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AFGHANISTAN

End of an era: Base stores will no longer accept pogs

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The paper coins, or pogs, that troops have used at stores and collected as souvenirs on overseas bases for the last 20 years are being phased out as the U.S. military leaves Afghanistan.

Some stores have already stopped using pogs, which were given as change instead of nickels, dimes and quarters since 2001 at Army and Air Force Exchange Service stores.

Signs at the seven AAFES stores that are still open on bases in Afghanistan encouraged people to turn in or use their pogs before they are no longer accepted, spokesman Chris Ward said.

SEE POGS ON PAGE 4



Stars and Stripes

The few Army and Air Force Exchange Service stores that are still open on bases in Afghanistan are encouraging people to turn in or use their paper coins, or pogs.

RELATED

C-130 crew honored for evading fire, aiding airman in Afghanistan
Page 3



JOHN VANDIVER/Stars and Stripes

An artillery team from Spain fires a round Wednesday during U.S. Army Europe and Africa's Dynamic Front drill in Grafenwoehr, Germany. The exercise is part of the overarching Defender Europe-21 program.

Fine-tuning firepower

15 countries, 1,800 troops demonstrate NATO's reach in US-led fires exercise in Germany

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — The ground shook in northern Bavaria as Spanish artillerymen fired rockets under the orders of American soldiers, who are using a makeshift command post this week to test the Army's ability to coordinate attacks across large distances.

At the Army's sprawling ranges in Grafenwoehr and a separate site in Poland, U.S. Army Europe and Africa's Dynamic Front drill is bringing together dozens of howitzers and multiple launch rocket systems in a showcase of allied reach.

"This, right now, is about fine-tuning our ability to work together and working out the bugs now, so that in a crisis or conflict, we've got that behind us."

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Roger Cloutier
head of NATO Allied Land Command

"This, right now, is about fine-tuning our ability to work together and working out the bugs now, so that in a crisis or conflict, we've got that behind us," said U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Roger Cloutier, head of NATO Allied Land Command. "Fires is going to be a critical part of any crisis or conflict if it gets to that end."

The Army's 41st Field Artillery Brigade is at the center of the action as it coordinates strikes. The brigade was stood up three years ago after years of U.S. unit cuts in Germany, in a push to bring long-range artillery back to Eu-

SEE FINE-TUNING ON PAGE 3

EXCHANGE RATES		
Military rates		
Euro costs (May 21)	\$1.19	
Dollar buys (May 21)	0.7988	
British pound (May 21)	\$1.38	
Japanese yen (May 21)	106.00	
South Korean won (May 21)	1104.00	
Commercial rates		
Bahrain(Dinar)	.3770	
Britain (Pound)	1.4144	
Canada (Dollar)	1.2075	
China(Yuan)	6.4345	
Denmark (Krone)	6.0898	
Egypt (Pound)	15.6800	
Euro	.8190	
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7632	
Hungary (Forint)	286.45	
Israel (Shekel)	3.2609	
Japan (Yen)	108.84	
Kuwait(Dinar)	.3007	
Norway (Krone)	8.3212	
Philippines (Peso)	47.77	
Poland (Zloty)	3.69	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7502	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3310	
South Korea (Won)		1129.94
Switzerland (Franc)		.8996
Thailand (Baht)		31.37
Turkey (NewLira)		8.3658

SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC

CHINA

RUSSIA

N. KOREA

S. KOREA

Sea of Japan

JAPAN

Pacific Ocean

Seoul 72/54

Osan 71/55

Busan 70/59

Sasebo 68/61

Iwakuni 65/61

Misawa 56/52

Tokyo 72/62

Guam 84/82

Philippine Sea

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

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RELOCATION GUIDE

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MILITARY

C-130 crew honored for combat heroism

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A pilot who escaped enemy ground fire and flew a quick reaction force to Bagram Airfield has received one of the military's highest awards for heroism in flight, the Air Force said.

C-130J pilot Maj. Christopher Richardson received the Distinguished Flying Cross at a ceremony in Little Rock, Ark., on May 10. Fellow pilot 1st Lt. Christian Grochowski, and loadmasters Senior Airman Dimitrious Carden and Staff Sgt. Jade Mori received Air Medals, a statement said Wednesday.

The 61st Airlift Squadron crew was flying a team of service members to an unnamed forward base on Sept. 19, 2020, when enemy fire crippled the plane and injured a crew member, the statement said.

Richardson tried to approach the base but was hindered by damaged controls.

He decided instead to return to Bagram Airfield.

"For me, it was a continual balancing of priorities," Richardson said in the statement.

"First was to get the crew and the plane out of harm's way. Second was assessing if the mission was worth the risk."

Meanwhile, Carden and an on-board combat control team tended to the injured crew member's wounds, it said.

"Everything happened quickly, and adrenaline makes decision-making difficult, but having my previous training to lean on helped me incredibly," Carden

said.

Upon landing at Bagram, another C-130J Super Hercules was prepared and the remaining crew finished the mission, the statement said.

"The teamwork aspect of the squadron was awesome," Richardson said.

"I told them we were on our way back with a problem and the whole squadron jumped into action."

The previously unreported incident occurred during a period which the U.S. military said was largely free of Taliban attacks against foreign forces. The insurgents pledged to stop targeting foreign troops as part of a U.S.-Taliban deal signed in February 2020.

While it hasn't been confirmed whether the Taliban were responsible, the incident was raised with the group through a military coordination channel in Qatar, United States Forces-Afghanistan said.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded for singular acts of heroism or extraordinary achievement while in flight.

The Air Medal is awarded heroism or meritorious achievements in flight.

"I certainly would not have succeeded alone — we all worked together and relied on each other that night," Carden said. "Everybody on that plane played a significant role in carrying out the mission and bringing everyone home safely."

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PHOTOS BY AARON IRVIN/U.S. Air Force

Air Force Col. John Schutte, 19th Airlift Wing commander, presents the Distinguished Flying Cross to Maj. Christopher Richardson, 61st Airlift Squadron pilot, at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., on May 10.



Schutte presents the Air Medal to Senior Airman Dimitrious Carden, 61st Airlift Squadron loadmaster.



Schutte presents the Air Medal to Staff Sgt. Jade Morin, 61st Airlift Squadron loadmaster.



Schutte presents the Air Medal to 1st Lt. Christian Grochowski, 61st Airlift Squadron pilot.

Fine-tuning: Dynamic Front drills showcase allied reach

FROM PAGE 1

rope.

More than 70 different allied artillery systems, 15 different countries and 1,800 troops — 800 of them American — are taking part in the exercise, which is part of the Army's new "Fires Shock" series that involves events from the Arctic to North Africa.

The aim of Dynamic Front is to ensure that, in the event of conflict, Army artillerymen in Germany can coordinate fire missions with any number of allied land forces anywhere in Europe, said Brig. Gen. Christopher Norrie, who commands the 7th Army Training Command in Grafenwoehr.

The drills also involve "shoot and scoot" tactics, where once a rocket is launched the artillerymen move to another location ahead of possible return fire. Unlike the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, any conflict with Russia in Europe would involve facing off with an adversary capable of launching long-range precision strikes of its own.

Norrie said there is no substitute for such rehearsals, which require forces to work



7TH ARMY TRAINING COMMAND

Soldiers with the Spanish army's 63rd Field Rocket Launcher Artillery Regiment fire during Dynamic Front 21 on Wednesday at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany.

through the technical difficulties of getting different weapons systems to synchronize, all in austere conditions, as soldiers live out of tents in the field.

"Those challenges are getting smaller as we continue to act and train together," Nor-

rie said, as he watched artillery fire from a lookout point. "We'll never know exactly what a future conflict might look like. But all our efforts are to ensure the distance between where we are and where we need to be is as short as possible."

Fires Shock falls under the Defender Europe-21 drill, which is now in its second year and includes about 30,000 troops. The effort, designed amid concerns about a more aggressive Russia, focuses on improving the ability of the U.S. and allies to move large numbers of troops and gear quickly in a crisis.

For the Army, the role of long-range artillery in drills coincides with a broader push to step up such capabilities by making improvements a top service modernization priority.

German troops also are among those launching artillery in Dynamic Front, which is due to wrap up Monday.

"For us, non-U.S. NATO allies, I personally think the U.S. is always setting the benchmark so we have to see where we are," said Germany's Lt. Gen. Andreas Marlow, commander of 1 Corps, a multinational division of German and Dutch troops, who was on hand for the events.

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WAR/MILITARY

Pogs: Paper coin phaseout part of larger Afghanistan withdrawal

FROM PAGE 1

“As closure of operations in Afghanistan continues, Exchange facilities in the country are transitioning to a cashless system,” Ward said.

The exact day when pogs will no longer be used anywhere in the country was unknown, he said.

The B&S Central Store at the coalition base at Kabul airport has already stopped accepting the paper coins, a sign at the shop’s entrance said last week.

Many shelves were bare inside the store, which once sold items like energy drinks, protein powder and action figures. The few items available were discounted by 75% or more.

B&S stopped accepting pogs when it could no longer exchange them for dollars through AAFES and the U.S. finance office, Michiel Kampers, head of retail support for the Netherlands-based chain, said by email.

The airport store, which was the last B&S shop in Afghanistan, was set to close Thursday, he said.

Pogs started being phased out early this month as the U.S. military’s finance office began its Afghanistan drawdown, Ward said.

The finance office at Resolute Support Headquarters was no longer accepting pogs, Maj. Nicholas J. Long, commander of the 93rd Financial Management Support Unit, said in an email Monday.

The end of the pog in Afghanistan comes as U.S. and coalition troops continue to withdraw after nearly 20 years of war.

President Joe Biden said last month that the U.S. military would



Stars and Stripes

A cashier sorts paper coins, or pogs, with regular cash and coins in a store register on a U.S. military base.

be out of Afghanistan no later than Sept. 11.

The drawdown from Afghanistan is “between 13-20%” completed, Central Command said Tuesday in a statement.

Troops and contractors still in Afghanistan have been discussing what to do with their paper coins, they said.

Pogs can continue to be used at locations outside of Afghanistan, but “I think the majority are just calling it a loss and throwing them out,” said one soldier, who asked to remain anonymous because she was not authorized to speak to the

press.

AAFES began issuing the cardboard coins at exchange stores in Afghanistan in November 2001, saying at the time that pogs are lighter than metal coins and cheaper to ship overseas.

At first, pogs were intended to be temporary and simply carried information saying how much they were worth. But they evolved over the years to feature photos of troops or aircraft, pictures of NASCAR drivers and comic book characters.

Collectors now buy and sell pogs. This week, a set of 13 pogs

from 2005 was offered on eBay for \$450, and a single 5-cent pog from 2003 with the image of a dolphin was going for \$13.

The paper coins were “one of those unique little details from deployment,” said Kristen Rouse, a logistics officer who served in Afghanistan in 2006, 2010 and 2012.

During her first tour, Rouse collected a pile of pogs with a face value of around \$20. She got most of them as change from the Green Beans coffee shop at Bagram Airfield.

One of the pogs is now part of her collection of challenge coins

— metal tokens of appreciation from military leaders for a job well done, she said.

Pogs were “a weird staple of deployed life” that left a lasting impression on former public affairs soldier Francis Horton, who deployed to Afghanistan in 2004.

But with the paper coins being phased out in Afghanistan, “you find yourself a little astonished when one of the last things connecting you to that era is gone,” he said.

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VA to review thousands of ‘Blue Water’ Navy claims automatically

BY NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs is reviewing thousands of rejected claims from Vietnam War veterans who were denied benefits, but may now be entitled to retroactive compensation.

Under court order, the VA started reviewing last week the 60,000 claims for Agent Orange exposure from veterans who served offshore during the Vietnam War. These former sailors served aboard ships in the open waters off the coast of Vietnam and have long contended they were exposed to chemical herbicides through the ships’ water systems. The dioxin-laden herbicides have been found to cause respiratory cancers, Parkinson’s disease and heart disease, as well as other conditions.

Congress passed legislation in 2019 that entitled these veterans,

known as “Blue Water” Navy veterans, to government benefits. The U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California decided in November that the VA must reevaluate claims from veterans who were rejected.

“This review provides an entire generation of veterans with another shot at getting the health care and benefits they’ve earned,” said Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

In a letter last week, Acting VA Undersecretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy wrote that Blue Water Navy veterans would automatically have their rejected claims re-adjudicated if the reason for their denial was their lack of in country service in Vietnam.

“VA is working as quickly as possible to review these claims,” the agency said Tuesday.

Since Blue Water Navy veter-

ans became eligible for VA benefits in 2019, the department has processed more than 45,000 claims and paid nearly \$900 million in retroactive benefits.

It remained uncertain Tuesday how many of the 60,000 rejected claims would gain approval during the review. VA officials estimated the review would last at least through the summer.

The agency has been tackling a large backlog of claims that accumulated during the coronavirus pandemic. Murphy told Congress last week that the backlog was likely to “hit an apex” in August, in part because of the large volume of Blue Water Navy claims.

In its budget request to Congress, the VA asked for more full-time employees to help review these claims.

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US authorizes release for oldest Guantanamo prisoner

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A 73-year-old from Pakistan who is the oldest prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay detention center was notified on Monday that he has been approved for release after more than 16 years in custody at the U.S. base in Cuba, his lawyer said.

Saifullah Paracha, who has been held on suspicion of ties to al-Qaida but never charged with a crime, was cleared by the prisoner review board along with two other men, said Shelby Sullivan-Bennis, who represented him at his hearing in November.

As is customary, the notification did not provide detailed reasoning for the decision and concluded only that Paracha is “not a continuing threat” to the United States, Sullivan-Bennis said.

It does not mean his release is imminent. But it is a crucial step before the U.S. government negotiates a repatriation agreement

with Pakistan for his return. President Joe Biden’s administration has said it intends to resume efforts to close the detention center, a process that former President Donald Trump halted.

Paracha’s attorney said she thinks he will be returned home in the next several months.

“The Pakistanis want him back, and our understanding is that there are no impediments to his return,” she said.

A Pentagon spokesman had no immediate comment.

The prisoner review board also informed Uthman Abd al-Rahim Uthman, a Yemeni who has been held without charge at Guantanamo since it opened in January 2002, that he had been cleared, according to his attorney, Beth Jacob, who spoke to him by phone.

“He was happy, relieved and hopeful that this will actually lead to his release,” Jacob said.

MILITARY

US Navy destroyer passes through South China Sea

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

The USS Curtis Wilbur steamed past the Paracel Islands to assert free navigation, the Navy said Thursday, just days after the guided missile destroyer passed through the Taiwan Strait.

The Paracels, a cluster of islands in the South China Sea about 180 miles southeast of Hainan, China, are claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan and China. All three expect either permission or advance notice before a warship cruises through the area.

The Chinese military's Southern Theater Command said the Curtis Wilbur entered the waters near the Paracels without permission, and that Chinese ships and planes followed the U.S. ship, according to Reuters news service.

The United States periodically sends a warship, often a destroyer, on freedom-of-navigation oper-

ations past the Paracels and the Spratly Island chain about 250 miles west of the Philippines to demonstrate a right of "innocent passage." The USS John S. McCain steamed through the Paracel archipelago on Feb. 5.

The South China Sea, particularly, is overlaid with claims and counterclaims. China uses the islands as baselines to extend its claim of territorial seas beyond 12 nautical miles of the mainland coast, according to a 1996 State Department report.

"Regardless of which claimant has sovereignty over the islands in the Paracel Islands, straight baselines cannot lawfully be drawn around the Paracel Islands in their entirety," according to a Navy statement on the Curtis Wilbur's operation Thursday.

China has also expanded the islands by dredging and building an airfield, helipads, harbors, sur-

face-to-air missile sites and complementary structures, according to the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative.

On Tuesday, the Curtis Wilbur made a trip through the Taiwan Strait, the 110-mile-wide body of water that separates China from Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province.

Chinese President Xi Jinping in January said China expects Taiwan's peaceful return to the people's republic, but it reserves the right to use force to make that happen, the BBC reported.

In February, President Joe Biden said the U.S. under his administration would maintain its heightened pace of innocent-passage operations and trips through the Taiwan Strait.

China views U.S. passage through the strait as a bold provocation.



U.S. NAVY

The guided-missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur steams through the South China Sea on Thursday.

U.S. warships "have repeatedly flaunted their prowess in the Taiwan Strait, provoking and stirring up trouble," Zhao Lijian, spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said on Wednesday.

China is resolved to uphold its territorial integrity, he said.

"This is by no means commit-

ment to freedom and openness, but rather deliberate disruption and sabotage of regional peace and stability," Zhao said. "The international community sees this crystal clear."

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Vietnam War hero who protected fellow service members dies at 74

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

An Army medic who received the Medal of Honor for picking up a fallen soldier's rifle and using it to protect his wounded comrades during the Vietnam War has died, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.

Charles Hagemeister, 74, died Wednesday in Leavenworth, Kan., the society announced that day. It did not state a cause of death.

The youngest of four siblings, Hagemeister was born in Lincoln, Neb., on Aug. 21, 1946. He graduated from Lincoln's Southeast High School and was drafted into the Army in May 1966 while on a break from the University of Nebraska, according to the society's statement.

Spc. 4th Class Hagemeister was a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st

Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in Vietnam's Binh Dinh province during an attack on the night of March 20, 1967.

Hagemeister's platoon came under heavy fire from three sides by an enemy force occupying well-concealed, fortified positions and supported by machine guns and mortars, according to his medal citation.

Seeing two of his comrades seriously wounded, Hagemeister raced through the deadly hail of fire to help. After learning that the platoon leader and several other soldiers had been wounded, he crawled forward under fire to render aid, the citation states.

At one point in the battle Hagemeister seized a rifle from a fallen comrade, killed a sniper and three other enemy soldiers who were attempting to encircle his position, and silenced an enemy machine gun before securing help from a nearby platoon to evacuate the

wounded, according to the citation.

"Hagemeister's repeated heroic and selfless actions at the risk of his life saved the lives of many of his comrades and inspired their actions in repelling the enemy assault," the citation states.

Stars and Stripes ran a front-page photograph on May 16, 1968, of Hagemeister and three others receiving the nation's highest awards for valor two days earlier from President Lyndon Johnson in the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon.

"As we meet here other men in Paris are beginning the very hard negotiations that we hope will one day silence the guns in a free Vietnam," Johnson said at the ceremony.

In a July 1968 interview with Army Digest cited by the Medal of Honor Society, Hagemeister said: "The pressure of a crisis situation makes you realize what you're



JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Charles Hagemeister

made of. If you do your job and a little bit for somebody else, you'll usually come through."

Hagemeister retired from active duty as a lieutenant colonel in June 1990 and served on the board of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, two children and two grandchildren.

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US, Russia at odds over military activity in Arctic

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — The Biden administration is leading a campaign against Russian attempts to assert authority over Arctic shipping and reintroduce a military dimension to discussions over international activity in the area.

As Russia assumed the rotating chairmanship of the Arctic Council on Thursday, the U.S. rallied other members to oppose Moscow's plans to set maritime rules in the Northern Sea Route, which runs from Norway to Alaska, and its desire to resume high-level military talks within the eight-nation bloc.

The effort reflects growing concerns in Washington and among some NATO allies about a surge in Russian military and commercial activity in the region.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had earlier this week dismissed the U.S. criticism because the Arctic "is our territory, our land."

From The Associated Press

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PACIFIC

‘I think it’s a story that needs to be told’

Racism he endured drove 1st Vietnamese-born Army general’s passion for diversity, inclusion

By ERICA EARL
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — For the Army’s first Vietnamese-born general officer, the trauma of escaping to America with his family during the Vietnam War was a call to foster a more inclusive military.

Maj. Gen. Viet Luong, commander of U.S. Army Japan, was 9 years old when he fled Vietnam with his family in 1975. He shared his story during a U.S. Army Japan Facebook Live event on Tuesday as part of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Luong faced racism as a young immigrant growing up in Los Angeles, he told Stars and Stripes via email Wednesday. The coupling of his family’s harrowing ordeal in Vietnam and the discrimination he faced drove his passion for diversity and inclusion, he said.

“Just to be honest, the scars from that event are indelible,” he said during the Facebook Live interview. “I don’t like to retell that story all that much, but I think it’s a story that needs to be told because it’s part of who we are as Americans.”

Luong’s father was the South Vietnamese marines’ executive officer just before the height of the war. One night, Luong said, he overheard him telling his mother that their country was doomed.

With help from one of his father’s American friends, the family made plans to move to the United States.

Luong recalled staying in hotels around Vietnam and at a refugee compound with nothing but documentation and a few articles of clothing. On April 27, 1975, the family were corralled on a hot tarmac at Son Nhat Airport when, he said, “all hell broke loose.”

Luong saw mortars and artillery fire. He said he could hear small-arms fire surrounding the airport, and then the enemy bombed the airstrip.

Luong recalled cowering, lying face down, hearing his father yelling to stay down in between trying to soothe and reassure him that everything would be alright.

“People close by were getting hit,” Luong said. “I remember their screams and cries. I did pretty much the only thing a 9-year-old could do at that moment and said my Hail Marys and recited my prayers.”

The U.S. Marine Corps helped evacuate survivors via aircraft, and, in what Luong says is somewhat of a hazy memory, led them aboard the aircraft carrier USS Hancock to America.

He said watching his father guide his family through such a traumatic experience encouraged



U.S. Army

Maj. Gen. Viet Luong, commander of U.S. Army Japan, shares his family’s story at an immigration and naturalization ceremony in 2018.

him to become a leader.

‘Doors open’

In 1993, Luong became one of only 27 battalion commanders of Asian descent in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division.

At the time, he said, he felt a need to outperform his white counterparts to earn equal recognition.

“Maybe I was too naïve, but I thought if we all just do our jobs and do well, everything will work out,” Luong said Tuesday. “But it doesn’t work like that. In order to be successful, you need a lot of support, you need mentorship, and you need advocacy.”

“I’m not bitter about it, but as I look back, I realize there were opportunities and doors open for my peers as far as advocacy that were available at nearly every turn that I didn’t have. To correct that, it’s going to take a little bit of time.”

About 4% of active-duty enlisted personnel and 8% of commissioned personnel in the U.S. military are of Asian descent, and only about 3% of all active-duty personnel are Pacific Islander, according to a December report from the Department of Defense Board on Diversity and Inclusion.

White officers represent 73% of all active-duty officers, the report said.

Luong said work still needs to be done to ensure the path to leadership positions is not more difficult or met with more resistance for some than others.

“In the Army, we have been having some very uncomfortable conversations to tackle the harmful behavior,” he said.

This year, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month comes after a wave of increased violence against Asians in America, including the March attacks in Atlanta that killed six Asian women.



Viet Luong

Luong, far left, was 9 years old when he fled Vietnam with his family in 1975. He’s pictured here with his father and siblings in 1973.

Luong said that not all acts of racism are aggressive. Internal bias can be much subtler and, even if not explicitly harmful, create a toxic work environment, he said.

That includes comments about the stereotypical “good Asian,” assuming one race is quieter or more hardworking than another and other sweeping judgments.

‘Global by nature’

Another Vietnamese-born leader, Air Force Brig. Gen. John Edwards, said the conversation around diversity extends to behavior as ambassadors of the military when overseas and making genuine attempts to understand the language and culture of host nations.

“The military is global by nature, and acceptance is critical to the mission,” he said in a video call with Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

Edwards, director of the Nuclear Enterprise Directorate at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency in Fort Belvoir, Va., moved to

the U.S. with his Vietnamese mother during the war. His father, an American Vietnam War veteran, was evacuated from the embassy roof just before the fall of Saigon.

“We lost all of our stuff, but most importantly, we remained together,” he said. “That was not the case for a lot of people.”

Edwards co-leads the American Asian and Pacific Islander component of a diversity and inclusion task force on Fort Belvoir. He said he was too young to remember much about his life in Vietnam but spending some of his developing years against the backdrop of war created a drive against racism.

Fully understanding host nation communities is a key element in “righting past wrongs” of the U.S. military, Edwards said.

“We are not taking our foot off the gas on this,” he said. “Our diversity is what makes us a smarter force.”



Viet Luong

Luong is pictured with family members in Vietnam during the 1960s.

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MILITARY

Lawmakers mull a DC quick reaction force

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — With the National Guard’s monthslong deployment to the Capitol in its final days, congressional lawmakers are considering whether to create a dedicated force to respond quickly if troops are needed again.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee, introduced a \$1.9 billion Capitol-security funding bill Friday to address costs of the Jan. 6 riot. The bill, in part, would create a standing force in the D.C. National Guard dedicated

to crisis response.

Thousands of Guard troops from across the country deployed to Washington after the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol building. Almost 2,150 Guard members remain in the region supporting that mission, which is scheduled to end Sunday, chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters Wednesday.

While the majority of the funds would reimburse the National Guard, Capitol Police and the District of Columbia for costs incurred in the response to the riot, the bill allocates about \$200 million to create the quick-reaction

force.

“This emergency supplemental appropriation addresses the direct costs of the insurrection and strengthens Capitol security for the future,” DeLauro said in a statement Friday. “The needs are urgent, so it is imperative we swiftly pass this legislation to protect the Capitol and those who work and visit here.”

But Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., and Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., on Wednesday announced their opposition to creating the quick-reaction force in a statement commending the National Guard for

their efforts but declaring “it’s time they return home and focus on their core mission.”

“Security of the Capitol complex must remain the responsibility of federal civilian law enforcement,” the lawmakers said in their joint statement. “Use of the uniformed military in D.C. and the Capitol complex is subject to complex statutory restrictions, and for good reason. We cannot and should not militarize the security of the Capitol complex.”

Instead, Rogers and Inhofe suggested creating a quick-reaction force within a federal civilian law

enforcement unit, which they said “improves the range of law enforcement capabilities, streamlines operations beyond the Capitol and would likely cost much less than tapping the National Guard for this purpose,” according to the statement. “If Democrat leadership wants to spend an additional \$200 million on the National Guard, it would be better spent on rebuilding Guard readiness that suffered as a result of this overlong deployment to Capitol Hill.”

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Biden praises global role of Coast Guard at commencement

By SARAH CAMMARATA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Coast Guard’s importance in strengthening global economic, trade and environmental security, especially amid a tumultuous year of extreme weather events and the coronavirus pandemic, took center stage in President Joe Biden’s commencement address Wednesday at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

“The Coast Guard has always recognized the broader definition of our national security,” as stewards of the environment and those who work to intercept illicit drug shipments at sea, he said.

Biden also spoke about the Coast Guard’s role in keeping sea lanes open and secure, amid increasing aggression from Russia and China in the Indo-Pacific region and the Arctic.

“You have an essential role in our efforts to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific,” he said.

Biden also highlighted that slightly more than one-third of the Coast Guard’s 2021 graduating class is women. He recently nominated Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, the first female four-star admiral, to serve as the service’s next vice commandant.

“Being here together is a victory in and of itself, an important marker in the progress we’ve made to turn the tide of this pandemic. It’s a testament of the skill and military discipline [and] sense of responsibility you already embody,” Biden told the Class of 2021.

Flanked by Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz, Biden spoke to a crowd of 240 U.S. cadets, along with seven international cadets, at the academy’s campus in New London, Conn.

Operating as part of the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard force of roughly 42,000 members has a broad range of missions including conducting search and rescue, drug interdiction, law enforcement and maritime security.

Biden praised members of the Coast Guard for stepping in to aid 250,000 stranded cruise passengers at the start of the pandemic. Later, 500 reservists deployed to support nationwide vaccination efforts.

Disaster response — long a part of the Coast Guard’s diverse set of missions — was vital last year, amid the most active hurricane season on record, Biden said.

“To see more women at the highest levels of command, we have to make sure that women have the chance to succeed and thrive throughout their careers,” he said.

Biden also reaffirmed his commitment to combat the scourge of sexual assault and harassment in the military and cited the importance of diversity.

“Our national success depends on our capacity to harness the full range of ideas and experiences that exist in our country,” he said.

The speech comes just weeks after the Coast Guard Academy’s senior enlisted leader, Command Master Chief Brett VerHulst, abruptly resigned. The Coast Guard Investigative Service is leading an investigation into alleged inappropriate conduct.

A news story this week written by reporters from McClatchy and its newspaper the Miami Herald said VerHulst is under



President Joe Biden arrives to speak at the commencement for the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., on Wednesday.

investigation for alleged inappropriate sexual conduct with a female cadet at the academy.

Schultz also came under fire last summer when he declined to appear before a joint House Oversight and Homeland Security Committee hearing to address the services’ handling of systemic racist harassment.

A Homeland Security Inspector General report in early June was the focus of the July hearing, which found the Coast Guard Academy was aware of 16 racist harassment cases between 2013 and 2018, of which 11 cases were not investigated thoroughly.

Yet, Biden on Wednesday was optimistic about the future of the Coast Guard’s graduating class.

“You’re the most progressive, best educated, least prejudiced, most open generation in American history. We need you badly. You’re ready. It’s time to get underway,” he told them.



Cadets stand during the commencement for the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., on Wednesday.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Cases wane on US bases; Okinawa may declare emergency

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — U.S. commands on Okinawa reported four new cases of COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, as of 6 p.m. Thursday.

Kadena Air Base had three people test positive while still quarantined following travel outside Japan, according to a base Facebook post late Wednesday. Contact tracing was underway.

One person at Camp Foster contracted COVID-19, according to a post by Marine Corps Installations Pacific on Thursday.

Kadena has recorded 11 new coronavirus cases so far this month, while the Marine Corps on Okinawa has reported 27.

All U.S. military installations in Japan and South Korea have scheduled vaccine clinics this week for children ages 12-17 to receive the first of the two-shot Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Scheduling and sign-up details were available on base and military hospital Facebook pages.

Okinawa prefecture reported 203 new infections Wednesday, its highest one-day count during the pandemic, according to prefectural data online. Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki was expected to ask the national government to declare a state of emergency there to curb the virus's spread, public broadcaster NHK reported on Thursday.

Approximately 30,000 U.S. service members of all branches are stationed on Okinawa, along with another 27,000 Defense Department civilian employees and family members. Japan extended its state of emergency to nine prefectures Sunday. Under the emergency, which includes Tokyo and Osaka, alcohol sales are curtailed, some business hours are shortened and employees are urged to telework. Train service on some lines was reduced.

Tokyo on Thursday reported 843 new coronavirus patients, a drop of 167 people from the same day last week, according to NHK.



HIRO KOMAE/AP

People wearing face masks walk across Tokyo's Shibuya crossing Thursday. Tokyo on Thursday reported 843 new coronavirus patients, a drop of 167 people from the same day last week, NHK reported.

Osaka prefecture, Japan's second-largest metro area, on Thursday reported that 477 more people had contracted COVID-19, a continuing decline in the worst coronavirus wave to strike the prefecture, according to prefectural data. Osaka, however, continues to report that its hospital beds reserved for severely ill patients are nearly at capacity.

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US jobless claims decline to 444K, a new pandemic low

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment aid fell last week to 444,000, a new pandemic low and a sign that the job market keeps strengthening as consumers spend freely again, viral infections drop and business restrictions ease.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department showed that applications declined 34,000 from a revised 478,000 a week earlier. The number of weekly jobless claims — a rough measure of the pace of layoffs — has declined steadily since the year began.

The data release coincides with rapid moves by nearly all the nation's Republican governors to cut off a \$300-a-week federal unemployment benefit that they and many business executives blame for discouraging the unemployed from seeking jobs. Those cutoffs of federal jobless aid will begin in June.

Twenty-two states, from Texas and Georgia to Ohio and Iowa, have acted to block the federal government's \$300 weekly payment for the unemployed, according to an Associated Press analysis. Two more states, Florida and Kansas, are also considering doing so. Those 24 states all have Republican governors and state legislatures.

Unemployed Americans have been able to receive the federal benefit, which was included in President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion financial rescue package, on top of their state jobless aid. Combined, the cutoff of federal jobless aid in the states that are targeting it would reduce unemployment benefits for 3.5 million people, according to Oxford Economics.

About 16 million people were receiving unemployment benefits during the week ending May 1, the latest period for which data is available, the government said Thursday. That is down from 16.9 million in the previous week, and it suggests that some Americans who had been receiving aid have found jobs.

As the economy quickly recovers from the pandemic recession, consumers are showing more confidence and spending at a healthy rate. Most economists think the economy could expand 7% this year, which would amount to the fastest annual growth in more than 35 years.

Yet the rapid reopening from the pandemic has created a wide range of supply shortages that have disrupted what economists had hoped would be a smooth rebound. Home building fell sharply in April, for example, as builders struggled with shortages of lumber and labor.

The shortages have caused a spike in inflation, which led stock markets to tumble this week because investors worry that higher prices will force the Federal Reserve to prematurely cut back on its efforts to stimulate growth. Fed officials have stressed their belief that the accelerating price increases are temporary. But the minutes of their April policy meeting, released Wednesday, showed that some Fed officials support a discussion at future meetings about dialing back their efforts.

Duty-free giants offer free flights in order to lure VIP shoppers

Bloomberg

Last month, Hyun Jung-a boarded a flight from South Korea's Incheon Airport. Around two hours later, she was back in the same airport and loading up on duty-free shopping, despite never landing in another country.

The Air Busan flight, organized by Lotte Duty Free for its VIP customers, was Hyun's first since the pandemic began and it didn't cost her a cent. Because the route briefly departed South Korean airspace and went over a Japanese island, the 130 passengers on board qualified to shop at duty-free stores in Seoul typically reserved for people who have traveled internationally.

Destination-less flights like these are an attempt by duty-free operators to salvage an industry decimated by COVID-19. Before the virus, business was booming — the global duty-free market was worth \$85 billion in 2019 and on track to reach \$139 billion by 2027, according to Verified Market Research.

Sales plunged as countries restricted international travel. Globally, only 1.8 billion people took scheduled flights last year compared with 4.5 billion in 2019, the International Civil Aviation Organization said. Annual revenue for Swiss duty-free giant Dufry, which operates outlets worldwide, fell 71%.

