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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## US, allies weigh providing Ukraine with fighter jets

BY KAROUN DEMIRJIAN  
AND DAN LAMOTHE  
*The Washington Post*

Senior U.S. officials acknowledged Wednesday that the United States and its allies are considering whether to provide Ukraine with new fighter jets and the training needed to operate them, a move that would dramatically expand Western involvement in the war with Russia.

Gen. Charles Brown, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force, said that although he would not speculate what type of aircraft might be transferred, discussions are ongoing about how to reinforce Ukraine's fleet, including with new planes. The Ukrainian air force has been outgunned by Russia since the invasion began Feb. 24, sparingly flying an assortment of MiG jets and other Cold War-era planes.

Brown said there are several

**SEE JETS ON PAGE 6**



ZACHARY RUFUS/U.S. Air Force

The Eurofighter Typhoon is one of the fighter jets that could be provided to Ukraine to help it counter Russian forces.

### RELATED

Major city shelled as Russia expands its goals in Ukraine **Page 7**



THOMAS BOATRIGHT/U.S. Navy

Sailors prepare an F/A-18E Super Hornet to launch from the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman in the Mediterranean Sea on May 18. The decision whether to recover a Super Hornet swept off the Truman could come down to the age of the aircraft's technology.

## Navy wrestles with fate of fighter

Decision on recovery of Super Hornet from Mediterranean Sea could hinge on its technology

BY ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — The decision to recover a Navy Super Hornet swept off an aircraft carrier into the Mediterranean Sea likely hinges on whether the plane carried technology that could be exploited by China or Russia, experts say.

The F/A-18 jet, introduced in 1999, is slowly

being phased out of service. But newer, or Block III, versions have an infrared search-and-track system useful in pinpointing stealth aircraft. They also have better radar equipment and a precision approach landing system, experts say.

Obtaining such advanced technology could enable the Russians or the Chinese to "learn a good deal, both about countering specific U.S.

capabilities and perhaps learning things they could develop and employ in their own aircraft," said Jan van Tol, a retired Navy officer and senior fellow at the Washington, D.C.-based think tank Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

While not as sophisticated as the fifth-gener-

**SEE SUPER HORNET ON PAGE 3**

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## EUROPE GAS PRICES

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service did not provide gas prices for facilities in Europe.

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	Guam
Japan	..	\$5.349	..	\$5.499	\$4.569	\$5.069
Change in price	..	-16.0 cents	..	-13.0 cents	-16.0 cents	-15.0 cents
Okinawa	\$4.559	..	..	\$5.499	\$4.569	\$5.359
Change in price	-15.0 cents	..	..	-13.0 cents	-17.0 cents	-16.0 cents

\*DieselEFD \*\*Midgrade  
For the week of July 22-28

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (July 22)	\$1.00
Dollar buys (July 22)	0.9513
British pound (July 22)	\$1.16
Japanese yen (July 22)	135.00
South Korean won (July 22)	1280.00

South Korea (Won)	1313.20
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9705
Thailand (Baht)	36.80
Turkey (NewLira)	17.6935

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
Britain (Pound)	1.1936
Canada (Dollar)	1.2906
China (Yuan)	6.7685
Denmark (Krone)	7.2883
Egypt (Pound)	18.9374
Euro	0.9792
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8493
Hungary (Forint)	391.16
Israel (Shekel)	3.4444
Japan (Yen)	138.31
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3075
Norway (Krone)	9.9373
Philippines (Peso)	56.37
Poland (Zloty)	4.65
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7564
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3925

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Interest Rates Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	0.08
3-month bill	2.49
30-year bond	3.16

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

### FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



### FRIDAY IN EUROPE



### SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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## MILITARY

# Air Force focuses on defeating Iran's drones

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

Neutering the threat of Iranian aerial drones and regaining full air superiority in the Middle East is one of the key goals for the new top U.S. Air Force commander in the region.

Maj. Gen. Alexis Grynkeiwich took charge of 9th Air Force (Air Forces Central) in a ceremony Thursday at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, succeeding Lt. Gen. Gregory Guillot, who helmed the unit during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan last year.

The command manages the five expeditionary wings that provide U.S. air power across 21 countries in the Middle East and Central

Asia, with missions that include combat airstrikes, surveillance and supply.

U.S. combat jets still have the advantage in the skies of the Middle East, but Iran has adapted its tactics and made great strides because of its drones, Grynkeiwich said.



Grynkeiwich

"If an adversary is able to do what they want and we can't stop it, they have localized air superiority," Grynkeiwich said.

His comments dovetail with what former U.S. Central Com-

mand chief Kenneth McKenzie told Congress this spring. The U.S. is "operating without complete air superiority" for the first time since the Korean War because of Iran's drone capabilities, McKenzie said.

CENTCOM's current boss, Gen. Michael Erik Kurilla, presided over the command change ceremony Thursday.

"My charge from General Kurilla is to figure out, 'how can we regain a level of control in the air, so this threat is neutered,'" Grynkeiwich said.

Iran's drones are among the most advanced in the world and made an outsized impact in proxy wars in Yemen, Iraq and Syria, ex-

perts and U.S. military officials have said.

Earlier this month, senior U.S. officials said Iran is planning to train and equip Russian forces with drones for use in Ukraine.

In January, Iran-backed Houthi rebels launched several missile and drone attacks into the United Arab Emirates, with targets that included Al Dhafra Air Base, which hosts the U.S.'s 380th Air Expeditionary Wing.

The various U.S. military branches created different systems to counter the specific drones they faced, but these systems don't communicate with each other well enough, Grynkeiwich said, adding that better coordi-

nation and technology are needed.

Besides dealing with Iran, the U.S. must maintain regional partnerships to prevent Russia and China from gaining a foothold in the Middle East, Grynkeiwich said.

