final two spots.

The two guys who don't get starting jobs should add more depth to a bullpen that's been revamped. Phillies relievers had a 7.06 ERA in 2020. The team signed Brandon Kintzler, who was Miami's closer last season, Archie Bradley, who has closer experience, and lefty Tony Watson to join Hector Neris. The Phillies are counting on Jose Alvarado returning to his 2018 form with the Rays, and they're hoping nonroster pitchers like Neftali Feliz and Hector Rondon can do the same.

"We've done a lot to strengthen our pitching and to bring in power arms," Girardi said. "I think it was something that we lacked last year in the back end of our bullpen and we've done a really good job of bringing those arms in."

After coming close only to fall apart down the stretch, Girardi says the team has "a mindset of determination to complete the task."

But they're in a tough NL East featuring the defending division champion Braves, Mets, Marlins and Nationals.

"We're in this to win it, right? That's why we're here," Girardi said. "So I really believe that we're going to try to formulate the best team possible now."

## NHL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## AROUND THE NHL

## Games in Tahoe could mean more picturesque sites

By JOSH DUBOW  
Associated Press

Outdoor games have become the marquee event of the NHL season ever since the league staged the first Winter Classic in Buffalo back in 2008.

None of the 30 previous outdoor games had quite a setup like this season, when the league will stage two games this weekend on the 18th fairway of a golf course on the shores of Lake Tahoe, with the Sierra Nevada Mountains towering in the background.

With the COVID-19 pandemic preventing the ability of huge crowds gathering at a stadium, the league opted for a pair of true outdoor games in a picturesque setting far from any stadium.

If the feedback to the games Saturday between Colorado and Vegas and Sunday between Boston and Philadelphia is as positive as it was to the first Winter Classic, the NHL could look for other dazzling outdoor venues in the future.

"We feel this is something that will resonate with sports fans," NHL chief content officer Steve Mayer said. "I really believe this is going to catch their eye whether you're a hockey fan or basketball fan or football fan, this is something you're going to tune into. If we do get a great response, I think at the league office we'll talk about what the future of games in crazy, beautiful, wonderful landmark places happens to be as we look to the future."

## Doc-umentary

Part of NBC's Sunday broadcast will be a documentary about retired play-by-play announcer Mike Emrick. "Doc Emrick—The Voice of Hockey" will air before the Bruins-Flyers game and include 20 current and former players and broadcasters sharing their thoughts on "Doc."

Emrick hasn't seen it and doesn't want to know anything about it until it airs. He and wife Joyce are "just going to watch it like everybody else."

"It's like a present," Emrick said. "They're doing a really nice thing for me. And I would rather not ask a lot of questions about, well, what are you getting me for Christmas?"

## Game of the week

The Toronto Maple Leafs visit the Montreal Canadiens on Saturday for the fourth meeting of the season between the top two teams in the North Division.

## NHL scoreboard

East Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	14	10	2	2	22	42	30
N.Y. Islanders	15	8	4	3	19	38	34
Philadelphia	13	8	3	2	18	46	41
Washington	14	7	4	3	17	50	52
Pittsburgh	14	7	6	1	15	44	50
New Jersey	10	5	3	2	12	28	28
N.Y. Rangers	14	4	7	3	11	33	39
Buffalo	12	4	6	2	10	31	38

Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Florida	14	10	2	2	22	48	43
Chicago	18	9	5	4	22	52	51
Tampa Bay	14	10	3	1	21	54	32
Carolina	14	10	3	1	21	53	40
Columbus	17	7	6	4	18	50	60
Dallas	12	5	3	4	14	40	34
Nashville	15	6	9	0	12	36	52
Detroit	18	4	11	3	11	35	56

West Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	14	10	3	1	21	43	31
St. Louis	16	9	5	2	20	52	49
Colorado	13	8	4	1	17	41	27
Arizona	15	7	6	2	16	40	42
Anaheim	16	6	7	3	15	32	42
Los Angeles	14	5	6	3	13	44	44
San Jose	14	6	7	1	13	38	51
Minnesota	12	6	6	0	12	30	34

North Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	17	12	3	2	26	60	45
Montreal	15	9	4	2	20	52	39
Edmonton	18	10	8	0	20	63	60
Winnipeg	16	9	6	1	19	55	46
Calgary	16	8	7	1	17	45	45
Vancouver	20	8	11	1	17	62	72
Ottawa	18	4	13	1	9	41	71

## Wednesday's games

Florida 4, Carolina 3, OT  
Chicago 2, Detroit 0  
Vancouver 5, Calgary 1  
Edmonton 3, Winnipeg 2  
Toronto 2, Ottawa 1

## Thursday's games

Buffalo at Washington  
N.Y. Islanders at Pittsburgh  
N.Y. Rangers at Philadelphia  
Nashville at Columbus  
New Jersey at Boston  
Ottawa at Toronto  
San Jose at St. Louis  
Tampa Bay at Dallas, ppd  
Los Angeles at Arizona  
Minnesota at Anaheim

## Friday's games

Chicago at Carolina  
Florida at Detroit  
Edmonton at Calgary  
Winnipeg at Vancouver

## Saturday's games

Buffalo at New Jersey  
N.Y. Rangers at Washington  
Vegas vs. Colorado at Edgewood Tahoe Resort  
Florida at Detroit  
Chicago at Carolina  
Los Angeles at Arizona  
N.Y. Islanders at Pittsburgh  
Nashville at Columbus  
San Jose at St. Louis  
Toronto at Montreal  
Tampa Bay at Dallas  
Minnesota at Anaheim  
Calgary at Edmonton

## Sunday's games

Philadelphia vs. Boston at Edgewood Tahoe Resort  
Montreal at Ottawa  
New Jersey at Washington  
Winnipeg at Vancouver



VASHA HUNT / AP

Alabama forward Herbert Jones, left, moves the ball down the floor against Georgia guard Sahvir Wheeler. Jones has added three-point shooting to his already strong defensive and rebounding skills.

## Jones' emergence gives Alabama a decent shot

By JOHN ZENOR  
Associated Press

**H**erb Jones was draining three-pointers — three in all — during the first half of Alabama's game against Georgia.

For a sharp-shooting team like the eighth-ranked Crimson Tide, that might not seem notable. Then again, Jones made only one three all of last season.

Jones is no longer mostly just a rebounder and defensive stopper, like Alabama is no longer just a middle-of-the-pack team in the Southeastern Conference. The mutual transformation is hardly coincidental.

"I still go out and try to do my job on the defensive end," Jones said. "I don't too much worry about the offense, really. I just try to get open shots for my teammates and create for my teammates. If it's my time to score, I take that opportunity and score."

Even if that means shooting the occasional three-pointer. Jones has made 19 of 36 threes, a 52.8% clip. He doesn't have to elaborate on the dramatic improvement in that regard.

"Everyone can see it," Jones said.

In his first three seasons, he made 14 shots from beyond the arc, hitting on a paltry 22.9% of his attempts. Last season, when he had elbow and wrist injuries, Jones was just 1-for-14.

He is averaging 11.9 points, easily a career best, this season and a team-leading 5.9 rebounds per

**29.9%**

Percentage improvement this season in Herb Jones' three-point shooting compared to his first three seasons with Alabama. He's hitting 52.8% of his three-point attempts.

SOURCE: Associated Press

game. The 6-foot-8, 210-pound senior also is tops on the team in assists, steals and blocked shots.

He is coming off a career-best 21-point game against the Bulldogs.

John Petty Jr. gets more attention as one of the SEC's top shooters. Jahvon Quinerly and Josh Primo are former five-star prospects and Jaden Shackelford is the team's leading scorer.

But nobody on the Tide's best team in years fills up a stat sheet like Jones. He has added scoring to his repertoire even while dealing with a lower back injury that has limited practice time.

One thing hasn't changed: Jones' defense.

"I think he's the best defensive player in the country," Alabama guard Keon Ellis said. "He just does so much. He can guard from 1 through 5s (positions). Just seeing that alone, he sets the standard for our defense. He's always talking. He knows what spot everyone's supposed to be in, and he's always helping our guys. I think he just motivates everyone to play better on defense."