While shoppers on flights such as Hyun's won't fill the financial void, they at least bring in some much-needed business. "I saw a lot of people with bags full of duty-free items," said Hyun, who bought a Chanel bag, shoes and cosmetics. "I tell all my friends that it's worth taking the flight because of the duty-free shopping opportunity."

Hotel Shilla, South Korea's second-biggest duty-free operator after Lotte, is offering 114 seats on two so-called flights to nowhere on May 23 and 30 to customers who have spent more than \$550 at its stores since May 3. Lotte is putting on another five flights this month.

Duty-free operators and other stores are among the last in South Korea to recover from the pandemic, with the country's retailers and wholesalers shedding 182,000 positions in April even as the economy added 652,000 jobs from a year earlier, the statistics office reported Wednesday.

The industry is in less of a squeeze where domestic air traffic has rebounded and tax-free shopping zones are in place. The palm-fringed Chinese island of Hainan has become an even more popular getaway for tourists from the mainland now starved of international travel. That's helped the province's duty-free sales, which more than doubled to \$4.3 billion last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

"The trend of visiting Hainan to do luxury shopping is here to stay for the Chinese," said Jonathan Siboni, chief executive officer of data-intelligence firm Luxurysight.

NATION

Body cam shows deadly arrest of Black man in La.

By JIM MUSTIAN
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Louisiana state troopers were captured on body camera video stunning, punching and dragging a Black man as he apologized for leading them on a high-speed chase — footage of the man’s last moments alive that the Associated Press obtained after authorities refused to release it for two years.

“I’m your brother! I’m scared! I’m scared!” Ronald Greene can be heard telling the white troopers as the unarmed man is jolted repeatedly with a stun gun before he even gets out of his car along a dark, rural road.

The 2019 arrest outside Monroe, La., is the subject of a federal civil rights investigation. But unlike other in-custody deaths across the nation where body camera video was released almost immediately,

Greene’s case has been shrouded in secrecy and accusations of a cover-up.

Louisiana officials have rebuffed repeated calls to release footage and details about what caused the 49-year-old’s death. Troopers initially told Greene’s family he died on impact after crashing into a tree during the chase. Later, State Police released a one-page statement acknowledging only that Greene struggled with troopers and died on his way to the hospital.

Only now in the footage obtained by the AP from one trooper’s body camera can the public see for the first time some of what happened during the arrest.

The 46-minute clip shows one trooper wrestling Greene to the ground, putting him in a chokehold and punching him in the face while another can be heard calling



MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO, POOL/AP

Family members of Ronald Greene listen to speakers on Aug. 28 as demonstrators gather for the March on Washington, on the 57th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech.

him a “stupid motherf——.”

Greene wails “I’m sorry!” as another trooper delivers another stun gun shock to his backside and warns, “Look, you’re going to get it again if you don’t put your f—— hands behind your back!” Another trooper can be seen briefly dragging the man facedown after his legs had been shackled and his hands cuffed behind him.

Instead of rendering aid, the

troopers leave the heavysset man unattended, facedown and moaning for more than nine minutes, as they use sanitizer wipes to wash blood off their hands and faces.

“I hope this guy ain’t got f—— AIDS,” one of the troopers can be heard saying.

After a several-minute stretch in which Greene is not seen on camera, he appears again, limp, unresponsive and bleeding from

his head and face. He is then loaded onto an ambulance gurney, his arm cuffed to the bedrail.

In many parts of the video, Greene is not on screen, and the trooper appears to cut the microphone off about halfway through, making it difficult to piece together exactly what was happening at all times. At least six troopers were on the scene of the arrest but not all had their body cameras on.

Veteran to receive Medal of Honor for his actions during Korean War

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden will award the Medal of Honor on Friday to Ralph Puckett Jr., a 94-year-old retired Army colonel who led the capture and defense of a hill during the Korean War against an overwhelming Chinese attack.

The White House announced the award Wednesday, saying Puckett distinguished himself with “acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty.” South Korean President Moon Jae-in will join the ceremony Friday.

Puckett will receive the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest military award for bravery, for actions he took more than 70 years ago. As a young first lieutenant in November of 1950, Puckett commanded the Eighth Army Ranger Company during a mission to seize “Hill 205” and defend it against a series of chaotic assaults.

Puckett led 51 Army Rangers and nine Korean soldiers to capture Hill 205. He intentionally ran across an exposed area multiple times to draw enemy fire away from his soldiers, allowing them to destroy enemy positions, the White House said.

During the first of several Chinese attacks on the American-con-

trolled hill, Puckett was wounded by a hand grenade but refused evacuation. He directed artillery support, moved between foxholes to check the company’s perimeter and distributed ammunition to the other Rangers.

The soldiers were “inspired and motivated by the extraordinary leadership and courageous example” exhibited by Puckett, the White House said.

As the Chinese continued to attack, Puckett was told over his radio that supporting artillery fire was unavailable. His company continued to fight, and Puckett was wounded two more times by enemy mortar rounds.

“The pressure increased, so I ran back to the foxhole,” Puckett said in an interview for an oral history project. “I got on the radio, called force artillery and said, ‘We’re under great pressure. We’re crumbling. We’re being overrun. I just gave my unit the word to withdraw.’”

As the Chinese overran them, Puckett ordered his company to evacuate the area and told the soldiers to leave him behind. Two of his Rangers disregarded the order and carried Puckett off the hill to safety.

Puckett earned two Distinguished Service Crosses for his ac-

tions on Hill 205. He had a 22-year career in the Army, during which he also served in combat during the Vietnam War.

When he retired from active duty in 1971, Puckett became the national programs coordinator of Outward Bound Inc., and established Discovery Inc., a leadership and teamwork development program. He was inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame in 1992 and served as the first honorary colonel of the 75th Ranger Regiment from 1996 to 2006.

He’s been described as “omnipresent” within the Ranger community, often volunteering as a speaker and adviser. In 2004, Puckett was selected as a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. In the description of Puckett’s service, the academy wrote that he could still be found “walking the swamps and hiking the hills at the Ranger School, encouraging and instructing the rising generation of American soldiers.”

Puckett lives in Columbus, Ga., with his wife, Jean Martin. Together, the couple have a daughter, one son and six grandchildren. One daughter is deceased.

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Colonial Pipeline confirms it paid \$4.4M to hackers

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The operator of the nation’s largest fuel pipeline confirmed it paid \$4.4 million to a gang of hackers who broke into its computer systems.

Colonial Pipeline said Wednesday that after it learned of the May 7 ransomware attack, the company took its pipeline system offline and needed to do everything in its power to restart it quickly and safely, and made the decision then to pay the ransom.

“This decision was not made lightly,” but it was one that had to be made, a company spokesman said. “Tens of millions of Americans rely on Colonial — hospitals, emergency medical services, law enforcement agencies, fire departments, airports, truck drivers and the traveling public.”

Colonial Pipeline’s CEO, Joseph Blount, told The Wall Street Journal he authorized the payment because the company didn’t know the extent of the damage and wasn’t sure how long it would take to bring the pipeline’s systems back.

The FBI discourages making ransom payments to ransomware attackers, because paying encourages criminal networks around the globe who have hit thousands

of businesses and health care systems in the U.S. in the past year alone. But many victims of ransomware attacks, where hackers demand large sums of money to decrypt stolen data or to prevent it from being leaked online, opt to pay.

“I know that’s a highly controversial decision,” Blount told the Journal. “But it was the right thing to do for the country.”

Blount said Colonial paid the ransom in consultation with experts who previously dealt with the group behind the attacks, DarkSide, which rents out its ransomware to partners to carry out the actual attacks.

Multiple sources had confirmed to The Associated Press that Colonial Pipeline had paid the criminals who committed the cyberattack a ransom of nearly \$5 million in cryptocurrency for the software decryption key required to unscramble their data network.

A ransom payment of 75 Bitcoin was paid the day after the criminals locked up Colonial’s corporate network, according to Tom Robinson, co-founder of the cryptocurrency-tracking firm Elliptic. Prior to Robinson’s blog post, two people briefed on the case had confirmed the payment amount to AP.

NATION

House OKs Jan. 6 riot commission over GOP dissent

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House voted to create an independent commission on the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, sending the legislation to an uncertain future in the Senate as Republican leaders work to stop a bipartisan investigation that is opposed by former President Donald Trump.

Democrats say an independent investigation is crucial to reckoning what happened that day, when a violent mob of Trump's supporters smashed into the Capitol to try and overturn President Joe Biden's victory. Modeled after the investigation into the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the legislation would establish an independent, 10-member commission that would make recommendations by the end of the year for securing the Capitol and preventing another insurrection.

The bill passed the House on

Wednesday 252-175, with 35 Republicans voting with Democrats in support of the commission, defying Trump and House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy. Trump issued a statement urging Republicans to vote against it, calling the legislation a "Democrat trap."

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell is trying to prevent defections among his own ranks, echoing McCarthy's opposition in a Senate floor speech Wednesday morning. Both men claimed the bill was partisan, even though membership of the proposed commission would be evenly split between the parties.

The January insurrection has become an increasingly fraught topic for Republicans, with a growing number in the party downplaying the severity of the worst attack on the Capitol in more than 200 years. While most Republicans voted against forming the commission, only a few



SUSAN WALSH/AP

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, of California — flanked by Reps. Benny Thompson, D-Miss., left, and Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn. — talks to reporters on Capitol Hill on Wednesday about legislation to create an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol complex.

spoke on the floor against it. And the handful of Republicans who backed the commission spoke forcefully.

"This is about facts — it's not partisan politics," said New York Rep. John Katko, the top Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee who negotiated the legislation with Democrats. He said "the American people and the Capitol Police deserve answers, and action as soon as possible to ensure that nothing like this ever happens again."

Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., said that Jan. 6 "is going to haunt this

institution for a long, long time" and that a commission is necessary to find the truth about what happened. He recalled that he "heard the shouts, saw the flash-bangs, smelled the gas on that sorry day."

In the Senate, McConnell's announcement dimmed the prospects for passage, as Democrats would need at least 10 Republicans to vote with them. But Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., vowed to force a vote on the bill, charging that Republicans are "caving" to Trump.

Like in the House, some Senate

Republicans have suggested they will support the legislation.

Utah Sen. Mitt Romney said Tuesday that given the violent attack, "we should understand what mistakes were made and how we could prevent them from happening again." Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy said he doesn't agree with McConnell that the bill is slanted toward Democrats and "I'm inclined to support it."

Maine Sen. Susan Collins, a Republican, said that she supports the idea of a commission but that the House bill would need adjustments.

New round of arrests announced related to breach of US Capitol

BY CAROLYN THOMPSON
Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — A woman heard shouting at police to "Bring Nancy Pelosi out" to be hanged during the attack on the U.S. Capitol is among those charged in a new round of arrests announced Wednesday by federal officials.

"They're criminals. They need to hang ... Bring her out," Pauline Bauer of Kane, Pa., is heard shouting on body camera footage, according to a criminal complaint charging her with obstructing Congress and disorderly conduct.

In the series of complaints announced Wednesday, Bauer is charged with the most serious counts from among two Pennsylvania residents and five from upstate New York charged with being part of a mob of former President Donald Trump's supporters who pushed past police officers and broke through windows and doors on Jan. 6.

More than 400 people have been charged so far in the siege.

A witness told authorities Bauer's husband recently revealed that his wife had entered the Capitol building but said she had not been violent, according to the complaint. The witness said Bauer's in-

creasingly political rhetoric over the past year had been driving business away from the restaurant Bauer runs with her husband.

Bauer, who could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted of obstruction, represented herself during an online court hearing from what was labeled as an FBI facility in Pittsburgh. Her hair had been dyed a lighter color than it appeared in pictures submitted as evidence in the charging documents.

Wearing a gray sweatshirt with the words "Old school patriot" screen-printed on the front alongside a graphic of a coiled snake, Bauer was contentious with the federal judge overseeing the initial appearance, repeating her desire to represent herself instead of answering his questions about whether she had had any legal training or education in the law.

William Blauser Jr., of Ludlow, Pa., also appeared on charges of illegally entering a restricted building and violent entry and disorderly conduct.

Both he and Bauer were released on bond.

In New York, John Juran, of Williamsville; Traci Sunstrom, of Amherst; Michael Sywak, of Hamburg; and his son William Sywak, of

Alden, were arrested Wednesday on similar charges and scheduled to make initial appearances in federal court in Buffalo. Court documents did not indicate whether they had retained lawyers.

Daniel Warmus, of Alden, appeared before U.S. District Judge Michael Romer in Buffalo on Tuesday.

The FBI began investigating Warmus after receiving a Jan. 12 tip that, while at a dentist's office, he described smoking marijuana inside the Capitol and refusing a police officer's warning to leave. Warmus also played a video he had taken inside the Capitol, which an unidentified tipster heard but did not see, according to a criminal complaint.

"We're not interested" in commenting, a woman who answered the phone at Warmus' home on Wednesday said.

A complaint unsealed in Arizona on Tuesday charges Micajah Jackson, of Arizona, with entering a restricted building and violent entry and disorderly conduct. The complaint alleges Jackson appears in photographs walking with members of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group, but that he told investigators he is not affiliated.



JONATHAN J. COOPER/AP

Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone, foreground, and other elected officials refute allegations of irregularities with the Arizona county's handling of the 2020 election, during a news conference in Phoenix on Monday.

Arizona auditors now say no election data destroyed

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Firms hired to run a partisan audit of the 2020 election for Senate Republicans in Arizona said Tuesday that data was not destroyed, reversing earlier allegations that election officials in the state's most populated county eliminated evidence.

The claim of deleted databases was amplified by former President Donald Trump and his supporters, who believe conspiracy theories about election irregularities.

Ben Cotton, founder of a computer forensics firm working on the audit, told key senators that he had recovered all data. The revelation

came a day after Maricopa County officials released a scathing letter saying the auditors couldn't find the data because they didn't know where to look.

He spoke at a hearing called by Republican Senate President Karen Fann to demand answers from county officials about the allegation of deleted data and improper documentation of ballot storage.

The GOP-controlled county Board of Supervisors refused to show up, instead holding a blistering meeting of their own Monday to refute the allegations. They called the audit a "sham" and said Fann's auditors are incompetent.

WORLD

Israel fires rockets as expectations for cease-fire increase

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israel unleashed another wave of airstrikes across the Gaza Strip early Thursday, killing at least one Palestinian and wounding several, and Hamas fired more rockets, even as expectations rose that a cease-fire could be coming.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pushed back against calls from the United States to wind down the Gaza offensive, appearing determined to inflict maximum damage on Hamas in a war that could help save his political career. Still, officials close to the negotiations say they expect a truce to be announced in the next 24 hours.

In another possible sign of progress, Netanyahu scheduled a meeting later Thursday with his Security Cabinet, where the issue of a cease-fire was likely to be debated.

Explosions shook Gaza City and orange flares lit up the pre-dawn sky, with bombing raids also reported in the central town of Deir al-Balah and the southern town of Khan Younis. As the sun rose, residents surveyed the rubble from at least five family homes destroyed in Khan Younis. There were also heavy airstrikes on a commercial thoroughfare in Gaza City.

The Israeli military said it struck at least three homes of Hamas commanders in Khan Younis and another in Rafah, targeting “military infrastructure,” as well as a weapons storage unit at a home in Gaza City.

With hundreds already killed in the worst fighting since Israel and Hamas’ 2014 war, U.S. President Joe Biden told Israel on Wednesday that he expected “a significant de-escalation today on the path to a cease-fire” — but Netanyahu pushed back, saying he was “de-



MAYA ALLERUZZO/AP

An Israeli soldier walks at a staging ground near the border with the Gaza Strip, in southern Israel on Thursday.

termined to continue this operation until its aim is met.” It marked the first public rift between the two close allies since the fighting began and poses a difficult test of the U.S.-Israel relationship early in Biden’s presidency.

Still, an Egyptian intelligence official said a cease-fire was likely late Thursday or early Friday, after the U.S. appeal bolstered Cairo’s own efforts to halt the fighting. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the delicate talks.

Khalid Okasha, director of the Egyptian Center for Strategic Studies, which has close ties to the government, also said a cease-fire was likely in that timeframe, as did Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas official.

Visiting the region, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Israel has “the right to defend itself against such unacceptable attacks.” But he also expressed concern about the rising number of civilian victims and voiced support for truce efforts.

Spain, Morocco concentrate on young migrants stuck at border

Associated Press

CEUTA — With border crossings of migrants apparently under control, Spain and Morocco turned their attention Thursday to the plight of hundreds of teenagers and children stranded on both sides of their frontier amid one of the biggest diplomatic spats between the two countries in recent years.

In Ceuta, the Spanish enclave on the northern African coast at the center of the dispute, hundreds of unaccompanied minors were crammed into charity-run warehouses for a 10-day compulsory coronavirus quarantine under police watch. Some climbed onto the buildings’ roofs to escape.

Looking for some extra clothes to protect against the evening’s cold, a 14-year-old boy who had left the poor conditions in the warehouse explained that his attempt for a life in Spain had been agreed to by his parents.

“They see that if I come here, I can have a future,” said the boy, who had traveled from Tetouan, a city about 25 miles south of the Spanish border.

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Iranian president upbeat on nuke talks

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran’s president on Thursday offered his most optimistic assessment yet of ongoing talks to resuscitate his country’s nuclear deal with world powers, claiming there had been “major” agreement among diplomats even as other nations involved suggested challenges remain.

The comments by President Hassan Rouhani come as Iran prepares for a June 18 election to determine who will replace the relatively moderate cleric. Saving his signature atomic accord before the vote could boost reformist and moderate candidates backing Rouhani’s agenda in an election in which many believe hard-liners already hold an edge.

Speaking at a ceremony inaugurating several petrochemical projects, Rouhani asserted that solutions to “major issues like sanctions” had been agreed to by diplomats, while other issues remained under discussion.

“We have taken a major and big step and the main agreement has been done,” Rouhani said.

That comment came just as Mikhail Ulyanov, a Russian diplomat involved in the talks, tweeted that it “is obvious now that the Vienna talks on (deal) will not be completed by May 21 as the participants hoped.” He described the situation as “regrettable but not dramatic.”

“May 21 wasn’t a deadline but a target date. It helped us not to forget about time pressure,” Ulyanov wrote. “The talks will continue until successful outcome.”

That mirrored comments Wednesday by Enrique Mora, the European Union official who chaired the talks between Russia, China, Germany, France, Britain and Iran. He said told reporters “we have made substantial progress” though there were “still things to be worked out.”

Chinese diplomat Wang Qun was paraphrased by the state-run Xinhua news agency as saying “there is still some distance away from the goal of reaching an agreement.” European diplomats involved said after the talks that they were “beginning to see the contours of what a final deal could look like” but that “success is not guaranteed.”

Diplomats agreed to resume the talks in Vienna next week.

Specifics have been few from weeks of talks in Vienna, which aim to see Iran return to the limits the deal imposed and the U.S. drop the sanctions it imposed after then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the deal in 2018.



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CMST 100G	Spreadsheet Applications (1) + 26 June (2 weeks)
IFSM 201	Concepts and Applications of Information Technology (3) 16 June (4 weeks), 30 June
IFSM 300	Information Systems in Organizations (3) + 30 June
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LANGUAGES & HUMANITIES

ARTH 204	Film and American Culture Studies (3) 30 June
ARTH 489H	Baroque Art in Rome: An Introduction (3) 13 July (4 weeks)
ARTT 152	Basics of Photography (3) 30 June
GERM 111	Elementary German I (3) 30 June
GERM 112	Elementary German II (3) + 1 July
GERM 211	Intermediate German I (3) + 1 July
GERM 333	German Society and Culture (3) + 30 June
HIST 115	World History I (3) 30 June
HIST 141	Western Civilization I (3) 30 June
HIST 156	History of the United States to 1865 (3) 30 June
HIST 157	History of the United States Since 1865 (3) 30 June
HIST 202	Principles of War (3) 30 June
HIST 217F	History and Culture of Naples (3) 30 June
HIST 318G	D-Day and Normandy Campaign of 1944 (1) 5 June (2 weeks)
HIST 365	Recent America: 1945 to the Present (3) + 21 July (4 weeks)
HUMN 100	Introduction to Humanities (3) 16 June (4 weeks), 30 June
ITAL 111	Elementary Italian I (3) 30 June
ITAL 112	Elementary Italian II (3) + 1 July
ITAL 312	Advanced Conversation II (3) + 30 June
MUSC 210	Music as Cultural Expression (3) 30 June
PHIL 110	Practical Reasoning (3) 30 June
SPAN 111	Elementary Spanish I (3) 1 July
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ACCT 220	Principles of Accounting I (3) 30 June
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STAT 200	Introduction to Statistics (3) 30 June, 1 July

NATURAL SCIENCES

BIOL 101	Concepts of Biology (3) 30 June
BIOL 102	Laboratory in Biology (1) + 30 June
BIOL 181	Life in the Oceans (3) 30 June
BIOL 182	Marine Biology Laboratory (1) + 30 June
BIOL 211	Environmental Science (3) + 30 June
BIOL 302	Bacteria, Viruses, and Health (3) 16 June (4 weeks)
BIOL 304	The Biology of Cancer (3) 30 June
NUTR 100	Elements of Nutrition (3) 30 June, 21 July (4 weeks)
NUTR 101	Nutrition Laboratory (1) + 30 June

SOCIAL SCIENCES

BEHS 220	Diversity Awareness (3) 30 June
CCJS 350	Juvenile Delinquency (3) + 30 June
ECON 201	Principles of Macroeconomics (3) 30 June
ECON 203	Principles of Microeconomics (3) 30 June
GVPT 100	American Government (3) 21 July (4 weeks)
GVPT 408	Counterterrorism (3) 30 June
PSYC 100	Introduction to Psychology (3) 30 June
PSYC 307H	Sleep and Dreams (1) 12 June (2 weeks)
PSYC 309VG	Emotional Well-Being (1) 5 June (2 weeks)
PSYC 321	Social Psychology (3) + 16 June (4 weeks)
PSYC 332	Psychology of Human Sexuality (3) + 30 June
SOCY 100	Introduction to Sociology (3) 30 June

WRITING & SPEECH

ENGL 102	Composition and Literature (3) + 30 June
SPCH 100	Foundations of Oral Communication (3) 30 June
WRTG 111	Academic Writing I (3) 30 June
WRTG 112	Academic Writing II (3) 30 June
WRTG 293	Introduction to Professional Writing (3) + 30 June
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WEEKEND



Reintroducing
Ratchet and Clank
Video games, Page 19

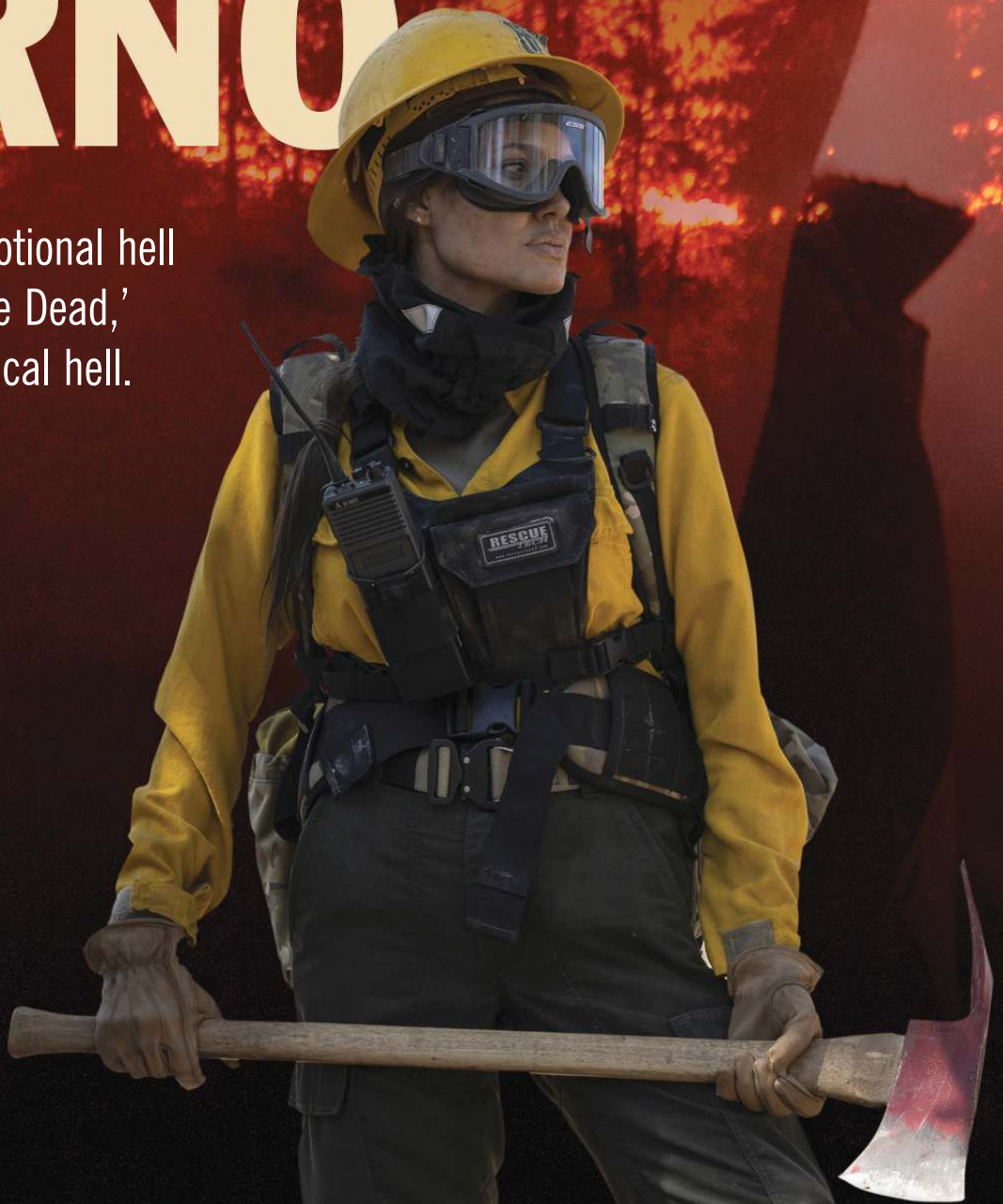


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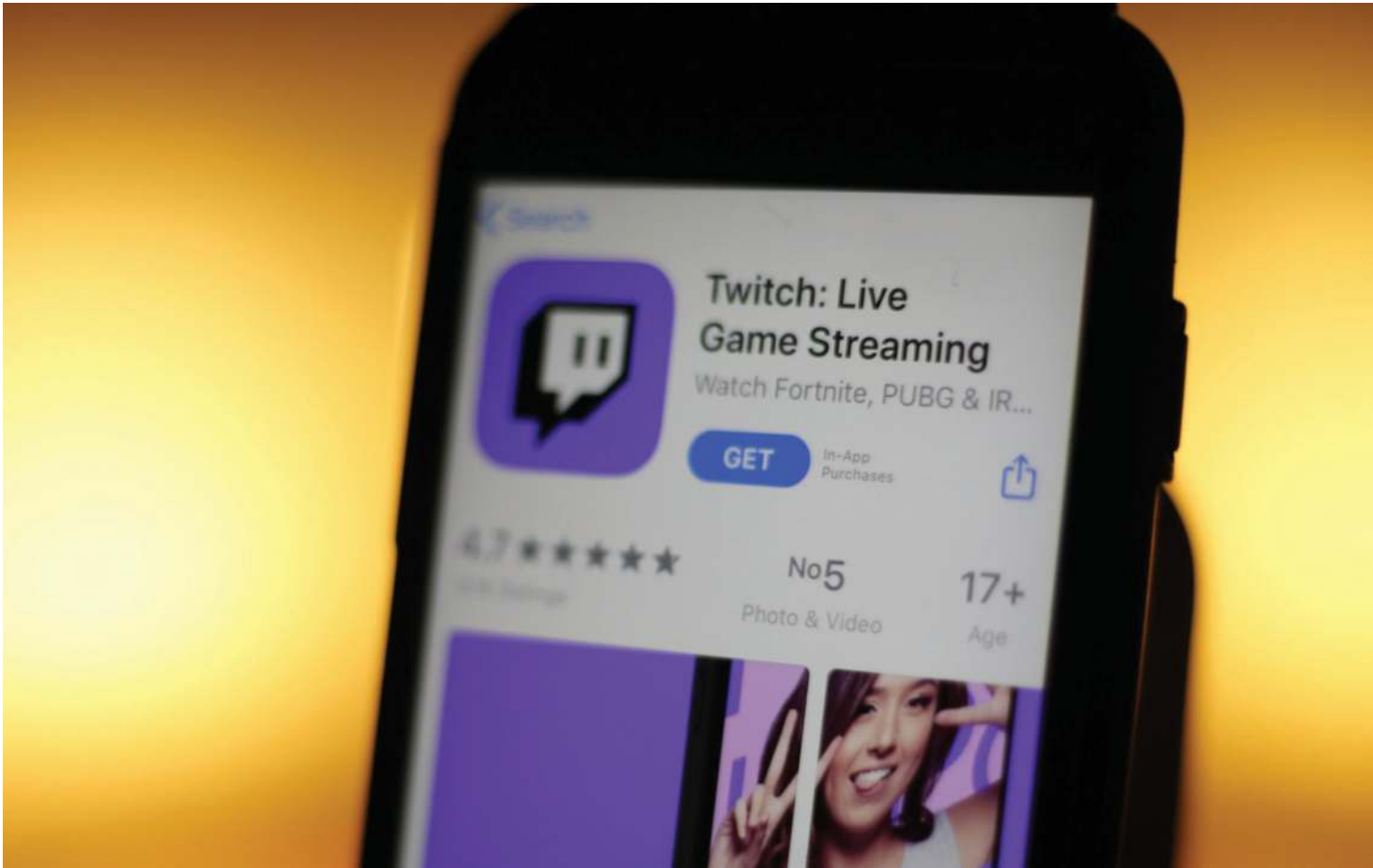
To play a character going through emotional hell in the chase film 'Those Who Wish Me Dead,' Angelina Jolie had to go through physical hell. And she 'loved every minute of it.'

Profile on Page 16; Review on Page 17

WARNER BROS. PHOTOS/Stars and Stripes illustration



WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



HOLLIE ADAMS/Bloomberg

A smartphone displays the Apple App Store page for the Twitch streaming app. Female streamers “just chatting” are gaining popularity on the Amazon-owned livestream site that was once dominated by gamers livestreaming their game-play.

Popularity of ‘just chatting’ Female streamers are conquering Twitch with live video diaries

By OLGA KHARIF
Bloomberg

During a recent livestream, Maya Higa, 22, ate guacamole and chips while bantering with two of her housemates as they cooked quesadillas. Over the next 90 minutes, Higa grilled some vegetables and consulted on which pan ought to be used for frying. At one point, she provided her online viewers with an update on her young pet emu. “Stompy is good,” said Higa. “I had her on stream yesterday.”

She wasn’t sure, she explained to one of her kitchen buddies, how much Stompy now weighed. But the lovable emu was definitely growing fast.

The same could be said of Higa’s livestreaming audience. In February, Higa burst into the top 200 most popular creators on Twitch. She now has 420,000 subscribers on the livestreaming site owned by Amazon, making her something of an anomaly in an industry known for male streamers playing video games and, to a lesser extent, female streamers nicknamed “hot-tub girls,” who woo Twitch viewers by wearing skimpy swimwear and lounging in bathtubs.

Higa, by contrast, is part of a new wave of female streamers who are gaining prominence on Twitch and elsewhere in the industry while staying well clear of the jacuzzi scene. Recently, YouTube creator Rachel “Valkyrae” Hofstetter became the co-owner of 100 Thieves, an esports gaming organization and brand. In April 2021, there were eight women in the top 200 streamers on Twitch up from just three a year earlier, according to StreamEle-

ments, a company that provides video tools for streamers and which represents Higa.

The number of top female streamers is growing now, in part, due to changing preferences on the platform. During the third quarter of last year, a relatively new genre of livestreaming videos known as “just chatting” — essentially live video diaries — eclipsed gaming-related content to become the most popular category on Twitch. In the first quarter of 2021, “just chatting” videos accounted for 12% of all content watched on Twitch, according to tracker Streamlabs.

Imane Anys, 24, who goes by the nickname Pokimane, has 7.7 million followers on Twitch. She typically splits her performance time between “just chatting” videos and playing games like Valorant. Twin sisters Alexandra and Andrea Botez, aka BotezLive, have amassed 791,000 followers on Twitch, teaching and playing chess.

“You see more games at the top of Twitch that rely less on competitive value and more on the entertainment value of social dynamics,” said Doron Nir, chief executive officer of StreamElements. “What propels them to the top is the exact same thing that propels male streamers to the top — they are very, very entertaining.”

The growing popularity of group games like Among Us has allowed streamers to share their fan bases, said Hana Tjia of United Talent Agency, which represents several top female streamers, including Pokimane, Valkyrae and Leslie Fu, aka Fuslie. “They uplift one another,” said Tjia.

Moving into a group house full of fellow

Twitch performers has been another winning strategy for some female streamers, including Higa. For years, streaming houses only invited gamers. But lately, “just chatting” streamers have joined in. Higa credits her rise up the rankings in the past year to moving into her boyfriend’s house in Texas. The house is home to six streamers in addition to Higa’s pet falcon and emu. “It is kind of like reality TV,” said Higa.

The life of a female streamer does have its drawbacks. “The negative side of all of it, of course, there’s harassment,” Higa said. “People get banned through our channels all the time. If you go through my ban appeals, it’s just disgusting, ‘Take your shirt off.’ It’s a bit of a problem, but overwhelmingly positive.”

It’s also easy to get burned out when living and working in a streamer house. About a year ago, Anys moved out of the Offline TV streaming house to try and achieve a better work-life balance. She now shares a house with three fellow female streamers, but their interactions are private and not being shared with viewers. “When you live where you work, the lines get blurred very easily, and it’s hard to take proper breaks because there’s always something going on in person,” Anys said in an email.

Now, it’s the brands that are hoping to move in. These days, lots of advertisers — pitching everything from food-delivery services to phone plans — are looking to cozy up to female streamers.

