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Air Force rolls out shorts on Okinawa

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Airmen of the 18th Maintenance Group at Kadena Air Base can now sport blue uniform shorts on the flight line to help them beat the suffocating Okinawa heat.

The shorts were issued in January following the lead of stateside bases like Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, Luke Air Force Base in Arizona and Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida, that rolled out the shorts last summer, the 18th Wing

said in a statement released this month.

The material is tough, flexible and stain resistant — similar to clothing worn by civilians in the maintenance and construction fields.

“I’m always hot out on the flight line,” 67th Aircraft Maintenance Unit crew chief Airman 1st Class Richard Flagg said in the statement. “Even at night I’m hot outside so these shorts are really nice for keeping cool.”

SEE SHORTS ON PAGE 7

Airman 1st Class Richard Flagg, shown checking out an F-15C Eagle at Kadena Air Base, Japan, on Jan. 23, said in an Air Force statement that he expects the uniform change to boost morale.

RHETT ISELL/U.S. Air Force



MARQUIS WHITEHEAD/U.S. Navy

Petty Officer 1st Class Alyssa Babcock, right, signs for department mail at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on Dec. 12.

New USPS policy likely to mean longer waits at military post offices

By **JOHN VANDIVER**
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Mailing packages from military post offices is about to become more of a hassle following a new U.S. Postal Service rule that is doing away with handwritten customs declaration forms.

Beginning March 6, clerks at military post offices overseas will require customers to use an electronic version of the PS Form 2976 that should be typed and printed, the Postal Service said in a recent announcement.

U.S. Army Europe in a statement Wednesday said it is working to delay the policy change, which is expected to cause longer waits for customers. While the Army tries to negotiate a delay, the military community should anticipate the change taking effect in March, USAREUR postal chief Bill Hilsher said.

For decades, filling out paper customs forms has been a fixture of military life for service members overseas, particularly during the holiday season when customers cram into postal offices.

USAREUR warned the new system

could result in longer wait times, particularly if customers elect to have postal clerks individually type declarations into retail system software.

Another option is filling out forms and printing them at home in advance.

There also are plans to set up computer-equipped kiosks at military post offices, USAREUR said.

“We ask for customers’ patience and understanding if the policy change causes longer wait times,” said Chuck Sharpe, program manager for Installation

SEE WAITS ON PAGE 7

PACIFIC

S. Korea reports 1st virus death

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

■ DODEA officials cancel events in Pacific **Page 29**

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea reported its first coronavirus-linked death Thursday, while the U.S. military tightened restrictions on travel to the southeastern city of Daegu due to an outbreak in infections in the area.

Daegu also urged residents to stay home as the city of 2.5 million people and surrounding areas struggled to contain an outbreak of the pneumonia-like disease.

The Army garrison in Daegu also restricted access and announced that schools and nonessential business would be closed for a second day Friday.

In an exception to policy, U.S. service members were authorized to wear face masks in uniform “regardless of air quality conditions,” according to the garrison’s Facebook page.

Fast-moving developments this week were a blow to South Korea’s hope that the crisis was easing.

Instead, dozens of new cases were confirmed in recent days, with the total number of infections soaring to 104 on Thursday, according to the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

U.S. Forces Korea said, “there remains zero confirmed cases of USFK personnel with COVID-19.”

The virus first appeared in December in Wuhan, China, and spread to nearly 30 countries.

2 former ship passengers with virus die in Japan

Associated Press

TOKYO — Two elderly passengers taken off the quarantined cruise ship Diamond Princess because they were infected with the new virus have died, Japan’s Health Ministry said Thursday, becoming the first fatalities from the virus-stricken vessel.

Japan now has three deaths linked to the COVID-19 illness.

The two victims, a man and woman in their 80s who are both Japanese, were believed to have been infected before health checks and a Feb. 5 quarantine began on the ship, Health Ministry official Masami Sakoi said. It was not immediately known if they had any roommates on the ship.

They had been hospitalized on Feb. 11 and 12 and each tested positive a day later. It was not immediately known why they were not tested earlier when they de-

veloped initial symptoms and consulted with the ship’s clinic, Sakoi said.

The ministry also announced Thursday that two more government officials had become infected while providing clerical work on the ship to help in the quarantine effort.

Four other officials — a quarantine official, a paramedic who carried an infected passenger, a Health Ministry worker and an

emergency relief medical expert — have also been sickened.

The Diamond Princess, docked in Yokohama port near Tokyo, started letting passengers who tested negative for the virus off the ship Wednesday, when the government-set 14-day quarantine ended. On Thursday, hundreds of other passengers were expected to leave in a disembarkation process expected to last through Friday.

Nonessential personnel were not required to go to work on Friday and most activities would be suspended, including the schools, it said.

The garrison also recommended that members of the military community avoid public places and transportation in the city, including stores, restaurants and other heavily congested areas until the situation is brought under control.

Self-quarantine measures were ordered for any American troops who had visited the affected New World Church, but garrison commander Col. Edward Ballanco said earlier Thursday that no Americans were known to have done so.

He also urged Americans to avoid a local hospital where the man believed to have been a carrier was treated.



KIM JUN-BEOM, YONHAP/AP

Workers wearing protective gear spray disinfectant against the new coronavirus in front of a church in Daegu, South Korea, on Thursday.

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The garrison also lifted limits on wearing face masks for American troops in uniform, who normally are only allowed to wear them on days with extreme pollution.

“The color of the masks can be black or white or a subdued color, such as gray,” it said.

The USFK public affairs office said the exception only applied to service members in Daegu.

Meanwhile, the mayor of Daegu urged people to stay inside and pleaded for help from the central government amid fears that the city’s health infrastructure would be overwhelmed.

“National quarantine efforts that are currently focused on blocking the inflow of the virus (from China) and stemming its spread are inadequate for preventing the illness from circulating in local communities,” Mayor

Kwon Young-jin was quoted as saying by The Associated Press.

USFK also has implemented self-quarantine measures for service members who recently traveled to mainland China “out of an abundance of caution.”

The quarantine lasts for two weeks, which is believed to be the incubation period for the virus.

“So far, 65 persons within USFK populations have been self-quarantined with 61 medically cleared for duty,” USFK spokesman Col. Lee Peters said Thursday in an email.

The military also urged people to exercise good hygiene, including thoroughly and frequently washing hands and avoiding contact with people who are sick, or staying home if ill themselves.

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EUGENE HOSHINO/AP

Buses carrying Israeli passengers from the quarantined Diamond Princess cruise ship leave a port Thursday in Yokohama, near Tokyo.

veloped initial symptoms and consulted with the ship’s clinic, Sakoi said.

The ministry also announced Thursday that two more government officials had become infected while providing clerical work on the ship to help in the quarantine effort.

Four other officials — a quarantine official, a paramedic who carried an infected passenger, a Health Ministry worker and an

emergency relief medical expert — have also been sickened.

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New cases of virus decline again in China

Associated Press

BEIJING — New virus cases in China have again declined, up just 394, after authorities on Thursday again changed how they count new daily infections. They are now discounting cases that came back negative after laboratory tests.

Another 114 people reportedly died from the new illness, COVID-19, as health inspectors went door-to-door to attempt to find every infected person in the worst-hit city of Wuhan.

Mainland China has reported 2,118 deaths and 74,576 total cases. While the overall spread of the virus has been slowing, the situation remains severe in Hubei province and its capital, Wuhan, where the new coronavirus was first detected in December. More than 80% of the country’s cases are in Hubei and 95% of the deaths, according to data from China’s National Health Commission.

The new daily figure is a notable drop from the 1,749 cases

recorded the previous day. The commission said 279 cases were deducted from the daily report after nucleic acid tests showed negative results.

The reduction in new cases in China was partly a result of health workers ceasing to diagnose patients on the spot, and refinements in the way symptoms were classified, according to Wang Guijing, an infectious disease specialist at the First Hospital connected with Beijing’s elite Peking University.

Improvements in testing have allowed health workers to better assess those seeking treatment, Wang said.

Inspectors in protective suits went door-to-door Wednesday in Wuhan searching for every infected person. “This must be taken seriously,” said Wang Zhonglin, the city’s newly selected Communist Party secretary.

Cities in Hubei with a combined population of more than 60 million have been under lockdown since the Lunar New Year holiday.

PACIFIC

Medical field drill is tough test for troops

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

ROTA, Northern Marianas — Pitching emergency medical tents on a tiny Pacific island is more of a challenge than clambering over an obstacle course after an ocean swim and 12-mile run, according to the winner of Guam's Trench Challenge adventure race.



Johnson

Air Force Maj. Brian Johnson, 35, a medical officer and avid adventure racer from Imanan, S.C., was on the island of Rota on Tuesday leading a team of 40 troops who set up a four-bed field hospital during the multinational Cope North exercise. The drills, which include 2,000 troops and more than 100 aircraft from the United States, Japan and Australia, launched Feb. 12 and run through the end of the month in and around Guam.

Johnson, who serves with the 36th Medical Group out of Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, was also on Rota in October competing in the adventure race. He won that event along with Guam's Trench Challenge adventure race a month earlier, he said.

However, Johnson rated the tent-pitching drill a tougher challenge. "In a race you can control everything but around here we are



Troops taking part in the multinational Cope North exercise work to set up a four-bed field hospital on the island of Rota on Tuesday.

SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

relying on a lot of support and a lot of things are out of your control," he said.

The medical personnel — who

formed an Expeditionary Medical Support Health Response Team — had to adjust their plans after some of their gear arrived

on the island a day late, Johnson said.

"Things are as realistic as you can make it," he said.

The exercise simulates how the U.S., Australia and Japan might respond to a natural disaster by evacuating the sick and injured and providing food, water and relief supplies to survivors.

Once the tents were pitched beside an airport, the troops started unpacking and assembling gear they'd need to equip an operating theater.

The facility is the Air Force's equivalent of an Army field hospital staffed with a single surgeon. It was deployed to render aid to survivors of 2018's Typhoon Yutu, Johnson said. The typhoon brought sustained winds of 180 mph that caused widespread damage to the Northern Marianas and killed a woman on the island on Saipan.

Inside one of the tents, Air Force Capt. Annalyn Pilarca, 33, was ready for patients, wearing a belt across her chest loaded with medication.

The trip to the islands was a chance for her to share some of the things she loves about her native Guam with co-workers, she said.

Pilarca recommends visitors taste kelaguen barbecue ribs, a native a Chamorro dish, and visit the Tarzan falls and Pagat Cave while they are in Guam.

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'Waltzing Matilda' inspires Cope North leader

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam — The Jolly Swagman is an Australian legend, but the much-loved sheep rustler shares some core values with his American cousins, according to a Royal Australian Air Force squadron leader involved in this month's Cope North drills on and around Guam.

Like all good Aussies, Group Capt. Hinton Tayloe knows the words to "Waltzing Matilda" by heart. Australia's unofficial national anthem tells the tale of a poacher who leaps to his death in a billabong to avoid capture by the police.



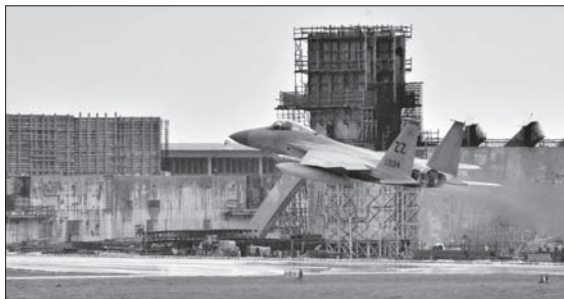
Tayloe

What's unusual is that Tayloe recites the bush ballad with an American accent.

Born and raised in Hollywood, Fla., he flew F-18 Hornet combat jets in the U.S. Navy for eight years before heading Down Under 21 years ago and embarking on an Australian military career.

These days he commands RAAF's No. 42 Wing and leads some of the forces involved in Cope North, an annual field-training exercise now underway between the U.S., Japan and Australia. It involves more than 2,000 troops and 100 aircraft drifting over the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

"I understand the culture as well as any-



An F-15 Eagle takes off from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, during drills on Wednesday.

SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

body," he said Wednesday of his interactions with Americans and Australians during Cope North, which run through Feb. 28.

Shared core values make it easy for the two nations to cooperate, Tayloe said, sheltering from morning rain that pelted nearby Australian F-18 fighters ahead of a large-scale drill alongside U.S. and Japanese planes.

"What is the Jolly Swagman? At the end he'd rather die than be incarcerated. In the American Revolution they said: 'Give me liberty or give me death.'" Tayloe said, quoting Patrick Henry's 1775 plea for Virginians to join the

fight against the British.

Freedom and self-autonomy are treasured by Americans and Australians, he added. "You don't hear that a lot out of Australians, but every Australian I have ever talked to believes that," he said. "These core values allow me to serve in the RAAF."

The allies also have a shared interest in free and secure trade routes, he said, noting the high volume of Australian imports and exports that pass through the Western Pacific. "Peace and stability in the Western Pacific is essential for Australian survival," he said.

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MILITARY

Esper visits nuke base to highlight weapon spending

By **ROBERT BURNS**
Associated Press

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. — Defense Secretary Mark Esper used his first-ever visit to a nuclear missile field in frigid North Dakota to tout the Trump administration's multibillion-dollar plan for a top-to-bottom modernization of the nuclear arsenal. The costly project is necessary, he said, to keep up with Russia and outpace China.

"Russia and China are both modernizing and expanding their nuclear arsenals," Esper told reporters, speaking alongside a behemoth B-52 bomber, which, along with Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missiles and Navy ballistic missile submarines, represent the three "legs" of the U.S. nuclear triad.

"All three legs of the triad need to be modernized, and it's critical if we're going to maintain a strategic deterrent — that word is critical, we're trying to deter war ... we need to have the confidence that our triad and related systems are effective, safe, reliable and credible," he said Wednesday.

The weapons are also expensive. President Donald Trump recently referred to the spending of billions of dollars on nuclear weaponry by the United States,

Russia and China as "this craziness." His solution to controlling that expense is to get China and Russia to negotiate a new arms deal to replace a U.S.-Russia agreement, the New START treaty, that is due to expire one year from now unless extended.

Trump's skepticism about nuclear weapons spending may be based on the eye-popping price tag. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the first 10 years of the modernization plan will cost nearly \$500 billion, and that the total would hit \$1.2 trillion, including the cost of sustaining the current and future force, over a 30-year span.

The key new weapons are a replacement for the current Minuteman 3 ICBM, a new-generation Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine fleet and a new long-range bomber, dubbed the B-21 Raider, to replace the B-2 stealth bomber that is to be retired even as the older B-52 bomber remains.

In his 2021 defense budget proposal to Congress, Trump requested \$2.8 billion for the Raider bomber and \$1.5 billion for the new-generation ICBM.

In all, the administration's proposed nuclear weapons budget for 2021 would approach \$46 billion, divided between the Defense De-



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

Defense Secretary Mark Esper arrives for a Senate briefing on Capitol Hill in Washington.

partment, which is responsible for operating the weapons, and the Energy Department, which maintains the warhead stockpile. That is more than the administration's proposed \$41 billion for the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development.

Esper came to Minot to get an up-close look at the Minuteman 3 missile system and the B-52

bomber. Minot, situated in north-west North Dakota, is the only military base with both weapons systems. The rest of the B-52 fleet operates from Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, and the other Minuteman 3 bases are in Wyoming and Montana.

Once called America's "ace in the hole," the ICBM is the card never played. None has ever been

fired in anger. That is their intended role — to dissuade any other nation from attacking with nuclear weapons for fear of a devastating U.S. retaliation.

The ICBM is the most controversial segment of the nuclear force, in part based on an argument by critics that having the missiles constantly ready for launch on a moment's notice raises the risk of miscalculation leading to nuclear war. The Trump administration, however, reaffirmed its commitment to the ICBM force in a 2018 review.

"The ICBM force is highly survivable against any but a large-scale nuclear attack," the review concluded. "To destroy U.S. ICBMs on the ground, an adversary would need to launch a precisely coordinated attack with hundreds of high-yield and accurate warheads. This is an insurmountable challenge for any potential adversary today, with the exception of Russia."

Trump would like Russia and China to agree to negotiations leading to broader limits on nuclear weapons, thus saving the need to keep building new ones. But with China showing little or no interest in such talks, Trump is asking Congress for tens of billions of dollars to modernize the entire U.S. arsenal.

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MILITARY

Navy on hunt for \$40B in savings

By Caitlin M. Kenney
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy needs to find at least \$40 billion in savings by 2026 to pay for additional ships to keep up with the demand on their fleet, the service's acting secretary said.

The service is facing significant challenges to meet mandates set by Congress and the Defense Department to increase the number of ships and start paying for the new Columbia-class nuclear ballistic missile submarine program that will continue for 40 years, all while having to dig themselves out of readiness gaps caused by increased operations during recent years and sequestration.

Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly announced Tuesday in a memorandum that he had started a department-wide "Stem-to-Stern" review to find \$40 billion in savings — or about \$8 billion annually — in that amount by 2026.

Though the Navy's fiscal year 2021 budget request increased slightly from 2020, budget amounts for the service are expected to stay roughly the same for several years, Modly wrote in the memo. That means Navy leadership needs to make tough choices to meet the requirements under the National Defense Strategy to compete against military powers Russia and China.

"We need to find savings within the department to reinvest in the kind of decisive naval force that will provide for our nation's future economic and political security," Modly wrote.

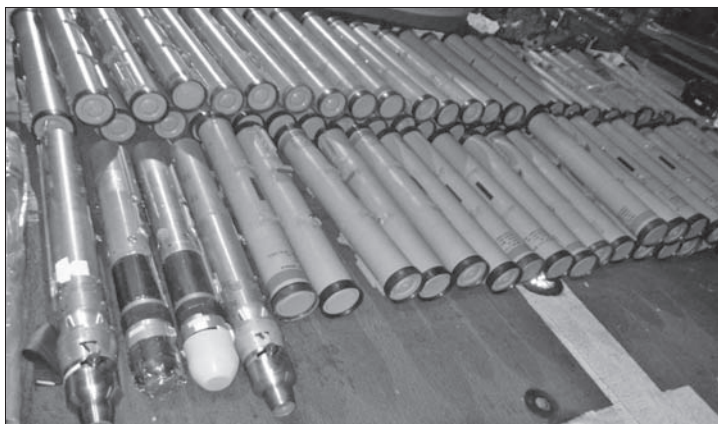
The savings will be reinvested in Modly's top three priorities: building 355 ships by 2030, digital modernization of the Navy, and "advancing our intellectual capacity and ethical excellence," though the memo does not detail what that is.

Modly pointed to the Army's own efforts during the last two years to find savings through their "Night Court" sessions in which the service uncovered about \$13 billion.

The Navy review will look at the entire department to identify "low priority, redundant, or legacy capabilities, programs, processes, or headquarters functions that can be realigned, eliminated or reduced to meet the [service's] resource needs," he wrote. That includes more of an emphasis in certain areas, including streamlining naval logistics and consolidating or eliminating headquarters, commands and organizations.

The review will end April 15 so the Navy can submit its findings as part of their fiscal year 2022 budget request in June.

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The crew of the guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy seized a shipment of advanced weapons and weapon components from a stateless chow in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations on Feb. 9.

Michael H. Lehman
U.S. Navy

CENTCOM: Seized weapons headed to Yemen

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A U.S. military spokesman said Wednesday that a large shipment of Iranian-made weapons seized last week by the Navy in the Arabian Sea was being transported illegally to Houthi rebels, who have been supported by Tehran in Yemen's five-year civil war.

The weapons seized Feb. 9 by sailors aboard the USS Normandy, a guided-missile destroyer, included Iranian copies of Russian weapons and others "uniquely designed by Iran and found nowhere else in the world," said Navy Capt. Bill Urban, the chief spokesman for U.S. Central Command. The supply included some 150 "Dehkhviethi" anti-tank guided missiles, land-attack and anti-ship cruise missiles, and newly designed Iranian surface-to-air missiles known as "358s," he said. It also included drone parts, thermal weapons scopes and other advanced weapons parts.

The intercepted shipment was found aboard a small sailing vessel known as a "dhow" and discovered during a routine inspection of the boat, which was not flying a national flag. It was the sixth shipment of similar weapons believed to be on the way to Yemen from Iran seized by the U.S. military in the last five years, including a very similar cache seized in November by sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Forrest Sherman.

"The United States assesses with high

confidence that the weapons seized by the USS Forrest Sherman in November and the weapons seized by the USS Normandy in February were manufactured in Iran and were being illicitly smuggled to the Houthis in Yemen," Urban told reporters Wednesday at the Pentagon. "There is no doubt to where these weapons came from or where they were going."

Urban cited markings on the weapons in English and Farsi languages that he said were unique to Iranian weaponry. Some of the parts of the cruise missiles matched weaponry used in attacks conducted by Iran and its proxy organizations, including the September attack on Saudi oil facilities by drones and cruise missiles, he said.

The U.N. announced last month that it agreed with the U.S. assessment that the weapons cache left Iran bound for the Houthis. Such shipments from Iran to Yemen are barred by a U.N. Security Council resolution, which restricts Iranian support for the Houthi rebels.

In Yemen, Shiite fighters triggered a devastating civil war when they overran the country's capital Sana'a in March 2015. The war has sparked the world's worst humanitarian disaster, according to the U.N., and has resulted in near-famine. The Houthis continue to fight against the U.N.-recognized Yemeni government, which is backed by a Saudi-led military coalition and supported by the United States.

Urban said Wednesday that the Houthis

are largely supplied by Iran, especially with advanced weapons including drones and ballistic missiles that have been used to attack military and civilian targets in Yemen and in neighboring Saudi Arabia.

The Navy captain also said he hoped highlighting the continued illicit supply of Iranian weapons to the Houthis would galvanize the international community to take notice, and perhaps take action against Tehran.

The United States and Iran have seen increased tensions in recent years, which reached a boiling point early this year when the U.S. military on Jan. 3 killed Iran's top military leader, Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, who commanded the Quds Force, which has trained and directed Tehran's proxy forces.

Iran retaliated by launching more than a dozen ballistic missiles into a key Iraqi base that hosts more than 1,000 American troops. More than 100 U.S. service members suffered traumatic brain injuries in the attack. But President Donald Trump did not retaliate militarily, keeping the tensions from rising further.

Urban said Wednesday that even without Soleimani, the continued shipments of advanced weapons from Iran showed the Quds Force is still supplying proxy forces.

"There's an extensive portion of weapons being transferred into Yemen," he said. "That just continues the conflict and continues the suffering."

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Army's top health officer in Europe suspended amid probe

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. Army Europe is continuing to investigate the top medical commander in the region, who was suspended in connection with an ongoing probe, military officials said Thursday.

Brig. Gen. Ronald Stephens, who leads Regional Health Command-Europe, was suspended Feb. 12, USAREUR said in a recent statement.

"The investigation does not involve patient care or safety," USAREUR said.



Stephens

Col. Andrew Pippen, the health command's chief of staff, is serving as the acting commander.

USAREUR declined to provide details of the alleged misconduct, saying no information will be released until the investigation is complete.

A spokesman for Regional

Health Command Europe also declined to comment on the USAREUR-led investigation.

Stephens is at least the second senior-ranking leader within Europe's military health command in recent years to be suspended pending an investigation.

In 2018, the former commander of Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Col. Timothy Hudson, was suspended. The Army cleared Hudson of all allegations of mismanagement and inappropriate behavior after a three-month probe.

It was Stephens who reinstated Hudson, one month after

the general assumed leadership of the health command in April 2018.

Stephens previously served as the Army Medical Command's deputy chief of staff for support.

The regional health command has four subordinate commands — Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Medical Department Activity-Bavaria, Public Health Command Europe and Dental Health Command-Europe.

There are also 11 outpatient medical clinics, 14 dental clinics and seven veterinary clinics.

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MILITARY

Village remembers WWII bomber crew

By CHRISTOPHER DENNIS
Stars and Stripes

RAMSHOLT, England — The crew of a World War II B-17 Flying Fortress were remembered in a ceremony in this small English village Thursday, 75 years to the day after their bomber crashed in the nearby Deben River in the closing months of the war.

Hundreds of people turned out to honor the crew of 10, eight of whom died when the plane came down shortly after takeoff on Feb. 20, 1945, after one of its engines caught fire.

The pilot, 2nd Lt. Frederick Stindt, and flight engineer Cpl. Jewel Haynes were the only two survivors. Stindt died three years ago and Haynes passed away in March last year.

"It's just amazing to me, all the people who came out here to pay their respects to the guys who gave their lives," said Janice Vasek, Stindt's daughter, who traveled to England from Texas to attend the ceremony.

Stindt and his crew had taken off on a winter's morning 75 years ago, bound for Nuremberg, Germany, where "their target was to be the marshalling yards," Darren Jelley, an archivist from the 493rd Bomb Group Museum, told Stars and Stripes by email.

When one of the B-17's engines caught fire six minutes into the flight, they steered the



Harbormaster George Collins leads family members of a B-17 that crashed on Feb. 20, 1945.

plane, which had "a full bomb load and fuel tanks," toward the wide Deben River, said Leonard Haynes, son of flight engineer Jewel Haynes.

As wreaths of flowers and red poppies were laid Thursday on the riverbank near where the aircraft went down, a U.S. Air Force C-130 and CV-22 from RAF Mildenhall flew overhead to honor the World War II crew.

"I'm glad I came so far to see this," Vasek said as the planes paid tribute to her father and his crew. "I wouldn't have missed this for the world."

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PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER DENNIS/Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Air Force C-130 and CV-22 from RAF Mildenhall fly over the Deben River in England on Thursday, 75 years to the day that an American B-17 Flying Fortress crashed there, killing eight of the 10 crew on board.

Academy to commission officers for Space Force

Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — Graduates from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado are expected to cross-commission into the Space Force this spring, military officials said.

About 60 cadets would be commissioned into the new armed service branch, which formed in December with the signing of the \$738 billion National Defense Authorization Act, the Gazette reported.

"They're doing Air Force Academy curriculum, and they'll just be directly commissioned into the Space Force," academy Vice Superintendent Col. Houston Cantwell said.

Academy leaders and members of Colorado's congressional delegation announced the cross-commission plan at an oversight Board of Visitors meeting Wednesday. The plan would be similar to how the U.S. Naval Academy commissions Marine officers.

It is unclear how exactly academy leaders plan to commission cadets into the Space Force.

There are talks about offering juniors interested in joining the Space Force multiple job fields to choose from, including intelligence, cyber, acquisitions and engineering, leaders said.

Waits: Change applies to most items

FROM FRONT PAGE

Management Command-Europe's postal operations.

The military currently has a limited exemption for mail destined for non-U.S. addresses.

"Only military mail items that originate at Military Post Offices destined to international, non-U.S. addresses are allowed as a temporary exception to this rule

(pending software updates)," a recent U.S. Postal Service bulletin stated.

Otherwise, the changes apply to all U.S. post offices, military and nonmilitary, the postal service stated. A fillable customs form can be found on the U.S. Postal Service website.

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Shorts: Permitted only on flight line

FROM FRONT PAGE

Flagg said he expected the move to improve morale and productivity.

"If you feel bad then you're probably not going to be as productive compared to if you're comfortable," he said. "I know when I feel good, I want to work harder."

Okinawa temperatures were between 61 to 79 degrees Fahrenheit in the month of January, according to AccuWeather Inc.'s website. During the summer months, temperatures are typically over 90 degrees, with 95% humidity.

The uniform change was the result of feedback that leaders

received from maintenance airmen, the statement said.

"We started noticing maintenance organizations in hot weather environments across the Air Force allowing their Airmen the option to wear shorts," 18th Maintenance Group superintendent Chief Master Sgt. Gregory Austin said in the statement. "Our commander was fully on board in getting shorts approved for our maintainers."

The shorts may only be worn on the flight line and in the flight line dining facility, the statement said. Airmen are required to change before leaving those areas.

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MILITARY

WWI French helmet tops today's in blast protection

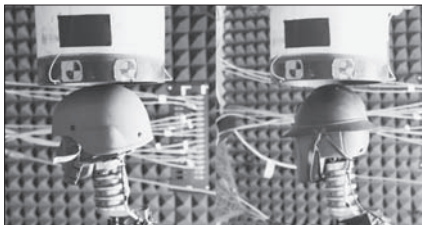
By SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

A World War I French helmet offers better protection against overhead blasts than at least one modern United States Army helmet, researchers from Duke University found.

A team of biomedical engineers compared the U.S. Advanced Combat Helmet, which is being phased out, to three designs from WWI — the French Adrian, the British Brodie and the German Stahlhelm helmets — in extensive testing designed to simulate the effects of overhead explosions.

Traumatic brain injuries can be caused by the pressure resulting from detonations from artillery shells, aerial bombs or other ordnance. The associated injuries often have long-term effects that are difficult to detect immediately.

The study, published earlier this month, said that while ballistic protection afforded by modern helmets is much better than in



High-speed video records high-intensity blast tests on the French Adrian helmet, right, and a modern helmet, the results of which were released in a recent Duke University study.

WWI, the modern helmet did not provide better protection against overhead blasts than any of its WWI predecessors.

Specifically, the French 1915 Adrian helmet produced a lower peak pressure at the crown of the head compared to the modern helmet, it said.

"While we found that all helmets provided a substantial amount of protection against blast, we were surprised to find that the 100-year-old helmets performed just as well as modern ones," said Joost Op 't Eynde, principal author of the study. "Despite the significant ad-

vancements in these other areas of protection, helmet protection of the head against shock waves has not changed all that much," he said in an email.

All of the helmets tested significantly reduced the risk of moderate brain bleeding, the study found.

The findings come in the wake of a Jan. 8 Iranian missile attack on Al Asad Air Base in Iraq, in which over 100 U.S. service members suffered traumatic brain injuries. The attack, in which at least a dozen missiles were fired at the base, was in retaliation against the killing of Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, a top Iranian military commander, by a U.S. drone strike earlier in January.

The Adrian model, named after its designer and introduced in 1915, became the first helmet issued to troops in WWI, when head wounds from shrapnel and air bursts by artillery shells became a major cause of battlefield deaths. It was soon followed by the Brodie, which was also ad-

opted by the U.S. Army as the M1917.

The Adrian was characterized by a crest along its dome. This provides an additional layer of protection that absorbs the shock to the wearer's head, in contrast to helmets that don't have that feature.

"The Adrian helmet resulted in lower crown pressures than in all other cases," the study found. "The ACH, Stahlhelm and Brodie helmet were not found to be significantly different from each other," the study found.

The Army's ACH has been in use since the mid-2000s, but is being steadily replaced by the Enhanced Combat Helmet.

Meanwhile, the Army's new Integrated Head Protection System helmet has been fielded by units in Afghanistan and elsewhere with promises of better protection against blunt impact.

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Colonel on space station to swear in 800 Army recruits

Stars and Stripes

When more than 800 Army recruits across the United States take the oath of enlistment later this month, they'll have someone to look up to — way up.

Army astronaut Col. Andrew Morgan, who is aboard the International Space Station orbiting some 250 miles above Earth, is slated to swear them in Feb. 26 via a broadcast to 100 locations, U.S. Army Recruiting Command said in a statement Tuesday.

It will mark the first time the oath will be administered nationwide from the ISS, where Morgan is the flight engineer, it said.

Brig. Gen. Patrick Michaelis, USAREC's deputy commanding general, will host the ceremony and a question-and-answer session with Morgan, which will also be streamed via NASA TV, DVIDS and the Army's Facebook and YouTube pages.

One of three current Army astronauts, Morgan is a combat



CHRISTINA KOCH/NASA

Army Col. Andrew Morgan conducts a spacewalk to upgrade the International Space Station's solar array batteries on Oct. 11.

veteran and emergency physician who served with special operations units and deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa, a NASA

biography said. The West Point graduate was selected to become an astronaut in 2013, completed astronaut can-

didate training in 2015, and has performed seven spacewalks and one flight to the ISS.

The swearing-in event is meant

to highlight the Army's need for soldiers in fields involving science, technology, engineering and math.

Space is a growing interest to the Defense Department, which recently launched a sixth service branch focused on the extraterrestrial domain.

While mostly associated with operations on Earth, the Army relies heavily on "space-enabled" technology such as intelligence and communications satellites to help soldiers "see, shoot, move and communicate," the USAREC statement said.

The Army has been seeking to grow its force and had to retool how it recruits new talent last year, after failing in 2018 to meet its recruiting goal for the first time since 2005. In 2019, it surpassed its more modest target, and launched initiatives to market itself to fitness buffs and video gaming enthusiasts.

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Iwo Jima ceremony could be camp's last

Stars and Stripes

A ceremony in California marking the 75th anniversary of the World War II Battle of Iwo Jima is expected to be the last formal West Coast gathering of veterans of the 36-day fight to take the volcanic Pacific island from the Japanese.

For three days last week, the Iwo Jima Commemorative Committee and Marine Corps Installations-West hosted 28 Marines and sailors who were among the tens of thousands of Americans who fought to secure the rock as part of the campaign that was critical

to Allied victory in the Pacific theater.

Some of the "old breed" donned Marine or Navy dress uniforms or simply displayed their medals during the annual reunion, which the service said has been hosted by Camp Pendleton for 30 years. But with the number of still-living veterans dwindling, this year's event is expected to be its final iteration, the Marine Corps said in a statement this week.

The battle, where the iconic photo of the Marine flag-raising on Mount Suribachi was taken, is deeply ingrained in the service's

identity. Many Marines regard those who fought against dug-in and fortified Japanese forces with awe.

Nearly 7,000 of the over 70,000 Marines who fought to take the island were killed, making it one of the war's bloodiest battles.

After coming ashore on Iwo Jima's black sand beaches, 22 Marines earned the country's highest valor award during the battle — more than one-quarter of the Corps' 82 Medal of Honor recipients from the entire war.

news@stripes.com



ROYCE DORNAN/Marine Corps

Samuel Prestigiacomo, a former Marine corporal, was one of 28 Iwo Jima veterans attending a sunset ceremony on Saturday at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

MILITARY

Pompeo focuses on Iran threats in his Saudi visit

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Saudi Arabia's King Salman and the crown prince on Thursday to discuss shared security interests in the Gulf and threats from Iran.

He also toured a sprawling desert air base in Saudi Arabia where a few thousand U.S. troops are deployed as part of a wider effort by the Trump administration to stymie Iran's regional reach.

Ahead of his arrival in the capital Riyadh, Pompeo said he'd also raise with the Saudi leadership concerns about human rights and the cases of dual Saudi-American citizens.

Some of these American citizens have been imprisoned in the kingdom as part of a wider crackdown on perceived critics of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. They include Badr al-Ibrahim, a writer and physician, and Salah al-Haidar, whose mother is prominent women's rights campaigner Aziza al-Yousef, who faces trial for her activism.

Others are barred from leaving Saudi Arabia, like Walid Fitaihi, a Boston-area physician who was swept up in an anti-corruption campaign launched by the crown prince in late 2017.

"The Saudis share our strategic

objectives. They are an important ally and partner," Pompeo told reporters Thursday.

"At the same time we continue to make clear our expectations with respect to a broad range of human rights issues," he added.

In between his meetings with the king and crown prince, Pompeo met with U.S. military commanders at a Saudi air base where some 2,500 U.S. troops have been stationed since the summer.

The U.S. military presence in the kingdom at the Prince Sultan air base includes a squadron of U.S. Air Force F-15E fighters that fly daily missions over Iraq and Syria and two American Patriot missile batteries prepared to knock down any Iranian attack against the Saudi kingdom.

Pompeo said the American military presence is a form of deterrence against Iran — "to deliver us to a place where I, as secretary of state, can get the diplomatic outcome that the president is seeking."

American troops were sent to Saudi Arabia as part of the Trump administration's efforts to beef up the United States' military presence in the Middle East in response to escalating tensions between Washington and Tehran following President Donald Trump's decision to pull the U.S.



ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AP

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks with U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jana Donberg in front of an F-15E Strike Eagle during a visit Thursday to Prince Sultan air base in al-Kharj, in central Saudi Arabia. Pompeo also met Thursday with King Salman in the capital, Riyadh.

out of Iran's nuclear agreement with world powers and impose sanctions on the country.

Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have blamed Iran for a stunning attack last summer against Saudi dissident and Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

Congress has also harshly criticized Saudi Arabia for its war in Yemen, which has led to the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

The kingdom, however, remains the biggest buyer of U.S. military arms and Crown Prince Mohammed has cultivated a relationship with Trump's son-in-law and senior advisor on Mideast policy, Jared Kushner.

Pompeo has said the U.S. is

more capable today than we were," he said.

Saudi Arabia is a decades-long U.S. ally, but that relationship was rocked by the 2018 killing of Saudi dissident and Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

Congress has also harshly criticized Saudi Arabia for its war in Yemen, which has led to the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

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Pompeo has said the U.S. is

prepared to come to the table to talk with Iran, but is not rushing to do so.

"The pressure campaign continues. It's not just an economic pressure campaign, it's diplomatic pressures, isolation through diplomacy, as well," he told reporters before arriving in Saudi Arabia from Ethiopia on Wednesday.

During his time in Riyadh, Pompeo also met Thursday with a group of Saudi women business leaders with Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the U.S., Princess Reema bin Bandar Al Saud.

Pompeo departs Friday for Oman, a close U.S. ally that has ties with both Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Judge orders release of USS Thresher disaster documents

Portsmouth (N.H.) Herald

WASHINGTON — A federal judge has ordered the U.S. Navy to begin releasing unclassified documents in relation to the USS Thresher, the nuclear submarine that imploded 57 years ago, taking the lives of 129, and forever changing submarine safety.

It was the country's worst nuclear submarine disaster in history when Thresher (SSN-593) did not surface while conducting deep dive exercises 220 miles off Cape Cod on April 10, 1963. The vessel imploded, and its shattered hull remains more than 8,000 feet underwater today.

Thresher was built and commissioned at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in 1961. Approximately two dozen families of the men lost aboard the submarine still live in New Hampshire, and a number of other families reside in Maine.

The 129 deaths sent shock waves through the Seacoast community. It also catalyzed modern day submarine safety, which today takes the form of the SUBSAFE program. Since the program's inception, just one submarine has been lost, the USS Scorpion in 1968.

Last July, retired Navy Capt. James

Bryant, a former Thresher-class submarine commander who served 23 years on active duty, sued the Navy for release of the investigative documents. On Feb. 10, U.S. District Court Judge Trevor McFadden ordered the Navy to begin reviewing 300 pages of documents per month starting in April, with rolling productions of the documents to begin before May 15, every 60 days.

There are approximately 3,600 identified pages of records.

Bryant, who investigates and lectures about the loss of Thresher in his retirement, wrote in his initial complaint that he sought the nonexempt portions of certain U.S. government records relating to the loss of the nuclear submarine. He filed the federal lawsuit after the Navy denied expedited proceedings for his April 19 Freedom of Information Act request, and then "improperly withheld agency records," he alleged.

"This FOIA lawsuit seeks disclosure of the requested records in order to better inform the public about the activities of the Navy and U.S. government with respect to the loss of the Thresher and the officers, sailors and civilians onboard," the suit states, originally requesting disclosure of the documents

ahead of the memorial dedication for the Thresher at Arlington National Cemetery last September.

Bryant's complaint outlines the conflicting theories about the Thresher's sinking that have emerged over the years, including an electrical failure and flooding in the engine room. The documents could lend more clarity, he said in the lawsuit.

In August, the Navy answered Bryant's complaint stating it had not improperly withheld any records under his FOIA request, and that it was working on an ongoing classification review.

In a previously filed joint status report, the Navy said its team would review approximately 240 hours to require for line-by-line declassification purposes, with an additional 120 hours of FOIA exemption review and redaction, over the course of 12 months.

But at the Feb. 10 hearing, McFadden was not convinced by the Navy's review plans, and ordered the first set of documents be released by May 15.

Last fall, a long-awaited memorial for the Thresher crew was dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery, a process beginning in 2012 requiring six levels of approvals.