He also listed the need to contain international terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

The U.S. still has a basic understanding of what is happening in Afghanistan, Grynkeiwich said, but he added that it has become more difficult to keep tabs on terrorist groups in that country since the U.S. withdrawal last year.

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## NATO drill in Germany spotlights reactivated US Army artillery unit

By MICHAEL SLAVIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — A long-running multinational artillery exercise is taking on a higher profile this year, as shown by the leading role given to a recently reactivated Army unit and an uptick in participation.

The Wiesbaden-based 56th Artillery Command, which went back online in November 2021, was put in charge of Dynamic Front, an annual NATO drill. More than 1,500 American troops are among the total of approximately 2,400 from 19 countries.

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Stephen Maranian, the leader of the artillery command, called Dynamic Front "a mainstay of the exercise program here in Europe for almost a decade." He said his sol-

diers bring "the ability to integrate and synchronize fires and effects for the alliance."

Now encompassing 55 weapons systems, the exercise has grown over the past five years, more than doubling its 2017 participation of nine countries. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is front and center for the militaries present.

"Clearly, we're watching what's happening in Ukraine right now," Maranian said. "NATO has its doctrine, and we are training to be interoperable but understanding the doctrine evolves over time."

After 12 days of preparation, the live-fire portion of the exercise began Monday and runs through Saturday. Dynamic Front is taking place at the Army's vast Grafenwoehr Training Area.

Participants engaged in cross-

training on a range of artillery systems. That allows NATO allies and partners to act in concert.

"It's great to be working with other nations, being able to see different perspectives, looking at the different pieces of equipment and understanding how they operate and having them understand how we operate," said Army Staff Sgt. Austin St. Michael, section chief of a multiple rocket launch system.

The 19 countries in this year's exercise include NATO aspirant Finland as well as Georgia and Kosovo.

Maranian said one thing the artillery field has always strived for is the ability to go into the force and engage with operational units to see what they are doing. They determine needs and examine techniques and procedures, then



MICHAEL SLAVIN/Stars and Stripes

**A U.K. soldier loads practice rockets into M27 Multiple Launch Rocket System canisters during the Dynamic Front exercise on Wednesday at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany.**

infuse them with what the Army teaches its next generation of soldiers.

"We're really excited about the trajectory of this," Maranian said.

"Dynamic Front '23 is going to be even bigger."

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## Super Hornet: US concerned Russia, China may have interest in tech

FROM PAGE 1

ation F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter, Super Hornets are "4.5-generation fighters, which means they would have some pretty sophisticated systems that the Russians or Chinese would be happy to get hold of," van Tol said.

On July 10, the Navy announced that a Super Hornet assigned to Carrier Air Wing 1 had been blown off the deck of the USS Harry S. Truman two days earlier during heavy weather.

The statement didn't identify the version of the plane involved or say whether a recovery effort was underway, saying only that a determination was being made.

No one was aboard the plane, although one sailor received minor injuries during an unrelated job.

It also was unclear exactly

where the plane had sunk, but USNI News reported July 7 that the Truman was sailing in the Ionian Sea, which is south of the Adriatic Sea and bounded by Sicily, southern Italy, southern Albania and the western coast of Greece.

The deepest part of the Ionian Sea is 17,280 feet, according to worldatlas.com.

Since then, the Navy hasn't made any announcements about the aircraft or potential recovery efforts. If a fifth-generation fighter were lost, the service would almost certainly seek to retrieve it.

When an F-35C fighter attempting to land on the USS Carl Vinson crashed and slipped into the South China Sea on Jan. 24, the Navy quickly announced it was working to find and recover the \$103 million jet.

The plane was recovered about

37 days later from a depth of 12,400 feet. That operation included a remotely operated diving vehicle and crane from a diving support construction vessel, Stars and Stripes reported March 3.

Last fall, the first Block III Super Hornet was delivered to the Navy, according to a Sept. 27 statement from Boeing. The Navy plans to purchase 78 of the aircraft through the mid-2030s and upgrade its existing Block II Super Hornets with the same capabilities, according to Boeing.

It's unclear exactly how many Block III Super Hornets the Navy has or how many existing planes have been upgraded.

Whether the F/A-18 lost July 8 stayed intact or broke up, where it is located and how difficult a salvage operation would be are other factors the Navy would weigh, van

Tol and other experts said.

Another factor would be how easily the Chinese or Russians could get to the aircraft, van Tol said.

Two Russian submarines carry deep-diving submersibles used for covert seabed missions, such as wreckage plundering or interference with undersea communication lines, according to a November USNI News report.

The Russians might look for the Super Hornet, but "it's unlikely they will bring their undersea reconnaissance subs (to the Mediterranean) from the Northern Fleet, so it is unlikely Russia would find the plane," said Bryan Clark, director of the Hudson Institute's Center for Defense Concepts and Technology.

Any attempt by the Russians or Chinese to recover the jet would

be visible to the U.S., and "we would likely initiate our own salvage operations and impede theirs," van Tol added.

It seems that Navy leadership is debating whether it's worth the trouble and expense of recovering the F/A-18, said James Holmes, who chairs the maritime strategy program at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

There was no doubt at all when it was "imperative not to let potential opponents get their hands on stealth technology, let alone all of the sensor and computer capabilities that make the F-35 what it is," said Holmes.

He added that the Navy was being prudent in not releasing details about the F/A-18.

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## MILITARY

# Biden: Military frowns on Pelosi's Taiwan trip

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden said on Wednesday that U.S. military officials believe it's "not a good idea" for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to visit Taiwan at the moment.

Biden's comments in an exchange with reporters came a day after the Chinese Foreign Ministry said it would take "resolute and strong measures" should Pelosi proceed with reported plans to visit Taiwan in the coming weeks.

"Well, I think that the military thinks it's not a good idea right now," Biden said in response to a question about Pelosi's reported trip. "But I don't know what the status of it is."

