WASHINGTON — More than 2.4 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week in the latest wave of layoffs from the viral outbreak that triggered widespread business shutdowns two months ago and sent the economy into a deep recession.

The Labor Department said Thursday another 2.2 million people sought aid under a new federal program for self-employed, contractor and gig workers, who are now eligible for jobless aid for the first time, up from 850,000 in the previous week.

These figures aren’t adjusted for seasonal variations, so the government doesn’t include them in the overall number of applications.

Another 2.4 million apply for US jobless aid; total rises to nearly 39 million since virus hit

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt has returned to sea after spending nearly two months sidelined at Guam to battle a coronavirus outbreak on board, the Navy announced Thursday.

The carrier left Naval Base Guam and entered the Philippine Sea on Thursday to conduct carrier qualification flights for Carrier Air Wing 11, a statement said.

“It feels great to be back at sea,” Rear Adm. Stu Baker, commander of Carrier Strike Group 9, said in the statement. “Getting Theodore Roosevelt and Carrier Air Wing 11 one step closer to returning to their mission in the Indo-Pacific is a great achievement for the crew.”

SEE BACK ON PAGE 6

BY CAITLIN DOORBOS
Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt departs Apra Harbor at Naval Base Guam on Thursday following an extended visit amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ship went out to sea for training after nearly two months sidelined at the pier with a coronavirus outbreak onboard.

JORDAN E. GILBERT, U.S. MARINE CORPS

Another 2.4 million apply for US jobless aid; total rises to nearly 39 million since virus hit

BY CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than 2.4 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week in the latest wave of layoffs from the viral outbreak that triggered widespread business shutdowns two months ago and sent the economy into a deep recession.

Roughly 38.6 million people have now filed for jobless aid since the coronavirus forced millions of businesses to close their doors and shrink their workforces, the Labor Department said Thursday.

Another 2.2 million people sought aid under a new federal program for self-employed, contractor and gig workers, who are now eligible for jobless aid for the first time, up from 850,000 in the previous week. These figures aren’t adjusted for seasonal variations, so the government doesn’t include them in the overall number of applications.

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EUROPE GAS PRICES

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Change in price +2.0 cents +3.0 cents +4.0 cents --
Okinawa $1.939** $2.349 $2.619 --
Change in price +2.0 cents -- +4.0 cents -1.0 cents
South Korea $1.959 -- $2.639 $2.469

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

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* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of May 22-28

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INTEREST RATES

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Percentage of women up slightly since ’04

GAO study also finds that female troops are more likely to leave service early

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Women make up a higher percentage of U.S. armed forces, but female troops are 28% more likely than men to leave the military early, the Government Accountability Office found in a study released Tuesday.

The percentage of women serving in the military services rose slightly from 15.1% of the active-duty force in 2004 to 16.5% in 2018, the GAO found. The Congress-mandated study looked at personnel data from the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps for the 15-year period that ended in 2018, the most recent year for which they had complete data.

The report’s authors found a variety of reasons that women are significantly more likely to leave the military earlier than their male counterparts, largely based on family-related and cultural issues, which the authors encouraged the Pentagon to address.

Defense Department officials have for years indicated publicly that increasing female recruitment and retention rates are important to ensure diversity within the ranks, especially since the Pentagon opened all jobs and units, including combat frontline combat positions, to women in 2015. But the GAO found service leaders had not implemented plans with “goals, performance measures and timeframes” that would aid in assessing female recruiting and retention.

Pentagon officials stated that retention goals have, in the past, been misconstrued as quotas and, as such, the department does not set goals or targets for gender,” the GAO report states. “However, goals are not quotas and can help guide continued improvement. Without DOD guidance and service plans with goals, performance measures, and timeframes to monitor female recruitment and retention efforts, DOD may continue to miss opportunities to recruit and retain a valuable segment for its active-duty force.”

As a result of its analysis, the GAO recommended the four military departments implement such plans with “clearly defined goals” to monitor and improve female retention and recruiting. It also recommended the secretary of defense and his personnel chief provide the services clear guidance on the issue in the Pentagon’s forthcoming diversity and inclusion strategic plan due in the fall.

Pentagon officials told the GAO that they agreed with those recommendations, according to the authors.

The report’s authors noted the lower retention rates among female troops has led to an even smaller percentage of women serving within the highest ranks of the military. They also found women reported six primary factors for their decision to leave the service before retirement eligibility, which included problems they perceived within the military’s organizational culture such as a lack of female mentors.

“Study participants also noted that they often faced sexism and the existence of an ‘old boys’ network,’ especially in career fields dominated by males,” the GAO authors wrote. “As such, these female service members felt they had to work harder to prove themselves and also felt they were sometimes not treated equally because they were female.”

Other factors that the GAO concluded largely led women to leave the military included uncertain work schedules, impacts of deployments on their family lives, family planning issues such as pregnancy, and issues with dependent care such as limited day care hours and long waitlists for child care services.

Women also listed sexual assault as a deciding factor for them to leave the military, the GAO reported. The authors noted female veterans expressed discouragement based on the occurrences of sexual assault and the military’s handling of sexual assault investigations.

“For example, two females stated that the perpetrator was not punished, and another woman cited the lack of support from other service members as contributing to their decisions to separate from the military,” the authors wrote.

Military officials have said for years that they take allegations of sexual assault seriously and are taking steps to address the problem within its ranks. A Pentagon report on sexual assault and harassment in the military released in April stated the DOD had made some cultural improvements to its handling of sexual assault and harassment.

Nonetheless, the Pentagon reported the military saw 7,825 sexual assault reports among its ranks in 2019, a 3% increase from those reported during 2018.

Overall, the GAO’s data showed the percentage of women among U.S. troops dropped consistently in the early years that the agency studied, from 15.1% in 2004 to 14.4% in 2009 before increasing slightly every year to reach 16.5 percent in 2018.

However, more women were actually serving in 2004, when a much larger military was conducting major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. DOD reported 226,342 female service members in 2004 and 232,063 in 2018.

During the 15 years that the GAO studied, the agency found the Air Force consistently reported the highest percentage of female troops ranging from 14.4% of its force in 2009, its lowest percentage during the period analyzed, to a 2018 high of 16.5%. The Marine Corps consistently reported the lowest percentage of women among its ranks, ranging from a low of 6.1% in 2004 to a high in 2018 of 8.6%.

The Navy saw the largest jump in the percent of women within its ranks. It reported women made up 14.7% of its force in 2004, 2005 and 2006 before consistently increasing its percentage of female sailors to a high of 19.6% in 2018.

The Army, meanwhile, reported a reduction in the percentage of women in its service during the same time. In 2018, 15.1% of the active-duty Army were female soldiers, down from 15.3% in 2004. The Army reported its lowest percentages of female soldiers at 13.6% in 2012.

Fort Hood soldier found shot dead, vehicle found burning

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — A Fort Hood soldier was found shot dead Monday morning on a residential street in the small town of Harker Heights minutes before police received a call about his vehicle burning miles away just outside the central Texas Army base, according to local law enforcement and service officials.

Pfc. Brandon Scott Rosecrans, 27, was identified Tuesday as the victim by the Harker Heights Police Department, which is now investigating his death as a murder according to a news release from Police Chief Phillip Gadd.

Police received a call at 10:17 a.m. Monday about a body lying on the side of the road in the 2100 block of Fuller Lane, said Lawrence Stewart, a police spokesman.

The area is about 12 miles southeast of Fort Hood.

At 10:30 a.m. Monday, the Harker Heights Fire Department responded to a call about a burning vehicle in the 2500 block of Jubilation Drive, Stewart said.

It is a residential street about 4 miles from Fuller Lane.

Police said they were able to identify Rosecrans and determine he died from a gunshot wound.

The burning vehicle, an orange 2016 Jeep Renegade, belonged to Rosecrans, according to the news release from police that indicated Rosecrans was found inside his vehicle.

No arrests have been made as of Thursday. The town’s fire marshal is conducting an arson investigation and Army Criminal Investigation Command is investigating.

Rosecrans, who is from Kimberling City, Mo., entered the Army in May 2018 as a quartermaster and chemical equipment repairer and has been assigned to the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division since November 2018, according to a news release from Fort Hood.
US envoy working to revive US-Taliban deal

WAR ON TERRORISM

Advocates building case for ISIS crimes against Yazidis

BY SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

QASR AL-MIHRAB, Iraq — It was clear he was in charge when he entered the wedding hall, turned slave pen in the Iraqi city of Mosul, where dozens of Yazidi women and girls huddled on the floor, newly abducted by Islamic State militants.

They beat him at the slightest sign of resistance. At one point, he dragged a girl away, picking her up for himself, a Yazidi woman — who was 14 when the incident occurred in 2014 — recounted to The Associated Press.

This was Hajji Abdullah, a religious judge and a key architect of the ISIS slave system. He later became deputy to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Many believe he is the late al-Baghdadi’s successor, identified by the pseudonym Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qayrawy. The U.S. has a $5 million bounty on his head.

Investigators with the Commission for International Justice and Accountability are amassing evidence, hoping to prosecute ISIS figures for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide including Hajji Abdullah.

William Wingate, executive director and founder of CLJA, said fighters didn’t just decide to enslave and rape Yazidi women; it was a carefully executed plan by the group’s leadership.

“They put all of the apparatus of their so-called state behind carrying it out in practice,” he said. “And in doing so, they were going to go to the xác to the leaders of the ISIS group by ensuring there were no more Yazidi children born.”

The investigators have interviewed some of their findings with AP, say that through ISIS documents and interviews with survivors and insiders, they have identified 49 ISIS figures who built and managed the slave trade, and nearly 170 slave owners.

The AP interviewed former slaves, rescuers and imprisoned militants to build a picture of how slavery became central to ISIS structure. The group’s “cabinet” constructed the slave system, security agencies enforced it, and Islamic courts supervised it. Still, it devolved into a free-for-all with fighters enriching themselves — selling women amongst themselves and back to their families.

CLJA aims to build cases so suspects can be prosecuted for crimes against humanity or genocide, not only charges of material support or membership in a terrorist group.

In the first prosecution on behalf of a Yazidi victim, a German court brought an Iraqi to trial for enslaving a Yazidi woman and her 5-year-old, who was chained and left to die of thirst. U.N. investigators say they have collected evidence from Iraq, including 2 million call record, that can strengthen cases against perpetrators of crimes against the Yazidis.

ISIS launched its attack on the heartland of the Yazidi community at the foot of Sinjar Mountain in August 2014. The fighters killed hundreds and abducted 6,417, more than half of them women and children of the captured adult men were likely killed.

Initially, the women and children were handed out as gifts to fighters who took part in the offensive. Many fighters showed a receipt from Hajji Abdullah confirming their participation so they could claim their slave, former captives and CLJA said.

The remaining women blamed ISIS for selling Yazidis to “commoners” — for any senior figure to own slaves, a sign even top officials were abusing the process.

Laila Taloo’s 2½-year ordeal in captivity underscores how ISIS members continually ignored the rules.

“They explained everything as permissible. They called it Islamic law, the law of the jungle,” she said. Taloo, who was owned by eight men. After Taloo, her husband, young son and newborn daughter were abducted in 2014, she and her husband were forced to convert to Islam, which should have spared them from being enslaved or killed.

Conversion meant nothing. Eventually the men who converted were massacred, and Taloo and the other women enslaved.

“What is this all for? They never had a second thought about killing or slaughtering or taking women,” she said.

Despite rules mandating sales through courts, Taloo was thrown into a world of informal slave markets run out of homes. One of her owners, an Iraqi surgeon, had her dress up and put on makeup so four Saudi men could marry her. Another owner, an Islamic court judge, had her dress up and put on makeup so four Saudi men could marry her. Another owner, an Islamic court judge, had her dress up and put on makeup so four Saudi men could marry her.

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Taloo finally escaped along with her children and sister-in-law, according to a report from The Associated Press.

Some 3,500 slaves have been freed from ISIS’s clutches in recent years, most ravaged by their experiences. More than 3,500 Yazidis remain unaccounted for, including some 1,300 women and children, according to the Yazidi abductees office in Iraq’s Kurdish autonomous region.
Impossible Burger coming to Marine menus on Okinawa

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Marine dining facilities across Okinawa are adding the Impossible Burger, a plant-based alternative to ground beef, to their food lines.

Marines and sailors taste-tested the burger May 13 at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Gunny Sgt. Maurice Toole, the subsistence chief for Marine Corps Installations Pacific, told Stars and Stripes on Thursday. He said the Impossible Burger will be just one of the plant-based items the Marine Corps plans to roll out in its dining facilities on Okinawa this fall.

“We like to get as much input as we can from Marines: What new things do they want to see, and what things they want to get rid of?” Toole said. “Lots of Marines are asking for healthier. And we are looking to have plant-based items represented in every area we serve the mainline, specialty items and the snack or ‘fast-food’ line.”

“Tooled said his team initially wanted to add a black-bean or other vegetarian burger to the snack line but changed its mind after the vendor offered the Impossible Burger, which had a satisfying texture and appearance. And it was also a great burger,” said Lance Cpl. Alexander Skelton, an air support operations officer with 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, in a Marine Corps press release May 13. “It’s nice to see the [mess hall] committed to giving more choice to Marines with different diets and beliefs.”

The test was sprung on patrons out of the blue to avoid preconceived notions about plant-based meat, Toole said. It was added to the mainline, where traditional entrees are offered, and the mainline, specialty items and the snack or ‘fast-food’ line.

“We wanted to shock the audience,” he said. “We knew if we caught everyone off guard, that we would get better real-time reactions. Even some of the people who were not interested initially tried it and liked it.”

A menu review board last year identified Marines’ desire for meatless protein options.

Impossible Burger, made of soy and potato protein, was approved by the Corps’ lead dietician, who must review all new menu items before they are pushed out to troops, Toole said. The dietician will also review all the plant-based options that will be made available to Okinawa Marines in the future.

Tooled’s team will introduce the burger to the snack line first as part of the Marine Corps Fuel-to-Fight initiative. The service wants Marines to see a trip to the mess hall as a way to refuel their bodies and get healthier.

The Impossible Burger and other plant-based meat alternatives are popular at stateside restaurants and have slowly made their way to troops overseas. The dining facilities on Okinawa are the first in Japan to offer the item to troops on base.

For now, it will only be available at Marine Corps facilities on Okinawa, but other Marine facilities on Hawaii and elsewhere in Japan can offer the item if they choose, Toole said.

Most base residents overseas who don’t eat at dining facilities will have to wait a while longer for meatless options on restaurant menus.

Burger King’s popular Impossible Whopper, Qdoba’s meatless burritos and Dunkin’s meat-free breakfast sausage are sold on many Army, Air Force and Navy bases in the United States. AAFES officials have said. Walhburgers on Ramstein Air Base in Germany offers the Beyond plant-based burger as well.

VA pushes back on reported Agent Orange use on Guam

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The Department of Veterans Affairs is pushing back against a recent report that says veterans who served on Guam between 1962 and 1975 were likely exposed to the toxic herbicide Agent Orange.

The report — released May 11, by the National Veterans Legal Services Program and the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School — says those veterans meet the legal standard for exposure and may have valid claims to service-related disabilities.

The VA disputed the report’s findings in an email to Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

“There is no evidence agent orange was ever used on Guam,” wrote VA press secretary Christina Noel.

She said the report’s authors failed to consider a 2018 Government Accountability Office report and a recent Department of Defense review on the subject.

“GAO reviewed DoD documents, other government records, and interviewed Veterans alleging Agent Orange exposure and concluded that there was no evidence of Agent Orange or other tactical herbicides, such as Agents White or Blue, on Guam,” she said.

Investigators found extensive use of approved commercial herbicides on Guam but no evidence of Agent Orange or other tactical herbicides, Noel said.

The VA believes Agent Orange causes several cancers, including leukemia, Hodgkin’s disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma and others, according to its website. The department also recognizes the herbicide as a cause in some cases of diabetes and diseases of the nervous system, skin and heart.

The report by the veterans’ legal program and Yale Law School clinic was based on a review of government, private, archival and oral history evidence of herbicide use on Guam during the Vietnam War.

Guam served as a major base for U.S. air power during the Vietnam War. At the height of bombing operations during Vietnam, three-quarters of all U.S. B-52 aircraft available for operations in Southeast Asia were based on the island.

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BY CAITLIN DOORNBUS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Typically known for frequent port visits, the 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge broke its 48-year-old record of consecutive days underway by remaining at sea to avoid the coronavirus, the Navy said in a statement Thursday.

The amphibious command ship had been at sea for 69 days as of Thursday, passing its previous record of 64 days, which was set during the Vietnam War. The Blue Ridge is the Navy’s oldest operational warship and has been in service for nearly 50 years.

“These times are uniquely challenging for the entire world, but it takes an extremely dedicated crew to maintain this old of a ship at sea for this long,” Blue Ridge commander Capt. Craig Sicola said in the statement.

The 223-year-old USS Constitution is the Navy’s oldest ship, but it does not deploy.

Meanwhile, the Yokosuka-based aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan completed port visits as the Indo-Pacific deployment this week. Its crew completed phased sequestrations before embarking the ship to mitigate the chance of bringing coronavirus-positive sailors on board, the Navy said in a separate statement Thursday.

“The restriction-of-movement period allowed fleet leadership the ability to monitor the health of the force in a controlled facility and build a safe environment for sailors to accomplish assigned missions at sea,” the statement said.

More than 1,000 tons of ordnance, 5,000 crewmembers and more than 60 aircraft were moved aboard the carrier for the deployment, the Navy said.

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt departed Apra Harbor at Naval Base Guam on Thursday following an extended visit to Guam in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

An outbreak among a few Roosevelt sailors in March led to over 1,150 of their shipmates testing positive for the coronavirus.

The Roosevelt returned to sea Thursday with a reduced crew.

As the 7th Fleet’s flagship, the Blue Ridge typically makes more port visits than other ships in the fleet. It visited 11 ports in nine Indo-Pacific nations during its 114-day deployment last spring.

During that deployment, the Blue Ridge hosted more than 5,000 Sailors as it brought foreign navy representatives on board for professional exchanges, the Navy said when the ship returned to Yokosuka last May.

This year, however, the crew had to tweak its plans as the coronavirus — first reported in Wuhan, China, on Dec. 31 — grew from a regional outbreak into a global pandemic as the ship was on sea.

The Blue Ridge’s deployment this year began normally enough. After leaving Yokosuka in January, the crew made stops in Japan, South Korea and Thailand in its first month underway before port visits were canceled in response to the virus’s spread.

Sicola said that while the pandemic cast a shadow on the patrol, the crew “has been amazing.”

“I realize every day how tough it has been, especially for some who lost loved ones or who have families that have endured challenging events during this pandemic,” he said in the statement. “Even through all that, their heads are high and they have taken great pride in Blue Ridge’s historic underway during her 50th year of service.”

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Back: Roosevelt crew continues to take precautions upon returning to sea

FROM FRONT PAGE

To maintain social distancing on board, only crewmembers essential to the carrier flight qualifications set sail with the ship. The Navy in a statement Monday said that the remaining sailors would stay on Guam to support crewmembers still in quarantine.

“We are scaling our manning on board based on our mission requirement,” Roosevelt commander Capt. Carlos Sardiello said in the Thursday statement. “Carrier qualification requires fewer personnel than other missions, and bringing fewer sailors on board will enable enhanced social distancing while underway.”

After qualification flights end, the remainder of the crew will re-embark, according to the Monday statement.

The Roosevelt had been deployed to the Western Pacific when it diverted to Guam on March 26 after several of its sailors tested positive for the coronavirus. Since then, more than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors have tested positive for the virus, according to the Navy.

The carrier has been away from its San Diego homeport since it left for patrol on Jan. 17.

As many as 13 sailors from the Roosevelt have tested positive for the virus a second time, according to The Associated Press. Those sailors and a number of others who had contact with them were removed from the ship.

Most of the 4,800-person crew disembarked and were isolated last month as the carrier was sanitized. The Navy began moving sailors back aboard the Roosevelt on April 29 after all crew members were tested for the virus.

The carrier took its first steps toward redeploying Sunday when sailors began a simulation called a “fast cruise” while moored at Naval Base Guam.

During a fast cruise, typically one of the final steps before a Navy vessel sets sail, crews simulate normal underway conditions while testing the critical systems required to sustain the ship during its upcoming underway operations,” the Navy said in the Monday statement.

During the fast cruise, the crew also practiced new measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus. They included adjusted meal hours, minimizing in-person meetings, sanitizing, wearing masks and “medical surveillance of 100% of the crew,” according to the Thursday statement.

Sardiello told CBS News on May 5 that crewmembers still in quarantine would be left behind when the ship steamed back to sea.

Sardiello took over for Capt. Brett Crozier, the carrier’s former commander, when then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly removed Crozier from command in April.

A letter Crozier had written Navy high-ups pleading for help for his crew was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle and picked up by worldwide media.

“The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating,” Crozier wrote March 30. “We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die.”

A report on the handling of the outbreak is due to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday next week. Crozier’s removal prompted an inquiry into the situation, which led Gilday to order the follow-on investigation.

Modly received backlash from sailors and lawmakers for removing Crozier. Video of thousands of Roosevelt sailors chanting Crozier’s name as he walked off the carrier for the last time flooded social media, and members of Congress released messages of support for Crozier.

Modly resigned a week after removing Crozier when videos of his speech to the Roosevelt’s crew criticizing the former skipper and calling him “stupid” was leaked to the public.

The investigation, due to Gilday by Wednesday, will “provide a more robust documentation of events and a fuller consideration of the circumstances surrounding the matter,” Gilday’s statement said last month.

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Air Force planes fly over Tokyo during Samurai Surge drill

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — C-130J Super Hercules tactical airlifters and CV-22 Osprey tiltrotors were paired up Monday for a launch of aircraft Thursday from the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo.

The Samurai Surge drill, which took place in 2018, involved nine of the 374th Airlift Wing’s 14 Super Hercules and two of five Ospreys stationed at Yokota, as well four UH-1 Huey helicopters and three C-12 transports.

“...a demonstration to the Japanese government and the Indo-Pacific Command that we are still ready to do a full contingency or humanitarian response despite COVID-19 and poor weather,” the wing’s vice commander, Col. Jason Mills, said shortly before the aircraft launched under grey skies with light rain falling.

Flying so many Super Hercules at one time required coordination between the 353rd Special Operations Group out of Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, and Yokota’s 374th Operations Group, he said.

The surge was supposed to involve the first formation or “inter-fly” operation between the two aircraft types since the Osprey arrived at Yokota in October 2018, Mills said. The Super Hercules debuted at the base in March 2019.

The plan was for the aircraft to fly in formation over Tokyo Bay, but clouds and rain meant that they stayed closer to home and plans for tactical air-drop training over the base were canceled, according to officials.

The surge focused on the wing’s operations and maintenance groups with support from the combat mobility flight and the logistics readiness squadron refueling aircraft and transporting crews. Medical and wing staff were also involved, making sure 60 or so fliers and hundreds of maintainers were medically ready to do their jobs, Mills said.

“To see everything up in the air at the same time was a big deal,” said Master Sgt. David Arnold, 31, a C-130 production superintendent with the 374th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

The maintainers were responsible for making sure that the aircraft were ready to fly and responding to last-minute mechanical issues. A crew spent about 30 minutes fixing a glitch in one plane’s de-icing system before it could take off, he said.

The only time that Arnold had seen so many aircraft take off was during a typhoon evacuation, which was staggered rather than all at once, he said.

Rapidly launching so many aircraft required planning and coordination that started a week-and-a-half ago. Such an operation probably wouldn’t happen even during a war or disaster, Mills said.

“It would be rare to launch all the aircraft at once,” he said.

A mass launch would, however, happen if Yokota was attacked by enemy missiles, he said. It’s something that defense experts have warned of, citing Chinese and North Korean threats.

 attendance at any activity is not mandatory, he wrote.

“These optional activities will vary by school and meet the guidance of installation commanders and USFK measures for health and safety,” Arrington wrote.

DODA schools in South Korea closed Feb. 23 due to the pandemic and started online instruction three days later. Graduation ceremonies are planned as virtual events as well. The school year is scheduled to end June 9.