ELIZABETH FRASER, ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY/U.S. Army

The Navy Ceremonial Guard participates in a wreath-laying procession in September for the USS Thresher National Commemorative Monument Dedication Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

NATION

Dems take aim at Bloomberg in latest debate

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — From the opening bell, Democrats savaged New York billionaire Mike Bloomberg and raised pointed questions about Bernie Sanders' take-on prisoners politics during a contentious debate Wednesday night that threatened to further muddy the party's urgent quest to defeat President Donald Trump.

Bloomberg, the former New York mayor who was once a Republican, has been criticized for his record and past comments related to race, gender and his personal wealth in an occasionally rocky debate stage debut. Sanders, meanwhile, tried to beat back pointed questions about his embrace of democratic socialism and his health following a heart attack last year.

The ninth debate of this cycle featured the most aggressive sustained period of infighting in the Democrats' yearlong search for a primary nominee. The debate reflected growing anxiety among candidates and party leaders that the nomination fight could yield a candidate who will struggle to build a winning coalition in November to beat Trump.

The campaign is about to quickly intensify. Nevada votes Saturday and South Carolina follows Feb. 29. More than a dozen states host Super Tuesday contests in less than two weeks with about one-third of the delegates needed to win the nomination at stake.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren was in a fight for survival and stood out with repeated attacks on Bloomberg. She sought to undermine him with core Democratic voters who are uncomfortable with his vast wealth, his offensive remarks about po-

licing of minorities and demeaning comments about women, including those who worked at his company.

Warren labeled Bloomberg "a billionaire who calls people fat broads and horse-faced lesbians."

She wasn't alone. Bloomberg's policing policies as New York City mayor that he said targeted "African-American and Latinos in an outrageous way."

And former Vice President Joe Biden charged that Bloomberg's "stop-and-frisk" policy ended up "throwing 5 million black men up against the wall."

Watching from afar, Trump joined the Bloomberg pile on. "I hear he's getting pounded tonight, you know he's in a debate," Trump said at a rally in Phoenix.

After the debate, Warren told reporters: "I have no doubt that Michael Bloomberg is reaching in his pocket right now, and spending another hundred million dollars to try to erase every American's memory about what happened on the debate stage."

On a night that threatened to tarnish the shine of his carefully constructed TV-ad image, Bloomberg faltered when attacked on issues related to race and gender. But he was firm and unapologetic about his wealth and how he has used it to effect change important to Democrats. He took particular aim at Sanders and his self-description as a democratic socialist.

"I don't think there's any chance of the senator beating Donald Trump," Bloomberg declared before noting Sanders' rising wealth. "The best known socialist in the country happens



PHOTOS BY JOHN LOCHER/AP

From left, Democratic presidential candidates, former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg, Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Sen. Bernie Sanders participate in a debate Wednesday in Las Vegas.



Candidates, from left, Bloomberg, Sen. Amy Klobuchar and former Vice President Joe Biden talk during a break.

to be a millionaire with three houses!"

Sanders defended owning multiple houses, noting he has one in Washington, where he works, and two in Vermont, the state he represents in the Senate.

While Bloomberg was the shiny new object Wednesday, the debate also marked a major test for Sanders, who is emerging as the front-runner in the Democrats' nomination fight, whether his party's establishment likes it or not. A growing group of donors, elected officials and political operatives fear that Sanders' uncompromising progressive politics could be a disaster in the general election against Trump, yet they've struggled to coalesce behind a single moderate alternative.

Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Ind., went after both Bloomberg and Sanders, warning that one threatened

to "burn down" the Democratic Party and the other was trying to buy it.

He called them "the two most polarizing figures on this stage," with little chance of defeating Trump or helping congressional Democrats in contests with Republicans.

Bloomberg and Sanders were prime targets, but the stakes were no less dire for the other four candidates on stage.

Longtime establishment favorite Biden, a two-term vice president, desperately needed to breathe new life into his failing campaign, which entered the night at the bottom of a moderate middle behind Buttigieg and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar.

And after a bad finish last week in New Hampshire, Warren was fighting to resurrect her stalled White House bid.

A Warren campaign aide said

on Twitter that her fiery first hour of debate was her best hour of fundraising "to date."

The other leading progressive in the race, Sanders came under attack from Biden and Bloomberg for his embrace of democratic socialism.

Sanders, as he has repeatedly over the last year, defended the cost of his signature "Medicare for All" health care plan, which would eliminate the private insurance industry in favor of a government-backed health care system that would cover all Americans.

"When you asked Bernie how much it cost last time he said ... 'We'll find out,'" Biden quipped. "It costs over \$35 trillion, let's get real."

And ongoing animosity flared between Buttigieg and Klobuchar when the former Indiana mayor slammed the three-term Minnesota senator for failing to answer questions in a recent interview about Mexican policy and forgetting the name of the Mexican president.

Buttigieg noted that she's on a committee that oversees trade issues in Mexico and she "was not able to speak to literally the first thing about the politics of the country."

She shot back: "Are you trying to say I'm dumb? Are you mocking me here?"

Later in the night she lashed out at Buttigieg again: "I wish everyone else was as perfect as you, Pete."

Labor unions split over drive for 'Medicare for All' plans

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Democratic presidential candidates' plans to provide "Medicare for All" are driving a wedge through the labor movement, pitting union against union and fracturing a powerful constituency as the primary barrels toward heavily organized states.

Big labor largely supports a push for universal health coverage, but some unions — particularly those who have spent years bargaining for strong health benefits — tend to back an incremental approach over a dramatic switch to government-run health insurance that would abolish their union plans.

The dispute has for months created friction between Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders for All's chief backer, and the some unions. But the fight broke open this

week as Sanders campaigned in Nevada, the first primary contest in a state where unions carry sway. It's a rift almost certain to intensify as voters in California, and later Michigan, weigh in, creating a potential hurdle for Sanders as he tries to win working-class voters.

"We want to keep the union (health care)," Gary Morris and his wife, Mammie, said almost in unison this week as they waited in line to vote early. Gary Morris, 61, a doorman at a Las Vegas casino, voted for Sanders Saturday that warned about Sanders' health care plan and listed several Sanders rivals as his favorite choices. "That's a big thing."

Nevada's most powerful union, the 60,000-member Culinary Workers Union, did not endorse any single candidate ahead of the state's caucuses Saturday. But the union, which offers top-shelf health ben-

efits, has made its opposition to Sanders' health care plan known.

"We fought so hard, and everything we got here in Las Vegas has not been delivered to us," said Geoconda Arguello-Kline, Culinary's top official, pointing to photos of decades of strikes as she stood in its meeting room after an event with female housekeepers hearing from presidential candidates. "It's not been easy for us. We've had rallies, civil disobedience. People have been beaten up on the picket line."

Sanders' fight with the Culinary Union is emblematic of a broader fight in the movement over whether to bargain for the specific interests of their members or the good of all workers.

Labor supporters of Medicare for All say all workers, even those with strong insurance plans, should be in favor of expanding access to coverage.

"This debate is over. There's a broad acceptance that the only solution is Medicare for All," said Marc Duznik, national coordinator of Labor Campaign for Single Payer, which claims 15 national unions in its coalition. "We've got to take health care off the bargaining table."

Other unions, like North America's Building Trades Unions, strongly disagree. The building trades' health care is union-run, operated by its locals rather than private insurers, said president Sean McGarvey.

"It's a cooperative and it's run by the members, so any time they hear someone say they're going to take away their health care — which they like — it's a problem," McGarvey said, adding that people who claim to speak for organized labor as a whole don't speak for its members.

NATION

Woman struck, killed by Mardi Gras float

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans is mourning the death of a woman who was run over by a parade float as the city celebrates the season leading up to Mardi Gras. Police are still investigating the accident, spokesman Juan Barnes said Thursday.

The woman apparently tried to cross between two parts of a tandem float, tripped over a hitch connecting the sections and was run over, witnesses told news outlets.

It happened Wednesday night during the parade of the Mystic Krewe of Nyx, an all-female Carnival group that was "established to unite women of diverse backgrounds for fun, friendship, and the merriment of the Mardi Gras season," according to its website.

"On such a joyous night, this is obviously a tragic occurrence," Nyx Captain Julie Lea said in a statement. "On behalf of the entire Krewe of Nyx, and the city of New Orleans, we offer our most sincere condolences to the family and friends of the individual involved."

The accident involved float 21, New Orleans Police Superintendent Shaun Ferguson said at a



BRETT DUKE/AP

Emergency personnel work the scene after a woman was run over and killed by a float in the Mystic Krewe of Nyx parade during Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans on Wednesday.

news conference. The woman's identity wasn't immediately released.

The parade was ended early, and the rest of the floats were diverted off the parade route. That

was the "proper thing to do," New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell told reporters near the scene.

People left flowers, beads, candles and other items in an impromptu memorial Thursday at a

corner near the accident site. The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate reported.

Mardi Gras is Feb. 25, but the Fat Tuesday celebration is preceded by a week or more of pa-

rades and parties each year.

The death comes one year after a car sped into a bicycle lane near a parade route, hitting nine people and killing two bicyclists.

Before Wednesday night's accident, the most recent Carnival float-related fatality happened in 2009, when a 23-year-old rider fell from a float and in front of its wheels in Carencro, about 120 miles west of New Orleans.

In 2008, a rider getting off a three-part float after the Krewe of Endymion parade in New Orleans was killed when the float lurched forward and the third section ran over him, police said.

An 11-year-old boy trying to grab a trinket under a slowly moving float in 1986 was crushed by the big rig's wheels in suburban New Orleans, and a man who tried to leap onto a float in New Orleans apparently lost his grip and fell under it.

In 1981, an 8-year-old boy died when a surging crowd toppled the ladder on which he was sitting, throwing him behind the cab of a flatbed trailer on which a parade float had been built. That same year, a 2-year-old girl died under a Zulu float. Police said she had darted out to get a necklace.

Visa rules set off 'panic wave' in affected communities

By PHILIP MARCELO
AND SOPHIA TAREEN

Associated Press

BOSTON — After nearly a dozen years moving through the U.S. visa system, Sat Kyaw's brother and sister and their families were at the finish line: a final interview before they could leave Myanmar to join him in Massachusetts and work at his restaurant.

Then a dramatic turn in U.S. immigration policy halted their plans. The interview was postponed, and it's not clear when, or whether, it will be rescheduled.

"It's terrible," Kyaw said. "There's nothing we can really do except pray. They've been waiting 12 years. If they have to wait another 12 years, they will."

His is just one of many stories of confusion, sorrow and outrage spreading across some immigrant communities after the announcement of a Trump administration policy that is expected to all but shut down family-based immigration from Myanmar, also known as Burma, as well as Nigeria, Kyrgyzstan and Eritrea. The policy also restricts visas from Sudan and Tanzania.

"There's a panic wave going through the community," said Grace Mobosi-Enwensi, president of the Minnesota Institute for Nigerian Development, a nonprofit group.

In signing a proclamation last month that takes effect Friday, President Donald Trump said those countries failed to meet

minimum security standards. It was his latest crackdown on his signature issue of immigration.

Calls about the restrictions have flooded legal advocacy groups and lawyers' offices. A Boston-area Burmese church is trying to intervene to help congregants. The United African Organization has held legal clinics in Chicago to walk people through their options.

The rules are certain to face legal challenges, but in the meantime, activists have organized around #MuslimBan and #AfricaBan on social media and ramped up lobbying efforts to press Congress to pass the No Ban Act, which would limit the president's

ability to restrict entry to the U.S.

Roughly 10,000 people received immigration-based visas from Nigeria, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar in the 2018 fiscal year, according to federal data analyzed by the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute. More than half were from Nigeria, the most populous African nation.

The ripple of emotion has been felt strongest among America's roughly 380,000 Nigerian immigrants and their children. They are one of the most educated immigrant groups. More than 60% percent of people with Nigerian ancestry who are at least 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher,

which is more than twice the general U.S. population rate of 29%, according to 2017 census data.

Citizenship and Immigration Services officials declined to comment on the concerns of affected families, deferring to the Department of Homeland Security. Agency officials did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Unlike previous travel bans, the new rules are narrower. They halt immigrant visas from Nigeria, Eritrea, Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan, covering people who want to live in the U.S. permanently and are sponsored by family members or employers. They also eliminate participation in a visa lottery program in which a computer randomly selects up to 55,000 people for visas from underrepresented countries. Sudan and Tanzania will also be barred from the lottery.

The ban does not affect immigrants traveling to the U.S. for a temporary stay, including tourists and students, or immigrants already in the U.S. There are exceptions, including dual citizenship holders.

In Chicago, the United African Organization hosted dozens of people at legal clinics. Many had questions about their spouses and children. One was Osemeh Otohob, 46, a Nigerian citizen with a green card who has applied for two of his teenage children from a previous marriage to come to the U.S.

Though their visas were recently approved, the suburban Chicago man married to a U.S.

citizen was worried. His children live in Lagos, and he wants them to pursue an education in the United States.

"I don't even know how to explain it to them," Otohob said of the restrictions.

Activists said the restrictions amount to another travel ban like the one that was widely decried as targeting Muslims. The Supreme Court upheld that ban as lawful in 2018. It restricted travel from several Muslim-majority countries including Iran, Somalia and Syria.

Sudan and Kyrgyzstan are also majority-Muslim countries. Nigeria, the world's seventh-most populous nation, has a large Muslim population too.

"It's a continuation of this administration's racist and xenophobic immigration framework that they use," said Mustafa Jumale, a policy manager for the Black Alliance for Just Immigration.

Some churches have also sprung into action.

At the Overseas Burmese Christian Fellowship in Boston, Pastor Clifford Maung says he has relayed the concerns of two families in his congregation to national Baptist church leaders and is prepared to appeal to the U.S. government on their behalf.

"You hope for the best. We grew up under a similar situation in Burma with an oppressive government so this is something we are used to," he said. "But it shouldn't happen in America."



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Baptist Pastor Clifford Maung, third from left, recites a prayer as Chin Sai, center, and Myint Myint Swe, right, prepare food following services at the Overseas Burmese Christian Fellowship in Boston on Sunday. All three are immigrants from Myanmar.

NATION



EVAN VUCCI/AP

Supporters of President Donald Trump cheer as he arrives at a campaign rally Wednesday in Phoenix. Trump said of his Democratic opponents: "We don't care who the hell it is. We're going to win."

At Ariz. rally, Trump trolls Dems debating

Associated Press

PHOENIX — President Donald Trump trolled his political enemies Wednesday in the first of three rallies in three days in the West as Democrats vied in neighboring Nevada to be the one to challenge him in the November election.

Just minutes before Trump regaled a friendly crowd in Phoenix, Democrats watched billionaire and former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg make his debut on the debate stage ahead of Nevada's party caucuses on Saturday. Trump took aim at the new target.

"I hear he's getting pounded tonight — you know he's in a debate," Trump said about the man he has dubbed "Mini Mike" because of his short stature. "I hear that pounding. He spent \$500 million so far and I think he has 15 points. Crazy Bernie is at 30."

He gleefully derided Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren as "Pocahontas" for her past claims of Native American heritage and claimed her presidential campaign had stalled. "Fortunately she self-destructed anyway,"

Trump said.

"We don't care who the hell it is," he said. "We're going to win."

Arizona is home to Republican Sen. Martha McSally, who stood by the president during the Senate's impeachment trial. In her rally remarks McSally mentioned her Democratic opponent Mark Kelly, who has said he'd back Sen. Bernie Sanders if he is the party's nominee.

"Mark Kelly is flying on Bernie Sanders' wing and I'm flying on your wing, President Trump," she said.

Trump was on stage for more than an hour and 20 minutes. Before he arrived at Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum, a crowd of protesters swelled into the hundreds. A large contingent of migrant rights advocates waved signs declaring "Dump Trump" and "Power to the people!"

Trump began his day with an unscheduled stop at a fundraiser in the gold-plated lobby of his hotel, where his son Donald Trump Jr. was the headliner. Then he hopped over to the Rancho Mirage, Calif., estate of billionaire Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison to raise more cash.

Staunch Trump ally Stone gets 40 months in prison

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Trump loyalist and ally Roger Stone was sentenced Thursday to 40 months in federal prison, following an extraordinary move by Attorney General William Barr to back off his Justice Department's original sentencing recommendation.

U.S. District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson said Stone's crimes demanded a significant time behind bars, but she said the seven to nine years originally recommended by the Justice Department were excessive.

Stone's lawyers had asked for a sentence of probation, citing his age of 67 years, his health and his lack of criminal history.

Stone was convicted in November on all seven counts of an indictment that accused him of lying to Congress, tampering with a witness and obstructing the House investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to tip the 2016 election.

The sentence came amid Trump's unrelenting defense of his longtime confidant that has led to a mini-revolt inside the Justice Department and allegations the president has interfered in the case.

Trump took to Twitter to denounce as a "miscarriage of justice" the initial recommendation by Justice Department prosecutors that Stone receive at least seven years in prison. Barr then backed off that recommendation, prompting four prosecutors to quit Stone's case.

Jackson angrily denied that Stone was being punished for his politics or his allies. "He was not prosecuted, as some have claimed, for standing up for the president. He was prosecuted for covering up for the president," she said.

She said during the hearing



MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP

Roger Stone and his wife, Nydia Stone, arrive for his sentencing on convictions for witness tampering and lying to Congress in Washington on Thursday.

that Stone's use of social media to stoke public sentiment against the prosecution and the court was intended to reach a wide audience, including using a photo of Jackson with crosshairs superimposed.

"This is intolerable to the administration of justice," Jackson said.

"Why are you the one who is standing here today?" Jackson asked federal prosecutor John Crabb, who took over the case after the original trial team quit.

Crabb said there had been a "miscommunication" between Barr and Timothy Shea, the former Barr aide who now serves as the acting U.S. attorney in the nation's capital. Crabb asked the judge to impose "a substantial period of incarceration."

After Stone's attorney, Seth Ginsberg, repeated the defense team's plea that Stone get no prison time, Stone declined to address the court. Outside the courthouse, a small crowd gathered. Two people held a large banner featuring a sketch of Stone and

#PardonRogerStone emblazoned underneath. Next to it was a large multimedia figure of a rat constructed to look like Trump, with his distinctive red tie and hair.

Stone was the sixth Trump aide or adviser to be convicted of charges brought as part of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.

Any jail sentence seems likely to draw a public rebuke from Trump, who maintains that Stone's entire case is just an aspect of the ongoing "witch hunt" against him and his allies by bitter Democrats and the "deep state" inside the FBI and the Justice Department.

There has been speculation that Trump could eventually pardon Stone.

"I haven't given it any thought ... but I think he's been treated very unfairly," Trump said this week. Overnight Thursday, Trump retweeted a conservative cable host's comment that what happened to Stone "should never happen again."

Lawyer: Assange was offered US pardon if he absolved Russia

Associated Press

LONDON — WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange leaks found evidence during an extradition hearing that the Trump administration offered him a pardon if he agreed to say Russia was not involved in leaking Democratic National Committee emails during the 2016 U.S. election campaign, a lawyer for Assange said Wednesday.

Assange is being held at a British prison while fighting extradition to the United States on spying charges. His full court hearing is due to begin next week.

At a preliminary hearing held in London, lawyer Edward Fitzgerald said the former Republican Rep. Dana Rohrabacher visited Assange at the Ecuadorian

Embassy in London in August 2017.

Fitzgerald said a statement from another Assange lawyer, Jennifer Robinson, recounted "Mr. Rohrabacher going to see Mr. Assange and saying, on instructions from the president, he was offering a pardon or some other way out, if Mr. Assange ... said Russia had nothing to do with the DNC leaks."

Responding to the lawyer's claims, White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said, "This is absolutely and completely false."

President Donald Trump "barely knows Dana Rohrabacher other than he's an ex-congressman. He's never spoken to him on this subject or almost any sub-

ject," Grisham said. "It is a complete fabrication and a total lie. This is probably another never-ending hoax and total lie from the DNC."

Emails embarrassing for the Democrats and Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign were hacked before being published by WikiLeaks in 2016.

In a statement linked on his Twitter account, Rohrabacher said he never spoke with Trump about Assange and was not directed by the president or anyone else connected with him to meet with Assange. Recounting his meeting with the WikiLeaks founder, Rohrabacher said he told him "that if he could provide me information and evidence about who actually gave him the DNC

emails, I would then call on President Trump to pardon him. At no time did I offer a deal made by the President, nor did I say I was representing the President."

He said he met briefly on his return with then-White House Chief of Staff John Kelly and told him that Assange would provide information about the purloined DNC emails in exchange for a pardon. Rohrabacher said no one followed up with him, "and that was the last discussion I had on this subject with anyone representing Trump or in his administration."

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser said the evidence was admissible in the extradition case.

Assange appeared at London's Westminster Magistrates' Court by video link from Belmarsh

prison, where he is being held as he awaits his extradition hearing.

U.S. prosecutors have charged the 48-year-old Australian computer hacker with espionage over WikiLeaks' hacking of hundreds of thousands of confidential government documents. If found guilty, he faces up to 175 years in jail.

He argues he was acting as a journalist entitled to First Amendment protection.

There is no quick end in sight to Assange's long legal saga. The full extradition hearing starting Monday is due to open with a week of legal arguments. It will resume in May, and a ruling is not expected for several months, with the losing side likely to appeal.

NATION

Trump names Grenell as top intel official

By ZEKE MILLER AND MATTHEW LEW
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump announced that Richard Grenell, the U.S. ambassador to Germany, will become acting director of national intelligence, a move that puts a staunch Trump ally in charge of the nation's 17 spy agencies, which the president has only tepidly embraced.

"Rick has represented our Country exceedingly well and I look forward to working with him," Trump tweeted on Wednesday. A White House statement Thursday said Grenell "is committed to a nonpolitical, nonpartisan approach" to the job.

Grenell follows Joseph Maguire, who has been acting national intelligence director since August. It was unclear if Maguire would return to the National Counterterrorism Center. "I would like to thank Joe Maguire for the wonderful job he has done," Trump tweeted, "and we look forward to working with him closely, perhaps in another capacity within the Administration!"

Grenell, a loyal and outspoken Trump supporter, becomes the first openly gay member of Trump's Cabinet. He has been the U.S. ambassador to Germany since 2018. He previously served as U.S. spokesman at the United Nations in the George W. Bush administration, including under then-Ambassador John Bolton.

News of the announcement was quickly criticized by those who said the job should be held by someone with deep experience



ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AP

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is greeted by U.S. ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell as he arrives at Munich International Airport, in Munich, Germany on Thursday.

in intelligence. Trump named Grenell acting national intelligence director, meaning he would not have to be confirmed by the Senate.

Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said Trump had "selected an individual without any intelligence experience to serve as the leader of the nation's intelligence community in an acting capacity."

Warner accused the president of trying to sidestep the Senate's constitutional authority to advise and consent on critical national security positions.

"The intelligence community deserves stability and an experienced individual to lead them in a time of massive national and global security challenges," Warner said in a statement. "Now more than ever our country needs a Senate-confirmed intelligence director who will provide the best

intelligence and analysis, regardless of whether or not it's expedient for the president who has appointed him."

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 was signed by President George W. Bush after 9/11 to improve the sharing of information among all the intelligence agencies. The law states that the president shall appoint a national intelligence director with the advice and consent of the Senate. It also states: "Any individual nominated for appointment as Director of National Intelligence shall have extensive national security expertise."

Susan Hennessey, a fellow in national security law at Brookings Institution and a former attorney at the National Security Agency, tweeted: "This should frighten you. Not just brazen politicization of intelligence, but also someone who is utterly incompetent in an important security role. The guardrails are gone."

Trump named Maguire to the position after Texas GOP Rep. John Ratcliffe removed himself from consideration after just five days amid criticism about his lack of intelligence experience and qualifications for the job.

Maguire became acting director the same day that former National Intelligence Director Dan Coats' resignation took effect. It was also the same day that deputy national intelligence director Sus Gordon walked out the door. Democrats denounced the shake-up at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and accused Trump of pushing out two dedicated intelligence professionals.

Utah lawmakers tough on porn, lax on polygamy

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah lawmakers voted Tuesday to put new regulations on pornography and remove some on polygamy in separate proposals moving quickly through the Legislature in the deeply conservative state.

Senators voted unanimously to change state law to remove the threat of jail time for consenting adult polygamists, a step that supporters argue will free people in communities that practice plural marriage to report abuses, like children being taken as wives, without fear of prosecution.

A majority of people in Utah belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which had an early history of polygamy but has forbidden it for more than a century.

An hour later, House lawmakers approved a proposal to require pornography to carry warning labels about harm to minors. An adult entertainment industry group called the vote a dark day for freedom of expression.

The faith widely known as the Mormon church declared pornography a public health crisis in 2016, and since then, more than a dozen states have advanced similar proposals.

The labeling proposal from Republican state Rep. Brady Brammer would carry a potential penalty of \$2,500 per violation.

"I think it will make a difference," Brammer said. "It won't stop every problem related to obscenity, but it will stop all obscenity, but it will move the ball further down the field."

Republican lawmakers called it a creative solution. The measure would apply to material that appears in Utah in print or online and allow the state and residents to sue producers.

The new measure is narrowly aimed at hardcore obscene material, but the way the law is written could still allow for thousands of lawsuits, said Mike Stabile, a spokesman for the Free Speech Coalition, a pornography and adult entertainment trade group.

"Really it just sort of opens up the floodgates for lawsuits over all sorts of content," he said.

He also argues the dire harms outlined in the proposed warning label haven't been proven.

The porn warning labels need to be approved by the Senate, while the reduction in punishment for polygamy must pass the House.

Utah's restrictive bigamy law is an outgrowth of the church's history with polygamy. While mainstream members abandoned the practice in 1890, an estimated 30,000 people living in polygamous communities follow teachings that taking multiple wives brings exaltation in heaven.



RECK BOWMER/AP

Republican Rep. Brady Brammer poses for a portrait at the Utah State Capitol in Salt Lake City.

Utah goes further than other states by prohibiting cohabitation with more than one purported spouse. The measure from Republican Utah Sen. Deidre Henderson would make that an infraction rather than a felony.

Some former members of polygamist groups have spoken against the change, saying it would do little to help victims like those in underage marriages.

Polygamists with Utah ties range from Warren Jeffs, who was convicted of sexually assaulting girls he considered wives, to Kody Brown, whose four wives chose the relationship as adults. The Browns have opened their lives to reality TV cameras in the TLC show "Sister Wives."

Utah has publicly declined to prosecute otherwise law-abiding polygamists for years. Still, Henderson argues that fears remain, left over from raids where children were separated from their parents.

Weinstein jurors focus on Sciorra's allegation

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jurors continued deliberating for a third day Thursday in Harvey Weinstein's sexual assault trial after so far focusing a lot of attention on actress Annabella Sciorra's allegation that the once-heralded Hollywood mogul raped her in the mid-1990s.

Sciorra's allegation is too old to be charged on its own because of the statute of limitations, but it's a key component of the most serious charges that jurors are weighing in the closely watched #MeToo case.

Weinstein, 67, is charged with five counts stemming from the allegations of Sciorra and two other women — an aspiring actress who says he raped her in March 2013 and a former film and TV production assistant, Mimi Halesy, who says he forcibly performed oral sex on her in March 2006.

The Associated Press has a policy of not publishing the names of people who allege sexual assault without their consent. It is withholding the name of the rape accuser because it isn't clear whether she wishes to be identified publicly.

Weinstein has maintained that any sexual contact was consensual.

Sciorra's account is the basis for two counts of predatory sexu-

al assault, a charge that carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. To convict Weinstein of that charge, jurors must agree on two things: that Weinstein raped Sciorra and that he committed one of the other charged offenses.

On Tuesday, signaling their interest in Sciorra, jurors sent a note seeking clarity on why Weinstein wasn't charged with other crimes stemming from her allegation, only to be told by the judge that they "must not speculate as to any other charges that are not before you."

The panel of seven men and five women finished Wednesday's round of deliberations by revisiting actress Rosie Perez's testimony about what she says Sciorra told her soon after the alleged rape.

Perez said her friend Sciorra had told her at some point in 1993, her voice shaking on the phone, that something had happened to her. "I think it was rape," Perez testified that months later, on a phone call from London, Sciorra said Weinstein was harassing her and she was scared.

"I said, 'He's the one that raped you,'" and they both began crying, Perez testified.

"Please go to the police," Perez said she told Sciorra.

She said Sciorra responded: "I can't — he'd destroy me."

NATION

'GAME CHANGER'

Instead of releasing this greenhouse gas, beer brewers are selling it to pot growers

By JENNIFER OLDHAM
The Washington Post

DENVER — The state of Colorado and three small businesses are trying a novel approach to reduce carbon emissions that sounds like something out of the fever dreams of Willie Wonka: using carbon dioxide produced from beer brewing to help marijuana plants grow.

Denver Beer Co., Colorado's seventh-largest craft brewery by volume, is testing technology developed by Austin-based Earthly Labs to capture carbon dioxide emitted naturally during fermentation that was previously vented into the air.

The refrigerator-sized device purifies the greenhouse gas and chills it into a liquid. Stored in a 750-pound tank, the recovered CO₂ is transported about nine miles to the Clinic, where growers vaporize the liquid and pump it into rooms full of pot plants to speed photosynthesis.

"This is an example of something we think has great potential to scale in Colorado — we have a thriving craft brewery industry and a thriving cannabis sector," said Gov. Jared Polis, a Democrat whose administration provided technical and communications support, but no funding, to the project. "It's an economic win — and it has the potential to help with climate."

CO₂ emissions represent a large percentage of the greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, warming the planet.

Polis, who was elected in a blue wave in 2018 in which Democrats captured the state legislature, campaigned on a promise of 100% renewable power by 2040. The governor signed a bevy of laws to facilitate such a transition, including a bill that set a target for

a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas pollution below 2005 levels by 2030.

The carbon exchange between the nation's recreational pot marketplace and one of its most robust craft brewing industries is a small step toward his climate change goals that could be applied in other states, Polis said. Colorado is home to approximately 1,142 licensed marijuana growers and about 396 craft breweries.

The 16-week pilot program, which officially began last Tuesday, is designed as a cost-efficient way for breweries and cannabis firms to cut carbon dioxide emissions by eliminating the need for them to purchase the gas from power plants and have it trucked across the state. If it proves successful, most CO₂ emissions saved by such a program would be the result of fewer truck trips.

Denver Beer Co. will also use the captured CO₂ to carbonate and package its beer instead of venting it.

"This is excellent and shows how to close the carbon cycle," said Alissa Park, an engineering professor at Columbia University whose research focuses on capturing CO₂ from industrial sources before it enters the atmosphere. "We need to develop a new carbon economy, a new way of seeing things at the end of the day."

The Colorado project is one example of emerging methods that reuse carbon in ways that could transform how entire industries do business. These include a process that injects carbon dioxide captured by industrial gas suppliers into concrete when it's mixed. The \$20 million Carbon XPrize, to be awarded this fall, encourages entrants to develop technologies that will convert CO₂ emissions from power plants and



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW STAVEN/For The Washington Post

Brian Cusworth, left, director of operations at the Clinic, poses with employee Chris Baca. The licensed marijuana growing facility uses carbon dioxide produced by the beer brewed at nearby Denver Beer Co.

industrial facilities into everyday products such as vodka, watches and pens.

Earthly Labs technology, in use by two dozen or so breweries nationwide, carries the potential to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, said Amy George, founder and chief executive. The company's goal is to avoid 1 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions by 2030, which is the equivalent of pollution generated by 257 coal-fired power plants over the course of a year.

"If you do the waste stream over all the breweries in the world, it's a big number," she said. "We could get there pretty quickly, and hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide could be saved."

In Colorado, the Denver Beer Co. and the Clinic are focused on ensuring that the pilot project is efficient and economical. And that it makes tasty beer and cannabis.

The brewery's co-founder, Charlie Berger, said his business spent several years testing Earthly's CiCi, as its carbon capture technology is known. Those tests made it clear that the machine — emblazoned with a charcoal-colored sign declaring, "This box can capture more CO₂ than 1500 trees a year" — is a "game changer."

Geaturing toward rows of two-story-tall, 120-barrel stainless steel fermentation tanks in a cavernous warehouse in northwest Denver, Berger said the \$100,000 CiCi is poised to turn a CO₂ waste stream into a commodity that craft brewers can sell to cannabis firms, restaurants and tap rooms.

Cleaner than gas purchased from industrial sources, which contains volatile organic compounds, the CO₂ from the CiCi made a perceptible difference in taste, he said. It's also affordable for smaller brewers — their larger peers recover carbon with technology that costs millions of dollars.

"Economically it makes sense,"

Berger said. "We saw almost 40% growth in 2019 and now we're trying to do right by our community and the environment."

Berger lifted an industrial plastic tube that carries CO₂ from fermentation tanks into a dryer, where water separates from the gas. Next, the gas flowed into the CiCi, through a carbon filter and was chilled to liquid stored in a tank bound for the Clinic.

In a low-slung warehouse near the South Platte River behind an unmarked evergreen door crowned with a shredded off-white awning, managers at the Clinic recently hooked tanks up to a vaporizer to turn the carbon liquid back to a gas. The CO₂ gas traveled up a small white tube and through a bank of controls that determine how much is pumped into rooms where marijuana plants are at different stages of growth.

Carbon dioxide from the brewery will be used in one vegetation room, home to about 1,200 plants, and another room where as many as 1,300 plants are in the flowering stage. Growers, who triple the amount of CO₂ typically found in ambient air to speed the growing process, will test the plants over their 16-week cycle to see how they respond.

Labs will test the soil, water and potency of the plants. Grow managers will sample them for hardness, taste and smell.

"We already know this exchange is less than what we are paying now on the industrial side because of delivery, rental and transportation costs," said Brian Cusworth, director of operations. The brewery can supply the Clinic with the 6,600 pounds of carbon dioxide — at about 37 cents a pound — it uses each month at its facility near the South Platte River.

Recycling carbon also helps the image of growers, Cusworth said. "We are trying to eliminate the negative stigma the cannabis business has," he said.

In the odoriferous flower room, citrus and fruit-punch aromas

waft from top-heavy four-foot-tall flowering plants. CO₂ is released through small holes in a tube snaking across the ceiling. Fans alongside the rows of plants circulate the heavy gas.

The CO₂ pilot is one example of a push by the craft brewing and cannabis industries to shrink their outsized carbon footprints. Solar panels installed on the Denver Beer Co. warehouse roof provide 100% of the operation's energy. The Clinic switched to energy-efficient lighting.

The state's department of public health and environment is trying to help growers reduce energy and water use and waste. It is also heading up a study to quantify how many pounds of volatile organic compounds are released per pound of marijuana grown to estimate the industry's overall impact on the state's air quality.

"Typically, I only allocate six months to a year to an industry — I've been working with cultivators for two years," said Kaitlin Urso, a consultant for the department who is directing the air quality study and conducting environmental audits for growers.

Urso has also audited craft brewers and encouraged them to use a sustainability benchmarking tool offered by the Brewers Association. She said she's building a similar system for marijuana cultivators that would allow them to anonymously log the energy and water they use and compare themselves with peers.

That would also help state officials determine whether sustainability efforts are reducing these industries' impact on the environment, she said. In announcing the carbon exchange project, Polis also introduced a pilot to provide cultivators with free energy use assessments. Urso hopes to facilitate more partnerships between brewers and cannabis firms when the Earthly pilot is complete.

"We've had multiple breweries and multiple cultivators from inside and outside Colorado say, 'That's really great — how can we do this?'"



Founder Charlie Berger is seen alongside fermentation tanks inside the Denver Beer Co. earlier this month in Denver.

WORLD

Suspected far-right attack in Germany kills 9 people

Associated Press

HANAU, Germany — A 43-year-old German man who posted a manifesto calling for the “complete extermination” of many “races or cultures in our midst” shot and killed nine people of foreign background, most of them Turkish, in an attack on a hookah bar and other sites in a Frankfurt suburb, authorities said Thursday.

He was later found dead at his home along with his mother, and authorities said they were treating the rampage as an act of domestic terrorism.

The gunman first attacked the hookah bar and a neighboring cafe in Hanau at about 10 p.m. Wednesday, killing several people, then traveled about 1.5 miles and opened fire again, first on a car and then a sports bar, claiming more victims.

The bloodshed came amid growing concerns about far-

right violence in Germany and stepped-up efforts from authorities to crack down on it, including last week’s detention of a dozen men on suspicion they were planning attacks against politicians and minorities.

Chancellor Angela Merkel said the shootings exposed the “poison” of racism in Germany, and she pledged to stand up against those who seek to divide the country.

“There is much to indicate that the perpetrator acted out of far-right extremist, racist motives,” she said. “Out of hatred for people with other origins, other faiths or a different appearance.”

Hookah lounges are places where people gather to smoke flavored tobacco from Middle Eastern water pipes, and Metin Kan, who knew many of the victims, said it was obvious why the gunman chose the neighborhood.

“Look, a hookah bar, a doneer, a gaming parlor there, a diner,

kebab place there — it’s a place frequented by immigrants,” he said. “Why this hatred of foreigners? We all get along here.”

People of Turkish background make up Germany’s single largest ethnic minority, and Turkey’s ambassador said five of the people killed in the attack were Turkish citizens.

Germany’s federal prosecutor, Peter Frank, said that all nine people killed were of foreign backgrounds and that six others were injured, one seriously.

Investigators said it appeared the gunman acted alone, but Frank said the “goal of the investigation is to find out whether there were, or are, people who knew of, or supported” the attacks.

Frank identified the gunman only as Tobias R., in line with German privacy laws, and confirmed he had posted extremist videos and a manifesto with “confused ideas and far-fetched conspiracy theories” on his website.



MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

Police secure the hookah bar where several people were killed late Wednesday in Hanau, Germany, on Thursday.

The man identified himself as Tobias Rathjen on the website, which has now been taken down, with a mailing address matching that where the bodies of the killer and his mother were found.

In the manifesto, Rathjen claimed to have approached police several times with conspiracy theories, but Beuth said it does not appear the gunman had a criminal record or was on the radar of Germany’s domestic intelligence agency.

Among the documents posted to

the man’s website was a 24-page, rambling manifesto detailing fears that he has been under government surveillance for years. He blamed the surveillance for his inability to have a relationship with a woman. He also called for genocide.

“We now have ethnic groups, races or cultures in our midst that are destructive in every respect,” he wrote. He said he envisioned first a “rough cleaning” and then a “fine cleaning” that could halve the world’s population.

Bosnian Serb leader calls for dissolution of Bosnia

Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — The Bosnian Serb leader on Thursday renewed calls for Bosnia’s dissolution and pledged to block decision-making in the country’s institutions, in a move slammed by Western envoys as a challenge to the U.S.-sponsored peace agreement that ended Bosnia’s civil war.

Milorad Dodik said after a meeting of the Bosnian Serb leaders in a Sarajevo suburb that the crisis in Bosnia “will disappear only when Bosnia disappears.”

The U.S.-brokered Dayton peace agreement has divided Bosnia into two entities,

the Serb republic and the Muslim-Croat federation. All the decisions on the state level have to be reached by consensus of the three ethnic groups, and if one votes against, the decisions are blocked.

Tensions increased in Bosnia earlier this month when the country’s Constitutional Court ruled that unclaimed agricultural land is the property of the central Bosnian state rather than the Serb mini state, contradicting a Bosnian Serb law.

Lawmakers in the Bosnian Serb mini-state have given a 60-day deadline for the court to revoke its decision and reform itself by kicking out three foreign judges that the Serbs claim are biased against them.

The pro-Russian Bosnian Serb leader has reiterated his calls for secession of the Bosnian Serb lands so they could join neighboring Serbia — the plan by Serb nationalists that triggered the 1992-95 war that left at least 100,000 dead and millions homeless.

“Goodbye Bosnia, welcome (Bosnian Serb) exit,” Dodik, who is also the Serb member of Bosnia’s joint presidency, said earlier this week.