The president stopped short of

suggesting that Pelosi not travel to Taiwan.

Pelosi was originally scheduled to visit in April but had to postpone after she tested positive for COVID-19. She would be the highest-ranking American lawmaker to visit the close U.S. ally since Newt Gingrich, a Republican, traveled there 25 years ago when he was House speaker.

The Financial Times reported on Tuesday that Pelosi planned to move forward with her postponed visit to Taipei in the next month. Her office declined to



Pelosi

comment, saying the office does not confirm or deny the speaker's international travel in advance, due to longstanding security protocols.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijiang said such a visit would "severely undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, gravely impact the foundation of China-U.S. relations and send a seriously wrong signal to Taiwan independence forces."

The U.S. has a longstanding commitment to the "One China" policy that recognizes Beijing as the government of China but allows informal relations and defense ties with Taipei. China has stepped up its military provocations against democratic, self-

ruled Taiwan in recent years as it looks to intimidate it into accepting Beijing's demands to unify with the communist mainland.

Biden also said that he expected to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping sometime in the 10 next days.

Biden's national security and economic aides are in the process of completing a review of the U.S. tariff policy and making recommendations to the president.

The tariffs imposed under President Donald Trump applied a 25% duty on billions of dollars of Chinese products. The penalties were intended to reduce the U.S. trade deficit and force China to adopt fairer practices.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has called for eliminating

some of those tariffs as a way to help fight inflation in the United States. Others in the Biden administration, including U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, have raised concerns about easing tariffs when China has not upheld its agreements on purchasing U.S. products.

Biden sidestepped a reporter's question on Wednesday about what he might have to say to Xi about tariffs. "I'd tell him to have a good day," Biden responded.

Biden and Xi have their differences over Russian President Vladimir Putin's prosecution of his nearly 5-month-old war against Ukraine. Biden has sought to press the Chinese to resist directly providing economic or military assistance to Russia.

## Japan, UK consider stealth fighter collaboration, aim for 2023 decision

BY SETH ROBSON AND HANA KUSUMOTO  
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japan may work with Great Britain to build a new stealth fighter, according to Japan's Ministry of Defense.

A decision on collaboration on the high-tech project is due by year's end, a spokesman for the ministry's Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency told Stars and Stripes by phone Wednesday.

The two countries already fly U.S.-engineered F-35 Lightning II stealth fighters but are close to a deal to merge their Tempest and F-X future fighter jet programs, the Reuters news agency reported July 14.

"The Tempest aircraft will deploy new, game-changing technology and is set to join the RAF fleet from 2035, replacing the Typhoon," according to the Royal Air Force's official website.

Japan's X-2 stealth fighter, developed by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries with the help of 220 subcontractors, features a radar-evading design, stealth coating and locally made engines equipped with afterburners. A prototype flew for the first time in 2016.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed when they met in London in May to decide what form cooperation on the new plane will take, in coordination with other allies, by year's end, according to the Japanese official.

A joint program by the two nations to develop a fighter engine and other air combat technologies was announced by the ministry Dec. 22.



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

**Japan's X-2 stealth fighter, developed by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries with the help of 220 subcontractors, features a radar-evading design, stealth coating and locally made engines equipped with afterburners. A prototype flew for the first time in 2016.**

Cooperation aims to "lower the development cost and technology risk," the Japanese official said.

Japan has begun primary design of a new fighter to replace the Mitsubishi F-2, derived from the F-16 Fighting Falcon, which is due to be phased out from 2035, but can't estimate how much the replacements might cost, the official said.

"We will continue with the development, so [the new fighters] can be deployed around that time," he said.

Japan is aiming to develop stealth fighters equipped with new sensors and enhanced network capability, he said.

It's customary in Japan for some government spokespeople

to speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

"Cooperation with the UK is a significant step in the evolution of Japanese defense policy: doing more and doing it with more partners," Brad Glosserman, deputy director and visiting professor at the Center for Rule-Making Strategies at Tama University in Tokyo, said in an email Wednesday.

"The two countries have been working together on various components including sensors and engines, for some time," he said. "Building an entire jet is another matter."

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## Commander: Morale better for Texas troops on border

BY ROSE L. THAYER  
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — More than half of the Texas National Guard members deployed along the state's border with Mexico have said they would be willing to volunteer for another year of the same duty, the mission's commander told state lawmakers Wednesday.

The state in morale and opinion about the state's border mission among troops represents a vast change from earlier this year when some Guard members joined a state employees union to fight the pay problems and poor living conditions that they faced as the force doubled its size from about 5,000 to 10,000 troops.

"In the last four months that I've been on the border, that mission has continued to mature," said Maj. Gen. Ronald "Win" Burkett, who took command in March of the Texas 36th Infantry Division, which leads the border mission. "My understanding is at the soldier level, that the value that they bring and how important what they're doing is meeting the governor's intent, absolutely helps morale. At the same time, working with the state, there's been a lot of just soldier care."

In a recent survey of the 5,400 troops deployed along the border, 2,800 responded they would volunteer to stay on for another year, he said. For most troops, the one-year mark for their deployment order should occur this fall.

"I think that speaks to the lea-

dership," Burkett said.

He spoke alongside Maj. Gen. Thomas Suelzer, the Texas adjutant general, and provided the update during a hearing of the Texas House Defense and Veterans' Affairs Committee. While the hearing was intended to review the state's programs and funding for mental health services, it first called the two generals forward for an update on the state-sponsored border mission known as Operation Lone Star.

"Our Texas National Guardsmen supporting Operation Lone Star have stepped up to the challenge of a difficult and complex mission," Suelzer said.

Suelzer said he has increased operational efficiencies that allowed for the Guard to close one base camp and send about 700 support personnel home.