“In our hope that these activities will provide some closure for students and parents who have requested opportunities to return to the school before the end of the year,” Arrington wrote.

A CV-22 Osprey taxis during an elephant walk at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Thursday.

Security airmen help battle blaze outside Osan Air Base in S. Korea

BY MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — A team of airmen and South Korean soldiers on a routine patrol outside Osan became impromptu firefighters when they arrived first at a burning blanket shop May 15.

Three airmen from 51st Fighter Wing security forces and two soldiers of the Korean Augmentation Unit to the U.S. Army, or KA-TUSA, searched the burning, three-story shop for anyone still inside, said Staff Sgt. Sebastian Borges. Finding the place empty, he and his team attacked the fire with extinguishers and kept onlookers at a safe distance until city firefighters arrived.

The fire caused no injuries and left $8,000 in damages, according to Pyeongtaek city officials.

Around 10 p.m., the routine patrol in the Seongtai entertainment district to ensure U.S. Forces Korea personnel were complying with coronavirus regulations quickly turned into a search-and-rescue scenario, said Borges, 24, of Vallejo, Calif.

South Korean civilians waved and shouted to the team, which the KA-TUSAs of the 35th Air Defense Artillery Brigade interpreted as a call for help.

“Luckily, our two KA-TUSAs noticed local nationals yelling about a fire going on,” Borges told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday. “We went down an alley, and at this point it was just smoke.”

A local woman approached the team, “screaming about how there were people inside the building, and she wasn’t sure where they were at,” Borges said.

“At this time, we all looked at each other, we don’t know how or essentially what is going to happen. It’s a cheap fabric shop and everything in there is extremely flammable.”

The team broke through a door in the building, called but heard no response and searched inside for about 20 seconds before dense smoke forced their retreat, he said.

“At that moment, we decided all we could do now is pick up fire extinguishers,” Borges said. “I never responded to something where I have seen a fire ignite this quick.”

The store owner, who was presumed to be on the second floor, eventually appeared from around a corner yelling and in tears, Borges described.

He said that the incident served as a prime example of the importance of having South Korea soldiers serving alongside U.S. troops.

“They are essentially my left hand, and I’m a right-handed man,” Borges said. “Without KA-TUSA, essentially our communication with any Korean, unless they speak English, is zero. When there is a fire going on and there is potentially someone in there and we need to find an answer in a matter of two seconds, these guys have that answer.”

DOD schools in S. Korea can plan farewell activities

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

Students at Defense Department schools in South Korea have requested opportunities to return to the school before the end of the year.

Arrington’s letter came a day before U.S. Forces Korea eased some restrictions on troops aimed at curbing the virus’ spread. USFK also lowered its health condition level for all bases except those in and around Seoul.

Arrington in his letter asked for “patience and flexibility” among students and parents as schools complete their planning.

Attendance at any activity is not mandatory, he wrote.

“These optional activities will vary by school and meet the guidance of installation commanders and USFK measures for health and safety,” Arrington wrote.

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Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
US pulling out of surveillance pact

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration notified international partners on Thursday that it is pulling out of a treaty that permits 30-plus nations to conduct unannounced, observation flights over each other’s territory — overflights set up decades ago to promote trust and aver conflict.

The administration says it wants out of the Open Skies Treaty because Russia is violating the pact, and imagery collected during the flights can be obtained quickly, at less cost from U.S. or commercial satellites. Exiting the treaty, however, is expected to strain relations with Moscow and upset European allies and some members of Congress.

President Dwight Eisenhower first proposed that the United States and the former Soviet Union allow aerial reconnaiss ance flights over each other’s territory in July 1955. At first, Moscow rejected the idea, but President George H.W. Bush re ved it in May 1989, and the treaty entered into force in January 2002. Currently, 34 nations have signed it; Kyrgyzstan has signed but not ratified it yet.

More than 1,500 flights have been conducted under the treaty, aimed at fostering transparency about military activity and helping monitor arms control and other agreements. Each nation in the treaty agrees to make all its territory available for surveil lance flights, yet Russia has re stricted flights over its bases.

Last month, top Democrats on the Foreign Affairs and Armed Services committees in both the House and the Senate wrote to Trump accusing the president of a hasty move that would set the stage for a more dangerous world, given Moscow’s recent actions.

The Pentagon said Thursday’s notification marks a departure from the Obama administration’s decision not to notify Moscow in December 2012, shortly before President Barack Obama announced that the United States would withdraw.”

National Guardsman from SC dies in Afghanistan

By Caitlin M. Kenney
Stars and Stripes

A National Guardsman from South Carolina died in a non-combat incident in Afghanistan this week, the Pentagon said Thursday.

Pfc. L.T. Trevorian Ravon Bow man, 25, from Spartanburg, S.C., died at Bagram Airfield on Tues day, the Defense Department said in a statement.

The Pentagon did not give a cause of death, but a spokeswoman for the South Carolina National Guard told Stars and Stripes by phone that it was not related to the cor onavirus pandemic, which had been spreading rapidly in Afghanistan.

She confirmed that an investi gation has been launched into the death, which is the fourth noncombat fatality of a U.S. ser vice member in Afghanistan and brings to eight the total number of American troops who have died in the country this year.

Bowman was with Company B, 1st Battalion, 167th Infantry, 10th Mountain Regiment, based in Spartanburg, said the South Carolina National Guard.

Bowman’s sister Kierra Bowman said on Facebook that the death had taken the family by surprise.

A fellow soldier with the Face book account “Ryan Bowman’s Army Office” told Stars and Stripes by phone that he and Bowman had talked about the future when they saw each other recently in Kuwait.

“[I]t’s kind of sad to hear he’s reached for new heights in the military,” Rogers’ post said. “Your life was short but you made an impact that will not be forgotten. May he rest in peace, with my heartfelt sympathy to his family.”

Sailor injured in base shooting incident

By Caitlin M. Kenney
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A sailor was injured Thursday in a shooting at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, Navy officials said.

Navy officials said the sailor was “neutralized,” in an incident that shut down the base at about 6:15 a.m. after a report of an active shooter.

National Security Forces respond ed, and one security force mem ber, a female sailor, was injured. She was taken to a local hospital, according to Steve Strickland, a spokesman with Navy Region Southwest.

The sailor is in good condition and was expected to be released Thursday, according to the Navy.
There's a high probability that those layoffs could persist for longer than those that were a function of (businesses) just being closed.

Stephen Stanley
Chief economist, Amherst PIERPOINT

‘Virus Outbreak’

21st TSC in Europe eases restrictions for its troops

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Thousands of personnel in Germany and the Benelux countries can now dine indoors at restaurants and have a barbecue with another family over the Memorial Day weekend after one of Europe’s largest commands eased coronavirus restrictions there.

Service members, civilians and family members affiliated with the Army’s 21st Transportation Command may now dine indoors at local restaurants, where in their host country and stay overnight in a hotel, said an order signed by the command’s top officer, Maj. Gen. Chris Mohan.

But overnight stays more than 10 miles away are not approved, and a service member’s home requires a pass approved by an O-5 equivalent or higher, and cross-border travel is still prohibited, the order said.

“Borders ... are controlled by host nations and what we don’t want is people who are out and about to get trapped on the other side of the border,” Mohan said in a video posted on the 21st TSC’s Facebook page.

The order also allows two families to meet socially, except in Belgium and the Netherlands, which have not yet relaxed coronavirus restrictions on gatherings.

“In the past we’ve heard that we’re coming up on Memorial Day weekend, we’re going to allow family-to-family cookouts,” Mohan said. “If you want to host another family — one family — over at your house for a cookout or vice versa, that is also allowed and appropriate.”

A midnight to 5 a.m. curfew has been lifted, but barricades or block parties are still prohibited, and a number of off-post facilities — including bars, night clubs, hookah lounges, pools, saunas, massage parlors and movie theaters — remain off-limits to service members and their families.

Restrictions on troops in Romania, Greece and Kosovo, who also fall under the 21st TSC, were also relaxed, but to a lesser extent, the command said.

They can now travel up to 100 kilometers from their homes, instead of 30 kilometers or around 19 miles — farther if they’re on orders or have an emergency, a separate order said Wednesday.

A mandatory curfew remains in place but will start at midnight rather than 10 p.m., and run until 5 a.m., it said.

Meanwhile, airmen based at Ramstein Air Base near Kaiserslautern were urged to restrict their Memorial Day travels to within the state of Rhineland-Palatinate.

“Travel can be a high risk activity right now, as some areas within Germany and throughout Europe have higher infection rates than Rheinland-Pfalz,” a post on the base’s Facebook page said.

Anyone wanting to travel outside the state would need approval from their chain of command and could be screened on their return to the base, the post said.

Afghan official: ‘Big tragedy’ should cases mount amid fighting

BY J.P. LAWRENCE Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Afghan government has issued a dire warning about a coronavirus outbreak that has coincided with increased fighting between security forces and Taliban insurgents.

Confirmed coronavirus cases have spiked in recent days, with almost half of a 1,000-person survey in Kabul testing positive recently, Feruzdin Feroz, the country’s health minister, said Wednesday.

“Things keep going like this, we will have a big tragedy in Afghanistan in the months of June, July and August,” said Feroz, who is recovering from his own bout with the virus.

The health minister’s comments came a week after President Ashraf Ghani ordered the country’s military to conduct offensive operations against the Taliban.

Over the last week, more than 3,000 of the country’s roughly 8,000 cases have been confirmed, the World Health Organization said on its website.

If an outbreak emerges in the Afghan military, it could cripple its fight against the insurgents, said Jonathan Schodron, director of the special operations program at CNA, a nonpartisan research organization based in Virginia.

“Coronavirus has the potential to cause significant problems for the [Afghan army],” Schodron said. “The force is already chronically understaffed by 10-15%, so it really can’t afford any more loss of manpower.”

The Afghan military said it has developed plans so that its operations do not lead to an outbreak. They include spraying bases with disinfectant, banning mass gatherings, cutting duty hours and isolating anyone who appears sick, said Fawad Aman, deputy spokesman for the Defense Ministry.

“Afghan who participate in the operations, they will get tested before going out if they have any signs of the virus,” Aman said, adding that no cases have been found in the military so far.

The Afghan military devised COVID-19 prevention plans with help from the U.S. and NATO advisors, who also have distributed masks, gloves and medical supplies worth $18 million, the Lead Inspector General for Operation Freedom’s Sentinel said in a report to Congress this week.

An outbreak would strain Afghanistan’s economy, overburden an already weak health system and potentially force millions of people deeper into poverty, the report said.

Some Afghan troops were less concerned about COVID-19 and more about continuing attacks by the Taliban, who have rejected calls for a humanitarian cease-fire from Kabul and the international community.

Five soldiers in Ghazni province, currently fighting to take back a key road from the Taliban, have died during four weeks of fighting, officials there said.

“There is a virus more dangerous than coronavirus: the Taliban,” said one of the soldiers, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak to reporters.

“I am not afraid of the coronavirus. I am young and strong,” the soldier said, before he was seriously injured in late April after his vehicle hit a roadside bomb. He remained hospitalized Thursday.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.

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Jobless: Analyst says recent layoffs a concern since they come as reopening has begun in US

FROM FRONT PAGE

The continuing stream of heavy job cuts reflects an economy that is sinking into the worst recession since the Great Depression. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated this week that the economy is shrinking at a 38% annual rate in the April-June quarter. That would be by far the worst quarterly contraction on record.

Nearly half of Americans say that their incomes have declined or they live with someone who has lost pay through a job loss or reduced hours, the Census Bureau said in survey data released Wednesday. More than one-fifth of Americans said they had little or no confidence in their ability to pay their next month’s rent or mortgage on time, the survey found.

During April, U.S. employers shed 20 million jobs, eliminating a decade’s worth of job growth in a month. The unemployment rate reached 14.7, the highest since the Depression. Millions of other people who were out of work weren’t counted as unemployed because they didn’t look for a new job.

Since then, 10 million more laid-off workers have applied for jobless benefits. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said in an interview Sunday that the unemployment rate could peak in May or June at 20% to 25%.

Across industries, major employers continue to announce job cuts. Uber said this week that it will lay off 3,000 employees, on top of 3,700 it has already cut, because demand for its ride-hailing services has plummeted. Vice, a TV and digital news organization tailored for younger people, announced 155 layoffs globally last week.

Digital publishers Quartz and the magazine giant Condé Nast, among others, have followed suit, cutting duty hours and disinfecting, banning mass gatherings, cutting duty hours and isolating anyone who appears sick, said Fawad Aman, deputy spokesman for the Defense Ministry.

“Those who participate in the operations, they will get tested before going out if they have any signs of the virus,” Aman said, adding that no cases have been found in the military so far.

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Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.

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Europe’s app tracking plan faces setbacks

Associated Press

LONDON — Doubts were growing on Thursday over whether ambitious plans by European governments to use contact-tracing apps to fight the spread of the coronavirus will be able to be implemented with any real effectiveness soon.

In contrast, there appeared to be some movement forward in the sprint to find a vaccine against COVID-19, bolstered by a $1 billion investment from the U.S. vaccine agency.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged Wednesday to have a “test, track and trace” program for COVID-19 in place by June 1 as part of a strategy to persuade the country that it’s safe to move on to the next stage of easing the lockdown and restarting the economy.

But the government also appeared to backtrack on an earlier pledge to make a smart phone app a pillar of that program.

Security minister James Brokenshire told the BBC on Thursday that he remains “confident” that the tracing system will be in place by June 1, but acknowledged that an app intended to help track the virus was not ready. He suggested “technical issues” were the reason for its failure to be introduced as planned by mid-May.

Experts say that being able to quickly identify people exposed to the virus can help stop the spread of the contagious respiratory illness, but efforts to put apps in place have come up against technical problems and fears of privacy intrusions.

The French government has also been forced to delay deployment of its planned contact-tracing app. Initially expected last week as the country started lifting confinement measures, it won’t be ready before next month due to technical issues and concerns over privacy.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte said Thursday that the country’s contact-tracing app would begin tests “in the coming days.” But he made no mention of whether Italy had hired teams of contact-tracers to actually conduct interviews and get in touch with people who had been in contact with COVID-19 patients, as other European countries have done.

Spain’s Economy Minister, Nadia Calvino, said Wednesday in parliament that Spain is making preparations to test a European Bluetooth-based app at the end of June in the Canary Islands.

But the adoption of the app has taken a back seat to the hiring of old-school human tracers in Spain. The government has said that the technology will be adopted only if it adds value to the tracing efforts that are being deployed by the country’s 17 regional administrations.

Meanwhile, drug maker AstraZeneca said Thursday it has secured the first agreements for 400 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine that is now being tested at the University of Oxford, one of the most advanced projects in the search for a vaccine.

The Anglo-Swedish company reported it had received more than $1 billion from the U.S. Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority for the development, production and delivery of the vaccine, starting this fall.

AstraZeneca CEO Pascal Soriot said the company “will do everything in our power to make this vaccine quickly and widely available.”

Men wearing face masks walk past a coronavirus-related artwork displayed on screens in the window of the Flannels clothing store on Oxford Street in central London on Thursday.

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

USAA drafted an NFL offensive lineman to help honor fallen heroes on Memorial Day.

Ben Garland, a player for the San Francisco 49ers and a captain in the Air National Guard, will help the financial services and insurance company promote their digital wall of honor.

Visitors to PoppyInMemory.com will be able to dedicate a virtual poppy to a hero or loved one who gave their life in battle, Garland said in a phone interview.

“There’s a pandemic going on, so it’s really important to have this digital outlet, to pay tribute to the men and women who have fallen,” Garland said.

The Poppy Wall of Honor is the online version of memorials installed for the last two years by USAA on the National Mall in Washington.

USAA, which has a large military clientele, moved the memorial online this year in response to coronavirus pandemic concerns and prohibitions against large gatherings.

The poppy has come to symbolize war sacrifices since World War I.

Garland was drawn to the project because of three friends from his days at the Air Force Academy who lost their lives in Afghanistan, he said.

Following graduation, Garland served two years on active duty after being drafted by the Denver Broncos. During his seven years in the NFL, he’s played in two Super Bowls, one with the Atlanta Falcons and one with the 49ers.

Garland received the NFL’s Salute to Service award following the 2018 season after going on USO tours, working with ROTC students and veterans with PTSD.

Garland said he has become more creative in his outreach efforts in response to social distancing guidelines.

The digital Poppy Wall of Honor is one way to overcome those limitations, and Garland said he has also set up Zoom meetings between veterans and NFL players.

“We continue to learn from both the NFL and military,” he said, adding, “I’m just blessed to wear the best two uniforms in the world.”

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49er and Air Force guardsman aids digital Memorial Day tribute

Ben Garland, a San Francisco 49ers offensive lineman and captain in the Air National Guard, meets with airmen from Travis Air Force Base, Calif., in August during an event in Santa Clara, Calif.
VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDPUP

Mississippi church suing on restraints destroyed by fire

Associated Press

HOLLY SPRINGS — A church in Mississippi was destroyed by a suspected arson fire about a month after its pastor filed a lawsuit challenging the city of Holly Springs on gathering restrictions amid the coronavirus outbreak.

First Pentecostal Church in Holly Springs, Miss., burned down Wednesday morning, news outlets reported. When investigators from the Marshall County Sheriff’s Office got to the scene, they found graffiti in the church parking lot that read: “Bet you stay home now you hypokrites.”

Jerry Waldrop, pastor of the church, had filed a lawsuit against the city of Holly Springs last month, alleging that police officers had disrupted a church Bible study and Easter service. Holly Springs City Attorney Shirley Byers said that nearly 40 parishioners inside the church, had filed a lawsuit to keep city officials from pre-

Harms of public health. She declined to say if the man had traveled out

for more activity over the Memo-

rial Day weekend, the governor said Wednesday.

A new state order will allow so-

cial gatherings of up to 100 people and retail stores and malls to op-

erate at 75% capacity, Gov. Eric Holcomb said. Gatherings have been limited to 25 people and stores to 50% capacity under the state’s first easing of restrictions that took effect May 4.

Gyms, fitness centers, community pools and campgrounds will also be allowed to open as long as people and for distancing and cleaning.

Holcomb pointed to a decline in the number of COVID-19 infected people hospitalized and the continued availability of intensive care units to treat those most seriously ill.

Kentucky

FRANKFORT — Looking to defuse resistance to wearing masks, Gov. Andy Beshear on Wednesday called it “basic public health guidance” to combat the coronavirus that shouldn’t spark political divisions.

Kentucky’s governor continued to encourage people wearing masks as the state’s economy gradually gets rebooted. Nonessential retail businesses were opened Wednesday, and restaur-

ants can reopen dining rooms Friday.

Other states are encouraging people to wear masks as their economies get restarted to help reduce the spread of the virus in case outbreaks occur, Beshear said at his daily briefing.

At a gas station and conve-

dy, said Karyn Johnston, direc-

tor of public health. She declined to say if the man had traveled out

of state.

Nine more people were tested

because of contact with the man, and seven of them have tested positive for COVID-19. All are male and are isolated at home. Two are in their 60s, two are in their 20s and three are between the ages of 10 and 19, the state health department reported.

Three nurses doing contact tracing have located more than 30 contacts with those who are infected, and the investigation continues. The identified contacts have been placed in quarantine, but they won’t be tested unless they develop symptoms or have underlying health conditions, Johnston said Wednesday.

New York

NEW YORK — New York will allow small religious gatherings starting Thursday as the state gradually loosens pandemic re-

strictions, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said.

Religious gatherings of up to 10 people will be allowed state-

wide as long as participants wear masks and practice social dis-

tancing. The state is also allowing drive-in and parking lot services.

The state will work with an Interfaith Advisory Council to dis-

cuss proposals to safely bring back religious services. The council consists of dozens of reli-

gious leaders, including Cardinal Timothy Dolan and the Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts.

The New York Civil Liber-

ties Union said that both an-

nouncements raise constitutional concerns.

“We agree small events where people observe social distancing should be permitted, but that has to apply to all First Amendment events, regardless of message and regardless of whether religious or political,” Christopher Dunn, the group’s legal director, wrote in an email.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania is working on guidelines to allow sporting events, exhibi-

tions and leagues, both profes-

sional and amateur; to get back to “some semblance of normalcy” after practically everything shut down to help stem the spread of the coronavirus. Gov. Tom Wolf said Wednesday.

In a conference call with re-

porters, Wolf said that he has been in touch with major profes-

sional and amateur, to get back to

sional organizations including

NASCAR, the NFL, NHL, Major

League Baseball and others to figure out how they can resume.

He said he expected that his admistra-

tion will, in the coming
days, produce guidelines for the various venues, sports and activities and resume. But, he said, the ultimate success of the events and leagues will rest on whether people feel safe to attend and participate.

“In the end, the ultimate arbi-

ter of our fate here when it comes to sporting events are going to be individuals who want to partici-

pate, individuals who want to be part of sports, whether its ama-

teur or professional,” Wolf said.

“The state is working on plans to change campus dining, recreation and the set up of class-

rooms. But ultimately, whether the campus stays safe from the virus is up to workers and stu-

dents, Clemson University Police Chief Greg Mullen said.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Gov. Doug Ducey said Wednesday that people in Arizona are actively responsible since he loosened restrictions on businesses, but he’s not yet ready to open new sectors of the economy.

Ducey said that he has an “as-

pirational” goal for schools to re-

open on schedule in August, and he’s hopeful that summer camps and youth activities will be open soon.

Schools have been closed since March, when Ducey and schools chief Kathy Hoffman shut them down due to mounting concerns stem-

ming from the coronavirus out-

break. Hoffman has formed a task force of education leaders to write plans for the safe reopening of schools.

The Republican governor said he sees “very clearly” that Ari-

izona will have a surge in coronavi-

rus infections as social distancing measures relax. But he suggested that he’s willing to reimpose restric-

tions if necessary.

Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana’s coronavirus restrictions will ease in parts of the state Friday, two days ahead of schedule, to allow
Officials assess damages from Michigan floods

Associated Press

MIDLAND, Mich. — Authorities were assessing damages Thursday as floodwaters from heavy rains that overtook two dams retreated in some mid-Michigan communities and continued to threaten others further downstream.

The flooding forced the evacuation of about 11,000 people in the Midland area, about 140 miles north of Detroit. The floodwaters mixed Wednesday with containment ponds at a Dow Chemical Co. plant and could displace sediment from a downstream Superfund site, though the company said there was no risk to people or the environment.

Officials warned that the scope of the damage could take days to fully see. The nearly century-old Edenville Dam, which failed to hold back floodwaters, was the target of lengthy investigations by federal regulators, who revoked the facility’s license over safety violations two years before the flooding. Wixom Lake, which had been held back by the dam, was left nearly empty.

“You can see houses with water up to the roof line, you can see a lakebed that was drained out,” Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Thursday morning during an appearance on “CBS This Morning.”

“There’s no lake there anymore because it’s all at the lower end of the river now. The water should start to recede now. But there’s no question that this is a devastating event.”

The National Weather Service said communities farther downstream were bracing for flooding in the coming days. A flood warning was in effect Thursday along the Tittabawassee River from Midland downstream into Saginaw, and flooding in that area was possible through the weekend.

Residents near the Tittabawassee River were urged this week to seek higher ground following what the National Weather Service described as “catastrophic dam failures” at the Edenville Dam, about 20 miles northwest of Midland, and the Sanford Dam. Officials have said the Sanford Dam was overflowing but that the extent of structural damage isn’t yet known.

No injuries have been reported.

Dow said the containment ponds held only water, and it detected no chemical releases from the plant in Midland where the company was founded, though the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said state officials would evaluate the plant when they’re able. Once the flooding recedes, Dow will be required to assess the Superfund site — contaminated with dioxins the company dumped in the last century — to determine if any contamination was released, the EPA said.

Man’s head run over, more than 100 arrested at event

By Jessica Schladreck

New York Daily News

A Texas beach party for Jeep enthusiasts over the weekend prompted nonstop calls to law enforcement, more than 100 arrests and has left several revelers hospitalized — including a 21-year-old who is fighting for his life after a truck ran over his head.