“Ad agencies generally pitch me as pretty brand friendly,” said Higa. “The only thing I need to watch out for is swearing.”

GADGETS

Air purifier for allergy season

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

If there was ever a timely gadget to provide some relief for the spring allergy season, the Scosche FrescheAIR portable HEPA air purifier/deodorizer is it.

Measuring 2.6-inches round by 6.9-inches deep and weighing 1.42 pounds, the FrescheAIR is made with rugged aluminum alloy. It’s not only portable to fit in a backpack or such, but also fits perfectly in a vehicle’s cup holder for use on the road. It’s perfect for eliminating smoke, food and pet odors, germs and pollens from the air.

Inside the FrescheAIR are dual-speed fans that pull in the dirty air from all directions. A three-stage HEPA filter on the bottom third of the cylinder collects 99.5% of the PM2.5 pollen and dust. PM2.5 is defined as fine inhalable particles with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers or smaller. After the air is filtered in the FrescheAIR, fresh air is released as negative ions and deodorized air.

Using it is as easy as waving your hand over the touchless controls to have it quietly and efficiently eliminate unwanted odors at most any location. A top display shows the current temperature, humidity and air quality.

A 4-foot USB power cable is included, which can be used at home or with the included dual 12W USB car charger. An extra replaceable high flow HEPA filter is included. More filters can be purchased for \$14.99 each.

www.scosche.com \$99.99

With a lot of us starting to work from the office again, the Moshi Muto gives you the perfect reason to clean out your old backpack and make the switch to a new and more stylish one.

With dimensions of 11.02-by-3.94-by-16.14 inches and a 29-ounce weight, don’t let the compact size be deceiving. Even if I remove less than half of what I found I didn’t need to be carrying around in my existing backpack, the Moshi Muto was a perfect transition.

Moshi describes it as a modern-looking backpack, which instantly goes from backpack to crossbody to briefcase to match your commuting needs. The Quik-Flip strap gives you access in any position and the Airmesh back ensures all-day comfort along with padded back straps.

It holds a 13-inch laptop and an 11-inch tablet in padded compartments as a backpack or briefcase angles. An intelligent zipper system keeps the contents in place whether opening horizontally or vertically.

The Muto is constructed with a water-repellent and abrasion-resistant exterior in coastal beige or slate gray. A side zippered pocket is built with RFID Shield protection to keep personal items such as credit cards, passports and anything else needing protecting from data skimming.

An external sleeve holds a water bottle and inside hidden compartments are integrated to hold accessories.

www.moshi.com \$149.95

WEEKEND: MOVIES

12

new movies to be the most excited about this summer

BY MOIRA MACDONALD
The Seattle Times

Good luck planning ahead to see movies this summer; the schedules (and the theatrical versus streaming strategies) are still changing rapidly. But here are a dozen movies I'm keeping an eye on, and hoping to see on the biggest screen I can find.



Disney

Emma Stone stars as the young villain Cruella de Vil in "Cruella," the origin story of the baddie from "101 Dalmations."

'Cruella'

(May 28, also on streaming on Disney+ Premier Access)

Do we really need an origin story for "101 Dalmatians" villain Cruella de Vil? Apparently we do! Two always-splendid Emmas — Stone and Thompson — appear in this live-action Disney comedy, with Stone as the young title character who dreams of being a fashion designer. The costumes alone, by the great Merchant-Ivory veteran Jenny Beavan, look to be a treat. Craig Gillespie ("I, Tonya," "Lars and the Real Girl") directs.

'Vivo'

(June 4)

It's the Summer of Lin-Manuel Miranda at the multiplexes! (After the year we've been through, we deserve all the L-MM we can get.) First: this animated family comedy about an adventurous kinkajou who travels from Havana to Miami. Miranda wrote the songs; his "In the Heights" collaborator Quiara Alegría Hudes wrote the script with director Kirk DeMico.

'In the Heights'

(June 11, also streaming on HBO Max)

See above! A year after it was originally scheduled to be in theaters, the film of Miranda's hit Broadway musical about a Washington Heights bodega owner is finally hitting the multiplexes. Jon M. Chu ("Crazy Rich Asians") directs; expect dancing in the streets.

'Rita Moreno: Just a Girl Who Decided To Go For It'

(June 18)

You might know Moreno from "West Side Story," or maybe from growing up with "The Electric Company," or maybe more recently from her delightful work on "One Day at a Time" — regardless, the EGOT (Emmy/Grammy/Oscar/Tony) winner is a legend in show business, and has long deserved a documentary of her own.

'The Dry'

(May 21)

Based on a wonderfully atmospheric novel by Jane Harper, Robert Connolly's film stars Eric Bana as an Australian federal agent who reluctantly agrees to investigate a crime in his hometown.



Paramount Pictures

Evelyn (Emily Blunt) and Marcus (Noah Jupe) brave the unknown in "A Quiet Place Part II," the sequel to director John Krasinski's breakout hit from 2018.

'A Quiet Place Part II'

(May 28)

The original "A Quiet Place," back in 2018, freaked me the hell out, to put it mildly. (Do not watch this film in an empty house; every subsequent noise will terrify you.) Now the sequel to John Krasinski's very effective horror movie, in which he stars with Emily Blunt as a couple who must fend off apocalyptic monsters who are triggered by sound, is coming up, with even more silence. Yikes.

'Cinderella'

(July 16)

Billy Porter as Fairy Godmother? Sign me up. This musical version of the familiar fairy tale also stars recording artist Camila Cabello (in her first feature film) and Idina Menzel as her wicked stepmother.

'Old'

(July 23)

M. Night Shyamalan's output has been decidedly uneven since "The Sixth Sense," but what the heck, we've all been missing movies so let's give this one a go. Gael Garcia Bernal and Vicky Krieps ("Phantom Thread") play a couple who are horrified when their children begin rapidly aging on a remote tropical beach. OK then!

'Respect'

(Aug. 13)

Jennifer Hudson was personally chosen by Aretha Franklin, years before the Queen of Soul's death in 2018, to play her as a young woman in this biopic, which also stars Forest Whitaker, Audra McDonald and Mary J. Blige (the latter as Dinah Washington). And yes, of course Hudson does her own singing.

'Black Widow'

(July 9, also on Disney+ Premier Access)

The 24th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe has at its center one Natasha Romanoff (Scarlett Johansson), a former KGB assassin and present Avenger; it takes place after the events of "Captain America: Civil War." It's been delayed three times due to the pandemic, but finally hits theaters in midsummer. And sure, you could stream it, but don't you want to see this one big?

'Blue Bayou'

(June 25)

The latest from filmmaker/actor Justin Chon ("Gook") sounds timely and moving; let's hope it doesn't get lost in a sea of higher-profile films. Chon plays a Korean adoptee living in Louisiana with his wife (Oscar winner Alicia Vikander, "The Danish Girl") who learns that he is facing deportation.

'F9'

(June 25)

Inject this movie into my veins immediately, please. Dwayne Johnson may have left this fast-driving, insanely fun franchise, but Vin Diesel, Charlize Theron, Michelle Rodriguez and the rest of the gang return — along with Helen Mirren, who according to the trailer gets her own car this time. Bring it on!



Marvel Studios

Scarlett Johansson stars in the much delayed "Black Widow."

WEEKEND: MOVIES

‘What I needed’

Jolie says she related with her character’s journey in ‘Those Who Wish Me Dead’

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

Taylor Sheridan, initially brought on to rewrite the mountain thriller “Those Who Wish Me Dead,” gradually got more invested in the movie. When another filmmaker dropped out, he called the studio with an offer.

“I said if I can get Angie to do this with me, I’ll direct it for you,” Sheridan says. “They said, ‘Great. You’ll never get Angie.’”

The skepticism on the part of Warner Bros. executives was warranted. Angelina Jolie, whose priorities have centered on filmmaking, international work and family, hasn’t starred in a live-action film in six years. Over the last decade, her only leading performances have been two “Maleficent” movies and “By the Sea,” which she directed and starred in alongside then-husband Brad Pitt.

But Sheridan’s timing was right. Jolie, going through a painful and protracted divorce, was more interested in a quicker, simpler role on set. And the part of a Montanan smoke jumper haunted by trauma and guilt, was potentially cathartic.

“We all have times in our lives where we are broken. And we grieve and we’re not sure we have anything left in us,” Jolie said in an interview by Zoom from Los Angeles. “I identified more with a part of her that didn’t feel she could do a lot, and hadn’t done this in a long time. To be in this situation and have a director that is both sensitive and aware of the human experience, to go there and to feel it, but also to push you to find your strength and move forward.”

“It was really what I needed at that time,” Jolie says.

“Those Who Wish Me Dead,” now playing in theaters and streaming on HBO Max, is an anomaly for other reasons, too. It’s a star-led genre film not based on well-known intellectual property made by a major studio. (The film is based on Michael Koryta’s 2014 book.) Like Sheridan’s previous films — “Hell or High Water,” “Sicario” (both of which he wrote) and “Wind River” (which Sheridan wrote and directed), it’s a tale of blood and justice across a vast and violent American landscape.

“To sound like a millennial, it’s very on-brand for me,” says Sheridan, chuckling. “But what’s unique is we made this at a studio. This is a studio film and they trusted us to go do this. We made it like a ’70s movie. They promoted it like a ’70s movie. The biggest 21st century element is the fact that you’ll be able to stream it or go to the theater.”

In “Those Who Wish Me Dead,” Jolie’s Hannah Faber encounters a 12-year-old



WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT PHOTOS/AP

Angelina Jolie appears in a scene from “Those Who Wish Me Dead.” Jolie, who also appeared in action films like “Salt” and “Lara Croft: Tomb Raider,” performed many of her own stunts for the film, which was shot in New Mexico in May and June 2019.

“I like characters whose physical journey parallels the emotional journey they’re going through.”

Taylor Sheridan
director, “Those Who Wish Me Dead”

boy (Finn Little) in the wilderness who’s fleeing two assassins. It was shot in New Mexico in May and June 2019 — a month after Jolie and Pitt were ruled legally single by a court. (A custody battle over their six children is ongoing.)

Snow was still falling in the mountains. Aside from the natural environs, Sheridan erected a faux forest and set it aflame. Jolie, an action star in “Mr. & Mrs. Smith,” “Salt” and “Lara Croft: Tomb Raider,” performed many of her stunts. Sheridan, accustomed to making films close to the land, had little luxury to offer beyond space heaters in tents and lavish, overbudget craft services. He cheerfully recalls the experience as miserable.

“You know, the character sort of drags Angie through emotional hell, and then I drug her through physical hell,” Sheridan says from a remote lakeside quarantine in Ontario. “That’s how we be made the movie.”

“And I loved every minute of it,” Jolie says, smiling.

Jolie will next be seen in Marvel’s “Eternals,” by “Nomadland” director Chloé Zhao — another filmmaker drawn to fresh tales on old American frontiers. It’s been an unexpected break from directing for Jolie, who last helmed 2017’s Cambodian genocide drama “First They



Director Taylor Sheridan, left, chats with Jolie on the set of “Those Who Wish Me Dead.” Sheridan was initially brought on to rewrite the film, which is based off of a 2014 book.

Killed My Father.”

“I prefer directing, but acting gives me more time at home,” Jolie says. “It’s less of a commitment.”

Yet, if anything, the chances of such performances are getting slimmer. The pandemic, says the 45-year-old Jolie, has been a time of reevaluation — and movies are a diminishing priority.

“I was kind of spending more time at home regardless because of different family reasons. But if I was before spending half my time on my international work, I think I’ll now be spending 80% of my time on this other work. I’ll be doing less film work. Not quitting anything but a lot less,” Jolie says. “I’ve mentally shifting into a different time in my life.”

Jolie has been a special envoy to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since 2012. She applauds President Joe Biden’s recent expansion of U.S. refugee admissions but sees a global crisis

only worsening, especially as countries struggling from the pandemic pull back on foreign aid.

“In the last decade, we saw numbers double. We’re looking at 80 million displaced people. A lot of those people are displaced because of the climate and the way that’s changing, and that’s going to keep changing,” Jolie says. “If we don’t take it seriously, we’re going to see a complete breakdown of some many things for so many people. Or this can be the turning point where we all pull together.”

In juggling global inequity and personal turmoil, it’s easy to see how the straightforward, physical demands of “Those Who Wish Me Dead” would appeal to Jolie.

“I like characters whose physical journey parallels the emotional journey they’re going through,” Sheridan says. “She was game. It was cold. I’d be like, ‘Get in the river’ and she’d be like, ‘OK, I’m getting in the river.’”

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS



WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT/AP

Angelina Jolie and Finn Little appear in a scene from “Those Who Wish Me Dead.”

A story told with bumps, bruises, cuts and tears

Chase film ‘Those Who Wish Me Dead’ keeps viewers on the edge of their seats but doesn’t have lasting impact

BY LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

It would be an understatement to say that Angelina Jolie is put through the wringer in writer-director Taylor Sheridan’s new film, “Those Who Wish Me Dead.” In just 100 minutes, she is beaten and bruised by nature, men and even some of her own choices — like a crazy stunt involving a parachute and a pickup truck. Jolie has always thrown herself into physically demanding roles, but her Montana firefighter Hannah Farber may take the cake for most cuts and shiners sustained in 24 hours. This is a film in which she’s running from hitmen, raging forest fires and past traumas. Apparently her face and body are the physical representation of that. Even so, it’s always a pleasure to see her back on screen, which has become rarer and rarer lately.

“Those Who Wish Me Dead” was adapted from a novel about Connor, a 12-year-old boy on the run from a pair of assassins who killed his dad. Screenplay credits go to the author Michael Koryta, Charles Leavitt (“Blood Diamond”) and Sheridan, who seems to be cornering the market on bleak and bloody Western thrillers. Sheridan wrote the screenplays for

“Sicario,” “Hell or High Water” and “Wind River,” which he also directed.

This outing is not quite as grim as “Wind River” but it’s still very much in that vein. And like his folksy-poetic dialogue or not, he knows how keep a film moving and give his actors juicy moments to chew on. (It should be no surprise that he too cut his teeth acting.) He’s populated this film with solid talent including Jon Bernthal as a local sheriff, and Aidan Gillen and Nicholas Hoult as the hitmen. Finn Little, who plays Connor, can turn on the waterworks and internalized trauma as effectively as Jolie.

The film is a little scant on key details — the whole chase is set off by Connor’s dad discovering some criminal conspiracy big enough to warrant blowing up the district attorney’s home (yes, with the family inside). But because there was only one team sent to kill off the two people with knowledge of the conspiracy, Connor and his dad get a few days’ head start to drive from their Florida home to Montana to seek help from his brother-in-law sheriff (Bernthal).

Jolie’s Hannah meanwhile has been relegated to tower duty after she failed to save three boys in the woods during a massive fire. It might be a bit of a stretch, but she

sells it with her steely gaze and cool swagger. Yes there probably aren’t many firefighters who look like Jolie, but there also aren’t many people who look like Jolie. At least here everyone acknowledges her otherworldly beauty. And she gets her chance to help another young boy when she spots Connor running through the woods.

“Those Who Wish Me Dead” doesn’t hold up to much scrutiny. There are too many threads left dangling and characters left unexplored, including Hannah herself. We get to see her as one-of-the-boys at the beginning with as much ego as a test pilot and a few flashbacks to the tragedy that seems to define her, but otherwise she’s an enigma. Some of the forest fires are also distractingly digital. And yet, it’s an effective and watchable chase film that keeps you on the edge of your seat enough to make it worthwhile. And it’s a great breakout role for Medina Senghore, who gets to play a kick butt survival expert who’s also six months pregnant. It’s just not a film you’re going to be thinking much about five minutes after it ends.

“Those Who Wish Me Dead” is rated R for “strong violence and language throughout.” Running time: 100 minutes. Now streaming on HBO Max.

‘The Woman in the Window’ fails to deliver on its promise

BY ANN HORNADAY
The Washington Post

The pedigree of “The Woman in the Window” is so impressive that it looks like a no-lose proposition: In this twisty psychological thriller, based on A.J. Finn’s bestselling novel, Amy Adams plays an agoraphobic child psychologist whose voyeuristic obsession with her new neighbors leads her into an increasingly perilous labyrinth of lies and distorted identities.

Throw in a supporting cast that includes Gary Oldman, Julianne Moore and Tracy Letts — working with Letts’ own adapted screenplay and under the directorial hand of Joe Wright — and “The Woman in the Window” promises to be the kind of elegant, atmospheric, locked-room mystery that made its most obvious literary and cinematic inspirations such classics.

Indeed, Wright makes sure to toss in plenty of brief film clips from the likes of Alfred Hitchcock and Otto Preminger (“Laura”), and the shadowy Harlem townhouse that Adams pads around in would no doubt prompt Agatha Christie to poke around its most tantalizing corners. But even with all this promise, “The Woman in the Window” falls apart, devolving into tawdry body horror and tiresome, talky exposition.

Things get off to an alarmingly clichéd start during the movie’s first moments, when the camera pans across a creepy doll house belonging to Anna Fox (Adams). Trapped in her gentrified Harlem pad for the past several months, Anna has spent most of the time chasing a variety of medications with copious glasses of red wine. Her therapist, played by Letts with his usual dry humor, stops by for occasional sarcastic banter with Anna, who is resolute in her inertia. That is, until the Russell family moves in across the street, and their adolescent son Ethan (Fred Hechinger) stops by for an impromptu meet-and-greet.

Something’s not quite right with the Russells, and Adams begins to study them from afar, cued by a mixture of compassion, clinical interest and garden-variety curiosity. But her addled state, exacerbated by her intake of alcohol and pills, blurs her perceptions. Is she seeing what she thinks she’s seeing? And is it as bad as it looks?

Reportedly, “The Woman in the Window” has been in progress for a few years now, rewritten and re-filmed to accommodate confused test audiences. It’s now gone directly to streaming at a time when, like Anna, many of its viewers are cooped up, stir crazy and drinking more than they probably should. Had Wright brought his gift for scene-setting to bear on the story, that might have made “The Woman in the Window” at least a visual escape. Instead, he doubles down on Anna’s sepulchral interior life, making Adams look as puffy and dowdy as possible and filming her in dreary, dimly lit rooms that have all the appeal of a grimy aquarium. (Between this movie and her recent appearances in “Hillbilly Elegy” and HBO’s “Sharp Objects,” it’s past time for Adams to bring the catatonia phase of her career to a close; it has done her no favors.)

When Moore shows up in a provocative cameo, she injects a welcome jolt of destabilizing brio into the otherwise dull proceedings; Oldman, for his part, is criminally underused. The cinematic references of the original novel here are telegraphed in quick clips, which feels like a missed opportunity for the visual style Wright brought to such films as “Atonement” and “Anna Karenina”; a late scene of magical realism is perfunctory and tonally out of place.

“The Woman in the Window” is the kind of film that could go places, but sadly never manages to get out the door.

“The Woman in the Window” is rated R for violence and strong language. Running time: 101 minutes. Now streaming on Netflix.



Netflix

Amy Adams appears in a scene from “The Woman in the Window.”

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Never-ending ‘spiral’ of pain

Police abuse-driven plot of 9th ‘Saw’ film timely for franchise starting to show its age

By MICHAEL O’SULLIVAN
The Washington Post

If after eight movies in the “Saw” franchise — the new “Spiral” makes nine — you’re still unfamiliar with or (harder to believe) undecided on the concept, let me get this out of the way: The movies center on the gruesome infliction of pain, perpetrated as a means of teaching a lesson, though more often the “student” just ends up dead, often minus a body part or two.

Typically referred to as “games,” the scenarios are elaborate and theatrically violent, though usually shorter in duration than one would find in torture porn, a genre into which some have lumped the films, though that isn’t exactly right.

“Spiral,” which involves the hunt for a serial killer by the police force of a nameless metropolis, is a thriller, a mystery, a police drama, but it hews closely to “Saw’s” grisly curriculum. Detective Zeke Banks (Chris Rock) has stumbled onto a series of murders that appear to be copycat killings perpetrated by

someone who has adopted the methods of the “Saw” movies’ antagonist: the now deceased John Kramer, aka Jigsaw (played by Tobin Bell).

The film opens with the death of Banks’ pal, a detective who has been lured onto a subway track, where he is strung up, essentially, by his tongue, in the path of a speeding train. If he’s willing to sacrifice that organ — a metaphor for the lies he’s told in court, according to the message from a man in a pig mask playing on a nearby TV — he lives.

Things don’t quite work out that way, in the first of a series of grisly demises, all involving police officers or former officers, and entailing, among other things, flaying, a hailstorm of broken glass shards, hot wax and finger avulsion. (Look it up. On second thought, don’t.)

So the film, directed by Darren Lynn Bousman (“Saw II” through “Saw IV”) from a screenplay by Josh Stolberg and Pete Goldfinger, and executive produced by Rock, has a topical jolt: Someone is punishing rotten



Chris Rock, foreground, stars in “Spiral” with Max Minghella, right. The film, the ninth in the “Saw” franchise, follows Rock and Minghella as they investigate the murders of corrupt police officers.

police officers. Police officers who lie, abuse their authority, shoot innocent people and cover up for them. That makes it ... good? It certainly gives it a bit of much-needed urgency anyway, this deep into a franchise that was starting to show signs of age.

Zeke is, presumably, one of the good ones. He turned in a corrupt officer once, which has made him a pariah. As the film opens — with an undercover job incorporating a riff on the movie “Forrest Gump” that plays like a Rock stand-up routine — he’s assigned a rookie (Max Minghella) to mentor, as a way of making him more of a team player.

Further backstory: Zeke has a complicated relationship with his

father (Samuel L. Jackson), the former police chief. Everyone else seems to openly hate Zeke. Half of them are suspects, and the rest potential victims.

Stylistically, the film looks good, shot in a palette of grimy browns that give it the patina of sweat-stained leather. The rare pop of color is delivered via a series of Tiffany-blue packages containing clues, and the bright red spray-painted spirals left by the killer — a symbol of growth, change and evolution, we’re told, that is ironically largely missing from the film. Yes, the killer leaves taunting clues, making the film feel like something of a throwback — a sense that is underscored by all the electric

fans humming in the background of every other scene, like a movie made before air conditioning.

But the story itself is kind of atavistic, too. You may find that you have pegged the killer early on, which means there’s something wrong with the plot, structurally — the twist isn’t much of a twist — or you’ve seen too many of these things. Possibly both are true.

This inevitable decline raises the question: If you’ve managed to avoid 17 years worth of “Saw” movies so far, why start now?

“Spiral” is rated R for sequences of grisly, bloody violence and torture, pervasive crude language, some sexual references and brief drug use. Running time: 93 minutes. Now playing at select theaters.

‘Profile’ a well-acted cautionary tale of online terrorist recruitment

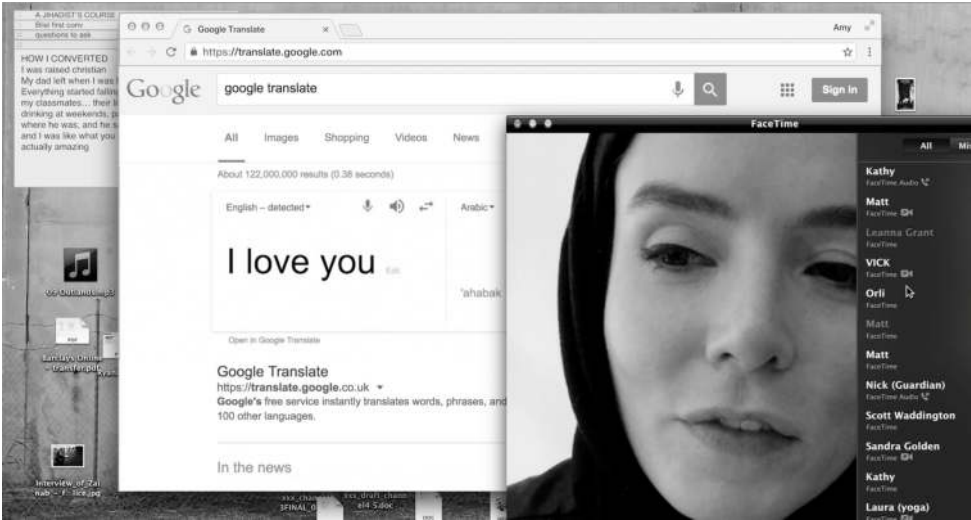
By MICHAEL ORDOÑA
Los Angeles Times

“Profile,” based on a journalist’s undercover investigation of an Islamic State recruiter, is inventive, well-acted and one of the most tense movies of the year so far.

British investigative reporter Amy Whittaker (Valene Kane) is writing about the phenomenon of European women and girls being recruited to join Islamic State. She crafts a fake Facebook profile as “Melody Nelson,” a 19-year-old recent convert to Islam, and shares a jihadist’s video. With alarming suddenness, he makes contact with her. What follows is an increasingly taut game of deception with life-or-death stakes as the recruiter, Abu Bilel Al-Britani (Shazad Latif), insists on video chatting with her and digs into her background over dozens of daily conversations — and the lines between professional and personal blur.

“Profile” is based on the nonfiction book “In the Skin of a Jihadist” by a French journalist who actually did this; a fair amount of dialogue comes verbatim from her account.

Director and co-writer Timur Bekmambetov (the “Night Watch” trilogy) uses what’s being called the “screenlife format”: We see only what is shown on Amy’s computer screen, as in “Searching”



“Profile” makes use of the “screenlife format,” only allowing the viewer to see what’s on journalist Amy Whittaker (Valene Kane)’s computer screen.

or “Unfriended,” which he also produced. Rather than playing as a gimmick, it increases tension as Amy conducts in-character Skype sessions with Bilel while getting calls and notifications from friends, colleagues and her boyfriend. Things get particularly hairy when Bilel demands she share her screen with him.

The screenlife format traps the viewer in Amy’s predicament. There’s no exit, no

God’s-eye view. It’s akin to effective use of an extended unbroken take: You’re trapped in the protagonist’s experience. The choice even reveals character, as the speed with which Amy rejects calls betrays stress and the way she grabs needed information or learns processes on the fly displays intelligence. Even the hesitance with which she types, then deletes, messes conveys emotion.

The acting by the two leads is very good. Apart from playing their sides of the game, they must convince us that a sophisticated, intelligent English journalist could be swayed and perhaps even seduced by a homicidal terrorist. Amy is well aware of what really happens to these girls; she has seen the notorious videos and studied the organization. Yet the actors pull off the magic trick of making her wavering seem credible.

Latif has got to be charming, smart and believable as an enthusiastic romancer who happens to be a deadly zealot. He pulls it off. His rare moments of venom sting all the more bitterly because of all the honey he has poured in her ear.

It’s with impressive skill that Kane executes her emotional and intellectual high-wire act. Her performance is layered, complex, reactive. We sense her panic when things happen too fast. We feel her shifting gears among her editor, boyfriend or quarry-hunter. We believe it when she starts to feel something for Bilel and cringe when she starts to slip up.

“Profile” works on several levels — as a cinematic feat, dual character study, gripping thriller ... and as a cautionary tale.

“Profile” is rated R for language throughout and some disturbing images. Running time: 105 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Evolution of Ratchet and Clank

Insomniac Games creative director, lead writer discuss ‘Rift Apart,’ the latest release in the 19-year franchise

By GENE PARK
The Washington Post

Rapper and record producer Large Professor used to say rap lyrics should not include years — it dates your song. It’s why A Tribe Called Quest dedicated one of its songs “to eternity.”

I couldn’t help but think of that as Insomniac Games creative director Marcus Smith talked to me about the evolution of the Ratchet and Clank series, from its incredibly referential humor and satire in its early PlayStation 2 titles to the more capricious adventures in the past decade. The first and second games lambasted consumer culture, while the third game depicted the dangers of pop idolatry.

Smith also served as creative director for Sunset Overdrive, an Xbox One launch title from 2013, and one of the last Insomniac Games titles before Sony acquired the studio. That game was filled to the brim with satirical portrayals of capitalist culture, driven by an energy drink that turned people into monsters.

“Not all of those held up particularly well!” Smith told The Washington Post. “So I understand and the studio understands that anything that’s referenced can often times make your work of art dated. Our main point was to make stories that are universally relatable, and there’s little things here and there that you can draw a line to now. But hopefully, five years from now, it will still be entertaining on its own.”

This tactic isn’t unwise. Despite a 19-year history and millions of units sold across several titles, Ratchet and Clank have largely avoided the spotlight as Play-

Station icons. This year, Rift Apart is one of the few big budget, next-gen console releases (coming June 11). Insomniac Games wants to take advantage of the new interest early in this console generation, which means having to reintroduce the two characters to new players, all while appeasing longtime fans, who have played every entry since the PlayStation 2.

Rift Apart also comes after Insomniac has attained much broader cultural cachet and name recognition thanks to its successful “Marvel’s Spider-Man” and “Marvel’s Spider-Man: Miles Morales” games,

The new character, Rivet, is Ratchet in an alternate dimension, and shows what would happen to this same character if they lived under different circumstances.

both PlayStation exclusives. But Smith said they’ve learned a lot from the heroes, as well as “Sunset Overdrive,” which was basically a Ratchet game that allowed for grinding and bouncing across an open-world city.

The new dimensional rift mechanic seems to accomplish both in the reintroductions, as well as representing an evolution of Insomniac’s design philosophy. Ratchet games are always about fun weapons and gadgets, and in Rift Apart, players can use the “Dimensionator” to jump between alternate realities. From what we’ve seen of the gameplay, this kind of works like Spider-Man’s web-swinging, except instead of moving between build-

ings, Ratchet is moving between universes. For Smith, it’s important that players enjoy every second and moment while moving.

Smith said the first Insomniac game he played before getting hired was Spyro the Dragon, a beloved early 3D platformer that nailed mixing snappy movement with luxurious, high-quality animation work.

“Even when you’re not actively involved in the gameplay, it’s just fun to move around in these worlds,” Smith said. “That to me has been the through-line for every game we ever make. It has to feel good.

With Rift Apart, we’re capitalizing on a lot of that experience.”

The dimensional rifts also give the storytellers an ample runway to reintroduce story concepts to new players.

“Players will have the opportunity to see familiar faces from previous entries in the franchise, while also giving us an entirely new version of the dimension’s cast,” said Lauren Mee, the game’s lead writer. “This lets players meet fan-favorite characters, with a twist.”

Most notably, they’re reintroducing the star of the show. Not everyone may be familiar with Ratchet’s past ornery attitude and his early hot-and-cold friendship with Clank. Ratchet has a big chip on his

shoulder as the last surviving member of his alien species, the Lombax. The new character, Rivet, is Ratchet in an alternate dimension, and shows what would happen to this same character if they lived under different circumstances.

“Rivet, unlike Ratchet, has been on her own her entire life. She’s never had a best friend to help her through her struggles, no one to celebrate her wins with,” said Insomniac senior animator Lindsay Thompson. “Has her time spent alone made her a little awkward?”

The weapons are another key component of the Ratchet games. Insomniac previously made the PlayStation-exclusive first-person shooter series Resistance, which also dabbled in strange, out-of-the-box guns like the Mutator, which would turn enemies into moving proximity mines. Ratchet, being a more G-rated affair, has previously fired guns that turns enemies into sheep.

Smith said the team tries to “hit a 10” on one of the three pillars that make fun weapons to shoot: strategy, spectacle and humor. It was the same formula used in the original Ratchet games, created by former Insomniac chief creative officer Brian Hastings.

“It held up during all these other games we were making too. Even when we were designing gadgetry for Spider-Man, humor might not be part of that equation, but we certainly looked at strategy and spectacle,” Smith said. “So those lessons are what we bring forward into all of our games.”

Platform: PlayStation 5
Online: insomniac.games/game/ratchet-clank-rift-apart



Rift Apart is a big-budget, next-gen console release. It features a new dimensional rift mechanic called the “Dimensionator,” allowing players to jump between alternate realities. Sony Interactive Entertainment

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



When Mark Beales noticed that his favorite coffee shop in Kona, Hawaii, had closed early, he didn't have to look far for the reason. The "Help Wanted" sign out front told him everything he needed to know. He saw the same signs at grocery stores, hotels and gift shops around the Big Island.

"A few employees I've spoken with said they've had to work long hours because of the staffing shortage," says Beales, a retired mortgage banker from Mill Creek, Wash.

Beales' problem could become your problem this summer. The hospitality industry is facing a historic staffing shortage. After aggressively downsizing during the pandemic, many companies are scrambling to hire new employees to meet demand. The sluggish staffing recovery could result in major service disruptions.

"Even before the pandemic, hospitality organizations struggled with attracting and retaining a qualified workforce," explains Michael Sheridan, an associate professor of tourism and hospitality management at Temple University. "COVID-19 has only exacerbated this challenge."

Sheridan says many industry professionals decided to leave the travel industry after losing their jobs. Students who would

normally major in hospitality and tourism have reconsidered their career choices. "It's having a drastic effect on the hospitality labor force," he says.

How bad is the "help wanted" problem? Narendra Khatri, CEO of travel insurance company InsuBuy, says the industry "hasn't faced this severe shortage of job applicants in the past two decades."

The Refuge Brewery in California's Temecula Valley had to cut its hours because it could not find enough staff to stay open. Owner Curt Kucera says he would get hundreds of applications for an open position in a typical year; now, he's lucky if he receives more than 10.

"Other restaurants have started to offer signing bonuses and retention bonuses," he says. "We haven't taken that step yet but are certainly considering it if the challenges continue into the summer."

In Solvang, Calif., just up the coast, the picture is similar. Aaron Petersen, co-owner of several restaurants in the area, says he has had to close on Mondays and Tuesdays because of a staff shortage. Many of his workers said they would stay if he agreed to pay them in cash. Others have retained part-time status so they can collect unemployment. "Most restaurants are begging for help," he says.

It's not just restaurants. In the nearby Buellton, Calif., the tavern and inn at Zaca

Creek are paralyzed by a staff shortage. Stephen Villa, Zaca Creek's general manager, says the new venture had to put an expansion on hold because it didn't have enough people.