A tweet issued by the U.S. Embassy after a meeting Wednesday between Ambassador Eric Nelson and Dodik said the U.S. “expects nothing less than full respect of the Dayton Accords and the territorial in-

tegrity and sovereignty” of Bosnia.

The U.S., European Union and four Western European countries have denounced the Bosnian Serb blockade.

“Unilateral withdrawal from institutions, or blockages of decision-making within them, are unacceptable and counter-productive from any side and would only undermine the very improvements and progress that citizens wish to see,” a joint statement said.

“Decisions of the (Bosnian) Constitutional Court, as decisions of any Constitutional Court in any country, are final and binding, and must be implemented,” the statement said.

Lesotho’s prime minister to be charged in estranged wife’s slaying

Associated Press

MASERU, Lesotho — Lesotho’s Prime Minister Thomas Thabane will be charged with the June 2017 killing of his estranged wife, Lipolele, a top police official said Thursday, and the prime minister announced he would be stepping down.

The southern African kingdom already has watched, shocked, as the prime minister’s current wife, Maseaiah, was charged earlier this month in the murder after briefly fleeing the country.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Paseka Mokete said the prime minister will appear at the Maseru Magistrates Court on Friday “to face a murder charge in connection with the killing of Lipolele-Thabane.”

Lesotho’s 80-year-old leader also will face an attempted murder charge in connection with the shooting of another person who

was with his wife at the time, Mokete said.

He said police investigations were complete and more people soon will be charged.

Thabane will become Lesotho’s first sitting prime minister to be charged with any crime. His current wife is out on bail and will next appear in court on March 17.

Lipolele had been estranged from Thabane, who had filed for divorce when she was shot dead near her Maseru home on the night of June 14, 2017. Her friend, Thato Sibolla, who was travelling with her in the car, escaped with gunshot wounds and has since fled to neighboring South Africa in fear for her life.

The attack occurred just two days before Thabane was sworn in for his second stint as prime minister.

It was not until January that Po-

lice Commissioner Holomo Moli-beli filed court papers declaring that Thabane was a suspect in the killing. Thabane unsuccessfully tried to oust the police commissioner. Thabane also sought to get immunity for him and his wife for the killing of his ex-wife, Moli-beli said.

Thabane in a statement Thursday said he will step down “with effect from the end of July this year, or at an earlier date if all the requisite preparations for my retirement are completed before then.”

He said he communicated the message to King Letsie III, and a few days ago he visited South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to formally inform him of his decision to retire.

The All Basotho Convention, Lesotho’s ruling party, has been pressing Thabane to step down immediately, saying he cannot

stay in office with the murder charge hanging over his head.

Lesotho’s parliament was to open Friday, and the ABC party

wants him to step down before then or face a challenge in parliament, party spokesman Montoeli Masoetsa said.



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WORLD

Australians focus on climate change after fires

By JOSEPH SERNA
Los Angeles Times

LATROBE VALLEY, Australia — The turning point came in 2017, when wind-whipped blazes swept through the foothills, jumped a freeway and burned through thousands of homes and businesses, killing more than 40 people.

The fires in Northern California's wine country — followed by an even more deadly inferno in Paradise the following year — led many Californians to recognize that climate change was not some distant threat but an immediate catalyst of the state's ever-more destructive blazes.

Australia is now going through a similar shift in perspective amid fires that have burned more than 30 million acres.

"No one can recall an event like this," said Nick Clark, a farmer who lost most of his sheep's pasture to a wind-driven fire on Southern Australia's Kangaroo Island in mid-January. "And you can say that about a lot of weather events in Australia. It's hard to say that it's just a cycle; I think you have to concede that it's more than just that."

Australia is a fossil fuel-friendly country, with an economy dependent on tourism and shipping coal to China and other fast-growing Asian nations. In the past, Australians tended to blame fires on natural cycles — wet years, dry years. But now, even in the country's coal towns, there's a recognition that something is changing.

"Going back 20 or 30 years, the realization was there, but I don't think there was the opportunity to engage in the conversation," said Jon Missen, mine closure and rehabilitation officer for one of Australia's biggest brown coal-burning power stations, Loy Yang, in the Latrobe Valley, the heart of Victoria's energy industry. "Probably 20 years ago, if I said the things I wanted to say that I say now, no one would've listened. It's maybe more of a willingness to discuss rather than change a view," he said.

Surveys back up Missen's assertion.

A January Ipsos poll of more than 1,000 Australians revealed that a progressive think tank, fourth on concern, with most drawing a connection between climate change, drought and bushfires.

In November, before some of the country's biggest fires had erupted, a survey of 1,400 residents by the Australian Institute, a progressive think tank, found that two-thirds of participants considered climate change a national emergency. A survey conducted by the Lowy Institute last summer found that 64% of Australians considered climate change a "critical threat" to the country, the highest that number has been since 2006.

The increased concern has even forced Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison to back away from his denial of prevailing climate change science and state that his government's views are evolving, though without any specific policy changes.



PHOTOS BY CAROLYN COLE, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Wildfires devastated Australia's Kangaroo Island in late December 2019 and January 2020.



As global warming becomes a greater concern, some see the burning of coal as a major emissions problem, but brown coal still provides 70% of energy in Victoria, Australia.

The prime minister, in a recent interview, also described the increased federal response to bushfires as the "new normal."

"He started off much too loose about what was going on and, in my opinion, was trying to cover the climate change issue," Brisbane resident Meredith Jordan, whose niece's wedding was disrupted by the bushfires on Kangaroo Island, said of Morrison's response. "His message should've been, 'Here is our problem now, here is what we are doing with the problem.' But he kept saying it's a state issue ... it's not what we want to hear."

Compared to Australia, California has long recognized the threats posed by a warming planet, but it wasn't until the middle of the last decade that the term "new normal" became a talking point for the state's governors and firefighters. A similar transition is happening on the other side of the globe.

"That's the \$64 million question at the moment — is this the 'new normal'?" said Ross Brad-

stock, director of the Center for Environmental Risk Management of Bushfires at the University of Wollongong in New South Wales. "There's been a lot of politics played out in this, but I think the climate change narrative is paramount."

To be sure, seasonal wildfires have long shaped the landscapes of both California and Australia, and climate change is hardly the only ingredient in their most recent big blazes. When multiple deadly fires erupted in 2015 in California, destroying more than 3,000 homes and charring some 216,000 acres, the cause for two of them were faulty hot tub wiring and downed power lines.

Weather extremes have whipped-sawed Australia over the last decade. The years 1997 to 2009 were the driest 13-year period on record in southeastern Australia, according to a report by the country's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization. In 2010 and 2011, record rainfall hit the continent, breaking the drought. Then came 2018



Sheep and cattle farmer Martine Plowman, left, said that she and her husband had a fire plan in place and stood their ground.

and 2019 — Australia's hottest and driest years on record — followed by the record fires.

Lightning sparked most of Australia's recent blazes, yet it is unclear if climate change will directly equate to more lightning-caused fires in the future. A 2016 report from the nonprofit Australian Climate Council said there is not enough data to map out long-term trends, though global patterns would suggest that the potential exists.

Given the size and endurance of the bushfires this year, Clark, the Kangaroo Island wool farmer, doesn't need any more convincing.

"I'm concerned for my kids because that impact is going to be cumulative," he said. "As more of this sort of thing happens, the more carbon is released into the atmosphere, you know, the more ice caps melt, the whole thing is just ramping up. It's accelerating the problem."

Yet not every person affected by fire shares the level of alarm. Sheep and cattle farmer Mar-

tine Plowman, 42, said she, her husband and their kids review their fire plan before every summer to prepare for scenarios like this. When embers rained on their home and a line of flames approached them from all sides just after the new year, they stood their ground.

The children protected the interior by climbing into the attic with a water gun to extinguish any embers that blew in through a vent and by patrolling windows to window with walkie-talkies, where they announced spot fires in the grass near the home.

Plowman and her husband were outside with buckets, mops and a hose. The family spent hours fending off the fire and ember siege. They lost a few livestock and their shearing shed, and all but 30 of their 2,000 acres was burned. But they and their home survived.

"Bushfires are a way of life in this area," she said. "There's other people that haven't been impacted before that now it's an issue. But that's always going to be an issue here."



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Stay connected and hey, welcome to the neighborhood.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Semi crashes in river, spilling toilet paper

MT BILLINGS — A semi-tractor-trailer slid on icy roads and crashed into a guardrail in south-central Montana, causing the cab to go into the river and the load of toilet paper to be strewn across the highway, Red Lodge Fire and Rescue said.

The driver suffered minor injuries in Monday morning's crash and 100 gallons or less of diesel fuel spilled into the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River near Beltry, officials said.

The driver lost control of the rig while approaching an S-curve on Montana Highway 72, officials said. The semi hit the end of a bridge guardrail, splitting the cab from the trailer.

Adult punches mountain lion to save girl on trail

CA CUPERTINO — A state park in Northern California remained closed Tuesday after a mountain lion attacked a 6-year-old girl while she walked on a trail, officials said.

The girl was at the Rancho San Antonio County Park and Open Space Preserve in Cupertino when a mountain lion attacked her Sunday, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife said in a statement. Rangers treated the girl for minor injuries.

The 6-year-old was with her parents in a group of six adults and four children. An adult who was with them rescued her by punching the animal in the ribs.

Man is charged after snowball throwers shot

WI MILWAUKEE — A Milwaukee man is charged with firing shots at children who threw snowballs at his car, injuring two of them.

William Carson, 24, was charged Sunday with two counts of first-degree reckless injury and five counts of first-degree recklessly endangering safety, all felonies.

Prosecutors allege Carson fired nine shots at seven children in early January. A 13-year-old boy and 12-year-old girl were injured, suffering gunshot wounds to the thigh and forearm, while a bullet also grazed a third child, according to the criminal complaint.

Carson is jailed with bond set at \$35,000, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported. He is due back in court Tuesday.

Christian theme park laying off most workers

FL ORLANDO — A Christian-oriented theme park in central Florida that describes itself as "bringing the Bible to life" is laying off most of its workers.

The Holy Land Experience last week filed notice with the city of Orlando and state officials that it would be eliminating 118 positions. That represents most of the jobs at the theme park in Orlando's tourist corridor.

Holy Land Experience officials said in a letter that they were



Russ Dillingham, Sun Journal/AP

Getting his ice time

After borrowing a tub to help keep his balance while learning to skate, Finn Shapiro jumped in and got a ride from his friend Pollic Cain at the Androscoggin Bank Colisee in Lewiston, Maine, on Tuesday.

shifting focus from entertainment and theatrical productions to the park's Biblical Museum.

School probed for racial 'Duck, Duck, Goose'

NV LAS VEGAS — School district officials in Las Vegas are investigating allegations that a class was playing a game of "Duck, Duck, Goose" that invoked slavery.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported Monday that the principal at Rowe Elementary School issued a message to parents about the reported incident.

Principal Jeffrey Schaber said no behavior that contradicts having "an inclusive community" was tolerated.

A parent posted on Facebook that her kindergarten-age daughter last week was taught to play "Duck, Duck, Goose," but as "Hunter Chase the Slave."

Hearing for theater bar that served tainted drinks

NE LA VISTA — Nebraska's liquor control agency has called a movie theater bar in suburban Omaha to account for accidentally serving two customers cocktails that contained cleaning solution.

The Alamo Drafthouse in La Vista could have its liquor license suspended, canceled or revoked at the March 10 hearing before

THE CENSUS

16M

company recently said it would invest more than \$60 million to build the Fred B. Noe Craft Distillery, encompassing the entire family of brands, including Jim Beam, Knob Creek, Booker's, Baker's, Basil Hayden's, Little Book and Legend.

the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.

The women, ages 45 and 51, took sips on Jan. 28 and soon began to feel burning sensations in their throats and stomachs, authorities said. The women also had trouble breathing. They were taken to a hospital and then released. A server experienced similar symptoms after tasting the drinks and was treated as well.

A bottle that had contained a liqueur was being used to store cleaning solution for lines that connect beer kegs to taps. The bottle had been placed near the bar, police said.

Jail returns funds after getting counterfeit bills

WY GILLETTE — A Wyoming jail unwittingly helped an inmate earn a profit from counterfeit money when it returned unused funds from a commissary account where he's accused of depositing fake bills, authorities said.

The number of barrels James B. Beam Distilling Co. has filled with its bourbon since Prohibition, the distiller said in a news release. Family distillers Fred Noe and his son, Freddie Noe, filled the 16 millionth barrel and sealed it in Clermont, Ky., on Monday. The

The Campbell County Sheriff's Office returned \$261.69 to Edwardo Vlahos, 43, when he was released in October. The Gillette News Record reported Monday. Vlahos was arrested earlier that month on suspicion of felony shoplifting. As part of the booking process, he turned over money in his possession to be used to buy food and other items in jail.

The funds added to the commissary account included \$120 in counterfeit bills, according to a probable cause affidavit filed in the case. The funds were returned on a debit card when Vlahos was released on a \$1,500 cash or surety bond, officials said.

Vintage WWII fighter plane to fly sightseers

HI HONOLULU — Sightseers will soon have an opportunity to experience history while viewing Hawaii when a vintage World War II fighter plane begins passenger flights.

A private company has modi-

fied a P-51D Mustang to allow space for the pilot and a backseat passenger beginning in March, The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Monday.

Wings Over Pearl is expected to take passengers up in a 1944 Mustang owned by the Erickson Aircraft Collection. A 15-minute tour of Pearl Harbor, Wheeler Army Airfield and the Haleiwa Fighter Strip is expected to cost \$2,900.

Police: Man forced woman to watch 'Roots'

IA CEDAR RAPIDS — An Iowa man is accused of forcing a woman to watch the nine-hour miniseries "Roots," threatening her and telling her the episodic drama would make her better understand her racism.

Robert Noye, 52, is charged in Cedar Rapids with harassment and false imprisonment.

The Gazette reported that the woman told police that Noye made her sit with him to watch the miniseries. It was based on author Alex Haley's family history, from the capture and enslavement of his ancestor Kunta Kinte in Africa to the liberation of Kinte's descendants.

When she tried to move, the woman said, Noye told her to remain seated or he would "kill her and spread her body parts" across the interstate.

From wire reports

FAITH

More US firms boost faith-based support

By DAVID CRARY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — It has become standard practice for U.S. corporations to assure employees of support regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation. There's now an intensifying push to ensure that companies are similarly supportive and inclusive when it comes to employees' religious beliefs.

One barometer: More than 20% of the Fortune 100 have established faith-based employee resource groups, according to an AP examination and there's a high-powered conference taking place this week in Washington aimed at expanding those ranks.

"Corporate America is at a tipping point toward giving religion similar attention to that given the other major diversity categories," says Brian Grim, founder and president of the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation that's co-hosting the conference along with the Catholic University of America's Busch School of Business.

A few companies have long-established faith-in-the-workplace programs, such as Arkansas-based Tyson Foods, which deploys a team of more than 90 chaplains to comfort and counsel employees at its plants and offices. That program began in 2000.

However, Grim says most companies — over the past few decades — have given religion less attention in their diversity inclusion programs than other categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disabilities.

Grim is an associate scholar at the Religious Liberty Project at Georgetown University and a former senior researcher with the Pew Research Center. From 2015-16, he served as chair of the World Economic Forum's global agenda council on the role of faith.

Grim's foundation, founded in 2014, recently completed a detailed analysis ranking the Fortune 100 companies on their commitment to religious inclusion as part of those programs.

The top 10 in the rankings featured some of America's best-known companies — Google's parent company Alphabet, Intel, Tyson Foods, Target, Facebook, American Airlines, Apple, Dell, American Express and Goldman Sachs.

Tyson won points for its chaplaincy program; most of the others have formed either a single interfaith employee resource group or separate groups for major religions such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Google's interfaith group, the Inter Belief Network, has chapters for those faiths and for Buddhists, while Intel has a group for agnostics and atheists, as well as groups for major religious faiths.

One employer, the Internal Revenue Service, has a group specifically for Christian fundamentalists.



LOGAN WEBSTER, TYSON FOODS/AP

Karen Diefendorf, second right, director of Chaplain Services at Tyson Foods, talks with employees at the company's Berry St. poultry plant in Springdale, Ark., in October 2018.



Brian Grim, president of the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation, speaks at the launch event for the Corporate Pledge on Religious Freedom in Washington in 2016.

Grim says several other high-profile companies — including Walmart, the largest U.S. employer — have recently decided to launch faith-based employee groups.

One of the fastest growing faith-based groups, called Faithforce, was launched by Salesforce in 2017. Its founder, Farah Siddiqui, says more than 2,600 employees have signed up since then, joining 17 regional hubs on five continents.

Siddiqui, a Muslim whose family is from Pakistan, said the group now includes Sikhs, Hindus, pagans and humanists, as well as followers of America's largest faiths.

"We're a very inclusive group," she says. "If someone has something interesting to share, we share it. There is no proselytizing."

Siddiqui said Faithforce, in somber fashion, proved its value after a string of deadly attacks on houses of worship in far-flung parts of the world — notably the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, three Christian churches in Sri Lanka and two mosques in New Zealand.

"We had healing circles after each of those tragedies," said Siddiqui, who recounted in-person visits by a rabbi and a Muslim scholar. "What we've done is support

our employees of those faiths to show that the rest of us are here for them," she said.

At Tyson Foods, the team of chaplains includes one Muslim, but is overwhelmingly Christian. However, the team's director, Karen Diefendorf, says the chaplains are trained to provide empathetic pastoral care to employees and their families regardless of what faith — if any — the workers belong to.

Diefendorf, whose career includes stints as a United Methodist minister and a U.S. Army chaplain, said there's a key difference between pastoring and chaplaincy.

"When I pastor, I only represent my denomination, my faith tradition," she said. "As a chaplain, I can support people who come from very different backgrounds ... I ask them how their beliefs are helping them cope with what's going on."

Often, the chaplains are sought out by employees struggling with difficulties at work or at home, but Diefendorf said her team members sometimes act proactively — for example, finding tactful ways to signal to a supervisor that his or her management practices are causing problems for workers.

Her advice to other companies considering a chaplaincy team: "Making the right hire is critically important."

"You want a person who has maturity, who is secure in their own faith but not spiritually conflicted in allowing others to pursue their faith," she said.

Formal theological training is an asset, but not sufficient in itself, she added. "They can have all the training in the world, but if they don't have the right compassion in their heart, they aren't worth a plugged nickel."

Thus far, the faith-in-the-workplace movement has mostly escaped harsh criticism. Brian Grim has taken pains to argue that faith-based employee resource groups are not a threat to LGBTQ employees, and instead should be viewed as a sign of a corporation's overall commitment to diversity and inclusion. American Airlines is evidence of that. Its presence high atop the new religious-freedom rankings come after many years of accolades for its strong support of LGBTQ employees.

"The perception out there is that religion is a dangerous topic, but some companies have found the opposite — that it reinforces the other things they care about," Grim said.

Nick Fish, president of American Atheists, said companies considering faith-based initiatives should strive to ensure they are inclusive.

"Creating a work environment that is exclusionary of non-religious staff or members of religious minorities is a recipe for disaster," he said via email. "I'd urge any employer who is considering this sort of action to instead ensure that their workplace is religiously neutral and welcoming to staff and customers of any religious belief or those who are non-religious."

WEEKEND



The hazards of binge-reading

Books, Page 39



WHEN TALK ISN'T CHEAP

Success for musical artists such as Taylor Swift seems to come at a price: Keeping their mouths shut when it comes to politics, personal principles

Page 23

WEEKEND: GADGETS



Neighborhood watch

Internet-connected cameras turn people into voyeurs

DREW HARWELL
The Washington Post

Marigart Cudia thought her Ring doorbell camera was “the best thing since sliced bread.” She loved watching the world pass by through her suburban New Jersey neighborhood, guarding vigilantly for suspicious strangers and porch pirates from the comfort of her phone.

She hadn’t expected that the camera also might capture awkward moments closer to home, like the time it caught her daughter grabbing a beer and talking about how controlling her mother was. “I never told her about that one,” she said with a laugh.

Amazon’s Ring, Google’s Nest and other internet-connected cameras — some selling for as little as \$59 — have given Americans the tools they need to become a personal security force, and millions of people now see what’s happening around their home every second — what Ring calls the “new neighborhood watch.”

But the allure of monitoring people silently from afar has also proved more tempting than many expected. Customers who bought the cameras in hopes of not becoming victims joke that instead they’ve become voyeurs.

They analyzed their neighbors. They monitored their kids and house guests. And they judged the performance of housekeepers, babysitters and other domestic workers, often without letting them know they were being recorded. “I know maybe I should” tell them, one woman explained, “but they won’t be as candid.”

Ring’s installation guide suggests customers use stickers or signs to “let visitors know that your home is under audio/video surveillance by a Ring device.”

But the cameras’ offering of secretive observation, some customers told The Post, often felt too enticing to ignore. Mari Gianati, whose Nest cameras watch over her waterfront home in Puerto Rico, said she uses the cameras to examine the housekeepers, the pool guy, the fumigator, the people who feed her birds and any strangers who pass by her private road, most of whom she said don’t know the cameras are there.

All that added vigilance has come at a cost. Hackers have peered into children’s bedrooms. Police officers have asked homeowners for video of their neighbors. And families have had to reckon with the delicate new bounds of home privacy.

But most people said those concerns weren’t enough to persuade them to turn off their cameras. Device sales have surged in recent years amid falling prices and rising public acceptance: The companies won’t give full sales figures, but they say millions of cameras now are online nationwide.

Matthew Guariglia, an analyst for the online-rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation, said the rush of new home cameras threatened to make the problems of widespread surveillance — the chilling of free speech, the erosion of privacy — that much more intimate and inescapable.

“Who hasn’t looked out and watched other people through their peephole? There’s a kind of morbid fascination to it,” he said. “The problem is when it’s not just you behind a peephole but a camera that’s on at all times, saving to a cloud you don’t control.”

The extra eyes have been a huge gift to American law enforcement. Ring lets police officers use a special tool to ask customers for videos captured in and around their houses, and the number of police agencies with access has more than doubled since September, to nearly 900 agencies across 44 states, a Washington Post analysis found. “Ring believes when communities and local police work together, safer neighborhoods can become a reality,” Ring spokeswoman Yassi Shahmiri said.

Privacy advocates have called the Ring/policy partnerships an unnerving escalation of criminal surveillance powers. But nearly every Ring owner contacted by The Post said they would have no problem providing video to law enforcement if it could help solve a crime.

This ability to see into homes has already been weaponized: Hackers have used the camera systems to shout racist slurs at an 8-year-old girl in Mississippi and a 15-year-old boy in Florida; spew sexual expletives and kidnapping threats at a 4-month-old baby in Texas; and broadcast pornography into the bedroom of a 2-year-old girl in California.

Some customers also voiced anxiety over who might have access to their in-home feeds. Criticism of the systems has also come from inside the companies: Amazon software engineer Max Eliazer wrote last month that the mass deployment of internet-connected cameras was “simply not compatible with a free society.”

“Ring should be shut down immediately and not brought back,” he wrote. “The privacy issues are not fixable with regulation, and there is no balance that can be struck.”

GADGET WATCH

Speaker makes conference call difficulties a thing of the past

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

I remember years ago when I worked in corporate America and conference rooms were the home away from home (let me politely say I don’t miss those days). With each meeting we struggled to get the conference call connected, the volume loud enough for us to hear those on the other end or keeping the built-in microphone close enough to pick up our voices. Whatever we did, it was a constant struggle.

With the Anker PowerConf Ultra Clear Bluetooth Speakerphone, those problems and frustrations are a thing of the past.

It’s perfect for businesses or school but I tested it for a family call and the clarity people hear us in with the 6 built-in microphone system was outstanding from anywhere in the room I spoke, regardless of the distance.

With the microphones, the voice pick up lets you walk and talk, sit close or further away. The Omni-Directional Voice Pickup has 360-degree voice coverage up to a 5 meter range for up to 8 people. Technology inside automatically balances voices for consistency in the volume, no matter the distance you are talking from the speakerphone.

After the call I questioned those on the other end about the clarity they heard me and unanimously I got rave reviews. During the call I even threw in some background music and crumpling paper noise to see if it upset the reception, which it didn’t. What makes the clarity that Anker’s custom DSP algorithm offers real-time echo cancellation, de-reverberation, and background noise suppression to ensure your voice is picked up without distracting noises.

Setting it up is effortless, connecting via Bluetooth (v 5.0) to your smartphone or a computer (Windows 7, 8, 10, and macOS) via the USB-C connection.

There’s no need for software or drivers and Anker says the

PowerConf is compatible with all popular online conferencing services. This includes Skype, Google Hangout, Facetime, Zoom, WebEx, GotoMeeting, and Chromebox.

Controls of the 4.9-by-4.8-by-1.2-inch conference speaker are in the center of the top of the speaker, including a multifunction button, volume, LED status and phone controls. On the sides are power, Bluetooth, USB and audio output port. The speaker itself has a black finish on the grill cover.

With the PowerConf’s USB-C port, you can connect your smartphone for optimized speed charging from the internal 6,700mAh battery. The battery is rated to produce a week’s worth of calls, or 24 hours of call time on a single charge.

A USB-C cable and a travel case are included.

Online: anker.com; \$129.99



The Anker PowerConf Ultra Clear Bluetooth Speakerphone has 360-degree voice coverage up to a 5 meter range for up to eight people.

The versatile and clever Ohsnap phone grip attaches to the back of your smartphone case or the device itself to give you a perfect grip of your phone at any angle, rotating 360 degrees.

When you want a finger grip, just snap out the long centered finger loop by pressing in the center and both ends pop up with the center portion keeping intact with the frame. When the ends are popped out, the center strip forms into a circular shape and hooks together, making it perfect for holding it with a single finger.

When not needed, the silicone-coated grip snaps back in to a 2.7 mm thin profile along with pocket-friendly smooth edges. That versatility is what sold me, on top of being able to try out the gripping feature while it was still in its packaging.

If your smartphone wireless charges, all you do is slide out the center frame, and when charging is completed, slide it back in.

When the Ohsnap is snapped out, it also works as a kickstand for handsfree viewing. The center is built with neodymium magnets, allowing it to stick to magnetic mounts, workout equipment or anything magnetic.

According to the Ohsnap site, Ohsnap works with most cases, if your case is flat and is made of a hard material. The adhesive backing can be removed and a new one reinstalled.

Online: ohsnap.com; \$29.99, available in 9 color choices. Additional sticky mounts (2-pack \$5) and car mounts (\$15) are also available



When not needed, Ohsnap’s silicone-coated phone grip snaps back in to a 2.7-mm profile.

ON THE COVER: “Miss Americana,” a documentary about Taylor Swift’s career currently available on Netflix, reveals the struggles behind the scenes when it came to voicing political beliefs.

ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN MOORES, USING IStock AND AP IMAGES/Stars and Stripes

WEEKEND: MUSIC

The high price of speaking out

'Miss Americana,' the documentary on Taylor Swift's career, explores the predicament pop artists face — voice your political beliefs or say nothing

BY DAN DeLUCA ■ *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

E

arly on in "Miss Americana," the new Taylor Swift documentary, the then-16-year-old singer takes a moment to celebrate "Tim McGraw," the 2006 hit that made her the youngest artist ever to write a No. 1 country song that she also performed.

"I give myself, like, five seconds a day to say, 'Yes, this is happening!'" the curly-haired, whip-smart teenager exults. "The rest of the time I'm trying to figure out how to make it last."

She hasn't done too badly: seven million-selling albums, two Grammy album of the year trophies and legions of fans who pack stadiums wherever she goes. And her latest album, last year's "Lover," is both her most mature effort and a creative rebound after the mild disappointment of 2017's "Reputation."

Yet, to hear Swift tell it in the Netflix movie directed by Lana Wilson, all that success came at a cost: keeping her mouth shut.

"Miss Americana" is about Swift becoming self-aware. It starts slowly, tracking her rise to fame and rehashing battles with Kanye West and Kim Kardashian.

The doc gets seriously compelling, though, when it sends a camera into the recording studio to capture her creative process, and when it focuses on two transformative events outside.

The first was a 2017 trial stemming from the singer's allegation that Denver DJ David Mueller groped her during a 2013 promo event. Swift

won a judgment against him — the \$1 that she asked for — and Mueller's \$3 million defamation suit against her was dismissed.

The second was her decision during the 2018 midterm elections to speak out politically — specifically against conservative Tennessee Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn, whom Swift called "Trump in a wig." Swift was appalled by her vote against reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Blackburn went on to defeat Democratic opponent Phil Bredesen.

A central scene pits Swift and mother Andrea against the men in the room. Among them is her father, Scott, who asks, "Did Bing Crosby do it? Did Bob Hope do it?" suggesting she shouldn't risk alienating fans.

For Swift, though, striving to be the good girl is no longer viable. "I've been doing it for 15 years, and I'm tired of it," she says.

Wokeness is manifest both in "Lover's" cleverly feminist single "The Man" and in "Only The Young," the new song from "Miss Americana" that aims to be a youth vote anthem.

Swift's decision to engage politically stemmed from personal experiences, of course. And remaining neutral left her open to both being excoriated by the left for not taking a stance in the 2016 election and being appropriated by white supremacists as an "Aryan goddess."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

"Miss Americana" offers a revealing look at singer-songwriter Taylor Swift during a transformational period in her life. The film tells the story of Swift navigating the difference between who the world wants her to be, and who she wants to be.

Netflix



WEEKEND: MUSIC

12 things to know about Post Malone

By David J. Criblez
Newsday

Rapper Post Malone is the man of the moment. His third album, "Hollywood's Bleeding," has accelerated his musical profile into the stratosphere, spawning seven hit singles and a headlining arena tour. Since becoming a household name, Malone, 24, has infused himself into pop culture with his unique blend of pop, trap, rock, folk and R&B. Here are 12 things you might not know about him:

Doritos dude

During the 2020 Grammy Awards, Malone's Doritos commercial made its debut. In the clip, he's known as "Post Limon," promoting the new Flamin' Hot Limon Doritos using his hit song "Wow." He even gets a facial tattoo of a Doritos chip on his cheek in the clip.

'Spider-Verse' cameo

Malone makes a voice cameo in the 2018 animated film "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" as a Brooklyn bystander. Additionally, he provided a song to the film's soundtrack — "Sunflower," a collaboration with rapper Swae Lee, which reached the top of the Billboard charts.

Duetting with Ozzy

Despite his recent prognosis of Parkinson's, iconic heavy metal singer Ozzy Osbourne, 71, collaborated with Malone on the track "Take What You Want," which reached No. 8 on the Billboard charts. The crossover rock-rap track, with a guitar solo by Andrew Watt, opened Malone up to a whole new audience.

Patriotic post

Much like Long Island native anti-war activist Ron Kovic, Malone was born on the Fourth of July — July 4, 1995, to be exact. He is a native of Syracuse, N.Y., but moved to Grapevine, Texas, where his father worked as a manager of concessions for the Dallas Cowboys.

Super Bowl ad man

In a 2020 Super Bowl commercial for Bud Light seltzer, Malone is shown entering a convenience store to purchase a Bud Lite beer when he's surprised to see a display of Bud Light seltzer. We then see inside his brain where there's a team of people dressed in suits and inked with Malone's tattoo patterns controlling his every thought and move. The two men at the helm battle over which drink he should purchase. This internal revolt causes Malone's body to be tossed about,

making a massive mess in the store until a decision has been reached to purchase both beverages. Then, walking across the debris, Malone casually asks the clerk, "Got any pretzels?"

Real name, rap name

Malone's real name is Austin Richard Post. In order to create his stage name, he moved his last name to his first and got "Malone" through a rap name generator online. He's been using "Post Malone" as a moniker since his mid-teens.

Buds with Bieber

Malone and pop star Justin Bieber have been friends since the Biebs sang a guest vocal on the single "Deja Vu" off Malone's debut album, "Stoney," in 2016. Malone even served as an opening act on Bieber's "Purpose" World Tour the same year.

Sunglasses guy

Malone has partnered with Arnette Sunglasses as its representative, modeling and curating the eyewear in the re-launch of the brand.

Breaking MJ's record

Malone made history in August 2018 when his 2016 album, "Stoney," spent 77 weeks in the top 10 of Billboard's Top R&B and Hip-Hop Albums chart, surpassing the record held by Michael Jackson's "Thriller," which spent 76 weeks on that same chart in the '80s.

Movie-star turn

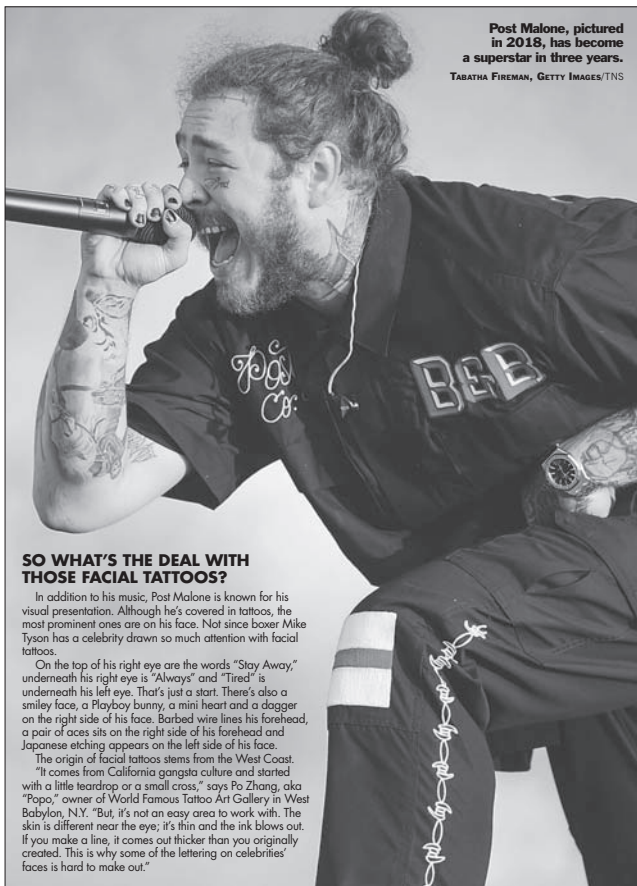
Malone, aside, Malone is branching into acting in the upcoming Netflix film "Spenser Confidential," which comes out March 6. Actor Mark Wahlberg stars as an ex-felon and former police detective from Boston who returns home to investigate the murder of his former colleagues. Malone, billed as Austin Post, plays one of Wahlberg's adversaries.

Beating the Beatles

Malone broke The Beatles' and J. Cole's records for the most simultaneous songs in the top 20 on Billboard's Hot 100. He had nine songs in the top 20 on the week of May 12, 2018. The Beatles and J. Cole held the previous record with six.

Big gun collector

Malone has a large gun collection including a M14 rifle, a Walther PPK pistol, a 44 Desert Eagle hand cannon, a M1911 pistol, a Cobalt AR-15 rifle, a FN Five-Seven pistol, a Mossberg shotgun and a Glock 19 pistol. Although he doesn't fire the weapons, Malone actively goes to battle virtually on "Call of Duty."



Post Malone, pictured in 2018, has become a superstar in three years. TABATHA FIREMAN, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

SO WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THOSE FACIAL TATTOOS?

In addition to his music, Post Malone is known for his visual presentation. Although he's covered in tattoos, the most prominent ones are on his face. Not since boxer Mike Tyson has a celebrity drawn so much attention with facial tattoos.

On the top of his right eye are the words "Stay Away," underneath his right eye is "Always" and "Tired" is underneath his left eye. That's just a start. There's also a smiley face, a Playboy bunny, a mini heart and a dagger on the right side of his face. Barbed wire lines his forehead, a pair of acce sits on the right side of his forehead and Japanese etching appears on the left side of his face.

The origin of facial tattoos stems from the West Coast. "It comes from California gangsta culture and started with a little leardrop or a small cross," says Po Zhang, aka "Pops," owner of World Famous Tattoo Art Gallery in West Babylon, N.Y. "But, it's not an easy area to work with. The skin is different near the eye; it's thin and the ink blows out. If you make a line, it comes out thicker than you originally created. This is why some of the lettering on celebrities' faces is hard to make out."



DISCOGRAPHY

1. "STONEY"

The debut album was released in December 2016 and spawned six hit singles, "White Iverson," "Too Young," "Go Flex," "Deja Vu," "Congratulations" and "I Fall Apart." The album has been certified triple platinum and features guest appearances from Justin Bieber, Khalid and Quavo.

2. "BEERBONGS & BENTLEYS"

His sophomore effort hit the streets in April 2018 debuting at No. 1 on the Billboard Top 200 albums chart and clocking in 479 million streams on Spotify in the first 24 hours of its release. 21 Savage, Ty Dolla Sign, Nicki Minaj and G-Eazy appear on the record, which was nominated for Album of the Year at the 2019 Grammys and won an American Music Award for Best Rap/Hip-Hop album. Five singles — "Rockstar," "Candy Paint," "Psycho," "Ball for Me" and "Better Now" — have come from the album with "Rockstar" and "Psycho" both hitting No. 1 on the charts.

3. "HOLLYWOOD'S BLEEDING"

The third album dropped in September 2019 and featured appearances by Ozzy Osbourne, DaBaby, Halsey, Meek Mill, Future and others. The album went straight to No. 1 on the Billboard albums chart in its first week and has currently gone platinum three times and counting. Seven singles have spun off the album, including "Goodbyes," "Circles," "Enemies," "Allergic," "Take What You Want," "Wow," and the No. 1 single, "Sunflower."

WEEKEND: MUSIC



FROM PAGE 23

But Swift's shift is a prime example of the predicament pop artists face, with pressure ramping up to take sides as the calendar moves inexorably toward November.

Choosing between a political stance and silence can be a business decision, as well as a matter of principle. Protest art doesn't necessarily stand the test of time.

The likelihood of artists alienating their audiences varies widely. Rapper YG had little to lose by releasing "FDT" about Donald Trump in 2016. And in a nonmusical realm, Larry David made it clear he didn't care if he lost fans over his MAGA hat jokes in the new season of HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm."

But a mainstream country act might be inclined to steer clear of politics, remembering the ostracism of the Dixie Chicks for criticizing George W. Bush in 2003.

This year, artists who have long made social commentary their métier have resolved to make their voices heard — among them, the Southern rock band Drive-By Truckers, who just released "The Unraveling," their state-of-the-nation statement.

In "Thoughts and Prayers," singer Patterson Hood seethes with frustration at hollow responses to gun violence. But he also wishes he could block out the ceaseless partisan racket. "White noise in my head, I think I need a filter, a pressure valve to keep from blowing up."

Green Day has gone in the other direction. In 2004, the pop-punk trio led by Billie Joe Armstrong were Bush bashers on "American Idiot," their rock opera that became a hit Broadway show.

But their new "Father of All ..." eschews politics, instead returning to the antics of their 1994 breakthrough "Dookie." The new album is fun, but feels cautious.



Musical artists such as the Drive-By Truckers, top, Jason Isbell, above, and Steven Van Zandt, right, of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band have been known to publicly comment on politics.

That notion that now, more than ever, art should provide a place for people to escape politics has its adherents.

In 2017, I talked with Steven Van Zandt, the Bruce Springsteen guitarist who made politically agitating music as a solo artist in the 1980s. He saw these times as different. "I don't feel the need to explain Donald Trump. He explains himself every day ... It's redundant to even talk about it, honestly."

A better strategy, he said, is to create a refuge that's "a spiritual fuel stop ... in a way that's totally away from daily life and daily frustrations."

With Springsteen expected to release a new album and tour with the E Street Band this year, it remains to be seen whether the Boss will be inclined toward escapism or engagement in 2020.

Jason Isbell, the acclaimed Nashville songwriter who's an heir to Springsteen in depicting quotidian struggles with poetic grace, is leaning toward the latter. This month, Isbell



released "Be Afraid," the first track from his upcoming album "Reunions."

"Be afraid, be very afraid," Isbell sings on the rugged song. "Do it anyway." The advice could apply to any existential situation — carpe diem, while you can — but Isbell is also speaking to fellow artists who might fear the consequences of speaking their minds. "If your words add up to nothing, then you're making a choice to sing a cover when you need a battle cry."