The cost of the mission for this fiscal year is expected to be about \$1.33 billion, he said. In Texas, the fiscal year runs from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31. The Texas Military Department still needs the state to provide about \$38 million to finish out the year, Suelzer said.

To continue into 2023 at the same level of operations would cost about \$1.36 billion, he said.

Abbott has shown no signs of decreasing his border operations, and recently provided new authority to Guard members. Following the July Fourth holiday weekend, when about 5,000 migrants were arrested for illegally crossing into the U.S. from Mexico, Abbott announced Guard members and state police would begin transporting those people back to a port-of-entry.

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Burkett

## MILITARY

# Troubled F-35 risks groundings over lack of working engines

By **TONY CAPACCIO**  
*Bloomberg*

A shortage of spare engines may leave some F-35s grounded because it's taking longer than planned to repair a key component for the U.S.'s costliest warplane, according to congressional auditors.

"Inadequate maintenance depot capacity leading to a shortage of operating" engines has "grounded F-35s more often and for longer time periods than expected," the Government Accountability Office said in a new report Tuesday.

Much of the issue stems from the Pentagon's failure to develop an adequate strategy for sustaining the engine, including providing sufficient depot repair capability as production continues, the GAO said. Engines for the plane that's built by Lockheed Martin are provided by Raytheon Technologies Corp.'s Pratt & Whitney unit.

So far, 820 F-35s have been delivered worldwide out of a potential 3,000 for the U.S. and partner na-

tions. After years of talks, the Pentagon announced Monday evening that it reached an agreement with Lockheed on the next three-year contract for 375 more of the advanced fighters.

The GAO report expands on public testimony the agency gave to a House panel in April. Its warning of the need to stem a current, and possibly expanding, shortage of ready engines contrasts with positive publicity that the F-35 is receiving as it flies patrols over Eastern Europe after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Finland, Switzerland, Germany and Greece are the latest overseas customers for the aircraft, and South Korea has signaled it wants more jets.

The engine repair issue — and its ramifications for readiness — are a case study in why the Pentagon is struggling to reduce the estimated \$1.3 trillion cost to operate and sustain the planes over a 66-year projected lifespan. Engine sustainment costs are already projected to hit \$1 billion annually by 2028, up from \$315 million last year, as aircraft quantities, flying

hours and scheduled maintenance increase, the GAO said.

Since the beginning of 2020, "an increasing number of F-35 aircraft have not been able to fly due to the lack of an operating engine," the auditors said. "Almost all of the aircraft affected" are operated by the Air Force, the largest F-35 customer, with 348 of its planned 1,763 planes in its inventory. The 2,456 planes projected for the U.S. also include versions for the Marine Corps and Navy.

For example, in August 2021, the Air Force had 35 aircraft unable to fly because they didn't have an operating engine, according to service officials. It had taken delivery of about 283 by then. In February, the latest data period cited, about 36 jets had no engines. The major impediment is repair to the power module, one of five in the engine, which is designated F-135, that's key to generating thrust. It's taking longer to repair, and the Pentagon lacks enough spare engines, the GAO said.

The Defense Department's F-35 program office "is aware of



JENSEN STIDHAM/U.S. Air Force

The sun sets behind an F-35A Lightning II aircraft at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

the challenge the program faces related to engine sustainment" and agreed with GAO's recommendation that it needs to continue to review and revise support strategy for the engine, Lt. Gen. Mike Schmidt, the F-35 program manager, said in a statement.

The engine removals aren't the result of defective, flawed or substandard material, the F-35 program office said in a statement this year. One major cause: A coating on the engine's high-pressure turbine blades has been "degrading faster than anticipated" as it flew in sandy environments.

Since the fall of 2020, the F-35 Joint Program Office and Pratt & Whitney "have taken actions and have plans to take additional actions to increase depot repair capacity to meet current and future engine maintenance need" and "these efforts have begun to improve depot capacity" and result-

ed in improved projections of engine availability, the GAO said.

The time to repair power modules dropped to 119 days in January, from 207 days in October 2020. Starting in early 2020, all new engines and those repaired in depots have blades with a new coating "that has demonstrated greatly increased performance," the program office said.

Still, "significant risks remain that will require DoD and Pratt & Whitney sustained management attention," GAO said.

The two sides have had a disagreement since at least 2019 over how much money is needed for spare parts funds to repair engine modules, for example.

Schmidt, the program manager, said his office has also agreed with the GAO's recommendation that it should develop with Pratt & Whitney a common model for forecasting spare parts needs.

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## EUROPE

# Monkeypox case confirmed at base in Naples

BY ALISON BATH  
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The first case of monkeypox has been confirmed within the Naval Support Activity Naples community, officials announced Thursday.

U.S. Naval Hospital Naples was working with “Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (in Germany) and the Defense Health Agency Region-Europe to ensure testing and vaccine capabilities are in

place to support the Naples community,” according to a post on the hospital’s Facebook page.

The post did not indicate if the infected person was a sailor or other community member. It also didn’t say when the case was discovered, if the person was quarantined or if contact tracing was underway.

“While it remains a low health risk as assessed by the World Health Organization, this does

warrant awareness and taking protective measures,” the hospital said.

In June, an American service member in Stuttgart, Germany, was diagnosed with the virus. That person was infected with the West African variant, which generally is mild and has limited human-to-human transmission. The case was believed to be the first involving a U.S. military member.

As of Tuesday, European offi-

cials had identified at least 9,281 monkeypox cases in 31 countries as reported through the European Surveillance System, according to a WHO report. Of those, 9,276 were laboratory confirmed.

The majority of cases involved people between 31 and 40 years old, and most were male, the report stated. Few required hospitalization, and no one had died.

The report identified 374 confirmed cases in Italy, 1,859 in Ger-

many and 2,653 in Spain.

The virus spreads through direct contact with infectious body fluids, rash, scabs and respiratory secretions. It typically causes fever, chills, rash, and lesions on the face or genitals, the hospital said.