Branun Francis was partying at the “Go Topless Jeep Weekend” at Crystal Beach on Sunday when he fell out of the back of a truck and into its path. He was airlifted to a hospital in Corpus Christi, where his mother, Julie Busby, said he was receiving treatment for multiple skull fractures.

“As my son was laying there in a pool of blood, the people were trying to video him,” she told ABC 13. “And his friends were just heartbroken.”

First responders warned Francis may not survive his injuries, but the young father has made strides toward recovery since the weekend incident — his mother on Monday revealed that he was attempting to communicate and, in the end, was able to scribble down his thoughts.

“My head hurts,” the shaky note reads. Francis was one of at least six people hospitalized during the Crystal Beach party on the Bolivar Peninsula — which is billed as an annual gathering of Jeep, ATV and big truck lovers.

The Galveston County Sheriff’s Office confirmed to KTRK they made 263 arrests Wednesday through Sunday in the area, dozens of them for public intoxication. The charges range from a minor consuming alcohol and public intoxication to trespassing and drug possession.

Videos shared to social media of the event sees the beach consumed in chaos and countless fights breaking out. The rowdy scene has sparked a petition by legal advocates to end the “Go Topless Gavelston” event, which boasted nearly 19,000 signatures by Wednesday afternoon.

“Go Topless weekend in Crystal Beach has become more and more dangerous over the years. It has become a danger for the people attending and a danger for the residents of Crystal Beach,” it reads.

“This year, in 2019, there were so many

Former Trump lawyer released from NY prison

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s longtime personal lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen was released from federal prison Thursday to serve the remainder of his sentence at home, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

Cohen had been serving a federal prison sentence at FCI Otisville in New York after pleading guilty to numerous charges, including campaign finance fraud and lying to Congress.

The person was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Cohen was released on furlough as part of an effort to slow the spread of the coronavirus in federal prisons. Cohen, 53, began serving his sentence last May and originally was scheduled to be released from prison in November 2021.
Installing acrylic shields at point of sale and customer service areas.

Disinfecting customer service and sales points multiple times.

Deploying posters, floor decals and other visual reminders for shoppers to keep a safe distance between themselves and others.

Transitioning the school meal program for military schoolchildren overseas to a grab-and-go format.

The Exchange is committed to ensuring Warfighters & families can get critical products while maintaining physical distancing in a safe environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more about Exchange efforts to protect the Force at shopmyexchange.com/community
NATION

White House report blasts China’s ‘communist regime’

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Beyond its hard-hitting rhetoric against China over its handling of the coronavirus, the White House has issued a broad-scale attack on Beijing’s predatory economic policies, military buildup, disinformation campaigns and human rights violations.

The 20-page report does not signal a shift in U.S. policy, according to a senior administration official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the report and spoke only on the condition of anonymity, but it expands on President Donald Trump’s tough rhetoric that he hopes will resonate with voters angry about China’s handling of the disease outbreak, which left tens of millions of Americans out of work.

“The media’s focus on the current pandemic risks missing the bigger picture of the challenge that’s presented by the Chinese Communist Party,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday before the White House released its report.

“China’s been ruled by a brutal, authoritarian regime, a communist regime since 1949. For several decades, we thought the regime would become more like us — through trade, scientific exchanges, diplomatic outreach, letting them in the World Trade Organization as a developing nation. That didn’t happen,” he said.

“We greatly underestimated the degree to which Beijing is ideologically and politically hostile to free nations. The whole world is waking up to that fact.”

Later in the day, the State Department announced that it had approved the sale of advanced torpedoes to the Taiwanese military, a move sure to draw a rebuke from Beijing, which regards the island as a renegade province. The department said it had informed Congress of the $180 million sale of heavy-weight torpedoes, spare parts, support and testing equipment, which “will help improve the security of (Taiwan) and assist in maintaining political stability, military balance, and economic progress in the region.”

While pushing back on China, Trump has sometimes uttered contradictory statements. He has talked about having a great personal relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping yet has repeatedly denounced China for not doing more to stop the virus from spreading across the world. He’ll criticize China, then say he wants Beijing to sign Phase II of a trade deal and join the United States and Russia in a three-way nuclear arms control treaty.

Late Wednesday, Trump wrote on Twitter that China’s “massive disinformation campaign” is intended to help Joe Biden win the 2020 presidential election.

According to the report, the Trump administration sees “no evidence” in engaging with Beijing for symbolism and pageantry. “When quiet diplomacy proves futile, the United States will increase public pressure.”

Supreme Court blocks House from secret testimony in Mueller’s report

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Wednesday temporarily prevented the House of Representatives from obtaining secret grand jury testimony from special counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation.

The court’s unsigned order granted the Trump administration’s request to keep previously undisclosed details from the investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 election out of the hands of Democratic lawmakers, at least until early summer.

The court will decide then whether to extend its hold and schedule the case for arguments in the fall. If it does, it’s likely the administration will be able to put off the release of any materials until after Election Day. Arguments themselves might not even take place before Americans decide whether to give President Donald Trump a second term.

For justices eager to avoid a definitive ruling, the delay could mean never having to decide the case, if either Trump loses or Republicans retain control of the House next year.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi objected to the high court’s decision in a statement Wednesday evening. “The House’s long-standing right to obtain grand jury information pursuant to the House’s impeachment power has now been upheld by the lower courts twice,” Pelosi said. “These rulings are supported by decades of precedent and should be permitted to proceed.”

The Justice Department said in its Supreme Court filings that the court’s action was needed in part because the House hasn’t given any indication it “urgently needs these materials for any ongoing impeachment investigation.”

The House had opposed the delay on the grounds that its investigation of Trump was continuing, and that time is of the essence because of the approaching election.

President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting Wednesday with Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, and Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington.

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STARS AND STRIPES
In film, Roe plaintiff says her anti-abortion switch was just an act

BY JESSICA GRESKO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Norma McCorvey loved the limelight. Better known as "Jane Roe," her story was at the center of the 1973 Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion nationwide. At first she was an abortion rights advocate, but, in a twist, she became a born-again Christian in 1995 and switched sides.

Now, three years after her death of heart failure at age 69, she's making headlines again. In a documentary being released Friday, McCorvey says she was paid to speak out against abortion.

"This is my deathbed confession," she says, chuckling as she breathes with the aid of oxygen during filming at a nursing home where she lived in Katy, Texas.

"I took their money and they put me out in front of the cameras and told me what to say," she says in the documentary, which was filmed in 2016 and 2017.

Filmmaker Nick Sweeney said the documentary condensed hundreds of hours of film he shot over the last year of McCorvey’s life and that he hoped it gave her the chance to tell her own story.

McCorvey's true feelings about abortion have always been nuanced, said Joshua Prager, who spent eight years working on a book about McCorvey due out next year. In a telephone interview, he said McCorvey made her living giving speeches and writing books on both sides of the abortion debate and was coached by both sides. She had conflicted feelings about each, he said, but was consistent throughout her life in one thing: supporting abortion through the first trimester.

If the film confirms anything, it is that McCorvey was complicated. She grew up poor and was sexually abused by a relative. She was a lesbian. At 22, she was unemployed and living in Texas when she became pregnant with her third child.

McCorvey wanted an abortion, but it was illegal in Texas and most states. That led her to become the anonymous plaintiff in Roe v. Wade. She gave birth to her third child before the Supreme Court ruled in her case.

If the film confirms anything, it is that McCorvey was complicated. She grew up poor and was sexually abused by a relative. She was a lesbian. At 22, she was unemployed and living in Texas when she became pregnant with her third child.

McCorvey wanted an abortion, but it was illegal in Texas and most states. That led her to become the anonymous plaintiff in Roe v. Wade. She gave birth to her third child, whom she put up for adoption, before the Supreme Court ruled in her case.
NEW DELHI — Wide swathes of the coasts of India and Bangladesh were flooded and millions of people remained without power Thursday, after the most powerful cyclone to hit the region in more than a decade killed hundreds and left a trail of destruction.

In the Indian city of Kolkata, home to more than 14 million people, large portions of the metropolis and its suburbs were underwater, including the city's main airport. Roads were littered with uprooted trees and lamp posts and electricity and communication lines were down.

Cyclone Amphan also badly damaged many centuries-old buildings when it tore through the city on Wednesday. “It feels like a dystopian Jurassic Park of sorts,” said Shuli Ghosh, who runs a cafe in Kolkata. “The roofs of many homes have flown away and the streets are waterlogged.”

When the storm made landfall on Wednesday it lashed coastal areas in both India and Bangladesh with heavy rain, a battering storm surge and sustained winds of 105 miles per hour and gusts up to 118 mph. It devastated coastal villages in both countries, knocking down mud houses, ripping out electricity poles and uprooting trees.

In Bangladesh, television stations reported 13 deaths, while 72 deaths were reported in India’s West Bengal state. Officials said two people were killed in India’s Odisha state. Hundreds of villages in Bangladesh were flooded by tidal surges and more than a million people were without electricity.

Officials in both countries said the full extent of the damage remained to be seen as communication lines are down.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic and social-distancing measures had made mass evacuations ahead of the storm difficult.

Likewise the pandemic will have an impact on relief efforts and the recovery. The damage caused by the storm is likely to have lasting repercussions for poor families already stretched to the limit by the pandemic.

India kicks off political event pushed back by virus

BEIJING — China began its most important political event of the year Thursday after a two-month delay because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The opening of the annual session of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference is a further sign of what the government said is its victory over the outbreak that began in the central city of Wuhan late last year.

That will be followed Friday by the opening of the National People’s Congress, the ceremonial parliament, highlighted by a speech from Premier Li Keqiang outlining economic and social goals for the year.

This year’s meeting of the two bodies is being shortened to one week from the usual two as part of virus control measures. Media access has also been largely reduced and only a limited number of reporters, diplomats and observers were permitted into the vast auditorium inside the Great Hall of the People in the heart of Beijing. The more than 2,000 delegates in attendance wore masks.
TO RELEASE OR NOT TO RELEASE?

MUSICIANS MUST MAKE TOUGH CHOICES DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

Music, Page 32
Virtual vet care has arrived
Veterinary telemedicine startup just what the doctor ordered

By Erin Arvedlund
The Philadelphia Inquirer

The market was ripe for innovation. The American Pet Products Association data show that two-thirds of 84.9 million U.S. households have at least one pet, offering steady demand for routine veterinary services.

Americans spent more than $25 billion on vet services in 2018, according to data from Freedonia Group, and that number should increase.

Industry growth between 2015 and 2020 averaged 2.9% annually, according to IBIS World.

Through the My Virtual Veterinarian iOS app, pet parents can access their primary veterinarian, or find a different one who is available, and schedule an appointment. This flexibility extends to the veterinarians, who can schedule appointments that fit their schedule.

Competitors include AirVet and TeleTails, but Johnson contends that the competitors’ apps “lock you into using only one veterinarian. With us, you can choose your own vet,” or any vet available as long as they sign up for the platform.

Her company makes money by taking a percentage of appointment fees, which vary among animal doctors. “We don’t charge the vets to use the app, we charge the pet parents,” she said, generally 30% of the appointment fee.

With 150 million dogs and cats in America, and an average cost of $50 per appointment, MyVirtualVet app’s goal is a little more than $14 in gross profit per visitor.

So far, My Virtual Veterinarian has completed 51 appointments and 16 chats with doctors. The company has four employees, including Johnson, who taught herself to code.

Plans for growth include hosting “Paws for Wellness” pop-up wellness clinics in major cities to introduce pet parents to the platform, as well as partnerships with groomers and insurers.

And, of course, custom poop bags in local dog parks to advertise the service.
A  s quarantines and lockdowns have ravaged the entertainment industry, most studies have taken their films out of theaters, worried about health implications, gov-
ernment restrictions and consumer reluctance to sit in a dark room with strangers. Then there’s Warner Bros.
The studio is pressing ahead with release plans for “Tenet,” the mysterious new movie from “Inception” director and proven moneymaker Christopher Nolan. Executives are making plans to open the movie widely across the U.S. as scheduled on July 17 amid the ongoing spread of the coronavirus. They’re going through all the paces of a big summer release despite many reasons a successful rollout may not be remotely possible.
At stake, any entertainment players and analysts, is nothing short of the nation’s pre-eminent form of public entertainment.

"If ‘Tenet’ doesn’t come out or doesn’t succeed, every other company goes home,” said a marketing executive from a rival studio who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not autho-
rized to speak to the news media. “It’s no movies until Christmas.”

Experts describe two fundamentally different visions of what coming months will look like.

In one, audiences eager to leave the house after months of isolation pour in (socially distantly) to see the Nolan film, and still others have gone to streaming.

Disney recently said it was moving its recording of stage phenomenon “Ham-

Nolan himself has fueled the debate with an op-ed in The Washington Post, in which he wrote of the importance of movie theaters re-emerging from coronavirus.

“When this crisis passes, the need for collective human engagement, the need to live and love and laugh and cry together, will be more powerful than ever,” he wrote.

“We don’t just owe it to the 150,000 workers of this great American industry to include them in those we help, we owe it to our-

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Nolan to the rescue?

‘Tenet’ seen as a test of if, and how, Americans can return to movie theaters

By Steven Zeitchik
The Washington Post

experience in the age of streaming, were planning to use the movie as a kind of reopening lever.

That plan has now come into focus. Both Warner Bros. and Nolan declined to comment for this story. But those with knowledge of the plans describe how the studio is moving forward. The company has already conducted cast and filmmaker interviews for “long-lead” journalists, monthly magazine writers, by Zoom. It also is preparing to drop a second trailer online in coming weeks — one more trappings of a company preparing a major summer release.

The studio, Nolan and theater owners have also remained in close contact about the measures that can be taken to bring people safely into multiplexes. Everyone has been trying to pull toward the same goal, say those familiar with the conversa-
tions who were not authorized to speak about them publicly — support “Tenet” as the movie that reopens America.

For Warner Bros. the upside to that approach is huge. It could capitalize on months of pent-up demand and have the studio theaters all to itself.

Unfortunately, analysts note, there’s also a reason the reward is high: because no other studio wants to go first, Nolan is once again a visionary director brand of the past decade.

Nolan’s last three non-Batman movies — “Inception” (2010), “Interstellar” (2014) and “Dunkirk” (2017) — have collectively grossed more than $2 billion in theaters worldwide, making him the most bankable director brand of the past decade.

While there has been no talk, multiple WarnerMedia insiders say, of releasing the film on streaming early, some wonder if that shouldn’t be part of the strategy.

If theaters tried playing the movie for a few weeks and people were not coming out, I’m not sure Warner Bros. couldn’t turn it into a digital rental, he said. “Especially if you brought theaters into revenue-sharing. It could be a pretty good backup plan.”

Warner Bros. Pictures
Heard and not seen

You may not recognize ‘Scoob!’ actor Frank Welker, but his voice will take you back to your childhood

BY TIM GREIVING
Special to The Washington Post

A

s a little boy, Frank Welker was blessed with the “strange, innate ability” to mimic the sound and speech of animals. Jockeying for attention at the family breakfast table, he would offer up dead-on impressions of the sparrows chirping on the front lawn.

“I was the youngest in the family,” Welker said. “I found that by acting peculiar I could get my piece of the attention.”

He got it all right, and spun it into career gold. A successful voice actor since the 1960s, Welker has cornered the market on all creatures great and small. Now, at 74, he has one of his first “starring” roles in a major motion picture — as the voice of Scooby-Doo in the animated “Scoob!”

“I was the sophomore in college when we set including an impression of the Kennedys. He was already at home in bed when it happened but said he’ll never forget that day “because I actually had to go right through part of the kitchen to get to the Cocoanut Grove.” His set included an impression of the Kennedys.

It seems Welker was destined for a unique life of fame advocacy — unseen but ubiquitous. Part of his voice-over career has been dubbing lines for famous actors. His first big gig was providing Rex Harrison’s animal communication in the original “Doctor Dolittle.”

“We Wish You a Merry Christmas.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21
Zoinks!
Reboot of classic cartoon, ‘Scoob!’ is no tasty treat

BY JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

E ven before darker anxieties took hold, the bad guys of “Scooby-Doo” were charmingly quaint. An evil circus owner, a plotting first mate — these were the villains of “Scooby-Doo,” all of them revealed with an unmasking flourish and the cursing of “you meddling kids.”

But for anyone looking for the nostalgic and corny delights of the old 1970s cartoon in the new animated reboot “Scoob!” — well, I’m sorry to resort to this, rub rh. “Scoob!” is the kind of movie less predicated on original formulas than the contemporary dictates of corporate franchise-making. Scooby-Doo has been amplified and digitized. Superheroes and current pop culture references have been tacked in, most of them from other properties of the same studio (including even “Shallow” from “A Star Is Born”). Even a “cinematic universe” has been born. It’s enough to make a critic say “zoinks!”

“Scoob!” had been headed for theaters this spring but instead has been released for rental on digital platforms and on-demand. Following Universal’s “Trolls World Tour,” it’s the second major studio movie diverted into the home by the pandemic — this time via Warner Bros.

The smaller screen may be the more natural home of Scooby-Doo even though “Scoob!” aspires to be so much like other big-screen franchises. Scooby-Doo has been amplified and digitized. Superheroes and current pop culture references have been tacked in, most of them from other properties of the same studio (including even “Shallow” from “A Star Is Born”). Even a “cinematic universe” has been born. It’s enough to make a critic say “zoinks!”

Incorporating characters like Blue Falcon, Dick Dastardly, Captain Caveman and Dynomutt, “Scoob!” has also tried to use an interpolated Hanna-Barbera universe, a gambit that only adds to the feeling of force-fed corporate synergy.

Director Tony Cervone, a longtime Hanna-Barbera and Warner Bros. Animation veteran, opens “Scoob!” with an origin story, flashing back to when Scooby (voiced again by Frank Welker) met Shaggy (Will Forte, taking over for Casey Kasem). Hundreds of cases later, the movie catches up with the Mystery, Inc. gang, including Fred (Zac Efron), Daphne (Amanda Seyfried) and Velma (Gina Rodriguez). Setting things in motion is, of all people, Simon Cowell (voicing himself and appearing in weirdly accurate animated form), who professes that friendship has no value. “Scoob!” will test the bond between Shaggy and Scooby.

Things immediately go haywire. A spaceship arrives and abducts Shaggy and Scooby. Aboard is the son of Blue Falcon (Mark Wahlberg) and his robotic canine Dynomutt (Ken Jeong), who need Scooby to help stop a scheme launched by Dick Dastardly (Jason Isaacs) involving ancient, mythic dogs.

If Greek antiquity isn’t where you’d expect a Scooby Doo movie to go, you’ll probably also be thrown by straining-to-be-hip gags about the Hemsworth brothers and stealing Netflix passwords. Right down to that exclamation point in the title, “Scoob!” is trying much too hard to be just like every other movie. “Scooby Doo” was never the most unpredictable of shows, but “Scoob!” has merely swiped the original’s blueprint for that of a superhero movie.

“Scoob!” is available on VOD. It is rated PG for action, language and suggestive humor. Running time: 94 minutes.

FROM PAGE 20

In the hall of fame of famous animals, he’s played Smokey Bear, Garfield, Kermit the Frog and Woody’s horse, Bullseye, in the “Toy Story” movies. Besides Abu, he also voiced the erudite monkey who croaks from a “bad date” in “Raiders of the Lost Ark” — oh, and he’s Curious George.

Welker is an animator’s muse, Musker said, not just because he’s a “man of a thousand voices” or such a talented zoological mimic.

“There’s a scene where Abu really mocks Aladdin because he’s sweet on Jasmine,” the voice of Abu explained. “He does a little sashay, where he’s like ‘Ooh yeah, pretty girl, huh?’ Frank came up with a way of doing that where he totally got the attitude, even though there wasn’t a word of dialogue.”

And it all started in 1969, when Welker’s backyard of voices landed him a dog food commercial, which got him into an audition for a new Hanna-Barbera show about a food-crazed dog named Scooby-Doo. Welker was eventually cast — but as the teenage straight man Fred Jones.

Starting out with the voice actor Don Messick as Scooby and Casey Kasem as Shaggy, Welker has been a key member of Mystery, Inc. for more than 50 years. After Messick died in 1997, Welker eventually took over the iconic role of the talking, charming, often petrified canine who puts R’s in front of every word. Even though the cast of “Scooby-Doo” all had fun doing impressions of one another, Welker described the role as “the most natural” of all part of this same family, the Scooby family.” (“Scoob” pays homage itself by setting some of the film’s action on “Messick Mountain.”)

So is it a blessing, after decades of work and hundreds of parts, to have an inescapable voice and yet an inexpressible face?

“My ego says no,” he wrote, “but my reality says yes.”

In ‘Capone,’ Tom Hardy portrays titular gangster in his last days

BY KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Here is the tale of Al Capone, a legend told on film time and again for nearly a century, and now, once more, in all its gruesomeness, in “Capone,” starring Tom Hardy. But the more interesting tale is the story of writer/director Josh Trank, the wunderkind filmmaker who burst onto the scene in 2012 with his found footage teen sci-fi movie “Chronicle,” which became a surprise hit.

Before the age of 30, Trank was handed the keys to the newest iteration of Marvel’s “Fantastic Four,” and was even promised a Star Wars spinoff. But then “Fantastic Four” went down in a blaze of reboots, rumors and rotten reviews, Trank quit Star Wars before he could get fired and the young director found himself in director jail.

The only reason for this contextual windup before getting to the assessment of his new film is to try and understand Trank’s mindset when he conceived of and wrote this movie. Isolated, rocked by the Hollywood roller coaster and a thorough wringing out of the messy, mobbed-up family obsession with the famed Chicago gangster, and despite all odds got the film made, with a movie star to boot. And so here is “Capone,” which is sort of a giant middle finger directed toward the establishment and the powers that be, wrapped up in a depiction of the last days of the gangster’s life, spent in a haze of syphilitic dementia at an estate in Florida.

It’s not enough to say that the English actor Tom Hardy “presents” Capone, you don’t hire Hardy if you don’t want an actor who will commit to the physical realities of the role with an almost terrifying commitment. Hardy doesn’t “play” Capone, he sweats, grunts and vomits Capone, while coated in old-age makeup, bloodshot eyes darting, mumbling menacingly in Italian. Hardy, never one to pass up the opportunity to experiment with a crazy New York accent, takes his work to new heights, or rather lows, with the gravelly Brooklynese he touts for the role.

At the age of 47 (looking 87), Capone, or “Fonzo” as his family calls him, looked less like Capone’s violent past as his body deteriorates in the Florida sun. As he regresses physically, equipped with diapers and a carrot cigar, for an intimidating doctor (Kyle MacLachlan), his family tends to his care, while gangsters (Matt Dillon) and FBI agents (Jack Lowden) come snitching around and realize that Capone still has a fortune buried somewhere.

They’re convinced that his rambles will reveal a clue or two, but the only information Capone has for them is the aforementioned futility, part of a graphic scatological motif that Trank weaves throughout.

Watching this frequently grotesque and narratively meandering movie is a somewhat nightmarish experience, and thereby it successfully evokes Capone’s tortured existence: it traps us within his surreal, blood-soaked flashbacks as he decays slowly and then all at once, in an operatic display of body horror.

“Capone” is available on VOD. It is rated R for strong/bloody violence, pervasive language and some sexual content. Running time: 103 minutes.
Streets of Rage 4's updated visuals, two new characters and new plot set it apart from its 1993 predecessor, the sequel retains the made-for-commentary repetitive actions and cartoonish violence, typical of games in the "beat 'em up" genre, that are best enjoyed with a friend.

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The first of many little visual flourishes that caught our attention was Dylan, a new enemy who fights bare-chested with a baseball bat. The second was the each other's themes, however, that ambition had to respond the player's actions. Outside of the modernity of dance music and the nostalgia Streets of Rage fans, I thought the best way for doing it was to twist it all into one final blend that would eventually become the sound of Streets of Rage 4. It seems like it worked out.

Deriviere, who has worked on several other games in different genres, said that he's a big believer in pushing interactivity in video game scores, with music shifting to respond the player's actions. Outside of boss themes, however, that ambition had to be scaled back to maintain that old-school brawler feel.