"We simply do not have the necessary staff members to sustain a consistent level of service," he says. "While we're grateful for the applicants we do have, numbers are sparse and mostly without any meaningful service experience, and it continues to be a struggle to find anyone nearing the right fit that has the availability for the times we need."

The King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort in St. Simons Island, Ga., normally hires some of its housekeepers from abroad, but last year the pandemic forced it to recruit staff locally. Bud St. Pierre, the hotel's director of sales and marketing, says that has forced the management team to get creative, often coaxing housekeepers with jobs in other hotels to accept part-time work at his property. "It will allow us to stay fully open and staffed this summer," he says.

Help is needed everywhere, according to experts. Tracey Jenkins, senior vice president for human resources at Sodexo Sports & Leisure, which handles ticketing, food service and logistics for large sporting events, said the labor shortage is a nationwide issue. During the pandemic, it set up a program to retain its employees by shifting them to other divisions. "We are also extending benefits as much as possible," she says.

But smaller companies didn't have that luxury, and now they are paying the price. "With fewer workers, the quality of service in hospitality is likely to be affected in the coming months," says Roland Rust, a business professor at the University of Maryland. "And there's not much that travelers can do about it."

Or is there?

"Planning is crucial," says Brian Marks, executive director of the University of New Haven's entrepreneurship and innovation program. "It will be important to perform your due diligence to ensure that your destination is properly staffed."

If planning doesn't come easy to you, consider finding a travel professional who can call ahead to make sure your favorite attractions and restaurants are open. If you do it yourself, keep one thing in mind: Days of operation and opening hours will be volatile and subject to change.

If you are thinking of eating in a restaurant, get a reservation. If the place doesn't take reservations, then avoid peak times. Even then, prepare for what may be a long wait, says Kay Maghan, a spokeswoman for Alabama's Gulf Shores and Orange Beach region.

In her area, even the fast-food restaurants can't handle the influx of demand.

"They're closing their dining rooms and only operate the drive-through because they can't get enough workers to fully staff the restaurant," she says.

This isn't going to be an easy summer for the tourism industry. After a year of lockdowns, it finally has a shot at recovering some lost business, only to find that it doesn't have the staff to handle the demand.

"Be patient," says Elizabeth Squillante, a travel adviser with New Canaan TravelWorld. "There's no industry that wants to see people on the move more than the travel industry. It will just take some time to get things back to where they used to be."

"Even before the pandemic, hospitality organizations struggled with attracting and retaining a qualified workforce. COVID-19 has only exacerbated this challenge."

Michael Sheridan
Temple University

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

A coffee-shop conversation in Amsterdam

Here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe at the other end of this crisis.

Wandering around Amsterdam, every few blocks you pass a window full of plants displaying a red, yellow and green Rastafarian flag — both indications that the coffee shop doesn't sell much coffee. These days, "coffee shop" refers to a place where the Dutch gather to buy and smoke marijuana. I duck into one of these coffee shops to get the latest.

A round table at the front window is filled with a United Nations of tourists sharing travelers' tales stirred by swizzle sticks of smoke. From the looks of the ashtray, they've been here a while. The table is a clutter of teacups, maps and guidebooks.

Taking a seat at the bar next to a leathery 40-something biker and a college-age kid with two holes in his body for each one in mine, I feel more like a tourist than I have all day. The bartender, Pieter — sporting a shaved head and a one-inch goatee — greets me in English and passes me the menu.

Swarte Marok, Blond Marok, White Widow, Northern Light, Stonehedge, Grasstasy... so

many choices on the menu, and that's just the wiet (marijuana). Hashish selections fill the bottom half of the menu.

When I marvel at how open-minded the Dutch are, Pieter explains, "We're not open-minded, just tolerant. There's a difference. Wiet is not legal ... only tolerated."

I ask, "Does this tolerance cause a problem?"

Handing a two-foot-tall bong and a baggie of leaves

to a woman whose huge dog is tied to the bike rack outside, Pieter says, "My grandmother has an old pipe rack. It has a sign: 'A satisfied smoker creates no problems.'"

"That was tobacco, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it's from the 1860s. But this still applies today."

I ask the guy with all the holes why he smokes here.

Speaking through the silver stud in his tongue, he says, "Some young people hang out at coffeeshops because their parents don't want them smoking at home, others come here to smoke pot with their parents. I come here for the coffee shop ambience."



Rick Steves



Rick Steves

In the Netherlands, pot users go to coffee shops — not jail. A varied menu faces those desiring to indulge.

I ask about a sign with a delivery boy on it.

"In Holland, we have pot delivery services," Pieter explains, "like you have pizza delivery in America. Older people take out or have it delivered."

"We have lots of states where recreational pot is legal, but a coffeeshop like this is not possible yet," I say.

"I know," Pieter agrees. He shows me snapshots of Woody Harrelson and Willie Nelson, each hanging out in this obscure little coffee shop, and continues.

"America's two most famous pot smokers told me all about America."

The kid chimes in. "Hollanders — even those who don't smoke — they believe soft drugs ... you know, pot, hash ... it shouldn't be a crime."

"What do your parents think?" I ask.

"They think the youth have a problem. My dad says, 'Holland will get the bill later on.'"

"And other countries ... doesn't legal pot in Holland cause them a problem?" I ask.

"Actually, it's not legal here," he reminds me, "just tolerated. Officially, we can't legalize anything because your country made these world treaties."

"The French complain about Holland's popularity with drug users, but they have a worse problem with illegal hard drugs," Pieter adds. "Here, the police know exactly what's going on and where."

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

Live music returning to Europe slowly but surely

On May 13, a live audience of 4,000 gathered in the O2 Arena in London to watch the BRIT Awards, the British version of the Grammys. London's first indoor live music event in more than a year was staged as part of the British government's pilot scheme to determine how to safely hold large-scale events in closed environments without the need for social distancing.

Concerts in Barcelona and Amsterdam, along with a rave in Liverpool, are among other events recently staged in order to determine how rapid testing and various hygiene and distancing concepts might allow festivals and similar events to be organized going forward.

Europe's glitzy and garish, often-mocked but much beloved musical competition is also returning to the scene following its cancellation in 2020. The Ahoy Stadium in Rotterdam, Netherlands, will host the Grand Final of the Eurovision Song Contest on May 22. The scaled-down event will have a live audience of 3,500, which represents some 20% of the venue's capacity. All viewers will be required to present a negative Coronavirus test before entering. Meanwhile, performers and their delegations have been staying in their so-called "bubbles," only leaving hotels for rehearsals, program-related activities and socially distanced outdoor exercise. In the event of an act testing positive, a backup recording of its performance will stand in. TV viewers, whose numbers reached some 182 million in 2019, can tune in at 9 p.m. European Central time to watch the kitschy contest.

Although ongoing restrictions might well disrupt travel plans abroad, it's encouraging to observe the tentative comeback of live music. Here's a look at scheduled events that remain contingent, of course, upon what might transpire with COVID-19 in the weeks and months to come.



Karen Bradbury



iStock

England

Last year's summer festival season was a non-starter, but the outlook for 2021 is slightly greener, thanks to high vaccine uptake and the availability of mass testing. While the country's most famous festival, Glastonbury, has been canceled, a handful of events scheduled for later in the summer remain on the docket for now. As many of the country's largest festivals tend to sell out in a flash, hopeful concert-goers might wish to turn their sights to smaller events. Family-friendly festivals taking place in the Midlands include the Bigfoot Festival in Alcester on June 18-20 (top acts include Primal Scream, Fat White Family, Hot Chip Megamix, Baxter Dury and Dinosaur Pile-Up), Let's Rock Shrewsbury in Shrewsbury on July 17 (Adam Ant, Howard Jones, Go West, Nik Kershaw, others) and Splendour in Nottingham on July 24 (Richard Ashcroft, Supergrass, Rick Astley, The Vamps, Belinda Carlisle, others).

Germany

In the summer of 2020, large festivals were canceled across the board, and the news hasn't been much better for those scheduled in 2021, with Rock am Ring, Rock im Park, Hurricane, Southside and countless others pushed back for another year. The prospects are much better for small-scale events in which all visitors sit in preassigned spaces and provide their contact details.

Strandkorb Open Air is a series of open-air concerts making clever use of the popular two-seater wicker chair with a striped awning so popular along Germany's sea-coast. These summery seats, properly distanced from one another, will be set up in outdoor arenas in Augsburg, Cham, Hamburg, Mönchengladbach, Nuremberg, Regensburg, Rosenheim, St. Wendel, Zweibrücken and a handful of other cities. Up to 3,200 spectators can be accommodated thanks to precautions including zoned spaces, one-way streets and delivery service for food and drinks. Acts on stage include Alice Merton, Element of Crime, God Save the Queen, Fury in the Slaughterhouse, Smokie, Spider Murphy Gang and other predominantly German acts. Online: strandkorb-openair.de

Picknick Konzerte, or picnic concerts, mark a return to a concept successfully launched last summer. Cities staging these concerts include Berlin, Cologne, Dresden, Erfurt, Hamburg, Ladenburg, Paderborn, Rostock and Wiesbaden. Again, acts are overwhelmingly German. Online: picknick-konzerte.de

Those in Kaiserslautern can look forward to a series of small concerts to be held in the garden of the Kammgarn concert venue between June 17 and Sept. 11. The events, held on Thursdays through Saturdays, can be accommodated in the casino in the event of bad weather. Entrance tickets for most events will range between 6 and 18 euros. Online: tinyurl.com/97e6brw

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



Zebras eat and lounge around at the Woburn Safari Park, established by the 13th Duke of Bedford to focus on animal conservation.

PHOTOS BY KYLE ALVAREZ/Stars and Stripes

On the QT

Address: Woburn Safari Park
Bedfordshire, Woburn, MK 43 0TU
Hours: Daily 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Costs: Adults 16 and over: 27.50 pounds (\$36.70); Children 3-15 20 pounds (\$28.20); 2 and under free; VIP experience 349 pounds (\$492.)
Food: Restaurant open from 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.; hot food served until 4:45 p.m.. You can bring food as well.
Information: <https://www.woburnsafari.co.uk/>; +44 1525 290407.

Kyle Alvarez



Woburn Safari Park in Woburn, England opened in 1970 and is one of the United Kingdom's oldest wild animal parks, taking care of around 1,000 wild and exotic animals on more than 300 acres of land.

Meet the wildlife

Woburn Safari Park in Bedfordshire brings you inches from lions, tigers, bears and more

By KYLE ALVAREZ
Stars and Stripes

I've always wondered what it would be like to be a few feet away from a wild animal like a black bear or African lion, and after visiting the Woburn Safari Park in Bedfordshire I now have my answer: awestruck.

My family and I drove a little more than an hour from nearby RAF Mildenhall to the park, which adheres to all of England's coronavirus guidelines. My daughter is a huge animal lover, and the Road Safari, which allows you to drive through acres of parkland reserves where large wild animals roam freely, was an experience she's been talking about for weeks since.

We came face to car window with elephants, rhinos, giraffes, zebras, monkeys, lions, tigers and bears. The Road Safari took less than an hour to finish, but patrons can have as many go-arounds as they like for the day.

One of the funniest parts of the Road Safari was the Barbary macaque enclosure. Visitors get a close-up encounter when the monkeys jump on your vehicle for a little joyride. Some monkeys use the cars as portable grooming stands.

After the Road Safari, it was time for the Foot Safari. We parked our car at the main restaurant and gift shop for a bite. The menu had your usual assortment of park food: burgers, chips, drinks, coffee and desserts, and since this is in the U.K., some fried fish options.

We then checked out the smaller animal enclosures. We were able to see pen-

guins, wallabies, red pandas, sea lions, lemurs, tortoises and a variety of others. The park also offers shows featuring birds, sea lions and elephants, but I'd recommend checking when the shows start in advance if you're interested in them.

Other attractions I came across included a giant slide open during fair weather and lots of playground equipment. There's also the Go Ape Experience, full of zip lines, rope bridges and swings among the trees. Acting like an ape isn't cheap at 25-33 pounds per person for ages 10 and up, but it discounts the park tickets down to 10 pounds each.

Ape life with small children wasn't for us. But the Great Woburn Railway ride was my daughter's favorite of the day. The train took us through sections in the zoo, almost like a daily recap minus the Road Safari enclosures. The train cuts through the alpaca area. The furry, llama-like animals came surprisingly close to us.

On our way back to the train station, I noticed a Land Rover with a zebra pattern. It was part of the VIP experience, where anyone can get a more personal look at the zoo. This option includes up to four people, and is something my wife wants to do, since you can feed some of the animals.

I see us purchasing annual passes for my tenure in the U.K., something I know my daughter will love. The park delivers a great experience that anyone stationed here should try at least once.

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Woburn Safari Park lets you drive through the Barbary macaque enclosure, which allows for some interesting interactions between the visitors and the macaques.



Black bears climb as onlookers pass by in cars at Woburn Safari Park.



The miniature railway at Woburn Safari Park runs every 30 minutes starting at noon. The train runs past an alpaca herd and toward attractions explored on foot.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Worth every star

Mother’s Day dinner from Langwieden Farmers Restaurant lived up to the hype

BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

When a restaurant gets five stars from a dozen reviewers, including one who describes the chef as a magician, it has a lot to live up to.

But the Farmers Restaurant in the tiny village of Langwieden, near Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, meets the expectations the glowing reviews set it up for. And it has a moving back story.

I was looking for a Mother’s Day treat when I found Farmers. It was offering a three-course set menu for around \$25, including a bottle of sparkling French wine and a complimentary rose. And it had all those five-star reviews.

The menu featured asparagus soup or salad to start; beef with red wine gravy, chicken supreme or baked salmon served with a side of roast or mashed potatoes, rice or fries; and chocolate cake for dessert. Beverage options were sodas or bubbly wine from France’s Alsace region. That was the easiest decision to make — we ordered two bottles of crémant d’Alsace.

I asked if they could do a vegetarian main course for my guest and something instead of cake, which I can’t eat. They — or as it turns out, he, because Farmers is pretty much a one-man show — suggested either ratatouille or pasta with a veggie sauce, and a fruit platter for dessert.

We chose asparagus soup to start, ratatouille for one main course and salmon for the other, both with mashed potatoes; and one piece of chocolate cake and a fruit platter for dessert. In early May, the restaurant was only doing takeout because of coronavirus restrictions, so I arranged to pick up our meals at 7 p.m. on Mother’s Day.

Irish music was playing when I walked into the small indoor dining area, festooned with shillelaghs, green hats and beer steins. German and American flags hung on the wall next to a door that led to the kitchen area, where I saw two men working over a stove.

One of them, the chef-magician, who introduced himself as Ovidiu Cracut, emerged after a few minutes with three bags. One contained two full-sized bottles of crémant d’Alsace — for the price, I was expecting single-serving bottles — and the others, our food.

Originally from Romania, Cracut came to Germany in 2017 from Ireland where he had lived for 20 years and worked his way up from kitchen porter to business owner and chef. One of the highlights of his career, he said, came in the early 2000s when he rubbed shoulders at the Four Seasons Hotel in Dublin with former U.S. President Bill Clinton and former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev, who were in town for a meeting.

But in 2016, the floor fell out from under Cracut when his 35-year marriage ended abruptly.

After floundering for a while, he took



AFTER
HOURS
GERMANY



The Farmers Restaurant, which opened in 2018, could soon have a food truck rolling across the base at Ramstein.

The Farmers Restaurant

Location: Hauptstrasse 5c, 66894 Langwieden. Fifteen minutes from Ramstein, 30 minutes from Kaiserslautern, 40 minutes from Baumholder, five minutes from LRMC.

Hours: 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily, closed Wednesday; also open for lunch from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Hours may vary, so check ahead.

English menu: A la carte is in German, special menus in English on Facebook. Owner speaks English.

Cost: The Mother’s Day menu was 22.50 euros, or about \$25. Prices on the small a la carte menu range from about \$5.50 for a salad to \$21 for Farmers Cordon Bleu. Irish stout is available when COVID restrictions allow deliveries. U.S. credit cards accepted, except American express. Restaurant is takeout only until coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

Information: +49 (0)6372 991-9190; www.facebook.com/TheFarmersLangwieden

Karin Zeitvogel

the youngest of his four sons, then 16-year-old Matthew, and headed back to Romania. But on the way, they stopped in the Kaiserslautern area to see relatives, and Cracut ended up staying, opening the Farmers Restaurant in 2018.

“The owner said to me, ‘It’ll never work. Nothing has ever worked here,’” Cracut told Stars and Stripes. “Three years later, he loves me so much. ‘You brought this place back to life,’ he tells me. It’s crazy.”

Since Matthew went back to Ireland just before Christmas 2018, Cracut has thrown himself into the restaurant “so I don’t feel alone.”

He sold 60 meals on Mother’s Day, including ours which included enough asparagus soup for four people, two good-sized slabs of salmon with bechamel sauce, ratatouille and a dozen scoops of mashed potato. The fruit platter — melon, raspberries, strawberries, grapes, kiwi fruit, orange slices and small orange berries that I think were seaberries — was so good, the cake went untouched.

The salmon was simple, tasty and plen-



PHOTOS BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL/Stars and Stripes

Baked salmon served with mashed potatoes was one of the main courses offered on the special Mother’s Day menu at the Farmers Restaurant in Langwieden, Germany.



The ratatouille from the Farmers Restaurant, made with grilled eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and zucchini, topped with herbs, a light tomato sauce and melted cheese, was crazy-good.

tiful. The ratatouille, made with grilled eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and zucchini drizzled with a tomato sauce and herbs and topped with melted cheese, was crazy-good.

Last week, Cracut met with Ramstein officials to get clearance to operate a food truck on base. He expects the truck to be up and running in about a month.

“It’s crazy,” he said. “Americans could be eating Farmers burgers and fish and chips at Ramstein soon.”

And ratatouille — Cracut said he would add it to the menu.

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A slice of chocolate cake was offered for dessert on the Mother’s Day menu.



A delicious mixed fruit platter from the Farmers Restaurant was suggested as a substitute for chocolate cake for a customer with food intolerances.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Blast from the past

Retro vending machines dispense tastes of yesteryear at Used Tire Market outside Tokyo

BY AARON KIDD
Stars and Stripes

On a dirt and gravel road outside Tokyo, not far from the U.S. Army's Camp Zama and Sagami General Depot, you'll find a battalion of rusty vending machines waiting to dispense food and fond memories.

Some people are drawn to the Used Tire Market in Sagamihara for a set of retreads or discounted rims. Others come for the hot noodles, toasted sandwiches, glass-bottle Cokes and odd knickknacks offered by scores of vintage vending machines surrounding the shop.

"We started this service so that customers who come to the store to change tires can enjoy the waiting time," says a note on the shop's website. "May your waiting time be filled with nostalgia and fun."

On my first visit, I spotted a grinning old man enthusiastically popping coins into a 1960s-era Japanese curry machine. Nearby, a young couple leaned against a wooden railing, slurping steaming ramen from the same yellow plastic bowl.

My fellow diners on a later visit included a pair of Japanese celebrities — a comedy duo known as Wagyu — filming a segment for television.

When eating my way through a portion of the shop's seemingly countless offerings, I was particularly taken with the toasted sandwiches (300 yen or about \$2.75) that, after a 60-second countdown, pop out tightly wrapped in piping hot aluminum foil. Tongs are available to keep you from burning your fingers.

There are two kinds available, corned beef and ham and cheese. I enjoyed the corned beef's peppery flavor so much, I decided to have another. A colleague preferred the ham and cheese, de-

scribing its familiar taste as "comfort food."

Less impressive, for me anyway, were the instant noodles. You'll likely find better quality at any Japanese convenience store, though those won't come close to matching the Used Tire Market experience.

My colleague and I tried the udon with deep-fried tofu (350 yen) that, unfortunately, proved to be a "blah" experience. The noodles were soggy, the soup was bland, and I couldn't even bring myself to touch the tofu. A bowl of chashu ramen (also 300 yen) I shared with my 10-year-old son on a subsequent visit was superior by leaps and bounds.

Speaking of my son, he's a big fan of the freshly popped American Popcorn (150 yen), which comes in three flavors: salt, barbecue and chocolate. The machine keeps you entertained with an infectious ditty while you wait for a microwave inside to do its thing. The same machine sells a Japanese version of Pop Rocks (30 yen) that my son likes to shake into the popcorn bag before munching away.

Other options include tiny but meaty hamburgers served in a box, hot dogs with mustard, shrimp tempura, fried rice and something called "bread in a can." No Michelin Star candidates here, but all are cheap, fast and fun.

Hot food isn't all you'll find at the used tire shop. There are also rusty machines selling candy cigarettes, AA and AAA batteries, medical masks, umbrellas, toy robots, plastic models and photos of teen singing sensations whose fame has long faded.

My favorite is a cardboard box that dispenses green apple-flavored gumballs with the push of a plastic button. If you're lucky, you'll get the one red gumball waiting inside.



AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

Some people are drawn to the Used Tire Market in Sagamihara, Japan, for a set of retreads or discounted rims. Others come for the hot noodles, toasted sandwiches, glass-bottle Cokes and odd knickknacks offered by scores of vintage vending machines surrounding the shop.



AARON KIDD/Stars and Stripes

These retro-inspired bottles of mixed juice are among the scores of items for sale in the vending machines at Used Tire Market in Sagamihara, Japan.

ON THE QT

Directions: 2666-1 Shimomizo, Minami Ward, Sagamihara, Kanagawa 252-0335. About a 15-minute drive from Camp Zama and Sagami General Depot.

Times: Open daily, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Costs: Most hot food items can be had for about 300 yen.

Information: 042-714-5333;
www.tire-ichiba.co.jp/retro.html

Aaron Kidd

Need coins? You'll find a change machine inside a small room near the tire shop's office crammed with classic arcade games. Many of the machines were inoperable during my visits, though several classics were up and running, including Pac-Man, Donkey Kong and Frogger.

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AARON KIDD/Stars and Stripes

Candy cigarettes are just one of the nostalgic items you'll find in the scores of vintage vending machines outside Used Tire Market.



AARON KIDD/Stars and Stripes

A large, steaming bowl of chashu ramen from one of the vintage vending machines outside Used Tire Market in Sagamihara, Japan, can be had for 300 yen.



AARON KIDD/Stars and Stripes

The toasted sandwiches from a retro vending machine outside Used Tire Market in Sagamihara, Japan, pop out wrapped in piping hot aluminum foil.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY DANIEL BETANCOURT/Stars and Stripes

The egg curry from Matchpoint Restaurant and Bar near Yokosuka Naval Base boasts a beautiful balance of heat and flavor.

Beautifully balanced flavor

Matchpoint near Yokosuka Naval Base specializes in Japanese curry

BY DANIEL BETANCOURT
Stars and Stripes
A short train ride from Yokosuka Naval Base and a five-minute walk from Zushi Station

brings you to Matchpoint Restaurant and Bar, a quiet yet rustic spot in bustling Zushi that specializes in Japanese curry.

But even if you drive there, as I did, you'll find parking at a nearby 24-hour lot.

The welcoming staff at Matchpoint showed me immediately to a table hung with plastic sheets for protection against the coronavirus. The double-sided menu lists food and drink selections in English and Japanese.

Lunchtime entrees are curries only, but a menu of sides features salads, seafoods and meat dishes, some large enough to make a meal.

For the main event, I went with the egg curry (800 yen, or about \$7.30) followed up with a homemade custard pudding for dessert (550 yen).

The curry had a beautiful balance of heat and flavor with two exceptionally large and runny boiled eggs on top. Other lunchtime curry options include beef, chicken, pork, shrimp, seafood, tomato, mushroom and seasonal vegetables.

The pudding, which resembles caramel-custard flan, brought



Matchpoint Restaurant and Bar

Location: 5-1-13 Zushi, Kanagawa, 249-0006.
Directions: About a 30-minute drive from Yokosuka Naval Base, or a 5-minute walk from Zushi Station.
Hours: Open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Prices: Dishes range from 500 yen to 1,500 yen.
Dress: Casual
Information: 046-873-0371

Daniel Betancourt

me back to my Latino roots. The flavor profile provided a mix between sweet and bitter and brought the whole meal to the finale it deserved.

From the side menu I ordered the ginger fried pork, Japanese-style calamari with butter sauce and garlic fried potatoes. The pork was served atop a salad with a delicious dressing and string carrots. The portions were bigger than I expected, which was a nice surprise.

The calamari came thinly sliced with fried onion rings topped with butter sauce and



The ginger fried pork from Matchpoint Restaurant and Bar is served atop a salad with a delicious dressing and string carrots.

sesame seeds. Even if you are not a seafood fan, that dish will surprise you.

The garlic fried potatoes were a huge hit with the children in the restaurant.

The Matchpoint lunch menu is amazing, so I can only assume the dinner menu will not disappoint, either. There's another location in Kamakura, as well as a roving food truck, according to the restaurant's Facebook page.

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The homemade custard pudding resembles caramel flan.

Lamb curry takes no time to cook

BY LINDA GASSENHEIMER
Tribune News Service

For this quick meal, I used curry powder from the super-market spice section. Strictly speaking, prepared curry powder doesn't really exist in India. Good cooks prefer to make their own blend of spices using the freshest ingredients. The curry powder found in the markets should be used within three to four months. After that it loses some of its flavor.

You can use a Golden Delicious apple instead of the Granny Smith.

Look for minced garlic in the produce section of the market.

Add another ¼ teaspoon curry powder if you like it spicy hot.

Lamb Curry

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- 1 cup sliced onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- ½ pound lamb cubes cut from the leg
- ¼ pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces (about 1 cup)
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 cup fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- ¼ cup raisins
- 1 medium tomato cut into small wedges
- 1 package microwave brown rice (to make 1 cup cooked rice)
- ¼ cup low-fat, plain Greek-style yogurt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the curry powder, onion, and garlic. Sauté 2 minutes.

Add the lamb and green beans and sauté 3 to 4 minutes. Stir to make sure lamb touches bottom of skillet. Sprinkle in the flour and stir until it is absorbed about 30 seconds.

Add the broth and simmer until broth thickens, 2 minutes. Stir in the raisins and tomatoes. Simmer 2 to 3 minutes.

Microwave rice. Measure 1 cup and reserve remaining rice for another time. Remove from heat and stir in the yogurt, cinnamon and add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve on two dinner plates. Serves 2.

From "Delicious One-Pot Dishes" by Linda Gassenheimer, published by the American Diabetes Association. Reprinted with permission from The American Diabetes Association. Gassenheimer's latest book is "Simply Smoothies: Fresh & Fast Diabetes-Friendly Snacks & Complete Meals," published by the American Diabetes Association. To order either book call 1-800-232-6733 or at www.shopdiabetes.org.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

The geometry of an illusion

Reality depends on your angle at the 'super steep' Eshima Ohashi Bridge

By AYA MATSUURA

The Japan News-Yomiuri

When viewed from the right angle, the “betabumi-zaka” ramp for the Eshima Ohashi Bridge looks like it’s shooting straight up into the sky.

Betabumi-zaka means “a pedal-to-the-metal slope” in Japanese and the renowned insane-looking bridge connects Sakaiminato in Tottori Prefecture and Matsue in Shimane Prefecture.

Matsue is my hometown and my family and I had crossed the bridge once before with my father behind the wheel. But I decided to cross the bridge with myself in the driver’s seat, so I rented a car and set off from Matsue Station to the bridge that looks like a roller coaster for cars.

I chose an approximately 30-minute route that wound through Daikon and Eshima islands on brackish Lake Nakau-mi. I rolled down the windows a bit and a pleasant mid-March spring breeze accompanied me as I drove clockwise around the perimeter of Daikon Island until I found a spot where I could see the bridge almost head-on across the lake.

I got out of the car, pulled out my camera and scrutinized the bridge through the viewfinder — the distant ramp looked like a vertical wall.

I got back in the car, drove across Eshima Island, turned at an intersection and stopped near the 1.4 kilometer-long bridge. Up close I could indeed see a somewhat impressive incline, but it was a far cry from the bulwark that I had observed only moments before on Daikon Island.

As I drove up the ramp, I could feel the car moving up a slope of sorts, but I was able to keep my rental moving forward without having to stomp on the gas pedal. I crested the bridge in what felt like the blink of an eye and then smoothly coasted down into Sakaiminato.

It turned out that to cross the bally-hoed Betabumi-zaka ramp, a driver needed only to pump the gas pedal gently.

I returned to the Matsue side and noticed a few people had gathered to look at the bridge.

Rieko Kimura, 55, a company employee from Toyonaka, Osaka Prefecture, who was traveling with a friend by car, said she wanted to check out the bridge after she saw a picture on the internet.

“I was skeptical about the extremity of the incline,” she said. “But seeing that [the slope was not that steep] is kind of a letdown.”

The bridge became a national legend when it was featured in a TV advertise-

ment from the end of 2013. People soon after started flocking to the area, which prompted a temporary parking lot to be set up nearby.

“We still get inquiries about shooting locations, and it seems to have piqued people’s curiosity,” said a representative of the Sakai Port Authority, which manages the bridge.

The optical illusion of making the Eshima Ohashi Bridge ramp look like a surreal tower in photos is done by putting distance between the bridge and the camera and using a telephoto lens.

The Matsue side of the bridge can be seen from Daikon Island, as there are no objects obstructing it, which makes it an easier area to find a good vantage point. And the farther away the photographer is from the bridge, the steeper the slope can appear in their photographs.

With a modest gradient of 6.1%, the slope in actuality is nowhere near as steep as it is in the famous perspective-jarring photographs.

I searched the internet and found betabumi-zaka in Tokyo and Osaka as well. However, there are many tall structures in such cities, which makes such slopes difficult to photograph from a distance.

The bridge’s height adds another element as to why the slope can look so bewilderingly impressive. The bridge was constructed with an apex of 146 feet, so that large ships can pass underneath and, for example, enter Matsue Port.

After the bridge’s completion in 2004, it replaced the Nakaura Watergate, which was used for land reclamation and desalinating brackish Lake Nakau-mi. The top of the watergate was used as a road and as it was equipped with a draw-bridge to let ships pass through, traffic had to be stopped every time the draw-bridge was up. Furthermore, vehicles over 14 tons were not allowed on the bridge and this led to the occasional inconveniencing of passengers on large tourist buses who were sometimes asked to disembark and walk across the bridge.

“That bridge sometimes made me late when it was up,” said Tatsuya Abe, 54, a civil servant, who used to ride his bicycle to school in Sakaiminato from his home on Daikon Island. “But it’s really convenient now.”

The Eshima Ohashi Bridge has connected two cities and made it much more convenient for people to come and go. It would be fair to say that it has bridged the gap between the Sanin region with the rest of Japan.

I heard that the view from the bridge’s apex is well worth a gander. Next time, I’ll stroll across the not-so-steep slope that is famously framed as being just way too steep.



PHOTOS BY AYA MATSUURA/Japan News-Yomiuri

The Eshima Ohashi Bridge, connecting Sakaiminato in Tottori Prefecture and Matsue in Shimane Prefecture, appears to rise into the sky when viewed from the Daikon Island.



The slope of the bridge doesn't look as steep or impressive when viewed from Matsue.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Fitness philosophy

Cartoonist discusses her latest graphic novel, 'Superhuman Strength'

By MICHAEL CAVNA
The Washington Post

Alison Bechdel once believed in striving for a “lone wolf” style of self-reliance. Now, when she walks in the woods of her northern Vermont home, a fair distance from neighbors or the nearest town, she feels especially tethered to the world.

“You can’t ask for a more vivid example of that than this pandemic,” the bestselling

cartoonist said earlier this month, upon the release of her new book about the relationship between mind and body. The global spread of the coronavirus “demonstrates how vulnerable we all are — how completely connected we are to each other — with the

intense contagion of this thing. It’s really kind of stunning.”

Speaking by phone from her home and studio outside Burlington, the 2014 MacArthur Fellow says she has had a safe and privileged place to weather the pandemic, at peace and staying on “an even keel.” Last year, she had her graphic novel to focus on, and her wife, Holly Rae Taylor, a painter and colorist, to help her make her book’s deadline last December — a shared project that was “very absorbing and distracting from the craziness outside.”

Now, as an immunized author, she is starting to make professional and personal travel plans: There’s family in Pennsylvania to see, and possible trips to New York and Florida.

“Life is starting to resume full force in a way I have very mixed feelings about,” she said.

Yet Bechdel’s new work illustrates the degree to which she has spent her life in motion — getting into “almost every new fitness fad to come down the pike,” she writes, as well as activities with long histories. Karate to Pilates. Hiking to biking. And scaling mountains, perhaps “to better plumb my own depths.”

“The Secret to Superhuman Strength” is her first new graphic novel in nearly a decade, after her twin memoirs about her parents: the 2006 smash “Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic,” which was adapted into a Tony-winning musical, and the 2012 follow-up “Are You My Mother?: A Comic Drama.”

Bechdel didn’t set out to write and draw another labor-intensive work, but the creative intellectual who has a penchant for solo endurance sports found herself wrestling with weighty themes — pressing on to examine what happens when the physical meets the metaphysical.

“I really did have an intention to write a



Elena Seibert

short, fun, light book about my exercise life. It just immediately became complicated by other thoughts — by mortality,” says Bechdel, who launched her long-running comic “Dykes to Watch Out For” nearly four decades ago. “I was getting older and I was noticing that I couldn’t do the same things I used to be able to do — at least not as well or as quickly.”

Bechdel turned 60 while completing “Superhuman Strength,” which is structured into six chapters — each focusing on the sports and relationships and influential ideas that dominated a different decade of her life.

ade of her life.

“The book took a long time in part because of the way I set it up,” she says, noting with a laugh: “I couldn’t finish the last decade until I’d actually lived through it. Thank God I lived through it.”

The book explores Bechdel’s many motivations for living a life of aerobic pain and gain. Growing up in a family that got into skiing, she was struck early on by images of muscled men who promised physical results, from Jack LaLanne flexing in a onesie on TV to the cartoon ads of leopard-print-Speedo bodybuilder Charles

Atlas urging skinny kids to become the “hero of the beach.”