"Be Afraid" also addresses anyone who insists that artists have no place commenting on the world at large: "We won't shut up and sing."

Isbell's urgency is akin to that expressed by Swift in the Netflix doc as she realizes she needs to make her beliefs heard if she's going to thrive as an artist and a human being.

She talks candidly about her career as a window that inevitably will close. "I want to work really hard while society is still tolerating me being successful," she says, cognizant that she works in an industry "where women are discarded in an elephant graveyard by the time they're 35."

In "Miss Americana," the clock is ticking, and when it comes to deciding whether to speak out, Swift can only come to one conclusion: Now is the time.

Justin Bieber

Changes (Def Jam)

The most striking image in "Seasons" — the thinly veiled 10-part commercial that Justin Bieber rolled out piece-meal on YouTube ahead of the Feb. 14 release of his fifth studio album — is the sight of the 25-year-old pop superstar zipping himself into an enormous oxygen chamber.

Proof (if you needed it) that pop superstars are nothing like the rest of us, it's a blunt visual expression of what the docueries makes clear in plenty of other ways: Bieber, scarred from the experience of global celebrity, is in deep need of protection. Again and again, we see the people around him — his wife, Hailey Baldwin; his manager, Scooter Braun; his onetime "swagger coach" Ryan Good — doing all they can to create a kind of safe space around Bieber, who talks frankly in the show about having his nervous system wrecked by too much money, too many drugs, too much adulation.

The singer makes yet another cocoon for himself on "Changes," a low-key set of gentle electro-R&B jams that depicts his relationship with Baldwin as a refuge from the unkind world she's still not quite ready to reenter. Long on clean-toned guitars and drowsy soul grooves — and many, many words about the love of a good woman — it represents a distinct shift from the throbbing EDM of Bieber's last album, 2015's "Purpose"; its stylistic consistency is a change, too, from the dabbling that Bieber did between L.P.s in far-flung collaborations with Luis Fonsi, David Guetta, Dan + Shay and others.

Yet R&B has always been where Bieber — who, don't forget, came up under the tutelage of Usher — goes for comfort and redemption. At times "Changes" recalls "Journals," the intimate collection of digital singles he released in 2013, at the end of a year in which his paparazzi exploits (including his novel use of a restaurant's mop bucket) put a serious dent in his popularity. Chief among the studio wizards here? Poo Bear, who also worked behind the scenes on "Journals."

For all the personal stability it seems to reflect, though, the question this very chill — and often very pretty — album poses for Bieber is how dedicated he is to reclaiming his spot at the center of pop. Sure, there are on-trend trap drums sprinkled here and there; sure, Post Malone and Travis Scott put in streaming-bait guest spots. But "Changes" mostly feels like a willful retreat from a scene that demands instant engagement.

Which you'd say was precisely the point if Bieber weren't headed out on a stadium tour in May. How these songs play in those spaces is anyone's guess. Hopefully the guy brings along his oxygen chamber.

— Mikael Wood
Los Angeles Times

Lil Wayne

Funeral (Young Money/Republic)

Yes, it's too long. The Wayne we know and adore won't truly be "back" until he can refrain from unloading 24 tracks in 76 minutes on his fans. But "Funeral," the second offering of Weezy's comeback period that began with 2018's long-awaited and surprisingly maudlin "The Carter V," is worth an old fan's time. The lyric "Mamagany" — a reference to Wayne's "Mama Mia" (when he brags about performing a sex act with a woman's breasts while her baby nurses) alone comprises the man's greatest thrills since 2013. There are 22 more tracks with too much Auto-Tune, dotted with keepers nonetheless: the Kanye-inspired robo-gospel "Dreams," the overdue New Orleans bounce of "The Energy" and the rapturous "Wayne's World" ("party time, excellent, pardon my excellence"). The oddly named "Funeral" tries too hard where his classics are laid-back, and there's too much "pistol-whip you till you know the serial number by heart" to be truly fun. But all over it you can hear the Best Rapper Alive gearing up for something big.

— Dan Weiss
The Philadelphia Inquirer

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Sparking creativity

Puzzle-based 7th Sector a fresh approach to sci-fi plot

By CHRISTOPHER BYRD

Special to The Washington Post

Sergey Noskov's 7th Sector is an inspired sci-fi game that draws on the visual vocabulary of the 1980s. Neon skies, rabbit-eared televisions and moody synth music all play into its analogue vision of the future. Although it has its stealth and action moments, at its heart 7th Sector is a challenging puzzle game that will occasionally tap into your math or logic skills, or, if you're like me, send you scurrying to the internet for answers. The game's atmospheric quality, which evokes themes of confinement and the struggle for liberation, is reminiscent of the work of Playdead, the Danish development studio whose Inside (2016) set the standard



for dark cinematic sidescrollers.

7th Sector opens with a scene that recalls the haunted television in Steven Spielberg's film "Poltergeist." An indistinct figure materializes on a fuzzy CRT television. Using the thumbstick on the controller, you can guide it to either side where it will push against the edge as though at the door of a cage. Then, with the press of a button, the phantom on the screen transforms into a spark that can pass through the cables on the back of the television.

From there, you can hop between other cables snaked along the ground or attached to different surfaces, as well as into transistor boxes and other electronic sources. Over the length of the adventure, the backstory of which is told in collectibles spread throughout the environment, you'll hijack everything from the power amp on a record player to a child's RC car, to domestic and killer robots and other forms of machinery.

Traveling as a spark along cables reminded me of the opening shots of Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski's "Red." I've never seen a game adopt such a novel point of view. Given that science fiction has long been an overly represented genre in video games, surprises are rare, and I considered this no small feat. That said, a couple of puzzles stopped me in my tracks and would have seriously derailed, if not outright halted, my progress if I hadn't consulted an online walk-through.

Although I took issue with the fluidness of a couple of the puzzles such as one in a chapter appropriately titled "Physics," where you must ferry highly insecure cargo on the back of a flying drone, I was, on the whole, impressed with the range of puzzles and different gameplay scenarios available.

Platforms: Nintendo Switch, PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One
Online: store.steampowered.com/app/749250/7th_Sector

Journey to the Savage Planet largely forgettable

By CHRISTOPHER BYRD

Special to The Washington Post

Cheeky behavior can be a cover for inadequacy. That was the main thought I had while playing Journey to the Savage Planet, a candy-colored, sci-fi action-adventure game that left me deflated.

The game puts players in the role of a lonely explorer that's been dispatched to a relatively unknown corner of the galaxy by corporate overlords searching for habitable planets. It's telling that the only note I wrote down over the more than 20 hours I spent with it comes from the beginning of the game when the A.I. companion who aides you on your expedition compliments you for acquiring a 3-D printed gun. "Now you have a weapon," she says. "The single



most important tool of any colonizer."

Comedy is supposed to function as an important part in Savage Planet. There are silly messages from your corporate headquarters and commercials for products like a mobile game with a titanic amount of microtransactions. But as with the aforementioned joke, the humor in Savage Planet is tame. Yet, colonialism was bad and video game design often uses weapons as a crutch around which to build other gameplay mechanics, but here still is a game where you spend a good amount of time shooting hostile aliens. And yes, microtransactions are an easy straw man to poke fun of as an example of corporate greed, but Journey to the Savage Planet isn't exactly bucking conventions. Think what you will of its funny-looking creatures such as the Jellywaft — a flying jellyfish of sorts — or the Barfer, a creature whose existence is self-explanatory. Its gameplay progression is fairly pedestrian, its combat is so-so and its boss fights seem there for obligation.

As the story goes, your employer didn't invest much thought into seeing you, in person, ever again. So, you must explore the planet — made up of a number of floating archipelagos — to try to resupply your ship for a homeward voyage. The company credits you for scanning flora and fauna for clues and is, of course, interested in all of the data you collect. Travel between places is gated by obstacles requiring specific tools to overcome such as a grappling hook or pouches tailored to hold plant-based projects. And if you've played a fair number of Metroid-style games, the treadmill of upgrades available here should pass by with hardly any notice. The most memorable (if that's the word for it) obstacle in the game is the Meat Vortex, a flesh-eating plant that requires an offering before it'll move its tendrils from blocking a pathway.

All in all, I found little reason to wish to prolong my Journey to the Savage Planet.
Platforms: PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One
Online: savageplanetgame.com

Latest Call of Duty season makes Ghost a playable character

The second season for Call of Duty: Modern Warfare pushed live last week, reintroducing one of the franchise's all-time favorite soldiers as a playable character.

Simon "Ghost" Riley is back and will be available to anyone who purchases the Season 2 pass for 1,000 Call of Duty Points (\$10). Also reintroduced in the game's latest content update will be fan-favorite, tight quarters multiplayer map Rust, along with Zarkov Boneyard, which will be playable in the game's Ground War mode.

Two new weapons — the GRAU 5.56 assault rifle and Striker 45 sub machine gun — will also be unlockable through gameplay. A "classified" weapon has also been teased for later in the season, along with two other new operators, named Talon and Mace (who also looks suspiciously like Ghost. White face paint on black masks is all the rage this season, apparently). Other new multiplayer maps (Atlas Superstore) and Buzzar (specific to the game's gunfight mode) are already playable, with another map (Khandor Hideout) advertised to be available later in the season.

Season 2 will also introduce multiplayer playlists specific to the game's esports circuit, the Call of Duty League, which began play at the end of January. Gunfight tournaments — play tested as a limited time mode during Season 1 — will make a return in Season 2. Infinity Ward also advertised that its popular Infected mode would be coming to the 50-on-50 Ground War mode later in the season.

Ghost will be unlocked immediately with the purchase of the Season 2 battle pass. The Talon and Mace characters will be available for purchase via the in-game store.

Other items obtainable in the battlepass include new weapon blueprints (such as a slick gold-plated MK2 skin), added operator skins (including some streetwear threads), and XP bonuses. The battlepass will also again include the opportunity for players to earn up to 1,300 Call of Duty points (the equivalent of \$13) by completing all tiers.

This is the second installment of Modern Warfare's battlepass mechanism, a Fortnite-like rewards mechanism that parcels out new content for players as they amass playing time and experience points in the game. The first battlepass included another new character, Mara, while a second, Nikto, was available in the in-game store as part of a \$24 bundle.

Previous Call of Duty games had come under fire for incorporating a player reward system that relied on randomly assigned loot boxes, which required players to spend significant amounts of money to assure themselves of a desired character skin or weapon, some of which were among the most powerful in the game. The latter issue led some to criticize game publisher Activision for using a pay-to-win dynamic, one of the more frowned-upon practices by game developers and something that has led to lawsuits and potential legislation in both Europe and the United States.

The content comes at a non-nominal cost, too. Some players are reporting the update comes in around 70 gigabytes, depending on the platform.

— Mike Hume/The Washington Post

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe



PHOTOS BY SLOBODAN LEKIC/Stars and Stripes

The Citadel of Bitche towers over the center of the French town. This year Bitche will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Franco-Prussian war in which the fortress endured a 220-day Prussian siege.

Historical liberation

French town of Bitche is a must see for military enthusiasts

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC

Stars and Stripes

The Moselle department in eastern France is best known for its medieval villages with their half-timbered houses, its white wines and wonderful cuisine.

But the town of Bitche's main claim to fame is its 800-year-old Citadel, a massive hilltop fortress that dominates the town once regarded as one of Europe's most powerful military strongholds.

For Americans in the Kaiserslautern region, a daytrip to the closest town in France, located just 15 miles from Zweibrücken and its popular Fashion Outlet mall, offers a peek into a culture and tradition very different from that of neighboring Germany.

I would recommend starting with a visit to the Citadel, perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking the center of the town. Visitors are guided through the underground tunnels and galleries, which are dotted with screens showing videos about life in the fortress with a focus on the long 1870 Prussian siege of Bitche. Ultimately, the Citadel was surrendered to the Prussians after the defeat of the surrounded French main armies at Sedan and Metz. It remained a part of Prussia until 1918, when Alsace and Lorraine were returned to France at the end of World War I.

The fortress, with its majestic views of the town and the hills beyond, is best experienced on a self-guided audio tour with a headset that activates itself as you approach points of interest throughout the tour.

This year, the city celebrates the 150th anniversary of the 1870 Franco-Prussian war — which established Germany as the dominant power in Europe — and the tourism board has prepared a series of events at the fortress to commemorate it.

In July, the castle will be the scene of a Middle Ages festival with a mock village constructed along its moats, and with jousting tournaments, displays of chivalry by sword-wielding knights and other activities designed to delight kids of all ages.

As you return to town from the Citadel, be sure to stop

at the Porte de Strasbourg which houses a small "space of memory," an exhibit devoted to the liberation of Bitche in 1945 by the U.S. 100th Infantry Division. It is full of weapons, photos, helmets and other military items found in the town or its vicinity, including the American flag hoisted by the GIs — who promptly became known throughout the Army as "Sons of Bitche" — on the city hall.

In May, Bitche plans to host surviving members of the unit to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the liberation, said Michel Klein, custodian of the exhibit.

Another must-see site for military buffs just a couple of miles outside town is Fort Simserhof, a major hub on the Maginot Line — a defensive system of fortifications built along France's eastern border in the 1930s to prevent a surprise attack by Nazi Germany. The underground fort, which was used by the French army until the 1970s, has been turned into a vast museum offering visitors a glimpse of the most extensive infrastructure of the hundreds of Maginot Line fortifications. A three-hour tour of the combat blocks, underground sleeping quarters, kitchens and medical clinics includes a ride on a small train once used to ferry troops from one combat post to another.

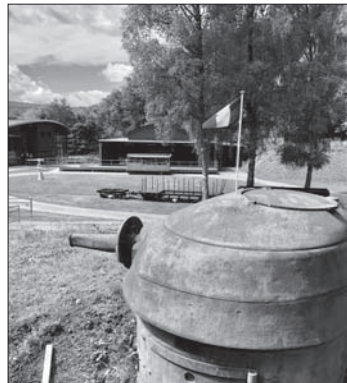
The Maginot line extends from Luxembourg to the Mediterranean Sea, and Simserhof is the closest fort to the Ramstein and Kaiserslautern area that's open to visitors.

While Bitche has long served as a military stronghold, it also has other, unrelated attractions.

I would strongly encourage visitors to have a meal at the downtown Hotel Strasbourg, a gourmet restaurant where you can get a taste of the "haute cuisine" for which France is famous. The hotel offers "gastronomical overnight packages," for which you get a room for the night, dinner and a visit to the local golf course — reportedly the best in eastern France.

The region around Bitche is also well worth visiting for its hiking trails through Alsatian villages with their quaint medieval half-timbered houses, which are particularly popular in summer.

lekic.slobodan@stripes.com



A view of the rail car that takes visitors into the Simserhof underground fortress on the Maginot Line close to Bitche.



The U.S. flag that was hoisted on city hall in Bitche during the liberation of the town by the 100th Infantry Division. Above it is the photo of the event in 1945.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Bitche is about 50 miles southeast of Kaiserslautern. The easiest way to get there is to drive west on the A6 autobahn, turn south on the A8 all the way to the turnout for the Fashion Outlet mall. From there follow the signs to Bitche, about 15 miles down a local road past Zweibrücken airport.

INFORMATION

The local tourism office is located in the center of town. Telephone: +333 87 16 16

Simserhof is located next to the village of Siersthal, 2.5 miles from Bitche. Telephone: +33 (0)3 87 96 39 40; www.visit.alsace/en/269000126-ouvrage-du-simsershof/

Hotel Strasbourg: 24, rue du colonel Teysier - 57230 Bitche, +33 3 87 96 00 44; le-strasbourg@wanadoo.fr

— Slobodan Lekic

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Travel tips to make your Irish tour luckier

Ireland is more than an "Emerald Isle." It's an isle filled with cultural and historic wonders ... and lately with lots of tourists, too. And at many of its top sights, reservations are now either required or highly recommended.

In Dublin, it's more important than ever to buy advance tickets for the most popular sights. These include Kilmainham Gaol, a museum housed in a former prison for political prisoners (visits are by guided tour only), and the Guinness Storehouse, birthplace of Ireland's famous stout beer. If you don't book in advance, you'll waste time waiting in long ticket lines and may not even get in.

It's also smart to buy timed-entry tickets in advance for the Book of Kells, the 1,200-year-old illuminated manuscript of the four gospels, displayed at the Trinity College library. Without a reservation, visitors can try the side entry (through the Arts Building on Nassau Street), where it's often easy to book tickets — even same day, if available — from ticket machines in the lobby hallway.

One of Dublin's newest museums, 14 Henrietta Street, is also one of the city's best sightseeing spots. The former townhouse offers a fascinating look at the hardships of Dublin tenement life. Once an affluent Georgian mansion, it was subdivided and converted in the 19th century into a cramped multifamily space housing more than 100 people. On a 75-minute tour, guides share stories of former residents and describe the 150-year decline of this aristocratic townhouse into a tenement.

A new, modern visitors center has opened at Bru na Boine, the site of two 5,000-year-old passage tombs 45 minutes

north of Dublin. Exhibits detail the latest discoveries at the site, while high-tech interactive displays transport visitors to prehistoric times. From the center, shuttles make it easy to reach the tombs — Newgrange and Knowth — which can be accessed only via guided tour. Tours are expected to fill up well in advance, but as of this March you can reserve a spot online ahead of time.



Rick Steves

Popular spots around Ireland are coming up with creative ways to grapple with crowds. The Cliffs of Moher — the majestic sheer cliffs on Ireland's west coast — now cleverly offer online tickets for half price (4 pounds) for visits before 11 a.m. and after 4 p.m. Tickets include parking and admission to the visitors center and its exhibit, which focuses on the cliffs' natural and geological history.

South of Dublin, in County Wicklow, Avondale House — the former residence of Irish political leader Charles Parnell — has closed for a long-term renovation. In the southern port town of Kinsale, Desmond Castle is also closed to visitors for an indefinite period of time.

Residents of Northern Ireland are wrestling with the effects of an impending Brexit. But tourists aren't likely to experience any significant impacts.

Planning is needed to visit a few popular sights near the town of Portrush, on the northern coast. To walk across Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, dramatically suspended above the Antrim Coast, it's



Dominic Arizona Bonuccelli

For a more peaceful (and cheaper) time, visit the Cliffs of Moher early or late in the day.

smart to buy timed-entry tickets ahead of your visit (now available online). To tour the Old Bushmills whiskey distillery, travelers should show up early, as groups are limited to 18 people and spots are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

In Northern Ireland's capital of Belfast, the "Glider" buses, the city's new form of hybrid-powered rapid transit, have proved popular. These 105-person buses, connecting east and west Belfast on one line and the city center and Titanic Quarter on another, are particularly handy for travelers who want to get from the City Hall

area out to the Titanic sights, including the excellent Titanic Belfast museum.

"Game of Thrones" lives on in Northern Ireland, where much of the show was filmed. In the town of Banbridge, 30 minutes from Belfast, a Game of Thrones studio tour — featuring actual sets, costumes and props from the show — is slated to open later this year at Linen Mill Studios, one of the show's main production sites.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Carnival season peaks in Germany

Carnival season has been simmering throughout Germany over the past few weeks, with dances, parties and sessions full of jokes and revelry offering welcome diversion in what's otherwise a slow time of year. Celebrations approach boiling point through the weekend, and on Monday, the day referred to as Rose Monday, the merriment spills over and engulfs every one.

Just how these celebrations play out depends upon the part of Germany you're in. Karneval, Fasching or Fastnacht, as the season is known in its various strongholds, involves customs and rituals that can vary dramatically according to location. Where Black Forest community members might celebrate by donning the traditional wooden masks and costumes passed down from their forefathers, many of those by the banks of the Rhine will be dressing up like it's Halloween. They'll then turn out to watch a parade made up of floats mocking political developments from the local level to the international stage.

The largest and most famous of all Rose Monday parades take place in Aachen, Cologne, Duesseldorf and Mainz, but several other cities stage their bustling, street party-like affairs on Sunday as well. The spectacle



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler

of decked-out floats, costumed performers and marching bands is something the whole family can enjoy. Kids will especially get a kick out of gathering the candy and other shiny swag tossed from the floats, so be sure to bring a shopping bag. Here are some other happenings close to U.S. military communities:

Sunday

Frankfurt: The 3.5 km parade with more than 3,000 participants begins at 12:21 p.m. from Untermainkai and wends through the city center, passing Rossmarkt and Hauptwache. The party ends in the Roemerberg at around 4 p.m. Online: grosser-rad.de/fastahtsuzug

Nuremberg: a parade involving more than 50 carnival groups and attracting 100,000 spectators

starts at 1 p.m. from Bayreuther Strasse and makes its way across Theresienplatz, Obstmarkt and Spitalgasse before ending at Josephsplatz. Online: fnf-nbg.de

Wiesbaden: The parade begins from the Elsasser Platz at 1:11 p.m. and arrives at the Town Hall at approximately 3 p.m. Some 400,000 viewers turned out to watch the colorful spectacle last year, so arrive early if you want the best vantage point. Street music is played in the Schlossplatz thereafter. Online: tinyurl.com/tq694fl

Wuerzburg: One of the largest parades in Bavaria marches forth at 11:55 a.m. from Semmelstrasse and passes by the Kaisergerichten C&A, Juliuspromenade, Oberer Markt and Rathaus. Online: fashingszug-wuerzburg.de

Monday

Aachen: The 5-km-long parade with 100 floats and more than 5,000 participants starts downtown at 11:11 a.m. Online: tinyurl.com/vz6fg7p

Cologne: This 6 km parade gets underway at 10:30 a.m. from Severntor in the southern part of the city and makes its way through the center. It would take about three hours to watch all the groups pass by. Online: tinyurl.com/rw44vtf

Duesseldorf: This giant procession, one of the country's biggest and most famous, starts downtown at noon.



iStock

Costumed performers aplenty will soon flood the streets of Mainz, Germany, and many other cities for Carnival.

Online: tinyurl.com/wvvtlle
Mainz: This huge parade stretching for more than five miles begins at 11:11 a.m., passing through the city center and past the market square, cathedral and Schillerplatz before ending some five hours later. Online: tinyurl.com/rc8s9m4

Saarbruecken-Burbach: One of the biggest parades in Saarland gets underway at 1:11 p.m. from Dammtor Luisenthal. The Bergstrasse is a popular point from which to watch the marchers pass. Expect a parade some two miles long and up to 200,000 viewers. Burbach is located northwest of the city center. Online: tinyurl.com/rapz446

Florence showcases chocolate

Those with a sweet tooth still hungry for chocolate after Valentine's Day have another chance to indulge in Florence, Italy, the site of an artisanal chocolate fair titled Florence and Chocolate.

Through Feb. 23, chocolate producers will travel from all corners of Italy to present their high-quality products in the Piazza Santa Croce. Other things to do here include cooking demos and sampling a cocktail featuring chocolate as an ingredient. The fair runs from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. daily, and entry is free. Online: feradeliocciolatoio.it

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY NORMAN LLAMAS/Stars and Stripes

The German Pub and Alehouse's montasio burger comes in a blackened bun, and is served with montasio cheese, smoked prosciutto, arugula, zucchini pesto and fries.

Go north of the border

German Pub and Alehouse near Aviano transports taste buds across the Dolomites

By NORMAN LLAMAS
Stars and Stripes

If you're looking to dine on something other than the traditional Italian fare you can easily find near Aviano, head to the quaint little town of Sacle, about nine miles southwest of the base.

On the outskirts, you'll find the German Pub and Alehouse, a large eatery with a cozy, welcoming atmosphere.

The menu, like the restaurant, is also large, offering classic dishes from the Tyrol region of Austria, international appetizers like mozzarella sticks, and, because this is Italy, pizza.

There are also more than 60 types of beer available, including eight on tap, from Germany, Belgium, England and Scotland, and seasonal beers that vary throughout the year.

The menu offers first-course dishes — usually light fare like pasta — and meat- and fish-based second-course dishes. For meat-lovers, for instance, the second course menu includes a South Tyrolean dish, a Bavarian dish and a German



dish, all offering a mixture of sausages local to the particular dish's namesake area or country. All are served with potato dippers and a cabbage salad.

Other menu offerings include pasta dishes, including spaetzle, which is pasta made with fresh eggs; Wiener schnitzel; and mixed cold cuts, which the restaurant is known for.

Burgers and a large variety of side dishes are also available, as are regional dishes such as frico — a dish from the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, made with cheese and potatoes — and traditional Italian offerings like aged cheeses, cured meats and polenta.

My wife ordered the pork shank braised in German red bock beer, served with a side of roasted potatoes, bacon and on-



The restaurant is on the outskirts of Sacle, Italy, about 9 miles from Aviano.

ions. I had the 200-gram burger on a blackened roll with cured ham and potato dippers. It was larger than I imagined it would be, and it was delicious.

This was our second time visiting this restaurant, and the food did not disappoint, with each dish's strong flavors leaving us to wonder whether we'd somehow been magically transported to Austria or Germany.

The very reasonable prices — meals are between \$14 and \$20 — are the icing on the cake.

llamas.norman@stars.com
@normanllamas

GERMAN PUB AND ALEHOUSE

Address: Via Ronche 32, 33077 Sacle, PN, Italy
Hours: Thursday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, 6 p.m.-1:30 a.m.; Friday and Saturday, 6 p.m.-3 a.m. Closed on Wednesdays.

Food: Classic Tyrolean cuisine, traditional Italian

cuisine, salads, desserts. A limited kids' menu is available.

Drinks: Beers from all over Europe, and a full bar with an extensive beverage selection as well as fountain sodas, juice, water and coffee.

Prices: About 12 to 18 euros

(\$14 to \$20) for most meals
Menu: Italian and English. Most of the workers speak English, are friendly and very helpful.

Information: Phone: +39 0434 73 7399; Email: info@germanpub.it

— Norman Llamas

Italian pork sandwich gets regional treatment

By SHARYN JACKSON
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

A few months ago, Tim Niver brought his mother into the kitchen of his restaurant, Mucci's Italian, for a sort of staff training.

A descendant of Italian immigrants, Niver grew up eating classic Italian-American dishes with his family. He thought his mother could infuse a bit of that "spirit" into the restaurant's kitchen, which was staffed by mostly non-Italian chefs.

Niver's mother oversaw the making of a humble chicken liver dish. At one point, Niver messed something up.

"She spat out this Italian phrase, that translates to, 'Who put on your shoes today?' Meaning: What are you doing?"

Niver wasn't embarrassed, but proud. His mother had more to teach his staff than a recipe.

"That's the essence," he said. "There's a spirit behind this food. It's not just a cuisine, it's an idea."

The staples of Italian-American food — think spaghetti and meatballs, fettuccine Alfredo, lasagna, chicken Parmesan — make this a fare all its own. It's more American than Italian, though its roots are in the late 19th- and early 20th-century Italian immigrants who brought over their ability to stretch the simplest ingredients available to them. As generations continued making those marinara-enrobed dishes, these foods became woven into restaurant menus and family dinners across the country.

"Even if you don't have an Italian grandmother, whether it's pizza or lasagna, it brings back memories of food that you may have grown up with, that you're always happy to see again," said Jack Bishop, chief creative officer of America's Test Kitchen and one of the originators of Cook's Country magazine,

which just published a cookbook on Italian-American cuisine.

Minnesota didn't see the same influx of Italian immigrants that cities like New York and Chicago did. Still, many families who settled in Minnesota entered the restaurant business, introducing their own spins on Italian food to a wider audience.

Local ingredients influenced dishes that are now linked to certain cities and neighborhoods across the U.S. Cioppino, a fish stew, grew out of San Francisco's seaside location. St. Louis pizza is topped with the smoky, local Provel cheese. And thanks to its turn-of-the-century wave of Italian-born miners, Minnesota's Iron Range is home to porketta, the fennel-encrusted pork roast inspired by Italy's porchetta.

"Italian immigrants were responding to what was here and what wasn't here," Bishop said. "They were thinking of what was available, and how to translate that."

Still, there are constants in much of Italian-American cuisine — specific ingredients, whole dishes, or simply a feeling. "A lot of it is the sauce," said Mike Latuff, owner of the 48-year-old Latuff's Pizzeria in Plymouth, Minn.

"I think there's a lot of garlic, there's a lot of cheese, there's a lot of comfort in this food," said Niver. "It's nap-inducing."

"It's basically red sauce and spaghetti," said Mike DeCamp, chef at the Minneapolis modern Italian restaurant Monello, and its Sunday-only Italian-American counterpart, Mama DeCamp's.

DeCamp's heritage is Norwegian, but he grew up eating in Twin Cities Italian family restaurants, of which fewer and fewer remain. His Sunday supper is an homage to them.

"To me, Italian-American food kind of means my childhood," he said. "It's a good history. I don't want to see it go away."

IRON RANGE PORKETTA SANDWICHES

Note: Plan ahead as this takes at least six hours for the spices to do their magic.

Ingredients
3 tablespoons fennel seeds, cracked

1 tablespoon salt

2 teaspoons pepper

2 teaspoons granulated garlic

1 (5-pound) boneless pork butt roast, trimmed

1 fennel bulb, stalks discarded, bulb halved, cored, and chopped

8 crusty sandwich rolls

Directions

Combine fennel seeds, salt, pepper and granulated garlic in bowl.

Slice through pork parallel to counter, stopping an inch from edge, then open meat flat like a book. Cut 1-inch-deep slits, spaced 1 inch apart, in cross-hatch pattern on both sides of roast. Rub roast all over with

spice mixture, taking care to work spices into crosshatch. Wrap roast tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours, or up to 24 hours.

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Unwrap meat and place in roasting pan, fat side down. Spread chopped fennel evenly over top of roast. Cover roasting pan tightly with aluminum foil. Roast until meat registers 200 degrees and fork slips easily in and out of meat, 3 to 4 hours.

Transfer pork to carving board and let rest for 30 minutes. Strain liquid from roasting pan through fine-mesh strainer into fat separator; discard solids.

Shred pork into bite-size pieces, return to pan, and toss with 1 cup defatted cooking liquid. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Divide meat among rolls and serve. Serves 8.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



A closeup of Bridget Tichenor's "Crossword."



Exhibit visitors examine Toyer's "The Paravent."



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Photographs by American photographer Lee Miller are displayed as part of the exhibit "Fantastic Women" at the Schirn in Frankfurt, Germany. The exhibit, whose 260 works are billed as the largest ever dedicated exclusively to female surrealists, runs through May 24.

'Fantastic Women' on display

Frankfurt museum features the surreal world of early- to mid-20th century female artists

BY MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

"Fantastic Women," the terrific new show at the Schirn exhibit hall in Frankfurt, is also appropriately named.

The exhibit, subtitled "Surreal World from Meret Oppenheim to Frieda Kahlo," features 260 works of 34 artists from 11 countries, and is billed as the largest-ever exhibit dedicated exclusively to female surrealists.

The art ranges from paintings to sculptures to photography and film. The works span about 40 years of the early- to mid-20th century, with artists from Europe and North, Central and South America represented.

The surrealism movement got its start in 1920s Paris, led by the writer Andre Breton. Some of the best known surrealist artists were Max Ernst, Rene Magritte, Man Ray and Salvador Dali. However, most of the artists here are relatively unknown, with notable exceptions like Kahlo and a few others such as Oppenheim, Louise Bourgeois and Lee Miller.

Miller is better known for her photojournalism, and as the show's curator Ingrid Pfeiffer noted at the exhibit's opening, even Kahlo, who died in 1954, was only rediscovered in the 1980s.

Many of the artists here got their introduction to the contemporary art scene as lovers, models and/or muses of male artists of the time.

Dora Maar, for example, is probably best known for her relationship with Pablo Picasso, but Maar and others were talented artists in their own right.

Their biographies reveal just how young they

were at the time. All but five of the artists were born in the 20th century. For many, their artistic careers were interrupted by the havoc of World War II, when they had to emigrate from Europe. Interestingly, many ended up in Mexico.

The art here is so varied and extensive that it's hard to single out the highlights.

Best known is Kahlo's "Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird," but more interesting — especially in today's political situation — is her "Self-Portrait on the Borderline between Mexico and the United States."

Striking is the bust "Angel of Mercy," by British artist Eileen Agar, and Leonor Fini's "Self-Portrait" is mesmerizing. Disturbing but spellbinding is Bridget Tichenor's "Crossword," a painting of all eyes and faces.

Oppenheim's "Evening Dress with Bra-Strap Necklace" is sensual, while her "Anatomy of a Dead Woman" is unsettling.

Fini's "Chthonian Deity Watching over the Sleep of a Young Man," a painting of a nude man, turns the table on male artists of the time, many of whom used nude women as objects of desire in their works.

Indeed, the artists here treat their person and their sexuality rather humorously and ironically, sometimes within the large number of self-portraits displayed.

The sculptures and paintings by Bourgeois, in a space at the far end of the exhibit, is in itself a wonderful retrospective of the American artist's work.

All in all, it is a fantastic exhibit of the art of fantastic women.

abrams.mike@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripes_photog

KNOW & GO

DIRECTIONS

The Schirn Kunsthalle is at Roemerberg, 60311 Frankfurt.

By car, head for the city center and follow signs to Parkbereich D, Dom/Roemer. The garage here costs 2 euros per hour, 1 euro on Sundays and German holidays.

By public transportation: Take subway lines 4 and 5 to the Dom/Roemer stop. Take tram lines 11 or 12 to the nearby Paulskirche stop.

TIMES

The museum is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays; 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays.

COSTS

Admission is 14 euros for adults, 10 euros for youths and seniors and free for children under age 8. A family ticket for two adults and their children up to 17 years of age is 28 euros.

INFORMATION

The exhibit runs until May 24. Tickets are available online at schirn.de/en/Home.html. Please note that the exhibit contains some nudity.

—Michael Abrams



A visitor checks out Leonora Carrington's "Le Grand Dame (Cat Woman)," a piece she created with sculptor Jose Horna.

Airlines worried about 'flight shaming' trend

Environmental crusader Greta Thunberg is starting to make some U.S. airlines nervous. The Swedish teenager, who has been vocal about combating climate change, may have played a role in a recent 4% drop in the number of commercial passengers flying in Sweden, where the term "flygskam," or flight shame, has gained popularity.

Some U.S. airline executives are now expressing concern that the same guilt could take hold in the U.S., prompting American travelers to think twice before buying an airline ticket.

Robin Hayes, chief executive of New York-based JetBlue Airways, told industry analysts during a conference call recently that it's only a matter of time before Americans follow the lead of their Swedish counterparts to find more environmentally friendly alternatives to commercial air travel.

"This issue presents a clear and present danger; if we don't get on top of it," he said. "We've seen that in other geographies and we should not assume that those sentiments won't come to the U.S."

Although flight shame hasn't caught on as strongly in the U.S. as in Europe, airline industry experts say carriers are amplifying their efforts to cut emissions to help ease the concerns of fliers, especially young travelers who are more likely to change their travel plans based on environmental issues.

"Today's environmentally focused 22-year-old is tomorrow's 35-year-old frequent business traveler," said Henry Hartveldt, a travel industry analyst with the Atmosphere Research Group. "The industry wants to make sure everyone, regardless of age, knows what they are doing."

Emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from all commercial flights, including cargo and passenger planes, represented 2.4% of all global CO2 emissions in 2018 — a 32% increase over five years earlier, according to a study by the International Council on Clean Transportation.

Mark Manduca, a City managing director, predicted that flight shaming would put "downward pressure to demand growth forecasts." But he said that "investors believe that flight shaming will largely be a European phenomenon, with Germany, France and Sweden likely to see the largest impact."

One reason fliers in Europe might be more willing to cut back on flying is that Europe has more transportation alternatives to commercial airlines, including high-speed rail, than the U.S., he said, adding that he believes that short-haul flights, about 600 miles, are most likely to be affected by "flight shaming" in Europe.

Airlines for America, a trade group for U.S. air carriers, responded: "We are confident that when our passengers know the facts about our environmental record and all we do to connect the world, they will remain proud to fly," spokesman Carter Yang said.

Hugo Martin
Los Angeles Times

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific



BRIGID SCHULTE/For The Washington Post

The author's daughter Tessa stands under the Shinto torii gates of Hakone Shrine on the shore of Lake Ashi near Mount Fuji.

Transcending all that divides

Mother, daughter bond on trip to Japan's Kyushu Island

By BRIGID SCHULTE
The Washington Post

In 1984, the day after I graduated from college, I was itching to get out of my provincial life in Portland, Ore. I left to take a job as an English teacher in a place called Kagoshima, Japan, on the country's volcano-strewn southernmost main island of Kyushu. Kyushu calls itself the Land of Fire and Water. I'd, however, never heard of it.

I lived on a bay, off an impossibly narrow street of shops selling enormous daikon radishes, slabs of tofu chilling in tubs of water and sizzling yakitori kebabs. My room was nestled near terraced rice fields and jagged, steep and forested hills, with a perfect view of Sakurajima, an active volcano, which, since 1955, has steamed and roiled and rained black ash most days.

I hadn't been back to Japan for more than 30 years when I had the chance to spend a summer in Tokyo. And when my then-17-year-old daughter, Tessa, joined me for the last 10 days, I wanted to find a way to show her some of the best of what draws so many to the Tokyo-Kyoto corridor. But I also wanted us to make our way to the strange, out-of-the-way and lush place I had once called home. And honestly, after weeks in the crowded, hyped-up urban landscape of Tokyo, I was in desperate need of both slowing down and seeing something green.

Once Tessa landed in Tokyo, I decided to immerse my jet lagged daughter immediately in one of the unique and, in my mind, one of the best things about Japanese culture — the onsen, or mineral hot springs.

The art of public bathing was first extolled in the seventh century in Japan's oldest history book, the *Kojiki*. Buddhist monks originated the practice. They believed a

meditative soak in bubbling hot water could not only heal the body but cleanse the soul.

I took Tessa not to just any onsen. I took her to a place called Spa LaQua, a kind of super onsen on the top floors of the kitschy Tokyo Dome — a roller coaster runs through a cutout in the building — with sex-segregated outdoor natural pools, and indoor pools of varying temperatures and mineral compositions.

Tessa, like any privacy-loving teen, looked stricken as

Buddhist monks originated the practice of public bathing. They believed a meditative soak in bubbling hot water could not only heal the body but cleanse the soul.

I explained proper onsen etiquette on the elevator ride up to the spa: The first step is to completely disrobe and store everything in a locker. Grab a tiny washcloth, stool and bucket, often made of sweet-smelling Hinoki wood, and head to a bank of low-lying faucets, shower nozzles and mirrors and scrub yourself silly. Then, rinsed and clean, taking care to keep your washcloth on your head, walk to the pools for a good, long soak.

Perhaps it was because she was too jet lagged to put up much of a fuss, but Tessa gamely gave the baths a try. Eyes closed, immersed in bubbling hot water, we fell into the kind of random, thoughtful conversation and comfortable silence that doesn't often happen in a busy, screen-filled Western life. It's an onsen bonding phenomenon the Japanese call "hadaka no tsukiai" — literally, "without

clothes, we are all the same."

Seeking out these kinds of meditative spaces — in the both the busy and well-traveled Tokyo-Kyoto corridor and in rustic Kagoshima — became a theme for the rest of our trip.

In Tokyo, we mixed a visit to the over-the-top roller-skating neon madness of the Robot Restaurant with a quiet meal in a private tatami mat room at Bon for shojin ryori, the vegetarian fare of Zen Buddhist monks. Our busy day spent navigating boats, ropeways and trams in Hakone in search of the perfect view of Mount Fuji ended with a solitary walk to a 400-year-old teahouse on what remains of the old Tokaido Road — a key thoroughfare in the 17th to 19th centuries.

And we balanced temple hopping in Kyoto with a tranquil tea ceremony at Yuhisai Kodoukan, and with a stay in a traditional Machiya house, sleeping on futons on tatami mat floors and soaking in our own wooden tubs.