"Every arena gets its proper musical moment, and even some secret levels in 16-bit turn the music into a chiptune seamlessly," he said. "Of course, SOR4 is about dance and grooves, and reading Twitter and witnessing people like CoryxKenshin dance on my tracks was a real satisfaction ... and relief."
The last significant trip my family and I took before the coronavirus was a Christmastime weekend jaunt to Bristol, England, with five of our closest friends. When I consider how casually our large group gathered and traveled, how we freely stepped in and out of taxis, buses and trains, how we squeezed into crowded pubs and cafes, how we actually sought out the company of hundreds of other human beings, I get a little wistful. I try to appreciate Bristol outside of that pre-pandemic context, because it really is a great place to consider visiting when such a trip becomes viable.

Bristol’s signature landmark is the Clifton Suspension Bridge, a remarkable structure soaring across the Avon Gorge to the west of the city. The bridge opened in 1864 after many decades of delays and redesigns and has since grown into an icon of southern Britain. In 1979, the bridge was the site of what’s considered the first modern bungee jump. In 2012, the Olympic torch changed hands there.

The bridge cuts a stunning figure upon approach. Its two towers are not quite identical in design and occupy opposite and distinct sides of the gorge; one perched majestically on craggy rock at the edge of Bristol’s urban core and the other sprouting from a thick forest known as Leigh Woods.

Visitors can view the bridge from all angles. A hike up to the Clifton Observatory offers a stunning aerial view of the structure, while a steep footpath leading to the River Avon provides a vantage point from below. A straight-on view of the bridge is available from the appropriately named Lookout Lectern.

A step out onto the bridge itself is a memorable experience. Sways and vibrations are an intentional design feature but are either exhilarating or terrifying depending on one’s predilections. The sleek bridge feels slight and substantial all at once as it offers unencumbered views of the river far below.

Beyond the bridge, Bristol offers a lot of the amenities you’d expect from a reasonably sized British city. Our group spent a lot of time at Cabot Circus, an attractive shopping center packed with restaurants like Nando’s, Five Guys and a bunch of others we ignored in favor of Nando’s and Five Guys.

Elsewhere in the city you’ll find castles, parks, museums, a zoo, an aquarium and walls covered with vibrant street art, all in range of the soothing countryside.

In the absence of traveling in the months since, the visit to Bristol and the Clifton Suspension Bridge has remained fresh in my memory long after many other such trips have faded into the hazy past. But the destination deserves to be admired for its own merits, of which it has plenty.

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The Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol, England, spans Avon Gorge. The bridge was opened in 1864.

Suspended in time and memory
A rewarding day trip to Bristol starts at the bridge

By Gregory Broome
Stars and Stripes

Thorough details about visiting Bristol, including up-to-date information on coronavirus-related delays and closures, are available online at visitbristol.co.uk.

The Clifton Suspension Bridge visitor center is closed because of coronavirus restrictions, but remains open to traffic. For the latest details, go to cliftonbridge.org.uk.

— Gregory Broome

Temple Meads station in Bristol, England, offers train, bus and taxi transportation around the city and the larger region. Cardiff, Wales, is about an hour’s train ride to the west, while London is just two hours to the east.

The cityscape of Bristol, England, is enlivened by street art and murals on the sides of many buildings.
Illness-inspired culture, art abounds

The Bavarian town of Oberammergau was gearing up for a big event in 2020. Every 10 years, the pretty town encircled by Alpine peaks sees hundreds of thousands of tourists from around the world flock to its renowned Passion Play. The staging of this drama depicting Jesus Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, crucifixion and resurrection represents the fulfillment of a promise to God made by Oberammergau’s villagers back in 1632. As plague ravaged the population, the leaders of the community came together and playfully held a treaty discussion with God. “If you don’t giveus our Fruit of Eden, we’ll build a church to honor the Virgin Mary.” Authorities made good on their promise with this construction at the site where the Grand Canyon met the Grand Basin. This supreme example of Venetian Baroque can also be reached by pontoon bridge on a special feast day on the first Sunday of July or on the Feast of the Redeemer. The play was to have been performed 102 times between May and October until COVID-19 put a stop to this. Imperfect Foods Chief Executive Philip Behn says the cheese and snack trays were an early casualty of the coronavirus pandemic. Two months ago, before it became a nationwide pandemic, this catering and airplane meal supplier said they saw a decline in economic cheese and snack sales. Behn says, “This was one of our first COVID-19 food waste recovery opportunities. We could only take a fraction of what they had.” Behn says they’ve sold 40,000 cheese and snack trays. He says there are hundreds of customers eager to buy back for millions of pounds of food originally slated for restaurant, hotel or travel and leisure businesses. But frequently these foods are not desirable or packaged for retail consumers. “We call that ‘breaking bulk,’” Behn says. “We have stepped up with co-packers to repurpose these products — it’s hard work and it’s slow given the importance of food safety.” Yet there is beauty to it. Imperfect Foods is a budget-conscious company, so high-end products like pineapples are usually too expensive to offer their customers. When Herculean at its Marché de la Vieillesse, Imperfect Foods has doubled the volume of food it was previously buying, the JetBlue snacks among many. Julianna Bryan, communications specialist for JetBlue, says the airline has to dramatically reduce its in-flight and beverage service to minimize contact between customers and crew members. “We have temporarily suspended the sale of meals and drinks, but we’ve added our EatUp Snack Boxes, EatUp Cafe, fresh food items, beer, wine and liquor,” she says. JetBlue has donated leftover inventory of snacks to Feeding America and other food banks, as well as hospitals. Bryan says that JetBlue has worked with business partners to sell unused inventory, such as the cheese trays, at a heavily discounted price with the goal of moving it quickly and minimizing waste. JetBlue is not the only airline to have to find new outlets for its in-flight overflow. Delta has had to unload its Biscoff cookies and Delta Stewart, or snack trays. He says there are $400,000 in snacks and other in-flight items to nonprofit organizations and near- ly 13 tractor-trailers full of groceries to 15 food banks that are a part of the Feeding America network. Delta has donated 500,000 pounds of food around the world in the past six weeks. Front-line workers and hospitals get the Biscoff cookies along with coffee and other in-flight beverages, while other perishable food has gone to Feeding America’s partner agencies like Georgia Food & Resource Center and Missouri’s Carthage Crisis Center. And United has donated 173,000 pounds of food to food banks and charities, pulling from airport lounges and catering kitchens.

New market for in-flight snacks, movie popcorn

Delta’s Biscoff Cookies are an example of an in-flight snack that currently has few takers. Charities and surplus-food companies are buying foods meant for airlines, hotels and movie theaters and redistributing them to retail customers and charities. Be- nard’s Biscoff Cookies are an example of an in-flight snack that currently has few takers. Charities and surplus-food companies are buying foods meant for airlines, hotels and movie theaters and redistributing them to retail customers and charities. Delta’s Biscoff Cookies are an example of an in-flight snack that currently has few takers. Charities and surplus-food companies are buying foods meant for airlines, hotels and movie theaters and redistributing them to retail customers and charities.

The Santa Maria della Salute in Venice was built to commemorate the end of a 17th-century plague. It was tended by monks. The brothers would look after those suffering from the plague, as well as hideous skin conditions including gangrene. The altar’s unflinchingly brutal image of a crucified Christ is scarred and pitted with plague-type sores, illustrating the idea that Jesus understood and shared the patients’ afflictions. Online: musee-unterlinden.com

The German History Museum in Berlin features an unusual object that’s gained much attention of late: a Middle Ages plague doctor’s costume. To shield themselves from contagious diseases, doctors would don protective hoods consisting of a velvet mask, glass lenses and a leak-like metallic protrusion. The wearer would breathe through two small holes in the “beak,” containing fragrant herbs or vinegar-soaked sponges in the belief that this would filter the air and repel disease. The mask was worn with a cloak-like leather costume designed to shield the entire body. Today the mask makes up part of the museum’s permanent collection. A similar mask is on display at the German Medical History Museum in Ingolstadt, Germany. Online: tinyurl.com/y8n9fhcc
Finding good pizza is easy when you live in Italy. But I think I may have done it.

In the town of Sacile, about nine miles southwest of Aviano Air Base, is DoDo, where the pizzas are made Neapolitan-style, following a tradition that dates back centuries.

For those unversed in the delights of pizza, Neapolitan and Roman are among the most celebrated. Neapolitan pizza is characterized by its thick, soft crust and plump, hydrated dough. It’s cooked in a brick oven at a very high temperature, which allows the dough to remain moist and thick.

Roman pizzas, on the other hand, have a thinner, crunchier crust than Neapolitan pies. Because they’re cooked at a lower temperature, they can use more toppings than Neapolitan pies, without running the risk of the ingredients burning to a crisp.

DoDo opened in May last year and, in pre-coronavirus times, seated about 90 diners. It was closed for in-restaurant dining in mid-May, but open for pickup or home delivery service.

Orders are called in, and, if you want home delivery, you choose the time. Knowledge of Italian helps because the owner speaks very little English, although he does try very hard to understand what you’re trying to order and the language barrier has never posed a problem for me.

DoDo delivers within the town of Sacile, but like many Italian restaurants may deliver to nearby towns. Your pizza could arrive within half an hour of placing your order.

In addition to pizza, DoDo offers a small list of appetizers, including a fried vegetable mix, focaccia, French fries and fried pizza dough strips with arugula and cherry tomatoes.

For the main course, there are also panuozzi or calzones if you don’t want pizza or just want to try something else.

Panuozzi are Neapolitan sandwiches made with pizza-dough flatbread and ingredients like mozzarella cheese, sausage, tomatoes and spinach. Two slices are baked open-face until crunchy and then placed one on top of the other and eaten like a sandwich.

Calzones, meanwhile, are made by putting the ingredients of your choice on pizza dough, which is then folded over into a crescent shape. DoDo’s calzones are either baked in a wood-burning oven or deep fried.

DoDo offers 27 different pizzas, but the highlight of the menu has to be the restaurant’s namesake pie, the pizza DoDo. This masterpiece consists of stretched, fried pizza dough, smothered in tomato, buffalo mozzarella cheese, basil, parmesan cheese and extra virgin olive oil. It’s an explosion of flavor.

The drink menu is typical of most restaurants in Italy, featuring such staples as red or white wine by the bottle or glass, draft and bottled beer, juice and coffee. There’s also a limited dessert menu.

DoDo in Aviano offers Neapolitan-style pizza for pickup or delivery

Great pizza good to find

By Norman Llamas
Stars and Stripes

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By Norman Llamas
Stars and Stripes
A city of contradictions

Tel Aviv: a spicy mix of chaos, sophistication, culture and laid-back laziness

By Brian Schaefer
Bloomberg

In the Jewish holiday of Purim — a spirited mix of Halloween and Mardi Gras — festivities and revelers are encouraged to drink until the world is turned upside down. I was in Tel Aviv during Purim this year, in March, watching pirates, princesses and many a Joker stumble down the wide, tree-lined Rothschild Boulevard. The bars were lively, if not quite as bawdy as they should be on a holiday. Appreciation was in the air, some of my friends were already in quarantine, and there was a shared sense that this might be the last hoorah for a while, so better go for broke.

The next day, the world indeed turned upside down. As Israel and the United States competed to see which could shut down quicker, I grabbed one of the last seats on one of the last flights to New York, fleeing my favorite city. As Israel, which has witnessed more than 16,000 cases of novel coronavirus, begins to gradually reopen its doors, I daydream about my return.

Tel Aviv has always inspired me with its contradictions: Lazy beach vibes mix with cosmopolitan ambition — part Paris in its sexy chilliness — yet undeniably a product of the Middle East. There are chaotic open-air markets with piles of spices and dunes of dried fruit, calls to prayer echoing from Jaffa, and daily headlines to remind you that, despite such nonchalant swagger, Tel Aviv sits in the eye of an ever-swirling political storm. That potent cocktail of influences, mixed with my memories, kept me constantly intoxicated during my three years there, initially on a yearlong fellowship, then as a graduate student and, of course, may be verboten in a post-COVID-19 world, but that’s the permission to share them.

Tourists and locals shop the Carmel Market (the Shuk Hacarmel) in Tel Aviv last June. The Carmel Market is the largest street market, or shuk, in Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv’s open-air markets are vibrant places that sell everything from fruit and vegetables to clothes and electronics.

That’s the real daydream: not the tastes and experiences alone, but the permission to share them.

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...
To satisfy their wanderlust, Americans are turning to online window shopping

By Natalie B. Compton
The Washington Post

With most travel on lockdown until further notice, the best people can do to cure their wanderlust is plan or window-shop for future trips. According to the data, they’re doing a lot of it.

On Google, Pinterest and booking app Hopper, users are searching for destinations, trip ideas and, above all, clarity: Perhaps unsurprisingly, Americans’ biggest travel-related query is when international travel will resume.

It’s a good question without a good answer. The State Department is still issuing a “Level 4: Do Not Travel” global health advisory, urging U.S. citizens to avoid all international travel. That recommendation has been in place since mid-March, and with the world still battling the coronavirus pandemic, there are no signs officials will back off it soon.

In the meantime, our fantasies live on.

Here’s what travelers are searching for.

According to Google:

The top U.S. travel searches on its platform from April 1 to May 11 read like a globetrotter’s sad pandemic monologue: “can you travel during shutdown,” “will we be able to travel this summer,” “when will it be safe to travel again,” “where to travel during COVID,” “when is it safe to travel again.”

Meanwhile, after “when will flights resume,” the top Google searches for flights and trips were about the Maldives. (As of mid-May, the small island nation had reported 1,106 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Your amazing Maldivian vacation can wait.)

The third, fourth and fifth most popular searches were regarding flights to and from India. The next top destinations? Sweden, Antarctica, Poland and Switzerland.

According to Pinterest:

Always an aspirational social media tool, the platform allows users to find inspiration, collect ideas and share content, and it launched new features to help with travel planning, too.

But when the coronavirus pandemic hit, user activity shifted.

“In the early phases of the outbreak, Pinners put traveling on hold to focus on needs close to home,” Swasti Sarna, Pinterest insights manager, said in an email. “But in April, future optimism began to take hold as searches for ‘travel ideas’ and ‘travel destinations’ started to climb back up.”

Sarna reviewed Pinterest’s travel-related activity, comparing searches from April 20 to May 3 against searches from April 6 to April 19. Her research shows Pinterest users can’t wait to leave town with loved ones.

“In early April, with the outbreak under control, search volume for ‘travel with friends’ came back,” Sarna wrote in an email. “Pinners are dreaming about going to the beach this summer,” Sarna said, with “beach trip packing list” searches more than doubling and “beach trip with friends” searches up 83%.

Pinterest users also are more interested in taking road trips. “Road trip with kids” and “healthy road trip snacks” searches have doubled since April, and searches for “road trip games” are up 50%. The standout road-trip destination searches included South Dakota — home of Mt. Rushmore and Badlands National Park — as well as Colorado and Oregon.

According to Hopper:

Hopper economist Hayley Berg crunched the app’s data to find its most popular destination searches from April 1 to May 12.

Outside of the States, the top five searched slots belonged to San Juan, Puerto Rico; Cancun, Mexico; London; Paris; and San Jose, Costa Rica. The top-searched domestic destinations included Las Vegas, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Miami and Denver.

Daydreaming is fun, but health experts are encouraging all travel at this time.

“My advice would be: Please err on the side of caution,” said Robert Quigley, who holds a doctorate in immunology and serves as an executive at International SOS, a medical and security services company.

For now, the occasional sad search will have to do.
Daydreams are made of this
Phuket beckons with salty breezes, sandy beaches and crystal-clear water

BY RANDY THANHTHONG-KNIGHT
Bloomberg

As a swimmer, I’ve always felt at home in the ocean. But Phuket, a place I’ve visited more than a dozen times since childhood, is where I find stillness. The ocean laps calmly, and when you close your eyes to feel the salty breeze, you can hear the rustling of tropical forests right off the coast. Vendors sell just-cracked coconuts sloshing over the sand, and from their plunge pools you can commune with chirping cicadas and crickets.

Until I can get back safely to Phuket, I’ll relish one of my local favorites — but I’ll also indulge in the singularly luxurious spots that have given Phuket its prime position at the top of many bucket lists. Here’s how to navigate the day away under the sun. Old Phuket Town, with its brightly colored Portuguese-inspired buildings, has long been dismissed as overly rundown. But the area has been experiencing a renaissance: Historic buildings have been restored and turned into cafes, restaurants and shops. Enormous, colorful murals now coat the streets, and some of the rooms are fashioned after birds nests, shaded by beautiful parasols. The resort offers access to a private beach with ultra-fine sand and clear water, where the ladies lounge chairs are shaded by beautiful parasols.

I tend to order both at Raya, my favorite restaurant on Phuket Old Town — an unassuming spot that you could easily pass by and never notice, with a geometric tiled floor and black-and-white photos on its walls. It’s not air-conditioned, so on a hot day, I’ll head to the nearby Tu Kab Khao instead. Located in a colonial building with coffered ceilings and Murano chandeliers, it focuses on prettied-up versions of family recipes such as stir-fried pork leg with salted krill and stir-fried pumpkin with dried shrimp and shrimp paste.

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To the east are Thailand’s famous Phi Phi Islands and a archipelago of 11 islets that are ringed by crystal-clear waters inhabited by neon coral, turtles and reef sharks. To the west are Thailand’s famous Phi Phi Islands and the less-visited Koh Yao Noi and Koh Yao Yai, which offer secluded beaches and pristine coves.

Even as a native Thailander, I find the food served there to be its most beautiful self whenever we can return.

A pause on human visitors has brought out rare sea turtles to nest in record numbers on empty beaches, and the manatee-like creatures called dugongs have been spotted in typically boat-riddled shallows. That means Phuket will be its most beautiful self whenever we can return.

Tourists take a selfie at Patong Beach in Patong, Phuket, Thailand, in 2018.
TAYLOR WEIDMAN/Bloomberg
Planning, anticipating a new vacation can fill the void left by canceled trips

BY DIANE DANIEL
Special to The Washington Post

Judy Hohmann loves to imagine her three grandchildren’s screams of delight the first time they witness the Old Faithful geyser erupting at Yellowstone National Park — whenever that might happen.

Hohmann and her husband, Bill, met at the park 52 years ago, when they were university students working summer jobs. For their 50th wedding anniversary this summer, the couple, who live in St. Petersburg, Fla., are planning to take their two grown sons, daughter-in-law and grandchildren, ages 7 to 11, on a family trip to Yellowstone with Montana-based tour operator Austin Adventures.

“We started talking about it a year ago and booked last fall,” said Hohmann, 72. “We’ve been very psyched about it and booked last fall,” said Hohmann, 72. “We’ve been very psyched about it and talk about it frequently. Austin sent the children a book about geysers, and they’re so excited to see them.”

The Hohmanns nervously followed the news about the novel coronavirus outbreak. When they learned their June tour would be canceled, “we moved to an August date, and the absolute last option is to go next year,” Hohmann said. “We were so excited about going that cancellation wasn’t a consideration.”

Those feelings of anticipation are a big part of the “high” from travel, said Dan Austin, chief executive and founder of the tour company. They also compound the pain of cancellations and postponements.

“When someone pops your balloon with a pin, it’s hard to take, especially after months or years of buildup,” he said. “Once you make up your mind and you pay that deposit, then you’ve committed. You’re getting excited, then you start telling everybody. That’s all part of the anticipation.”

Science backs up Austin’s observations. When Dutch researchers conducted a study in 2010 on the effect that vacations have on overall happiness, they noted that the most significant boost in happiness seemed to come from planning the vacation, rather than being on it or looking back on it. That observation was confirmed in a follow-up study in 2013.

“The anticipation part was an interesting byproduct of the research,” said Jeroen Nawijn, the lead author and a tourism researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. The study showed that anticipation ran at the same levels regardless of trip duration.

Rescheduling a trip is the only concrete way to continue feeling the benefits of anticipation because the commitment is what makes it real, Nawijn said.

“The most obvious answer is to plan something further away, even if it might be canceled,” he said.

Not everyone can reschedule, such as Bob Maxwell and his wife, Jen, of Manfield, Ohio. They had planned a trip in June with their four children to celebrate three milestone graduations: high school, an undergraduate degree and a master’s degree. The six-day tour in Alaska, also with Austin Adventures, would have included hiking, kayaking and biking.

“We hadn’t done a big family trip for years and years, and this one was really special, with our two oldest about to go off on their own,” Bob Maxwell said. “Maybe we’ll all travel again sometime, but it’s really the end of an era. Austin tried to rebook us, but no other dates would work.”

Maxwell said he felt disappointment akin to grief, then added that he felt reluctant to call it that “when people are way less well-off than I am right now.”

His response is one that Diane Brennan, a licensed mental health counselor in New York City who specializes in loss and grief, hears in her work, especially now. But everyone is entitled to their feelings, she said.

“A grief is a loss and isn’t something to compare,” she said. “What matters is how important it is to the person who’s experienced the loss. The grief is a way for us to shift and adapt. It helps us regain our footing.”

Another loss some people might feel now, whether they can reschedule a trip or not, is of their identity as a traveler, she said.

“If that is an aspect of ourselves, how we see ourselves, and now we can’t travel, that’s a loss,” she said.

One way to address that, she said, is to continue to explore new places and engage in cultural experiences, even if that means staying closer to home or going online.

When 33-year-old Alex Poworoznek of Phoenix proposed to his girlfriend, Carly Benford, 30, during a day hike in Sedona, Ariz., he was on Plan C. His original plan, to pop the question while on vacation in the United Kingdom, was scrubbed. As was Plan B in Hawaii.

Instead, he proposed during a picnic. In a nod to his original plan, he wrote coded questions on postcards from London, written as if he were there. Because the now-engaged couple couldn’t get full refunds, they’ve rebooked their U.K. trip for the fall and hope it goes through.

“If we couldn’t travel for the rest of the year, that would really set me back mentally,” Poworoznek said. “Whenever we have downtime, we get online and look at places we want to go.

Frequent traveler Paula Wright, 74, of Newbury, Mass., has taken to the internet to keep her enthusiasm alive. As a volunteer ambassador with Road Scholar, a nonprofit educational travel organization for adults (formerly known as Elderhostel), she gives travel presentations to seniors groups. She is giving her first on video-call service Zoom this month, about the Arctic and Antarctica.

Wright was about to take her 29th Road Scholar trip this spring, to Tanzania, along with a pre-trip to Botswana with her daughter; both trips involve wildlife safaris. When Road Scholar suspended its tours through May, she quickly rebooked for next year. She also has two trips planned for fall — a Road Scholar tour in Mongolia and a writer’s retreat in Maine.

“I would feel lost if I didn’t have travel scheduled,” she said. “Maybe think of it as, ‘It’s going to be different than maybe we’ve planned for, but let’s reimagine it in a way that works.’”
Cruise desire

By Hannah Sampson
The Washington Post

A

umber O’Hara was stuck at sea. But that didn’t ruin her appetite for another cruise.

The Golden, Colo., retiree had been aboard the Azamara Pursuit for nearly two weeks when the industry decided to pause operations because of the coronavirus pandemic. She and her partner, Jim Ward, spent 29 days on board before disembarking in Miami, more than a week late and a continent away from where the trip was supposed to end because ports had closed to cruise passengers along the way.

Still, O’Hara enjoyed her time on board, and couldn’t resist an offer from the cruise line to make up for her troubles: a credit worth 125% of the trip she was on that could be used for a future cruise. Conveniently, cruise ships have a dedicated place to make new reservations on board. She booked it on the spot.

“The guy was overwhelmed with people booking,” says O’Hara, 58, who put the credit toward a November cruise from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro. The “hardcore vacationer” who loves to cruise is still watching to see what the state of the world will be in October, when she and Ward have two cruises booked out of Venice.

“I guess I’m the eternal optimist,” she said.

Since the coronavirus started its rapid global spread, thousands of passengers have been infected and dozens have died in high-profile outbreaks on ships, even after the industry paused all new cruises in mid-March. That has led many to vow they would never set foot on a ship, even if ports had closed to cruise passengers along the way.