“Oh, to be self-sufficient! Hard as a rock! An island!” Bechdel’s avatar says in the book, admitting that she’s come “to accept the unavoidable fact of my ultimate dependence” despite still gauging her “self-worth, to a disturbing degree, by my physical strength.”

Her commitment to fitness, though, becomes about questing for transformation and transcendence — from her college years, when she comes out amid a supportive lesbian community and endures her closeted father’s sudden death, which she comes to believe was a suicide, to the dawn of middle age, when she begins documenting changes in her body.

“When I hit the 40-year mark — that was an intense transition — I started to really get it: Self-sufficiency is impossible. So I’ve been working on that,” says Bechdel, who also notes how menopause is “such a great window into the whole aging process because you age very rapidly in a short period of time — it gives you a sense of what you’ve been doing your whole life long.”

As “Superhuman Strength” became a heavier lift as a creative journey, Bechdel — who had earlier discovered yoga and Zen beliefs — was drawn to the climbing adventures of Beat writers Jack Kerouac and Gary Snyder as described in the novel “The Dharma Bums.” Soon she was reading about the mental and physical lives of 19th century writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller (“That woman needs a Netflix series!” Bechdel says).

“I just kept getting pulled onto this metaphysical path,” she says, toward “the Transcendentalists, who I’d always been curious about but not understood. So that was a fun kind of rabbit hole to go down, and that led me to the British Romantics,” such as William Wordsworth, sister Dorothy Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Soon she was not only tracking connections between these British and American writers but also “seeing parallels between them and my own life. They were making their way into my work.”

As Bechdel’s avatar shifts while pursuing fitness, she examines what she might be running from, and what she might be trying to transcend. And as the action moves to modern day, she challenges her own views.

“One trend of the book is about the self and the other — the tension that we feel with others — and my belief, at least the belief I’m trying to talk myself into it, is that people really are profoundly interconnected,” Bechdel says. “If I really believe that, that means I’m profoundly interconnected with anti-vaxxers and Trumpers. This is my challenge: How do I stop making them into others and see some kind of commonality with them?”

In the book’s concluding pages, Bechdel — the same writer who grew up in a funeral home — sheds the goal of transcendence and extols exercise for exercise’s sake, saying: “Onward to the grave!”

“I really did labor under the delusion for a long time that these workouts were somehow going to keep me from dying,” Bechdel says wryly. “I didn’t think it through that clearly.”

Today, though, she is no evangelist for a fitness regimen. “I don’t exercise in order not to die. I exercise because I am on my way to dying, and it’s just a fun thing to do.”

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Q&A

Working mom going strong

After 2-plus decades in music and 2 kids, Pink still a rock star

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

Pink is grappling with the fact that her 9-year-old daughter, Willow, with husband Carey Hart, is on the cusp of the tween years.

“It’s still the salad days, she’s still my baby,” said Pink in an interview over Zoom. “But she’s starting to ask me questions about deodorant and bras.” As if on cue, a siren blares in the background. “And there’s my ambulance,” she deadpans.

Willow Sage and her son, Jameson Moon, are a huge creative inspiration for the singer, whose real name is Alecia Moore. Earlier this year she released a single called “Cover Me In Sunshine” featuring Willow’s vocals, which Pink says happened organically.

“She was in the room when I was recording. She liked the song and was humming, and she has such a cute, pretty little voice. I was like, ‘You want to sing on it?’ She’s like, ‘Sure.’”

In the new documentary “Pink: All I Know So Far,” debuting May 21 on Prime Video, viewers go back to 2019 for Pink’s Beautiful Trauma world tour with Hart, Willow and Jameson in tow. The kids join her for rehearsals, she wrangles them for bedtime and feels guilty when Willow vents that Jameson, a toddler at the time, gets all the attention.

“I wasn’t sure anybody would want to see that,” said Pink of the concept of capturing mom life on camera, but her director, Michael Gracey, convinced her it was something to see.

“He thought it was fascinating that someone that was headlining stadiums would be a full-time mom. He had never seen that before and thought it was a story worth telling. After I thought about it, I was like, ‘Well, there’s not a lot of women headlining stadiums and there’s certainly not a lot of women touring the world with their family.’ I just thought it was a time stamp... and something for the kids to watch one day when they’ve built this narrative in their head about how they weren’t loved or cared for.”

It’s a busy time for Pink, who also has a new song called “All I Know So Far,” and will accept the Icon Award at the Billboard Music Awards. Past recipients include Jennifer Lopez, Janet Jackson and Mariah Carey.

“I wish I could feel it more,” said Pink of the honor, adding she’s too self-deprecating to keep from poking fun at herself. “I’m like, ‘Oh, it’s the old lady award,’ because Cher gave it to Garth Brooks last year. I’m like, ‘Wait a minute, I’m 41, not 70.’ But at the end of the day, I guess two decades (in music) is a big deal and I want to be able to take it in.”



AMAZON PHOTOS/AP

Pink performs in a scene from the documentary “Pink: All I Know So Far,” which debuts May 21 on Amazon Prime Video. The film takes viewers back to the singer’s 2019 tour, on which she was joined by her husband, Carey Hart, and their two children.



Pink kisses her son, Jameson Moon, in a scene from “Pink: All I Know So Far.”

Pink says she’s “horrible” at acceptance speeches because she feels “awkward” and says her “jokes get bad,” but she made a pretty memorable one in 2017 at the MTV Video Music Awards. While accepting another prestigious award, the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award, she spoke to Willow, who was in the audience with her dad, about the importance

of authenticity and not conforming to conventional standards of beauty. The speech is included on the live album “All I Know So Far Setlist.”

In an interview with The Associated Press, Pink talks about her aerial silks routine, acting and what she thinks of a possible “Lady Marmalade” redo.

AP: You’re known for performing aerial

silks in your performances and doing acrobatics. Do you foresee a time you’d want to give that up?

Pink: I’ll always want to. It’s just if people are going to want to see that stuffed into a leotard. I mean, that’s the real question, isn’t it? (Laughs.)

You co-starred with Gwyneth Paltrow, Josh Gad and Mark Ruffalo in the 2012 movie “Thanks for Sharing.” Would you ever want to act again?

No, it’s excruciating. I mean, I would do Broadway, that kind of acting, even though that’s also excruciating, but no. I don’t want to see this (points to face) in hi-def any more than I have to (laughs.)

Speaking of Broadway, you worked with the “Dear Evan Hansen” songwriters — Benj Pasek and Justin Paul — on the “All I Know So Far” single. What was that like?

They’re freaking awesome. I loved “The Greatest Showman” so much, and “Dear Evan Hansen” and “La La Land.” They’re such good storytellers and I’m a theater geek.

There’s talk of a “Lady Marmalade” re-record with names including Miley Cyrus and Halsey singing your part. What do you think of that?

It would be amazing. Why not? I saw Miley do “Silent Night.” That girl could sing the phone book to me. She’s so good. Her voice is so soulful and Halsey’s rad, too. I think it’d be cool.

WEEKEND: MUSIC



Miranda Lambert has teamed up with fellow Texans Jack Ingram and Jon Randall on the intimate "Marfa Tapes."

Lambert & friends' 'Marfa Tapes' is an unpolished marvel

BY DAN DeLUCA
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Miranda Lambert and her buddies Jack Ingram and Jon Randall first headed to remote Marfa, Texas, together in 2016. That initial retreat yielded a hit for Lambert in the devastating heartache song "Tin Man," and the trio penned "Tequila Does," a crowd-pleasing staple of Lambert's arena-size country concerts on a return trip.

So with a pandemic putting a stop to the music business, what were the three Lone Star State friends to do but head back to the high-desert home of sculptor Donald Judd's Chinati Foundation and the atmospheric phenomenon of the Marfa Lights? Last September, Ingram, Lambert and Randall gathered around the campfire, seeking to recapture the in-person intimacy that COVID-19 has robbed so many musicians of.

Documenting their endeavors on an iPhone voice notes app, "The Marfa Tapes" is a marvelous off-the-cuff success. It's intentionally unpolished: Logs crackle, the wind howls, border patrol helicopters fly overhead. Giggles and miscues are not edited out.

Of course, that lack of polish could come across as performative authenticity-flaunting. But "The Marfa Tapes" avoids such pitfalls, thanks to quality songwriting. "Tin Man" and "Tequila



Jack Ingram, Miranda Lambert, and Jon Randall
The Marfa Tapes
(Vanner Records/RCA Nashville)

Does" are reprised, but the other 13 loosely performed songs are all new traditional country tunes of a high order.

Lambert is the focal point, and it's a big deal for an artist of her magnitude to take a legitimate musical risk. But while she handles most lead vocals, Ingram and Randall are also showcased, and their musical camaraderie is unmistakable.

When Randall sings lead on "Homegrown Tomatoes" (not the Guy Clark song), Lambert's concentration on her harmony vocal is evident. "Nailed it!," she compliments herself, before the moment passes.

Yep, you sure did.

COMMENTARY

Rock & Roll Hall of Fame needs to clean up its act

BY JON BREAM
Star Tribune

The Grammys are trying to do it. The Golden Globes are talking about doing it. The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame should do it. It's time for the Rock Hall to clean up its act regarding how artists get chosen for induction.

On May 12, the Hall announced six inductees — including Tina Turner, Jay-Z and Foo Fighters — who were elected by 1,200 voters (including me).

It announced seven other inductees — including two who had been on the ballot for multiple years — chosen by anonymous executive committees.

How does the Rock Hall process work? No idea. The music world needs transparency.

Thanks to recently announced changes to the Grammys procedures (eliminating blue-ribbon nominating panels), we know how the oft-maligned awards will work next year. We have long known how the Baseball Hall of Fame voting operates, and the totals are reported. Some years no one garners enough votes for enshrinement.

The only thing that's clear about the Rock Hall is that an artist is eligible 25 years after releasing their first recording. That's it.

There is a nominating committee that chooses who goes on the ballot. Who are the nominators? Don't know. The select members are never disclosed, though over the years we've heard that Questlove and Tom Morello have been added.

The late producer Phil Spector used to be on board. I knew a couple of industry executives and a critic or two who participated for a bit. We hear that Jon Landau, Bruce Springsteen's longtime manager and producer, chairs the panel of about 30 members.

I've heard that each member gets to make a nomination. In 2013, Questlove spoke up for his hometown Philly favorites Daryl Hall & John Oates, and they got on the ballot — and elected the first time they faced voters.

I have voted for the Rock Hall for more than three decades. Some years, we voters — including previous inductees, critics and industry workers — ranked our top five choices (if we opted for that many). Now we just check up to five picks; this



Rock & Roll Hall of Fame
LL Cool J has been rejected six times by voters, but was chosen for the Musical Excellence Award by the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

year there were 16 nominees. There has never been a write-in opportunity on the ballot.

Why did it take so long for such deserving names as Tina Turner and Neil Diamond to get on the ballot?

Diamond has never been hip, and the late Atlantic Records chief Ahmet Ertegun, co-founder of the Rock Hall who controlled it for years, apparently had an old business beef with him. Mr. Sweet Caroline waited 19 years to

In an interview with Billboard.com, Sykes explained that the Rock Hall is "constantly refreshing" the ballot with "young voters," citing that as a "balance of power" with the nominating committee.

How's that? If artists aren't even on the ballot, there is no way to balance the power of the omnipotent nominating panel.

Sykes explained that this year there were three special boards (with seven members each) who chose inductees for "early influence," "musical excellence" and Ahmet Ertegun Award for a nonperformer.

Gil Scott-Heron and Kraftwerk, both of whom I voted for when they were on the ballot in previous years, were chosen this year as early influences. LL Cool J, who was on the ballot this year for the sixth time and rejected by voters once again, was tapped for "musical excellence."

When asked if induction by executive fiat felt like a consolation prize for the rapper/actor, Sykes said "not at all." He pointed out that Hall of Famer Darryl McDaniels of Run-DMC advocated for LL Cool J.

Well, one voice outweighs the votes of 1,200. Did the judge overrule the jury? Did one autocrat overturn the will of the people?

Of course, some people question why the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducts hip-hop artists, pop stars and country singers. Because, as Sykes wisely pointed out, rock 'n' roll is an attitude, it's about youth culture.

This all boils down to a question of integrity because being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame should be one of the pinnacles in the music world. In an industry once plagued by payola and still poisoned by cronyism, there needs to be transparency about the Rock Hall process to insure credibility.

But, let's be honest: ultimately the Rock Hall of Fame is more concerned about two things — attracting fans to its fabulous facility in Cleveland and creating a widely watched TV show for the annual induction ceremony. The Hall pooh-bahs know that Tina Turner isn't going to perform at the Oct. 30 event, but LL Cool J certainly will.

Jon Bream has been a music critic at the Star Tribune since 1975, making him the longest tenured pop critic at a U.S. daily newspaper.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



Colored pencils, sharpened and at the ready, rest in a container on Seaman's desk. As interest in the artist's doodles grew, he began selling them on Etsy and giving half the proceeds to charity.

365 days of 'COVID Doodles'

88-year-old creates an intricate illustration for each day of 2020

BY HOLLY RAMER
Associated Press

Much like the round clock faces, gears and planets that often populate his artwork, Robert Seaman has come full circle.

Seaman, 88, has been drawing since he was a boy, and at age 60, left a real estate career to pursue his hobby professionally. But it took the coronavirus pandemic to fully return him to his passion.

"As a kid, I kept lurching between being a loner and being an extrovert," he said. "But in my introvert phase, I would love to go up to my room where I had a drawing table kind of desk and I'd spend hours up there drawing pictures. That's what I'm doing now."

May 11 marked one year since Seaman started churning out "daily doodles" from his small, one-room apartment at the Maplewood Assisted Living facility in Westmoreland, N.H. He spends about six hours a day working on his intricate, fanciful illustrations, starting with pencil sketches and finishing with ink, colored pencil and watercolor.

"After a long life, I'm back doing what I did when I was 11 years old," he said. "And it's great; I love it. I'm so lucky that I can do this."

Seaman moved into Maplewood just two weeks before the pandemic restrictions cut residents off from the outside world. For many months, they couldn't leave their rooms. It wasn't until the first week of May that they were allowed to interact in hallways and other common areas without masks.

"The first thought I had was to just do some kind of dark stuff that reflected the nature of the confinement that we were experiencing and the difficulties that



PHOTOS BY CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Artist Robert Seaman works on one of his daily doodles in his room at an assisted living facility May 10 in Westmoreland, N.H. Seaman, who moved into the facility weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down his outside world in 2020, recently completed his 365th daily sketch, or what he calls his "COVID Doodles," since being isolated due to the virus outbreak.

were created by this pandemic," he said. "Then it just started to grow, and I thought it would be interesting to do one a day."

He started sending the doodles to his daughter, Robin Hayes, and other friends and family. Hayes then shared them on Facebook, and as interest grew, began offering the originals and prints for sale on Etsy.com, with half the proceeds going to charities, including a COVID-19 relief fund, a homeless shelter and an organization that helps refugees.

As the days passed, Seaman's art got a bit brighter in both theme and appearance.

Some pieces showcase his fascination with science fiction, while others portray whimsical animals or sly humor — #131, "Portraits of a Shy Family," depicts framed paintings of the backs of heads. Robots carrying purple flags march across the page. Blackbirds burst from a pie. A squiggly-lined brain is sandwiched between two burger buns. A much-loved cat, Piper, shows up in all kinds of scenes.

Seaman, who has been fully vaccinated since January, says he'll "probably kick the bucket" before he runs out of ideas.

"I might be watching something on television, and someone will have a picture on the wall that will give me an idea. Or things just pop into my head. When I go to sleep at night, for a few minutes I try to think of some new ideas," he said. "When I get stuck, I'll just start drawing an object and it's like word association. I'll draw a hand, and all of a sudden that suggests something else, so it just grows from there."

Craig and Sandra Fox, of Deerfield, N.H., bought Doodles #13, 271 and 274 after hearing about Seaman on the radio and getting added to his daily email list.



Seaman holds up his 365th daily doodle in his room May 10.

"During the pandemic, a lot of our normal ability to get out and have contact with people was diminished, so to be able to get some output or something that isn't an advertising flier or newsletter on a daily basis was cool," Craig Fox said. "I collect books by people I know. If someone I know writes a book, I buy it and ask for an autograph ... and by watching the doodles come by, I started to feel like I know him."

Sandra Fox, who once stared at a painting in a museum so long that a guard teased her about "casing the joint," said she loves how much there is to see in Seaman's drawings.

"They are what they are to me, I have the same feelings, but I see more every time," she said. "I could look at them for

half an hour and see many, many things. I'll catch another color or something in a corner I never even noticed before."

Doodle #365, titled "Potpourri" includes the Earth looming behind a jumble of objects that include the aforementioned cat, a wind-up bird Seaman keeps on his desk, a horse and a man wearing an aviator cap and goggles. It's framed by a series of shapes that evoke calligraphy but aren't actual letters.

Though he accomplished his goal of a year of daily doodles, Seaman said he has no plans to stop.

"It's selfish. It keeps me occupied, and I love doing it, but it also does help some other people, which is kind of nice," he said. "Maybe I'll get so shaky I can't do anything, but as long as I can, I will."

WEEKEND: TELEVISION



PEACOCK PHOTOS/TNS

From left: Sara Bareilles (Dawn), Busy Philipps (Summer), Ashley Park (Ashley), Erika Henningsen (young Gloria) and Renée Elise Goldsberry (Wickie) appear in a scene showing the early days of the titular group in “Girls5eva.” The Peacock comedy series follows a fictional girl group’s rise to stardom, fade to obscurity and pop-culture comeback.

‘Girls5eva’ mocks the ‘misogynistic’ culture behind the rise of female pop stars of the ’90s and early ’00s

BY AIDA YLANAN
Los Angeles Times

The catchy, syrupy-sweet tunes from the female pop stars of the late ’90s and early ’00s were once described by some as a major step toward female empowerment: Britney Spears showing the world how a young woman could own her sexuality, or the Spice Girls championing the power of female friendship. But in retrospect, these acts’ shiny surfaces can also read as a slick repackaging of sexist tropes. And the ongoing reconsideration of American culture from that era, which has included everyone from Spears to Monica Lewinsky, is allowing those who lived through the years of over-plucked eyebrows, low-rise jeans and Destiny’s Child to look at it again, even as Generation Z delights in experiencing those bygone trends for the first time.

Bring in “Girls5eva,” the new Peacock comedy from executive producers Tina Fey and Robert Carlock. The series follows the titular girl group, which years ago shot to stardom and then quickly faded into obscurity, as its members seize the spotlight once more after being sampled on a trap artist’s new single.

The show jumps back and forth in time, juxtaposing the present with the group’s music videos, grainy camcorder footage and “Total Request Live” appearances of yore: We see Y2K through 2021 eyes, as the women — now in their 40s — grapple with the questionable artistic choices they made, often with less autonomy than they first thought.

“Have you ever wanted the perfect girl to fit in your world?” croons Gloria, played by former “Saturday Night Live” head writer Paula Pell, in the song “Dream Girlfriend.” “Well, don’t make a wish, because we’re already real.”

This ridiculous anthem of male fantasy, which launches into more pointed satire



“Girls5eva” members Summer, Wickie, Dawn and Gloria reunite in the present day.

about whale-tail thongs and stylish birth control, might sound like a stretch, but the show makes a point that it’s only a stone’s throw from real-life examples like “I’m a Slave 4 U” and “Cater 2 U.”

“Everything is an amalgamation of [turn-of-the-millennium pop music]. It’s Spice Girls, it’s Destiny’s Child, En Vogue, Britney Spears. It’s kind of like a pastiche of a kind of genre that I think is even wider than what Girls5eva were doing,” Sara Bareilles, who plays the group’s “chill” member, said via videoconference. (Even this is a reference to that moment in music history: Jeff Richmond, the show’s executive producer and composer, noted how group members of the era were branded to fit different personality types so fans could be a “Posh Spice” or “Sporty Spice” kind of girl.)

In borrowing so much from that period, the team behind “Girls5eva” (so named because “4 eva’s 2 short”) has tried to ensure, through meticulous research, that any exaggerations depicted in the show are rooted in

reality.

“The writers and I kind of bought every book that was written. We have one from, like, Beyoncé Knowles’ father, everyone who wrote a book in the late ’90s about that era,” said showrunner Meredith Scardino. Other reference materials include the TV series “Making the Band” and the Lou Pearlman documentary “The Boy Band Con.”

It also helped that the show is about an era the writers and actors remember vividly, Scardino added. “When I was thinking about developing the show, the girl group idea kind of popped in my head as a cool way to be able to talk about being a woman in her 40s now, and also look back at when I came of age,” she said.

The show’s riffs on the music industry certainly passed the test for the musicians on set. The third episode, in which Stephen Colbert plays an inscrutable but revered pop songwriter named Alf Musik, finds the group’s members in an uncomfortable spot when they’re compelled to turn down an

awful song Musik has written for them.

“I’ve been in those rooms with the producer who has a bad idea, and it’s sort of like the push-and-pull of wanting to be amenable, but also checking in with, ‘Is this a good idea? Should we say these things on the microphone? Probably not,’” Bareilles recalled.

“A lot of [these groups] are just kind of churned out by a factory and just handed a song and didn’t really have a voice in the equation,” Scardino said. Girls5eva’s “Dream Girlfriend,” crafted in much the same fashion, is about “being the ideal woman, but for a certain kind of man — like it was clearly not written by them.”

Another nod from the show to the girl group industry is that many weren’t formed from friendship but from money and circumstance. The show’s biting lyrics work, Richmond said, to shed light “on the music industry, how it operated, and how misogynistic it was to have a girl group that was created by men and written by men.” (“We’ve been best friends ever since we auditioned for a man in a motel in New Jersey,” says Wickie Roy, the superstar of the group, played by “Hamilton’s” Renée Elise Goldsberry.)

But while “Girls5eva” sharpens its comic knives for the ways in which pop culture exploits young women and then quickly casts them off — “For ladies, 35 is checkout time,” says the group’s manager, played by Jonathan Hadary — Scardino said the series is rooted in affection for the girl groups of that era. “We have nothing but love for every pop star that’s out there and went through this.”

And in our own nostalgia-obsessed culture, it’s not even a stretch for Girls5eva to get back together in hopes of making it big — on its own terms, a second time around. After all, the Spice Girls are teasing a reunion tour later this year.

“Girls5eva” is rated TV-MA (may be unsuitable for children under age 17). Now streaming on Peacock.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Author, Harvard-trained neuroscientist says minor forgetfulness is normal

By LAURIE HERTZEL
Star Tribune

What, you lost your glasses — again? And you have no idea where you parked your car? And the name of your favorite sitcom — it's on the tip of your tongue, but you just can't quite remember it?

Fear not. Such minor forgetfulness is pretty normal, neuroscientist Lisa Genova told an audience of more than 750 people

at a recent Zoom event, hosted by the Friends of the Hennepin County (Minn.) Library.

Genova, a Harvard-trained neuroscientist, is the author of five best-selling novels, all centering on people with brain maladies. "Still Alice," her bestselling novel

about a woman with early-onset Alzheimer's disease, was made into an Academy Award-winning film.

Her new book, "Remember," her first book of nonfiction, delves into why we remember, why we forget and how the brain works. Here are highlights from her recent talk. This has been edited for space; you can watch the full talk at support-hclib.org/lisa-genova

On why she started writing:

Becoming a novelist was really accidental. My interest in Alzheimer's began in a very personal way: My grandmother had it. I was the neuroscientist in my big Italian family, and I figured I would learn everything I could about Alzheimer's. I read everything, the scientific research papers, and the clinical texts, and a lot of the caregiving manuals, and everything was helpful — to a point. What was missing for me was the perspective of the person who had it.

I thought, fiction is a place where you get to walk in someone else's shoes. I wish there were a story written about someone with Alzheimer's told from her perspective. And then I thought, well, someday I'll write that book.

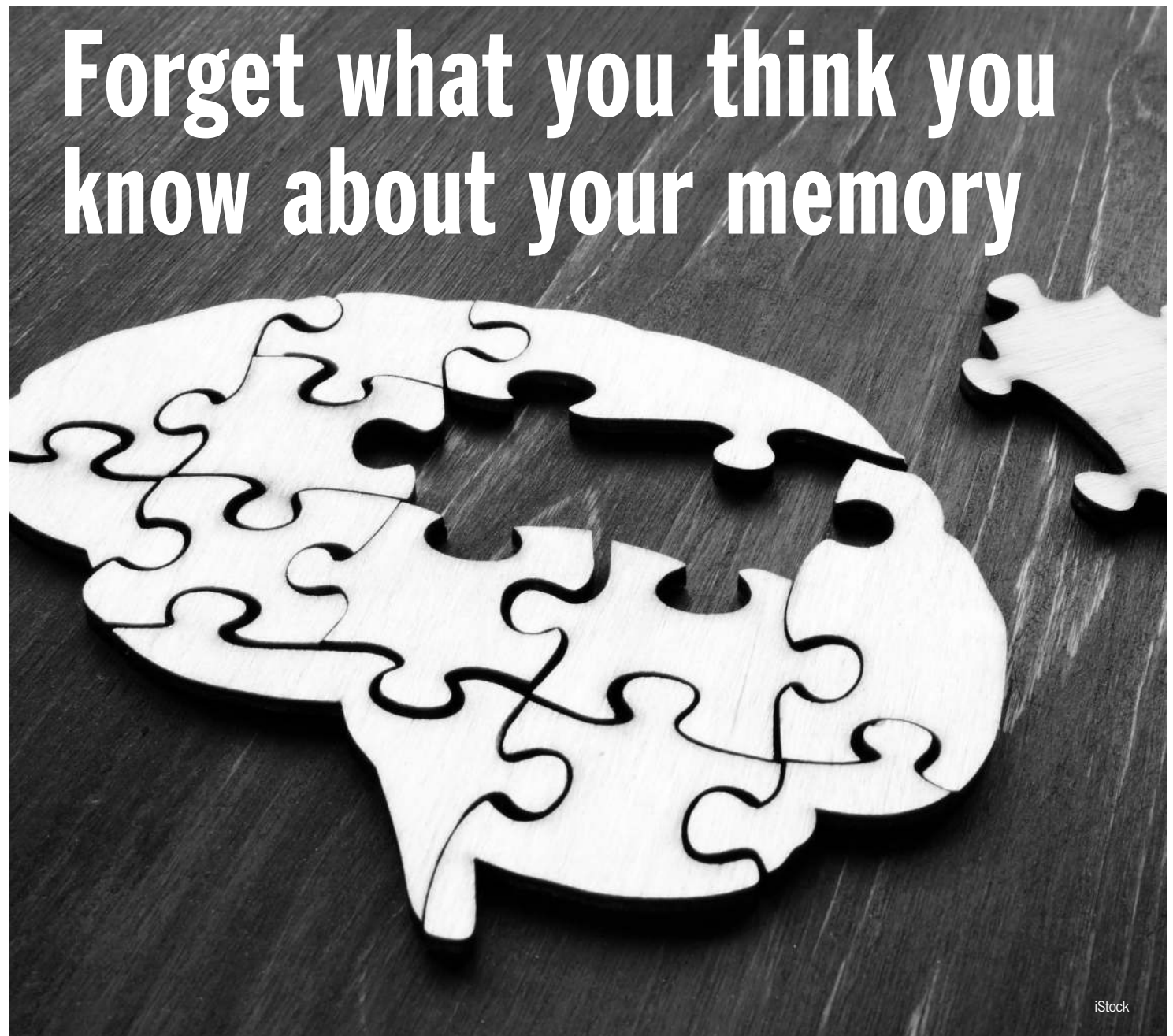
On 'normal forgetting':

I have been talking about Alzheimer's for over a decade, and I found that the conversation invariably drifts from Alzheimer's to normal forgetting — but people don't know what's normal. We have this conception that memory is a perfect thing. It wasn't even when we were 20, but I don't think we even noticed or cared when we were 20. But when we're 50, people start getting really scared and anxious.

So with this [nonfiction] book, I could reassure them and explain why they are really normal — how we remember and how we normally forget and what we can do to improve our memory.

On why we forget things:

The No. 1 first ingredient for creating a memory that's going to last beyond the moment is attention. You cannot remember something if you don't pay attention. I think a lot of us think of memory as a video camera and it's recording a constant stream and all you have to do to retrieve



something is hit "play." That is not memory.

You're only going to keep what you pay attention to. So when your keys go missing or your phone or your glasses — and we do these things every day — this likely doesn't involve your memory at all. This is a symptom of distraction — you did not pay attention to putting your glasses here. You're texting, you're thinking about the 12 things you need to do, and you're not paying attention to what you're doing. You can't create a memory of what you don't pay attention to.

On the distinct kinds of memory:

There's the memory for the stuff we know, the facts and information, like the stuff you learn in school. And there's the memory for the stuff that happens, the episodic memory. This is the story of your life. There's muscle memory, which doesn't actually live in your muscles but lives in your brain. This is the stuff you can do — ride a bike, brush your teeth, drive the car. There's also the memory for what you plan to do later.

For something that I remember that happened, that will change over time with every time I retell it. Every time I recall it, I have an opportunity to add something to it, subtract something. Maybe my mood is different now, maybe I can interpret it differently. Maybe I heard something on the news related to this thing that happened. I can slide that in, as well. This is not necessarily consciously done.

When I go to restore that memory, the new memory is what gets stored and it

overwrites the old memory.

We think that those memories are accurate, but they're probably not.

On memory games:

The way to improve your memory is not through brain games and crosswords. You'll get better at doing those brain games, and you'll get good at crosswords, but it doesn't translate. You don't then get a better memory in your day-to-day life.

On the importance of sleep:

Sleep is super important for your memory. Events are being consolidated into a lasting memory while you sleep. If you don't get enough sleep, the hippocampus might not have enough time to do its job. You go and try to retrieve them [the memories] later and you'll have a tough time and they won't be fully retrievable.

If you have a horrible night's sleep, do you have a hard time paying attention the next day? What do you need to form a new memory? Attention. So you won't have formed the memories of the stuff you learned yesterday and you're not going to be able to form the memories of the stuff you learned today because you won't be able to pay attention.

While you sleep, the glial cells, the janitors of your brain, they do their job while you sleep. And they clear away the metabolic debris that accumulated during the business of being awake. And one of the things it clears away is amyloid beta. And if amyloid beta isn't cleared away, it'll stick to itself and form plaque. That is the beginning of Alzheimer's disease.

So if you want to prevent Alzheimer's disease, one thing you can do is get enough sleep.

On how to sleep more restfully:

Our body temperature needs to go down by 2 degrees for us to fall asleep. Maybe your room is too warm. Are you worried through the night? Write down everything you need to do tomorrow before you go to bed.

Caffeine is a big deal. Caffeine is actually great for memory — it wakes your brain up. But you want to be careful about when you have this last latté of the day because the half-life of caffeine is five hours. That means that five hours later, half of the caffeine is still in your body.

On stress and memory:

Stress will inhibit your memory to remember. Chronic stress is super bad for memory. Exercise, even a brisk walk every day, can save our hippocampus. Yoga, meditation, deep breathing.

If you close your eyes and breathe in to the count of four, through your nose, it calms everything down. You can do this several times throughout the day.

On giving in and using Google:

If you can't remember something, people think if they google it, it's cheating. It's not. It does not make your memory stronger by forcing yourself to remember it, and you do not make your memory weaker by googling it.

A normal glitch in your memory doesn't mean you're getting Alzheimer's.

WEEKEND: FAMILY



SUSAN STOCKER, SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL/TNS
Lindsay Beattie works on her computer as her new dog, Moose, stays by her side at home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Separation anxiety

Pet owners are nervous about leaving their pets when they return to work

By Lois K. Solomon
South Florida Sun Sentinel

If you've been home with your pet during the pandemic, you know what's coming. Separation anxiety. We can't stay home forever. Soon we'll start heading back to the office and taking vacations. Our pets will wonder where we went. And we will get that pit in our stomach, like when we left our kids at school for the first time, because we have become so attached to our faithful animals.

Calls from uneasy dog owners are starting to come into Dogstown University in Deerfield Beach, Fla., which has a dog day care center and offers overnight boarding. Owner Adam Feingold tries to cheer them up. "We are getting lots of calls from people going back to work," Feingold said. "People want to be reassured that their dogs will not be alone. They have been attached at the hip for a year. We work it through with them."

Lindsay Beattie of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., is among those getting ready to enter the post-COVID work world, but now she has two pets to consider. When the pandemic hit last year, she took in a foster puppy to keep her and her 12-year-old shih tzu mix, Doc, company.

She fell in love with Moose, a purebred shih tzu who is now 18 months old, and decided to keep him. Now comes the hard part. She's a sales manager for a multinational company who is about to start traveling again. To ease the transition, she's been making arrangements with dog-sitters who will stay at her house while she's gone.

"The older one is happy when I leave," Beattie said. "The younger one is like, 'How dare you?' That creates anxiety for me. He is so spoiled."

Lisa Laufman of Deerfield Beach also went back to the office recently, and can't stop thinking about her kitten, Missy, adopted on Jan. 25.

"I put off going back to work as long as possible," said Laufman, a commercial insurance manager. "When I knew I had to go back, I would leave the house for a few hours at a time to get her ready. Now I go home at lunchtime to check on her. I don't even want to go out at night because I want to be with her."

Some pet owners may have gotten overly attached during quarantine. But these connections are healthy, pandemic or no pandemic, said Karyn Hoffman, a Boca Raton, Fla., social worker and therapist.

"As a dog lover, I understand this," Hoffman said.

"Research shows animals have a calming effect on us. If your animal is your companion, you are going to miss them when you leave the house."

For those leaving their canines home while they go to work, Jeff Nelson of Palm Beach Dog Academy offers these transition tips:

- Keep your dogs mentally stimulated when you're with them. Give them lots of attention. Take them out in public. Teach them to sit and stay.
- Make sure they get at least several good walks or playtime in the yard each day. Nelson says take them out first thing in the morning, feed them, then walk them before work. When you come home, take them on a 10-minute walk that includes training to obey commands, have some dinner and take them out again. "The more short walks, the better," he said.
- Leave the television or radio on when you're gone so the dogs are comforted by human voices and hear less outside noise.
- Keep an interior camera on in the house so you can watch what your pets are doing. There are even cameras now that allow "two-way conversations" and will throw your dog a treat.
- Don't leave them for more than eight hours. If you'll be out longer, hire someone to give the dog a mid-day walk.