After coach Nate Oats had just taken over the program, a staffer

suggested Jones as an option for much-needed point guard depth. Based on his limited film study at the time, Oats was skeptical.

"His defense is unbelievable, but how he's playing this year?" he said. "No, I didn't see that before I got here. Now once we started practicing that summer, then I could start to see it a little bit. I thought he was going to be dynamite, like an all-league player. Then he just couldn't stay healthy his junior year."

The left-hander injured his left elbow in the season opener. Then he fractured his left wrist, missing three games and playing the rest of the season in a cast.

Upon his return, Jones played only seven minutes against Auburn as a defensive specialist, but his impact persuaded Oats to play him more, even essentially one-handed. Jones responded with 17 rebounds against LSU in his next outing, making two key free throws (one-handed, of course) late in the game.

Now that Jones is healthier, Oats is hoping his versatile player can attain at least one more individual milestone.

"I'd still love to see him get a triple-double," the Tide coach said. "I think he's that good of a player and I think he should get one. Assists, rebounds, deflections, steals, blocks."

"Even when he's not doing anything that shows up on a stat sheet, he's just kind of mucking things up for the other team's offense. He's so valuable to have out there."

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN



ANDY BROWNBILL / AP

Japan's Naomi Osaka, left, is congratulated by the United States' Serena Williams after winning their semifinal match Thursday at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia.

# Serena stopped: Osaka tops Williams in semis

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — As Serena Williams walked off the court after her latest so-close-yet-so-far bid for a 24th Grand Slam title ended with a loss to Naomi Osaka at the Australian Open, the 39-year-old American paused and put her hand on her chest while thousands of spectators rose to applaud.

Was this, Williams was asked at a news conference after the 6-3, 6-4 semifinal defeat, her way of saying goodbye?

"If I ever say farewell," she replied with a smile, "I wouldn't tell anyone."

When the next question returned the conversation to the subject of Williams' many mistakes Thursday — twice as many unforced errors, 24, as winners, 12 — she shook her head, teared up, said, "I'm done," and abruptly walked out of the session with reporters.

On Saturday, at 7:30 p.m. local time, Osaka will meet first-time Grand Slam finalist Jennifer Brady of the United States for the championship. The 22nd-seeded Brady, who is from Pennsylvania and played college tennis at UCLA, prevailed in an epic, 18-point last game to edge No. 25 Karolina Muchova 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 in the semifinals.

Brady dropped to her back at the baseline after saving a trio of break points, then converting her



HAMISH BLAIR / AP

**The United States' Jennifer Brady reacts to beating the Czech Republic's Karolina Muchova in the semifinals. Brady will play in her first Grand Slam final on Saturday against Osaka.**

fifth match point when Muchova sent a forehand long.

"My legs are shaking," Brady said. "My heart is racing."

She lost to Osaka in a three-set thriller in the U.S. Open semifinals last September.

"Everyone's just really excited whenever they play their first final," Osaka noted about what awaits Brady, "but they're also really nervous."

Williams was hoping to get to her 34th Grand Slam final but, once again, couldn't quite get the

job done in order to add one more Grand Slam trophy to her collection of 23 and equal Margaret Court for the most in tennis history.

Osaka, who also beat Williams in the chaotic 2018 U.S. Open final that concluded with the crowd booing and both women in tears, reached her fourth major title match and stretched her winning streak to 20 matches by claiming the last eight points.

"I don't know if there's any little kids out here today, but I was a little kid watching her play," Osaka, 23, said about Williams, "and just to be on the court playing against her, for me, is a dream."

The No. 3-seeded Osaka's Grand Slam collection also includes last year's U.S. Open and the 2019 Australian Open and she is, without a doubt, the most dangerous hard-court player in the women's game at the moment.

That used to be Williams, of course. But she was off-target too much in this contest.

"I could have won. I could have been up 5-Love," said Williams, who instead took a 2-0 lead at the outset before dropping the next five games. "I just made so many errors."