Illness can last two to four weeks, and monkeypox can spread from the time symptoms start until the rash is fully healed and a fresh layer of skin has formed, the hospital said.

## Ukrainian first lady asks Congress for air defense systems

BY SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Ukraine’s first lady Olena Zelenska appealed to Congress on Wednesday for air defense systems, pleading for more weapons for her country to fend off Russia’s deadly attacks on civilians.

Zelenska made the request from the same auditorium in the U.S. Capitol where her husband Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appeared virtually in March. She stood in front of a rotating photo display of the war’s many casualties and asked Congress not to think of her as a first lady, but as a daughter and mother.

“Will my son be able to return to his school in the fall? I don’t know, like millions of mothers in Ukraine. Will my daughter be able to go to university at the beginning of the year and experience more student life? I cannot answer,” Zelenska said, speaking in Ukrainian. “We would have answers if we had air defense systems. ... Help us to stop this terror against Ukrainians.”

Russia has launched more than 3,000 cruise missiles into Ukraine since invading in February, Zelenska said. But all it takes to destroy

someone’s family is shrapnel, she said.

Zelenska highlighted several of the lives upended by Russian aggression. She showed images and a video of Liza Dmitrieva, a “cheerful, playful, little rascal” killed this month in a Russian strike on the city of Vinnytsia. Zelenska said she met the 4-year-old girl, who had Down syndrome, during the filming last year of a Christmas video.

The last photo of Liza showed the girl’s dead body lying next to her toppled stroller. In the next photo, a 5-year-old girl in southern Ukraine lay buried in rubble.

Zelenska spoke of the 20 Ukrainians who died in a shopping mall, the journalist who died in a missile attack and of Andriy, a 3-year-old boy who survived a Russian bombing and is now learning to use a prosthetic in Germany.

“How many children like him are there in Ukraine? How many families like this may still be destroyed by the war?” she said. “These are Russia’s ‘Hunger Games,’ hunting for peaceful people in peaceful cities of Ukraine. They will never broadcast this on their news, that’s why I’m showing it to you here.”

The first lady also spoke of a 96-



MICHAEL REYNOLDS/AP

Olena Zelenska, the first lady of Ukraine, shakes hands with Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., on Wednesday after addressing members of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington.

year-old man who survived four Nazi concentration camps and died from Russian shelling and the family of policeman Oleh Fedko, whose father, mother, wife, 6-year-old daughter and 1-month-old son were shot while trying to evacuate in a car. Fedko told Zelenska that the adults died right away, but the children cried for an hour and a half before succumbing to their wounds, she said.

“The war is not over, the terror continues, and I appeal to all of you, on behalf of those who were killed, on behalf of those people who lost their arms and legs, on behalf of those who are still alive and well and those who want to come back from the front,” Zelenska said, noting she was the first wife of a foreign leader to address Congress. “I’m asking you so-

mething now I would never want to ask: I am asking for weapons. Weapons that would not be used to wage a war on somebody else’s land, but to protect one’s home.”

Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a combat veteran, said Zelenska’s 15-minute speech was a grim reminder of “the realities of Russia’s unjustifiable war of choice.”

“We must continue supporting our Ukrainian allies and work together to hold [Russian President] Vladimir Putin accountable,” she tweeted.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., praised Zelenska’s “strength and courage” and said it should move “all of us in Congress to keep our focus on helping the Ukrainian people fend off Russia’s brutality.”

Zelenska’s visit to Capitol Hill

coincided with the announcement Wednesday that the United States will give Ukraine four more High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems to help beat back Russian forces attempting to swallow up the eastern Donbas region. The U.S. also pledged this month that it will send Ukraine the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System, which guards airspace over the White House and the Pentagon.

Zelenska thanked lawmakers for the continued support and said the U.S. stands united with Ukraine in the fight for human life and independence.

“While Russia kills, America saves,” she said.

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## Jets: US fighter plane discussions mark departure from earlier in war

FROM PAGE 1

possibilities, including American-made fighters or some made in Europe. Options include the Gripen fighter made in Sweden, the Rafale made in France and the Eurofighter Typhoon, which is built by a consortium of companies in several countries.

“It’ll be something non-Russian, I can probably tell you that,” Brown said during an appearance at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado. “But I can’t tell you ex-

actly what it’s going to be.”

The discussion marks a departure from earlier in the war, when the Biden administration ruled out facilitating a deal what would have sent some of Poland’s MiG fighters to Ukraine in exchange for U.S.-manufactured F-16s. Pentagon officials said in March that such a proposal was not “tenable” and raised the possibility that participating in the swap could exacerbate tensions. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that Eu-

ropean allies had a “green light” to send planes to Ukraine, but that the U.S. wanted to avoid direct conflict with Russia.

The prospect of training Ukrainian pilots to operate new aircraft has traction in Congress; last week, the House voted to dedicate \$100 million to the endeavor as part of its version of the annual defense authorization bill. Thus far, however, Pentagon leaders have declined to endorse such a plan.

“There’s been no decisions on

any of that,” Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Wednesday at a news conference alongside Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. “But we do examine a wide variety of options, to include pilot training.”

Austin and Milley following the latest meeting of international military leaders working to bolster Ukraine’s defenses, both in the near term and for what many foresee will be a yearslong standoff with Russia. Austin indicated

that, for now, the Biden administration’s priority remains the artillery war Ukraine’s troops are waging in the country’s east.

“Right now, we’re focused on helping them to be successful in the fight that they’re in, and employing the weapons systems they’re going to need to be successful in that fight,” he said. “In terms of predicting where we’re going to be with pilot training in months or years, I won’t venture to do that.”