But some passionate fans are not scared away and are even eager to return to sailing as soon as they can — provided they feel as though cruise lines have put enough health and safety measures in place. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a no-sail order in place until July 24, but could extend the mandate as the agency and Coast Guard work with cruise lines on their coronavirus response plans.

Carnival Cruise Line has tentatively said it hopes to start sailing with a limited fleet of ships in August, but warned that those plans could change.

“There’s a sense for many people that they’ve got cabin fever,” said Lin Humphrey, an assistant professor of marketing at Florida International University who once worked in the cruise industry. “We yearn for things that make us feel comfortable that it’s going to be a safe experience and the vacation they love.”

For Paula Kaisner of the Golden, Colo., retiree on board.

“We were supposed to be in the Caribbean right now,” she said. “If it’s happening, I’m there.”

Also a question mark for Kaisner: the conferences on ships scheduled for October and November, and the sailings in December (Caribbean) and February (Hawaii).

“I’m itching for it. My husband and I, we love cruising; that is our main form of vacation travel,” she said. “I absolutely miss it. I will absolutely support the industry when it’s ready to come back. I am not afraid at all to get back on a cruise ship.”

Kaisner, 52, was supposed to sail to the British Virgin Islands in late March, but that trip was canceled. Her next trip, a work-related shipboard conference on Oceania Cruises in early August, is so far still on the books.

“It’s still a go, but that’s questionable right now,” she said. “If it’s happening, I’m there.”

A question mark for Kaisner: the conferences on ships scheduled for October and November, and the sailings in December (Caribbean) and February (Hawaii).

Cruise lines love customers like Kaisner and O’Hara because, they say, once those passengers get hooked, they keep coming back. Humphrey, the marketing professor, said cruisers who spend enough time and money on particular lines take their status (and the associated perks) seriously.

“I don’t think this is going to scare them off in the long term,” he said, though the risk-averse might wait awhile to return.

Ben Hewitt and his husband, Dan McDonald, who run the Cruise With Ben & David YouTube channel, have already had a handful of cruises canceled this year. On Hewitt’s last cruise before the shutdown, the ship was turned away from Abu Dhabi and briefly quarantined in Dubai before he decided to fly home out of fear of tightening travel restrictions. The canceled trips include personal vacations and promotional events that cruise lines had invited them to attend.

“We were supposed to be in the Caribbean right now,” Hewitt, 35, said in a recent interview. He and McDonald, 32, took their first cruise in 2016 on the Disney Magic and dreaded the trip in advance but found they had a great time. The Cambridge, England, couple has since taken about 30 cruises and turned the habit into a job making videos about ship tours, tips, advice — and, more recently, the pandemic’s impact on the industry.

Hewitt said his fingers are crossed that a November Caribbean cruise they booked last year will still be possible, but he said he’s trying to be realistic with his expectations.

“We definitely can’t wait to get back on a cruise, but it has to be the right time. It has to be when things are ready,” he said. Hewitt said he’d like to see more thorough plans from cruise lines about how they plan to handle outbreaks, with more details on cleaning procedures and food service. He said he expects cruise ships to be one of the last forms of transportation to return.

“They really can’t do with any more bad stories,” he said. “The worst thing possible would be for a cruise to start sailing and for COVID to break out on that ship. It would be an absolute nightmare.”

Cruise fans interviewed for this story said they would be willing to undergo more testing before boarding ships and want to see cruise companies talk more openly about the health and safety things they’re planning to make before people can start sailing again.

“I think that even avid cruisers recognize that hey, we’ve got to figure out this virus first and then talk about returning to cruising,” McDaniell said.
"Big Summer" is a breezy romp through online influencer culture

BY ANGELA HAUPT

Special to The Washington Post

The cover of Jennifer Weiner’s new novel, “Big Summer,” is already lovely: splashes of turquoise, purple and cornflower blue. But imagine how much more it could pop with a filter fromfilter like Mayfair or Lo-Fi, the blue becoming more electric, the purple as juicy as a ripe boysenberry.

That would be but a mirage. As Weiner graciously remarks, we’re all less shiny than our sepia-tinted selfies.

In “Big Summer,” Daphne Berg, a not-so-influential plus-size influencer, reconnects with her estranged former best friend, Drue Lathrop Cavanaugh. If you scrolled past Dru on Instagram, you’d be dazzled: good looks, excellent clothes, addictive smile. And yet, a read of the standard operating procedure online — and it’s easy to gloss over imperfections, especially the invisible kind that fester inside.

The novel was originally set to publish on May 19, but when the coronavirus pandemic hit, Simon & Schuster bumped it up the release by two weeks. The sooner readers had this dose of summer fun in their hands, the better — and it delivers.

Weiner takes a breezy romp through online influencer culture, leveling an “I see you” gaze at Instagram fake-till-you-make-it-crowd. It’s deliciously fun.

It captures the moment with surprising depth.

Years ago, Drue — a familiar high school name — humiliated Daphne at a bar, tricking her into a setup with a boy who could barely disguise his disgust.

After succumbing to a rare shot of courage, Daphne stood for herself and delivered an Oscar-worthy tell-off that would later go viral. Then she dropped out of college, as Drue screeched, “You’re a fat little nobody. ... You’re lucky I ever even talked to you!”

That night, Daphne “decided to stop being a girl on a diet and just start being a girl.” First, though, she’d drop “a hundred and seventeen useless pounds” by vowing to never see Drue Lathrop Cavanaugh again. Six years later, Daphne has evolved into a #iercefatgirl: a 20-something Instagram influencer who’s cultivated a following through body acceptance hashtags.

Weiner gets readers invested in the pair’s relationship — which is magnetic but unhealthy — through revealing flashbacks. When Drue reenters the picture, begging forgiveness and claiming she’s changed, it’s with a big ask: She’s getting married and needs a bridal party, which is what happens when you make a hobby out of hurting people. Will Daphne be her maid of honor?

Soon, the pair is in picturesque Cape Cod for the society wedding of the summer. Drue is marrying Stuart Lowe, who unionizes “the Single Ladies” — a hilarious spoof of “The Bachelor.” The couple outdid themselves soliciting sponsors that wanted to pay to be featured on wedding-related social media posts (hashtagged #dreusandstuwed). At the rehearsal dinner on the beach, for example, guests could recline on a king-size bed outfitted with selfie sticks — and hashtags for the mattress company and linen supplier.

From there, the plot careens into slightly over-the-top whodunit territory, with a splash of steamy romance.

Weiner’s appraisal of Instagram culture, and our fixation with likes and followers, will resonate. Even as Daphne enjoys the perks of influencer status — clothing from brand partners, a community of women who make her feel seen — she’s alert to its pitfalls. “In space, nobody could hear you scream; on the Internet, nobody could tell if you were lying,” she muses, adding that her confidence and self-love weren’t totally faked for Instagram — just “considerably amplified.”

“Even if things don’t get better, you can always make them look good on the Internet,” she counsels a young friend, which is as advice goes.

Even with a side of romance and mystery, this is a story about friendship — and the damage we do when we’re not authentic with ourselves and each other.

“Big Summer” is big fun, and then some. It’s empowering and surprising — a plot to put down the phone and enjoy each moment for what it is, rather than what it could look like on Instagram.

By Hiller Italie

Associated Press

Over the past few years, author Curtis Sittenfeld has gotten to know Hillary Clinton in a way uniquely suited for a novelist — by writing a work of fiction about her.

“I was definitely an admirer of Hillary before I started the book, but writing from her perspective made me feel closer to her,” “Rodham” author Sittenfeld wrote to The Associated Press in an email. “I realize that closeness is NOT mutual — we’ve never met. But she feels very familiar to me in terms of the trajectory of her life, her relationships, her syntax, so when I see clips of her or hear her voice, I think, ‘Oh, that’s my Hillary.’”

Sittenfeld’s new book is her second imagined portrait of a famous woman; “American Wife,” based on the life of Laura Bush, was published in 2008. But while “American Wife” tells of a high-profile marriage that remains intact despite the narrator’s misgivings, Sittenfeld follows a different path in “Rodham.” The “Hillary” in Sittenfeld’s book breaks off from Bill early and remains Hillary Rodham, a decision that proves fortunate for her.

It’s a premise that has been raised before, including by the author and journalist Rebecca Traister. In a 2015 interview with The New Republic, entitled “The Best Thing Hillary Could Do For Her Campaign? Ditch Bill,” Traister wrote of how Hillary raised before, including by the narrator’s misgivings, Sittenfeld follows a different path in “Rodham.” The “Hillary” in Sittenfeld’s book breaks off from Bill early and remains Hillary Rodham, a decision that proves fortunate for her.

“I feel that it’s important for me to say that if anyone wants to read a definitive account of Hillary’s life, they should read either of her two memoirs or perhaps the nonfiction account “A Woman In Charge” by Carl Bernstein or “Chasing Hillary” by Amy Chozick. “Rodham” is an act of imagination, creativity, and, yes, to some extent wishful thinking.

On political memoirs, including Bill Clinton’s “My Life” and Hillary Clinton’s “Living History”:

“I confess that I read only the first 25% of “My Life,” up until the point when Bill and Hillary get married, but I enjoyed both those books. Political memoirs are criticized for being anodyne or else campaign tools masquerading as literature, but I’m often surprised by how revealing and colorful they are. I read memoirs by all the female senators running for president in 2020, and I especially enjoyed reading about the candidates’ families and upbringing. (For instance, Amy Klobuchar, who’s my senator, went on an impressive road trip with her three friends. Their friendship was named Amy, Amy, Amy, and Heidi, and they rode the Greyhound from Minnesota to Florida, where they pretended to be college students and met a group of high school boys pretending the same, while wearing fake mustaches.)

In Curtis Sittenfeld’s “Rodham,” Hillary’s life takes a different direction.

On whether she hopes Hillary Clinton reads “Rodham”:

“If Hillary wants to read the book, she’s very welcome to and I’d be happy to hear her feedback (even if she thinks parts of it are preposterous), and if she doesn’t want to, I don’t blame her.”

Sittenfeld’s ‘Rodham’ imagines a different woman
If these were normal times, singer-songwriter Jason Isbell would celebrate the debut of his new album, “Reunions,” the way he usually does, by visiting famed East Nashville record store Grimey’s on release day.

But the coronavirus shutdown measures have left Isbell stuck at home, wrestling with the same quandary facing many of his peers: How do you release an album during a pandemic? For artists such as Lady Gaga, Sam Smith and the Dixie Chicks, who have postponed their album releases, and for artists such as Pearl Jam, Kenny Chesney and the Weeknd, who have pressed on, the coronavirus crisis presents opportunities, difficulties and the potential for career-ending humiliation in almost equal measure.

For Isbell, postponing “Reunions” was never really an option.

“It’s important to keep people interested in what you’re doing, because there’s so many distractions and so many different forms of entertainment that it’s really, really hard to keep people’s attention,” he says. “For me, I think putting out an album full of strong material is a really good way to remind people, ‘Hey, I’m still here. I’m still making music. Even though we’re all locked in the house.’”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33
Many rap artists such as DaBaby have an easier time navigating the pandemic because they are less dependent on physical album sales and live performances than rock and country artists.

FROM PAGE 32

All music genres have struggled during the pandemic, although not equally. Many rap artists, generally less dependent on physical album sales and live performances than their rock and country counterparts, are thriving, buoyed by newer hitmakers such as DaBaby and YoungBoy Never Broke Again.

As many musicians are discovering, a captive audience isn’t necessarily a receivably receptive one. “People are distracted, and people are freaked out,” says Roy Trakin, a contributing editor at trade publication Variety. “It’s really hard to get people to concentrate. Streaming (numbers are) up, but the statistics show that streaming is not up for new releases. Streaming is up for classic stuff, comfort music. Is it the time to introduce new music? Are people ready for it? On the one hand, they’re at home, they’ve got plenty of time to concentrate on things. But it’s such a weird time. Artists with scheduled coronavera releases weigh conflicting concerns. They worry about competing with the virus for the nation’s attention; they worry that their music, if delayed, will no longer feel relevant to them; they generally dread album rollouts and want to get them over with.

“I was very overwhelmed by both options,” says Paramore frontwoman Hayley Williams, who released her solo debut, “Petals for Armor,” this month, and who, like Isbell, had to scratch plans to spend her release day at Grimey’s. “If I postpone it, I’m just going to feel bleated with it for God knows how much longer. If I put it out now, what if it’s not sensitive enough? Will I look like an egotistical a------? Eventually, after the strange grief of it all, I just decided that I would be really pleased to get some new music from one of my favorite artists. If Bjork wanted to drop something immediately, I’d live.”

Mike Jollett, frontman of the L.A.-based rock band the Airborne Toxic Event, was forced to postpone his debut album, “These Two Windows,” for early May 29, nothing can compensate for his inability to tour. “There’s pluses and minuses” to releasing an album during a pandemic, he says. The closure of schools, where his music spread through word of mouth, wasn’t great, he figures, but those kids are now home, waiting to be entertained.”It often feels like you’re being hovered by you’re feeling that day,” Benjamin says. “Sometimes I’m really bummed, you know? I waited my whole life to finally be in a position in which I can play shows.”

If there’s one thing music industry experts agree on, it’s that nobody really knows anything. The industry’s few remaining gatekeepers appear ill-equipped to sift through the avalanche of new acts. Radio play, for example, means less when fewer people are listening on their way to work. No real consensus has emerged on whether artists should release albums or postpone them, or how they might best gauge the national mood. It’s easier to determine whether an album is built on excellent material, including -six songs Tillis co-wrote. She sings with a blue hue. She swoops and slides, yes, but most of all she smolders, an alto with a blue hue.

More than 35 years into her recording career, Tillis has never sounded better than on “Looking for a Feeling.” By turns saucy and seductive, pulling back to a near whisper so the listener will lean in. She applies twang and melisma but never over-sings. A stylist such as Patsy Cline would be proud, and so would Tillis. Her wonderful performance is built on excellent material, including six songs Tillis co-wrote. She sings of the sky really falling?" Given that the album was drawn from sessions at three studios, each with a different producer, the set is remarkably cohesive. The outlier is “Karma,” a keyboard-heavy overreach that tries too hard to sound contemporary. Elsewhere the arrangements are smartly uncluttered — rootsy and retro, but also timelessly, leaning the focus on the songs and their singer. — Steven Wine Associated Press

Damien Jurado

What’s New, Tomboy? (Mama Bird Recording Co.)

Damien Jurado’s “What’s New, Tomboy?” is a deceptively simple collection of delicate vignettes, wrapped in subdued arrangements brimming with layers of whimsical melodies. Jurado’s 15th album is nearly all self-made, from the songwriting and production to the cover art, but Josh Gordon’s bass guitar is a key component, both foundation and figure.

Some of the album’s songs, named after people like “Francine,” “Sandra” and “Frankie,” are tales of fragility, romance, commitment, maturity and conflict. Jurado’s voiced, now at once intimate and distant, lends them empathy and credibility.

Openet “Birds Tricked Into The Trees” is melancholy in that it’s featured on the album cover, a guitar weaving itself around a weeping melody and a pondering aphorism — “It’s all about / ways,” says Mike Scarrfard, the band’s manager. “So we just felt like if we got the music out and let people live with it, then it’s probably better than waiting for some unknown time period and you know, potentially dealing with a lot of competition in that time period for attention, because you’ve got to think that there are probably a lot of people doing that.”

For singer-songwriter Alec Benjamin, whose debut album “ drei Windows,” is for early May 29, nothing can compensate for his inability to tour. “There’s pluses and minuses” to releasing an album during a pandemic, he says. The closure of schools, where his music spread through word of mouth, wasn’t great, he figures, but those kids are now home, waiting to be entertained.”It often feels like you’re being hovered by you’re feeling that day,” Benjamin says. “Sometimes I’m really bummed, you know? I waited my whole life to finally be in a position in which I can play shows.”

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Pam Tillis

Looking for a Feeling (Stellar Cat Records)

Pam Tillis has mastered the art of singing without raising her voice. She swoops and slides, yes, but most of all she smolders, an alto with a blue hue.

More than 35 years into her recording career, Tillis has never sounded better than on “Looking for a Feeling.” By turns saucy and seductive, pulling back to a near whisper so the listener will lean in. She applies twang and melisma but never over-sings. A stylist such as Patsy Cline would be proud, and so would Tillis. Her wonderful performance is built on excellent material, including six songs Tillis co-wrote. She sings of the sky really falling?" Given that the album was drawn from sessions at three studios, each with a different producer, the set is remarkably cohesive. The outlier is “Karma,” a keyboard-heavy overreach that tries too hard to sound contemporary. Elsewhere the arrangements are smartly uncluttered — rootsy and retro, but also timelessly, leaning the focus on the songs and their singer. — Steven Wine Associated Press

Hayley Williams

Petals for Armor (Atlantic)

One of the most gifted emo graduates, the 33-year-old woman Hayley Williams spent a decade firmly restating that she was no solo act. They even sold shirts saying “Paramore Esta Una Banda.”

But the band themselves evolved so much that the pop-punk to Wall of Sound productions to Paradise Garage-inspired 80s, and with a lineup change on every record — that was once a deliberate branding and its curveballs and melodic tropes like “Dolly 1969” and the virality of a kid, dogs and old movies (“My Kind of Medicine”). Tillis strikes a timely note in closing with a look at the big picture on “Burning Star,” and asks,

“Is the sky really falling?”

Given that the album was drawn from sessions at three studios, each with a different producer, the set is remarkably cohesive. The outlier is “Karma,” a keyboard-heavy overreach that tries too hard to sound contemporary. Elsewhere the arrangements are smartly uncluttered — rootsy and retro, but also timelessly, leaning the focus on the songs and their singer. — Steven Wine Associated Press

— Dan Weiss

The Philadelphia Inquirer
TV’s hot summer
Here’s (almost) every show available soon

BY MATT BRENNAN
Los Angeles Times

Two months after the COVID-19 pandemic halted most productions, the TV spigot hasn’t slowed — at least not yet.

But one needn’t look too far down the road to glimpse the shadow of the shutdown. Though two major streaming services — HBO Max (May 27) and Peacock (July 15) — are still set to launch this summer, coronavirus has already reshaped the former’s rollout. In the absence of pilot season, Fox on May 11 became the first broadcast network to announce a fall schedule, one that draws on animations, the TV spigot hasn’t slowed — at least not yet.

To get a sense of what remains in the pipeline, the LA Times reached out to a dizzying array of platforms for their summer slates — focusing on new series, new seasons, specials and TV movies. Though we’ve had to omit some unannounced titles, and others will surely be added or subtracted from the schedule as circumstances demand, this is, as far as we can ascertain, (almost) every show coming to TV in this pandemic summer.

Note: “TBA” denotes a summer 2020 program without a set premiere date.

ABC
“AFV/JI/‘Home” (May 17)
“Holey Moley II: The Sequel” (May 21)
“Joel the Truth” (May 21)
“Marvel’s Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.” (May 27)
“Celebrity Family Feud” (May 31)
“Press Your Luck” (May 31)
“Match Game” (May 31)
“The Bachelor: The Greatest Seasons - Ever!” (June 8)
“Don’t” (June 11)

HBO
“Yvonne Orji: Momma, I Made It!” (June 6)
“I May Destroy You” (June 7)
“Penny Mason” (June 21)
“Tranhood” (June 24)
“I’ll Be Gone in the Dark” (June 28)
“Welcome to Chechnya” (June 30)
“Room 104” Season 4 (June 24)
“Bully. Coward. Victim. The Story of Roy Cohn” (June 30)
“Lovecraft Country” (August TBA)

Lifetime
“Married at First Sight: Couples Cam” (May 20)
“Once Upon a Quarantine” (May 20)
“Married at First Sight: Australia” (May 27)

“Lifetimes Celebrates 30 Years of the Iconic Lifetime Original Movie” (May 30)
“Dance Moms: Abby’s Virtual Dance Off!” (TBA)
“Supernanny” (TBA)
“Married at First Sight” Season 11 (TBA)
“Marrying Millions” Season 2 (TBA)

HULU
“The Great” (May 15)
“Ramy” Season 2 (May 29)
“We are Freestyle Love Supreme” (June 5)
“Into the Dark: Good Boy” (June 12)
“Crossing Swords” (June 12)
“Love, Victor” (June 19)
“Taste the Nation With Padma Lakshmi” (June 19)
“Into the Dark: The Current Occupant” (July 17)

PEACOCK
“Brave New World” (July 15)
“The Capture” (July 15)
“Intelligence” (July 15)
“Lost Speedways” (July 15)
“Psych 2: Lassie Come Home” (July 15)
“Deopatra in Space” (July 15)
“Curious George” (July 15)
“Where’s Waldo” (July 15)

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
“Banksters” (May 25)
“Gordon Ramsay: Uncharted” Season 2 (June 7)
“Wicked Tunas: Outer Banks” Season 7 (June 28)
“Lost on Everest” (June 30)
“Expedition Everest” (June 30)
“Sharkfest” (July)

HISTORY
“Grant” (May 25)
“Forged In Fire: Battle the Judges” (June 3)
“Counting Cars” (June 3)
“Mountain Men” (June 4)
“Alone” (June 11)
“The UnXplained (With William Shatner)” (July 11)
“Unidentified: Inside America’s UFO Investigation” Season 2 (July 11)
“The Cars That Made the World” (Sept. 7)

APPLE TV+
“Central Park” (May 29)
“Dear” (June 5)
“Dads” (June 9)
“Little Voice” (TBA)
“Ted Lasso” (TBA)
“Boys State” (TBA)
“Acon TV
“Dead Still” (May 18)
“Hidden” Season 2 (June 15)
“The Sommerdahl Murders” Season 1 (June 29)
“The Nest” (TBA)
“The Other One” Season 1 (TBA)
“Rebecca Martinsson” Season 2 (July 19)

AMAZON PRIME VIDEO
“Homecoming” (May 22)
“Hanna” Season 2 (July 3)
“Gina Brillon: The Floor Is Lava” (TBA)
“Absentia” Season 3 (TBA)
“The Boys” Season 2 (TBA)

BBC AMERICA
“Quiz” (May 31) - simulcast on AMC
“Nos4a2” Season 2 (June 21) - simulcast on AMC
“Wild India” (July 18)
“Top Gear: Nepal Special” (Aug. 23)
“Top Gear” BBC America (Aug. 30)

NBC
“The Titan Games” (May 25)
“America’s Got Talent” (May 26)
“World of Dance” (May 26)

THE CW
“Masters of Illusion” Season 7 (May 26)
“DC’s Stargirl” (May 19)
“The 100” Season 6 (May 20)
“Burden of Truth” Season 3 (May 21)
“Bulletproof” Season 2 (June 10)

BRITBOX
“Sticks & Stones” (June 9)
“Isolation Stories” (June 23)
“Red Dwarf: Promised Land” (July 23)
“Wild Bill” (July 28)

APPLE TV+
“Marrying Millions” Season 2 (TBA)

YOUTUBE PREMIUM
“Great Estates” (May 19)
“Jeff the Killer” (June 6)
“Lockdown” (June TBA)

VHI
“St. Louis with Matt” (May 18) - simulcast on MTV and MTV2
“Eric & Julian: Breakout” (June 25)
“RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars” Season 5 (June 5)

TRAVEL CHANNEL
“Renovation Island” (June 7)
“Good Bones” (June 9)
“Build Me Up” (July 3)
“Help! I Wrecked My House” (July 29)

BRITISH CULTURE
“Bachelorette” (May 25)
“RuPaul’s Drag Race All Stars” Season 8 (August 4)

SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL
“An American Aristocrat’s Guide to Great Estates” (May 17)
“Inside Lives of the Monarchs” (May 18)
“Mystic Britain” Season 2 (June 14)
“Hunt for the Lost Superfleet” (June 15)
“Who is the Hunter for Escobar’s Hippo?” (July 12)

TRUTV
“Dear Class of 2020” (June 20)
“Uncensored” (June 28)

YOUTUBE PREMIUM
“Hunt for the Lost Superfleet” (June 28)

YOUTUBE PREMIUM
“NOS4A2” Season 2 (June 21)

YOUTUBE PREMIUM
“The Great British Bake Off” (June 28)

YOUTUBE PREMIUM
“Hunt for the Lost Superfleet” (June 28)

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History ‘of our own making’

‘The Great’ aims to reinvent story of Russian empress

BY LUANNE LEW
Tribune News Service

Sometines history can be so boring that nobody wants to hear about it. But Hulu plans to change all that when it presents its new 10-part ‘biography’ of Catherine the Great, available Friday.