As we trained our way south to Kagoshima, we made time for the ultimate quiet refuge: a retreat at Ekoin, one of the 100 Shingon Buddhist temples that have lined sacred Mount Koya since the 9th century and are now part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the morning, we joined the monks around an enclosed firepit for the Goma fire ritual where we tossed wooden sticks meant to symbolize the desires and foibles that cause human suffering into the flames for Buddha to cleanse and burn away.

Thirty years ago, it took effort to get to Kagoshima — involving a bullet train that connected to a slow-moving (though beautiful) rickety train ride along the coast. Back then, few outsiders, or "gaijin," managed to make their way there.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

WEEKEND: TRAVEL, FOOD & DINING

Pacific

FROM PAGE 32

All that changed in 2011, when the high-speed bullet train was extended directly to Kagoshima. Now, trains leave every hour. And, in recent years, with more competition from domestic low-cost airlines, travelers can find a relatively cheap flight from Tokyo and be there in under two hours. So Tessa and I did both

—took the train south and flew back to Tokyo to catch our international flight home.

When we arrived at the train station in Kagoshima, I didn't recognize anything. Gone were the squat, 1950s-era wooden buildings where I'd hung out drinking *shochu*, the local sweet potato alcohol, with my Akita teachers. Instead, the station was part of a gleaming new mall, with a plaza, a Ferris wheel and modern shops and restaurants. I did, thankfully, recognize my former student, Yasuko, who picked me up. She took us to the Shiroiyama Hotel, which sits high atop a hill overlooking the city and across Kinko Bay from the volcano Sakurajima, which smoked and huffed against the evening sky.

Years ago, on hot summer evenings, living in a dorm with students and no air conditioning, I would ride the ferry back and forth across the bay just to catch a breeze. This night, Tessa and I made our way to the hotel's large, shimmering onsen and sat outside in the swirling pool of water under the stars, lost in our thoughts, watching the brightly lit ferries crisscross the bay far below.

Kyushu and the scattering of islands to the south have always been a part in Japan's legend, myth, history and war run deep — the sun goddess was said to have taken refuge in a cave for a time in Miyazaki, along the island's east coast, until a bawdy dance lured her out. The dialect, *Kagomari*, is incomprehensible to many Japanese farther north. Even at the Paris World's Fair in 1867, Satsuma Province — which encompasses much of present-day Kagoshima prefecture — exhibited its own pavilion, separating from the then-all-powerful Tokugawa shogunate, leading many confused Europeans to think there were two countries in Japan. That internal tension would later erupt when Satsuma's last samurai, Saigo Takamori, helped overthrow the shogunate, and a few years later, revolted against the imperial government he'd helped install; he worried it was losing its soul to the West. Takamori made his failed last stand in 1877 on Shiroiyama in Kagoshima, not far from our hotel.

And, as it is simply nothing quite as intensely green as the landscape south of Kagoshima on the Satsuma Peninsula. I spent a few days showing Tessa some of my favorite Kagoshima haunts: the downtown Tenmonkan area, where antique forgers later, revolted against the imperial government he'd helped install; he worried it was losing its soul to the West. Takamori made his failed last stand in 1877 on Shiroiyama in Kagoshima, not far from our hotel.

of sake would be released at the highest point of the stream, and guests would write short poems before it floated past them — or drink the sake as punishment.

Then, with Yasuko as our guide, we headed south. Driving through the verdant tea fields of Chiran, we stopped at the sobering Peace Museum, located on the site of a former air base, which is dedicated to the 1,036 young *tokkotai*, or kamikaze pilots, who were sent on suicide missions in the waning days of World War II. The museum is much bigger than it was in the early 1980s when I last visited, and now includes remnants of a crumpled Mitsubishi Zero aircraft recovered from the bottom of the ocean and more English translations of some of the letters the doomed young men wrote home. "I feel that my 28 years of life was like a dream," wrote one young lieutenant before his first and final mission. "It is only fitting, Tessa noted, that Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, stands watch at the entrance. The old runways are now planted with sweet potatoes.

In need of a spiritual lift, we wandered, as if back in time, through Chiran's samurai district, a nearly perfectly preserved street of seven 250-year-old samurai houses and gardens. Then, to buoy our spirits further, for lunch we stopped for some *nagashi* — or floating *senbei* noodles — at Tosenkyo in the Tosen Gorge.

One of my first memories of Japan was a trip here on a blisteringly hot day. I remember how cool and hushed it became as we descended the steep stairs into the gorge, and how refreshing the delicate noodles tasted as I inexpertly used chopsticks to fish them out of the ice-cold water spinning in a circular contraption on the table, like a swirling Lazy Susan, and dunked them in *tsuyu* sauce of soy, ginger and scallions. Yasuko and I hoped Tessa would be similarly mesmerized.

After lunch, I asked Yasuko if we could go to Kohan no Yado Midori So, the tranquil onsen overlooking a lake at a secluded inn that had been a much-loved refuge for me decades before. At that, Yasuko smiled and said she had a better idea. We pulled up to the unassuming Tamatebako, or "Healthy Land" onsen, on a bluff along the coast.

I was magical at first. The interior bathroom had a decidedly utilitarian air. But once the three of us, scrubbed and rinsed clean, stepped outside and plunged into the natural stone outdoor hot springs, it was as if we were transported to one of the most magical places on Earth. With sweeping views of towering cliffs, the East China Sea lapping black sand beaches, the perfect cone of Mount Kaimon, or "Satsuma Fuji" as locals call it, and in the distance, the ancient chestnut forests on Bar for dessert. In Yakushima, the onsen is, truly, an idyllic oasis. Time slowed. And we fell in and out of the easy silence and thoughtful conversation of people who know that, despite the distance of language, age, culture, geography or years apart, underneath it all, we are all the same.



PHOTOS BY THERON GOBOLD/Stars and Stripes

The menu at Soul Food House in central Tokyo is packed with Southern staples. Lunch sets come with a main dish (chicken and waffles, in this case), a salad and soup.

Taste the comfort

Soul Food House brings Southern cuisine to Tokyo

By THERON GOBOLD
Stars and Stripes

Embedded in episode six of the Netflix show "Ugly Delicious," hosted by award-winning chef David Chang, is a short segment on fried chicken at Soul Food House, a restaurant in the Azabujuban neighborhood of central Tokyo.

My taste buds perked up. Is there actually good Southern-style food in this city?

After watching Chang speak with the owners of Soul Food House, I decided on a visit to the restaurant to find out for myself.

Founded in 2015 by Atlanta natives David and LaTonya Whitaker, Soul Food House is a family-owned restaurant born "out of a desire to bring authentic American Southern and Cajun cuisine to the hearts and stomachs of those that live and visit Japan," according to its website.

About a 15- to 20-minute stroll from Hardy Barracks or the U.S. military's New Sanno Hotel, this small eatery was hard to find at first. I passed the small sign about three times while Google Maps insisted I'd arrived. Down a narrow, covered entryway, I finally found the elevator to this sixth-floor dining experience.

Living in Tokyo for more than a year now, my expectations for Southern cuisine are rather low, but I was pleasantly surprised by the taste and quality served at Soul Food House.

I was magical at first. The interior bathroom had a decidedly utilitarian air. But once the three of us, scrubbed and rinsed clean, stepped outside and plunged into the natural stone outdoor hot springs, it was as if we were transported to one of the most magical places on Earth.

With sweeping views of towering cliffs, the East China Sea lapping black sand beaches, the perfect cone of Mount Kaimon, or "Satsuma Fuji" as locals call it, and in the distance, the ancient chestnut forests on Bar for dessert. In Yakushima, the onsen is, truly, an idyllic oasis. Time slowed. And we fell in and out of the easy silence and thoughtful conversation of people who know that, despite the distance of language, age, culture, geography or years apart, underneath it all, we are all the same.

When my food arrived, I was surprised by the small Caesar salad and a small bowl of French onion soup that came with the meal. The waffle — large and fluffy with a light dusting of powdered sugar — filled the plate. The mac and cheese arrived piping hot, fresh out of the oven, with a crusted layer of sharp cheddar on top. Just the right amount of pepper spiced up the dish. Everything was good, but the mac and cheese was really great, reminding me of a family meal at my grandmother's when I was a child.

With food this good and a few inches of space left in my stomach, I figured I would try something a bit more really if I had room for dessert. I opted for a fried fillet of catfish and sweet tea. A few years ago, I was living in a small town in Texas. My friend Rusty took me noodling (a form of fishing for catfish where you let them nibble on your hand and then pull the whole fish to the surface) for the first time and we pulled an 84-pound catfish from a local lake. We took it to his place and fried it up for dinner. That was one of the best fried catfish experiences of my life. Until



I tried the catfish at Soul Food House. It was perfectly crusty, not too crispy and had the perfect amount of spice.

A Soul Food House regular told me I was smart for coming during lunch because the crowd gets big for dinner and reservations are a must. "It's a taste of home, and once you meet the owners, you're family," the Dallas native said.

godbold.theron@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @GodboldTheron



Soul Food House serves up fried catfish with creamy tartar sauce and Southern sweet tea.

SOUL FOOD HOUSE

Location: 2-8-10 Azabujuban, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0045 Tokyo.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., Wednesday through Friday; 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday. Prices: About \$4 for a side dish to about \$20 for the country fried steak meal.

Dress: Casual.

Directions: About a 3-minute walk from Azabujuban Station on the Oedo or Nambu lines, or about 20 minutes on foot from Hardy Barracks or the New Sanno Hotel.

Information: Phone: 03-5765-2148; Online: soulfoodhouse.com

— Theron Godbold

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

To recline OR NOT to recline?

The completely correct guide to courteous airplane seat use

BY NATALIE B. COMPTON
The Washington Post

It is an active struggle to live in harmony on an airplane. It's amazing that more conflict doesn't ensue when you smash a dozen to a couple hundred people into a confined space with conflicting cultural norms, minimal elbow room and limited bathroom availability.

One of the touchiest subjects in all of air travel is the seat recline. To some, leaning your seat back on a flight is a no-brainer. Why wouldn't you take that precious spare space for relief? For others, the sight of the seat in front barreling toward them is a living nightmare. Not only would they never recline — they think the practice is rude.

Chaos can erupt when opinions clash over the recline feature. Most recently, a passenger on a flight from New Orleans to Charlotte repeatedly punched and nudged the seat of a woman in front of him after she reclined. Another passenger filmed the incident.

In 2014, a United Airlines flight was rerouted when two passengers got into an altercation over seat reclining and the use of the Knee Defender, a device that prevents the person in front of you from reclining. A week later, a Frenchman had a recline-related meltdown on a flight from Paris to Miami, causing yet another reroute. And because good things come in threes, a third incident went down just days after that, when a woman on a Delta flight had her head bonked by a seat reclining in front of her. Screaming ensued, and the plane was rerouted.

Do these travelers have a case? When, if ever, is it OK to hit that recline button? Here are some considerations.



Recline: Sitting in front of a child

Children and babies on flights get a bad reputation for being rambunctious, but at least they're small. Relative to their body size, the airplane seat they get is a lot bigger than yours. Reclining into a child's territory does put you at risk of getting your seat back trampled by a pair of baby Crocs, but that's a risk you might be willing to take.

Don't recline: In front of a tall person

Take a peek at the person sitting behind you. Are they clocking in under 6 feet? You're good to recline. But if you look back and the passenger appears to be a starting center for the New York Knicks, take your finger off of that recline button. Airlines these days offer economy passengers roughly 31 to 38 inches of legroom (or "seat pitch") on long-haul flights. Think of the perils of being in coach when you're 6'2" with legs some 40 inches long.

Recline: When you're on a long-haul

Planes aren't designed to be the most comfortable places to rest but, rather, to get you from Point A to Point B. It takes a lot out of a person to sit on a plane for extended periods of time. In cases where you're trapped for several hours, a couple inches of recline can provide absolutely crucial relief.

"I think reclining seats are necessary to surviving long-haul flights in economy," says Jessica Nabongo, an American travel writer on track to be the first black woman to visit every country on Earth. "For me, there is absolutely no possibility of my sitting upright in economy for eight-plus hours."

If taking those two to four inches of lean takes the edge off the backbreaking agony of a long-haul trapped in coach, go forth and recline.

Don't recline: When food is served

With the exception of Super Bowl Sunday, when you're free to kick back in a La-Z-Boy recliner and nosh on wings, we generally sit upright when eating food. While having the seat reclined on a plane may offer you some comfort, don't keep it that way when it's time for your flight's meal service. That'll mean a cramped dining experience for the passenger behind you.

If you're already reclined, do your fellow travelers a courtesy and at least (slowly) pop back up when a meal is served.

Recline: When you're taking a red-eye

Most people book a late-night flight with the intention of sleeping on the plane. The whole plane goes dark, and passengers are expected to at least try to get some shut-eye. You're good to recline here.

When it's 3 a.m. and the lights are off, there's less chance of disrupting the person behind you. Chances are, they're probably trying to snooze, as well. But remember that it's still good form to look back before you lean, just in case.

Don't recline: If you're sitting up anyway

For sweet goodness' sake, do not recline your seat if you're not taking advantage of those precious and controversial inches. The person behind you is getting less room and comfort because of your action. Not sitting back on your reclined seat is a cruel and unusual thing to do. Don't be cruel and unusual.

Recline: If everyone else is, too

A passenger in the front of the plane can trigger a chain reaction and cause a succession of leaning, all the way to the back. Even though you were taught growing up that you shouldn't do something just because everyone else is doing it, we're telling you the opposite. There seems to be an unsavory general consensus that if the person in front of you is reclining, you're entitled to, too. When the dominoes start to fall, give in.

Don't recline: When they beg for mercy

Flying isn't easy for everyone. Whether tall, claustrophobic, anxious or just in the middle of a terrible day, it can become a gruesome endeavor. If you go to recline and someone asks you not to, reconsider. Sure, it's technically within your right to do so — why would the function be there in the first place if not to use it?

But take the high road and collect some traveler karma instead.

Ultimately, flier discretion is advised. Assess individual situations, use your best judgment and act accordingly.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

One piece at a time

Jigsaw puzzles are becoming a popular way for adults to relax, reconnect

BY TRACEE M. HERBAUGH
Associated Press

There are jigsaw puzzle nights at coffee shops and libraries. Puzzle groups and puzzle games online. Hand-cut wooden puzzles that cost thousands of dollars. And puzzle designs that range from edgy, original artwork to your own, custom-ordered family photos.

Jigsaw puzzles for grown-ups are in vogue.

"I was not as passionate about jigsaw puzzles at first, but once I started doing them, I saw the loveliness of these puzzles," said A.J. Jacobs, a writer working on a book about puzzles, including jigsaws and crosswords.

"Puzzles are a very soothing and joyous way to spend a couple of hours. They're physical, tactile pieces, and you get an endorphin rush when pieces snap into place."

Fans say jigsaws provide respite from daily stress, a chance to step away from the screens and be in the moment.

Abby Matson, 37, found them therapeutic after the unexpected death of her dog three years ago. "The puzzle was the only thing I could do to keep from crying," she said.

Matson's friend, Abby McDaniel, 38, joined her.

"We stayed up so late drinking wine and doing this puzzle," Matson said.

They started a puzzle group that now has six members. It's informal. Members send photos of a completed puzzle before mailing it to the next person.

"It brings out an inner competition," McDaniel said.

Jacobs, author of books including "The Know It-All" and "The Year of Living Biblically," enjoys immersing himself in an activity and then writing about it. Part of his research into puzzles took him to the World Jigsaw Puzzle Championship in Spain, a timed competition with teams representing 40 countries.

He, his wife and two children finished second to last. A team of four Siberian women won first place when they managed to finish all four puzzles in less than four hours.

"Russia is a force to be reckoned with," Jacobs said with a laugh.

While many puzzlers are happy with cardboard puzzles, there's also a market for wooden and artisanal ones. Inspired artwork has replaced campy photos. Some enthusiasts buy special frames, glue and other tools for preserving finished jigsaw puzzles.

Vermont-based Stave Puzzles makes a wide range of wooden puzzles, from "10bits" to "Tormentors"; they sell for hundreds, even thousands of dollars.

"Our sales are up 25% in the last decade," said company founder Steve Richardson. "We are now seeing orders from the children and grandchildren of some of our original customers, so it is definitely a generational activity."



SHELBY COMSTOCK BRITTEN/AP

Puzzle enthusiasts work on a "Jiggy"-brand jigsaw puzzle at the trendy SoHo House hotel in New York. Puzzles have become popular as a social activity or a way to relax.

In addition to getting nicer, jigsaw puzzles have become specialized too. There are 3D and two-sided puzzles. Stave's "trick puzzle" can be solved in multiple ways, rated on a scale of 1 (easy) to 5 (difficult).

Other people prefer a simple jigsaw that reminds them of childhood — but one that's worthy of social media, of course.

Walking home after work one day, Kaylin Marcotte, 29, stopped at a toy store in New York City to buy a puzzle for the evening.

"I ended up purchasing one of puppies jumping out of a basket," she said. Seeing a gap in the market for sophisticated puzzles, she founded Jiggy Puzzles in 2018.

Jiggy's puzzles are packaged in an elegant glass container and feature original drawings by female artists. They come in two sizes, 450 and 800 pieces, and many sell for about \$40.

To launch Jiggy, Marcotte hosted a puzzle night at the Soho



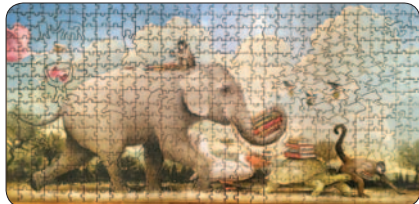
DAVID GALCHUTT, STAVE PUZZLES/AP

Stave Puzzle's traditional jigsaw puzzle titled "Ocean Sunset."

House in New York City. About 50 young professionals attended.

Shelby Comstock Britten, 29, went to the launch. A grown-up puzzle night with drinks sounded perfect, she said.

"I've always loved puzzles and will occasionally get a CVS puzzle, but it's kind of a bummer because it's made for an 8-year-old," she said. "I can't Instagram that."



ABBY MATSON/AP

This is one of the jigsaw puzzles that Abby Matson, 37, has completed with her puzzling group of five other puzzle fans.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“Knives Out”: In this kooky subverted whodunit, deeply Southern private investigator Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig) grills a wealthy family when its patriarch, beloved mystery novelist Harlan Thrombey (Christopher Plummer), is found dead after a gathering in the writer’s East Coast estate. The investigator quickly enlists the help of Harlan’s long-time nurse, Marta (Ana de Armas), whose mother is an undocumented immigrant. Everyone in the 1% family not only has a motive but is generally terrible.

It’s a fitting mystery for the Trump era, landing writer-director Rian Johnson a best original screenplay Oscar nomination. And it’s a delight, from its snappy retorts and telling blunders to its character quirks.

But at its core, the film presents a fitting debate about who deserves wealth, particularly when it’s a matter of inheritance: a privileged, corrupt bloodline, or the people (often of color) who selflessly take care of them?

“Frozen II”: In the sequel to the massive 2013 hit, we open with happy family Queen Elsa (voiced by Idina Menzel), Princess Anna (Kristen Bell), Kristoff (Jonathan Groff) and Olaf (Josh Gad) on game night (with extreme Midwestern vibes).

Although Elsa’s made a promise to her sister to stick together, she encounters a literal ceiling to head to the enchanted forest. As she follows the voice, with her family right behind her, a dark secret regarding the faltering kingdom of Arendelle and its history with the forest’s Northuldra tribe emerges.

It’s mostly a beat-for-beat match of its predecessor’s story. But the script also deftly addresses issues of climate change, imperialism and systemic racism, to name a few, with a family-friendly palate.

While some of the musical numbers don’t land (see: ‘80s rock banger “Lost in the Woods”), others rightly soar (“The Next Right Thing”). The Oscar-nominated “Show Yourself” is an empowering anthem, but perhaps to the comfort of parents everywhere, it’s much less of an earworm than “Let It Go.”

Also available on DVD: “Color Out of Space”: A rural family encounters an extraterrestrial organism that transforms their environment. Nicolas Cage stars.

“The North Family Vacation”: Norm (voiced by Rob Schneider) makes amends with his family while looking for his crown in this computer-animated film.

“The Corrupted”: Eager to get back into good graces with his family, an ex-convict (Sam Claflin) gets swept into his brother’s involvements with a suspicious developer (Timothy Spall).

“Years and Years: Season One”: A Manchester family grapples with technological and political changes in this British series.

— Katie Foran-McHale/TNS



RAY MICKSHAW/FOX

Host Will Arnett talks to contestants Mel and Jermaine on a recent episode of “Lego Masters,” which airs Fridays on AFN-Spectrum.

The brick is the limit

If ‘Lego Master’ contestants dream it, they must be able to build it

By TRACY BROWN
Los Angeles Times

Whether following the instructions for an extremely detailed model of the Millennium Falcon from Star Wars or assembling a free-form rainbow pirate ship, all Lego builds start by snapping together two interlocking plastic bricks.

The basic mechanics are simple, but the boundless creative possibilities have made the versatile toy popular among generations of kids. And more than 60 years since the brand’s debut, Lego has become an entertainment mainstay, spawning movies, video games and theme parks.

Now, a new level of brick-building is in the spotlight thanks to Fox’s competition series “Lego Masters,” which debuted this month. Hosted by Lego Batman voice actor Will Arnett, the show features 10 two-person teams competing in weekly challenges that whittle the contestants down until one team remains.

It’s a familiar formula for viewers who have followed other creative competition shows: The last team standing wins a trophy and a \$100,000 prize.

Not so familiar? The title that comes with winning: Lego Master. “We have three key criteria that we’re really judging the teams on throughout every challenge,” said Amy Corbett, a senior design manager at the Lego Group who has worked on the Lego Friends and Lego Disney lines. Corbett is one of two expert judges on the series, known as “Brickmasters.”

Challenges may emphasize certain criteria — creativity, technical ability and storytelling — over others, but each confronts the contestants with a distinct task.

“For each of the episodes, we’re asking them to do some very specific thing,” said Brickmaster Jamie Berard, who oversees the Creator Expert and Lego Architecture lines at Lego. “So it seems on the surface to be straightforward on the things that we can judge. But in reality it’s actually quite

complicated, because there’s so many different ways of solving the challenge.”

The contestants — who range in age from 23 to 65 — include artists, engineering teachers, a game developer and a piano teacher. Their approaches to and experiences with Lego are as varied as their jobs. But they all want the title Lego Master.

“A Lego Master is somebody who can use the Lego system in multiple ways to tell stories, create emotion and amaze people with Lego bricks,” said Sam Hatmaker, a contestant and the L.A.-based artist who designed a viral “Golden Girls”-inspired build. His teammate, multimedia artist Jessica Ragzy Ewud, agreed: “‘Lego Masters’ is all about taking Lego and taking creativity and pushing it to the absolute limit within the time that we’re given.”

The ability to roll with the punches and being unafraid of failure are traits Flynn De Marco thinks are key for those competing for the Lego Masters title.

“Failure is the way that we learn things and the way that we learn not to do things and also how to improve on things to make us better,” said De Marco, an Oakland-based contestant who teaches Lego engineering to kids. “I think that part of being a Lego Master is not only knowing your limits but being willing to go beyond them.”

De Marco’s teammate and husband, Richard Board, reiterated that flexibility is

“I think to be a true Lego Master, you should be able to build whatever you can dream up in bricks. And you should be able to take your same brick skills and build something you never even thought about before.”

Richard Board
Lego Masters contestant

a key skill for anyone hoping to master the medium and win the Lego Masters title.

“I think to be a true Lego Master, you should be able to build whatever you can dream up in bricks,” Board said. “And you should be able to take your same brick skills and build something you never even thought about before.”

Berard emphasized that another vital skill contestants need to have is teamwork.

“We don’t have a single winner; you’re winning as a team,” Berard said. “So it’s someone who can actually balance their skills with the skills of their partner and make sure that they’re maximizing their creativity and their efforts to really show off how two people are better than one. It takes both of them in order to win.”

The “Lego Masters” contestants and judges agree that practice is the only way for people to level up their Lego skills.

“If you really, really want to be an expert, you need to build every day,” De Marco said. “Set an hour aside and just put bricks together. It doesn’t matter what you’re making or whether or not you’re going to post it online or if anybody’s even going to see it. Just build and familiarize yourself with the pieces and the medium.”

Said Hatmaker: “You learn every single time you build.” And because “Lego Masters” is a show with no instruction manuals, it would be beneficial to challenge yourself to make different things with a limited brick selection.

“It doesn’t have to take a tremendous amount of time,” Berard said. “But just having somebody tell you to build something, and then you do it, it’s really liberating.”

And remember, “you don’t need to build alone,” Corbett said. “If someone wants to get even better at building, it’s really good to build together with someone. Whether you’re building two separate models or one build together, chatting to someone about what you’re making and giving each other ideas, that’s when you can really make leaps in your building.”

“Lego Masters” airs Fridays on AFN-Spectrum.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



Ford knows heroes

Actor's latest classic character is a gruff adventurer in a movie adaptation of a beloved Jack London novel

By PETER SLENDORIO
New York Daily News

Harrison Ford is certainly no stranger to iconic roles. From Han Solo to Indiana Jones, the actor has captivated audiences for decades by portraying some of cinema's most beloved action heroes.

His latest classic character is John Thornton, the adventurer from Jack London's book "The Call of the Wild" who forms a life-changing bond with Buck the dog after saving him from abusive owners. In a movie adaptation of the 1903 novel hitting theaters this weekend, Ford aimed to bring new depth to Thornton.

"We did take some liberty with the book, in that the character in the book just arrives without history, solves Buck's problems, but we don't know anything about him," Ford told the Daily News. "What I wanted was to develop an emotional story for him that found its resolution in context of his relationship with Buck."

For Ford, that meant giving Thornton a gripping backstory in which a tragedy from his past drives him to a life of isolation. It's only after he meets Buck that Thornton is inspired to embark on the outdoor adventure of a lifetime with the St. Bernard-Scotch Collie.

"The Call of the Wild" follows Buck as he's stolen from his home in California and sold as a sled dog in the Yukon before he crosses paths with Thornton.

"I knew the book from early on in my life," Ford, 77, said. "I hadn't read it since high school, when it was assigned reading. But when the script came to me, I saw an opportunity for a good audience film, a family movie, where I'd have a chance to do something that I haven't done for a while."

The film's director, Chris Sanders, applauds Ford for his desire to enhance the story.

"In the book, John Thornton is a guy who is looking for gold," Sanders, 57, told The News. "Harrison found

it very important to switch the narrative away from somebody who's looking for treasure in the ground to somebody who's looking for a different kind of treasure: a wilderness experience.

"I thought that was a really smart and sweet way of making it relatable and warming it up, whilst holding on to the idea that Thornton is a man... who's a bit lost, and Buck helps him find his way."

In recent years, Ford has revived marquee characters such as Solo in the latest Star Wars trilogy and Rick Deckard in the 2017 sequel to "Blade Runner." He's set to reprise the role of Indy soon, too, for a fifth "Indiana Jones" movie.

Although his work in the action-adventure realm has long earned acclaim, Ford says the genre isn't what draws him to roles.

"It's a character or relationships or the emotional substance of a film that attracts me, but I have no interest in any particular genre," Ford said. "I enjoy dressing up and pretending to be somebody I'm not. The job is just that: pretending."

Ford was intrigued that those making "The Call of the Wild" decided to computer-animate Buck into the film rather than shoot scenes with an actual dog.

Sanders says using a computer-created canine let them maintain consistency during production instead of rotating among multiple dogs who specialize in different things. It also let them put Buck through rough circumstances in the movie that the filmmakers wouldn't want a real dog to go through.

The actor is thankful to have worked with so many people over the years who helped him make successful films.

"It's a collaborative enterprise," Ford said. "It's the quality of the script. It's the investment of the director. It's the contribution of the cinematographer and all the other talented people that work on stuff. I'm grateful that I have the opportunity to do this job. It's given me a really very fulfilling life."

Harrison Ford, shown Feb. 13 in Los Angeles, helped fill in the backstory for his 'Call of the Wild' character.

CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP

Strength of story, actors save CGI-saddled 'Call of the Wild'

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Much like our furry friends, movies about man's best friend come in all shapes and sizes: lost dog movies, talking dog movies, military dog movies, reincarnated dog movies. "The Call of the Wild," directed by Chris Sanders and based on the classic novella by Jack London, is what one might call a literary dog movie, even if there is technically no actual dog in it. The star of "The Call of the Wild," Buck, is a CGI creation. And it's only through the technology that his dangerous and harrowing adventures in the Alaskan wilderness during the Gold Rush, as outlined by London, could be realistically brought to the big screen, for better or for worse.

Known for his work on the most recent "Planet of the Apes" films (and who thrilled and terrified in an ape-inspired performance art piece in "The



20TH CENTURY FOX/AF

Harrison Ford plays John Thornton, who serves as the narrator for "The Call of the Wild," based on a classic book by Jack London.

Square"), accomplished motion capture performer Terry Notary brings Buck's movements to life, and it's a truly skilled performance. But Buck's digital nature is noticeable right away. It's initially off-putting, and something you can never quite shake throughout the film. The computer-generated creation doesn't have the weight, the heat, the feel

of a real dog (or any creature for that matter), though the movements, gestures and expressions are accurate.

Fortunately, Buck plays opposite several solid human actors who can hold up their end of the tale. After the rambunctious Buck is kidnapped from his comfortable family home and sold as a sled dog in Alaska, he

luckily finds himself in the employ of Perrault (Omar Sy), who teaches Buck the way of the sled while delivering mail across the Yukon. Sy brings a warmth and joy to the role that's infectious and a necessary element in the otherwise terrifying story.

Writer Michael Green has streamlined "The Call of the Wild" into something simpler and more manageable for the film, flattening characters into hero/villain caricatures and relying on cliché both cutesy and otherwise. A "spirit wolf" guides Buck's way on the journey, and although he encounters saviors in the form of Perrault and the gruff and craggy John Thornton (Harrison Ford), who serves as the narrator, he also meets some truly nefarious and greedy humans. Dan Stevens, bedecked in a red plaid three-piece suit and Sidney Whiplash mustache, is especially over the top as the gold-hungry Hal, who drives Buck near death searching for the shiny stuff.

What you're left with is a story

that essentially asserts "dogs rule, humans drool," which is hard to argue with. Buck is the hero of the story, saving even the cranky Thornton, played by Ford with his signature gravely gravitas. The two lost souls, far from home, find each other for an epic Alaskan adventure. They're not looking for gold, and what they ultimately find is more precious than that: a little bit of grace, and a closer connection to the wilderness and their roots. You know, the old call of the wild.

There isn't much nuance or complexity to be found in "The Call of the Wild," but it's an old-fashioned animal-friendly adventure flick for kids, a modern-day and high-tech "Benji" based on a classic piece of literature. Although it's hard to buy the animated Buck, the human performances save it, proving that even the most realistic technology will never replace the real thing on screen.

"The Call of the Wild" is rated PG for some violence, peril, thematic elements and mild language. Running time: 100 minutes.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Controversial 'American Dirt' a powerful read

By CONNIE OGLE

Newsway

At this point, reading Jeanine Cummins' novel "American Dirt" in a vacuum is just about impossible, unless you don't have a social-media account, subscribe to any sort of news media or watch TV.

The novel, about a mother and her son on the run from the Mexican cartel, arrived on waves of hype, with praise from such authors as Ann Patchett, Sandra Cisneros, Stephen King and Don Winslow (who compared it to "The Grapes of Wrath"). That hype quickly soured to outrage when Latinx writers criticized the novel for inaccuracies and stereotypes. Then Oprah Winfrey chose "American Dirt" for her book club, and soon a petition with more than 100 authors' names was circulated asking her to rescind her endorsement. So far, she hasn't. Flatiron has canceled Cummins' book tour.

Also under fire is Flatiron's marketing department, which leaned on that "Grapes of Wrath" comparison, which is not quite accurate. "American Dirt" is

more page-turner than literary masterpiece, a scorching, modern-day version of Cormac McCarthy's "The Road." Instead of taking place in a futuristic, post-apocalyptic landscape, the nightmare is happening right here, right now, and Cummins tells the story with propulsive energy.

"American Dirt" is Cummins' fourth book, and yes, she has clumsily tried to make a statement in the ongoing discussion about immigration.

That the statement fell flat doesn't negate its potential to influence readers who haven't given much thought to the border or what happens there.

The story opens with the murder of 16 people at a quinceañera in Acapulco. Two survivors hide in a bathroom: Lydia, a bookseller, and her 8-year-old son Luca. Outside are the bodies of Lydia's family, including her athletic husband, whose work has prompted this butchery. The

killers grab meat off the grill, joking that they shouldn't let good barbecue go to waste.

Surviving is a temporary reprieve, Lydia knows. She and Luca must flee their comfortable middle-class home, evading cartel assassins and other predators to cross into the United States. The action is almost unbearably suspenseful, and Cummins never delves into politics. She doesn't rail against the inequities of class and economics or launch lengthy attacks on corruption or border policies. She allows the story and its characters to carry the narrative.

Lydia and Luca meet other migrants along their journey, including teenage sisters fleeing rape and violence in Honduras and a threatening young man who says he's fleeing the cartel (but might not be). They face impossible danger at roadblocks and boarding La Bestia, the train that sweeps migrants across Mexico. "The possible manners of death available on La Bestia are all gruesome," Cummins writes. She adds: "And finally, there's the ubiquity of ordinary human violence: you can die by beating or stabbing or shooting.

Robbery is a foregone conclusion."

Encounters with la migra on both sides of the border are horrific: "They understand the best-case scenario now is to be captured by a man who obeys the dictate of his uniform, a man who will detain them and process them, and then erase their entire journey, and send them back to wherever they started." The other possibilities are kidnapping, torture, extortion, rape, sexual slavery and death.

But mitigating such hopelessness is Cummins' awareness of compassion, which may be the most compelling detail in the book. Lydia and Luca meet many brave souls on their journey: A man with a machete who escorts migrants through town. Good Samaritans who provide food, shelter and prayers. Migrants already riding La Bestia who pull others aboard to safety.

"That vein of kindness runs through "American Dirt" and reminds us we can do better, too." "For every wickedness there is an equal and opposite possibility of redemption," Cummins writes. There are reasons to read this book, and this is one of them.



Love, Unscripted

Owen Nicholls

Set in 2008 London, Nicholls' novel manages to combine President Barack Obama's election with nostalgic movie references and song lyrics, and the result is funny and bittersweet.

Working as a projectionist in a movie theater, Nick adopts the habit of comparing his relationships with characters on the big screen. On the eve of Obama's election, Nick meets Ellie at a watching party. Summoning the courage of every romantic lead he has ever watched, Nick is brutally honest and miraculously charming. As luck would have it, photographer Ellie returns his affections.

The pair are inseparable at that time, but there are bumps in the road. When Ellie chooses to leave after four years together, Nick is devastated. How could she suddenly not love him? Where did it all go wrong?

Nicholls hits all of the emotional buttons in this novel. There's physical attraction, flirtatious sparring, deep romance, devastating pain, brutal heart-break and unforgettable regret. "Love, Unscripted" is a story that salutes the idea that love at first sight is not impossible.

— Linsee Ray
Associated Press

In the Land of Men

Adrienne Miller

Miller was 22 when she landed a job as an editorial assistant at GQ magazine. The experience led to her three years later becoming the first woman to hold the title of literary editor of Esquire.

For years she navigated a male-dominated world at a time when print was still king. Although she was surrounded by pompous egos and blatant sexism, Miller found sanctuary at her desk, reading a page of literature, ready to critique. Pieces of Norman Miller, George Plimpton and Dave Eggers crossed that surface. But it was David Foster Wallace who impacted her life both professionally and personally.

What starts out as an ordinary editing job almost immediately evolves into a deep friendship. Miller permits the reader to behold the complexities of the renowned writer by sharing intimate details of their relationship. She was his sounding board, his anchor and his advocate.

Miller has the ability to draw the reader in with an impressive array of literary content, yet trusts her writing enough to inject humor when necessary.

— Linsee Ray
Associated Press

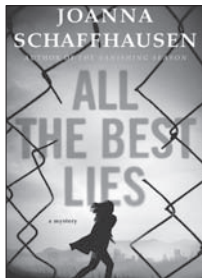
Been There, Married That

Gigi Levangie

Perhaps it's no coincidence that this book about Hollywood seems more like a movie than a novel. Rich detail is paid to the food, the clothes and the decor that surrounds Agnes Murphy Nash, the perfect wife to successful movie mogul (and cringe-inducing narcissist) Trevor.

It's obvious early on that there will be a trade-off for her enviable life. In the first half of the book, Agnes' backbone is flimsy and her relationships are out of whack. She signs off on going to rehab for eating disorders after an "intervention" because she was addicted to snacking on almonds.

But clawing her way out of the faux Shangri-la in Tucson, Ariz., becomes a formative experience for Agnes, and when she returns to her mansion, she starts to put her trust in the right places, especially her mooch convicted-felon sister, Fin. Together, they become an enchanting Thelma-and-Louise duo. I predict readers will cheer them on until the happy ending befitting a chick flick that surely this book will be someday.

— Samantha Critchell
Associated Press

All the Best Lies

Joanna Schaffhausen

Forty years ago in Las Vegas, Reed Markham's biological mother was stabbed to death as he lay nearby in his crib. The case was never solved.

Now, Reed and his adopted sisters agree to take DNA tests to learn more about their ancestry. What begins as a fun family project results in a shock. Their father, powerful Virginia politician Angus Markham, turns out to be Reed's biological parent.

How could that be? How did Angus meet Reed's mother and what was the nature of their relationship? Why did he keep his paternity secret? Does he know something about the murder? Might he even be the killer?

Reed heads for Nevada to find out. Along the way, he enlists his friend Ellery Hathaway, a suspended Massachusetts cop with a troubled history and her own daddy problems. As they pursue the murder of Reed's mother, the emotional stakes are high, the suspect list grows and someone out there wants to make sure they don't succeed. The writing is crisp, the suspense is intense and the fast-paced tale ends with a twist no one is likely to see coming.

— Bruce DeSilva
Associated Press

The Burn

Kathleen Kent

A labyrinth of a police procedural punctuated by nonstop action fuels Kent's second gripping novel about Dallas narcotics Detective Betty Rhyzik.

In addition to a detailed look at police work, "The Burn" is a solid exploration of how a cop who keeps her emotions in check recovers from a near-death experience.

The novel opens three months after Betty is back on the job after recovering from being tortured by a family of meth dealers. Betty throws herself into work, desperately wanting to find the head of the security force for Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. But her sexist boss has another plan for the detective, mandating Betty to desk duty and ordering her to see a therapist.

Betty doesn't easily follow the rules and begins to work her own confidential informants. The evidence that piles up indicates that a cop may be responsible for the recent murders of several drug dealers. Betty wonders whom she can trust.

Briskly paced, "The Burn" barely allows the reader to take a breath.

— Oline H. Cogdill
Associated Press

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Crime binge

What's it like to read 50 books in 5 months? Writer tells of her experience with In Death series

By SOPHIA ROSENBAUM
Associated Press

When you binge-read an entire 50-book series over five months, coming to the end feels like the final days of an amazing trip. You don't want it to end, and at the same time you want to get back to your life.

I started reading J.D. Robb's In Death series — a futuristic police procedural set in the mid-21st century — when I was in desperate need of escape. It was mid-August and, as an Associated Press editor, I had been through a particularly difficult news cycle: a mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio, followed by Jeffrey Epstein's suicide. My mind was teeming with the details from both stories, and I was burnt out. I felt like I could only get to a quarter tank of gas, and every time a half tank was in view, my energy would get depleted again.

I had been on a good reading kick, ripping through some spectacular books including Tayari Jones' "An American Marriage" and Tara Westover's "Educated." But something lighter, more of a beach read. A friend described a series she had recently started — page-turning murder mysteries paired with a storybook love story — and said it might be a good fit for me.

I had read the first 45 books later, I can say it definitely was. My binge-reading streak just ended with the 50th book, "Golden in Death," which was released this month.