## EUROPE

# Major Ukraine city struck as Russia expands goals

By **MSTYSLAV CHERNOV**  
Associated Press

**KHARKIV, Ukraine** — Russian shelling pounded a densely populated area in Ukraine's second-largest city Thursday, killing at least three people and injuring at least 23 others with a barrage that struck a mosque, a medical facility and a shopping area, according to officials and witnesses.

Police in the northeast city of Kharkiv said cluster bombs hit Barabashovo Market, where Associated Press journalists saw a woman crying over her dead husband's body. Local officials said the shelling also struck a bus stop, a gym and a residential building.

The bombardment came after Russia reiterated its plans to seize territories beyond eastern Ukraine, where the Russian military has spent months trying to conquer Ukraine's Donbas region, which is south of Kharkiv. The Russian declaration Wednesday came after Ukrainian officials aired plans to try to recapture Russian-occupied areas near the country's southern Black Sea

coast.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said the attacks early Thursday targeted one of the most crowded areas of the city, which had a pre-war population of about 1.4 million.

"The Russian army is randomly shelling Kharkiv, peaceful residential areas, civilians are being killed," Terekhov said.

At the market, desperate screams of Sabina Pogorelets pierced the air as she begged Ukrainian police to let her embrace her husband, Adam, whose body was lying partly covered with cloth next to a small stall. A bloody wound could be seen on his head as policemen gently pulled his wife away so medical workers could take away his body.

"Please! I need to hold his hand!" Pogorelets cried.

Nearby, a man hugged his small daughter as he and other visitors stood in shock. Emergency teams treated at least two of the wounded in nearby ambulances.

The Kharkiv regional governor, Oleh Syniehubov, said four people

were in grave condition and a child was among those wounded in the shelling. Russian forces also shelled wheat fields, setting them on fire, he said.

Elsewhere, Russian forces shelled the southern city of Mykolaiv overnight as well as the eastern cities of Kramatorsk and Kostiantynivka, where two schools were destroyed, Ukrainian officials said. A man's body was recovered from the rubble of the school in Kramatorsk and emergency workers say two more people are feared trapped under the ruins.

The scattered attacks illustrate broader war aims beyond Russia's previously declared focus on the Donbas region's Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, which pro-Moscow separatists have partly controlled since 2014.

In other developments on Thursday:

■ The operator of a major pipeline from Russia to Europe says natural gas has started flowing again after a 10-day shutdown for maintenance. But the gas flow was



EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

**Sabina, centre, cries next to the body of her husband Artem Pogorelets after Russian shelling at Barabashovo market in Kharkiv, Ukraine, on Thursday.**

expected to fall well short of full capacity and the outlook was uncertain. The pipeline is Germany's main source of Russian gas. German officials had feared that the pipeline might not reopen at all amid growing tensions over Russia's war in Ukraine.

■ Ukraine's nuclear energy plant operator says Russian forces have placed explosives and weapons in parts of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant where they pose significant danger. Energoatom said Thursday the heavy weapons and explosives are in the building that houses one of the six reactors at

Europe's largest nuclear power station.

■ Russia's foreign minister says that Moscow will consider boosting natural gas supplies to Hungary following a formal request from Budapest. Russian news agencies say Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó sought to get an additional 700 million cubic meters of gas from Russia this year. Hungary's populist Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has joined the Western sanctions against Russia, but has insisted on being exempt from the EU's oil embargo.

## CLA says 15K Russians killed, dismisses Putin health rumors

The Washington Post

Russia's territorial gains in Ukraine have been minimal and have come at a "very high" cost, senior U.S. officials said Wednesday, illustrating the deadly grind of the conflict while dismissing concerns about President Vladimir Putin's health.

CIA Director William J. Burns poured cold water over persistent speculation that the Russian leader is ill during a security forum in Aspen, Colo.

"There are lots of rumors about President Putin's health, and as far as we can tell, he's entirely too healthy," he quipped, adding that it was "not a formal intelligence judgment."

In the lead-up to the invasion and in the months that have followed, Putin has been portrayed as more eccentric and irrational. Widespread speculation that he is

sick, possibly with cancer, has continued to circulate as the war drags on.

Burns said about 15,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in the war in Ukraine. Up to 45,000 more have been wounded, he said, citing the latest U.S. intelligence on Russian losses. "Ukrainians have suffered, as well - probably a little less than that, but ... significant casualties," Burns said.

Gen. Mark A. Milley, the top U.S. military officer, told reporters Wednesday that Russian forces have taken just six to 10 miles of new territory in the past 90 days after focusing their efforts on seizing eastern Ukraine. "The bottom line is, the cost is very high, the gains are very low, there is a grinding war of attrition," he said.

"Advances are measured in literally hundreds of meters" on some days, Milley said.

The United States is also considering sending more advanced weapons to Ukraine, amid Kyiv's fears that Russian forces could get further entrenched if the war drags on into winter, making

counterattacks more difficult. "After winter, when the Russians will have more time to dig in, it will certainly be more difficult," the Ukrainian president's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, said Tues-

day.

Those weapons could include warplanes, Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., the U.S. Air Force chief of staff, said Wednesday. Brown didn't say what type of aircraft.

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## NATION

# Biden positive for COVID, has 'very mild symptoms'

By ZEKE MILLER  
AND CHRIS MEGERIAN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 on Thursday and is experiencing “very mild symptoms,” the White House said.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden has begun taking Paxlovid, an antiviral drug designed to reduce the severity of the disease.

She said Biden has “very mild symptoms” and “will isolate at the White House while continuing to carry out all of his duties fully.” She said Biden has been in contact with members of the White House staff by phone and will participate in his planned meetings at the White House “via phone and Zoom from the residence.”

The White House released a letter from Biden’s physician, Dr. Kevin O’Connor, that said the president has a runny nose and “fatigue, with an occasional dry cough, which started yesterday evening.”

Biden, 79, is fully vaccinated, after getting two doses of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine shortly before taking office, a first booster shot in September and an additional dose March 30.