This is not the sternly sagacious Empress of Russia that audiences have seen before with Helen Mirren, or Catherine Zeta-Jones, or Bette Davis, or even Marlene Dietrich.

No, this is former child actress Elle Fanning, now grown up. And ‘The Great’ is a comedy.

What’s more, it’s not even historically accurate, says creator Tony McNamara.

“When I see people tying their shoes with ribbons, I wanna kill myself,” he says. “So I was like, ‘What would I watch? What would be exciting for me?’ A period show about a great character. But how would we do that in a way that twisted the genre a little — but it was all about the characters?”

Comedy is new to Fanning, 22, who literally cut her teeth in films like “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” and “Daddy Day Care.”

“That did take a bit of getting used to for me. It’s a show I would watch? And that in a way that twisted the genre a little bit and made it a show I would watch?” Fanning says.

The Australian McNamara, who earned an Academy Award nomination for his screenplay “The Favourite,” says, “I think when I started, the reason I wanted to do it was because basically I knew one thing about Catherine the Great, which was maybe she fornicated with a horse. And then I also found out everything about her.”

What he discovered, he says, is that history’s impression of her is skewed.

“She went to a country she didn’t even know. She took it over. She started female education. She kept the Enlightenment alive. She invented the roller coaster. I was, like, well that’s the story,” he says. “And it also seemed a contemporary story because the received wisdom about her is a terrible lie and defines who everyone saw her as. But she was this quite incredible woman. So that seemed like a fascinating story to tell for us. But I also didn’t want to get bogged down in all the detail.

“And what I’ve talked about is finding really specific things we wanted to deal with that she did. And (I planned to) get to the true essence of those massive things that she did, but not get bogged down in all the really small detail so that it gets sort of boring historically. He thinks hers is actually a contemporary tale.

“It’s like, who are these people when they wake up? On one level, she’s Catherine the Great who marries Peter the Great and that’s a big story,” he says. “On another level that’s quite contemporary, it’s about a woman who marries the wrong person and then has to go, ‘What do I do? Do I kill him?’ And that seemed a contemporary question.”

McNamara doesn’t apologize for veering off the truth.

“As long as I feel like we’re truly telling a version of her story that is historically accurate here and there, and there’s certain sort of tent poles that we try and hit,” he says. “It’s not a perfectly historically accurate document. That’s not what we’re trying to do. Other shows have done that, and that’s not what we’re trying to do.”

While much of the series is McNamara’s invention, some of it is actually right out on, he says.

“There’s also lots of details that are completely strange that turn out to be true. Like odd methods of contraception and odd methods of pregnancy testing that are so bizarre you think we made them up, but they’re all kind of accurate,” he says. “It’s peppered with lots of detail that is true, and then how we tell the story is of our own making.”

It’s not a perfectly historically accurate document. That’s not what we’re trying to do. Other shows have done that, and that’s not what we’re trying to do.”

Tony McNamara
Creator, “The Great”
Weight of coronavirus

Avoid socially-distanced weight gain by starting new, healthy habits now

Mayo Clinic News Network

I f you’ve gained weight during the COVID-19 pandemic, you aren’t alone. The “Quarantine 15” — referring to the weight gain some people have experienced since stay-at-home guidelines went into effect — is likely due to a disruption in daily routines and habits.

“People’s habits have changed quite a bit since we’re spending more time at home,” says Dr. Donald Hensrud, medical director of Mayo Clinic’s Healthy Living Program. And those changes in habits can lead to health and medical issues down the road.

Dr. Hensrud shares his thoughts on the disruption of habits and how people can find new habits.

“Now, I want to make a point for some people: Getting enough food, getting enough calories and maintaining weight may be an issue,” Dr. Hensrud says. “Some people may have to worry about maintaining their weight, not unintentionally losing weight. But for many of us, our habits have changed.”

Change in movement

“For example, people think about exercise right away, and they should,” Dr. Hensrud says. “Fitness centers are closed. People may be doing less exercise and burning less calories through activity that way. What people don’t think quite as much about, though, is low-level activity throughout the day. Even if we have a desk job, we have to walk at least to our car to get to work. We may walk throughout the day; we may walk to lunch. And, so, for spending time at home, that low-level activity may be causing us to burn fewer overall calories.”

Consuming more calories

“We may be consuming more calories. On the good side, we’re eating out less at restaurants. Some-
times that can be high-calorie. We still may be taking takeout at home, so there might be a little bit of a good thing there, a decrease in calories. However, many people are stockpiling frozen foods and processed foods that have a long shelf life. Many times, they’re higher in calories and less healthy,” Dr. Hensrud says. “On the flip side, for example, fruits and vegetables: They don’t last as long, and we may be consuming less of them. There are a number of reasons why we might be at risk for weight gain through our habits that have changed, both in burning activity and in consuming more calories.”

Why weight gain matters

“A few pounds short term may not make a difference. It could be fluid. It might be just a little weight gain while we establish new routines. Obviously, the more we weight gain and the longer it’s maintained, the more it affects our health,” Dr. Hensrud says. “For children, for example, it’s been shown that children’s weight tracks to some extent. If children establish those habits, or lack of healthy habits, when they’re young and they gain weight, that might persist as they go into adolescence and adulthood.”

“Similarly, with adults, as we maintain those habits, if we can establish a new routine, the longer this goes on, then we can arrest that weight gain and try and maintain a normal weight. It’s more important for some people than others,” Dr. Hensrud continues. “For example, people who have very high blood pressure. Just a modest amount of weight gain in some people, if they’re sensitive to that, can increase their blood glucose and blood pressure, and they won’t have a good control over these factors, over these conditions. So, it depends on the individual, it depends on their health conditions, and it depends on long-term habits or routines.”

Establish new habits

“When all habits, it takes time to establish them, so everybody is getting accustomed to this new normal. I’d encourage people to establish those new healthy habits now. You have to be a little proactive about this, and that will make it easier in the long term. Break out of your comfort zone,” Dr. Hensrud says.

“Instead of giving in to large amounts of comfort food, this can be an opportunity to take foods that we may not think of as healthy — you can make burritos, bean burritos or even pizza. If you make it in the correct way, it can be a healthy food. Invest some time. Planning is a real key here if you plan ahead rather than just grabbing something at the last moment. Try and raise your culinary skills and do a little bit more cooking. It’s an opportunity for that, too. So, if we can embrace this, embrace our new normal, look for opportunities to establish new healthy routines.”

“Eating healthy and eating well don’t have to be drudgery. It can and should be an enjoyable way to live. And if we can do that, then we can better manage our weight and our overall health during this pandemic,” Dr. Hensrud adds.

I went for a walk the other day. Something in the window caught my eye: my reflection. I can’t say for sure, but I’m beginning to strongly suspect there is a little more of me than there was at the start of March.

I cannot say I am surprised. I’ve been working from home and practicing expert-level social distancing for two months now. Everything about my life and my routine has changed. That my body is changing too isn’t a surprise — or a bad thing.

I have been doing yoga at home, but scrolling past YouTube’s litany of “power core flow” and “total body vinyasa” routines in favor of slow, gentle, stress-relieving stretches. And I have been blissfully, gleefully throwing off the shackles of worrying about what I eat or how much I ate or whether I’ve made it to spin class recently.

I certainly haven’t stepped on a scale recently, but I’m pretty sure I’ve gained a little weight. And I couldn’t be more thrilled about it.

In fact, I’m grateful. If the worst thing that comes out of all of this for me is that I have to buy new pants, I will weep with gratitude.

I’m fortunate about a lot of things. Gain- ing weight means you have enough food to eat. My husband and I still have our jobs. So far, we’ve stayed healthy. So have my parents, my in-laws, my cousins, my uncles and aunts.

I decided to ask a couple of experts whether gaining a little extra protective coating will permanently ruin my health. The short answer: no. While obesity can be a contributing factor to worse outcomes for coronavirus patients, most people are not going to go from a healthy weight to obese just by eating more snacks for a couple of months, said Whitney Catalano, a registered dietician who lives in L.A.’s Palms neighborhood.

“Don’t worry about a few pounds, and remove the worry about the weight itself and focus on things that might be more compassionate ways to think about your health,” Samantha Cassetty, a registered dietitian who lives in New York City, said. “Slightly tighter jeans is not a massive weight gain.”

My overindulging will not end when social distancing does. I am setting money aside specifically to attempt to single-handedly revive our great city’s bar and restaurant scene, on top of the jaw- and waistline-popping amount of takeout I’ve ordered in recent weeks.

When they fling open the doors to the gyms and fitness centers once again, we can flood them like every day is the first Monday after New Year’s. I do plan on going back to the gym — I miss my spin Palms neighborhood.

“Don’t worry about a few pounds, and remove the worry about the weight itself and focus on things that might be more compassionate ways to think about your health,” Samantha Cassetty, a registered dietitian who lives in L.A.’s Palms neighborhood.

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The full freshman experience

Incoming college students wonder if campuses will reopen

By Gary Robbins
The San Diego Union-Tribune

K ate Quis loves San Diego State University and hopes to be a freshman there this fall. But she might end up 1,300 miles away, strolling the hilly paths of the University of Kansas.

She's decided to go to whichever school announces first that it will welcome students on campus rather than making them stay home and take courses online to avoid the novel coronavirus.

"I want the full freshman experience — going to football games, rushing a sorority, being around people my age, learning to be independent," said Quis, a senior at Rancho Bernardo High School in San Diego. "I don't want to pay to take classes only online."

Like other students, she'll be lucky if either school opens its doors.

The cherished tradition of packing a suitcase and heading off to college for freshman year has been scuttled by the coronavirus, which has shut campuses nationwide, forcing them to offer courses online.

Schools are suddenly reeling from unexpected costs, ranging from housing refunds to helping some students pay for flights home.

"This is the biggest disruption in the history of American higher education, one that could wipe out the full freshman experience — going to football games, living in dorms, making them stay 6 feet apart, and possibly triggering their use of restrooms."

USD President James Harris III wants to make things work, but he's circumspect.

"We're preparing to bring students back in the fall — but we're not not telling students to be here."

Harris, who has frozen wages on campus and personally taken a 15% pay cut, said: "It's difficult to plan for a variety of scenarios four months away when we don't know what we will be allowed or capable of doing."

His frustration is shared by Albert Pisano, dean of the Jacobs School of Engineering at UC San Diego.

"How do you teach students teamwork if they can't get together?"

PLNU President Bob Brower feels something similar: "This is a relationship-driven place. So much happens just encountering people on campus or in class. That's just more difficult right now."

The deadline for accepting admission at UCSD, SDSU, and USD was May 1. CSUSM and PLNU are giving students until June 1. Students could later switch to a different university if they find one that's offering in-person classes.

But many students wouldn't have to afford the cost of suddenly shifting to another school which, in some cases, could be far from home. Educators say students are more likely to stay close to home and many will take basic requirement classes at community colleges, which charge a fraction of the price of four-year schools.

Educators also that say some students won't return, crimping school revenues. It also could make it harder for students to graduate in a timely way.

"Many of the traditional gap years, backpacking vacations, volunteering in a foreign country — would be tough to do. Airlines have slashed international flights. Many foreign hotels aren't open. There are few places to pick up a job to cover expenses."

Students have to be really dedicated to do it from home."

"There are more distractions when you're at home," said TJ Griggs, a senior at SDSU. "You can get bored and forget school is there. You have to be really dedicated to do it right.""
**NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD**

**BORDER CROSSINGS**

**ACROSS**
1  “For more ____”
5  Some unwanted mail
9  Tense bit of advice
12  Half of an ice cream brand with a fake Danish name
19  Work a speech
20  Rent
21  Like tap water in a restaurant
22  His part
23  Wing it [Africa]
25  Blue
26  Chew out
27  Aprés-ski drink
28  Complete rip-off
31  Wealthy king of legend
32  Recess
36  Charge for admission
37  See 101-Down
39  Quaint contraction
41  Record company
42  Charge for admission
43  Wealthy king of legend
44  Recess
46  Charge for admission
48  Charge for admission
49  Charge for admission
50  Charge for admission
51  Take in

**DOWN**
1  Kant
2  Manhattan neighborhood west of the East Village
3  Order
4  Cranky codger
5  ‘Reach for the sky!’
6  Sandwich often served with remoulade sauce
7  Killer of the Night King on “Game of Thrones”
8  “Throw ____ bone”
9  Key of Debussy’s “Clair de Lune”
10  Black pie-crust component
11  Lead-in to many a joke on “The Daily Show”
12  Senator who once served as an editor of The Harvard Law Review
13  Hunt

**RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE**

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15 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN
**Seeing the light of day**

**‘Snyder Cut’ of ‘Justice League’ to be released on HBO Max sometime next year**

**BY MICHAEL CAVNA**

*The Washington Post*

“This is real,” filmmaker Zack Snyder trumpeted Wednesday afternoon on Twitter, with “this” referring to his storied version of the critically maligned “Justice League” film that will now see the light of day.

The so-called “Snyder Cut” of the 2017 superhero team-up movie will be released sometime next year on HBO Max, Warner Bros. and the streaming service announced Wednesday.

“I want to thank HBO Max and Warner Brothers for this brave gesture of supporting artists and allowing their true visions to be realized,” said Snyder, who broke the news to fans Wednesday during an online “Man of Steel” commentary with its star, Henry Cavill. “Also a special thank you to all of those involved in the SnyderCut movement for making this a reality.”

The announcement can be viewed as a victory for Snyder fans who had rallied around the #ReleaseTheSnyderCut hashtag and clamored for his vision of the film, which was believed to be considerably longer than the two-hour theatrical release.

Last fall, around the second anniversary of “Justice League’s” release, two of its stars, Gal Gadot (who plays Wonder Woman) and Ben Affleck (Batman), tweeted the hashtag in support.


Thank you.”

And Pride of Gypsies, the Instagram account of Jason Momoa (the film’s Aquaman), said, “Finally it’s happened” and “Justice served” in a post Wednesday.

“The chant to #ReleaseTheSnyderCut has been a daily drumbeat in our offices and inboxes,” Robert Greenblatt, chairman of Warner Media Entertainment and its direct-to-consumer business, said in a statement.

The Hollywood Reporter said that Snyder would reunite with “the original post-production crew to score, cut and finish visual effects” to create “an entirely new thing,” with his “Justice League” makeover possibly cut into “chapters” for its streaming release.

In May 2017, with the film set for release that November, Snyder announced that he would turn “Justice League” over to Joss Whedon for completion. Snyder had lost his 20-year-old daughter to suicide about two months earlier.

Upon release, the film — which felt like a patchwork of styles — was widely considered a critical misfire and commercial underperformer. Debate raged on social media about whether Whedon and the studio had stayed true to Snyder’s creative vision, and some diehard fans began demanding to see a fabled raw and incomplete version of the film, as guided solely by Snyder.

The budding “Snyder Cut” movement spawned various social-media accounts and a GoFundMe campaign.

“At the end of the day,” Greenblatt said, “it really is all about the fans.

Joe Rogan’s podcast headed to new home on Spotify

*Los Angeles Times*

“The Joe Rogan Experience” is headed to Spotify.

The podcast’s host and comedian announced Tuesday that the popular show will be available on Spotify starting Sept. 1. Then “somewhere around the end of the year,” the streaming service will become the podcast’s exclusive home.

“It will remain free, and it will be the exact same show,” Rogan said in an Instagram post. “It’s just a licensing deal, so Spotify won’t have any creative control over the show. We will still have clips up on YouTube but full versions of the show will only be on Spotify after the end of the year.”

According to Spotify’s press announcement, “The Joe Rogan Experience” has long been one of the most searched-for podcasts on the streaming service. The video episodes of the podcast, which Rogan’s team also produces, will be available to view within the Spotify app.

Rogan launched his podcast in 2009 and has boasted an intellectually diverse array of guests from Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk to Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). Despite Rogan’s controversial opinions and comments, notable figures from the entertainment industry, politics and other news organizations have appeared on “The Joe Rogan Experience.”

Daytime Emmys return to TV, but skipping the theater

The Daytime Emmy Awards are skipping a theater ceremony because of the coronavirus, but the honors will be presented on a TV broadcast.

CBS’ decision to air the awards on June 26 is a bright spot for the daytime honors, which had been consigned to an online presentation in recent years as viewer interest dwindled.

Nominations for the 47th annual Daytime Emmy Awards were to be announced Thursday on CBS’ “The Talk,” with categories including best drama series, talk show and game show.

The New York-based National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, which organizes the daytime awards, had previously announced it wouldn’t hold the traditional theater ceremony out of pandemic safety concerns.

Awards will be presented on the CBS broadcast in leading categories, with winners and “other special guests appearing from home in light of the COVID-19 pandemic,” the network and academy said in a joint announcement.

Winners in other categories were to be announced on Twitter during the two-hour telecast, with more awards to be presented in a July ceremony, the academy said.

Loughlin, Giannulli to serve prison time for college scam

Actress Lori Loughlin and her fashion designer husband, Mossimo Giannulli, have agreed to plead guilty to charges in the college admissions bribery case and serve prison time, according to court papers filed Thursday.

The couple agreed to plead guilty to conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud in a plea agreement filed in Boston’s federal court. The charge carries up to 20 years in prison and a fine of $250,000.

Under the plea agreement, Loughlin has agreed to serve two months in prison and Giannulli has agreed to serve five months. The plea deal must be approved by the judge.

Body of WWE pro found after suspected drowning

The body of former World Wrestling Entertainment pro Shad Gaspard was found early Wednesday on Los Angeles’ Venice Beach, after he was caught in a rip current last weekend, police said.

Patrol officers were flagged down around 1:25 a.m. by a person reporting that a body had washed ashore, a Police Department statement said.

He was about 50 yards from shore when he was last spotted by a lifeguard, police said.

Gaspard was 41 and a well-known wrestler with his 20-year-old daughter to suicide about two months earlier.

Beckyone joins Obamas in honoring 2020 graduates

Beckyone has been added to the list of guest speakers for YouTube’s virtual commencement ceremony that will also feature the Obamas.

YouTube announced Tuesday that Beyoncé will deliver an inspirational message to the 2020 class for its “Dear Class of 2020” event, which will take place June 6 at 3 p.m. EDT and will stream on YouTube.

“Dear Class of 2020” will include music performances from BTS, Lizzo, Migos, The Strokes, Chloe x Halle, Mahalia, CNCO and Camila Cabello.
**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

Stolen baby goat reunited with owners

MD BALTIMORE — A stolen baby goat was returned home to its community garden in Baltimore late Tuesday night, police said.

A car, more police said, was notified just before 10 p.m. that the young Nigerian Dwarf goat named Ed had been “anonymously returned” to his owners, according to a statement from the department.

Ed was reported missing from the Filbert Street Garden on Monday night. His caretakers alleged in a Facebook post that two teenagers tore through a fence, cut off a lock and broke into a barn to steal the animal, which weighs just 20 pounds and depends on its mother’s milk to survive.

In an update, the garden celebrated Ed’s safe return and thanked police for their help. Authorities did not say whether they were continuing to investigate.

Police: Body found after man jumps in river

PA LEHIGHTON — Authorities said the body of a man has been recovered from an eastern Pennsylvania river in the area searches were looking for a man who went into the river while fleeing from police the night before.

The (Allentown) Morning Call reported that the Carbon County coroner pronounced a 32-year-old man dead Wednesday afternoon along the Lehigh River near a railroad trestle that straddles Franklin Township and Lehighton.

Police haven’t said whether they believe the man is the same person who went into the river shortly after 7:30 p.m. Tuesday after fleeing from Franklin Township police.

Robbery suspect hit by car, yet still escapes

OH AKRON — A robbery suspect who jumped from a moving car was run over by the vehicle but still managed to flee from police, authorities said.

Akron police saw the man jump from the rear of the car around 9:15 p.m. Monday, authorities said. He was then struck when the car spun around, but he ran off.

The suspect was said to have been identified, but they did not release his name.

Two other men who were in the vehicle were arrested on weapons charges. Authorities said three loaded handguns were found in the car. The driver told police that the man who jumped from the vehicle had been trying to rob him and the other passenger. The matter remains under investigation, authorities said.

Boaters rescue 4 after kayaks capsize

CT STAMFORD — Two adults and two children were rescued from their capsized kayaks off the Connecticut coast in a spot where a man drowned three weeks prior.

Civilian boaters rescued a group of people Monday night off Wallacks Point in Stamford after hearing a radio distress call, the Stamford Advocate reported Tuesday.

A resident on the point, between Cummings Beach and Cove Island Park, called 911 after seeing people in the water next to their capsized kayaks, Deputy Fire Chief Tom Glorersen said.

Joe Hoyt, 27, was on his way out of the channel when the distress call was picked up by one of his passengers, Joey Romaniello, 30, a volunteer firefighter. Hoyt found the four people, including a 9-year-old girl and 6-year-old boy, with life preservers on the east side of Wallacks Point.

Bison put down after injuring park visitor

ND MEDORA — A bison had to be put down after injuring a woman visiting the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota, the National Park Service said.

Officials said the 55-year-old woman from Watford City was hiking around a bend on the Buckhorn Trail on Monday afternoon when she encountered a bull bison on the trail. The bull charged, striking the woman in the face and knocking her down.

The woman called 911 while on the ground, and a U.S. park ranger responded and found the bull still standing near the woman. The bison was showing increasing signs of aggression, so the ranger shot the animal.

The woman was flown to Minot and treated for broken vertebrae and facial fractures.

Suits: Security employee spied on customers

TX DALLAS — Two federal class-action lawsuits have been filed against ADT, one of the largest security companies in the country, alleging that an employee’s personal email address was added on 220 ADT customers’ accounts in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

ADT has fired the employee since discovering the breach. It was not immediately clear whether he faces criminal charges.

Small plane lands on road after engine fails

MO LEE’S SUMMIT — A small plane was forced to land on an interstate highway in suburban Kansas City Tuesday afternoon when one of the aircraft’s two engines apparently failed, authorities said.

The pilot was the only one aboard and was not injured when the twin-engine Bonanza landed on eastbound Interstate 470 in Lee’s Summit, police said. The plane hit a few signs but no other serious damage was reported.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol said on Twitter that the pilot was making his final approach to the Lee’s Summit airport when the engine failed.

Trooper brings moose calves, mom together

UT HEBER CITY — A Utah state trooper has helped a pair of newborn moose calves reunite safely with their mother after spotting them on a mountain road.

The trooper noticed the hours-old calves without their mother as he drove home from work, about 45 miles east of Salt Lake City on Monday, said Utah Highway Patrol Sgt. Nick Street.

It’s not clear how they became separated. Worried they could be hit by a car, trooper Alexander Agin stopped and put up a traffic barrier. Once he was out of his car and walking, the baby moose began to follow him. So Agin decided to guide them away from the traffic danger.

Just as he led them off the road, the calves’ mother arrived — and began to change him. Agin retreated to his car and recorded a quick video of the moose family reuniting and entering the trees.

From wire reports

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Friday, May 22, 2020

**ROLLING AGAIN**

A Rollerblader skates on the Hollywood Beach Broadwalk on Tuesday in Hollywood, Fla. Broward County started a phased reopening Monday.

**THE CENSUS**

$1M

The approximate amount of money in two bags that a Virginia family out for a drive for a change of scenery during the coronavirus lockdown found lying in the road. David and Emily Schantz left their Caroline County home with their children Saturday and drove their pickup truck over what they thought was a bag of trash, then stopped and picked it up as well as another bag nearby, news sources reported Tuesday. When the Schantzes returned home, they discovered the bags contained money, Emily Schantz said.

Caroline Sheriff’s Maj. Scott Moser would not say where the money was going. But he said he hopes the recipients offer the Schantzes a nice reward.
By Ernie Gates
Stars and Stripes ombudsman

T he coronavirus outbreak on the US and overseas is freshly in the news again, rightly grabbing the attention of news organizations everywhere, including Stars and Stripes. But this column is not about the COVID-19 story. The purpose of this column is to zero out Stripes’ $15.5 million slice of the $705 billion defense budget and shut it down. To keep these stories coming, and keep those who work deep within the Pentagon, families and DOD civilians around the world, it’s up to Congress to reverse the Pentagon’s proposal and make Stripes’ appropriation ironclad.