The In Death series is far from light reading. It centers around the life of Eve Dallas, a no-nonsense New York City police lieutenant. She's a homicide cop, so there is murder in every book.

There's the one where two lovers who think of themselves as a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde leave a trail of death, with their initials carved into their victims' bodies. There are the ones tinged with terrorism: A young sniper trained by her drugged-out, former-cop father turns people into murder-mindless zombies. Many of the books deal with rape, sexual assault or abuse, for more of a "Law & Order: SVU" vibe. And some are hunt-your-dreams scary.

J.D. Robb is the pen name for the prolific romance writer Nora Roberts, who started writing the series in 1995 and releases at least two new titles a year.

In the very first book, "Naked in Death," we are introduced to a slew of what become recurring characters: Eve's former partner and trainer, who becomes a father figure; the esteemed police commander; the maternal staff psychiatrist; Eve's criminal-turned-singer bestie; and most importantly, Roarke.

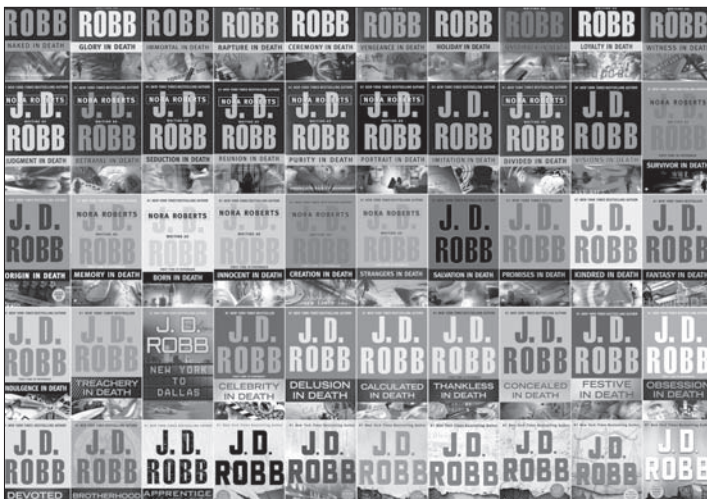
The sexual tension leaps off the page when Eve meets Roarke, who is rich, handsome and happens to be her prime suspect. Eve's moral code is black and white, which causes friction throughout the series with Roarke, who becomes her husband by the fourth book.

Roberts spends a lot of time building layer upon layer of intimacy into their relationship, so their partnership is believable while still being the epitome of #couplegoals. Their relationship is one of the things I loved most about the series, and miss most now that I'm caught up.

So what happens when you plunge into a 50-book series? Here are five things I learned:

The In Death series, written by Nora Roberts under her pseudonym J.D. Robb, features a futuristic police and security Department Lieutenant Eve Dallas and her husband, Roarke, and is set in the mid-21st century.

Berkley, St. Martin's Press/AP



There's nothing like escaping into a good book ... or 50

I lost touch with reading for a good chunk of my 20s. I blamed it on school, and then on my job. But getting back into a reading routine has done wonders for my life, and my brain. Reading requires undivided attention. You can't really read a book while you're texting someone or scrolling through Instagram or participating in any bad habits you're trying to kick.

About 100 books in, when I noticed I was starting to rip through a book a day, I started wondering: Was reading this much another bad habit?

Nervously, I asked my therapist about this obsession, admitting that most of my free time was spent escaping into Eve's world. My therapist said something like, "Of the compulsive habits to have, this seems relatively harmless, and maybe you really need it. It's only a

problem if you start turning down social interactions or find it is interfering with your daily life."

I've always been inclined to binge. The medium doesn't matter — TV show, book, podcast — once I'm hooked, I need to know everything.

I read these books every where I went, using peripheral vision as I walked through the corridor to my office every morning, narrowly avoiding running into people. I would sneak in five minutes when the subway was delayed. I'd curl up on the couch with my cat on a rainy afternoon, fall asleep most nights with a book in my hand, read on the beach on vacation.

After meeting a colleague for the first time recently, she said, "You're the book woman. It's so good to finally meet you."

Crazy book lady, at your service.

I am not a cop, but I started to think like one

When you spend hours a day reading police procedurals, you start thinking like a cop, or at least how I imagine a cop thinks. I began paying more attention to details.

Looking at people on the subway, I would think about how I would describe them if I were called as a witness — their dimensions, physical attributes, clothing, tendencies — and then test myself when I got home to see if I remembered.

I'd pay attention to license plates of passing cars, though I never was able to remember those.

Fiction is not reality

Over the summer, a homeless man killed four people as they slept on the streets of New York City. Telling my partner about it, I started describing what would happen if this was Eve's case.

"I think you have a problem," he replied.

There was a particularly meta moment when I was reading a book that featured characters going to the Oscars because a movie about one of Eve's cases was nominated. Later that evening, I tuned into the Golden Globes and couldn't help but make comparisons between the location and reality. If only "The Ice Age Agenda" (from Robb's "Origin in Death") won instead of "1917."

Now that I'm caught up, I can't say I'm looking for another series to dive into. I did immediately binge "The Morning Show" because I had been neglecting my TV shows. But reading these books gave me what I wanted and needed. Just like a vacation, the series gave me a break from reality, and taught me how much I need that.

You can, in fact, read too much

At 29, I'm not old, but I somewhat comically injured myself at least twice while reading the In Death series.

The first happened about 10 books in, when I got the strangest pain in my left pinky. It was particularly present when I would type; it felt like my finger had done one too many crunches. I was in the middle of reading when I said to my partner, "I can't figure out why my pinky hurts so much." He casually suggested it might have something to do with my new reading obsession, but I shot that down, feeling defensive.

I did notice, however, that I was holding the book like a martini glass, pinky up. Within days of changing my grip, the pain went away.

Then, toward the end of the book series, my right eye started twitching for about a week and a half. I was embarrassed, and Googled what might be the cause. Sure, I drank the occasional caffeinated tea, I probably could have gotten more sleep, and I am almost always stressed. But about two days after I finished book No. 50, my eye twitch went away.

Libraries are candy shops for adults

Rediscovering the library has been one of my favorite things about reading this series. I can't explain the excitement I would feel when I got an email notifying me that my books had come in. I loved going to get them and finding them bound together with a rubber band and marked with my initials.

I only bought one book, in a moment of weakness over Labor Day

weekend when I realized the library was going to be closed for four days and I hadn't ordered the next few books in time.

After that, I ordered them five or 10 at a time at the library.

It turns out I'm not the only one who loves the library. A recent Gallup poll found that Americans visited the library more frequently than the movie theater in 2019.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Swing into action

Increase core strength, boost confidence, improve cardio with pole dancing workout

By JESSICA VILLAGOMEZ
Chicago Tribune

In a small fitness studio in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood recently, Patty Yaconis taught a pole dancing class to a handful of women dressed in metallic body shorts and crop tops. Wearing a tank top and capri leggings, Yaconis started by instructing women through a series of stretching techniques in a room lined with full-length mirrors. A speaker blasted a sensual song.

Drama and exaggeration are the name of the game in pole dancing. A dancer starts with small, sexy strolls around the pole followed by short spins and the occasional body roll or hip swing. Beginners then complete moves like the fireman, walking around the pole while holding it with their inside arm. Leaning outward and using their momentum, they hook an ankle around the pole, completing a series of spins downward.

“It’s not my problem if someone sexualizes my dancing; I’m doing it for me.”

Jade White
dancer

“Yes — that’s beautiful! Feel the move; keep the posture up!” Yaconis said to the class of beginners.

Coming off of the Super Bowl performance this month and sex-positive media like the film “Hustlers,” women across America are swarming local pole dancing classes with hopes of mimicking the iconic Jennifer Lopez, fitness club owners said. While pole dancing is often stigmatized for being overtly sexual, dancers are hoping to embrace the sexy while highlighting the physical and confidence boosts that come with swinging on a metal pole.

“Everyone is calling me because of J.Lo. If J.Lo can do it, they can too,” said Francesca Garcia, owner of Fempress Fit in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood. “This is a skill just like any other; you have to practice it.”

Back at the Lakeview class, Yaconis grew tired of demonstrating in slippery leggings, so she took off her pants and continued teaching in a pair of velvet gray underwear. Yaconis said bare thighs grasp the pole best. In pole, only amateurs wear pants. “Pole dancing is sexy. It’s sexy for both men and women, but it is also very fitness-driven,” Yaconis said. “Pole is a little of everything. If you want to come and dance and have a good time, that’s wonderful, but you can become more advanced in moves and build strength.”

Yaconis said new clients are often shocked to find out the difficulties of lifting one’s body. Pole dancing incorporates cardio and strength techniques combined with dancing and flexibility.

“I emphasize to older women that I’m over 50 and have been doing this for six years,” she said. “It’s a great workout for building that upper body strength as we get older. If you aren’t doing weights or upper body strength, women lose that.”

Climbing and straddling the pole



Clockwise from top: Attendees climb their poles during a level one trick class at Fempress Fit in Chicago Feb. 4; instructor Unika Venson, left, and Cerissa Deocampo practice during an open pole session at the fitness studio; Deocampo laces up her high heels ahead of a class.

ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS photos

requires traction and dedication. One participant wore padded knee pads to protect from possible falls. Like football players watching tape, many propped their cellphones along the mirrors to capture video and watch how high they could climb.

Garcia, who has been pole dancing since 2007, is a certified fitness instructor and has a pole dancing certification. Pole dancing became a way out of her



corporate job and into a more interesting fitness regimen.

Sarah Abboud started taking classes at Fempress Fit early last fall. Abboud was inspired to start pole dancing because of her academic research on sexual health and health promotion.

“It just combines dancing with a lot of physical activity and strength building,” she said. “The space is also very positive and supportive. Over time it felt like a kind of therapy. There’s a focus on enjoying my body, and what I want to do.”

Dancing in stilettoes is the next level of advancement. A beginner’s heel is about five inches with a two-inch shoe box platform, Garcia said. Like a good pair of snow boots, professional dance stilettoes

have a ribbed rubber bottom.

One dancer at Fempress Fit, Jade White, has graduated to dancing in red lace-up boots with an eight-inch heel. Each shoe weighs about two pounds.

“I love the shoes,” White said. “I love the strength and flow that happens when I dance. It’s like a girls club. There’s no competition; we’re trying to lift each other up as we lift ourselves up.”

Formerly in the Navy, White said pole offered her a supportive and predominantly female environment.

“It’s not my problem if someone sexualizes my dancing; I’m doing it for me,” White said. “I spent a lot of time with bearded-up boys. A male-dominated gym isn’t my happy place; this is my happy place.”

WEEKEND: FAMILY

The space between us

How to make a long-distance relationship work

BY ALISON BOWEN
Chicago Tribune

The longest distance Matthew Harris and Maya Thompson were ever apart was more than 20 hours in the air — or the amount of time it takes to fly from Chicago to Sydney, Australia.

That was in the beginning of their two-year relationship, which has included long distance.

The couple both live in Chicago now, but for months, Harris, 24, and Thompson, 23, were in a long-distance relationship when she was finishing college in California and he was beginning his career in Chicago. Then, when she was working temporarily in Sydney

What happens when there are unexpected roadblocks that force a relationship to become long distance — like a job offer in a new city or someone wanting to move closer to family? All of a sudden, a budding courtship could become rooted in separate places.

How can you make a long-distance relationship go the distance? The Tribune talked to experts to find out what to think about, talk about and do.

Communicate

Harris and Thompson had been friends since they were children, so when they started dating in 2017, they had no problem communicating despite the distance. Thompson was a senior at Stanford University, and Harris was just starting his career in Chicago.

“We just made the decision to be with each other,” Harris said. “At the end of the day, I found myself comparing everybody to her.”

He said he learned a lot about the ways to communicate. He sent flowers; he sent text messages to friends asking them to pick up the bill at dinner, from him.

They promised to never go to bed upset, and to see each other about every other month.

Dana Dorfman, a psychotherapist in Manhattan, said couples should develop a ritual about when they connect. “Often times couples will check in in the morning, check in in the evening,” she said. “Having those predictable check-in points can provide anchors for communication and anchors for the relationship.”

Know that long-distance visits aren't real life

In his Los Angeles practice, marriage and family therapist Allen Wagner works with clients who date long distance or who travel often, such as musicians. He said that daters should know that when you're seeing each other for weekends, it's not the same as when a couple ultimately, hopefully, is in



iStock

Long-distance relationships can be tough to maintain, but following a few simple tips can help couples go the distance.

the same place.

“When they do connect, it's very intense and well-thought out,” he said. Couples often make plans like they're touring their own city, and they spend all their time together. “It's not always going to stay like that,” said Wagner. “It's kind of like a summer fling. There are going to be times where a person's going to be upset.”

Dorfman suggests setting up expectations for visits. Maybe one person wants to have a low-key weekend, or wants to get out to exercise. “Otherwise, there could be competing desires and competing expectations that could have been preemptively ironed out,” Dorfman said.

Know the next time you'll see each other

Harris and Thompson scheduled the times they would see each other in advance, usually every other month. Sometimes that meant missing things at work or with friends or family.

And it's good to set up talking time too. Consider something like organizing Facebook dates — maybe you cook together, or just know you'll catch up at that time — so that you both prioritize the time. Or do things at the same time. Thompson and Harris went through a Bible study together.

Also, agree on an endgame, Dorfman said. “Know when there's going to be an end to the long-term nature of it,” she said, even if it's a general sense of when you're likely to live in the same city.

Soak up the time to be independent

Both Harris and Thompson noted some positive parts of being inde-

pendent.

“I think that time alone is beneficial in our relationship, because it allows us to focus on ourselves, develop ourselves,” Harris said. “When we do get together, it's us.” Thompson advises other couples about to go the distance that it can be positive, not an obstacle.

“It really is a time for you to really be growing,” she said. “It makes you appreciate your partner more, but it also makes you appreciate everything you also bring to the table in a relationship.”

Dorfman said each person having individual lives is critical. “You don't want the relationship to necessarily detract from the quality of the rest of the life. You want it to enhance.”

Don't feel bad enjoying individual experiences

Thompson faced this first-hand when she was excited about working in Sydney, but felt bad about being in a new place and having an amazing time.

“It just made it a little difficult for our conversations,” she said. “Sometimes I would not be as open about things.” She didn't want him to feel like he was missing anything, she said, but ultimately, holding back could create a bigger emotional distance.

Both said they want each other to live their own lives. “You don't ever want to feel like you're the reason that your partner is stuck in time,” Thompson said.

After taking time, the couple said, to have their own lives separately, they are now back together in Chicago.

“Having her back, it just feels like my heart is full,” Harris said. “Half of my heart was gone for so long.”

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Why community is key to warfighting

As I waited in line at the commissary, I perused the military newspapers in the rack — Hmm, so the Air Force is allowing beards now, huh?

“Do you have any coupons, my dear?” the commissary cashier said, interrupting my reading with the thick Rhode Island accent that I'd come to recognize so well. I handed her the scrap of paper that entitled me to 50 cents off a pound of deli ham.

After discussing the weather with the bagger while she loaded my groceries into my car, I tipped her and was off on my next errand. Wednesdays are good for getting things done on base. Washing the car at the auto center, mailing packages at the post office, lifting weights at the gym, buying groceries at the commissary, picking up refills at the clinic pharmacy, stopping by my favorite spot to hunt for a few pieces of beach glass.

We lived on this base four years ago. Now we fall into the category “retiree and family,” but I still drive across the bridge and through the gates every week. Why? My base neighbors have moved on. I know only a handful of people by name. The Stop & Shop has a better produce selection. There's a post office a half mile from my house. “The vacuum at the auto center doesn't work that well. But, after 28 years of active-duty military life, I have learned that spending time on base boosts my morale.

Unlike civilians who are able to plant roots and form community bonds in one area for a period of time, military life requires us to be constantly mobile, adaptable, ready for separation and change at a moment's notice.

Last week, the Pentagon proposed plans to chip away at those little things that form our military community for sustenance just like civilians do.

We find it in the little things — on playgrounds, in base neighborhoods, at the Shoppette, in the combined clubs, in the clinic waiting rooms, at the base theater, at the gas station, on the running trails, in the Exchange, at the gas station, at the commissary and in military newspapers. “We typically aren't in any one location long enough to integrate into the local populace. But we seek community for sustenance just like civilians do.

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On NPR's “All Things Considered,” Stars and Stripes Editorial Director Terry Leonard explained why Stars is important to military readers. “[O]ther news organizations won't cover ... the pay, the benefits, what your life is like, the different things that happen to military families, military children, military schools ... It gives them a sense of ... having a normal life even though they're stationed 9,000 miles from home.”

If our family hadn't found a sense of community at duty stations overseas and in the U.S., our military family would not have served on active duty for 28 years. Humans seek fellowship, familiarity and understanding that only comes from being a part of a common culture. Military people, military bases and military stories become our support network, our home away from home, our community. This sense of security is critical to warfighters' motivation to continue to serve long term in the face of hardships, dangerous duties, separations, moves and deployments.

If the DOD reduces funding for “low-priority” military community programs, it will certainly be able to afford more weapons. But can it afford to lose the warfighters uniquely qualified to use them?

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

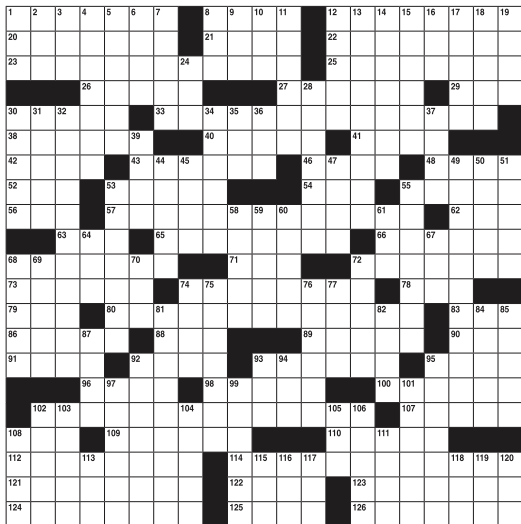
WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

'S-Q' ME!'

BY ED Sessa / EDITED BY WILL Shortz

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107 Altar sites
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109 Gay who wrote "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold"
110 ___ talking to you!"
112 The "E" of E.D.
114 All-day gripe sessions?
117 Abbr.
121 Like a rope in tug of war
122 Northern Iraqi
123 Alter ego on "The Simpsons"
124 Tightwad's opposites
125 Hungers
126 Questionable
DOWN
1 Ones in a mess, informally
2 Question: Abbr. (French stew)
4 Basis of the plot of "Gone Girl"
5 Like Corinthian columns
6 Bacilli shapes
7 Habitiments
8 Cobbler's tool
9 Vineyard designation
10 ___ Cayes (Haitian port)
11 Not related?
12 Gilbert who wrote "Love and Death on Long Island"
13 Rosetta Stone discovery site
14 In a sensesaw way
15 Deranged, in slang
16 Polish movie named Best Foreign Language Film of 2014
17 Work out
18 Henry VII's house
19 Lee who co-created the Avengers
24 Not an adjective: Abbr.
28 Flower colored by Aphrodite's blood, in myth
30 "You know who this is"
31 "A Visit From St. Nicholas" poet
32 Ways out of embarrassing situations?
34 Polished
35 It may have a ring to it
36 Ereno a diciebrre
37 Civil rights activist Guinier
39 Laker legend with a size 22 sneaker, informally
44 Something absolutely necessary
45 Fast-paced two-player card game
47 Munchies, say
49 Enumerations of things to be sat on?
50 A plenty angry
51 Song words before "the World" and "the Champions"
53 Like pre-1917 Russia
55 Green shells
58 Animal with a flexible snout
59 Early title for Julius Caesar
60 Brightest star in Orion
61 Apollo 11's Eagle, for short
64 What Lionel Messi wears
67 Brazil's ___ Bernardo do Campo
68 Chorographer Ailey
69 2016 film set in Polynesia
70 Et ___ (footnote abbr)
72 Document certifiers, for short



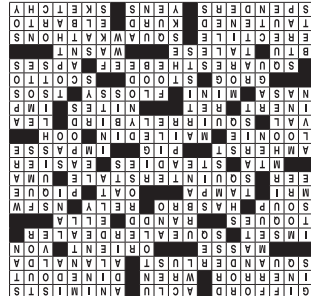
- 74 Countenance
75 Sorting category on iTunes
76 Vacuum-tube component
77 Cousin of a spoonbill
81 Alleged psychic exposed by the Amazing Randi
82 Co-authors Margret and H.A.
84 Theatricalize
85 Lhasa ___ (dogs)
87 "Old World Style" pasta sauce brand
92 Glacial deposit
93 Opposition
94 Easy question
95 "I dare you to do better!"
97 Snitched on, with "out"
99 Lucy's place, in a Beatles song
101 "Impossible!"
102 Leah, e.g.
103 Line (up)
104 Ones on the outside of brackets
105 "Yuck!"
106 Forgeries
108 Pot growers?
111 Kind of vaccine
113 Cardboard container: Abbr.
115 "___ pasa?"
116 Decorative garden item
117 Source of much of Google's income
118 Fictional creature made from heat and slime
119 Unspecified degree
120 ___ milk

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FACES

CBS streaming service to grow with Paramount, Viacom content

Associated Press

ViacomCBS is planning a new streaming service that will combine the existing CBS All Access service with Paramount movies and shows from Viacom channels such as MTV and BET.

The move was expected since CBS and Viacom combined in August to better compete in the increasingly competitive streaming environment.

CBS was one of the first media companies to launch its own streaming service, CBS All Access, priced at \$6 a month, includes original programming such as "Star Trek" series and a revival of "The Twilight Zone." The service also has old and current broadcast shows.

Since then, Disney launched its \$7-a-month Disney Plus service, while Comcast's NBCUniversal and AT&T's WarnerMedia have services coming, tapping movies and shows from their channels and production studios.

Separately, WarnerMedia said it reached a deal with Google's YouTube TV service to offer the upcoming HBO Max as an add-on to YouTube TV's \$50-a-month subscription. It will cost extra, but the price wasn't immediately disclosed. HBO Max will cost \$15 on its own, though some AT&T customers will get it for free. AT&T has said it was working on deals to bundle HBO Max with other companies that offer HBO to their services.

Lawrence to star in McKay's Netflix comedy

Jennifer Lawrence will star in the Adam McKay comedy "Don't Look Up" for Netflix.

The streaming giant on Wednesday announced that it acquired the project. McKay, who wrote the script, will direct the film about two low-level astronomers who go on a media tour to warn of an approaching asteroid heading for Earth.



Lawrence

Lawrence, 29, has been little seen on the big screen lately, most recently co-starring in last year's "X-Men: Dark Phoenix." The actress took a roughly two-year hiatus from acting by recently returning to work. She recently wrapped production on an untitled film for A24 directed by Lila Neugebauer.

"I'm so thrilled to make this movie with Jen Lawrence," McKay said in a statement. "She's what you find in the 17th century used to call a dynamic act." And the fact that Netflix sees this movie as a worldwide comedy sets the bar high for me and my team in an exciting and motivating way."

McKay's most recent movie was the Oscar-nominated "Vice," starring Christian Bale as Dick Cheney, released in 2018.



ABC Photos/AP

Randall Park, left, and Hudson Yang are pictured in a scene from "Fresh Off the Boat." The sitcom, which ends its six-season run Friday, was the first network TV comedy with an all-Asian cast since Margaret Cho's "All-American Girl" premiered in 1995.

Progress, hope in show's wake

ABC's departing 'Fresh Off the Boat' leaving indelible mark on TV landscape

BY TERRY TANG

Associated Press

Even before "Fresh Off the Boat" hit the airwaves on ABC in February 2015, the show was facing pressure that other new shows weren't.

It was set to be the first network TV comedy with an all-Asian cast since Margaret Cho's "All-American Girl" premiered 20 years earlier. ABC canceled that series after one season, and some wondered how long this show would last.

Randall Park, who portrays patriarch Louis, never even thought the pilot — inspired by restaurateur and TV personality Eddie Huang's childhood memoir — would be picked up.

"The odds of a show getting picked up are tiny. On top of that, being an Asian American family at the center of a show just made it kind of seem impossible in my head," Park told The Associated Press in a phone interview from Atlanta, where he is filming the Marvel/Disney+ series "WandaVision."

Now, after six seasons, "Fresh Off the Boat" will make its final voyage Friday.

Without question, the sitcom, centered on a Taiwanese-Chinese American family in the 1990s living in predominantly white Orlando, Fla. — will be immortalized in the canon of Asian American representation. It accomplished some unique firsts, like being the first American TV show to film on location in Taiwan and having a majority of dialogue in one episode be in Mandarin. It paved the path for movie stardom for Park ("Always Be My Myrtle") and on-screen wife Constance Wu ("Crazy Rich Asians," "Hustlers"). And having passed 100 episodes, the Huangs will live on in syndication for years to come.



The show paved the way to movie stardom for Constance Wu ("Crazy Rich Asians," "Hustlers") and on-screen husband Randall Park ("Always Be My Myrtle").

Hudson Yang, 16, was 9 years old when he won the role of Eddie. Thanks to his father, journalist Jeff Yang, he had an inkling this wasn't just any TV gig.

"My Dad would definitely talk about how important it was to have this kind of show. We talked about how previously 'All-American Girl' tried to do the same thing," Yang said. "I knew a little bit about how important it was but I didn't really know the full scale until a little bit later on."

The series used culturally specific humor while trying to universally appeal to a broadcast network audience.

"What was smart was having a writers' room, showrunner and actors that felt more empowered like they were part of the process," said Stephen Gong, executive director of the Center for Asian American Media. "They take that stereotype-based joke and turn it on its head a little bit more. That's where the in-community joke gets funnier."

The show might also be remembered for headlines generated off-screen. Wu, who was not available for an interview, shocked

viewers when she angrily tweeted about the show's renewal in May. She issued an explanation the next day, saying she would have to give up another project. She also apologized for being "insensitive" to struggling actors.

During the show's first season, the real-life Eddie Huang distanced himself from the show. In an essay for *Vulture* in 2015, he slammed it as a "cornstarch story" that was less about specific moments in his life and was instead a bland, "one-size-fits-all" narrative. Huang hasn't wavered.

"I take representing my experience as an Asian-American in this country very seriously," Huang said in an interview in January. "I never compromised it for what a company or brand or studio told me to do."

For better or worse, the show was often treated as a default ambassador for the Asian-American experience. So, the cast understands some of the criticism from Huang and others.

"As expected, there were some people who were like 'This isn't my family.' It's an understandable kind of response when there's only one," Park said. "But I get stopped by people of different races who say how much they love the show."

"Fresh Off the Boat's" absence leaves "Amkwaifan is Nora from Queens," the Comedy Central series led by the star of "The Farewell," as the only other U.S. series with a mostly Asian cast. But because of "Fresh Off the Boat," there's already hope that Asian American-led successors will no longer be seen as out of the ordinary.

"It is redefining what mainstream culture is. I think that's the legacy," Gong said. "It helped redefine a space that will help all creative Asian American media, producers and artists."

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OPINION

Barrage first of many Bloomberg will face

By KAREN TUMULTY
The Washington Post

Mike Bloomberg's best moment Wednesday night came about five minutes before the Democratic presidential debate started. It was when one of his ubiquitous television ads ran on MSNBC.

From there, things went pretty much downhill for him. The former New York mayor who appeared onstage in Las Vegas with five other contenders for the Democratic nomination was not the confident and commanding figure that we are constantly seeing and hearing in the \$409 million worth of television, radio and online advertising his campaign has produced.

Bloomberg seemed to disappear for much of the debate. When the camera caught him on a split screen as someone else was talking, he looked annoyed and, occasionally, lost.

He was caught flat-footed even by questions that he surely knew were coming.

Bloomberg will not be on any ballot until next month's Super Tuesday contests. His strategy has been to leverage his enormous wealth into a presumption that he is invincible. Strategists for his campaign are already arguing that he is the only one who can prevent the nomination from going to Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., a self-described democratic socialist who has the party's lead. He fear would go down to a landslide defeat against President Donald Trump.

Across the country, Democrats were sizing up Bloomberg, not only against the others who were actually on the stage, but in their estimations of how well he would do against Trump and his slate of Democratic tactics. Bloomberg's uneven performance Wednesday offered little reassurance that

he could hold the ground against Trump on a debate stage this fall.

Asked about sexist comments that he is alleged to have made to female employees of his news and business information company, Bloomberg tried to deflect by talking about his record of promoting women.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., who had an especially good night, was ready for that one: "I hope you heard what this defense was: 'I've been nice to some women.'"

She and former Vice President Joe Biden double-teamed Bloomberg on his refusal to release names who have sued him for sex discrimination from nondisclosure agreements (or, for that matter, to even say how many of them there are).

"They decided when they made an agreement that they wanted to keep it quiet," Bloomberg said, lamely. That exchange brought boos from the audience in the hall.

Bloomberg's was the most highly anticipated debut of a presidential candidate on a national debate stage since Trump made his entrance in Cleveland in August 2015.

That first one saw Trump standing alongside the current or former governors, three senators and an acclaimed neurosurgeon. They were part of what was arguably the most highly credited field of GOP contenders in modern history. It was largely because of his dominance — and, often, his shamelessness — in those debates that Trump managed to vanquish them all.

Bloomberg suffered from the fact that the other five were far more agile and seasoned, having been through eight previous debates this season. He may get better at this as the campaign progresses — and, indeed, seemed to have found some footing in the second debate slot that he offered, for instance, a strong defense of capitalism in a sharp exchange with Sanders.

Presidential pardons have been a bad idea since 1787

By NOAH FELDMAN
Bloomberg News

The president of the United States isn't a king, and he isn't above the law, or so constitutional law professors like me keep reminding everybody. But the painful truth is that there is one exception to this truth: the pardon power, exercised this week by President Donald Trump in free or absolve several white-collar criminals.

The presidential power to pardon is a holdover from British monarchy. And pardoning by definition goes above and outside the legal system. The pardon power therefore poses a structural threat to the republican character of the U.S. government.

It gets worse. The framers understood that a president might abuse the pardon power. But they thought impeachment was a failsafe against that abuse. Now that Trump has been impeached but not removed, it's hard to see what constraint still exists, short of public opinion.

We therefore need to ask a hard question about pardons: Should we be able to pardon a relic of a bygone, antimodernistic age?

Let's start with the framers, and how the pardon power made its way into the Constitution. Several state governors held the pardon power, and it was expected that the president would have it, too. On Aug. 27, 1787, Roger Sherman, of Connecticut, proposed that the president be able to exercise it with the consent of the Senate, an objection intended to lessen its apparently monarchic character. That idea was voted down without discussion.

On Sept. 15, 1787, the issue arose again after Edmund Randolph, the governor of Virginia and a critic of strong executive power, argued that giving the president the

ability to pardon treason would make him too powerful. Randolph worried that "the president may himself be guilty. The traitors may be his own instruments."

In response, several framers who favored strong executive power spoke out against the alternative of giving the pardon power to Congress. Gouverneur Morris said he would "rather there should be no pardon for treason, than let the power devolve on the legislature." James Wilson said that the pardon power, even in cases of treason, "is best placed in the hands of the executive."

Rufus King further argued that "a legislative body is utterly unfit for the purpose" of issuing pardons because it would be "governed too much by the passions of the moment." As an example he cited the Massachusetts legislature, which he claimed in one session could have hung all the insurgents in that state and then in the next legislative session "was equally disposed to pardon them all." This was an openly anti-republican theory of pardon that preferred the president precisely because he did not reflect the popular will in the same way as the legislature.

King then re-proposed Sherman's idea of Senate consent as a condition for pardon; and James Madison said he was prepared to agree to that arrangement for pardons of treason.

Randolph rejected the compromise idea of Senate consent because of the great danger to liberty lay in a combination between the president and that body." George Mason, another critic of executive power, echoed Randolph, insisting that "the Senate has already too much power." The upshot was that the whole idea was dropped. The president's pardon power remained intact — and restricted to the president.

Or maybe, it just won't matter. Never has any candidate had the financial resources that Bloomberg says he is prepared to spend on his quest for the White House.

But one thing that was made clear to Bloomberg on Wednesday is that his rivals are not going to give way for him, as some of his campaign strategists have suggested they should. A large and fractured field benefits Sanders, who after contests in Iowa and New Hampshire has emerged as the front-runner.

"I've been told many times to wait my turn and to step aside," Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., said. "And I'm not going to do that now, and I'm not going to do that because a campaign memo from Mayor Bloomberg said this morning that the only way that we get a nominee is if we step aside for him."

Bloomberg also got slammed by comparisons — and surely not for the last time — with the president they want so desperate to unseat.

"I'd like to talk about who we're running against," Warren said. "A billionaire who calls women 'fat broads' and 'horse-faced lesbians.' And no, I'm not talking about Donald Trump. I'm talking about Mayor Bloomberg." She was referring to a comment that was attributed to Bloomberg in a joke book that he was given as a long-ago birthday present, but he did not deny that he had said it.

If nothing else, Bloomberg is going to have to learn how to take a hit — and how to deliver one. Because, in a presidential campaign, there are going to be many more moments like this. And if you're not going to find out what kind of candidate is somewhere back there behind his ads.

Karen Tumulty is a Washington Post columnist covering national politics.

The framers thought that a president who abused the pardon power would be impeached. Wilson said so explicitly in the same debate: "If he be himself a party to the guilt he can be impeached and prosecuted by the entire body of the people, as well later at the Virginia ratifying convention."

Fast-forward to the present — and to a president who seems to be beyond the reach of impeachment. Might it be possible to limit future presidents from using the pardon power outrageously by creating a process that presidents commit to follow in advance of any pardon, one that sounds like a good idea; and indeed, there exists an office of the pardon attorney in the Department of Justice to run that process.

The trouble is that a president can, if he chooses, go outside that bureaucratic process. Trump did so in pardoning Michael Flynn of his insider trading and one-time junk bond king. That leaves a public condemnation as the only remedy. And Trump seems impervious to that check, too.

It's difficult to avoid the conclusion that the pardon power should be abandoned as a relic of a time when monarchic ideas were still part of the constitutional fabric.

Advocates of mercy will say, with some justification, that we should not have a system in which the word of the courts is final. Forgiveness is a crucial human virtue.

The answer to that problem is for the legislature to create mechanisms for review of past convictions that allow for mercy and forgiveness of mercy will say, with some justification, that we should not have a system in which the word of the courts is final. Forgiveness is a crucial human virtue.

The answer to that problem is for the legislature to create mechanisms for review of past convictions that allow for mercy and forgiveness of mercy will say, with some justification, that we should not have a system in which the word of the courts is final. Forgiveness is a crucial human virtue.

Noah Feldman is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and professor of law at Harvard University. His books include "The Three Lives of James Madison: Genius, Partisan, President."

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editors' or authors' opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Va. Senate's action reflects depth of gun rights support

The Wall Street Journal

Democrats took over both houses of the Virginia Legislature in November thanks in large part to voter support for gun control after mass shootings. Or so they claimed. But if they believe that, they now have some explaining to do after Gov. Ralph Northam's restrictive gun-control proposal was shelved Monday for lack of votes.

The bill had passed the state House, 51 to 48. But in the state Senate 40 Democrats joined every Republican on the Judiciary Committee to kill Northam's so-called assault-weapons ban. The bill would have required a year-long waiting period, background checks, as well as banned the possession of magazines holding more than 12 rounds.

The latter would have required tens of thousands of Virginians either to surrender their legally purchased magazines or face a year in prison. The Democratic rout of the Democrats' bill is a rebuke to Northam, who has interpreted last year's narrow takeover of the Legislature as a license to try to impose restrictive gun laws similar to those in New York and California.

The Virginia Legislature has waded through much of his gun agenda, including universal background checks, and a one-gun-per-month purchasing limit. But the voter backlash has been loud and swift, with more than 20,000 Virginia gun owners rallying last month at the state Capitol in Richmond. Nearly one of Virginia's 95 counties have so far voted themselves to be "Second Amendment sanctuaries," saying they won't enforce state gun laws that violate the U.S. Constitution.

The committee vote refers the bill to the Virginia State Crime Commission for further study, and some Democrats are attempting to mollify gun-control activists by claiming they aren't opposed to a ban as much as to the bill's vague wording. The truth is that the dissenting Democrats are worried that a voter revolt on gun rights would cost their seats, and perhaps their two-seat majority in the state Senate.

The conventional media wisdom is that the politics of gun rights has moved left, and that bans are now possible even in swing states. But support for individual gun rights runs deep across the country. Voters rightly mistrust politicians who say they support "reasonable" gun laws while campaigning but then try to ban weapons or magazines once in power.

Before backing Bloomberg, stop, then frisk his full record

The Bergen Record in New Jersey

So-called moderate Democrats in New Jersey have been quick to endorse the self-funded candidacy of billionaire Michael Bloomberg, pausing hardly at all, it seems, to consider — or remember — the suspect policies, especially in the realm of civil rights, that were so deeply troubling and that he fully supported during his long tenure as New York City's mayor.

Two stand out as especially egregious: the so-called "stop-and-frisk" crime fighting strategy aimed primarily at young men of color, whereby they were routinely detained by police and searched for weapons and drugs; and the New York Police Department's sweeping stop-and-search surveillance program in Muslim neighborhoods



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Democratic presidential candidate and former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg greets supporters after speaking at a campaign event in Raleigh, N.C., on Feb. 13.

that spread into New Jersey and caused all manner of havoc and anxiety.

Indeed, the Muslim surveillance, carried out by the NYPD on mosques, bakeries and even university student centers during the Bloomberg years as mayor, and the stop-and-frisk policies are, in actuality, no so far removed from President Donald Trump's current policy toward undocumented immigrants, or his travel ban on people from "Muslim" countries. They all smack of racial, ethnic or religious "profiling," which goes against the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution.

"Mr. Bloomberg's and I, Trump's actions are hand-in-glove the same thing," Army Sgt. Syed Farhan Hassan, a Middlesex County resident and Iraq War veteran, said in an interview with NorthJersey.com and the USA Today Network New Jersey. Hassan said Bloomberg's actions are "still causing issues between Muslim communities and law enforcement."

As for stop-and-frisk, a policy Bloomberg defended for years, and for which he issued what seemed a heartfelt apology last November, many Democratic politicians across New Jersey seem willing to forgive, forget and move on, citing, if not audibly then at least in private, the ever-operative word, most well-worn in the Democrats' 2020 playbook: "electability."

"My concern is that we have to beat Donald Trump," acknowledged Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh, whose city is home to thousands of practicing Muslims.

Certainly, Bloomberg has appeal for Democrats who carry the "moderate" banner in New Jersey, and who believe they will need a strong name at the top of the ticket to help carry the day in November. That the well-funded latecomer speaks with authority on gun control, climate change and economic revival that targets both working-class families and middle-income communities may be commendable, but it doesn't represent the whole picture.

Democrats who clamor aboard the Bloomberg train so early in the process, perceiving him as the "only one who can beat Trump," would do well to study up and be prepared to defend his full record.

Trump's abuse of pardoning power could add inner circle

Los Angeles Times

Not for the first time, President Donald Trump has used his presidential pardon power to benefit undeserving recipients with whom he shares a personal or political affinity. On Tuesday, the White House announced that Trump had commuted the prison sentence of former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, an epicly corrupt politician who once appeared on Trump's reality TV series "Celebrity Ap-

prentice," and granted a pardon to former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik, who was appointed to that post by then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, currently Trump's personal lawyer.

Objectionable as these grants of clemency may be, they also raise concerns about what would be an even more outrageous abuse of the pardon power: clemency for convicted Trump associates such as Paul Manafort, Trump's 2016 campaign chairman, and Roger Stone. On Tuesday, Trump again expressed sympathy for Stone, who faces sentencing in federal court for lying to Congress, witness tampering and obstructing a congressional investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. (Trump asserted, however, that he hadn't given any thought to a pardon for Stone.)

The Constitution gives the president essentially unbounded power "to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment." But a principled president will exercise that power in the interests of mercy, not because the recipients of clemency are prominent or political bedfellows or well-connected or cronies of the president himself.