Many pet owners who are heading back to work are heeding these suggestions.

Kim Serota of Coral Springs, Fla., a reading coach for Broward County schools, went back to the office in October after getting a Bernedoodle puppy, Murphy, four months earlier.

"Our puppy was accustomed to having us 24-7," Serota said. "We weren't going places. No one was coming over."

When she went back to work and her kids back to school, Serota hired a dog walker, who walked Murphy and stayed with him for an hour. Now, the walker stays with him for a half hour, and in the coming months, Serota believes Murphy will no longer need the mid-day exercise.

No matter how nervous pet owners feel, they should rest assured the animals will be just fine, therapist Karyn Hoffman said.

"We've all gone so long without socializing and travel, the benefits to us will outweigh the separation anxiety," she said.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Post-commencement cuckoo's nest still full

During the early days of 2020, my husband and I received an odd email from our middle child, Anna, who was, at the time, in her last semester of college. Just like her mother, Anna had earned the title "Class Clown" in high school, so we knew from the first line that her email had been written tongue-in-cheek.

It went a little something like this:

Dear Mother and Father,
Today I have met with the harsh reality that I am almost out of college. Thoughts and emotions have flooded my mind, body and soul.
Soon, I will have to stop mooching off my parents. I only have a few months left of free laundry, a constant supply of lunch meat, and access to your cars at my leisure.
Soon, I will enter the real world. More questions bombard my confused conscience. How does health insurance work? How much do gym memberships cost? How do I file my tax returns? Where will I live? How will I afford it? Do I still call grown ups "Mr." and "Mrs.?"
Soon, my whole world will be flipped upside down. What does this mean for us? Should I move out, struggle financially and mentally, then resent you for it? Should I come home so often that you begin to resent me? Should I start butting heads with Hayden and Lilly because it seems like adults enjoy having emotional turmoil with their siblings? Are you going to kick me off of our phone plan and leave me out to dry? Will I have to live at home one day?
Soon, all of these questions will be answered whether I like it or not. Soon, I have to dive head first into adulthood. Soon, I will have to start buying my own lunch meat.
For now I will enjoy the little things in life, like being able to walk over to the health center when I have a cold. Attending frat parties. Sleeping until my class at noon. Reminding my parents to send me rent money.
Because soon, it will all be gone.
—A creative writing piece by Anna Lynn Molinari. Enjoy.

My husband and I chuckled at our daughter's silly email. I filed the email in my "Miscellaneous" Gmail folder, fully intending to access it in May 2020 when Anna would graduate from college. I envisioned reading it to relatives at a big graduation party, where we would all be toasting Anna's success in college, and wishing her well in her first job as a junior fashion designer.

But, thanks to the pandemic, none of that happened.

The Class of 2020 was sent home early to finish their educations virtually. The fashion show where Anna's capstone senior collection would've been presented was canceled, her graduation ceremony was canceled, hotel rooms were canceled, and parties were canceled. Job openings were canceled, and the retail industry tanked.

Instead of flying the coop, Anna found herself cooped up in our cuckoo's nest, with no career opportunities, working a lousy part-time job, and driving a beat-up 2000 Ford Focus. No matter how many times we said, "stay positive, the industry will recover, you'll make it," Anna believed that being "institutionalized" with her parents at this pivotal moment in her life meant that she had arrived on the threshold of hell.

But just when Anna resigned herself to sleeping on a trundle bed in her parents' home asylum for the rest of her adult life, opportunity (now fully vaccinated) came knocking. In two weeks, Anna will pack up her belongings and fly the coop to New York City to her first real fashion design job.

With her sense of normalcy (and humor) finally restored, Anna thanked us for supporting her through her delayed transition to the "real world" and admitted, "But I still don't understand how health insurance works."

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

MOTHER'S DAY CONCERT
BY BRAD WIEGMANN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Brad Wiegmann is a national security lawyer for the Department of Justice in Washington. He dedicates this puzzle to his mother, “a voracious reader, talented knitter, mahjong maven and all-around supermom.” He says he’s never personally seen any of the musical artists named in the puzzle’s theme clues, but he did once attend a 23-Across concert. Brad’s last Times puzzle, “Crossword Buff,” appeared in February. — W.S.

ACROSS

1 Computer file, informally

4 Wound up on top?

8 Feels it the next day, say

13 Things served in prison

18 Shout at a Greek wedding

19 Country singer McKenna

20 “Whoa, settle down”

21 More than half of humanity

23 ____ state

24 Mom’s comment to her child during prenatal bonding? [Frank Sinatra, 1954]

27 Hot state

28 Bishop’s hat

29 They’re used mostly on corners

30 What Mom is obligated to do as her due date approaches? [The Beatles, 1969]

36 “____ the deal . . .”

37 Yes, in Yokohama

38 Bran material

39 Part of a drivetrain

40 The Renaissance, for one

42 Team ____ (late-night host’s following)

43 Cancer fighter, for short

44 Henley Royal ____ (annual July event)

49 Mom’s reaction to her first mild contractions? [John Cougar, 1982]

54 Midwife’s advice to Mom in the delivery room? [Salt-N-Pepa, 1987]

55 Cause of wear and tear

56 Wanna-bees, e.g.?

57 ____ of Maine (toothpaste)

61 Sport whose participants call “Pull!”

62 Pet sound

63 Tennis star with the highest career winning percentage in singles matches (89.97%)

64 Stress test?

65 “Whoa boy, settle down”

66 Mom’s remark as contractions grow stronger? [The Ramones, 1978]

70 Org. that delivers

73 Unenthusiastic

74 Went sniggling

75 Vaporize, say

78 Empire

80 Roughly

81 Be crazy about

82 Sappho’s “____ to Aphrodite”

83 Mom’s reaction as delivery draws closer? [Usher, 2012]

85 Child’s response to Mom’s actions? [Diana Ross, 1980]

88 Briskly

90 Actress in eight Bond films

92 Like sea horses that give birth

93 Beast with a humped shoulder

94 Utah ski resort

95 Cable news anchor Cabrera

98 Prey for a formicivorous creature

99 Simple life?

103 Nurse’s remark after Mom delivers the first twin? [Britney Spears, 1998]

108 Spanish archipelago, with “the”

110 Touches

111 Witty saying

112 Doctor’s comment after Mom delivers the second twin? [The Who, 1965]

117 Director DuVernay

118 Quiet

119 Settle down, say

120 Pacific crop

121 Something you might gloss over

122 Mother’s Day delivery

123 Apologetic remark during a breakup

124 Hang it up

125 Consult

5 Beginning that leads to a sum?

6 Singer with the 1968 hit “Think,” familiarly

7 Nibble

8 “Oh, no!”

9 X

10 Drink with the flavors Poppin’ Lemonade and Grabbin’ Grape

11 Wyoming’s National ____ Refuge

12 Spill clumsily

13 “Bye!”

14 Food-delivery route?

15 Piece of equipment for a biathlete

16 Oscar ____

17 Bad thing to do in class

22 Figure (out)

25 Aesthete’s interest

26 Complete

31 Hilarious sort

32 U.S. city whose name is composed of two state abbreviations

33 Struck out

34 Poorly

35 Toothpaste option

41 Solicit sales (for)

42 Fishing bait

43 Keeps the beat with one’s foot

45 “Who ____ you?”

46 Woman’s name meaning “goddess”

47 Relations

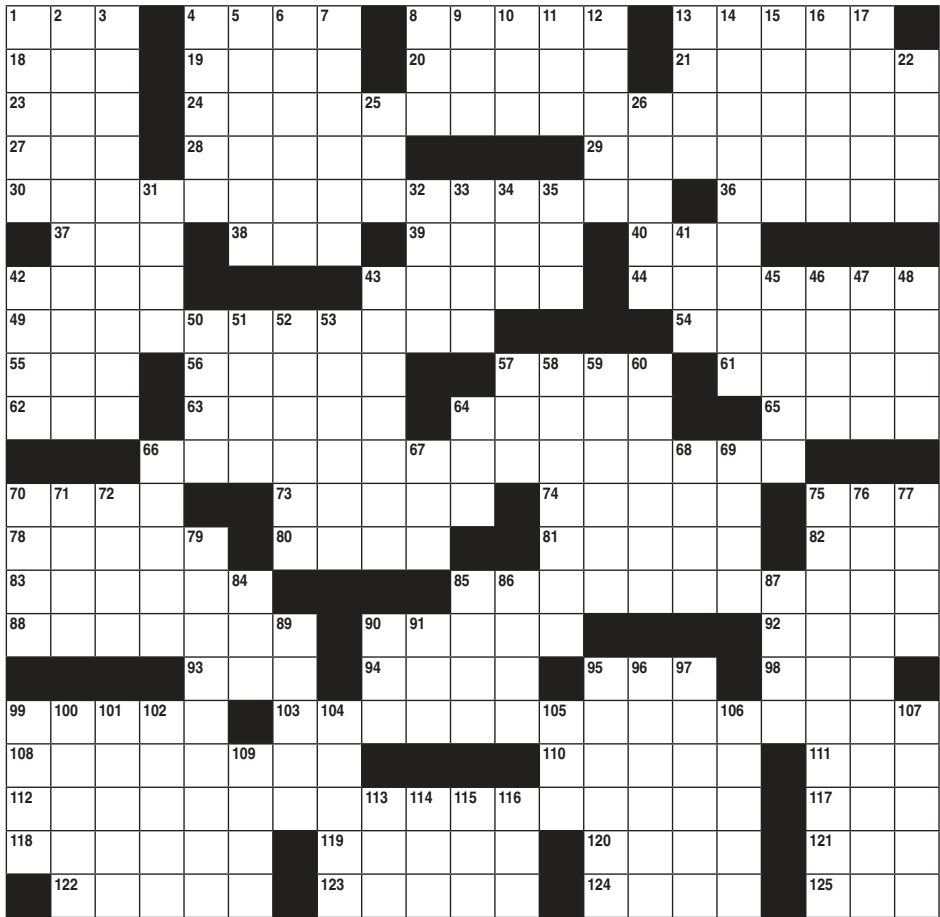
48 J.D. holder: Abbr.

50 What a shaken soda bottle will do when uncapped

51 Capital of Fiji

52 Not dismissive of

53 Earn



57 Quaint contraction

58 Rule for trick-or-treaters

59 Improvised

60 Wind down?

64 Janet Yellen’s former post, with “the”

66 Site of offshore banks?

67 Life, briefly

68 Garr of “Tootsie”

69 Setting for a scene in the Sistine Chapel

70 Major part of the night sky?

71 It’s broken off

72 Olympic athlete category

75 Lions and tigers and bears

76 Raw footage?

77 Davidson of “S.N.L.”

79 Stick in the refrigerator?

84 Sun follower?

85 Loving

86 Last name in shoes

87 Exam for some aspiring C.E.O.s

89 Go down the ____

90 Little bit

91 Ron who played Tarzan

95 Boundaries

96 Part of a Milky Way bar

97 Joint: Prefix

99 Book that’s the source of the line “It is more blessed to give than to receive”

100 Host of HBO’s “Real Time”

101 Año starter

102 Competes on a British cooking show

104 “Same here”

105 Lead-in to trumpet or drum

106 Legally foreclose

107 Tour de France stage

109 The 13th or 15th

113 Mobster’s undoing

114 Places to take breaks, for short?

115 Inoculation location

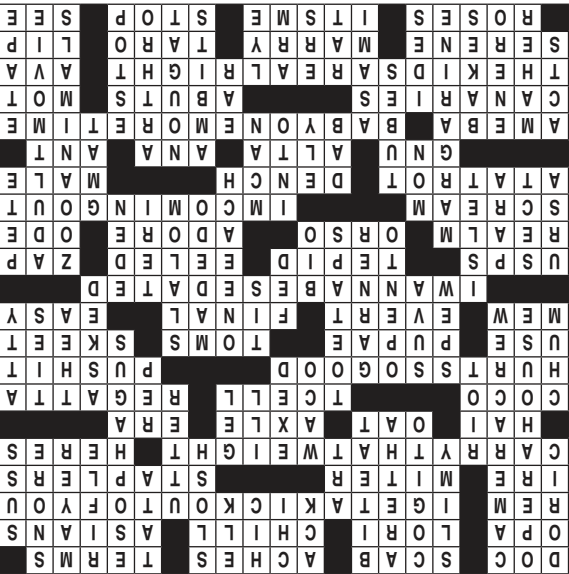
116 Cleaning solution

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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FACES

Becoming Aretha

Jennifer Hudson reveals the person behind the Queen of Soul in 'Respect'

BY ADAM GRAHAM
The Detroit News

Jennifer Hudson says playing Aretha Franklin took more than the simple flip of a switch.

"Let me say, you ain't just gonna wake up one day and think you're gonna be Aretha. Do not be fooled, OK?" Hudson said Tuesday during an online chat with reporters tied to the release of the new trailer for "Respect," which debuted online Wednesday.

Hudson said playing Franklin meant reevaluating everything she knew about music, as well as learning to play piano.

"Aretha sent me back to music school, which I am in Aretha Music School," the Oscar winner said. "I still get on the piano every day. And I feel as an actor, if I am going to portray someone who played, especially to the extent that she did? Oh Jennifer, you better get over here on this piano and figure out something."

Hudson — who says while she's gotten better on the piano, "I will never be on Franklin's level, let me be clear" — and "Respect" director Liesl Tommy talked about bringing Franklin's life to the big screen and the importance of presenting not just the legend of the Queen of Soul, but the person behind the persona.

"I pitched the journey of becoming Aretha Franklin as we know her, and all of the parts of her life that were so powerful: her faith, her relationship with her family, her journey from a person who sang standards to a person who sang her own music, and finding that authentic



QUANTRELL D. COLBERT/MGM

Jennifer Hudson stars as Aretha Franklin in the film "Respect."

voice," says Tommy, the theater director turned filmmaker who makes her feature film debut with "Respect." "I pitched that story and they loved it, and that's the story that I shaped."

Tommy said her experience as a Black woman was integral to telling Franklin's story.

"I felt strongly that we have been at the mercy of the white male gaze telling us who we are for a very long time," Tommy said. "(Franklin) always knew who she was, and she always loved Black people, and I felt that this movie was going to be about that as well. That it was going to be a movie that you could see all shapes, colors, dimensions and nuance of this Black woman. Not just somebody strong, somebody sassy, all the things that we've been told, 'that's the only part of us that's interesting.' She can be fragile, she can be scared, she can be unsure, and she can be strong, and she can be powerful, and she can be intimidating. She's a human being, a woman, who has so much to her, and that was the part that I was interested in: complexity."

After various delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, "Respect" will be released nationwide on Aug. 13, and Tommy spoke to her desire for audiences to experience it on in theaters.

"I made the film to be seen on the big screen," Tommy said. "It shows our lavish locations we chose, our costumes are lush, and the sound, we labored over the design of that sound. It all has to live up to Ms. Franklin, she embodied excellence and taste, and so our movie has to live in that same place."

"And I think there's something glorious about her journey, and I don't know about y'all, but I need a little glory in my life right now after COVID," she said. "I want to share the highs and lows, I want to share joy, I want to share music with a community. We have been isolated, and the amazing thing about movies is you can be in community and have a shared experience that can transform you, that can be transcendent. That's what she did, she was transcendent, and I feel people will be healed by this film."

Hudson said she's already waiting to grab her popcorn and watch the movie on the big screen.

"It's Aretha Franklin, and we all love her," she said. "She's a world treasure, not a national treasure, a world treasure, and what better way to bring people back to the theaters than through the Queen of Soul?"

HBO Max, TBS to air 'Harry Potter' specials

We're going back to Hogwarts.

Twenty years after "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" premiered in theaters, WarnerMedia announced two new unscripted Wizarding World specials Wednesday: a fan quiz competition series and a film retrospective.

The competition show, which will be four one-hour episodes, will include an at-home component for fans, the network said.

Both programs will be the first official TV versions of J.K. Rowling's expansive universe, although a live action series is reportedly in the works at HBO Max.

"To celebrate the dedicated fans old and new who have passionately kept the Wizarding World magic alive in so many forms for decades, these exciting specials will celebrate their Harry Potter fandom in a must-see multiplatform TV event," Tom Ascheim, President, Warner Bros. Global Kids, Young Adults and Classics, said in a statement.

"All Potter fans can gear up for this ultimate one-of-a-kind celebration by embracing their inner Hermione Granger and studying their Wizarding World knowledge. For fans who have always wanted to discover what it might be like to take the O.W.L. exams, this is as close as they are going to get!"

The specials will air over five nights on HBO Max, Cartoon Network and TBS later this year.

HBO Max adds ad-supported option

For the low, low price of \$9.99, you too can enjoy all HBO Max has to offer — if you're OK with ads, that is.

WarnerMedia announced a new pricing option for viewers Wednesday, an ad-supported version for \$5 less than its original price, following in the footsteps of similar structures at Hulu and Peacock.

"HBO Max with Ads will bring our beloved entertainment brands and franchises to even more consumers at this new, lower price point while, for the first time, elegantly connecting brands to the premium, iconic IP that defines this service," Tony Goncalves, EVP and Chief Revenue Officer for WarnerMedia, said in a statement.

The advertising department promised "the lightest ad load in the streaming industry," but did not specify any times or percentages.

Among HBO Max's most popular offerings are Kaley Cuoco's "The Flight Attendant," "Lovecraft Country," "Succession," "Search Party" and "The Undoing," as well as the upcoming "In The Heights," "Space Jam: A New Legacy" and "The Suicide Squad."

From wire reports

CBS bets on 'CSI' revival, 'NCIS,' 'FBI' franchises in fall

BY LYNN ELBER
Associated Press

CBS is reviving its hit "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" brand with a series that brings original cast members William Petersen and Jorja Fox back home.

"CSI: Vegas" will debut this fall alongside the network's expansion of its "NCIS" and "FBI" drama franchises, CBS said Wednesday in unveiling its 2021-22 schedule for advertisers and media.

"NCIS: Hawai'i," starring Vanessa Lachey, will be paired Monday night with "NCIS," entering its 19th season with star Mark Harmon. "FBI: International" will be bookended on Tuesday by family members "FBI" and "FBI: Most Wanted."

Petersen and Fox's characters, who were based in Las Vegas in the original 2000-2015 "CSI" that spawned a trio of spinoffs, will join ranks with a new team of forensic crime-busters led by Paula Newsome ("Chicago Med").



SONJA FLEMING/AP

William Petersen reprises his role as Gil Grissom in "CSI: Vegas," the sequel to CBS' global hit "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation."

"We're very excited to have three new franchise shows come on, which we know are going to help the schedule everywhere" they're placed, said Kelly Kahl, president of CBS Entertainment. A freshman series with a family pedigree gets a leg up, he said.

Another fall newcomer is the comedy "Ghosts," about the new owners (Rose McIver, Utkarsh Ambudkar) of a country estate that comes with spirits described as "eclectic." It's based on a eponymous British series, a critical darling.

Midseason shows will include the medical drama "Good Sam," with Sophia Bush and Jason Isaacs; the comedy "Smallwood," starring Pete Holmes, Katie Lowes and Chi McBride and based on pro bowler Tom Smallwood's second-act career, and the reality show "Come Dance With Me."

An unusual entry is "The Activist," described as a competition in which teams try to bring "meaningful change" in the areas of health, education or the environment. The goal: to seek funding and awareness from world leaders at an international summit.

The drama "All Rise" and comedy "The Unicorn" have been canceled.

Two CBS series will be making the jump to streaming on Paramount+, the network's ViacomCBS corporate sibling. Drama "Evil" and "Seal Team" will be available only on the service, although the latter will air four episodes on CBS this fall before its time slot goes to another series.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Cocaine worth more than \$1M found on beach

AL GULF SHORES — Late-night beachgoers found nearly 70 pounds of cocaine packaged in bundles washed up on the Alabama shore in an area popular with tourists, and police said they probably would never determine where the drugs came from.

Authorities said packages wrapped in plastic began coming in with the surf Monday night, and 30 were eventually collected.

Drug traffickers sometimes use boats and airplanes to cross the Gulf of Mexico, and a police spokesman said officials typically get calls about once a year about smaller amounts of drugs being found along the shore.

Valued at more than \$1 million, the cocaine was turned over to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Sgt. Jason Woodruff told WALA-TV, and police increased patrols along the stretch of beach where the bundles were found in case additional packages wash up.

Father charged after 2-year-old fired handgun

ME WEST BATH — A Maine man was charged with endangering the welfare of a child after his 2-year-old son discovered a loaded handgun and fired a single shot, hitting his parents and injuring himself in the process.

Ian Carr, 25, of West Bath, was arrested Monday and released on bail, the Times Record reports.

Police said Carr's son fired one round from a 9 mm semiautomatic handgun that struck both parents while they were sleeping. The recoil of the weapon injured the child. All three went to the hospital on May 12.

"The seriousness of this incident must be underscored," Sagadahoc County Sheriff Joel Merry wrote in a statement Monday. "This situation could easily have been fatal. The carelessness is astounding."

The loaded handgun was left on a nightstand where the boy found it, Merry said. The boy's mother was shot in the leg and bullet fragments hit Carr in the back of the head, the newspaper reported.

The boy and a 3-week-old sibling who was in the room are currently in the custody of family members.

Endangered red wolves born at zoo, doing well

NC ASHEBORO — Three litters of American red wolves, which are critically endangered and number less than two dozen in the wild, have been born at the North Carolina Zoo, officials announced Monday.

The zoos said in a news release that the litters, which total 12 pups, were born over three days at the end of April. According to zoo officials, all the pups and their mothers are healthy and doing well.

The newest pups bring the total number of red wolves currently in the zoo's breeding program to 36,



CHRIS DILLMAN, VAIL (COLO.) DAILY/AP

Rapid progress

Erika German, right, and Bella Borski compete in the Vail Recreation District's first Whitewater Series of the season Tuesday, in Vail, Colo. There are five races that make up weekly Tuesday series, ending in June.

making it the second-largest pack in the U.S. after Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium in Tacoma, Wash., according to the North Carolina Zoo.

Zoo officials said only 15 to 20 red wolves remain in the wild, all in eastern North Carolina. They're considered the most endangered canid in the world.

Officers pull dog to safety from septic tank

NH BEDFORD — Two police officers successfully rescued a German shepherd that had fallen into a 500-gallon septic tank as it was being serviced, police in New Hampshire said.

The 85-pound dog was about 6 feet down in the tank Monday, police in Bedford said. The officers and the homeowner used a catch pole to pull the dog to safety.

The dog was doing well, and was given a bath.

Library honored with top national award

WV HUNTINGTON — A public library in West Virginia was honored as one of six libraries and museums nationwide that made great contributions to their communities.

Cabell County Public Library in Huntington received the 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services is the highest honor for "in-

THE CENSUS

186 The weight, in pounds, of marijuana seized by the Nebraska State Patrol during a traffic stop Saturday. A trooper stopped a car that failed to signal a turn and drove onto the shoulder as it exited Interstate 80 at Giltner in south-central Nebraska, the patrol said in a news release. During the stop, a patrol dog indicated the presence of drugs in the car, the patrol said, and a search of the car turned up 186 pounds of marijuana in heat-sealed packages. Two people in the car — a 30-year-old man from Suffolk, Va., and a 25-year-old woman from Virginia Beach, Va., who was a passenger — were arrested on suspicion of drug trafficking crimes, the patrol said.

stitutions that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities," the program's website says.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said Tuesday he nominated the library for the award for its service to the community during the pandemic. The facility has provided wireless internet access from the exterior of the building to help students during remote learning.

6 police officers, 4 others exposed to pepper spray

AZ PHOENIX — Ten people including six police officers were taken to a hospital as a precaution Monday after they were exposed to pepper spray and an unknown substance in the air.

Police said officers were called about an unknown trouble at an apartment complex. When they arrived, police said several people were running from an apartment. Two men and a woman told police that they were being held against their will by a man wielding a ma-

chete-like object and they used pepper spray to escape.

Police said nobody was displaying any symptoms, but six officers who entered the apartment and the four people who had been inside were taken to a hospital to get checked out.

Most wanted fugitive is returned to face charges

NE OMAHA — Douglas County's most wanted fugitive has been brought back to Omaha after being held by officials in Miami, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office said.

The sheriff's office said in a news release that Adam Hawhee, 29, was picked up by Douglas County deputies and returned to Omaha on Tuesday to face two counts of child enticement and 26 counts of child pornography.

Hawhee became a fugitive in December when he failed to appear in court on the charges, authorities said. He had twice posted bond to be released from jail earlier in the year,

the first time after being arrested following a March incident in which he was accused of trying to entice girls at a park.

He was arrested again in July when police said he tried to lure a young boy into his car and exposed himself to the boy.

Following his failure to appear in court in December, local and federal authorities determined Hawhee had fled to Nicaragua, where he was taken into custody on immigration violations and extradited to Miami on May 7.

Improved water allows for expanded quahogging

RI WARWICK — Rhode Island regulators have opened up an area in the lower Providence River to quahogging for the first time in decades.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management announced last week that improvements in water quality in Narragansett Bay will gradually allow for more shellfishing further up the bay, the Providence Journal reported. Department staff could not find any records of shellfishers being allowed in the waters that far north in at least 75 years.

The water improvements are the result of advances in stormwater management that prevent tainted runoff from overwhelming systems.



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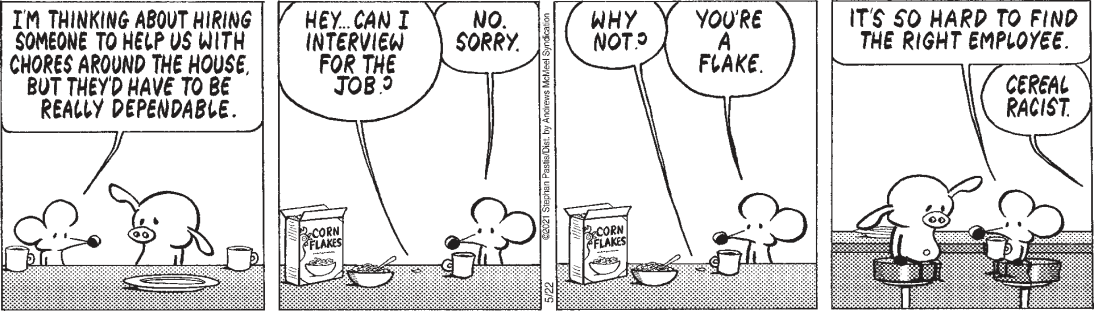
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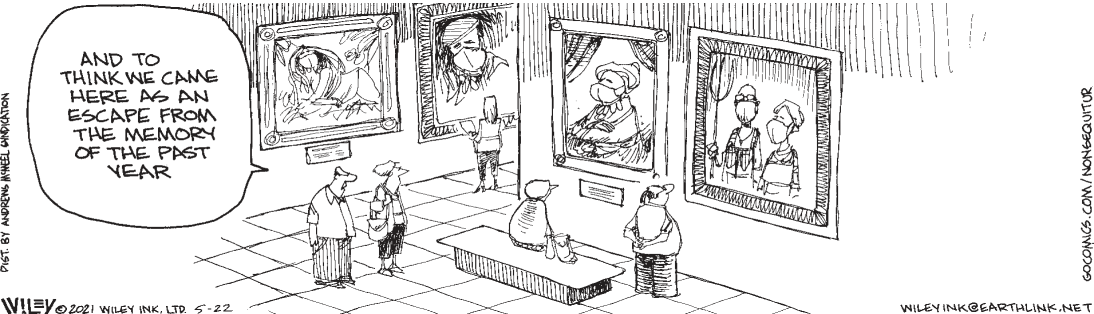
Dilbert



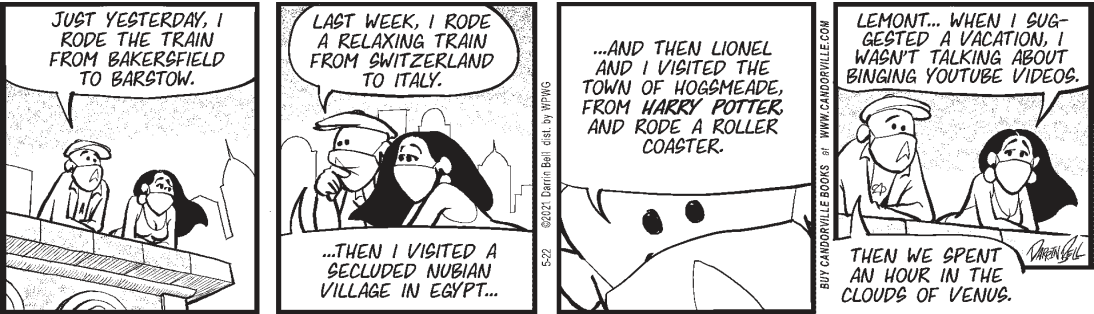
Pearls Before Swine



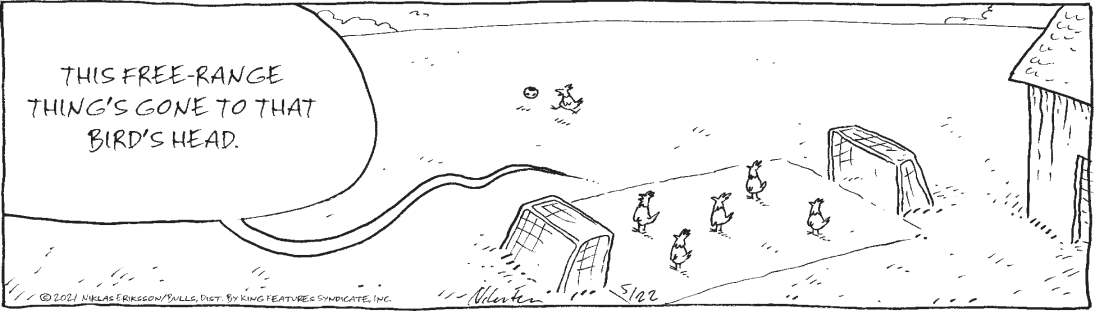
Non Sequitur



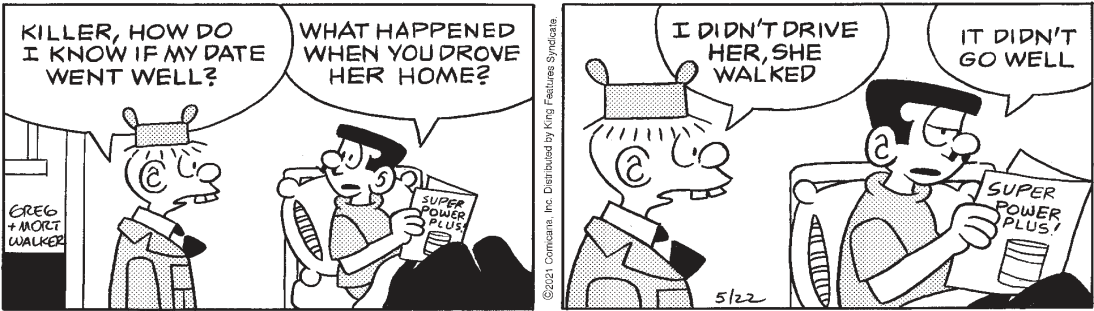
Candorville



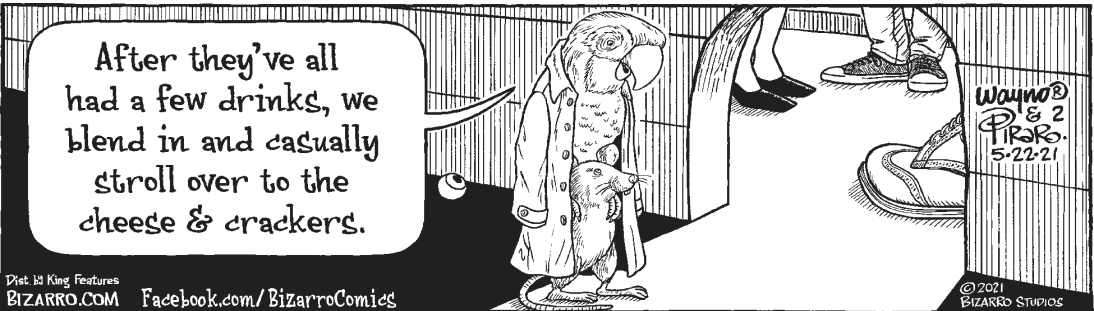
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19				20			
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48					49				50			
51					52				53			
54					55				56			

- ACROSS
- 54 Mensa stats
- 55 Genesis garden
- 56 Unravel
- 1 Doorframe piece
- 5 Worn-down pencils
- 9 Buddhist sect
- 12 Slanted type (Abbr.)
- 13 Norway's capital
- 14 — -de-France
- 15 Spanish artist
- 16 Bump into
- 17 Prohibit
- 18 Bridge
- 19 Citrus drink
- 20 Ella's style
- 21 Jay follower
- 23 Homer's cry
- 25 Debacle
- 28 Tics
- 32 Florida city
- 33 Curly-tailed dog
- 34 Fingerpaints
- 36 Group of priests
- 37 Corp. boss
- 38 "Do — say!"
- 39 Marathoner's stat
- 42 Gun the engine
- 44 Office part-timer
- 48 Epoch
- 49 To be, in Tours
- 50 Cameo shape
- 51 Knock
- 52 Dam
- 53 Disaster aid org.
- 22 Without — in the world
- 24 Lustrous gems
- 25 U.S. Army bases
- 26 Cartesian conclusion
- 27 Soul, to Camus
- 29 Knight's address
- 30 PTA session
- 31 Utter
- 35 Categorized
- 36 Bat's home
- 39 Actress
- 40 Persian Gulf land
- 41 Atlas pages
- 43 New York canal
- 45 Always
- 46 Nursery cry
- 47 Broadway show
- 49 Lamb's dam

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	A	S		E	M	U	S		J	O	B	S
O	V	A		N	O	N	O		I	B	E	T
W	E	L	L	S	A	I	D		G	I	L	A
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A	G	R	A		R	A	G	E		E	P	A
W	A	Y	S		R	O	S	S		R	S	T

5-22 CRYPTOQUIP

QSQDV ADNRWHJD VDPVVRHJP

SJ DFISQDR IZJUHIM RHFIZUDVDR

AHRHJP HJ S ISCQFHMD:

"IVHCHJSW HJ MDJM."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SOUTH AMERICAN METROPOLIS THAT'S A MAJOR PRODUCER OF CREAM-FILLED COOKIES: OREO DE JANEIRO.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals L



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Lt. Col. Richard McClintic, Pacific commander

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OPINION

Prioritize equality for LGBTQ+ troops

By JEREMY BUTLER
Special to Stars and Stripes

As a Black man and Navy veteran, I know firsthand that legal provisions and legislative changes are not enough to address the systemic biases, inequalities and discrimination that are socially ingrained within the military. For example, despite the U.S. Air Force’s internal findings in 2016 that it had “consistent” and “persistent” racial disparities in the prosecutions of Black service members, the service reportedly focused more on covering up the findings than fixing them. As a Black veteran, these disparities were no surprise, but I also know that veterans I work with and other leaders of color are continuing to fight to make the armed services more inclusive. But it can be difficult to talk about progress when it tends to be overshadowed by giant steps backward. Nearly four years ago then-President Donald Trump banned transgender people from serving in the military, quickly eroding the progress made for LGBTQ individuals with the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell” and Obama administration provisions allowing transgender service members to serve openly. Transgender service members had been proudly and bravely risking their lives on the front lines for centuries. Now these patriotic transgender Americans, many with whom I served, were being told that the Department of Defense didn’t want them and they didn’t belong. I couldn’t help feeling like the veteran community had failed our service members under this ban. I served in the Navy during the reversals of both “don’t ask, don’t tell” and the transgender military ban, and each time, opponents warned of the impending weakening of our military. Not surprisingly, the opposite occurred and our strength increased because the focus could now remain on readiness and

not hiding who you were. A recent study by the Palm Center confirmed that the transgender service member ban had eroded the military’s effectiveness in battle, limited its recruiting pool and lowered morale among transgender people who had been grandfathered into service. Fortunately, there’s newfound hope on the horizon. On Jan. 25, President Joe Biden issued an executive order lifting the transgender military ban and instructed the Pentagon to issue guidelines for returning to an inclusive service policy within 60 days. With these measures, Biden and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin have shown a commitment to protect those who serve and honor the fundamental military principle of valuing people for the sacrifices they make to serve their country. History has shown time and again that our military is stronger when it includes everyone. And the reality is that it already does include everyone — but not everyone has been able to serve openly as their true selves. So throughout the years, the military has worked to abolish discrimination based on race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation and transgender status. In honor of Military Appreciation Month, I urge everyone to offer their respect and gratitude to those who serve on the front lines to protect our country. Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the veteran service organization in which I serve as CEO, has always championed for equal rights for women, people of color, and LGBTQ service members. IAVA has supported groundbreaking legislation including the I Am Vanessa Guillen Act, the Military Justice Improvement and Increasing Prevention Act and more, to ensure that service members and veterans receive equal protection and resources under the law. For our country to truly respect the contri-

butions of the dedicated individuals who serve, those protections must apply both inside and outside the military. Congress has the power to ensure that transgender service members, veterans and their families are protected from discrimination in civilian life. If passed, the Equality Act will bring our federal civil rights laws into the 21st century by including explicit provisions for the LGBTQ community and expanding protections for women, people of color, and people of all religious backgrounds. It will grant every citizen the freedom to be their authentic selves, provide explicit protection from discrimination and harassment in housing, employment, health care, public accommodations and more, and bring us one step closer to equality and opportunity for all. While it’s clear that progress has been made, there is still work to do within the military to ensure fair treatment for all and create a truly inclusive place for LGBTQ service members. The military community must prioritize equality and equity to address the needs of LGBTQ service members. Veterans and service members are respected leaders in our communities. We can make a change in how our society treats LGBTQ service members by both supporting the call for Congress to pass the Equality Act and setting our own example now. Something as simple as taking a little time to read educational resources about transgender issues, or practicing using language that’s not gendered can make a big difference in creating an inclusive community. With strong federal protections in place and military values to guide us, together we can create an environment of acceptance and protection, from the barracks to the homeland and everything in between.