Here’s a little sample of Stripes’ unique coverage. COVID-19 is obviously a global story, but outbreaks, shutdowns, tests and quarantines happen locally. That’s where Stripes comes in. We are a local, accurate source of local content through news accounts and personal stories, while wire service reports provide the global picture, the national response and the international headlines.

In South Korea, Stripes was on the scene in Daegu immediately at the first big outbreak in the spring. When the local government gathering that started the spread and followed up repeatedly as U.S. Forces Korea responded with lockdowns and social distancing, worked hard toward collective testing with our allies, and more. Stories covered the threat to readiness, to backfillers and other volunteers. Army couple’s premature twins were born in a coronavirus-stricken Daegu hospital and were put on oxygen. A soldier’s newborn on neonatal care in the U.S. During a video town hall, one base command gave Stripes’ biweekly community publication a shout-out for publishing middle-high school students’ poems about life in lockdown.

In Japan, a 7th Fleet homecoming at Yokosuka went socially distanced and hughless as returning crew members went into quarantine. Child care centers serving Yokota, Camp Zama and Yokosuka were closed because of suspected coronavirus cases. Last year, U.S. Forces Japan recognized Stripes as an important conduit of COVID-19 policies and advisories. Stripes gave voices to families’ concerns that Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Japan were not planning to close which they soon did. Marines on Okinawa converted their 3D printer training into a mini-factory to produce thousands of face masks and face shield frames for medical workers and gates guards.

Stripes reporters covered the local consequences around the world as coronavirus concerns grew. UDOEA schools closed from the Pacific to the Middle East to Europe. High school sports tournaments and spring sports were called off. Base recreational activities went dark, gyms locked their doors, off-base became the new in-person. Food courts were roped off, changes kept customers apart. In Japan, carabinieri visited Aviano and Vicenza to check if social distancing rules were being enforced. In Germany, French Marine wife and Urania, a U.S. Marine spouse sang a parody aria from her balcony to entertain her Patch Barracks neighbors.

None of those stories were going to be noticed by DECA schools, just one more of Stripes’ reports that are part of those communities, that remains true as coronavirus restrictions begin to lift. Plenty of Stripes’ “local” coverage of the pandemic also cast an enterprising light on the larger story. Stripes in Europe first reported DOD’s decision to stop reporting cases base by base and release only an aggregate number worldwide. As debate raged over the source of the outbreak prior to the technical report, the chairman and the commanding general in a port call in Vietnam, Stripes reporting disclosed broad prior agreement along the chain of command for that port call.

On the international front, Stripes reporters continued to produce stories of special local relevance, such as the impact of the virus on Germany. With reporters still based in Afghanistan, unlike most news sources, Stripes was able to position to add praise to the obituary of Medal of Honor recipient Ronal Shurer from some of the Afghan special forces leaders he trained and fought beside.

There are plenty more where these stories came from, and more being reported, written, edited, fact-checked and designed. Far from being obsolete, Stars and Stripes’ independent news desk reports unique content, coverage that helps to educate, empower and entertain. Stars and Stripes’ reporting supports morale by building community and shared experience among military families.

The FY21 Defense bills are under consideration in Congress now. It’s good to tell your senators and House member to reverse the Pentagon’s shutdown plan, restore Stars and Stripes’ appropriation and rescue its important mission.

Ernie Gates is the independent ombudsman for Stars and Stripes, a congressionally mandated position in which his charge is to hold the newspaper’s mission firmly in focus. He can be contacted at omбудман@stripes.com or by phone for reader letters at (202) 886-0600.

Telecommuting Isn’t the future work model

By Helaine Olen
Special to The Washington Post

Thursday, May 22, 2020

Telecommuting isn’t the future work model. It was the future 20 years ago — mostly for upper-income and upper-middle-management groups. Started as an employee benefit, companies kept the telecommuting option around, not because they believed it was a good way to work, but because it was cheaper! It was cheaper to have employees work in a space they didn’t pay for, on a computer they didn’t have to buy!

With no Stripes, these stories won’t be told

Ernie Gates is the independent ombudsman for Stars and Stripes. He can be reached at ombudsmans@stripes.com. Readers can contact the ombudsman by phone at (202) 886-0600 or by email at ombudsman@stripes.com.

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What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Red flags in DeVos’ plan on sexual harassment on campus

The Washington Post

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ long-planned overhaul of regulations governing how schools and colleges handle allegations of sexual harassment and assault has been released in final form. As expected, they came under almost immediate court challenge from groups who claim they will lead to a return to the bad old days when campus rape and sexual misconduct were swept under the rug.

It is fair to question why the Trump administration chose to release the final rules during the 2020 election, when government policy changes take time to implement and when the public is focused elsewhere.

The regulations released May 18 reduce the now-rescinded guidance of the Obama administration on how to enforce the 48-year-old federal law banning sex-based discrimination in federally funded education programs. The Education Department said the new rules were not in response to any particular incident but aimed to signal a return to a more student-focused approach.

In the past time there was no criminal investigation into Flynn — as Biden knows. In 2016, the FBI opened a counterintelligence investigation into Flynn, and it was under that pretense that it conducted the interview in which it later claimed that Flynn lied. The lack of a criminal investigation, ” as he told Sirius XM’s “The Joe Madison Show”: “People would be derelict if they didn’t have enough curiosity to inquire what was going on.”

In other words, it’s OK to eavesdrop on your political opponents if you’re curious about their conversations with foreign agents. We doubt that justification would have played well had the George W. Bush administration spied on Barack Obama’s incoming team. Officials of incoming administrations routinely talk with officials of foreign governments.

Such exchange don’t justify the wide-spread scale of Obama administration unmasking of Flynn. And they certainly don’t justify the same kind of “perfectly legitimate” spying on Flynn and Attorney General Jeff Sessions had with the Russian ambassador. Leaking those classified conversations is a felony.

Then there’s John Brennan, the Obama CIA director, who claimed that the real scandal is naming the name of the unmasked Flynn. Brennan told CNN that he had a professional duty to investigate the “numerous engagements by representatives of the Trump camp with Russians.” As he told Sirius XM’s “The Joe Madison Show”: “People would be derelict if they didn’t have enough curiosity to inquire what was going on.”

The Flynn ‘unmasking’ involved brazen acts by Obama officials

The Wall Street Journal

The media are mostly ignoring the news that Obama administration officials sought to unmask Michael Flynn in August 2016. The objective of the unmasking was to investigate Flynn’s conversations with foreigners, but here and there they’ve asked a question. The unpersuasive answers suggest there’s more to learn.

Take Joe Biden, who “unmasked” Flynn only a few days before leaving office as vice president. Last week Biden told ABC that he knew “nothing about those moves.

The 2016 and 2017 spying on Trump officials and then leaking to promote a false narrative of collusion is one of the dirtiest tricks in the history of American politics. It is not “perfectly legitimate,” and the public needs to know the full story behind it.

Congress must require states to expand 2020 mail-in voting

Los Angeles Times

It is time for Congress to require states to expand opportunities for voting by mail and early voting — and to help pay for those changes — so that Americans on Nov. 3 aren’t faced with a choice between their health and their ability to exercise the most important right of citizens in a democracy.

That was the grim dilemma encountered by voters in Wisconsin’s April 7 election, when — despite social distancing and other precautions — dozens of voters and poll workers may have been infected at polling places. It’s vital that Congress act now to prevent voters across the country from encountering a similar situation in November, which could lower turnout as well as spread disease.

Congress included $400 million for state election systems in a coronavirus stimulus package approved in March. But that sum still falls far short of what is required to make it possible for states — especially those that lack experience with extensive voting by mail — to prepare for an election in which most votes might have to be cast by that method.

The House passed a new coronavirus relief bill Friday that would give state election systems $3.6 billion to respond to the pandemic — a sum much closer to estimates of what will be required to conduct elections during this crisis. But Congress must act quickly; according to an analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice, states will have to start preparing this month if they’re going to be ready for voting by mail in the fall.

It’s also important that states take precautions to protect the health of voters who will be casting ballots in person, an option that must remain for disabled voters and those with unreliable mail delivery.

Shoring up election systems to respond to the pandemic should be a bipartisan cause. But while some Republican governors recognize the importance of expanding voting by mail, Republicans in Washington haven’t risen to the occasion. Some GOP senators have expressed concern about a “federal takeover of the election process.”

President Donald Trump has called voting by mail a “terrible thing,” complained that it hurts Republicans, and suggested without offering proof that expanding the practice could lead to massive fraud. (Never mind that Trump benefited from absentee ballot in Florida’s primary).

Alarmism about a “federal takeover” of state voting systems is a red herring. The real obstruction that, while states are responsible for the “time, places and manner” of congressional elections, Congress may “at any time or for any reason” legislate for congressional elections. It would be shameful if Republicans refused to exercise that authority to make it easier for Americans to vote during a public-health crisis. But then, the GOP in recent years has been the party trying to make it harder to cast a ballot.

If Republicans in the Senate erect too many obstacles to an expansion of voting by mail and other measures to safeguard voting in this extraordinary emergency, they will face the judgment of history — and of the voters they disenfranchised by mail and other measures to safeguard voting in this extraordinary emergency, they will face the judgment of history — and of the voters they disenfranchised by mail and other measures to safeguard voting in this extraordinary emergency, they will face the judgment of history — and of the voters they disenfranchised by mail and other measures to safeguard voting in this extraordinary emergency, they will face the judgment of history — and of the voters they disenfranchised by mail and other measures to safeguard voting in this extraordinary emergency, they will face the judgment of history — and of the voters they disenfranchised by mail and other measures to safeguard voting in this extraordinary emergency, they will face the judgment of history — 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**Eugene Sheffer Crossword**

**ACROSS**
1. Grassy area
2. 5 Division word
9. Pop’s mate
12. “Superfood” berry
13. Astronaut Armstrong
14. Shopping tool
15. Harbor arrival
16. Bogus
17. Ballot marks
18. Actress Ward
19. Suitable
20. Pinta’s companion
21. “Platoon” locale
23. Oklahoma tribe
25. Like a teddy bear
28. Persian Gulf land
32. Part of Hispaniola
33. Beta follower
34. Quanels
36. Small chicken
37. MSNBC rival
38. Timetable abbr.
39. Creep
42. Motorists’ org.
44. Bangkok cuisine
48. Rushmore face
49. “Iroy” actor Brad
50. Corridor
51. Goat’s plaint
52. Choir voices
53. Hebrew month
54. NBC sketch show
55. Aspiring aty.’s exam
56. Alias
57. 11 Small plateau
58. Occasionally
59. Sci-fi visitor
60. Pull on
61. Chinese tea
62. Former Mideast org.
63. Use a shovel
64. Invoice fig.
65. “—Believer”
66. Highland hat
67. Slowpokes
68. “Scram!”
69. Toast toppings
70. Abba of Israel
71. Authentic
72. “—boy!”
73. Angelic light
74. Grad
75. Misfortunes
76. Chum

**DOWN**
1. Colleen
2. Rue the run
3. Banshee’s cry
4. Very close, as a race
5. Extreme dishonor
6. Tide variety
7. Short-form video-sharing app
8. World Cup cheer
9. Extra-long
10. Plow pullers
11. Part of Aug
12. 2004s’ language
13. 2004s’ language
14. Puerto Rico’s capital
15. Japan’s capital
16. 2004s’ language
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76. 2004s’ language

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

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W A S A Y E S Z E U S
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S A L E S O R S O N
S L I M E S H O I E
A I D S B L A H B L A H
A M E B O O R S O R A
B A D B L O O D S V E N
R O M P T E A S H
C A R O B I R A S
A G O G B U S Y B E E S
S U L U A R L O A V A
T A L E A L A R T E X
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**CRYPTOQUIP**

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PRNKi TPNQJGZ JA
OPRMSQHQRUZ JHHMTRSQJUZ
VBPUS BPI’NPRVAMKRS
BRQNZSIKQUL SBP
SPNNQOKPGJZ
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*Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: WHEN SOMEONE’S LEISURELILY WAY OF WALKING IS MAKING FOLKS STARE, IS IT THE SAUNTER OF ATTENTION?*

*Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: O equals B*
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Recession could hurt gate for World Cup

By ROB HARRIS
Associated Press

Organizers of the World Cup in Qatar are concerned that many fans won’t be able to afford traveling to the tournament in 2022 if the coronavirus pandemic causes a global recession. Many countries around the world are expected to suffer historically deep recessions as a result of the virus and the associated lockdown restrictions.

“It’s all right now unclear — we are entering into a recession,” World Cup organizing committee secretary general Hassan Al-Thawadi said Wednesday. “There’s always the concern about the global economy and the ability of fans to be able to afford traveling and afford coming and participating and celebrating the World Cup.”

Sporting events have also been postponed, including soccer’s European Championship due to start next month but has moved until 2021.

Qatar still hopes six of its eight stadiums will be completed by the end of this year despite the coronavirus pandemic. The World Cup is set to be played in November-December 2022 rather than its usual June-July slot.

“By 2022 I’m optimistic that we will overcome this pandemic as a human race collectively,” Al Thawadi said on a Leaders Forum coming to a halt.

NBA’s hesitation move

Utah Conley waits on the league’s decision, like rest of the players

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Mike Conley is waiting for further instructions. So is the rest of the NBA.

The league is continuing to work through multiple return-to-play scenarios, with two people with knowledge of the situation saying Wednesday that Orlando — which has been talked about for several weeks — along with Las Vegas and Houston remain under consideration. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the league has made no final decisions.

More than half of the league’s teams have open facilities for voluntary player workouts, with Minnesota expected to be the next to do so on Thursday. Utah is among the teams that has opened, but Conley is still at his home in Ohio, waiting to find out how hard he should be training.

Wednesday marked the end of the 10th week since the NBA shut down on March 11, a move that came once it was known that Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for the coronavirus. The pandemic halted a season that had 259 games left to play, but none of those games have been officially canceled yet.

Ordinarily, the NBA would be into the conference-finals portion of the playoff schedule at this point. Players who were paid May 15 saw 25% of those checks withheld in anticipation of some games being canceled, and if no more regular-season games are played they could lose a total of about $850 million in gross salary.

The league remains hopeful that some sort of decision on whether the season can resume can be made in the coming weeks. Commissioner Adam Silver de-
NCAA to lift ban on football, basketball workouts

By Steve Megargee  Associated Press

The NCAA Division I Council voted Wednesday to lift a moratorium on voluntary workouts by football and basketball players effective June 1 as a growing number of college leaders expressed confidence that fall sports will be possible in some form despite concerns about the coronavirus pandemic.

This decision clears the way for individual workouts by athletes, mostly on their own, subject to safety and health protocols decided by their schools or local health officials.

NCAA officials noted that the workouts could go on as long as all local, state and federal regulations are followed. The status of voluntary workouts for other sports will be determined later.

“We encourage each school to use its discretion to make the best decisions possible for football and basketball student-athletes within the appropriate recolization framework,” Penn athletic director and council chair M. Grace Calhoun said in a statement. “Allowing for voluntary athlete activity acknowledges that reopening our campuses will be an individual decision, but should be based on advice from medical experts.”

From Notre Dame to LSU and more, a number of schools have announced plans to reopen camps for the fall season and conferences have begun setting up plans for how to play football amid the pandemic. The latest came this week with the Florida State System announcing plans for its 12 schools and more than 420,000 students.

Many questions remain, including specific safety protocols and whether fans would be allowed if games proceed.

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith said in a separate interview that Wednesday that he believes the Buckeyes could safely play home games with 20,000 to 30,000 fans in its 105,000-seat stadium.

“I think we can get there,” Smith said.

Smith said he hadn’t figured out yet how those 20,000 to 30,000 spectators would be chosen. He said masks and other precautions would be required to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Smith added that Ohio State is ready to open the 15,000-square-foot Woody Hayes Athletic Center to athletes starting June 8 if the NCAA allows it. About 10 players at a time would be allowed to work out on staggered schedules with social-distancing and other hygiene precautions in place. Some coaches returned to the complex on a limited basis this week.

Other schools also are looking into ways they can hold workouts as safely as possible.

Middle Tennessee athletic director Chris Massaro said his school plans to take the temperature of players daily and be sure they are wearing masks. Massaro has even discussed moving some equipment from the weight room to the Red Floyd Stadium concourse to make sure workouts allow social distancing.

“We’re a little bit kind of like guinea pigs,” Middle Tennessee coach Rick Stockstill said. “We’re the ones that are coming back first, football’s coming back first all across the country. So we’ve got to make sure we’re doing our part so there’s not a setback, and it’s going to take all of us buying in and doing whatever we can to keep everybody else healthy and safe.”

The presidents of Miami and Notre Dame said in separate interviews they expect the football season to be played.


HBCUs hit hard by NCAA’s academic penalties

By John Zenor  Associated Press

Historically black colleges and universities have again been hit disproportionately hard by NCAA-imposed penalties based on Academic Progress Rates.

Charles McClelland, commissioner of the Southwestern Athletic Conference, knows that his members face many challenges in that regard, including fewer financial resources and lower admission standards.

He also understands that meeting NCAA standards is just part of HBCUs competing in Division I.

“We’re not going to allow any obstacle or any excuse to stop us from achieving our goal,” said McClelland, a former athletic director at Texas Southern and Prairie View A&M. “It might just take us longer to get there because we do have limited resources and we do have our historical mission that (includes) taking those that might not necessarily be ready for college, get them ready for college, educate them and then get them on the other end for graduation.

“We take extreme pride and joy in doing that, but sometimes that means that our numbers might be behind. But we’re not going to apologize for our mission and we’re not going to apologize for what we do, because we make a significant impact in this society.”

The NCAA announced penalties on 23 teams Tuesday, including 18 from HBCUs. SWAC member Alabama A&M joined Stephen F. Austin as the only athletic programs having three teams on that list.

The Bulldogs received post-season bans in men’s basketball, men’s track and field and women’s soccer.

In-state rival Alabama State also faces a postseason ban in men’s basketball, while Southern, Grambling State and Prairie View A&M were also hit with bans in other sports.

New Alabama State hoops coach Mo Williams, a longtime NCAA player who was formally introduced Wednesday, went to college at the far wealthier University of Alabama.

He said Alabama State has the resources to meet the academic goals.

“Alabama State is a great, great, great, great university,” Williams said.

“Th e m a j o r i t y  o f  o u r  s t u d e n t s  a r e  f o r m a n t l y  f i r s t- g e n e r a t i o n  s t u d e n t s,”  McClelland said.

The presidents of Miami and Notre Dame said in separate interviews they expect the fall sports season to be played.

Notre Dame President Rev. John Jenkins told MSNBC he expects to have clarity on how—or if—the football season can happen in the next few weeks.

“The team itself, I feel we can manage that one,” Jenkins said. “The question is who’s in the stands. We have an 85,000-person stadium. Can we get 85,000 people in there? That will be a big challenge to do that. But could we get a smaller number—10,000, 15,000, 20,000? I don’t know.”

Miami President Julio Frenk told CNN he hopes the Hurricanes can play this fall and they would be the top priority.

“They will probably play in empty stadiums, like so many other sports,” Frenk said.

Scott Woodward, the athletic director at defending national champion LSU, said his school was preparing to welcome back fans after the Southeastern Conference’s closure of athletic programs to students was slated to end May 31.

LSU will offer summer online and doesn’t have plans to reopen its campus to the general student population at least until the fall semester.

Most athletic departments need the revenue generated from football to fund their other sports. Hundreds of schools are reeling financially from the effects of the pandemic. Athletic departments, particularly at smaller schools and in Division II, have already been hit hard.

The NCAA this week lowered the minimum and maximum number of games Division I schools are required to play in all sports next year. The move includes a 33% reduction in the minimum number of games needed for sponsorship and championship qualification in most sports.

Frenk
BEST SPORTS MOVIES

No. 2: ‘Bull Durham’

Director didn’t lollygag about avoiding cliches

BY BEN NUCKOLS
Associated Press

Ron Shelton, the writer-director of “Bull Durham,” “White Men Can’t Jump” and “Tin Cup,” isn’t a big fan of sports movies.

“Sports movies generally, I don’t like, and as a kid growing up and as a young man, I liked them even less,” Shelton told The Associated Press. “My mother loved ‘Pride of the Yankees,’ which even as a kid I couldn’t stand. I thought it was sentimental and false and the athletics were horrible.”

Shelton, a former minor league ballplayer in the Baltimore Orioles organization, set out to put a personal stamp on the sports movie. He avoided the familiar tales of the heroic underdog player, hard-charging coach or team of misfits that somehow becomes a winner. And he hit a grand slam in 1988 with “Bull Durham,” his first effort as a writer-director, which finished tied for second with “Rocky” in a poll of AP sports writers’ favorite movies.

“Bull Durham” follows the Class A Durham Bulls through a season — sort of — as savvy minor league catcher Crash Davis (Kevin Costner) reluctantly tutors wild pitcher Nuke LaLoosh (Tim Robbins). Spoiler alert: When the movie ends, one key player is called up to the majors, (Tim Robbins). Spoiler alert: When the movie ends, one key player is called up to the majors, (Kevin Costner) reluctantly tutors wild pitcher Nuke LaLoosh (Tim Robbins).

“Shelton gave reality a do-over. ‘Bull Durham’ dispels some myths about what happens in the dugout, or during the intimate chats between pitcher and catcher, catcher and batter or catcher and umpire. A profane argument between Crash and an umpire is more about the argument itself than the substance of the ump’s call. A meeting on the mound between several players is about everything but baseball.

In order to teach Nuke a lesson, Crash twice tells a batter what pitch Nuke is about to throw. (“Here comes the deuce,” Crash says from behind the plate, announcing a curveball, “and when you speak of me, speak well.”) Both times the hitter crushes it.

This was one instance where Shelton gave reality a do-over.

To this day I am haunted by a game I played in Double-A at the Texas League against the El Paso Suns,” Shelton said. “The catcher said, ‘He’s going to throw a curveball first pitch.’ I looked down at him and he said, ‘No, curveball first pitch. Why would I lie to you?’ I didn’t know the catcher from Adam. The guy threw the most hanging curveball I’ve ever seen and I didn’t swing at it and I knew I could have hit it 400 feet. ... The catcher says, ‘That’s the last pitch I ever give you. If you don’t trust me, I can’t give you any pitches.’”

And Nuke was actually a toned-down version of the real pitcher who inspired him: Steve Dalkowski, who died last month of the new coronavirus. Dalkowski threw harder and was even wilder — on the field and off — than the character.

In retrospect, “Bull Durham” (released by Orion Pictures) was part of a golden age of sports movies. Every movie in AP Sports’ top 10 hit theaters between 1977 and 1992. Shelton credits Hollywood studios at the time for being more freewheeling and less concerned about the overseas market, where baseball in particular doesn’t sell.

Even a director of Shelton’s pedigree can’t get a baseball movie made today. He has a script co-written with his “Tin Cup” collaborator John Orville about a pitcher trying to resurrect his career in Colombia that hasn’t found a home.

And while he’s more worried about his next project than his legacy, the 74-year-old Shelton understands why “Bull Durham” remains beloved.

“The movie begins with an ode to baseball in voiceover, not from a player or coach, but from a passionate fan, Annie Savoy (Susan Sarandon), a liberated intellectual who favors season-long flings with younger ballplayers. Annie is the hero of the movie, the instigator of a love triangle and a strong voice for respecting yourself and the game. Shelton said he wasn’t trying to sneak a feminist message into the movie.

Matt DeMaveg checks on the bull atop the left-field wall at Durham Bulls Athletic Park in Durham, N.C., in 2006, 20 years after the movie “Bull Durham” came out. It follows the Class A Durham Bulls, as the veteran catcher Crash Davis (Kevin Costner) reluctantly tutors wild pitcher Nuke LaLoosh (Tim Robbins).
BEST SPORTS MOVIES

No. 2: ‘Rocky’

Boxing movie still packs punch as Philly favorite

Oscar winner has legions of fans worldwide

By Dan Gelston
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Brazilian exchange student made one request of his host before leaving at the start of the semester: a short but sweet trip to see Rocky.