O’Connor wrote in his letter about the president’s treatment plan: “I anticipate that he will respond favorably” to Paxlovid “as

most maximally protected patients do.”

Jean-Pierre said Biden had last tested negative on Tuesday, and he will stay isolated until he tests negative again. Biden had planned to visit Pennsylvania on Thursday to talk about his crime prevention plans and attend a Democratic fundraiser, and then spend a long weekend in Delaware. His appearances and travel are canceled.

First lady Jill Biden spoke to reporters as she arrived at a school in Detroit on Thursday, telling them she had just gotten off the phone with her husband.

“He’s doing fine,” she said. “He’s feeling good.”

The first lady, who was wearing a mask, said she tested negative earlier in the day.

She will keep her full schedule in Michigan and Georgia on Thursday, though she will be following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on masking and distancing, said Michael LaRosa, her spokesperson.

The president spent much of last week in Israel and Saudi Arabia. White House officials told reporters that Biden planned to minimize contact during the trip. However, as soon as he exited Air Force One on Wednesday July 13 the president was fist-bumping, handshaking and even seen in the occasional hug.

## Bannon’s defense seeks acquittal then rests case

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Steve Bannon’s lawyer opened his defense Thursday, asking the judge for a direct acquittal, arguing that prosecutors had not proven their contempt-of-Congress case against the former adviser to then-President Donald Trump. Then the defense rested without bringing any witnesses.

Bannon lawyer Evan Corcoran said the prosecution’s case concerning Bannon’s resistance to the Jan. 6 committee’s subpoena rested on the testimony of Kristin Amerling, the panel’s chief counsel and it was “clear from her testimony that the dates were in flux.”

In making his motion for acquittal before U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols, Corcoran said that “no reasonable juror could conclude

that Mr. Bannon refused to comply.”

Corcoran then rested the defense case. Nichols said he would rule later on the acquittal motion.

Throughout the trial Corcoran has tried to establish that the deadline for the onetime Trump strategist to appear before the House committee investigating the Capitol riot was flexible as long as the two sides were on negotiating terms.

In opening statements Corcoran argued that the charges against Bannon were politically motivated and that the former adviser was engaged in good-faith negotiations with the congressional committee when he was charged.

“No one ignored the subpoena,” Corcoran told the jury.



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

The House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol holds a hearing at the Capitol in Washington last week.

## Jan. 6 panel probes Trump’s 187 minutes as Capitol was attacked

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House Jan. 6 committee was to hold its final hearing of the summer the way the series began — vividly making the case that Donald Trump’s lies about a stolen election fueled the grisly U.S. Capitol attack, which he did nothing to stop but instead “gleefully” watched on television at the White House.

Thursday’s prime-time hearing will dive into the 187 minutes that Trump failed to act on Jan. 6, 2021, despite pleas for help from aides, allies and even his family. The panel intends to show how the defeated president’s attempt to overturn Joe Biden’s election victory has left the United States facing enduring questions about the resiliency of its democracy.

“A profound moment of reckoning for America,” said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a member of the committee.

With live testimony from two former White House aides, and excerpts from its trove of more than 1,000 interviews, the nearly two-hour session will add a closing chapter to the past six weeks of hearings that at times have captivated the nation.

Returning to prime time for the first time since the series of hearings began, the panel aimed to show just how close the U.S. came to what one retired federal judge testifying this summer called a constitutional crisis.

The events of Jan. 6 will be outlined “minute by minute,” said the panel’s vice chair, Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo.

“You will hear that Donald Trump never picked up the phone that day to order his administration to help,” Cheney said.

“He did not call the military. His Secretary of Defense received no order. He did not call his Attorney General. He did not talk to the Department of Homeland Security,” Cheney said. “Mike Pence did all of those things; Donald Trump did not.”

Former White House aides who had close proximity to power were set to testify Thursday.

Matt Pottinger, who was deputy national security adviser, and Sarah Matthews, then his press aide, both submitted their resignations on Jan. 6, 2021, after what they saw that day. Trump has dismissed the hearings on social media and regarded much of the testimony as fake.

Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., the chairman of the committee, is isolating after testing positive for COVID-19 and will attend by video. Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., a former Naval officer who will lead the session with Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., who flew combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, said she expects the testimony from the White House aides will “just be really compelling.”

“These are people who believed in the work they were doing, but didn’t believe in the stolen election,” Luria said.

The White House aides were not alone in calling it quits that day. The panel is expected to provide a tally of the Trump administration aides and even Cabinet members who resigned after Trump failed to call off the attack. Some Cabinet members were so alarmed, they discussed invoking the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office.

As the panel continues to collect

evidence and prepares to issue a preliminary report of findings, it has amassed the most substantial public record to date of what led up to Americans attacking the seat of democracy.

While the committee cannot make criminal charges, the Justice Department is monitoring its work.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said Wednesday that Jan. 6 is “the most wide-ranging investigation and the most important investigation that the Justice Department has ever entered into.”

“We have to get this right,” Garland said. “For people who are concerned, as I think every American should be, we have to do two things: We have to hold accountable every person who is criminally responsible for trying to overturn a legitimate election, and we must do it in a way filled with integrity and professionalism.”

In delving into the timeline, the panel aimed to show what happened between the time Trump left the stage at his “Stop the Steal” rally shortly after 1:10 p.m., after telling supporters to march to the Capitol, and some three hours later, when he issued a video address from the Rose Garden in which he told the rioters to “go home” but also praised them as “very special.”

It also expected to produce additional evidence about Trump’s confrontation with Secret Service agents who refused to drive him to the Capitol — a witness account the security detail has disputed.

The panel has said its investigation is ongoing and other hearings are possible. It expects to compile a preliminary report this fall, and a final report by the end of this session of Congress.