Jeremy Butler is CEO of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

CDC has failed in its COVID communications

By DAVID ZURAWIK
The Baltimore Sun

You can’t blame the messenger for not being clear if the message is a mishmash. And last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offered such a messed-up message about unmasking that its director still has not been able to clean it up. As a result, many of us are more confused than ever about masks, and we have a right to be angry about that. “Anyone who is fully vaccinated can participate in indoor and outdoor activities, large or small, without wearing a mask or physical distancing,” Rochelle Walensky, director of the CDC, said at a White House briefing on May 13. “If you are fully vaccinated, you can start doing the things that you had stopped doing because of the pandemic. We have all longed for this moment, when we can get back to some sense of normalcy.” Really? No masks? No physical distancing? As I wrote two days before the directive was announced, we in the media were at a point in covering the pandemic where clarity and exactitude were needed as much or more than ever because of the confusion that was already out there about masks, vaccines and how best to stay safe. But what did we get from the CDC? “Whiplash,” according to Jerome Adams, a former surgeon general. “It was a little bit of whiplash for the American public in terms of them saying just a week

before, keep your mask on. And then all of sudden, they’re saying now you can take them off,” Adams said Monday on CNN. He was being kind. NBC’s “Saturday Night Live” was not so kind in the show’s opening, mocking the CDC for the confusion it generated. “It’s your boy, Fauci, the patron saint of Purell,” Kate McKinnon, playing Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said in greeting viewers. “The CDC announced that people that are vaccinated no longer need to wear masks, outdoors or indoors. Pretty great, right? But a lot of people had questions, such as, what does that mean? What the hell are you talking about? Is this a trap?” It was a funny opening with actors from the “SNL” troupe playing CDC doctors acting out scenarios for when or when not masks should be worn. But there is nothing funny about the deeper truth it suggested: that the public health and medical professionals who are directing our COVID-19 response efforts are not very good at communicating with us. Now I’m being kind. By and large, they have been awful at communicating, and that has been a huge problem throughout the pandemic. Last week, I urged my media colleagues to strive for clarity and exactitude in reporting and analyzing the best information on masking. But what can media do if the primary government agency charged with providing information and guidance is offering informa-

tion so inexact that it is ripe for TV satire? Walensky went on the Sunday morning shows to try to walk back last week’s oh-happy-day announcement. She tried to explain the abrupt change to no masks for those who are vaccinated as the result of the CDC following the science as it “evolved.” She found some support for the “science” part, at least. I am not saying the CDC’s guidance last week is as dangerous as the information that came out of the COVID briefings starring former President Donald Trump. Who can forget the session in which he stood at the White House podium and suggested injecting oneself with bleach would kill the virus? But this failure is on President Joe Biden’s CDC and Walensky, and I think it suggests a cultural problem that has become a serious public health issue during the pandemic. Ours is a media-saturated culture with an overload of highly sophisticated information and disinformation streams competing for our attention. If you can’t communicate your message clearly and effectively, you might as well not have one. Medical, government and public health officials must put as much thought, money and expertise into communicating their messages as they do into formulating them. Not being clear, getting it wrong or not reaching the audience at all can be a matter of life and death for members of that intended audience. There is no excuse for that kind of failure.

SCOREBOARD/NFL

PRO SOCCER							
MLS							
EASTERN CONFERENCE							
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
New England	3	1	2	11	7	6	
NYCFC	2	0	3	9	6	2	
Orlando City	2	1	2	8	10	4	
Atlanta	2	1	2	8	6	4	
Montreal	2	2	2	8	8	7	
Philadelphia	2	2	2	8	5	5	
Inter Miami CF	2	2	2	8	8	9	
Nashville	1	0	4	7	6	4	
New York	2	3	0	6	7	6	
D.C. United	2	4	0	6	5	10	
Columbus	1	2	2	5	3	4	
Toronto FC	1	2	2	5	7	9	
Chicago	0	4	1	1	3	10	
Cincinnati	0	3	1	1	4	13	
WESTERN CONFERENCE							
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA	
Seattle	5	0	1	16	13	2	
LA Galaxy	4	1	0	12	10	8	
Sporting KC	3	2	1	10	9	7	
Colorado	3	1	1	10	8	6	
San Jose	3	3	0	9	10	8	
Houston	2	2	2	8	7	8	
Real Salt Lake	2	1	1	7	6	4	
Vancouver	2	3	1	7	5	7	
Portland	2	3	0	6	6	8	
Austin FC	2	3	0	6	5	7	
Minnesota	2	4	0	6	5	10	
FC Dallas	1	2	2	5	6	6	
LAFC	1	2	2	5	5	6	
Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.							
Wednesday, May 12							
Toronto FC 2, Columbus 0 New England 1, Philadelphia 1, tie Montreal 2, Miami 0 Houston 1, Sporting Kansas City 0 Minnesota 1, Vancouver 0 Seattle 1, San Jose 0							
Thursday, May 13							
D.C. United 1, Chicago 0							
Saturday, May 15							
Toronto FC 1, New York City FC 1, tie LA Galaxy 2, Austin FC 0 Atlanta 1, Montreal 0 Philadelphia 1, New York 0 Minnesota 1, FC Dallas 0 Colorado 3, Houston 1 Nashville 0, Real Salt Lake 0, tie Portland 2, San Jose 0							
Sunday, May 16							
Sporting Kansas City 3, Vancouver 0 Miami 3, Cincinnati 2 New England 1, Columbus 0 Orlando City 1, D.C. United 0 Seattle 2, Los Angeles FC 0							
Saturday's games							
Cincinnati at Montreal LA Galaxy at Portland Miami at Chicago Toronto FC at Orlando City Columbus at New York City FC New York at New England Real Salt Lake at FC Dallas Vancouver at Houston Sporting Kansas City at San Jose Colorado at Los Angeles FC							
Sunday's games							
Atlanta at Seattle Philadelphia at D.C. United Austin FC at Nashville							

DEALS	
Wednesday's transactions	
BASEBALL	
Major League Baseball American League	
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Sent SS Adalberto Mondesi to Omaha (Triple-A East) on a rehab assignment.	
LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Selected the contract of LHP Dillon Peters. Optioned RHP Jaime Barria to Salt Lake (Triple-A West).	
MINNESOTA TWINS — Placed RHP Michael Pineda on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 16. Selected the contract of RHP Luke Farrell from St. Paul (Triple-A East). Sent LF Alex Kirilloff to St. Paul (Triple-East) on a rehab assignment.	
NEW YORK YANKEES — Activated SS Gleyber Torres from the COVID-19 list. Placed INF Rougned Odor on the paternity list.	
SEATTLE MARINERS — Recalled INF Jack Mayfield from Tacoma (Triple-A West). Placed INF/OF Dylan Moore on the 10-day IL.	
TAMPA BAY RAYS — Optioned 3B Kevin Padlo and RHP Chris Mazza to Durham (Triple-A East). Activated CF Kevin Kiermaier from the 10-day IL. Placed RHP Luis Patino and LHP Cody Reed on the 10-day IL. Recalled RHPs Louis Head and Trevor Richards from Durham.	
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Selected the contract of RHP Casey Lawrence from York (Atlantic League).	
National League	
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Activated IINF Ketel Marte from the 10-day IL. Optioned OF Nick Heath to Reno (Triple-A West).	
ATLANTA BRAVES — Acquired C Kevan	

PRO BASKETBALL				
WNBA				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	3	0	1.000	—
Connecticut	3	0	1.000	—
Chicago	2	0	1.000	½
Washington	0	2	.000	2½
Atlanta	0	2	.000	2½
Indiana	0	3	.000	3
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	1	0	1.000	—
Phoenix	2	1	.667	—
Las Vegas	1	1	.500	½
Seattle	1	1	.500	½
Minnesota	0	2	.000	1½
Los Angeles	0	1	.000	1
Tuesday's games				
New York 86, Minnesota 75 Phoenix 91, Washington 70 Las Vegas 96, Seattle 80				
Wednesday's games				
Connecticut 88, Indiana 67 Chicago 85, Atlanta 77				
Thursday's games				
Seattle at Minnesota				
Friday's games				
Atlanta at Indiana New York at Washington Connecticut at Phoenix Los Angeles at Las Vegas				
Saturday's games				
Seattle at Dallas				

AUTO RACING	
NASCAR Cup Series schedule	
May 23 — EchoPark Texas Grand Prix, Austin, Texas	
May 30 — Coca-Cola 600, Concord, N.C.	
June 6 — Toyota / Save Mart 350, Sonoma, Calif.	
June 13 — NASCAR All-Star Race, Fort Worth, Texas	
June 20 — Ally 400, Nashville, Tenn.	
June 26 — NASCAR Cup Series Race at Pocono, Long Pond, Pa.	
June 27 — NASCAR Cup Series Race at Pocono, Long Pond, Pa.	
July 4 — Jockey Made in America 250 presented by Kwik Trip, Elkhart Lake, Wis.	
July 11 — NASCAR Cup Series Race at Atlanta, Hampton, Ga.	
July 18 — Foxwoods Resort Casino 301, Loudon, N.H.	
Aug. 8 — Go Bowling at the Glen, Watkins Glen, N.Y.	
Aug. 15 — NASCAR Cup Series Race at Indianapolis, Speedway, Ind.	
Aug. 22 — FireKeepers Casino 400, Brooklyn, Mich.	
Aug. 28 — Coke Zero Sugar 400, Daytona Beach, Fla.	
Sept. 5 — Cook Out Southern 500, Darlington, S.C.	
Sept. 11 — Federated Auto Parts 400, Richmond, Va.	
Sept. 18 — Bass Pro Shops Night Race, Bristol, Tenn.	
Sept. 26 — South Point 400, Las Vegas	
Oct. 3 — YellaWood 500, Talladega, Ala.	
Oct. 10 — Bank of America ROVAL 400, Concord, N.C.	
Oct. 17 — Autotrader EchoPark Automotive 500, Fort Worth, Texas	
Oct. 24 — Hollywood Casino 400, Kansas City, Kan.	
Oct. 31 — Xfinity 500, Ridgeway, Va.	
Nov. 7 — NASCAR Cup Series Championship, Avondale, Ariz.	

DEALS	
Smith from Tampa Bay for cash considerations. Activated LHP Grant Dayton from the 10-day IL. Designated C Jeff Mathis for assignment. Optioned LHP Tucker Davidson to Gwinnett (Triple-A East).	
CHICAGO CUBS — Selected CP.J. Higgins from Iowa (Triple-A East). Designated C Tony Wolters for assignment.	
NEW YORK METS — Sent RHP Noah Syndergaard to St. Lucie (Low-A Southeast) on a rehab assignment. Selected OF Cameron Maybin from Syracuse (Triple-A East). Placed RHP Taijuan Walker on the 10-day IL retroactive to May 18. Placed RHP Sam McWilliams and LHP Stephen Tarpley on the IL.	
PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Selected the contract of 3B T.J. Rivera from Long Island (Atlantic League).	
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Activated SS Fernando Tatis Jr. and 1B Eric Hosner from the IL. Optioned INF/OF Tucupita Marcano to El Paso (Triple-A West). Returned OF John Andreoli to elite level prospects (ELP).	
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Returned INF Donovan Solano from rehab assignment and activated from the 10-day IL. Placed INF Wilmer Flores on the 10-day IL.	
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Placed RHPs Erick Fedde and Tanner Rainey on the IL. Recalled RHPs Paolo Espino and Kyle McGowin.	
FOOTBALL	
National Football League	
ATLANTA FALCONS — Claimed OT William Sweet off waivers from Dallas.	
CHICAGO BEARS — Signed OL Adam Redmond. Waived OL Gage Cervenka.	
DENVER BRONCOS — Announced WR DaeSean Hamilton cleared waivers and was reverted to the non-football injury list.	

TENNIS	
WTA Belgrade	
Wednesday	
At Novak Tennis Center Belgrade	
Purse: \$235,238	
Surface: Red clay	
Women's Singles	
Round of 16	
Ana Konjuh, Croatia, def. Yulia Putintseva (2), Kazakhstan, 6-3, 6-4. Rebecca Peterson (7), Sweden, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 4-6, 6-2, 2-1, ret. Aliaksandra Sasnovich, Belarus, def. Cristina Bucsa, Spain, 6-4, 5-7, 6-0.	
Women's Doubles	
Quarterfinals	
Aleksandra Krunic and Nina Stojanovic (4), Serbia, def. Lidziya Marozava, Belarus, and Cristina-Andreea Mitu, Romania, 6-2, 3-6, 10-6. Vera Zvonareva, Russia, and Timea Babos, Hungary, def. Natela Dzalamidze and Irina Khromacheva, Russia, 6-1, 6-4.	
Lyon Open	
Wednesday	
At Parc de la Tete d'Or Lyon, France	
Purse: Euro 419,470	
Surface: Red clay	
Men's Singles	
Round of 32	
Jannik Sinner (6), Italy, def. Aslan Karatsev, Russia, 0-6, 6-3, 6-4.	
Round of 16	
Lorenzo Musetti, Italy, def. Sebastian Korda, United States, 6-3, 1-6, 6-4. Karen Khachanov (8), Russia, def. Kamil Majchrzak, Poland, 7-6 (4), 6-3. Aljaz Bedene, Slovenia, def. David Goffin (4), Belgium, 7-6 (4), 6-3.	
Men's Doubles	
Round of 16	
Artem Sitak, New Zealand, and Joao Sousa, Portugal, def. Marc Lopez, Spain, and Fabrice Martin, France, 6-4, 6-7 (6), 11-9. Matthew Ebdon and John-Patrick Smith, Australia, def. Stefanos Tsitsipas and Petros Tsitsipas, Greece, 7-6 (3), 6-3. Santiago Gonzalez, Mexico, and Marcelo Demoliner, Brazil, def. Albano Olivetti and Gregoire Barrere, France, 4-6, 6-2, 10-6. Tommy Paul, United States, and Lorenzo Musetti, Italy, def. Andrei Vasilevski, Belarus, and Andre Goransson, Sweden, 7-5, 6-1.	
Geneva Open	
Wednesday	
At Tennis Club de Geneve Eaux-Vives Geneva	
Purse: Euro 419,470	
Surface: Red clay	
Men's Singles	
Round of 16	
Casper Ruud (3), Norway, def. Tennys Sandgren, United States, 7-5, 6-2. Dominik Koepfer, Germany, def. Feliciano Lopez, Spain, 7-5, 6-7 (1), 6-3. Dominic Stephan Stricker, Switzerland, def. Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, 7-5, 6-4. Grigor Dimitrov (4), Bulgaria, def. Ilya Ivashka, Belarus, 6-4, 6-4.	
Men's Doubles	
Round of 16	
Nikola Cacic, Serbia, and Tomislav Brkic, Bosnia-Herzegovina, def. Oliver Marach, Austria, and Mate Pavic (1), Croatia, 7-6 (6), 6-2.	

GOLF			
LPGA money leaders			
Through May 16			
	Trn	Money	
1. Jin Young Ko	4	\$1,667,925	
2. Sei Young Kim	9	\$1,416,993	
3. Inbee Park	13	\$1,377,799	
4. Danielle Kang	13	\$897,872	
DETROIT LIONS — Signed T Penei Sewell to a four-year contract.			
HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed QB Jeff Driskel to a one-year contract.			
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Signed TE Kylen Granson and QB Sam Ehlinger.			
MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Signed DE Janarius Robinson.			
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed RB Rhamondre Stevenson.			
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Signed OT Le'Vean Clark and DE Ryan Kerrigan.			
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Signed WR Jaelon Darden to a four-year contract.			
WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM — Signed LB Joe Walker. Released LB Josh Harvey-Clemons.			
HOCKEY			
National Hockey League			
CALGARY FLAMES — Recalled C Matthew Phillips from minor league taxi squad.			
NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Named Meghan Duggan manager of player development.			
TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS — Recalled D Martin Marincin from Toronto (AHL).			
VANCOUVER CANUCKS — Recalled RW Kole Lind from minor league taxi squad.			
SOCCER			
Major League Soccer			
MINNESOTA UNITED FC — Signed LW Franco Fraga to a four-year contract, pending a physical and receipt of his P1 Visa and completion of league-mandated quarantine.			
NEW YORK CITY FC — Signed F Talles Magno to a contract through 2026.			
COLLEGE			
BROWN — Named Peter Quawey foot-ball assistant coach.			
ST. JOHN'S — Promoted Van Macon to men's basketball associate head coach.			



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Tim Tebow speaks to Florida fans after he was inducted into the Ring of Honor at Florida Field on Oct. 6, 2018 in Gainesville, Fla. The former Florida star and 2007 Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback signed a one-year contract to play tight end in Jacksonville.

Tebow inks 1-year deal with Jaguars

BY MARK LONG
Associated Press
JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Tim Tebow and Urban Meyer are together again, this time in the NFL and with Tebow playing a new position.

The former Florida star and 2007 Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback signed a one-year contract with the Jacksonville Jaguars on Thursday and will attempt to revive his pro career as a tight end. The move also reunites two of college football's most polarizing figures over the past 15 years.

The 33-year-old Tebow is returning to the NFL after five years (2016-20) in the New York Mets' organization and he'll be playing for Meyer for the first time since his senior year in 2009.

"I know it will be a challenge, but it is a challenge I embrace," Tebow said in a statement released by the team. "I am dedicated to taking the direction of our coaching staff and learning from my teammates. I appreciate everyone's support as I embark on this new journey."

He was on the field with his new team Thursday for a voluntary, closed workout. Tebow is not expected to have any media availability until training camp, at the earliest, in hopes of minimizing the media circus that follows the devout Christian who has received rock star treatment at every NFL stop.

His comeback is an unprecedented one because of his age, his new position and the fact that he last played in a regular-season game in 2012, with the New York Jets.

Several teams suggested Tebow make the position change years ago, but he declined.

He finally switched after retir-

ing from baseball in February. He worked out for the Jaguars the following week, the first of two exploratory sessions that came to light hours before the start of the NFL Draft on April 29.

Meyer raved about Tebow's workouts, saying assistants were surprised to see the 235-pounder in such great shape. Ultimately, Tebow's ability to pick up a new position — a number of college QBs have made the transition look seamless — will determine whether he makes the team.

Just getting a chance after such a lengthy layoff has stirred debate about preferential treatment. Others insist it's merely the result of a decades-long relationship that now includes Meyer and Tebow being neighbors in Jacksonville.

"This Tebow deal just shows that personal relationships go further at this level than actual ability," Carolina Panthers defensive tackle DaQuan Jones posted on Twitter last week.

Former Dallas receiver Dez Bryant, current Pittsburgh linebacker Devin Bush and Denver safety Kareem Jackson were among a number of others who criticized the move.

AUTO RACING

COMMENTARY

Andrettis adapting

Famous family's legacy winding down

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS
The day after Marco Andretti put his car on the pole for the Indianapolis 500 — 51 years after his grandfather scored the only Andretti win in the only race that matters to the iconic family — the third-generation racer dismissed any idea of a curse at the historic track.

He said all the right things about being an Andretti at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the hallowed grounds where seven different family members have raced with only that one win, by patriarch Mario Andretti in 1969.

Marco had suffered his own heartbreak in his Indy 500 debut, a crushing 2006 loss when the rookie was passed just 100 yards from the finish line. He had just two wins to show for a 15-year career, and a year ago, with an Andretti about to lead the field to green at Indianapolis with the spotlight at last all to himself, Marco was doing his best to convince anyone who asked that he very much still loved racing. If he didn't, he insisted, he'd walk away.

Just five months later, he did just that.

It wasn't so much a surprise, at least not to his father. Michael Andretti had heard rumors through the grapevine. Andretti Autosport was having a difficult time selling sponsorship for the 34-year-old, but Michael Andretti was not giving up, not until his oldest son himself called off the hunt.

There was maybe enough money for a partial season, Michael Andretti told The Associated Press, but when father and son finally connected in a telephone call, Marco wasn't interested.

"I think he was worried about talking to me about it," Michael told AP. "And when he saw that I agreed with him, the weight was just lifted off of him. I could hear the change in his voice immediately. It's been so good for him because he's so much more relaxed and happy."

The IndyCar season began this year without an Andretti on the track for the first time since 2006. There had been stretches before — Michael retired from full-time racing after the 2002 season — but Marco's decision to scale back puts the brakes for now on the most famous name in motorsports, which Michael himself acknowledges is disappointing but



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

Sam Hornish Jr., above, caught rookie Marco Andretti in the final straightaway to win the 2006 Indianapolis 500.

doesn't know where things went off course in Marco's career.

It certainly had a promising start when as a 19-year-old rookie he passed his father for the lead at Indy with two laps remaining and the checkered flag in sight. But Marco was caught before the finish line by Sam Hornish Jr., victory snatched away in the final seconds as his grandfather could only shake his head in disbelief from pit lane.

Marco scored a win later that 2006 season, and a second victory came in 2011, but that was it. Mario ranks second on IndyCar's all-time wins list and is considered one of the greatest racers ever, and Michael ranked third on the wins list when he retired.

But it just doesn't come easy for Marco, not even last year. He was the final driver to make a qualifying attempt on a windy afternoon at Indy and bumped six-time series champion Scott Dixon from the top of the board to put an Andretti on the pole for the 500 for the first time in 33 years.

On race day, though, Marco failed to lead a single lap, something that had not happened to a pole winner since 2001. He finished 13th.

His grandfather won't attempt to explain why Marco walked away from full-time racing.

"Only Marco can answer that and I can't say it's not disappointing for me because I live for the fact that he was out on the track,"



STEVE NESIUS/AP

Andretti Autosport's Michael Andretti says he could hear the relief in son Marco's voice when he finally told his dad he was ready to step away from racing.



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Mario Andretti, back, rides with his grandson, driver Marco Andretti, to the pits before practice for the IndyCar race on Belle Isle in Detroit on June 1, 2012. Marco made the decision this year to step away from full-time racing, essentially ending three generations of racing.

Mario told AP. "Last year he proved something to me — I always felt that he had the talent and just putting the car on pole under those conditions last year, he beat the very best that day. So he's capable. Why he's not more consistent? I can never answer that. But Marco's a good kid. That's the main thing for me."

Michael can't help but wonder if he should have taken a different approach with Marco's career and

not brought him immediately into the top-tier team team he owned. His first job was as a rookie teammate to Dario Franchitti, Bryan Herta and Tony Kanaan. His only boss was his father.

Bobby Rahal, meanwhile, sent his son out to learn in other organizations. Graham Rahal had driven for both Newman-Haas and Chip Ganassi when, six seasons later at 24 years old, he finally went to drive for his father.

"People say that maybe I should have done what Bobby did and have him go race for somebody else and all that stuff, I don't know, maybe I should have," Michael said. "Maybe because people think, you know, the silver spoon and all that crap. I don't know. I really don't."

The youngest of his five children is a twin 7-year-old boy they call Rio, named for his grandfather but with enough of an age gap between Mario Andretti that Michael didn't worry about the pressures of being a namesake. Rio has recently caught the racing bug, but Michael doesn't really know what to do with him.

"He's not out there doing it every week and it's partly my fault because I'm not going to be out there doing it every week. I'm not that type of dad who is going to sit down and school him on everything," Michael said. "And second, well, I don't think I want him to be doing it just yet. It's too early. I want him to see other stuff."

NHL

ROUNDUP

Hurricanes blank Predators, take 2-0 lead in series

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Sebastian Aho scored twice and Alex Nedeljkovic was sharp in net to lead a perfect showing for Carolina’s penalty kill, helping the Hurricanes beat the Nashville Predators 3-0 on Wednesday. The win gave Carolina a 2-0 series lead.

Nedeljkovic finished with 32 saves for the shutout in his second playoff start. And he was under plenty of pressure considering the Hurricanes were called for nine penalties.

Warren Foegele also scored for Carolina.

Game 3 is is Friday night in Nashville.

Jets 4, Oilers 1: Connor Hellebuyck made 32 saves on his 28th birthday, Dominic Toninato broke a tie midway through the third period and Winnipeg won at Edmonton in Game 1.

Playing just his third game for the Jets, Toninato tipped in Logan Stanley’s blast from the blue line, but the puck flew out so quickly it wasn’t immediately signaled a goal. The 27-year-old Toninato made his debut in the second-to-last game of the regular season.

Tucker Poolman tied it midway through the second, and Kyle Connor and Blake Wheeler added empty-netters for Winnipeg in its first playoff meeting with the Oilers since 1990. Edmonton’s Jesse Puljujarvi scored in his postseason debut.

Game 2 is Friday night in Edmonton.

Avalanche 6, Blues 3: Nathan MacKinnon finished his first career playoff hat trick with an empty-net goal to help host Colorado pull away late after St. Louis avoided a pregame virus scare that nearly sidelined several players.

Joonas Donskoi scored twice and Brandon Saad added an empty-netter as the Avalanche took a 2-0 lead in the first-round playoff series. Since moving to Denver, Colorado is 13-1 all-time in best-of-seven postseason series when capturing the first two games. Philipp Grubauer finished with 32 saves.

MacKinnon, who also had an assist, had the first hat trick by an Avalanche player in 24 years.

Sammy Blais, Brayden Schenn and Mike Hoffman scored for the Blues. Jordan Binnington had 29 saves.

Game 3 will be Friday in St. Louis.

Flames 6, Canucks 2: Mat-

Scoreboard

First Round
(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)
Carolina 2, Nashville 0
Carolina 5, Nashville 2
Wednesday: Carolina 3, Nashville 0
Friday: at Nashville
Sunday: at Nashville
x-Tuesday: at Carolina
x-Thursday, May 27: at Nashville
x-Saturday, May 29: at Carolina
Tampa Bay 2, Florida 0
Tampa Bay 5, Florida 4
Tampa Bay 3, Florida 1
Thursday: at Tampa Bay
Saturday: at Tampa Bay
x-Monday: at Florida
x-Wednesday, May 26: at Tampa Bay
x-Friday, May 28: at Florida
Boston 2, Washington 1
Washington 3, Boston 2, OT
Boston 4, Washington 3, OT
Wednesday: Boston 3, Washington 2, 2OT
Friday: at Boston
Sunday: at Washington
x-Tuesday: at Boston
x-Thursday, May 27: at Washington
Pittsburgh 1, N.Y. Islanders 1
N.Y. Islanders 4, Pittsburgh 3, OT
Pittsburgh 2, N.Y. Islanders 1
Thursday: at N.Y. Islanders
Saturday: at N.Y. Islanders
Monday: at Pittsburgh
x-Wednesday, May 26: at N.Y. Islanders
x-Friday, May 28: at Pittsburgh
Toronto vs. Montreal
Thursday: at Toronto
Saturday: at Toronto
Monday: at Montreal
Tuesday: at Montreal
x-Thursday, May 27: at Toronto
x-Saturday, May 29: at Montreal
x-Monday, May 31: at Toronto
Winnipeg 1, Edmonton 0
Wednesday: Winnipeg 4, Edmonton 1
Friday: at Edmonton
Sunday: at Winnipeg
Monday: at Winnipeg
x-Wednesday, May 26: at Edmonton
x-Friday, May 28: at Winnipeg
x-Sunday, May 30: at Edmonton
Vegas 1, Minnesota 1
Minnesota 1, Vegas 0, OT
Vegas 3, Minnesota 1
Thursday: at Minnesota
Saturday: at Minnesota
Monday: at Vegas
x-Wednesday, May 26: at Minnesota
x-Friday, May 28: at Vegas
Colorado 2, St. Louis 0
Colorado 4, St. Louis 1
Wednesday: Colorado 6, St. Louis 3
Friday: at St. Louis
Saturday: at St. Louis
x-Tuesday: at Colorado
x-Thursday, May 27: at St. Louis
x-Saturday, May 29: at Colorado

thew Tkachuk scored twice and host Calgary beat Vancouver in the NHL’s regular-season finale.

The game was the third in a row between the teams to close the season after the Canucks’ schedule was pushed back by a COVID-19 outbreak.

Dillon Dube, Andrew Mangiapane, Brett Ritchie and Connor Mackey, with his first career NHL goal, also scored for the Flames, and Jacob Markstrom stopped 19 shots. At 26-27-3, they ended up four points behind Montreal for the final playoff spot.

Bo Horvat and J.T. Miller scored for Vancouver. They finished last in the seven-team North, a point behind Ottawa.



PHOTOS BY CHARLES KRUPA / AP

Above: Bruins center Brad Marchand, right, scores on Washington Capitals goaltender Ilya Samsonov during the third period of Game 3 of the Bruins’ 3-2 first-round playoff win Wednesday in Boston. Below: Samsonov looks back at the puck after giving up the game-winning goal to Boston right wing Craig Smith.

Capsized: Bruins win in 20T

Smith’s goal gives Boston 2-1 lead in first-round playoff with Washington

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

BOSTON — Craig Smith has a mantra that he pulled out after scoring the winning goal against Washington on Wednesday night: “I love winning, but I hate waiting.”

The Bruins forward took care of the first part after he’d had plenty of the second, scoring 25:48 into overtime to give Boston a 3-2 victory over the Capitals and a 2-1 lead in their East Division first-round playoff series.

Smith outraced Washington defenseman Justin Schultz to a puck that Capitals goalie Ilya Samsonov left behind his net. The Bruins forward swept it around before Samsonov could get back in position to end the third straight overtime game in the series.

“I just tried to jump on it and see if I could create a little bit of a turnover there. They gave me just enough time,” said Smith, who also had an assist. “It just worked out. He was still out of his net trying to get back in, and I just snuck it in there.”

Brad Marchand and Taylor Hall also scored for Boston, and Tuukka Rask stopped 35 shots. The Bruins fell behind 1-0 and 2-1 before twice tying it, taking their only lead on Smith’s game-winner.