Trump, however, seems to see the pardon power as a way to reward supporters and score political points. The beneficiaries of his clemency have included former Maricopa County, Ariz., Sheriff Joe Arpaio, a hero of the anti-immigrant right who was absolved of a contempt-of-court conviction; conservative provocateur Dinesh D'Souza, who was pardoned after pleading guilty to violating campaign-finance laws; and, more recently, several members of the U.S. military, including three service members accused or convicted of war crimes.

Blagojevich was convicted in 2011 of several counts of corruption, including trying to sell the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Barack Obama after he won the presidency. He has served eight years of a 14-year sentence. In addition to the "Celebrity Apprentice" connection, Blagojevich was prosecuted by Patrick Fitzgerald, a friend of James Comey, who was fired as FBI director by Trump and who has become an obsession for the president. On Tuesday, Trump said that the case against Blagojevich "was a prosecution by the same people — Comey, Fitzgerald — the same group." (Comey wasn't even in the Justice Department when Blagojevich was prosecuted.)

Trump has also used the pardon or defense that Blagojevich was a Democrat, and the White House noted that some prominent Democrats have supported cutting short Blagojevich's sentence. But that doesn't mean Trump's action wasn't improper for other reasons. As all five Republican House members who represent Illinois warned the president last year in a

joint statement: "Commuting the sentence of Rod Blagojevich, who has a clear and documented record of egregious corruption, sets a dangerous precedent and goes against the trust voters place in elected officials."

Kerik was sentenced to four years in prison in 2010 after pleading guilty to tax fraud and making false statements. Among other actions, he admitted to speaking to city regulators on behalf of a contractor who had done renovations on his apartment for free. Kerik was released in 2013.

Some of the grants of clemency issued by Trump on Tuesday are defensible, including commutations for two women convicted of drug offenses. But often when Trump extends clemency to a recipient, deserving or less so, he does so after the intervention of a celebrity. That was the case with Alice Marie Johnson, whose sentence for a nonviolent drug conviction was commuted after intervention by reality television star Kim Kardashian West. That hardly seems like justice.

Overall, Trump's exercise of the pardon power has been at best whimsical and at worst self-serving and blatantly political. The president would be committing an even worse corruption of the pardon power if he were to pardon other recipients of figures such as Manafort and Stone.

On MLB's cheating scandal, Manfred struck out looking

The Washington Times

If Major League Baseball's general manager Rob Manfred had been handed a baseball bat and wanted to destroy it, he wouldn't be acting any differently. America's pastime needs new leadership, stat.

Begin with Manfred's pathetic reaction to the Houston Astros' shameful sign-stealing scheme, which went on for years. Manfred has been caught red-handed using video cameras to steal the signs of opposing teams during the years in which they enjoyed multiple playoff runs, culminating in a World Series win in 2017.

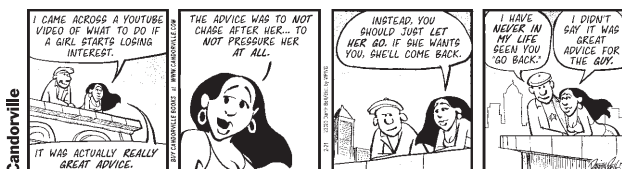
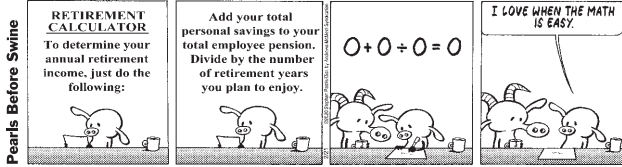
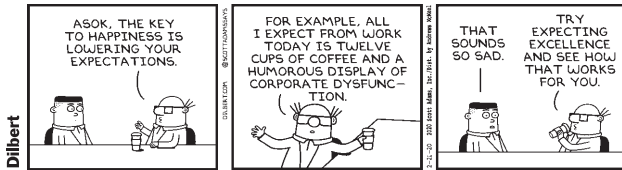
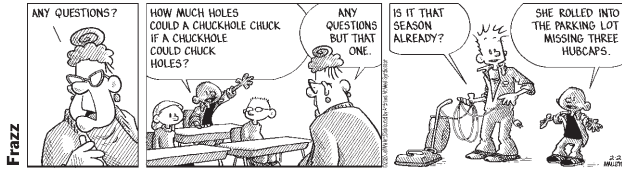
Manfred's reaction? Blanket immunity for all of the players involved and a few lifetime suspensions for the managers. The tainted 2017 championship will not be revoked. So: Fans can't trust the game they're watching is on the up-and-up, and Manfred's weak response will hardly act as a deterrent against future cheating.

If that wasn't bad enough, Manfred plans more. Starting this year, pitchers will have to face a minimum of three batters when they enter a game — gone will be the days of lefty and righty "specialists." So too will the days of skillful management — except that the number of pitchers facing "injury" and "having" to come out after a batter or two is rapidly rising.

And his decisions on future playoffs are even more worrying. "MLB is seriously weighing a move from five to seven playoff teams in each league beginning in 2022," the New York Post reported. "The team with the best record in each league would receive a bye to avoid the wild-card round round-robin." In other words, the two other division winners and the wild card with the next-best record would each host all three games in a best-of-three wild-card round. So the bottom three wild cards would have no first-round home games. The division winner with the second-best record would host the other two wild cards, and the pick of its opponent from those lower three wild cards, then the other division winner would pick, leaving the last two wild cards to play each other."

Simple, right?

If your eyes rolled to the back of your head in disbelief, the nutshell is this: The 162 regular game season would become essentially pointless as nearly half the league would make the playoffs. We're a far cry from the era when the best team in the AL and the best team in the NL faced each other in a best of seven world series. That system, incidentally, was the reason for the height of baseball's popularity in America.



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12				13					14				
15				16					17				
18								19	20				
				21				22			23	24	25
26	27	28					29				30		
31							32				33		
34							35				36		
37							38				39		
							40				41		
45	46	47					48	49					
50							51				52		
53							54				55		

- ACROSS**
- 1 Swab the decks
 - 4 Sandwich cookie
 - 8 Thailand, once
 - 12 Ecol. watchdog
 - 13 Chicken —
 - 14 Teen's woe
 - 15 Colombo's land
 - 17 Singer Loretta
 - 18 Pancake toppers
 - 19 "— the season ..."
 - 21 Recline
 - 22 President Trump's daughter
 - 26 Boyfriends
 - 29 Coquettish
 - 30 Texas tea
 - 31 They give a hoot
 - 32 Do wrong
 - 33 Vocal quality
 - 34 Aug. follower
 - 35 "Now I get it!"
 - 36 Sides in a turf war
 - 37 Football Hall-of-Famer Larry
 - 39 Extended lunch?
 - 40 Cartesian conclusion
 - 41 Semihard cheese
 - 45 Avocado dip, for short
 - 48 "Lonely Boy" singer
 - 50 Engrave
 - 51 Formerly
- DOWN**
- 52 Suffix with cash
 - 53 Overdue
 - 54 Mighty trees
 - 55 Body art, for short
 - 23 Lunch hour
 - 24 Monarch
 - 25 Pub orders
 - 26 Pear variety
 - 27 Woolly moms
 - 28 Dog food brand
 - 29 "Homeland" org.
 - 32 Rug cleaner
 - 33 Hand drums of India
 - 35 Alias abbr.
 - 36 Artful deceptions
 - 38 Recess
 - 39 In a jam
 - 42 Tizzy
 - 43 Furniture brand
 - 44 Like lemons
 - 45 Solidify
 - 46 Actress Hagen
 - 47 Play part
 - 49 Literary collection

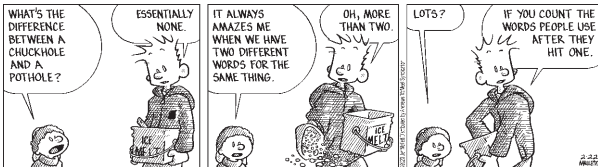
Answer to Previous Puzzle

H	E	E	D	S	A	U	L	N	A	B
E	T	N	A	T	A	R	A	I	C	E
N	A	V	I	B	E	A	N	S	L	D
S	T	I	L	E	S	E	J	E	C	T
				I	T	C	A	R	O	B
K	A	N	T	C	A	T	E	L	M	S
I	M	O	O	N	O	U	M	P		
R	E	B	A	R	A	P	S	E	X	Y
				I	M	P	E	L	O	H
A	N	G	I	E	T	R	I	P	L	E
L	E	G	N	E	W	S	B	R	I	E
M	A	I	N	A	P	A	K	N	I	T
A	P	E	S	T	A	R	S	A	S	S

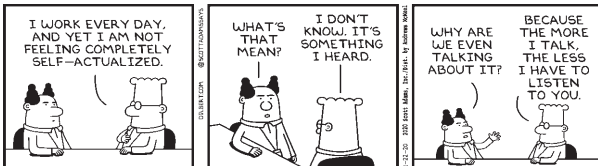
2-21 CRYPTOQUIP

ID, P NDI'F IXXN QDC FD
 MPWX TX QDCB YXSH
 HXNNSPIM TQ TXBGYKINPRX.
 P GKI WXIN EDB TQRXSE.
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: PHYSICAL GAMES THAT GREATLY ELEVATE IMPULSE ACTIVITY AMONG SYNAPSES: INTRANEURAL SPORTS.
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: N equals D

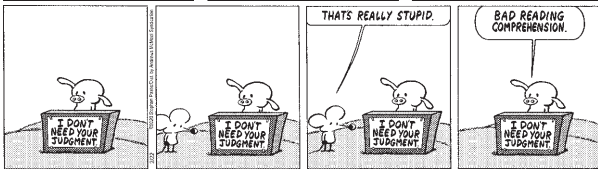
Frazz



Dilbert



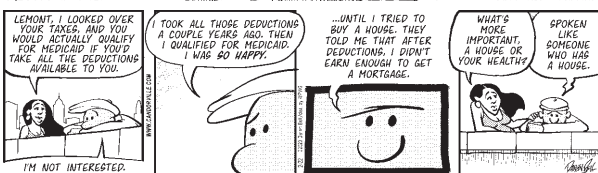
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



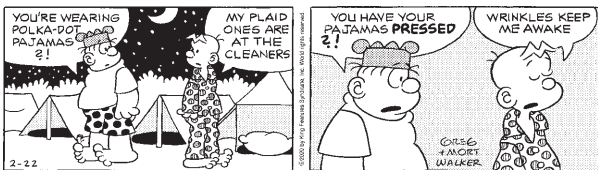
Candorville



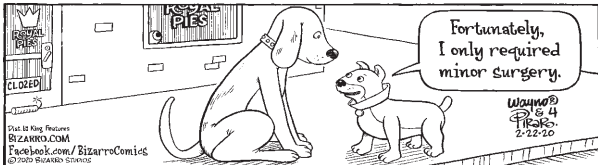
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11
12									13			
14									15			
16						17	18				19	
		20	21						22	23		
24	25	26		27			28		29		30	31
32			33						34			
35						36					37	
		38		39		40				41		
42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50			51				52	53				
54									55			
56									57			

ACROSS

- 1 "Vamoosel"
- 6 Geronimo, for one
- 12 Italian ice cream
- 13 More opulent
- 14 Front-runner
- 15 Court contests
- 16 Hotel chain
- 17 Bangkok language
- 19 Bakery purchase
- 20 Theater award
- 22 Actor Gibson
- 24 X-ray's cousin
- 27 Many a prep school (Abbr.)
- 29 Hawaiian island
- 32 Performer who works with dummies?
- 35 Cover with blackout

DOWN

- 56 Deserves
- 57 Gulf in a WWII battle
- 21 Tavern
- 23 Flightless bird
- 24 Super Bowl VIP
- 25 Irish actor Stephen
- 26 Patent seeker
- 28 Fait accompli
- 30 GI entertainers
- 31 "— showtime!" Family mom
- 33 Chai, e.g.
- 34 Gal. fractions
- 39 German sub
- 41 In poor taste
- 42 Sir's counterpart
- 43 Skin breakout
- 45 Pen fluids
- 47 Voucher
- 48 Coastal eagle
- 49 Rule, for short
- 51 — Lanka
- 53 Employ

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

2-22

CRYPTOQUIP

H GNJX KSDWCXY YUHWQ
LWNYDKAM UCY KUC CXJXW
MANL KNCDPHCT ASXP. HA'M
RDAAXWGQ HPLNMHRGX.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NO, I DON'T NEED YOU TO GIVE ME YOUR HELP PEDDLING MY MERCHANDISE. I CAN VEND FOR MYSELF.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals L

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AT

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NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference									
Atlantic Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	PP	PK	GA
Boston	61	38	11	5	88	203	147		
Tampa Bay	60	40	15	5	85	215	159		
Florida	60	32	22	7	70	210	202		
Toronto	61	31	22	8	70	213	204		
Buffalo	60	27	27	8	62	187	192		
Montreal	62	15	44	4	34	127	244		
Ottawa	60	21	28	11	53	163	204		
Detroit	62	15	44	4	34	127	244		
Metropolitan Division									
Pittsburgh	59	37	17	5	80	196	154		
Washington	59	37	17	5	79	208	180		
Philadelphia	60	33	20	7	73	198	178		
Carolina	59	34	23	2	72	193	164		
N.Y. Islanders	59	33	20	6	72	168	162		
Columbus	61	33	23	5	72	156	155		
N.Y. Rangers	59	31	24	4	66	195	184		
New Jersey	59	22	27	10	54	162	207		

Western Conference									
Central Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	PP	PK	GA
St. Louis	60	33	17	10	76	190	172		
Dallas	60	35	19	6	76	164	153		
Colorado	59	34	23	7	78	209	165		
Winnipeg	61	31	25	5	67	185	184		
Cashville	59	29	23	7	65	190	191		
Minnesota	59	28	24	7	63	180	190		
Chicago	60	25	26	7	60	179	194		
Pacific Division									
Edmonton	60	32	21	6	71	191	185		
San Jose	60	32	22	6	70	194	184		
Vegas	61	31	22	8	70	192	185		
Anaheim	61	24	34	6	68	180	186		
Arizona	63	30	25	8	68	174	170		
San Jose	59	29	29	7	65	155	194		
Los Angeles	60	24	29	7	59	156	190		
Los Angeles	60	21	34	5	47	148	193		

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Wednesday's games
 N.Y. Rangers 6, Chicago 5
 Dallas 3, Arizona 2
 Boston 3, Edmonton 1, OT
 Florida 4, Anaheim 1
 N.Y. Islanders 1, Toronto 1
 Minnesota 4, Vancouver 3, 3O

Thursday's games
 Montreal at Washington
 Philadelphia at Columbus
 Pittsburgh at Toronto
 San Jose at New Jersey
 Winnipeg at Ottawa
 Arizona at St. Louis
 Tampa Bay at Vegas
 Florida at Los Angeles

Friday's games
 N.Y. Rangers at Carolina
 Detroit at N.Y. Islanders
 Nashville at Chicago
 St. Louis at Dallas
 Boston at Calgary
 Philadelphia at Los Angeles

Saturday's games
 Buffalo at Pittsburgh
 Washington at New Jersey
 Tampa Bay at Philadelphia
 Carolina at Toronto
 San Jose at N.Y. Rangers
 Columbus at Nashville
 Tampa Bay at Arizona
 Boston at Vancouver
 Florida at Vegas
 Colorado at Los Angeles

Sunday's games
 Pittsburgh at Washington
 Chicago at Dallas
 Winnipeg at Buffalo
 San Jose at N.Y. Islanders
 Detroit at Toronto
 St. Louis at Minnesota
 Edmonton at Los Angeles
 Vegas at Anaheim

Leaders

Goal scoring		
Name, Team	GP	G
Auston Matthews, Toronto	61	43
David Pastrnak, Boston	60	42
Alex Ovechkin, Washington	58	40
Sebastian Aho, Carolina	58	34
Leon Draisaitl, Edmonton	59	34
Jack Eichel, Buffalo	59	34
Nathan MacKinnon, Colorado	58	33
Connor McDavid, Edmonton	55	30
Kyle Connor, Winnipeg	58	29
Nikita Kucherov, Tampa Bay	58	29
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	58	29
Patrick Kane, Chicago	60	27
Elias Lindholm, Calgary	61	27
Max Pacioretty, Vegas	61	27
Steven Stamkos, Tampa Bay	54	27
Patrice Bergeron, Boston	61	26
William Nylander, Toronto	59	26
Patrick Kane, Winnipeg	59	25
Mika Zibanejad, N.Y. Rangers	45	25
Jean-Gabriel Pageau, Ottawa	58	24

Plus/Minus		
Name, Team	GP	+/-
Ryan Graves, Colorado	57	41
Dougie Hamilton, Carolina	47	30
Nikita Kucherov, Tampa Bay	58	29
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	57	29
Bradley Point, Tampa Bay	57	29
Accob Slayton, Carolina	57	29
Ian Cole, Colorado	53	28
Anthony Cirelli, Tampa Bay	59	28
Victor Hedman, Tampa Bay	58	26
Valeri Nichushkin, Colorado	59	26
Credie Palat, Tampa Bay	59	26
Zeleno Chara, Boston	58	24
Kevin Shattenkirk, Tampa Bay	60	24
Brad Marchand, Boston	60	23
Sean Couturier, Philadelphia	59	23
Chandler Stephenson, Washington	56	22
Roman Josi, Nashville	59	21
Sean Couturier, Philadelphia	60	20
David Krejci, Boston	51	20
Craig Smith, Nashville	59	20

Around the league

Taking the road less traveled

Teams moving AHL affiliates closer to home

By PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

Jason Dickinson encountered quite a few bumps in the road on his route to the NHL. Good thing for his trusty truck.

Dickinson was up and down between the Dallas Stars and their American Hockey League affiliate, the Texas Stars, a total of 17 times during the 2017-18 season. Sometimes, the forward would join the team from the road. And sometimes, he would make that 183.5-mile trek along the interstate in his truck.

That's a rather easy call-up commute by league standards: From rink to rink, the average distance between NHL teams and their AHL partners is roughly 460 miles.

Currently, there are a half-dozen NHL teams that have affiliates located more than 1,200 miles away.

The longest jaunt? From the Utica Comets in New York to the Vancouver Canucks, which is a 2,918-mile coast-to-coast expedition.

The shortest? A tie between the San Jose Sharks/San Jose Barracudas and the Winnipeg Jets/Mantoba Moose. That's simply a short walk down the hallway thanks to shared arenas.

Over the past few seasons, a few teams have moved their minor



GRAHAM HUGHES, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

The Dallas Stars' Jason Dickinson moves in on Canadiens goaltender Carey Price as the Canadiens' Victor Mete, right, defends on Feb. 15 in Montreal. During the 2017-18 season, Dickinson drove his truck from the Stars' American Hockey League affiliate in Austin to Dallas when he was called up.

league affiliates closer to base camp. The Colorado Avalanche relocated their farm team from San Antonio, Texas, to Loveland, Colo., in 2018 and Ottawa a year earlier moved its from Binghamton, N.Y., to Belleville, Ontario.

The Vegas Golden Knights recently announced their purchase of an AHL franchise from Spurs Sports & Entertainment, operators of the San Antonio Rampage. The plan is to relocate the team from Texas to Henderson, Nev., and begin play at the Orleans

Arena next season.

It makes sense having players nearby for practical (emergency call-up) and logistical (easier for executives to catch games) purposes.

Avalanche assistant general manager Craig Billington lives in Denver but spends about 80% of his time working with the Eagles in Loveland, which is about 50 miles away.

"When you take into account the viewing and the communication that goes on, it really benefits

from a geographical proximity," Billington explained. "Information travels quite quickly and enables us to feel connected — the coaching staff, all the players, the trainers, the benefit of doctors and the medical support."

Eagles forward Jayson Megna is no stranger to making various NHL/AHL treks. He has taken that long flight from Utica to Vancouver while with the Canucks. He's gone from the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins to the Pittsburgh Penguins (264 miles). He knows the trip from the Hartford (Conn.) Wolf Pack to the New York Rangers (115 miles).

The current commute, from Loveland to Denver, is more than manageable for a player who's been added, recalled or returned on loan five times this season. Theoretically, he could be back at home in Fort Collins that night after a game.

"Super easy," said the 30-year-old Megna, who has played in 121 NHL games. "There's not any issues with travel plans. You still feel good and prepared for a game."

Not that players mind the travel — any sort of travel.

"I mean, when you get called up to the NHL, you have a certain amount of adrenaline," Megna said. "Guys just make it happen."

Take goaltender Calvin Pickard, for instance: He played in weekend games for the Grand Rapids Griffins last month, before getting a quick call to join the Detroit Red Wings to make a start.

"Just a quick drive," Pickard said of the 157-mile commute. "Just had to go grab my gear!"



MARY ALTAFFEN/AP

Right wing Jayson Megna, left, used to travel 11.5 miles from Hartford, Conn., to New York when he got called up. Now with the Colorado, he only has to drive 50 miles from Loveland, Colo., to Denver.

NBA

Confidence game: Graham steps up

Hornets guard emerging as Most Improved Player candidate in 2nd season

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Devonte' Graham had mixed emotions when Kemba Walker left for the Boston Celtics.

Walker had become his mentor on the court last year and a close friend off it, regularly inviting Graham over to his house for a meal cooked by his personal chef. Walker would let the rookie swim in his pool and lend him his car occasionally, too.

But while he knew he'd miss hanging out with his buddy, Graham realized that Walker's departure meant he'd see increased playing time — and have a chance to prove to everyone that he belongs in the NBA.

Graham has done just that. The Charlotte Hornets' second-year guard is averaging 18.1 points and 7.8 assists while playing 35 minutes per game entering Thursday night's game at Chicago. He is fifth in the league in three-pointers made (190).

That's a dramatic improvement over last year's rookie season, when Graham averaged 4.7 points and 2.6 assists in 14 minutes per game playing behind Walker and NBA veteran Tony Parker, all the while splitting time with the Hornets and their G League affiliate in Greensboro.

"Nobody expected Devonte' to be as good as he's been this year — not even Devonte,'" Hornets owner Mitchell Jordan said. "I think he believed he was better than he was the year before, but I think he's come out and shocked everybody in terms of the way he played."

Graham's prep school teammate, Donovan Mitchell, said Graham deserves to be the league's Most Improved Player.

Graham is certainly in the conversation, along with New Orleans' Brandon Ingram, Miami's Bam Adebayo, Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and others. But Graham's 13.4 points per-game scoring improvement far outdistances anyone else.

"That is the Devonte' I have known all of my life," Mitchell said. "He steps up once the lights come on. He makes tough plays. I'm so happy for him. For him to do what he's doing, it's really unmatched. A lot of people didn't really know who he was before this season."

Toronto's Nick Nurse coaches Pascal Siakam, who won the award last year, and said he sees



JIM MONE/AP

Charlotte Hornets guard Devonte' Graham, center, has improved his scoring average 13.4 points a game compared to last year and has the fifth-most three-pointers made in the league.

“That is the Devonte I have known all of my life. ... I'm so happy for him. For him to do what he's doing, it's really unmatched. A lot of people didn't really know who he was before this season.”

Donovan Mitchell

Utah Jazz guard who played at the same prep school as Devonte' Graham

similar traits in Graham. He's been impressed with Graham's consistency over the course of the season.

"Just like we talked about with Pascal, it's hard to be a consistent performer in this league," Nurse said. "To go from off the bench to consistently doing it every night is a really big leap, maybe a bigger leap than people think it is. We were keeping an eye on Pascal last season, wondering was this for real and was he going to be able to sustain this throughout the season? Was he able to bounce back from a tough night? Obviously, Pascal did. And Devonte' is showing a lot of the same qualities."

Graham has surprised even himself a little.

He laughed when thinking back to a game in December when he scored 40 points in a victory over the Brooklyn Nets.

"I don't know what happened there," Graham said, smiling. Outside of a mild slump before the All-Star break, Graham has remained fairly consistent despite seeing increased attention from defenses that know the Hornets don't have a lot of other scoring options. His 16 points/assists double-doubles are seventh most in the NBA this season.

But Hornets coach James Borrego has been most impressed with Graham's three-point shooting.

"The volume of threes he has taken and made is huge — that's extreme," Borrego said. "The

off-the-dribble shooting is elite, which is tough to do. We saw Kemba develop that over the last few years here, but he didn't have that earlier in his career. Devonte' has been able to do that in his second year."

Graham began the season as a reserve but quickly emerged as the team's top scoring threat, and Borrego quickly moved him into the starting lineup alongside Terry Rozier, who was pegged as Walker's replacement. He's been asked to play on and off the ball, similar to what he did in the same backcourt with Frank Mason at the University of Kansas.

Now Graham has emerged as a player that the Hornets feel they can build a franchise around.

But Jordan said Graham must continue to strive for greatness.

"I think he is starting to realize now that when defenses gear up against him, he's going to have to continue to improve," Jordan said. "I think he has done a good job of excelling and his hard work this summer has paid off. Like any great player, you can't stop. You have to keep improving and getting better. And he will get better. He's done an unbelievable job to this point."

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Toronto	40	15	72.7
Boston	38	16	70.4
Philadelphia	34	21	61.8
Brooklyn	25	28	47.2
New York	21	38	35.9

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
Miami	35	19	64.8
Orlando	24	31	43.6
Washington	20	33	37.7
Charlotte	18	36	33.3
Atlanta	15	41	26.8

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Milwaukee	46	16	74.2
Indiana	32	23	58.2
Chicago	19	36	34.3
Detroit	17	38	30.3
Cleveland	14	40	25.9

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Houston	34	20	63.0
Dallas	23	27	46.0
Memphis	28	26	51.9
San Antonio	23	31	42.6
New Orleans	19	37	34.1

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Denver	38	17	69.1
Utah	36	18	66.7
Oklahoma City	33	22	60.0
Portland	25	31	44.6
Minnesota	15	37	30.2

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
L.A. Lakers	41	12	77.4
L.A. Clippers	27	18	60.0
Phoenix	22	33	40.0
Sacramento	21	33	38.9
Golden State	12	43	21.8

Tuesday's games

No games scheduled.

Wednesday's games

No games scheduled.

Thursday's games

- Milwaukee at Detroit
- Miami at Atlanta
- Brooklyn at Philadelphia
- Charlotte at Chicago
- Memphis at Sacramento
- Houston at Golden State

Friday's games

- Cleveland at Orlando
- Dallas at Orlando
- Indiana at New York
- Phoenix at Portland
- Boston at Minnesota
- Denver at Oklahoma City
- San Antonio at Utah
- Memphis at L.A. Lakers
- Brooklyn at Toronto

Saturday's games

- Sacramento at L.A. Clippers
- Brooklyn at Charlotte
- Atlanta at Philadelphia
- Cleveland at Miami
- Phoenix at Chicago
- Philadelphia at Milwaukee
- Houston at Utah

Sunday's games

- Boston at L.A. Lakers
- Indiana at Toronto
- Minnesota at Denver
- Washington at Chicago
- San Antonio at Oklahoma City
- New Orleans at Golden State
- Detroit at Portland

Leaders

	Scoring	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Harden, HOU	51	517	532	1800	35.2
Antokumpo, MIL	48	459	507	1438	30.0
Young, ATL	50	459	392	1483	29.7
Lillard, POR	56	507	368	1594	29.2
Beal, WAS	36	368	340	1240	29.1
Doncic, DAL	44	418	306	1271	28.9
Siakam, TOR	42	396	256	1141	27.2
Westbrook, HOU	45	473	334	1232	27.1
Curry, GSW	42	468	1274	1254	26.9
Booker, PHX	52	463	347	1374	26.4
LaVine, CHI	55	483	258	1392	26.2
Drummond, DET	51	488	189	1274	25.0
Ingram, NOP	47	401	249	1169	24.9
James, LAL	52	477	187	1283	24.8
Siakam, TOR	43	385	170	1033	23.2
Curry, GSW	52	407	252	1120	23.2
Embiid, PHI	39	290	262	933	22.9
Wiggins, GSW	45	374	164	1011	22.5
Curry, GSW	52	407	172	1124	22.4
Walker, BOS	46	381	180	1001	21.8

Rebounds

	FG	FT	TOT	AVG
Drummond, CLE	52	566	904	35.8
Goertt, UTA	52	193	565	28.4
Whiteside, POR	51	203	515	27.8
Beal, WAS	39	169	397	25.3
Antokumpo, MIL	48	118	528	24.6
Curry, GSW	52	178	415	23.2
Embiid, PHI	39	104	365	21.9
Vucevic, ORL	51	115	361	21.8
Valanciunas, MEM	51	115	361	21.8
Adebayo, MIA	54	140	422	20.6

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
James, LAL	50	551	10.8
Young, ATL	50	459	9.2
Doncic, DAL	44	481	8.7
Beal, WAS	44	402	8.6
Simmons, PHI	53	441	8.3
Lillard, POR	52	429	8.2
Graham, CHA	54	420	7.8
Lowry, TOR	52	387	7.4
Harden, HOU	51	374	7.3
Brogdon, IND	50	301	7.3

FG Percentage

	FG	FTA	PCT
Goertt, UTA	204	309	66.0
Alieff, BOS	146	219	66.7
Capela, HOU	244	368	66.2
Clarke, MEM	243	390	62.3
Strutts, POR	332	532	62.4
Valanciunas, MEM	320	545	58.7
Simmons, PHI	359	615	58.4



Denver Nuggets (38-17) at Oklahoma City Thunder (33-22)
AFN-Sports
2:15 a.m. Saturday CET
10:15 a.m. Saturday JKT



New Orleans Pelicans (23-32) at Portland Trail Blazers (25-31)
AFN-Sports
4:35 a.m. Saturday CET
12:35 p.m. Saturday JKT



Philadelphia 76ers (34-21) at Milwaukee Bucks (46-8)
AFN-Sports2
2:30 a.m. Sunday CET
10:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



Boston Celtics (38-16) at Los Angeles Lakers (41-12)
AFN-Sports2
9:30 p.m. Sunday CET
6:30 a.m. Monday JKT

OLYMPICS/MLB/TENNIS

Test event limited to Japanese only

BY STEPHEN WADE
Associated Press

TOKYO — A test event for the Tokyo Olympics scheduled for later this month that would have involved some non-Japanese athletes is being revamped because of fear of the spreading virus from China.

It's now limited to only Japanese athletes with the Olympics just over five months away.

The two-day test event opens at the new Ariake Arena on Feb. 28 and is relatively obscure — a Paralympic test for boccia, a precision ball sport similar to bocce and related to lawn bowling. It's the first of 19 remaining test events before the Olympics are to open on July 24.

They will be watched closely, as will the start of the torch relay on March 26 in Fukushima, a prefecture devastated nine years ago by an earthquake, tsunami and the meltdown of three nuclear reactors.

The test events may reveal what effect the spreading virus is having on Olympic preparations, and the ability of non-Japanese athletes to safely enter Japan.

They could also shine a spotlight on Chinese athletes and serve as a reminder that the next Olympics — the Winter Olympics — are in Beijing in 2022.

The deaths in Japan of three Japanese hockey players attributed to the fast-spreading virus. The viral outbreak has infected more than 75,000 people globally and has been attributed to over 2,000 deaths in China.

"Obviously, that (test event) is going to be modified, but the test event will go ahead," Tokyo spokesman Masa Takaya told The Associated Press.

The International Olympic Committee and local organizers have repeated the same message for weeks: there are no plans to cancel or postpone the Olympics.

In a statement by Tokyo 2020, it quoted the Japan Para Sports Association saying "the JPSA has concluded that further time is necessary to fully analyze the potential impacts" that the virus might have on athletes.

Takaya said the next test events that are scheduled to have an international field include a wheelchair rugby test on March 12-15, and gymnastics test events on April 4-6.

Takaya said there were no plans to postpone or cancel any test events.

"No, no, no, no, never," he said. However, he could not guarantee that non-Japanese athletes would take part in the wheelchair and gymnastics events. It's possible they might go ahead, as boccia has, with only non-Japanese.

"We still don't know which athletes are competing," Takaya said. "When it's the most appropriate time, we will release the participants' information."

Olympic qualifiers and dozens of sports events across Asia have been postponed or called off.

On Thursday, the international governing body for wrestling approved moving from the Asian Olympic qualifier in Xi'an, China to Kyrgyzstan next month.

Chinese wrestlers eligible to compete have been routed to Serbia, where they are going through a quarantine process.

The cancellation of Olympic qualifying events wreaks havoc with athletes waiting to advance, organizers and federations forced to find new venues — not to mention disrupting hotel reservations, airplane flights and ticket reservations.

At risk are also TV broadcasters and sponsors who have invested billions of dollars in the Olympics. Almost three-quarters of the IOC income of \$5.7 billion over a four-year Olympic cycle is from broadcasting rights.

Federer has knee surgery, will miss French Open

Associated Press

BASEL, Switzerland — Roger Federer has had surgery on his right knee and will miss the French Open and several other tournaments.

Writing on his Facebook page Thursday, the 20-time Grand Slam champion said his knee "has been bothering me for a little while" so he "decided to have arthroscopic surgery in Switzerland (Wednesday)."

Doctors "are very confident of a full recovery," Federer said, before ending his post by telling his fans "see you on the grass" as he targets a return for Wimbledon.

Federer will skip tournaments

in Dubai, Indian Wells and Miami prior to the French Open, which starts on May 24.

Federer could potentially return to play at one of his favorite tournaments in Halle, Germany, on June 15. He has won the grass-court tournament 10 times.

Wimbledon starts June 29. Federer lost to Nadal in the semifinals at Roland Garros last year and then beat the Spaniard in the semifinals at Wimbledon.

Federer struggled with his fitness at times during the recent Australian Open, and was clearly hampered when he lost to Novak Djokovic in straight sets in the semifinals.



PHOTOS BY JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Washington Nationals manager Dave Martinez, left, talks with general manager Mike Rizzo during spring training Monday in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Martinez to Nats: Reminisce, then reload for a new season

BY HOWARD FENDRICH

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Carter Kieboom, a rookie who will get a shot to be the Washington Nationals' starting third baseman on opening day, took grounders alongside Asdrubal Cabrera, a versatile, 14th-year infielder who is among seven free agents returning to the World Series champions.

Across the diamond on Field 3 at the club's spring training facility, Ryan Zimmerman, another one of those returnees, shared duties at first base with Eric Thames, one of the few new faces expected to be on the 26-man roster.

A short while later Tuesday, at Field 6, slugging left fielder Juan Soto sent kids chasing balls that flew over the wall as he joined Howie Kendrick and Cabrera for the first round of batting practice.

As the Nationals engaged in their first full-squad workout, manager Dave Martinez's message was simple: Go ahead and think about the special moments of 2019, but also make sure to realize it's time to start over.

"It's 2020 now. At some point, you have to turn the page," said Zimmerman, back for his 16th season and the only player to be with the Nationals every year they have been in the nation's capital. "No one will ever take that year away from us, obviously. But for us to succeed this year, we have to move forward."

First, there will be some more reflecting in the days to come.

Some of that happened Tuesday, when Martinez gathered everyone for the daily top-of-the-morning "Circle of Trust," with all players and staff members, general manager Mike Rizzo and



Nationals left fielder Juan Soto showed off his power during batting practice on Tuesday.

owner Mark Lerner meeting for more than a half-hour, standing on a team logo on an artificial turf agility field.

Nearly, a drill whirred as a sign marking the team's Fall Classic triumph was affixed to a wall near a door leading to the home clubhouse.

Wednesday and Thursday will bring finger measurements, so championship rings can be sized. A parade honoring the team will be held in West Palm Beach on Thursday.

On Saturday, Washington will face the team it beat in the World Series — and the team it shares this complex with, and the team at the center of a sign-stealing scandal that is the talk of the baseball — in a Grapefruit League opener.

And on April 4, at the second

game of the season at Nationals Park, the title rings will be distributed.

"I like what Davey said. It's not about trying to repeat, it's about trying to compete. That's why we were great last year. We competed," shortstop Trea Turner said. "I would never say 'We are going to repeat,' but let's have fun and enjoy it and see what happens."

While one big name no longer around is Anthony Rendon, the third baseman who left to sign a \$245 million contract with the Los Angeles Angels, Turner is one of the many holdovers from a year ago.

"I really preached today: It's the process. Focus on the process. If you want to talk about something about last year, pick a moment that really stood out to you guys, and share it. And talk about it. There's nothing wrong with talking about it. We won. So talk about it. It's OK," Martinez said after making his way from field to field on a golf cart during the workout. "But pick a moment that stands out to you, amongst your teammates and everything, and live it and feel it. It's a good feeling. That should motivate people as you're talking about it, even with guys that weren't here. I'm sure they'd love to hear the stories about what transpired and how we do things. And go from there."

In other words, delight in it, but don't dwell on it.

And get right back to work. "We'll always talk about it. It'll always be crazy special," Zimmerman said about 2019. "The first week of the season will be cool. Getting the banner, getting a ring — all that stuff's really special. But then it's time to play this year. Get down to business."

MLB

Rangers' Choo relishing final year of deal

37-year-old leadoff hitter uncertain what will happen at end of season

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**
Associated Press

Shin-Soo Choo wants to enjoy baseball even more this season, all of those times in the clubhouse and on the field while still at the top of the Texas Rangers lineup. "I don't know what's going to happen at the end of the year," said Choo, the 37-year-old leadoff hitter going into the final season of his \$130 million, seven-year contract.

Choo has genuine confidence that he can play at a high level for another couple of years, or more, after 2020.

There is just no way to know if he will be re-signed by the Rangers, maybe go to another team or decide it's time to be at home full time with his wife and three growing children. Those are all questions he said are too early to consider.

"I still love this game," Choo said. "I'm still lucky to play major league level, and then it's very

special, major league uniform, wearing my number on it, my name on it on the back. That's very special, very lucky. I still feel that way, so we'll see."

His oldest kid is a 14-year-old son who is a high school freshman playing baseball and football. Choo flew home to Texas last weekend to watch one of his baseball games.

"I really want to see him play so bad sometimes," Choo said. "Just think about myself, I'll play five, 10 more years."

A first-time All-Star in 2018, Choo followed that up by hitting 265 with a career-high 24 home runs and a .371 on-base percentage last season.

"He's the most professional player, person," manager Chris Woodward said. "I truly value the person and what he can do. And, you know, I still think there's a lot left physically just based on the way he prepares himself, the shape that he keeps himself in."

Choo will be the highest-paid Rangers player this season, at \$21 million for the final year of



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Shin-Soo Choo will be the highest-paid player on the Rangers roster this season, making \$21 million.

his back-loaded deal. The only longer-tenured Texas player is 31-year-old shortstop Elvis Andrus, who is entering his 12th season.

Texas signed Choo as a free agent the same offseason it acquired Prince Fielder in a trade from Detroit, when the All-Star slugger had seven seasons left on a nine-year contract. Fielder was forced to retire midway through the 2016 season, at age 32, after a second neck surgery over a three-year period.

Choo, who turns 38 in mid-July, was coming off a career-high .423 on-base percentage during his only season with the Cincinnati Reds when he got to Texas. He is still having productive seasons for the Rangers.

Cory Kluber, a two-time AL Cy Young Award winner known

for his own hard work ethic and attention to detail, made his major league debut in 2011 with Cleveland when Choo was with the Indians.

"When I first got called up, you noticed right away the way he goes about his business. So I tried to try to pay attention to that a lot," said Kluber, who was traded from Cleveland to Texas during the offseason. "It definitely had an impact on me when I was younger."

Choo has averaged 149 games over the past three seasons, since being limited to 48 games in 2016 because of four stints on the disabled list for different injuries each time.

He has had at least 20 homers and 75 walks in each of the past three seasons, becoming only the

third Rangers player to do that. The others were Rafael Palmeiro's record five in a row (1999-2003), and Alex Rodriguez from 2001-03. Palmeiro and Adrian Beltre are the only other Texas players with at least 24 homers in a season at age 36 or older.