Her forehand, in particular, went awry, with no fewer than 10 unforced errors off that side in the first set alone.

"Too many mistakes there," she said. "Easy mistakes."

# Djokovic adds to perfect mark

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Novak Djokovic had a perfect record in Australian Open semifinals, and he was playing almost flawless tennis to protect it.

It didn't matter that across the net was Aslan Karatsev, a 114th-ranked, 27-year-old Russian who had come through qualifying to make his debut in a Grand Slam tournament after nine failed attempts.

Djokovic made only one unforced error in more than 50 minutes.

It was tight for the first seven games — before Djokovic reeled off eight straight points to win the first set — and again when Karatsev went on an all-or-nothing roll late in the second set.

Sensing a shift in support for the underdog — there was a loud, vocal crowd at Rod Laver Arena after a five-day span when fans were barred during a local COVID-19 outbreak — Djokovic moved up a gear and finished off his opponent 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

He's now 9-0 in semifinals at the season-opening major, and one win from a ninth Australian title.

"The more I win, the better I feel coming back," the top-ranked Djokovic said. "The love affair continues."

Djokovic will have a day off Friday when No. 4 Daniil Medvedev and No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas, who is coming off a five-set win over Rafael Nadal, meet in the other semifinal. He said he'd have a rest and get the popcorn ready to watch and see who he gets to face in Sunday's final.

Given his past success in Melbourne, Djokovic should feel confident going into another championship match. He already owns an all-time record eight Australian titles, and he's aiming for an 18th major title, which would reduce the

## Scoreboard

### Thursday

At Melbourne Park  
Melbourne, Australia  
Purse: AUD32,790,000  
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

#### Men's Singles Semifinals

Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Aslan Karatsev, Russia, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

#### Women's Singles Semifinals

Naomi Osaka (3), Japan, def. Serena Williams (10), United States, 6-3, 6-4.  
Jennifer Brady (22), United States, def. Karolina Muchova (25), Czech Republic, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4.

#### Men's Doubles Semifinals

Ivan Dodig, Croatia, and Filip Polasek (9), Slovakia, def. Nikola Pietrangeli and Mate Pavic (2), Croatia, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

#### Mixed Doubles Quarterfinals

Matthew Ebden and Sam Stosur, Australia, def. Hayley Carter, United States, and Sander Gille, Belgium, 6-3, 6-2.

Desirae Krawczyk, United States, and Joe Salisbury, Britain, def. Andreja Klepac, Slovenia, and Neal Skupski, Britain, 6-3, 6-4.

#### Mixed Doubles Semifinals

Rajeev Ram, United States, and Barbora Krejckikova (6), Czech Republic, def. Storm Sanders and Marc Polmans, Australia, 6-3, 6-3.

gap to Roger Federer and Nadal, who share the men's record at 20.

The 33-year-old Serb also is aiming to be only the second man to win nine or more titles at one of the four Grand Slams. Nadal has 13 at Roland Garros. Djokovic, in Australia, and Federer, with eight at Wimbledon, currently share second place.

"Recovery is the priority right now," Djokovic said. "I've had enough match play, enough practice."

"Right now it's just gathering all the necessary energy for the most important match of the Australian Open."

After the win, Djokovic said Karatsev deserved plenty of praise for his amazing major breakthrough. Karatsev will move into the Top 50 for the first time next week, meaning he won't have to go through qualifying for the majors.



ANDY BROWNBILL / AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after winning the second set against Russia's Aslan Karatsev during their semifinal match Thursday at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia.

# SPORTS



## Serena stopped

Osaka advances to Australian Open final with win over Williams » **Tennis, Page 47**

MLB

# New spring, same protocols



## Baseball set to undertake full season using lessons learned during last year's abbreviated 60-game slate

BY JAKE SEINER  
*Associated Press*

Completing the 2020 season required MLB to rewrite its rule book. Stadiums were emptied, schedules rewritten. Some players opted out. The ones that didn't spat into COVID-19 testing cups until their mouths went dry.