“We had a lot of good looks and then obviously got a break at the end,” Boston coach Bruce Cassidy said. “It’s a second-effort league and that’s how you score. That’s the way goals go in when goalies are on. You need to get two or three whacks at it.”

It was the 11th straight one-goal playoff game between the the teams since 1998.

Game 4 is Friday night in Boston.

“I would imagine that the next game is probably going to be the same type of game,” Washington coach Peter Laviolette said. “You hope at the end of the night your number on the scoreboard is bigger than the opponent’s.”

Alex Ovechkin scored his 800th combined regular-season and postseason goal, and Nic Dowd returned from a slap shot off the knee to add a goal for the Capitals. Samsonov returned from the COVID-19 list to make his playoff debut, stopping 40 shots for Wash-



ington, which lost the home-ice advantage after splitting the first two games at home.

“I think we’ve got to be hungrier, and we all know that,” Capitals defenseman John Carlson said. “It’s going to be our best effort next game.”

Dowd had to limp off the ice and head to the dressing room after blocking a shot with his right knee midway through the second period. He was back and charging the net when Garnet Hathaway kept the puck in at the blue line and fed him for the goal that made it 2-1 with less than two minutes to go in the period.

But it was Dowd who was called for high-sticking to set up the power play that led to Marchand’s tying goal. The puck bounced from Charlie McAvoy to Patrice Bergeron before Marchand swiped it into the net with 8:28 left in regulation to make it 2-2.

Marchand, who had two penalties in Game 2 before scoring the winner just 39 seconds into overtime, was whistled for the penalty that led to Ovechkin’s goal after the Bruins dominated the scoreless first period.

Boston still had a 15-9 advantage in shots when Ovechkin scored on the power play with 11:39 left in the second. It was his first goal of the series but the 70th of his postseason career, giving him a total of 800 for the regular season and playoffs.

That lead lasted less than a minute before Smith slid the puck to Hall in the slot.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Holiday eager to help Milwaukee take the next step in playoffs

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The price the Bucks paid to add Jrue Holiday to their roster and the amount they invested to keep him underscores how much Milwaukee believes the guard can help them end a half-century of NBA postseason frustration.

Holiday gets his chance to hold up his end of the deal this weekend when the Bucks begin a first-round series with the Miami Heat, who eliminated them in the second round last year.

“I think for somebody who just wants an opportunity to win and do the best they can, to come to a team like this and try to make something happen, I’m ready for this,” Holiday said. “I’m excited to get going.”

Milwaukee posted the NBA’s best regular-season record in 2018-19 and 2019-20 but fell short in the playoffs both times. The Bucks responded by overhauling their roster and putting a new group around two-time reigning MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo and two-time All-Star forward Khris Middleton.

No change was bigger than the addition of Holiday, who is playing for a legitimate title contender for the first time in his NBA career.

Milwaukee gave up guards Eric Bledsoe and George Hill, first-round draft choice R.J. Hampton and two future first-round picks to acquire Holiday and Sam Merrill from the New Orleans Pelicans as part of a four-team trade. The Bucks also gave New Orleans the right to swap two future first-round picks.

Holiday, who turns 31 on June 12, signed a four-year contract extension last month that would be worth at least \$134 million if he exercises his option for the final season.

Milwaukee says he’s been even better than expected.

“As the season’s played out, certainly we appreciate what he brings to the game on both ends of the court,” Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. “Just the more great two-way players you have, the better your team is going to be.”

Holiday missed 10 games this season due to COVID-19 but averaged 17.7 points, 6.1 assists and 4.5 rebounds while ranking fifth in the NBA in steals (1.63). He shot 50.3% overall and 39.2% from three-point range — both career highs — and stepped up his play after the All-Star break.

“I knew he was a good and complete player,” Middleton said, “but I didn’t know he was this good.”

Holiday’s presence helped Milwaukee average 120.1 points per game and become the first team since the 1984-85 Denver Nuggets to finish a regular season averaging at least 120 points.

The Bucks believe they upgraded by having Holiday take over at point guard for Bledsoe, who performed well in the regular season but struggled in Milwaukee’s playoff losses.

Holiday is making just his fifth playoff appearance in 12 NBA seasons and never has advanced beyond the second round.

The Bucks expect much more than a second-round exit.

Milwaukee guard Pat Connaughton was playing for Portland in 2018 when his Trail Blazers were swept by Holiday’s Pelicans.

“His ability to control the game offensively, always be in control on offense in attack mode but then defensively to take away another team’s best player, that’s what playoff basketball is,” Connaughton said.



AARON GASH/AP

Milwaukee Bucks guard Jrue Holiday drives to the basket as the Washington Wizards’ Bradley Beal, right, and Russell Westbrook defend. Holiday was a key newcomer for the Bucks this season.



TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

The Toronto Raptors’ Freddie Gillespie, left, and Jalen Harris, center, defend as the Dallas Mavericks’ Kristaps Porzingis works to the basket. The Mavs are seeded third, their highest seed since 2011.

Mavs look to end 10-year playoff series win drought

BY SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

Asked about the decade without a playoff series victory since coaching the Dallas Mavericks to their only championship, Rick Carlisle quickly mentioned the rebuilding phase that accompanied the drought.

When a similar question came up a day later, the Dallas coach showed he might be ready to quit answering them.

“I keep getting asked about is there pressure to advance, hell yeah there’s pressure to advance!” Carlisle said, his voice rising. “But we’re a championship organization. We’re not just looking to advance one round in the playoffs.”

Luka Doncic and the Mavericks will seek the franchise’s elusive series victory starting Saturday at the Los Angeles Clippers in a first-round rematch from the Florida bubble last year, when Kawhi Leonard, Paul George and company won in six games.

Dirk Nowitzki, Doncic’s predecessor as the Euro superstar in Dallas, led a six-game series victory over Miami’s LeBron James and Dwyane Wade in the 2011 NBA Finals. Nobody could have imagined the franchise would go this long without at least returning to the second round.

First, owner Mark Cuban changed the makeup of the title-winning team significantly in the

name of salary cap flexibility after the 2011 lockout. Three years later, a trade with Boston for Rajon Rondo blew up on the Mavericks.

It took a year, but the ill-fated Rondo deal triggered the rebuild. Dallas missed the playoffs three straight seasons after qualifying 15 of the previous 16. Hopes brightened after the Mavericks traded up two spots to get Doncic in the 2018 draft.

Dallas missed the playoffs with the 2019 Rookie of the Year, but his dazzling Game 4 buzzer-beater against the Clippers last August was the most tangible sign that playoff success might be near.

Now comes the rematch, with the fifth-seeded Mavericks as underdogs again.

“It helps carry that momentum moving forward, not only in that playoffs,” said Tim Hardaway Jr., one of four players on the roster to play for a team that won a playoff series. “If you end up losing, carries that momentum into next season, knowing that your guys have expectations to move forward and be better.”

If Doncic can get Dallas past the Clippers this time, he will match Nowitzki by getting his first playoff series victory in his third season. The comparisons will only grow from there.

Nowitzki’s postseason debut with a first-round win over Utah in 2001 was the first of 12 straight playoff trips. Two years later, the Mavs lost to San Antonio in the Western Conference finals before



ANDY CLAYTON-KING/AP

Dallas Mavericks head coach Rick Carlisle said there’s plenty of pressure on him and the Mavs since the team hasn’t advanced in the playoffs in 10 years.

going the distance in 2006, losing in six games to Wade and the Heat.

“When you’re part of an organization like the Dallas Mavericks and there’s a game scheduled, there’s pressure to win that game,” said Carlisle, in his 13th season with Dallas. “When you come to work for this organization and you work for Mark Cuban, you’ve got to be somebody that loves pressure.”

The Mavs have not had home-court advantage in the first round since winning the title. This year’s seeding is the highest since they were third in 2011. They’ve had five first-round losses: 2012, 2014-16 and last year.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Scoreboard

Playoffs
Play-in
Play-in First Round
Eastern Conference
Tuesday, May 18
Indiana 144, Charlotte 117
Boston 118, Washington 100
Western Conference
Wednesday, May 19
Memphis 100, San Antonio 96
L.A. Lakers 103, Golden State 100
Play-in Second Round
Eastern Conference
Thursday, May 20
Indiana at Washington
Western Conference
Friday, May 21
Memphis at Golden State
First Round
(Best-of-seven)
x-if necessary
Eastern Conference
Philadelphia vs. Washington/Indiana
Sunday: at Philadelphia
Wednesday, May 26: at Philadelphia
Saturday, May 29: at Washington/Indiana
Monday, May 31: at Washington/Indiana
x-Wednesday, June 2: at Philadelphia
x-Friday, June 4: at Washington/Indiana
x-Sunday, June 6: at Philadelphia
Brooklyn vs. Boston
Saturday: at Brooklyn
Tuesday: at Brooklyn
Friday, May 28: at Boston
Sunday, May 30: at Boston
x-Tuesday, June 1: at Brooklyn
x-Thursday, June 3: at Boston
x-Saturday, June 5: at Brooklyn
Miami vs. Milwaukee
Saturday: at Milwaukee
Monday: at Milwaukee
Thursday, May 27: at Miami
Saturday, May 29: at Miami
x-Tuesday, June 1: at Milwaukee
x-Thursday, June 3: at Miami
x-Saturday, June 5: at Milwaukee
New York vs. Atlanta
Sunday: at New York
Wednesday, May 26: at New York
Friday, May 28: at Atlanta
Sunday, May 30: at Atlanta
x-Wednesday, June 2: at New York
x-Friday, June 4: at Atlanta
x-Sunday, June 6: at New York
Western Conference
Utah vs. Golden State/Memphis
Sunday: at Utah
Wednesday, May 26: at Utah
Saturday, May 29: at Golden State/Memphis
Monday, May 31: at Golden State/Memphis
x-Wednesday, June 2: at Utah
x-Friday, June 4: at Golden State/Memphis
x-Sunday, June 6: at Utah
Phoenix vs. L.A. Lakers
Sunday: at Phoenix
Tuesday: at Phoenix
Thursday, May 27: at L.A. Lakers
Sunday, May 30: at L.A. Lakers
x-Tuesday, June 1: at Phoenix
x-Thursday, June 3: at L.A. Lakers
x-Saturday, June 5: at Phoenix
Denver vs. Portland
Saturday: at Denver
Monday: at Denver
Thursday, May 27: at Portland
Saturday, May 29: at Portland
x-Tuesday, June 1: at Denver
x-Thursday, June 3: at Portland
x-Saturday, June 5: at Denver
L.A. Clippers vs. Dallas
Saturday: at L.A. Clippers
Tuesday: at L.A. Clippers
Friday, May 28: at Dallas
Sunday, May 30: at Dallas
x-Wednesday, June 2: at L.A. Clippers
x-Friday, June 4: at Dallas
x-Sunday, June 6: at L.A. Clippers

LeBron's 3 lifts Lakers past Warriors

Play-in victory means LA advances to play Phoenix in first round in the West

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — LeBron James persevered through an injured ankle, a big first-half deficit and being poked in the eye late in the fourth quarter to add another highlight to his impressive résumé.

James made a long, go-ahead three-pointer with 58.2 seconds remaining, rallying the Los Angeles Lakers to a 103-100 victory over the Golden State Warriors in a Western Conference play-in tournament game Wednesday night.

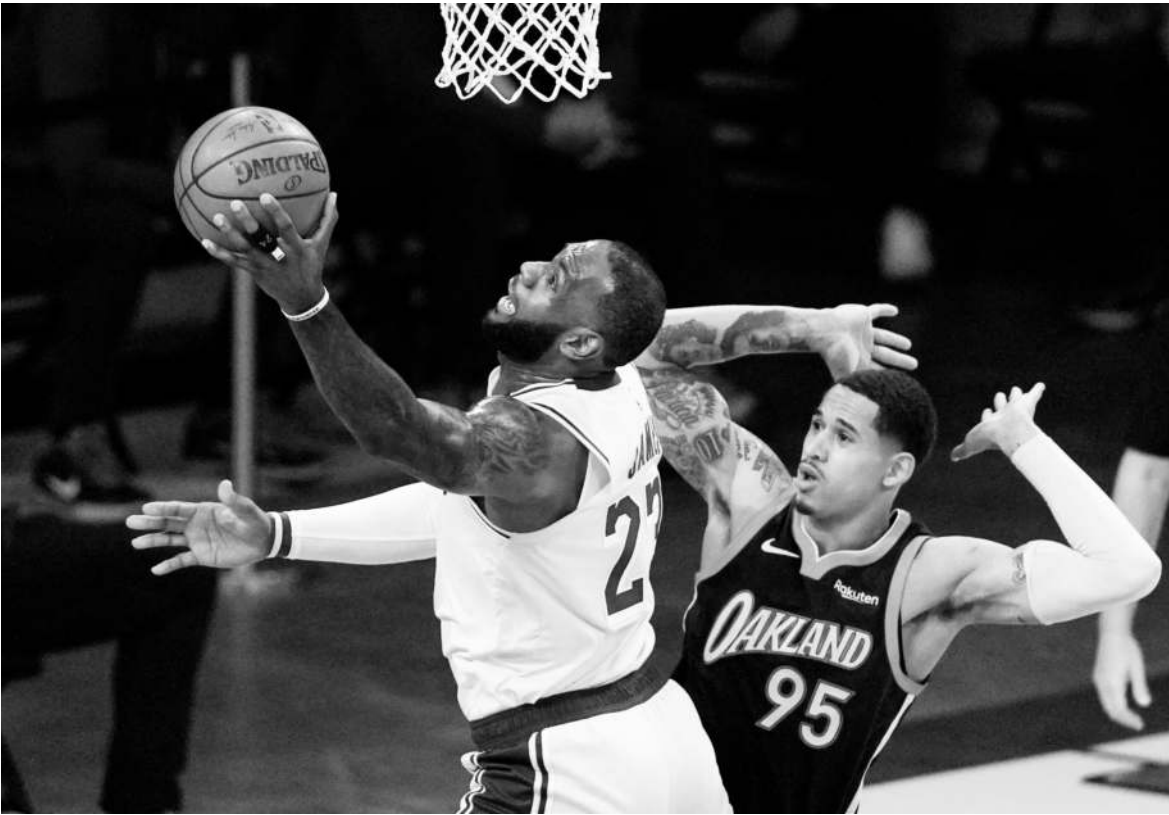
“After the finger to the eye, I was seeing three rims and shot at the middle one. By grace, I was able to knock it down,” said James, who finished with 22 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his sixth triple-double of the season. “I’ve been poked in the eye before.

“It is going to be sore tonight and tomorrow, but we got a big-time win.”

James was poked by Draymond Green while driving to the basket with 2:07 remaining. But he made the biggest shot when the defending NBA champions needed it the most. His 34-foot, three-pointer over Stephen Curry as the shot clock was winding down is his longest make of the season. According to ESPN Stats and Information, it is also the longest go-ahead shot in the final three minutes of any game in his career.

“He proved why he is the best player in the world. Just add it to the list of great plays and accomplishments,” Los Angeles coach Frank Vogel said.

Anthony Davis scored 13 of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, as the Lakers won their sixth straight and overcame 37 points from



MARK J. TERRILL / AP

Lakers forward LeBron James, left, shoots as Golden State Warriors forward Juan Toscano-Anderson defends during the Lakers' 103-100 play-in victory Wednesday in Los Angeles.

“It is going to be sore tonight and tomorrow, but we got a big-time win.”

LeBron James
After he was poked in the eye

league scoring champ Curry. Golden State had a chance to send it into overtime, but Kent Bazemore had a bad inbounds pass and sealed the victory for Los Angeles — which earned the seventh seed for the playoffs and a first-round matchup with second-seeded Phoenix. The series opener is

slated for Sunday afternoon.

“It’s a great shot,” Curry said of James’ three. “Broken play ... thinking he was kind of out of the play, they found him, he got his balance just in time and knocked it down. That was a tough one because you don’t really expect it to go in. You expect us to get the rebound and have a possession to take the lead. But everything changed when it goes in. All-time great players make great shots, that’s what happens.”

The Warriors host Memphis, which defeated San Antonio in Wednesday’s other play-in game, for the eighth seed on Friday. The winner of that game will face top-seeded Utah.

James and Davis were 3-for-19 from the field in the first half before getting back on track. They

combined to go 14-for-22 in the second half.

“We were very lackadaisical in the first half. We were playing hesitant because of the situation. There is a next game, but there is no next game,” Davis said. “We had to remind ourselves to get going and play our style of basketball. We had to find our swagger knowing we were the defending champions.”

The Lakers trailed by 13 at half-time and were down by 12 midway through the third quarter before rallying. They didn’t get their first lead until Kyle Kuzma’s layup 56 seconds into the fourth quarter put them up 81-79.

“This is a bitter pill to swallow. This was our game and we couldn’t get it done,” Golden State coach Steve Kerr said.



BRANDON DILL / AP

Grizzlies guard Ja Morant, left, and center Jonas Valanciunas react during the team's 100-96 play-in defeat of San Antonio on Wednesday in Memphis.

Grizzlies end Spurs' season, advance

By TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The young Memphis Grizzlies finally have a play-in victory to their credit, yet they’re nowhere near satisfied.

Dillon Brooks scored eight of his 24 points in the fourth quarter to put Memphis ahead to stay and the Grizzlies eliminated the San Antonio Spurs 100-96 on Wednesday night in the first Western Conference play-in game.

“It feels good, but I mean we’re not in the playoffs yet,” Memphis guard Ja Morant said. “Just have to turn the page.”

The Grizzlies will play at Golden State on Friday night for the No. 8 seed and a first-round series starting Sunday against top-seeded Utah. The Los Angeles Lakers beat the Warriors 103-100 on Wednesday night to

take the No. 7 seed and a first-round spot against Phoenix.

Memphis is trying to snap a skid of three straight seasons without a postseason berth with last season ending with a loss to Portland in the NBA’s first play-in game.

“We still have one more in front of us,” Grizzlies center Jonas Valanciunas said. “Really important. The same importance as tonight. It’s going to be do or die. That’s how we build our confidence. That’s how we build our experience.”

Valanciunas had a season-high 23 rebounds and 23 points for Memphis. Morant added 20 points and six assists. Jaren Jackson Jr. had 10 points.

DeMar DeRozan and Rudy Gay each scored 20 points as the Spurs lost their fifth straight. Dejounte Murray had his fifth triple-double with 10 points, 13 rebounds and

11 assists. Keldon Johnson added 11 and Jacob Poeltl 10.

San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said he told his team he didn’t know if he’s ever been more proud of a team that just doesn’t quit.

“No matter what the mistakes, no matter what the circumstances are, they really fight,” Popovich said. “That’s a good base. So, I’m really proud of the way they conducted themselves and played to win.”

The Spurs last led 83-81 on Johnson’s three with 6:55 left. Brooks started his scoring spurt with the Grizzlies trailing 80-79, and his driving 5-footer with 5:57 to go put Memphis ahead to stay at 85-83.

“We put ourselves in a hole early, but we fought all the way back, and had the game,” DeRozan said. “Let a couple of possessions slip away from us, and that kind of hurt us.”

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Closing stretch will test players' approach

By BEN NUCKOLS

Associated Press

KIAWAH ISLAND, S.C. — Lee Westwood stood on the back tee of the par-3 17th hole at the Ocean Course and ripped a low 3-iron into the two-club wind barreling down the Kiawah Island coastline. The ball cleared the water in front of the green with a few yards to spare and settled 20 yards short of the putting surface.

"I don't have a club for that. I'm not hitting 3-wood into it," Westwood said.

The five-hole closing stretch of architect Pete Dye's Ocean Course is forcing players in the PGA Championship to pull out the longest clubs in the bag in situations when they're rarely needed — approach shots into par 3s and 4s.

The holes are long — No. 14, 238 yards, par 3; 15, 466 yards, par 4; 16, 608 yards, par 5; 17, 223 yards, par 3; 18, 505 yards, par 4 — but the raw distance isn't the biggest problem. It's the east wind that's been blowing a consistent 10-20 mph and isn't forecast to change direction until Saturday at the earliest.



DAVID J. PHILLIP / AP

Justin Rose tees off on the 15th hole during a practice round at the PGA Championship on Wednesday. Wind on the closing five holes of the course has players hitting different clubs to the green than usual.

Rory McIlroy made the closing stretch irrelevant when he romped to an eight-shot victory nine years ago in the previous PGA Championship at Kiawah Island. But that event was played in August, when it was softer, more humid and — except for the second round — less windy.

"If the wind blows this way for the rest of the week, it's going to be a battle to just get in the clubhouse," Adam Scott said. "One

that comes to mind of just surviving was when Geoff Ogilvy won the U.S. Open. He was the only guy to play the last four holes in par that day, I believe, and it could be something similar for anybody kind of near the lead."

Each nine on the Ocean Course has an out-and-back routing along the coastline. With the wind blowing east, most holes are either straight downwind or straight into the wind.

Players get eight downwind holes before they ascend a dune at the western edge of the property to the tiny back tee box on 14. The severe, elevated green has been described as a tortoise shell, a camel's back or, perhaps most accurately, an upside-down saucer.

Cameron Champ, Sam Horsfield, Justin Rose and Willett — all pupils of swing coach Sean Foley — opted to use a forward tee for their money game on Wednesday. Champ, one of the longest hitters in golf, had played the back tee a day earlier.

"Smoked a 3-wood," he recalled. "Barely got to the front."

"And that 3-wood is about a 300-yard carry," Foley said. "So [Tuesday] it was playing 300 yards into the wind."

The 15th would be a relatively benign par 4 in neutral or helping wind but becomes a stern test into the wind. The par-5 16th presents another situation the world's best players aren't accustomed to. They can rip driver, rip 3-wood and still have a full swing for their third shots.

"When you stand on 16 and it's 608 (yards), it's playing like 750," Scott said. "It's probably numbers that we'll never see on golf courses. But that's what it's playing like."

Champ's mood appeared dour by the time he reached the 17th late Tuesday afternoon. He hit a low hook with a long iron that splashed just short of the green. Then he pulled a hybrid from his bag and muttered, "This ain't getting there." He pushed it to the right — no chance. Another splash.

Until the wind changes, the challenge is just reaching the green. Joel Dahmen led his practice-round foursome to the back tee on 14 during their money game on Wednesday, but when he got there, he pulled the headcover off his 3-wood with a resigned look on his face.

"I just don't have a club. I can't hit my hybrid that far into the wind and 3-wood's too much," Dahmen said, "so I don't know what I'm supposed to do."

He hit the 3-wood. It wasn't too much.

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Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	26	18	.591	—
Tampa Bay	25	19	.568	1
Toronto	23	18	.561	1½
New York	24	19	.558	1½
Baltimore	17	25	.405	8
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	26	16	.619	—
Cleveland	23	18	.561	2½
Kansas City	20	22	.476	6
Detroit	17	26	.395	9½
Minnesota	14	27	.341	11½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oakland	26	18	.591	—
Houston	25	18	.581	½
Seattle	21	23	.477	5
Los Angeles	18	24	.429	7
Texas	19	26	.422	7½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	20	17	.541	—
Philadelphia	22	21	.512	1
Atlanta	20	23	.465	3
Miami	19	23	.452	3½
Washington	17	22	.436	4
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
St. Louis	25	18	.581	—
Chicago	21	21	.500	3½
Milwaukee	21	22	.488	4
Cincinnati	19	22	.463	5
Pittsburgh	17	25	.405	7½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	27	16	.628	—
San Diego	27	17	.614	½
Los Angeles	25	18	.581	2
Arizona	18	26	.409	9½
Colorado	15	29	.341	12½
Wednesday's games				
Chicago White Sox 2, Minnesota 1 Tampa Bay 9, Baltimore 7 N.Y. Yankees 2, Texas 0 Boston 7, Toronto 3 Cleveland 3, L.A. Angels 2 Kansas City 6, Milwaukee 4 Houston 8, Oakland 1 Detroit 6, Seattle 2 San Diego 3, Colorado 0 San Francisco 4, Cincinnati 0 Miami 3, Philadelphia 1 Atlanta 5, N.Y. Mets 4 Washington 4, Chicago Cubs 3 St. Louis 8, Pittsburgh 5 L.A. Dodgers 4, Arizona 2				
Thursday's games				
Tampa Bay at Baltimore N.Y. Yankees at Texas Houston at Oakland Minnesota at L.A. Angels, Game. 2 Boston at Toronto San Francisco at Cincinnati Washington at Chicago Cubs Miami at Philadelphia Pittsburgh at Atlanta Arizona at L.A. Dodgers				
Friday's games				
Baltimore (López 1-4) at Washington Boston (Pérez 1-2) at Philadelphia (Nola 3-3) Chicago White Sox (Rodón 5-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Montgomery 2-1) Minnesota (Maeda 2-2) at Cleveland (McKenzie 1-2) Tampa Bay (Glasnow 4-2) at Toronto Houston (Ivey 0-0) at Texas (Gibson 3-0) Detroit (Ureña 1-4) at Kansas City (Minor 3-2) Oakland (Kaprielian 1-0) at L.A. Angels (Quintana 0-3) Seattle (Flexen 4-1) at San Diego (Pad- dack 1-3) Milwaukee (Houser 3-4) at Cincinnati (Hoffman 2-3) N.Y. Mets (TBD) at Miami (López 1-3) Pittsburgh (Anderson 3-3) at Atlanta (Anderson 3-1) Chicago Cubs (Hendricks 3-4) at St. Louis (Martínez 3-4) Arizona (Weaver 2-3) at Colorado (Már- quez 2-4) L.A. Dodgers (Bauer 4-2) at San Francis- co (Wood 5-0)				
Saturday's games				
Chicago White Sox at N.Y. Yankees Baltimore at Washington Houston at Texas Detroit at Kansas City Minnesota at Cleveland Boston at Philadelphia Tampa Bay at Toronto Seattle at San Diego Oakland at L.A. Angels Arizona at Colorado Milwaukee at Cincinnati N.Y. Mets at Miami Pittsburgh at Atlanta Chicago Cubs at St. Louis L.A. Dodgers at San Francisco				

No-hitter for second straight day



New York starting pitcher Corey Kluber celebrates after the final out of his no-hitter against the Rangers on Wednesday in Arlington, Texas. The Yankees won 2-0.

TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Kluber follows Tigers' Turnbull with gem for Yanks; Rangers' bats silenced for second time this season

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**
Associated Press
ARLINGTON, Texas — Corey Kluber stopped for a moment before his first pitch of the ninth in-

ning. “I had to take a breath after the warmups and calm myself down a little bit,” said the pitcher nick-named Klubot for his robot-like demeanor.

Kluber then finished the sixth no-hitter in the majors this season and second in two nights, leading the New York Yankees over the Texas Rangers 2-0 on Wednesday.

“It was a lot of fun, I think it was a special night,” Kluber said. “I’ve never been part of one, witnessed one, let alone thrown one.”

There have been four no-hitters in a 15-day span. The six total is the most this early in a season.

Kluber came within a four-pitch walk to Charlie Culberson in the third inning of throwing a perfect game.

“I don’t really do too much with what-ifs. Obviously I would’ve like to not walk a guy on four straight pitches,” Kluber said. “That being said, at that point in the game, it’s still 0-0, so my thoughts after that walk were try to get out of the inning without allowing a run.”

The 35-year-old right-hander pitched his gem a night after Detroit right-hander Spencer Turnbull threw one against Seattle,

marking the first no-hitters on consecutive days since 1969, when Cincinnati’s Jim Maloney threw one on April 30 and Houston’s Don Wilson on May 1. There were two no-hitters on June 29, 1990, by the Los Angeles Dodgers’ Fernando Valenzuela and Oakland’s Dave Stewart.

Kluber (4-2) struck out nine. The two-time AL Cy Young Award winner threw 71 of 101 pitches for strikes in his ninth start for the Yankees, lowering his ERA to 2.86 and winning his fourth straight decision.

This was the fifth no-hitter against the Rangers, who also were at home April 9 when San Diego’s Joe Musgrove threw the first no-hitter in Padres history.

“It stinks. It’s baseball. No-hitters happen. There’s been a lot so far this year. Unfortunate for us that we’ve been a part of two of them,” Culberson said. “It just shows you how good these pitchers are, these teams are and what they’re doing.”

The four no-hitters in May are the most in a month since June 1990. It is also the first time three teams have been no-hit twice in one season, with the Rangers joining Cleveland and Seattle.

Given the drama, even Amanda Kluber took a look.

“She doesn’t like to watch too much,” the pitcher said of his wife, “but she turned it on in the last inning to watch the end of it.”

Whiff: Hits have rarely been harder to come by

FROM PAGE 48

Remarkably, there wasn’t a single no-hitter in 1909 and only two in 1907. But there were six in 1908 and five in 1968.

The highest hits per game average since 1900 was in 1930, when it was 10.37 per team. Next were 1925, 1921, 1936 and 1929. There were only two no-hitters combined in those five seasons.

“My instincts tell me the pitching is getting better,” said Cincinnati Reds manager David Bell, whose team produced one of this year’s no-hitters when Miley threw his May 7. “The hitting is too, but I do think that the way the arms are, the velocity the pitchers are throwing, the ability to spin the ball incredibly well, it’s just a tough combination. And you get a guy on a good night when he’s locked in, the scouting reports have gotten more exact, and it can make for a tough night.”

One of the more unusual stretches for no-hitters came between 1988 and 1992. During that

5

Total no-hitters thrown between 2002-2006. In 2006, MLB teams averaged 9.28 hits per game, a number which has fallen steadily in the years since, with an according rise in the number of no-hitters. Entering Wednesday, the average game included 7.83 hits per team. Only one season has ended with a lower figure — 1908, which saw six no-hitters thrown as teams scratched out just 7.75 hits per game.

SOURCE: Associated Press

stretch, the hits per game numbers stayed between 8.62 and 8.75 every season, but the number of no-hitters varied widely. There was one in 1988, followed by zero in 1989, then seven each in 1990 and 1991. Then it was back to just one in 1992.

From 2002-2006, there were only five no-hitters. In that 2006 season, teams averaged 9.28 hits per game. That number has steadily decreased since then, and no-hit-

ters have been more common. There were seven each in 2012 and 2015.

“Over the last few years, everybody’s trying to hit homers,” Astros manager Dusty Baker said. “And if you hit homers, you’re going to foul back pitches, you’re going to swing and miss on balls, there’s very little bunting going on for hits. The unorthodox defenses take away a lot of hits up the middle.”

In this era of hard-throwing relievers and fewer complete games, you might expect more combined no-hitters, but each one this has been a solo effort.

“I think the surprising thing is that, you know, maybe in the age of pitchers not going 100 pitches, that they’re actually being able to finish these games off,” Woodward said. “Because typically nowadays it’s hard for a guy to get through six innings with less than 100 pitches.”

The number of strikeouts hasn’t really been out of the ordinary in

these no-hitters, and that might be part of the reason pitch counts weren’t out of control. The average number of strikeouts in this year’s no-hitters had been 9.2 through Turnbull’s masterpiece against the Mariners. Carlos Rodón of the Chicago White Sox had only seven in his no-hitter against Cleveland last month.

Chapman insists more players are trying to hit home runs since the base hits have become so tough to come by.

“There’s not many singles left,” he said. “So I think that’s why you see guys trying to swing for more power because most of the hits are over the outfielder’s head or over the fence, which leads to bigger swings and more swings and mis-es. I think that’s kind of the way the game’s trending right now.”

Perhaps the trend will subside a bit, but as long as hits are this hard to come by, a no-hitter will be a constant possibility. The question is whether these feats will still draw as much attention.

SPORTS



Still the King

LeBron's late three gives Lakers play-in win over Warriors » **Page 45**

MLB

The big whiff



Amid soaring strikeouts and plummeting averages, no-hitters almost seem routine

BY NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

Sometimes, the simplest explanation is the valid one: The number of hits per game in the major leagues has plummeted, so no-hitters are on the rise. Even so, this season has been a bit extreme.

Yankees right-hander Corey Kluber pitched the majors' sixth no-hitter Wednesday against the Rangers, just a night after Spencer Turnbull's gem, and 2021 is on pace to obliterate the modern record of seven no-hitters in a season. Cleveland, Seattle and Texas have already been no-hit twice, and of the 21 complete games that have been pitched this season, more than a quarter of them have been no-hitters.

"It's definitely getting harder to hit. The pitchers are only getting better and I think their plans of attack against hitters are getting better," Oakland Athletics third baseman Matt Chapman said Wednesday. "The shifts play a big part in that as well. It seems like there's not many hits out there. The way guys pitch, there's a lot of power arms and guys have high spin rates and they don't leave the ball over the middle of plate very often."

Of the six pitchers who have thrown one, only three have



NO-NO NO. 6

Yankees' Kluber latest to throw no-hitter; Second time Rangers' bats silenced this season

Page 47

been All-Stars — Kluber three times, John Means in 2019 and Wade Miley back in 2012. It's enough to make these no-hitters feel almost ... routine?

"I think it's still really hard," said Texas manager Chris Woodward, who was on the losing end when Joe Musgrove threw the first no-hitter in San Diego Padres history last month then again Wednesday. "It's one of the hardest things to do in sports. Any time it's happening, any game I'm watching ... if a guy has a no-hitter through four, I'm always kind of like intrigued."

It's hard to separate all these no-hitters from the context of what baseball looks like in 2021. Entering Wednesday, the average game included 7.83 hits per team. Only one season has ended with a lower figure, according to SportRadar. That was 1908, during the dead ball era. The other seasons when hits were the scarcest were 1968 — the famous "Year of the Pitcher" — and two more dead ball seasons, 1909 and 1907.

SEE WHIFF ON PAGE 47

The Cleveland Indians' Austin Hedges strikes out swinging against the Mariners on Sunday in Seattle. Batters across MLB are struggling at the plate this season, and the results are eye-popping — six no-hitters, including Wednesday's by the Yankees' Corey Kluber, a pace which all but guarantees that the all-time season record of seven will be broken.

ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

Tebow, Jags make it official, agree to deal » NFL, Page 41