Over those three seasons combined, Choo is fifth among all American League players in games played (446), walks (247), hit by pitch (35) and times on base (721).

"I think he's gotten smarter. His ability to control the strike zone and get on base," Woodward said. "Pitch one, he is the most prepared player I've seen. He doesn't take one day for granted. He's there. He's the earliest there every day. He'll talk about the game all the time."

By the numbers

24 **3** **149**

Number of home runs by Rangers leadoff hitter Shin-Soo Choo last season, a career high.

Number of seasons in a row in which Choo has hit at least 20 homers and earned 75 walks.

Number of games Choo has averaged the past three seasons since playing only 48 in 2016.

SOURCE: Associated Press



KAREEM ELGAZZAR, THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER/AP

Cincinnati Reds starting pitcher Luis Castillo had a breakout season last year, finishing 15-8 with a 3.40 ERA and 226 strikeouts over 190 1/3 innings.

Reds' Castillo aiming for Cy Young

By **GARY SCHATZ**
Associated Press

GOODYEAR, Ariz. — Luis Castillo accomplished two of his goals last year: He was the Reds' opening day starter and made the All-Star team. He's aiming higher in 2020.

With an upgraded offense behind him, Cincinnati's best starter thinks he's capable of winning the Cy Young Award.

"I try to set goals every year," Castillo said. "Even though I got these two goals, I want to get three goals. I want to get three goals and add the Cy Young and make the playoffs."

"I think with this team filled with veterans, it is something we can do together," he said.

Castillo, 27, had a breakout season in every way last year. He was 11-4 with a 2.63 ERA in early August before fading down the stretch of his most challenging season. He finished 15-8 with a 3.40 ERA

and 226 strikeouts in 190 1/3 innings.

The first-time All-Star had career highs in wins, innings and strikeouts, relying on a change-up that former Cubs manager Joe Maddon likened to a "Bugs Bunny change-up" because of the way it complements his fastball.

"He had a phenomenal year," Reds manager David Bell said. "Just staying hungry and continuing to get better will help him reach his potential, which is through the roof. We saw a lot last year and there's more in there for sure."

Over the last three seasons, Castillo leads the Reds' staff with 28 wins, 78 starts, 449 1/3 innings and 489 strikeouts. He'll be eligible for arbitration next year.

Castillo got attention with his impressive beginning to last season. Bell chose him for the opening day start, and he allowed only two hits in 5 1/3 innings of a 5-3 win over Pittsburgh. After 10 starts, he was 5-1 with a 1.90 ERA, allowing only three homers overall.

Castillo struggled near the end of the season as his innings piled up. He had a 4.40 ERA in his last eight starts, giving up at least five runs three times.

He's trying to use his change-up more strategically this season.

"The small little things are what we are focusing on this year," Castillo said. "The mistakes from last year. We will learn from this year."

The Reds finished near the bottom of the National League in runs scored last season despite playing in one of its most hitter-friendly ballparks. The additions of infielder Mike Moustakas and outfielders Nick Castellanos and Shogo Akiyama are expected to provide a significant upgrade.

The Reds also added to an already impressive rotation by signing left-hander Wade Miley. Castillo leads a rotation that includes All-Star Sonny Gray, Trevor Bauer and Anthony DeSclafani.

"I guess me such confidence," Castillo said.

MLB



PHOTOS BY DARRON CUMMINGS, ABOVE, BEN MAROIT, BELOW/AP

Oakland Athletics pitcher Mike Fiers, the whistleblower in the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scandal, is scheduled to make his first spring start Sunday in a split-squad game.

Athletics' Fiers plans to make his first spring start Sunday

Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. — Mike Fiers is scheduled to start a split-squad game for Oakland on Sunday in his first game action since revealing the Houston Astros' cheating scheme.

It had not been determined Wednesday whether Fiers' spring training debut would come in the home game versus San Francisco or against Arizona in Scottsdale. Fiers went 15-4 last season, including the second no-hitter of his career, as the A's earned an AL wild-card spot.

In a story published by The Athletic in November, Fiers said the Astros had stolen signs using a camera in center field during their run to the 2017 World Series championship. Fiers played on that team.

The ensuing scandal resulted in three managers losing their



jobs, a fine and other penalties, and has become the talk of Major League Baseball. Many players have harshly spoken about the

Astros, saying they should be stripped of their title.

There has been debate among fans and others whether Fiers did the right thing in his role as a whistleblower. Commissioner Rob Manfred said there was no doubt Fiers helped the sport.

"We will take every possible step to protect Mike Fiers wherever he's playing, whether it's in Houston or somewhere else," Manfred said. "Mike did the industry a service."

Fiers has declined to speak in detail about the scheme itself or his decision to go public.

"I'm not asking for extra security. I'm here to play baseball and I can defend myself, if anything," he was quoted as saying by The Athletic on Wednesday. "It's part of the game. If they decide to throw at me, then they throw at me. There's nothing much you can do about it."

Cole: Cheating talk doesn't concern him

BY KRISTIE ACKERT
New York Daily News

TAMPA, Fla. — Gerrit Cole is fine with his new teammates expressing their feelings. The former Astro reiterated Wednesday that he did not see, hear or know anything about Houston's scheme to illegally steal and transmit signs in real time, which was proven to have happened in 2017 — before he was there. Several Yankees have alleged, however, that it continued for the two seasons after Cole was traded there.

"I mean, I just refer back to what I said the other day. George asked me yesterday about players specifically and I'll just stick to what I said which is, everybody's entitled to their opinion. It's their own opinion. And people handle this the way they want to handle it," Cole said. "And, you know, we're all we're all grown guys around here. And, you know, I certainly am not going to tell somebody how to think, so I don't see it as an issue. I am not personally offended by it. And so

hopefully that's the last question that I'll have to answer about it."

The MLB report that concluded the Astros used the "banging scheme" in 2017, before Cole was traded to Houston. Gleyber Torres, Aaron Judge and Giancarlo Stanton (and many players across baseball) have made it clear they don't believe it stopped in 2018 and continued in 2019. Those were Cole's two seasons in Houston.

Still, there seems to be no animosity for the Yankees' new ace from his teammates.

After throwing a 40-pitch live batting practice that featured Torres, Cole and the shortstop spent a long time going over the sequence of pitches. It was amicable and it was helpful to Cole.

"Gleyber was asking why I didn't double up on the change-up because he didn't see it. But he encouraged me to try to throw it again," Cole said.

"We were just talking about approach to right on right, change-up and, you know, when I feel comfortable throwing it and then he was telling me when hitters are susceptible to swinging at that."

Hurts so good

Nats' Scherzer says he's pleased to have normal shoulder soreness

BY JESSE DOUGHERTY
The Washington Post.

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Max Scherzer smiled through the pain. Then those smiles grew while he discussed it.

"Can feel the shoulder is a little tired, right where you want it," Scherzer said Wednesday afternoon. "So I threw just enough pitches, just right, to be able to get back out here in a couple days when the games start up. Right on target."

The 35-year-old had just tossed 42 pitches across two simulated innings. That he felt a few pangs in his shoulder, and not anywhere else, was viewed as a little victory. Scherzer is coming off a very odd year for the Washington Nationals. He had been perpetually healthy, and averaging 32 starts a season, before his body acted up. His July included three diagnoses in 16 days — a mid-back strain, bursitis below the scapula in his right shoulder blade, then a mild rhomboid strain — before dealing with neck spasms in the World Series.

Scherzer finished with 27 regular-season appearances and pitched until Oct. 30. But Scherzer felt normal by December, when his throwing program picked up, and was encouraged by Wednesday's live batting practice. The shoulder soreness was welcomed and normal. It was exciting because there was no soreness anywhere else.

"In spring training, you have to put yourself through some fatigue. That's good for you," said Scherzer, who is expected to make his spring training debut against the Houston Astros on Saturday. "That's when you know you're pushing the limit in how you're building up. This is honestly the most dangerous time of the year for pitchers. This is when you see a good amount of Tommy Johns



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Washington Nationals pitcher Max Scherzer said he was encouraged by his throws during live batting practice Wednesday.

across the league and everything. I'm always scared of that."

The Nationals have again hitched their identity to starting pitching, with a returning rotation of Scherzer, Stephen Strasburg, Patrick Corbin and Anabel Sanchez. Their fifth starter will be one of Joe Ross, Erick Fedde or Austin Voth, with depth options in Kyle McGowin and Ben Braymer.

That leaves limited experience behind the top four arms. And that is why the health of Scherzer, Strasburg, Corbin and Sanchez will be essential to success.

Washington starters finished second in the league with 938 innings last season. They finished first in the league 214 wins above replacement. Both figures were important because of how bad the bullpen was. But even with a retooled relief corps, including the addition of Will Harris, this team will go as its rotation does. That begins with Scherzer.



FRANK FRANKLIN III/AP

New York Yankees' pitcher Gerrit Cole, who pitched the past two seasons for the Houston Astros, said he isn't bothered by talk of the Astros' sign stealing, saying he wasn't aware of it.

HIGH SCHOOL

DODEA Europe boys basketball

Unbeaten Raiders roll into semifinals

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

An elimination-game clash between archrivals Kaiserslautern and Ramstein is among the DODEA Europe boys' basketball semifinal matchups arranged via pool-play action in Wiesbaden and Ramstein on Thursday.

No. 2 Vilseck will take on No. 3 Black Forest in the other Division I semifinal, set for Friday at Clay Kasernen Fitness Center in Wiesbaden.

The round-robin Division II bracket continues Friday.

Division I

Kaiserslautern 61, Black Forest 60, OT: Tre Dotson delivered his second game-winning shot in as many days to send the Raiders to the semifinals without a loss.

Dotson took an inbound pass with nine seconds to play in overtime and his team trailing by a point and sped coast-to-coast, sliced into the lane, side-stepped BFA defenders and laid the decisive basket softly off the glass. The Falcons' desperation leave from midcourt bounced off the glass, sending the Raiders into the elimination round as the division's only unbeaten team.

"It was go time," said Dotson, who also scored the game-winner in the Raiders' redemptive 52-50 defeat of Wiesbaden on Wednesday. "I had to go for it."

The skilled and athletic Dotson creates a chunk of Kaiserslautern's offense via his forays into the paint, his objective often to draw the defense and kick to a shooter left open. Dotson had other plays with Thursday's game-winner.

The win completed a 3-0 preliminary round for the fifth-seeded Raiders, the runner-up in each of the last two European tournaments.

Wiesbaden 54, Stuttgart 43: Black Forest got the result it needed as the Warriors beat the Panthers.

The Wiesbaden win forced a three-way tie between Wiesbaden, Stuttgart and Black Forest. The Falcons claimed the tiebreaker based on their point differential in games between the three tied teams.

Ramstein 59, Lakenheath 23: The five-time defending champions earned their pool's second seed with a rout of the seventh-seeded Lancers.

The tournament's new structure, placing the No. 1 and No. 2 seeds in the same pool, was designed to save the division's premier matchup for Saturday's final. But the format yielded a semifinal that is a rematch of the last two European tie games, both of which saw Ramstein defeat Kaiserslautern.

Vilseck 41, SHAPE 25: As notable as the Raider-Royal semi-

nal might be, the second-seeded Falcons are making their own case as the team to beat in this tournament.

Vilseck continued its well-timed hot streak Thursday with a thorough defeat of the eighth-seeded Spartans. The Falcons beat Black Forest, their eventual semifinal opponent, twice in the final weekend of the regular season to clinch the second seed and avoid the more turbulent half of the bracket. On Wednesday, Vilseck seized control of its pool with a 44-38 defeat of top seed Ramstein.

Though the program hasn't enjoyed much postseason success in recent seasons, senior Jonas Matthews said this year's Falcons are different.

"We're all well-rounded," Matthews said. "We can all shoot, we can drive, we can score inside or outside, we're fast, we're tall."

Division II

Naples 52, AOSR 36: The Wildcats continued to perform well above their humble fifth seed, knocking off the top-seeded Falcons and later handling fourth seed Aviano 45-31.

That run came a day after Naples knocked off seasonlong nemesis Vicenza, starting postseason momentum that proceeded unabated through Thursday. All told, the Wildcats are 4-0 entering Friday's final two round-robin games against Rota and Bahrain and have a clear path to Saturday's championship game.

Barring a Naples collapse, the other finals berth will likely be decided by a pair of battles between the Wildcats' conquests to date. Aviano faces both AOSR and Vicenza on Friday. Vicenza beat AOSR 57-42 on Thursday to hand the No. 1 seed its second loss of the day.

Division III

Ansbach 41, Hohenfels 40: The second-seeded Cougars edged the third-seeded Tigers to claim the pool's top seed.

But the disappointment didn't last long for Hohenfels, which handily defeated Brussels 66-55 later Thursday to secure its own spot in the elimination round.

Baumholder 42, Spangdahlem 34: The top-seeded defending champions handled the fourth-seeded Sentinels in a largely inconsequential pool-play finale. Both teams had already clinched their semifinal berths before Thursday's tipoff.

Baumholder had no trouble with Hohenfels in its regular-season meeting, a 65-45 win on Jan. 31. Ansbach and Spangdahlem did not play each other this season.

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Scoreboard

DODEA Europe basketball championships

Thursday at Wiesbaden and Ramstein Air Base, Germany

Boys

Division I

Ramstein 59, Lakenheath 23
Vilseck 41, SHAPE 25
Pool B
Kaiserslautern 61, Black Forest 60
Wiesbaden 54, Stuttgart 43
Friday's games
At Clay Kasernen Fitness Center
Semifinals
Black Forest vs. Vilseck, 4 p.m.
Ramstein vs. Kaiserslautern, 5:30 p.m.

Division II

Round-robin play
Rota 46, Marymount 10
Vicenza 45, Bahrain 31
AOSR 36, Naples 11
Bahrain vs. 5 Naples, 11 a.m.
AOSR vs. 3 Rota, 1:30 p.m.
5 Naples vs. 6 Bahrain, 6 p.m.

At Wiesbaden High School
Friday's games
Round-robin play
At Wiesbaden High School
2 Vicenza vs. 7 Marymount, 8:30 a.m.
1 AOSR vs. 4 Aviano, 9:45 a.m.
3 Rota vs. 5 Naples, 11 a.m.
6 Bahrain vs. 1 Marymount, 12:15 p.m.
1 AOSR vs. 3 Rota, 1:30 p.m.
5 Naples vs. 6 Bahrain, 6 p.m.

At Wiesbaden Middle School
2 Vicenza vs. 4 Aviano, 4 p.m.
Division III
Pool A
Alconbury 57, Spinnella 36
Baumholder 42, Spangdahlem 34
Pool B
Brussels 24, AFNORTH 11
Ansbach 41, Hohenfels 40
Ansbach 54, Ankara 20
Hohenfels 66, Brussels 65
AFNORTH 44, Ankara 20

Friday's games
At Clay Kasernen Fitness Center
Semifinals
Baumholder vs. Hohenfels, 11:30 a.m.
Spangdahlem vs. Ansbach, 2:30 p.m.

Girls

Division I

Pool A
Stuttgart 43, Black Forest 10
Ramstein 43, Lakenheath 25
Pool B
SHAPE 44, Wiesbaden 34
Kaiserslautern 38, Vicenza 14

Friday's games
At Wiesbaden High School
Semifinals
SHAPE vs. Ramstein, 3 p.m.
Stuttgart vs. Kaiserslautern, 4:30 p.m.

Division II

Round-robin play
Vicenza 42, Rota 10
Naples 45, Bahrain 22
AOSR 28, Rota 11
Vicenza 53, Marymount 11
AOSR 28, Rota 11
Naples 45, Aviano 31
4 AOSR vs. 6 Bahrain, 4-6 p.m.

Friday's games
At Wiesbaden Middle School
Round-robin play
Vicenza 42, Rota 10
1 Aviano vs. 4 AOSR, 9:45 a.m.
2 Naples vs. 7 Rota, 11:30 a.m.
6 Bahrain vs. 7 Rota, 12:15 p.m.
1 Aviano vs. 3 Vicenza, 1:30 p.m.
2 Naples vs. 4 AOSR, 2-4 p.m.
5 Marymount vs. 6 Bahrain, 5:15 p.m.

Division III

Pool A
Hohenfels 38, Spinnella 16
Spangdahlem 34, Brussels 15
Pool B
Sigonella 27, Baumholder 26
AFNORTH 36, Ansbach 11
Vicenza 48, Ankara 20
AFNORTH 26, Sigonella 23
Baumholder 33, Ankara 17

Friday's games
At Clay Kasernen Fitness Center
Spangdahlem vs. Sigonella, 10 a.m.
Hohenfels vs. AFNORTH, 1 p.m.



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Marymount's Kevin Li pulls down a rebound against Aviano's Braden Letts in a Division II game at the DODEA Europe basketball championships.



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Vicenza's Kate Hunter fights for a rebound with Bahrain's Jalya Dewalt, left, and Kennedy Sawyer in a Division II game at the DODEA Europe basketball championships in Wiesbaden, Germany.

DODEA Europe girls basketball

Division I holds form; Naples beats Aviano

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

The top four teams in Division I claimed their places in the elimination round Thursday to set up a pair of DODEA Europe girls basketball semifinals Friday.

Reigning champion and top seed Stuttgart will face fourth seed Kaiserslautern, while No. 2 Ramstein takes on No. 3 SHAPE in the opposite semifinal.

Seventh-seeded defending Division III champion Sigonella, meanwhile, played its way into a semifinal matchup with top-seeded Spangdahlem. Hohenfels faces AFNORTH in the other Friday Division III semifinal.

Division II, meanwhile, has one more day of round-robin play on Friday.

Division I

Stuttgart 43, Black Forest 10: There still are no signs of vulnerability from the three-time defending Division I champions.

The Panthers handled a third and final preliminary opponent with ease on Thursday, playing their reserves for extended stretches of another blowout. Stuttgart won its three pool-play games by a combined 93 points.

Ramstein 43, Lakenheath 25: The Royals are ready to get to the business of playing for a championship.

That was the sentiment expressed by junior forward Alayna Potter after her team's "kind of messy" defeat of the eighth-seeded Lancers.

"We just didn't play up to our potential. I think we have the capability to do really well," said Potter, who scored six of her seven points in the third quarter. "Now we've just got to look forward."

What's ahead is a rematch of a 37-32 Royals win over SHAPE on the opening weekend of the regular season.

SHAPE 44, Wiesbaden 34: The Spartans used an 11-0 first-half run to separate themselves from the Warriors.

The Spartans ran into occasional trouble Thursday with the frenzied full-court pressure applied by the Warriors. But senior point guard Gabi Shultz kept the SHAPE offense squared away with steady ball-handling and a game-high 17 points.

Kaiserslautern 38, Vilseck 14: The Raiders stormed into the elimination round with a runaway defeat of the sixth-seeded Falcons.

Kaiserslautern deployed a balanced offensive attack to extend its season. Audrey Elisondo, Rebecca Moon and Azora Williams scored nine points apiece.

The Raiders' reward is a date with Stuttgart, which handed Kaiserslautern 57-33 and 41-28 losses in January.

Division II

Naples 45, Aviano 31: The Wildcats took control of the round-robin tournament by handing the Saints their first loss of the winter.

Naples, which also beat Bahrain 45-22 on Thursday, enters the final day of preliminary play at 4-0 and with the inside track at a spot in Saturday's championship. Aviano remains in good shape despite the loss. The Saints wrap up round-robin play with a matchup against Vicenza, also at 3-1 in the tournament, which looms as a potential play-in game.

Division III

Sigonella 27, Baumholder 26: The reigning champs roared back from a huge deficit.

The Jaguars struggled through the regular season without much of the talent responsible for last year's title. But the team has responded to the rigors of the postseason, adding the Thursday comeback to Wednesday's 2-0 showing and earning a return trip to the elimination round. Spangdahlem and AFNORTH remain the heavy favorites.

HIGH SCHOOL/BOXING

Concerns: First cancellation of winter tournaments in almost 40 years

FROM BACK PAGE

events and make a determination based on how this situation evolves."

The coronavirus started in China and has spread around the world. More than 2,100 people have died after being infected with the virus, according to Associated Press, with more than 75,000 people testing positive.

U.S. bases in Daegu on Wednesday restricted access and imposed a self-quarantine after a church was linked to first coronavirus. South Korea reported its first death from the virus on Thursday, according to the AP.

Daegu Mayor Kwon Young-jin urged its 2.5 million people on Thursday to refrain from going outside as cases of the virus spiked and he pleaded for help from the central government, AP reported.

It's the first time the boys tournaments, held annually since 1949, and the girls tournaments held since 1976, have been canceled since 1981, when budget cuts forced DODEA Pacific to call off all Far East tournaments except girls volleyball for the 1980-81 school year.

The news sparked universal disappointment among coaches and players.

"We knew coming in we had a good chance [to win]," Naama sophomore forward Keshawn McNeill said. "I especially feel badly for the seniors."

Coach Ron Merriwether of defending boys champion Humphreys said the Blackhawks were stunned.

"They're crushed," Merriwether said of his players. "What can we do? When I told them, they thought I was joking; I do that sometimes. I feel badly for the players who won't be coming back. A lot of emotion."

Kadena's girls team, which finished second to American School Bangkok the past three years, was hoping to make the leap to a D-I title, coach Johnny Cooper said.

"This could have been the year, but what was meant to be was meant to be," Cooper said.

Cheerleading teams were likewise disappointed when the news broke.

"It's devastating, horrible," Humphreys coach Maschil Alexander said. "We have a very strong team and that's what makes it even harder. It's horrible."

Her team captain, senior Lily Austinson, said the loss is double following the cancellation of the Korea league cheer tournament last month.

"Especially with me being a senior and the last time to compete and leave it all out on the floor and to have it taken away," Austinson said. "For good reasons, but it still hurts."

Along with the disappointment came understanding among the players, coaches said.

"This (coronavirus) is probably something we've never seen or heard of before," Cooper said. "We have to look out for these kids."

"We just have to deal with it. Nothing we can do," said Perry boys coach Joshua Egan. The loss is double following the cancellation to Japan three years ago.

Adding to the disappointment for Yokota's boys was losing their last game of the season Thursday at the last second against Edgren.

"You go through the whole season and it ends like that," Panthers coach Dan Galvin said. "But nobody's crying. They (players) understand. They just want to get home."



PHOTOS BY ISAAC BREKKE/AP

Tyson Fury attends a news conference for Saturday's WBC heavyweight championship fight.

Showdown: Unbeaten heavyweights square off

FROM BACK PAGE

paper, needs no promotion. Fury and Deontay Wilder for the title Saturday night in the biggest heavyweight showdown in years.

"If this fight doesn't sell, no fight in history will sell," Fury said. "You've got a Brit versus an American, a talker versus a talker, personality versus personality. Both unbeaten, and we fought to a draw last time."

"What's not to like?"
Frankly, not much. Fourteen months after they were both disappointed in a draw in a hugely entertaining fight, Fury and Wilder meet in a rematch so big that it took two major TV networks to combine for the pay-per-view show.

It's a fight with a bit of everything, the kind of fight boxing fans usually only dream about. There's little not to like about the bout at the MGM Grand arena, except maybe what it costs to watch at home on Fox Sports or ESPN pay-per-view (\$79.99).

Still, this fight might be the rare one worth calling up a few buddies and ordering pizzas. If it even comes close to the drama of the first fight, the entertainment value will be priceless.

And it's taking place only because the two best heavyweights in the world are willing to put their unbeaten records and everything else on the line to make it happen.

"It takes a certain type of man to risk his life and not just his life," Fury said as a camp member splashed nearby. "I mean risk everything he's ever achieved in his life. To put it all on the line, draw a mark and say, right, let's have the two best men fight each other for the ultimate glory. That's what me and Wilder are doing."

How Fury got to this point isn't exactly how the path to heavyweight greatness is usually mapped out. He won a piece of the title against Wladimir Klitschko in 2015, only to descend into the darkness of depression and drug and alcohol addiction that threatened to end not only his career but his life.



The only blemish on Deontay Wilder's record is his 12-round draw against Fury in December of 2018.

Fury ballooned to 385 pounds and seemingly would never fight again. But he discovered that working out would help him beat his demons and he hasn't stopped since returning to the ring in June 2018 after a 2½-year absence.

He's still big — 6-foot-9 and probably about 270 pounds at fight time — but sober now and right in the mix at the top of a heavyweight division that is suddenly hot once again. Two months after Anthony Joshua got a piece of the title back by beating Andy Ruiz Jr. in Saudi Arabia, Fury and Wilder will meet with the winner considered by most in boxing to be the legitimate heavyweight champion.

"The sleeping giant has now awoken," Fury said. "We've brought it back to the glory days. I believe the heavyweight division now is thriving like it was in the '70s and '80s."

While the fight has a lot of intriguing

sidelights — as well as two showmen with contrasting styles not afraid to mix it up — the real selling point is the first fight. Fury outboxed Wilder throughout that fight only to get knocked down in ninth round and then completely flattened in the 12th.

Wilder was walking around the ring celebrating what was surely another knockout victory. But somehow Fury got up and actually took the fight to Wilder in the closing seconds and when the scorecards were tallied it was a draw.

The rematch shapes up as boxer versus puncher once again, except Fury claims this time he'll be the one knocking Wilder down. He's predicting a second round knockout, despite Wilder's claims that he hits like a much smaller man.

"I don't respect his boxing skills," Fury said. "But the thing is I'm not looking for boxing skills in this fight. I'm looking for the big knockout punches. So it's going to be a very entertaining fight while it lasts."

It's Fury's third straight fight in the boxing capital of the world, and he left England at the first of the year to properly train for it. Fury and his camp are ensconced in a rented house near the glittering Strip, though Fury says he rarely ventures out to the casinos.

On a recent night he did visit the Strip, though, taking in a Vegas Golden Knights hockey game. Almost as if it was planned — and it kind of was — Ryan Reaves of the Knights and Ross Johnson of the New York Islanders dropped their gloves and traded blows right off the opening draw as Fury cheered from the stands.

Much like Fury's first fight with Wilder, the fisticuffs between Reaves and Johnson ended in a draw, with both players getting 5-minute penalties. But the fight seemed to spark the struggling Knights who went on to a 1-0 win.

The fight Saturday night could be just as close, with bookies making it a rare pick'em choice. And if the old adage in boxing that styles make fights is true, it could be one that lives up to the hype the second time around.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Plummeting percentages

Moving back three-point line has resulted in historically poor shooting from deep

By JOHN MARSHALL
Associated Press

By the numbers

The NCAA moved back the three-point line this season to create more room in the lane and cut down on the barrage of threes in college basketball.

Shooting percentages are down, historically low. Attempts also have dropped, slightly.

Clogged lanes? Depends on who you ask.

"I don't think it's changed a lot," Kansas guard Marcus Garrett said. "I just feel like a lot more shots are being missed."

He's right.

With teams heavily relying on three-pointers more and percentages steadily rising, the NCAA moved the arc back nearly two feet to 22 feet, 1½ inches this season. That matches the international distance, but short of the NBA arc at 23 feet, nine inches.

The goal was to make the lane more available for drives, cut down on the prevalence of three-pointers and create more offensive spacing.

The result, at least on the arc, is teams are missing at an historic rate.

Division I teams are shooting 33.3% so far this season, lowest since the three-point line was added to college basketball in 1986-87, according to Ken Pom.

Maryland Eastern Shore, annually one of the nation's worst three-point shooting teams, is last in Division I at 24.9%. Kennessaw State is right behind the Hawks at 25.1%.

Northern Alabama shot 29.8% last season, worst in the nation. This year, 25 teams are shooting at least that low.

Reigning national champion Virginia, which lost its top three scorers to the NBA, is 33.1st nationally at 29.2% from the arc, down from 39.5% last year.

33.3

Three-point shooting percentage for D-I teams this season, lowest since 1986-87.

29.2

Three-point shooting percentage for defending national champion UVA, down from 39.5%.

37.6

Percentage of FGs taken from deep this year, down from last season's all-time high of 38.7.

32

Number of players shooting over 40% from beyond the arc, down from 49 last season.

SOURCE: Associated Press

The last time the NCAA moved the three-point line back — a foot to 20 feet, 9 inches in 2009-10 — shooting percentages dipped the first few years before rising again.

"If it goes by what normally happens, it'll go down a little bit," Tennessee coach Rick Barnes said. "But it always comes back."

What it hasn't done is affect the elite shooters.

With players like Golden State's Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson routinely shooting from well beyond the NBA three-point line, college players started extending their range, too, almost to half court.

Stefan Gonzalez of UC Davis leads the nation at 49% from the arc this season, a year after Norfolk State's Derrik Jamerson topped Division I at 49.7%. For players like them or Marquette's Markus Howard, the nation's leading scorer at 27.3 points per game, it doesn't really matter where the line is set.

The difference is found in the players around them.

"For guys that can shoot, I think that the line moving back is not a big deal; I think they shot from there anyway," Pittsburgh coach Jeff Capel said. "I think for guys that are experimenting, then maybe there's a difference. I personally don't see a big difference."

The goal of creating more space in the lane hasn't fully materialized.

For teams that have multiple players who can shoot from long distance, sure. Defenses have no choice to extend out to the line, which widens the gap out to the lane.

Those teams who don't have a multitude of shooters, defenses have continued to pack it in, daring them to shoot. And, now with the deeper three-point line, they're missing even more.

"I haven't really seen

much of a difference," Sacramento State coach Brian Katz said. "I believe there's only one thing that creates space: really good shooters. You can put lines wherever you want, but if there's

four guys out there who can't shoot, we're not going out there beyond the line. I believe spacing is all about how guys shoot the ball, not lines on the floor."

The difference in the new three-point line may not be fully known for a few seasons. If the shooting percentages continue to fall, coaches will adjust, possibly cutting back on the number of three-pointers his team takes or which players take them.

Once that happens, there's a good chance three-point shooting will rise and, maybe, the arc gets moved out again.



Marquette's Markus Howard, right, shoots over Villanova's Collin Gillespie. Howard has been one of a few players largely unaffected by this season's move back of the three-point line, leading the nation with 26.7 points per game on 39.4% shooting from three.

Matt Slocum/AP

AUTO RACING



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Ryan Newman, top, goes airborne after being hit by Corey LaJoie during the Daytona 500 on Monday in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Is racing truly safe?

Horrific crash shows how dangerous it can be

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Dale Earnhardt's death on the final lap of the Daytona 500 may have saved Ryan Newman's life.

Earnhardt died 19 years ago Tuesday, the same day Roush Fenway Racing said Newman was awake and talking to doctors and family following his own harrowing accident on the last lap of the biggest race of the year.

Earnhardt died instantly when he hit the wall at Daytona International Speedway in what is considered the darkest day in NASCAR history. It triggered a chain reaction of safety improvements as the sanctioning body put a massive emphasis on protecting its drivers.

So it was jarring when Newman went airborne on the final lap of Monday night's rain-rescheduled Daytona 500 — a grim reminder that racing cars at 200 mph inches away from other drivers will never be safe.

Newman had just taken the lead when fellow Ford driver Ryan Blaney received a huge push from Denny Hamlin that put Blaney on Newman's bumper. At that point, Blaney said his only goal was to push Newman across the finish line so a Ford driver would beat Hamlin in a Toyota. Instead, their bumpers never locked correctly and the shove Blaney gave Newman caused him to turn right and hit a wall. His car flipped, went airborne, and was drilled again in the door by another driver. That second hit sent the car further into the air before it finally landed on its roof and slid

DID YOU KNOW?

When Dale Earnhardt was killed at the end of the 2001 Daytona 500, he was the fourth driver to die of a basilar skull fracture in an eight-month span. Adam Petty was killed in a 2000 crash at New Hampshire, approximately 100 yards from where Kenny Irwin had a fatal impact two months later. Tony Roper was killed in October in a crash at Texas Motor Speedway.

SOURCE: Associated Press

toward the finish line at Daytona International Speedway.

His spotter pleaded with Newman on the in-car radio "Talk to me when you can, buddy," but no words came from the driver.

An industry so accustomed over the last two decades to seeing drivers climb from crumpled cars with hardly a scratch held its breath as it took nearly 20 minutes for the 42-year-old to be removed from the car. It was another two hours before NASCAR said Newman was in serious condition at a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

This was a scare NASCAR has dodged for 19 years. Carl Edwards sailed into a fence at Talladega in 2009, climbed from the burning wreckage and then jogged across the finish line to complete the race. Kyle Larson in a 2009 Xfinity Series race flew into the Daytona fencing and walked away unscathed even though the front half of his car had been completely torn away. Kyle Busch crashed into a concrete wall at Daytona the day before the 500 in 2015.

Hospital releases Newman

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Ryan Newman was released from a Florida hospital Wednesday, about 42 hours after his frightening crash on the final lap of the Daytona 500.

Roush Fenway Racing released a photo of Newman leaving a Daytona Beach hospital holding the hands of his two young daughters. The announcement came just a few hours after the team said he was fully alert and walking around the hospital.

The 42-year-old Indiana native was taken by ambulance directly from the track in serious condition following the crash Monday night. Doctors said two hours after the accident that Newman's injuries were not life-threatening, but no details have been released.

His release from the hospital was rapid. Roush Fenway said earlier Wednesday that Newman "continues to show great improvement." The team added that "true to his jovial nature, he has also been joking around with staff, friends and family while playing with his two daughters" and included a photo of Newman standing in a hospital gown, smiling with his arms around the girls.

Two hours later, he was leaving the hospital in jeans, a T-shirt and socks, holding hands with his girls. The team released a third photo of Newman and his daughters with the staff that treated him following his crash.

"First and foremost, our focus remains with Ryan and his family as he continues to recover," Roush Fenway president Steve Newmark said. "We also want to express our sincere gratitude to all of those who have offered support and taken the time to send their thoughts and prayers to Ryan, his family and everyone at Roush Fenway Racing."

He broke both his legs and still was able to get himself out of the car. Five months later, Austin Dillon ripped out a section of Daytona fencing, landed upside down in a destroyed race car, and after he was pulled to safety by team members, he flapped both hands in the air for the crowd in a tribute to the signature celebration of the late bull rider Lane Frost.

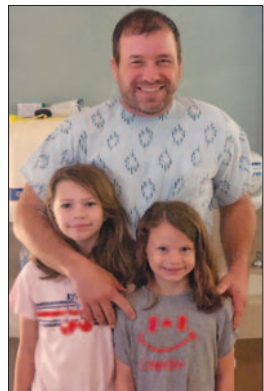
Perhaps it has created a false sense of security in today's cars because so many drivers have walked away from so many accidents.

But Earnhardt's death shook the sport to its core. The seven-time champion was the toughest man anyone knew and no crash was going to claim The Intimidator.

Only Earnhardt was an old-school racer still using his preferred routines. He wore customized open-faced helmets, sat low in his seat in a position that almost looked as if he was reclined, and, allegedly adjusted his seatbelts from the recommended installation settings to a position that suited his comfort level.

NASCAR acted quickly and speculation over Earnhardt's seat belts led teams to move from traditional five to six-point safety harnesses.

NASCAR also encouraged its drivers to begin wearing a head-and-neck restraint system, and by August of that year, 41 of the 43 drivers in the field at Michigan were using them. The device was not made mandatory until 2001, after Blaise Alexander was killed in an ARCA race at Charlotte. Tony Stewart resisted the device because he argued it made him feel claustrophobic in the car, but NASCAR refused to let him on the track until he put on the restraint.



ROUSH RACING/AP

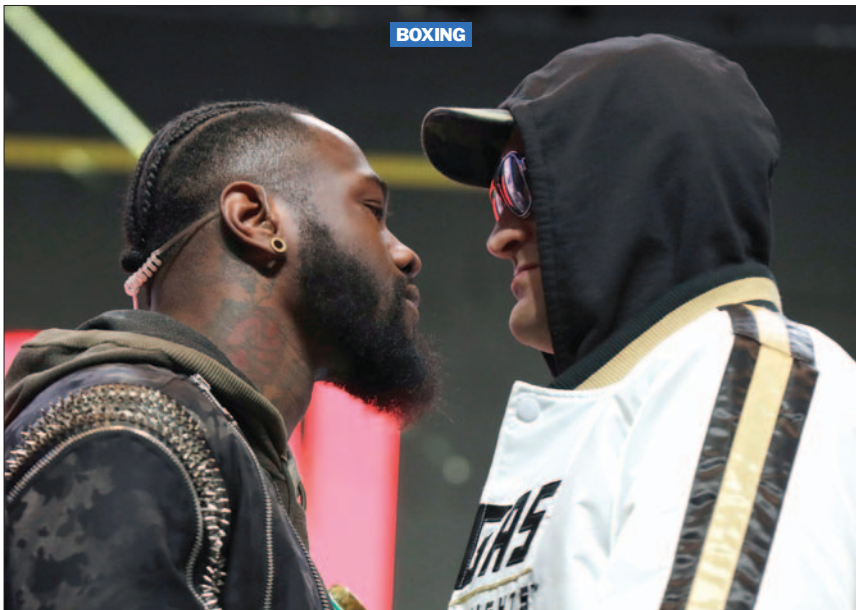
NASCAR driver Ryan Newman smiles while putting his arms around daughters, Brooklyn Sage, left, and Ashlyn Olivia at Hill Medical Center in Daytona Beach, Fla. Newman was released Wednesday.

SPORTS



Happy Max
Scherzer says shoulder is 'right on target' » **Page 59**

BOXING



HIGH SCHOOL

Coronavirus concerns halt all Far East tournaments

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

YONGSAN GARRISON, South Korea — Casey Cox said he couldn't believe it when his coach told him that the Far East boys basketball tournaments were canceled.

"I thought he was joking. I was hoping he was joking," the Kadena senior guard said Thursday, hours after DODEA Pacific made the announcement. "We've been working for this since my freshman year. I thought this year was our best chance [to win the Division I title]."

The D-I and D-II tournaments at Camp Humphreys were canceled Thursday afternoon after 13 of the 19 scheduled games had already been played at Humphreys High School.

DODEA announced several hours later that all Far East winter sports tournaments were being canceled.

That includes the girls D-I and D-II tournaments, being held at Kadena, and the Far East cheer-leading camp and competition at Matthew C. Perry.

The entire 16-game first-day slate of girls games were completed, but the tournament was halted at 8 p.m.

"This was a very difficult decision and we did not take it lightly, but this was a hard right decision based on guidance we got from U.S. Forces Korea," DODEA Pacific region chief of staff Todd Schlitz said by phone from Okinawa.

In a statement released by Schlitz making the announcement, DODEA said the decision was made "based on a new U.S. Forces Korea COVID-19 (coronavirus) guidance and out of an abundance of caution to ensure the safety of all students."

There are currently no reported cases of the virus among student-athletes at DODEA Pacific schools, the statement said.

"We are currently coordinating return flights for all students," the statement said, adding that more guidance would be released by DODEA Pacific on Friday.

As to whether spring Far East tournaments, to include baseball, softball, soccer and track and field, might also be canceled, Schlitz said: "We will continue to look at each of the

No promotion needed

Fury, Wilder set for highest-profile heavyweight showdown in years

By TIM DAHLBERG
Associated Press

THE water was warming up, and so was the sun. On the kind of day that made it easy to forget about dreary weather back home, Tyson Fury was sitting poolside in the backyard of his home in the shadow of the Las Vegas Strip, watching as some of his housemates frolicked in the shallow end.

The Gypsy King resisted the impulse to join them. He didn't have a swimsuit on and, besides, he had more serious things to attend to.

Like promoting a fight that, on

SEE SHOWDOWN ON PAGE 61

'If this fight doesn't sell, no fight in history will sell. You've got a Brit versus an American, a talker versus a talker, personality versus personality. Both unbeaten, and we fought to a draw last time. What's not to like?'

Tyson Fury
Heavyweight boxer



Above: Deontay Wilder, left, and Tyson Fury face off Wednesday in Las Vegas. Left: Fury has been training in Vegas ahead of Saturday's fight since the new year.
AP photos

SEE CONCERNS ON PAGE 61

Newman released from hospital after crash » **Page 63**