"When it was all said and done, you kind of look back and go, 'God, that was the longest 60 games I've ever been a part of,'" veteran pitcher Jon Lester said last month.

Well, to borrow from another Chicago Cubs favorite:

Let's play 162!

Against the backdrop of a still dangerous coronavirus pandemic, pitchers and catchers are reporting to spring training this week, the first step in a 2021 season that will take many of the complexities from 2020's 60-game sprint and stretch them over an additional four months.

Sure, there's the usual buzz over players with new homes. Blake Snell and Yu Dar-

vish, hoping to push the upstart San Diego Padres over the top. Still in their way, the World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers, who upgraded with NL Cy Young Award winner Trevor Bauer. Francisco Lindor is a Met, Nolan Arenado a Cardinal, and George Springer and Marcus Semien have joined up with the Blue Jays.

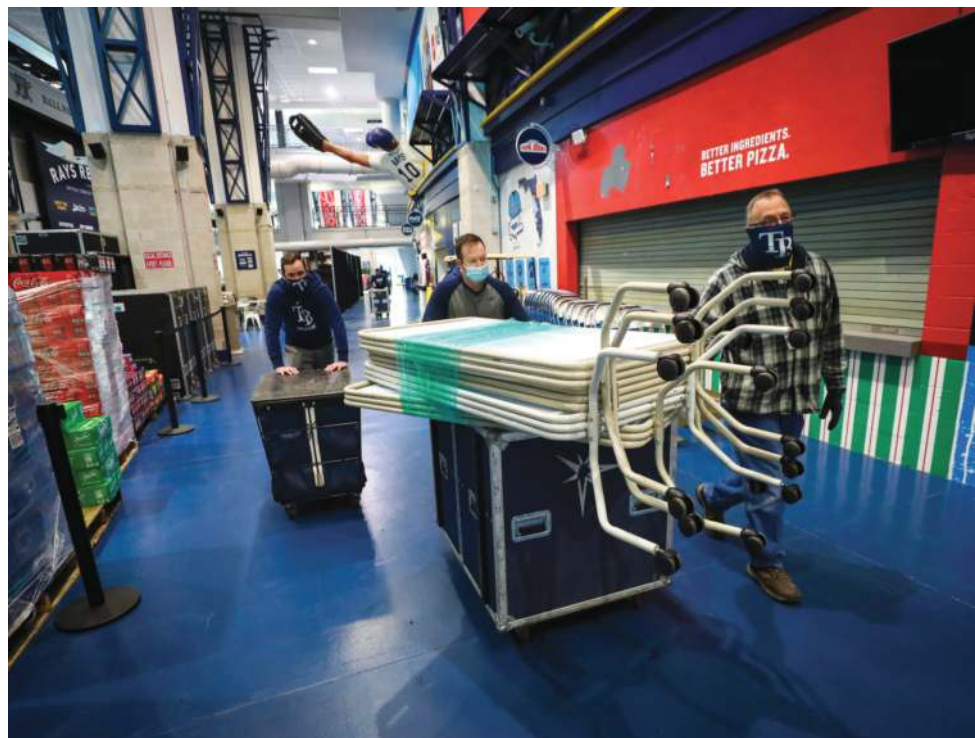
This season, though, promises to again be defined by the pandemic.

Offers by MLB to delay opening day were rejected by the players' association last month, defaulting the league into an on-time start.

Baseball will again use seven-inning doubleheaders and runners on second base to start extra innings — experiments introduced during last year's condensed regular season to ease the burden on pitchers amid a flood of postponements prompted by positive tests and contact tracing.

Sunflower seeds are still outlawed, and high-fives frowned upon, too. Although lim-

SEE PROTOCOLS ON PAGE 44



TNS photos

Top: Detroit Tigers pitchers Casey Mize and Matthew Boyd warm up on Wednesday, the first day catchers and pitchers reported to spring training in Lakeland, Fla. Above: Tampa Bay Rays clubhouse and medical staff load equipment onto trucks bound for spring training in Port Charlotte on Wednesday at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg.

## Source: Eagles send QB Wentz to Colts » NFL, Page 43