Take me to Rocky.

On the way to the Philadelphia airport, Joao Martucci, who studied linguistics at West Chester University, took a pit stop and beelined to the Rocky Balboa statue at the base of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He raised his arms in triumph like Philly’s favorite fictional fighter and then recreated the boxer’s famous run up 72 stone steps to the entrance of the museum.

He celebrated his ascent by waving his arms and hopping around (minus the strains of “Gonna Fly Now”) just as Sylvester Stallone’s character had done at the end of his training in “Rocky.”

“I just really like the films about Rocky,” he said. “I really wanted to know the statue and the stairs.”

He’s not alone in his Rocky fandom. From South Philly to Brazil and round the globe, an incalculable number of Rocky Balboa fans recreated the run made famous in “Rocky” and duplicated in sequels, spinoffs and Super Bowl spots.

The 1976 film won a best picture Oscar and transcended the sports genre to become a pop culture sensation and is etched in Philadelphia history every bit as much as the Liberty Bell and Ben Franklin.

You know the quotes by heart: “Yo, Adrian!”

“You’re gonna eat lightnin’ and you’re gonna crap thunder!”

“Cut me, Mick!”

“Ain’t gonna be no rematch.”

Just like Balboa in his first fight with Apolo Creed, “Rocky” failed to win the big one against the contenders for top sports movie. “Rocky” finished tied for third with “Field of Dreams” in the Associated Press Top 10 favorite sports movies poll.

There were several Rocky rounds that could have cracked the poll — “Rocky” bred four sequels, “Rocky Balboa,” and two Michael B. Jordan-led “Creed” films.

The movie did more for Philly than create easy landmarks for fans to visit or grumble their best “Yo, Adrian!” impressions; it inspired everything from a short-lived Broadway play to Philadelphia’s Rocky Run, a 50K (31 miles) jaunt based on the inspirational montage in the 1979 flick as Balboa trains for his heavyweight championship rematch with Creed.

But it’s the first movie that packs a punch with the city, back when Balboa was just a down-on-his-luck boxer that served as a metaphor on what it means to fight for love and prove you have the eye of the tiger.

Tanya Blake, a “Rocky” fanatic, had to go the (social) distance and escape feeling cooped up in her Pemberton, N.J., home to make her first trip to the statue.

Stallone commissioned the statue for a scene in 1982’s “Rocky III” and donated it to the city afterward. Lines usually snake around the museum sidewalk full of fans who want a snapshot and a selfie with the 9-foot-11, 1,300-pound bronze beast. During the coronavirus pandemic, it’s easy to step up and go eye-to-bronze nose with the statue, no wait necessary.

Blake loved all the “Rocky” movies but called the first one her “all-time favorite.” She had knee surgery and felt inspired by the films to run the steps. “If I did it, I made it,” she said. “I can check it off my bucket list now. I went the distance. Up and down.”

At the 2006 “Rocky Balboa” premiere in Philadelphia, Stallone said he owed so much of the movie’s success to the city.

“You belong to Philadelphia,” he said. “It’s a very unique relationship. It’s something no one could have ever planned on.”

Mike Kunda turned his reverence for “Rocky” into a career that served as a metaphor for his own efforts. Kunda has been cut short and he returned home to Sao Paulo.

“I think it just taps into wanting to be our personal best,” Kunda said. “It’s about you can take and keep moving forward; how much you can get hit and keep moving forward. It’s about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward; how much you can take and keep moving forward.

“Rocky appeals to that person who has been overlooked,” he said. “People judge you. So many of us have been overlooked that it’s important to be able to fail on our own terms. Give me a shot to fail. Rocky has great determination and that’s something that can be lacking in people.”

The last image of the Balboa character came at the end of “Creed II” when he visits his son to try and patch up a strained relationship. Not even Stallone is ready to say the character is set to hang up his gloves and fade into black on the silver screen.

“I never say no to Rocky,” Stallone said. “I have a couple of ideas. But I’m not so confident that it’ll be exciting enough for the audience. But who knows?”
Analysis

No Hail Mary on drive to reopening

League has goal line to reach but isn’t in a rush to get there

BY BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

The NFL is taking baby steps toward full reopenings for its teams. It has no other choice. No long throws downfield. Mostly halfback dives into the line.

There are so many issues that must be addressed with the opening of team facilities across the nation. Just because a handful of clubs returned executives and other staff — no coaches or players — to their complexes on Tuesday does not foreshadow a quick return to business as usual. Or close to it.

For one thing — a very major thing — there’s competitive balance to consider.

“Competitive issues are always important and they always are considered in a way to try to preserve equitable treatment of all 32 clubs,” said Jeff Pash, the NFL’s chief legal counsel. “And certainly, our goal will be to have all 32 clubs operating on a consistent basis.

Here are some of the challenges the teams face at a time when organized team activities (OTAs), followed by June on-field minicamps, would have been taking place.

Government restrictions

At least a dozen franchises had no chance to begin the reopening process this week because state or local municipalities barred it. All four California teams — the Raiders still count because their current training facility is in Alameda — and both New Jersey clubs fall in that category.

“We are not opening up,” Ravens President Dick Cass said Tuesday. “In Maryland, we are deemed to be a non-essential business. Under local and state regulations, we remain closed and we will remain closed until the governor permits us to open up. Right now, it would be great to have our players back. But I don’t see that happening anytime soon.”

Testing

As Dr. Allen Sills, the NFL’s chief medical officer, noted during a conference call following the team owners’ virtual meeting Tuesday: “We’re not putting dates on the calendar at this point” concerning getting coaches and players into team complexes.

“We feel there are certain important steps that need to occur with regard to testing, with regard to test availability, with regard to test reliability, and our continued evolution of understanding about how to manage exposure,” he added. “All of those things continue to evolve, and when we and the players association together feel like we’re at a point of satisfaction with that science, then we’ll be ready to move forward.

“We’re moving as fast as the science and the data takes us.”

Cass was willing to put a time frame on it — somewhat.

“We believe by the time of training camp (late July), we’ll be able to test players and coaches multiple times a week, and be able to get the results fairly quickly,” he said. “I think there’s a really good shot that we’ll be OK.”

Social distancing

This could be the most difficult task of all.

Consider the need to spread out dressing stalls, for example. Normally, players are practically shoulder to shoulder in locker rooms. Indeed, in training camp, makeshift lockers are installed to accommodate the extra load.

After stringent workouts or practices, many players head for the tubs. When one is done, another soon climbs in.

“There’s no way that will work any longer. Teams must consider installing more tubs and separating them. So add plumbers and contractors to the list of folks in facilities.

Meeting rooms are designed for large groups, making social distancing a huge challenge when coaches and players can actually hold those get-togethers.

“The hope around the league is that Phase 1 of reopening demonstrates our ability to operate in a safe manner, allowing more staff (including coaches) to gradually return to the office,” Broncos President Joe Ellis wrote in a memo to organization members.

“Although there is currently no set timeline for when this next phase of expanded facility access could begin, we should remain prepared in the event that it occurs in the very near future.”

After many baby steps are taken.

Defense: Shield could be ready in time for players to try in preseason

FROM BACK PAGE

Work on the face mask is far enough along that “there will probably be a recommendation to use it when the league begins its preseason schedule in August, according to Mayer. Cleveland Browns center JC Tretter, who also serves as president of the NFLPA, welcomed any attempt to improve player safety.

“There are no bad ideas at this point,” he said. “You kind of have to think outside the box. Just because it is an idea does not mean things are definitely going to happen, but you need to explore it and you need to understand it.”

Falcons cornerback Isaiah Oliver withheld judgment until he’s able to check out a prototype.

“I haven’t seen anything like that,” Oliver said Wednesday. “I would have to look into it to see what it looks like.”

Oakley is already contracted by the NFL to provide visors that some players use on their face masks. The company also has developed durable eyeglasses for the military that are designed not to fog up — technology that may prove useful in its latest project.

The new coverings would likely have to cover the entire face mask.

“They’ve got some prototypes,” Mayer told Schefter. “Some of them, when you first look at them, you think, ‘Gosh, no’ because you’re not used to seeing it. You’re just not used to seeing it. But they’re looking at every issue you can imagine, including when it fogs up. What do we do with that? But these guys are used to dealing with this stuff.”

McKay said he expects the new face masks would quickly gain acceptance, assuming they meet two main standards.

“They’ve got to be comfortable for the players,” he said. “And they’ve got to be safe.”

While McKay has never been a fan on the tinted visors that some players already use, he’s learned to accept that look.

“I understood that some players needed it because of their eyes,” McKay said. “In this instance, if this is what the doctors in the medical field think is needed, then we should look into it.”

Tretter said the NFL is “probably going to look a little different this year,” and modified face masks might be part of the changes.

“You have to focus on fitting football inside of this world of coronavirus and not get caught up in trying to fit coronavirus inside of this world,” he said. “You can’t expect just to throw football back in and think that the virus is going to kneel down to football. You have to look through different ways of making sure people stay healthy.”

Cardinals coach Kliff Kingsbury looks back at Kyler Murray during last year’s training camp. Several NFL teams, including Arizona, reopened their training facilities this week, while many are prohibited by government restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic.

FRISCO, Texas — Aldon Smith will be able to take part in team activities with the Dallas Cowboys after the NFL on Wednesday c o n f i r m e d  t h a t  i t  h a d  r e i n s t a t e d  S m i t h  f r o m  a n i n f i n i t e  s u s p e n s i o n  f o r  o f f s e a s o n - f i e l d  i s s u e s.

Cowboys’ Smith reinstated

Smith has served several legal issues as a player with San Francisco and Oakland. He was first suspended with the 49ers in 2011 and had his contract voided after receiving a one-year ban in November 2015 with the Raiders.

Smith applied for reinstatement to the NFL in 2016, but that decision was initially deferred.

Oakland retained Smith’s contractual rights before releasing him in 2015 after San Francisco police issued a warrant for his arrest in a domestic violence case.

The Cowboys still have a suspended pass rusher under contract in Randy Gregory, who is seeking reinstatement. Gregory was indefinitely suspended in February 2019 for violating the NFL’s substance-abuse policy, his fourth league suspension coming about seven months after he had been reinstated by Goodell.
Tagovailoa joins a league void of lefties

Rookie QB has solid role models in Hall of Famers Young, Stabler

By Annie Stapleton
Associated Press

When Tua Tagovailoa signed his rookie contract with the Miami Dolphins, the left-handed quarterback from Alabama didn’t have to worry about unlearning his signature.

He signed the documents with his right hand.

Yes, the NFL’s latest lefty QB is a natural right-hander, one whose father, Galu, turned him into (a sometimes) southpaw in his youth.

“My dad was the only lefty in our family and he wanted me to be a lefty as well, so he switched the way I throw,” explained Tagovailoa, who still eats, writes and cooks right-handed but shoots baskets and throws football with his left.

“I don’t think I would be here if I was a righty,” says Tagovailoa. “Because I know I’m only good with my left hand throwing the ball.”

That makes Tagovailoa an oddity in the NFL, where a left-handed quarterback hasn’t started at quarterback since 2015, when Dallas’ Kellen Moore threw for 255 yards in a Week 17 loss to Washington.

Since then, 116 quarterbacks have thrown a pass in the NFL, and all of them were right-handed.

The last lefty to throw a TD pass was entertainer Kid Rock, but a wide receiver: the Cowboys’ Dez Bryant threw a 25-yard strike against the Saints on Thanksgiving Day 2016 in Detroit.

Fewer than three dozen southpaws have played quarterback in the NFL’s 100-year history, something that irks Steve Young, the most decorated left-handed QB and the first to reach the Hall of Fame, 11 years before Ken Stabler was posthumously inducted in 2016.

“There’s something wrong from a statistical standpoint,” Young said, noting that with 10% of the general population being left-handed, there should be a half-dozen lefties among the league’s 64 starting quarterbacks.

“And we’ve never been 10%,” Young said.

“I can never remember six of us at one time. It was Boomer Esiason, myself, Mark Brunell, and then I was the fourth one. I can think of four or five, never six at one time, then, much later on, Michael Vick.

Now, lefties are lucky there’s even one of them every year that they should be half-dozen lefties among the league’s 64 starting quarterbacks.

“I will never say a kid is left-handed so I’ll shag a ball in the NFL’s American Football League,” Steelers GM Kevin Colbert said.

“That would be a naive statement that would never concern us whatsoever.”

Added 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan: “As a left-handed quarterback, a left-handed quarterback is a good thrower. I say it’s probably a coincidence, probably less than 1% to choose from.

The bias certainly doesn’t begin in the pros.

“I don’t follow all college teams, but I never see a lefty quarterback pass for a Pac-12 school,” Young said. “So, the NFL might say, ‘Hey don’t look at me. There’s no lefties coming out of college.’

Then, the colleges say, ‘Look, there’s no lefties coming out of high school.’

Even the experts are stumped over what’s caused this paucity of southpaws.

“I really don’t know the answer,” added Falcons GM Thomas Dimitroff.

“I usually have an answer or can dance around a lot of things,” Vikings GM Rick Spielman acknowledged. “That one, I have no answer to.

“I don’t have an answer,” either, added Broncos GM John Elway, who did offer a guess: he wonders if all the good left-handed quarterbacks are becoming pitchers instead.

“Those lefties that can throw the ball are pretty coveted,” said Elway, himself a minor league farmhand (a right-handed outfielder) in the Yankees system the summer before beginning his Hall of Fame NFL career.

Young doesn’t blame baseball.

“I could never have been a minor league pitcher. I couldn’t have even been a college pitcher. But I could play quarterback,” Young said. “A small percentage of quarterbacks can pitch in the major leagues. … So, the only thing I can go with is that coaches don’t want to coach lefties.

Young speaks from experience.

He was an incoming freshman at Brigham Young in 1981 when the Cougars’ offensive coordinator, Doug Scovil, pulled him aside and told him bluntly that he didn’t coach left-handed quarterbacks, so he’d better move to safety.

Scovil soon left, however, to become the head coach at San Diego State.

“Luckily, or I was done,” Young said. “I was cooked. I was playing defensive back with Tom Holmoe. Not long after Scovil left, QBs coach Ted Tolmun spotted him, a throwing beautiful spirals at practice and asked him why he wasn’t under center.

“Told him, ‘Because I’m a lefty.’

Young recouted. “He says, ‘Well, that’s stupid.’

So, Young went back to throwing passes, not defending them, “and nobody else ever said a word about me being a lefty.”

Sure, the ball spins and tails in the opposite direction out of a lefty’s hand, but so what?

“It was kind of weird at first,” said Broncos rookie receiver Jerry Jeudy, who played with Tagovailoa at Alabama. “After three catches or so, you get used to it real fast.”

Rookie QB has solid role models in Hall of Famers Young, Stabler

The Pro Bowl wide receiver, who caught a 44-yard pass at the end of that route the first week of February to spur a Super Bowl comeback for the Kansas City Chiefs, had been talking to his mother about how much the

Chief's Hill completes reclamation of his image

By Dave Skretny
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The steady stream of nurses filling out of St. Luke’s Hospital for close to an hour was finally slowing down, which was altogether fortunate, because the young man with thigs like tree trunks was running out of food to give them.

It may have been the most impressive thing Tyreek Hill had done since running 2-3 Jet Chip Wasp.

The Pro Bowl wide receiver, who caught a 44-yard pass at the end of that route the first week of February to spur a Super Bowl comeback for the Kansas City Chiefs, had been talking to his mother about how much the

world had changed. Hill had not run another route since that night in Miami, or caught another pass from Patrick Mahomes, after the breakout of the coronavirus changed the daily life of pro football players and nurses, and everyone in between.

“I don’t think she’s actual-

“A nurse,” Hill explained, “and she always comes home and talks about how some people don’t care about them risking their lives every day. So I was like, ‘Mom, maybe there’s something I can do here in Kansas City for the health care workers, you know? It can be small. It can be big.’

So, they came up with the idea of delivering food to St. Luke’s last week. The little boxes of sandwiches were a welcome improvement from their usual fare, but it was the delivery guy behind the white mask that made the moment so special.

It was special for Hill, too.

Just over a year ago, the record setter was a leaguewide pariah.

He had been suspended by the Chiefs and the NFL after audio surfaced on the night of the draft in which his then-fiancee accused him of hurting his 3-year-old son.

The district attorney launched an investigation, the Kansas Department for Children and Families became involved, and the odds appeared no better than 50/50 that Hill would ever step foot on an NFL field again.

The churlish nightmare eventually turned into a positive outcome.

First, the district attorney declined to press charges after he was unable to determine who caused injuries to the child. Then the league lifted its suspension and the team followed suit — not only welcoming Hill back for training camp but tying up the details of a $54 million, three-year contract extension.

Hill proceeded to break his collarbone in Week 1 against Jacksonville, but that was merely a four-game sidetrack on what turned out to be another sublime season. He caught 88 passes for 860 yards and seven scores. He helped lead dramatic comeback each round of the playoffs. And ultimately, he caught a pass at the end of the now-famous 2-3 Jet Chip Wasp to help the long-suffering Chiefs win their first Super Bowl championship in five decades.

“I mean, I just feel like I’m blessed with being able to play the game of football,” Hill said.

“My job is just to win. I want to win. I’ve always been part of a winning culture. I’ve always been taught team is first. There is ‘I’ in team.”
Staying fit: Virtual training a big hit

Olympic star Walsh Jennings reaches out to young athletes

By Jimmy Golen
Associated Press

A longtime evangelist for outdoor and active lifestyles, beach volleyball star Kerri Walsh Jennings knew the national stay-at-home orders would be especially hard on young athletes and others trying to stay fit. With her own quest for a sixth Olympics on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic, Walsh Jennings held video chats with dozens of volleyball clubs and teams — more than 4,500 people in all. Part pep talks, part skills clinics, the talks convinced her people are struggling to remain active when it’s much easier to just binge on TV.

“There was a consistent theme to every call: ‘Kerri, we are so sad. We don’t want to lose what we’ve earned. We want to stay sharp and inspired,’” Walsh Jennings said in announcing the creation of “Virtual Summer Camps” for aspiring volleyball players and others just trying to stay active.

“This is hard on everybody. But there’s so many resources out there,” she told The Associated Press. “There’s no excuse to be a slave to your couch. We all have a little bit of space. We can go outside and be free. And we just want to encourage people to do that.”

Through her volleyball and lifestyle platform p1440, Walsh Jennings put together an online program mixing skills, fitness and mindset training. The four-week pilot called “The Fundamentals” sold out in six days with 250 men, women, boys and girls of all ages, volleyball rookies up to semipro level.

“The materials were put together fast, but the wisdom and knowledge is literally 30 years of my life,” Walsh Jennings said.

Now, p1440 is gearing up for two “Virtual Summer Camps” that offer the chance to “Train with an Olympian” — one focused on fundamentals and a more intense version called “Unleashed.” Campers will have access to Walsh Jennings; her husband, beach volleyball pros Casey Jennings; UCLA beach volleyball coach and 2004 Olympian Stein Metzger; and trainer Tommy Knox.

“The materials were put together fast, but the wisdom and knowledge is literally 30 years of my life,” Walsh Jennings said.

“Even though this is virtual, it’s very engaging and it’s still very connected. And so we don’t want to minimize that part of it.”

Twelve-year-old Phia Neilson said the Fundamentals camp helped her grow as a volleyball player, but it was the journaling that was a highlight. One entry included a drawing of a girl playing volleyball, a quote from actor Will Smith and “3 ways to Optimize”: “Go to bed earlier, start a food log and raise my energy level.”

“I like that I am learning to be more patient with myself, to stay positive and to never give up,” she wrote.

“The fundamental philosophy is ‘doing things right.’ And it’s going to meet you where you are,” she said. “For me, an athlete working to go to my sixth Olympics, win my fourth gold, this is making me better. A 9-year-old who is just getting started in the game, it’s making her better. And everyone in between.”

The camps are virtual. The workouts are real.

Campers will receive videos by email every weekday with their exercises for the day — they can also log onto Walsh Jennings’ p1440 website. Strength training is twice a week, volleyball is four times a week, and mindfulness training is every day. The workouts are self-guided and should take about two hours.

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“You have to be patient, you have to be persistent. And you have to be ready to learn things about yourself,” Walsh Jennings said.

“Last year was a highlight. One entry included a drawing of a girl playing volleyball, a quote from actor Will Smith and “3 ways to Optimize”: “Go to bed earlier, start a food log and raise my energy level.”

“I like that I am learning to be more patient with myself, to stay positive and to never give up,” she wrote.
AUTO RACING

Denny Hamlin competes in Wednesday’s rain-shortened NASCAR Cup Series race in Darlington, S.C.
PHOTOS BY BRYNN ANDERSON / AP

Hamlin earns second victory

NASCAR returns to Wednesday as rain reduces race by 20 laps

Associated Press

DARLINGTON, S.C. — Denny Hamlin won NASCAR’s first Wednesday race since 1984 when rain stopped the event with 29 laps remaining at Darlington Raceway. The Daytona 500 winner was out front but out of fresh tires and trying to hang on when he got unintended help from Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Kyle Busch. The reigning Cup champion caused Chase Elliott to crash eight laps earlier to bring out the caution.

A furious Elliott waited for Busch on the apron of the track and flipped Busch the middle finger as he passed. As NASCAR cleaned the track, it started to rain and the cars were called to pit road under red flag.

It was an already active evening at “The Track Too Tough To Tame” as drivers were racing against the field and the weather. As the drivers sat in their cars waiting for NASCAR to pull the plug, a handful of Elliott’s crew members sat on the pit wall staring down Busch.

One of Busch’s crew members sat between two masked competitors. “I got my happy face on. Made a mistake and just misjudged the error,” Hamlin said of his mask. He said he also had masks made with a “sad face” but only brought the smiling mask to the track he counts among his favorites.

Hamlin thought he was in good shape when he made his last pit stop but a caution by Clint Bowyer, who won the first two stages of the race, jumbled the strategy with 34 laps remaining.

Hamlin had no choice but to stay out on the track, and his crew chief Chris Gabehart told him over the radio, “you ain’t going to like it, but we’re going to have to eat our vegetables here.”

Hamlin, the leader because he didn’t pit on the restart with 29 to go, had to hold off traffic for one lap before the Bush and Elliott collision. The rain then came and Hamlin earned the trophy.

“It’s a driver’s race track,” he said. “You can do different things and make (the car) handle. We got it right.”

The race marked the first time in NASCAR history that the Cup Series had two points-paying races at the same track in one week.

Chase Elliott was wrecked by defending NASCAR Cup champion Kyle Busch.

Members of Denny Hamlin’s pit crew celebrate his second victory of the season, which was shortened 20 laps by rain.

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Members of Denny Hamlin’s pit crew celebrate his second victory of the season, which was shortened 20 laps by rain.
NFL working on helmet face guard that protects like surgical mask

By Paul Newberry
Associated Press

ATLANTA — With an eye toward getting back on the field during a pandemic, the NFL is working on a helmet face guard that might provide the same sort of protection as a surgical mask.

Atlanta Falcons president Rich McKay, who heads up the league’s competition committee, said the issue was raised during a conference call about a month ago.

“A lot of players have played with a clear shield to protect their eyes,” McKay said Tuesday during a video conference call with Atlanta media. “This would be extended even further.”

Thom Mayer, the medical director of the NFL Players Association, said league engineers and sports equipment company Oakley are testing prototypes of a modified face mask that might contain surgical or N95 material.

“I had suggested that we should consider novel and emerging ways to handle the helmets and the face masks and the spread of the virus,” Mayer said on a podcast with ESPN’s Adam Schefter. “These guys got the bit between their teeth.”

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Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray warms up before a game last season. Oakley, which provides visors for some NFL players and has developed durable eyeglasses for the military, is testing prototypes of a modified face mask that might help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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Prevent defense

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Arizona Cardinals quarterback Kyler Murray warms up before a game last season. Oakley, which provides visors for some NFL players and has developed durable eyeglasses for the military, is testing prototypes of a modified face mask that might help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

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