## NATION



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray, R-Martinsville, and State Sen. Sue Glick, R-LaGrange, outline proposed legislation on abortion and financial relief at the Statehouse in Indianapolis on Wednesday.

## Indiana Republicans propose abortion ban with exceptions

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Leaders of Indiana's Republican-dominated Senate on Wednesday proposed banning abortion with limited exceptions — a move that comes amid a political firestorm over a 10-year-old rape victim who came to the state from neighboring Ohio to end her pregnancy.

The proposal will be taken up during a special legislative session that is scheduled to begin Monday, making Indiana one of the first Republican-run states to debate tighter abortion laws following the U.S. Supreme Court decision last month overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

The Supreme Court ruling is expected to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states.

The Indiana proposal would allow exceptions to the ban, such as in cases of rape, incest or to protect a woman's life.

Republican state Sen. Sue Glick, who is sponsoring the bill, said the proposal would not limit access to emergency contraception known as the morning-after pill or limit doctors from treating miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies.

The bill would prohibit abortions from the time an egg is implanted in a woman's uterus.

"Being pro-life is not about criminalizing women," Glick said. "It's about preserving the dignity of life and helping mothers bring new happy, healthy babies in the world."

Planned Parenthood's Indiana affiliate criticized the bill, saying in a news release that "a complete ban on abortion is on its way to Indiana."

"Even the bill's limited exemptions would leave providers risking investigations, and even criminalization, making them exceptions in name only," said the organization, which operates four abortion clinics in the state.

## Jobless claims are at highest levels in over 8 months

BY MATT OTT

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits last week rose to the highest level in more than eight months in what may be a sign that the labor market is weakening.

Applications for jobless aid for the week ending July 16 rose by 7,000 to 251,000, up from the previous week's 244,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's the most since Nov. 13, 2021, when 265,000 Americans applied for benefits.

Analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet expected the number to come in at 242,000.

First-time applications generally reflect layoffs.

The four-week average for claims, which smooths out some of the week-to-week volatility, rose by 4,500 from the previous week, to 240,500.

The total number of Americans collecting jobless benefits for the week ending July 9 rose by 51,000 from the previous week, to 1,384,000. That figure has been near 50-year lows for months.

Earlier this month, the Labor Department reported that employers added 372,000 jobs in June, a surprisingly robust gain and similar to the pace of the previous two months. Economists had expected job growth to slow sharply last month given the broader signs of economic weakness. The unemployment rate remained 3.6% for a fourth straight

month, matching a near-50-year low that was reached before the pandemic struck in early 2020.

The government also reported earlier in July that U.S. employers advertised fewer jobs in May amid signs that the economy is weakening, though the overall demand for workers remained strong. There are still nearly two job openings for every unemployed person.

Consumer prices are still soaring, up 9.1% in June compared with a year earlier, the biggest yearly increase since 1981, the government reported last week.

Though the number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits last week increased, the total number of those actually collecting benefits fell. The Labor Department also reported last week that inflation at the wholesale level climbed 11.3% in June from a year earlier.

All of those figures paint a divergent picture of the post-pandemic economy: Inflation is hammering household budgets, forcing consumers to pull back on spending, and growth is weakening, heightening fears the economy could fall into a recession.

In an effort to combat the worst inflation in more than four decades, the Federal Reserve raised rates by a half-point in May and another rare three-quarter point increase last month. Most economists expect the Federal Reserve to jack up its borrowing rate another half-to-three-quarters of a point when it meets later this month.

## House Dems move to protect contraception from high court

BY ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The right to use contraceptives would be inscribed into law under a measure Democrats are pushing through the House, their latest campaign-season response to worries that a conservative Supreme Court that's erased federal abortion rights could go further.

The House planned to vote Thursday on the legislation and send it to the Senate, where its fate seemed uncertain. The push underscored that Democrats are latching onto their own version of culture-war battles to appeal to female, progressive and minority voters by casting the court and Republicans as extremists intent on obliterating rights taken for granted

for years.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said now that the "radical, Republican-stacked Supreme Court" overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, GOP lawmakers want to do more than ban abortion.

"Those of us who've been in Congress a while can tell you that they have been against contraception, family planning, birth control the entire time," said Pelosi, D-Calif. "This is their moment. Clarence Thomas has made that clear. They're right down to the fundamentals of privacy that they want to erase."

In his opinion overturning *Roe v. Wade* last month, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the court should now review other precedents. He mentioned rulings that affirmed

the rights of same-sex marriage in 2015, same-sex intimate relationships in 2003 and married couples' use of contraceptives in 1965.

Thomas did not specify a 1972 decision that legalized the use of contraceptives by unmarried people as well, but Democrats have said they consider that at risk as well.

Thomas and congressional Republicans "are about one thing, control," said Rep. Kathy Manning, D-N.C., chief sponsor of the contraception bill, which has about 150 co-sponsors, all Democrats.

"These extremists are working to take away the rights of women, to take away our right to decide when to have children, to take away our right to control our own lives and our own bodies. And we will not let this happen," she said.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who is close to GOP leaders, said he doubted the legislation could win the Republican support it will need to survive in the Senate. Democrats there have introduced a contraception bill similar to the House version.

"I think it's pure hysteria" by Democrats, Cornyn said of the contraception rights bill. "It's not in jeopardy" of being repealed, he said.

House Democrats have begun forcing votes on these and other issues related to privacy rights, hoping for long-shot victories or to at least energize sympathetic voters and donors and force Republicans from competitive districts in difficult spots. The House voted last week to revive a nationwide right to

abortion, with every Republican voting no, and voted largely along party lines to bar prosecuting women traveling to states where abortion remains legal.

The contraception bill explicitly allows the use of contraceptives and gives the medical community the right to provide them, covering "any device or medication used to prevent pregnancy." Listed examples include oral contraceptives, injections, implants like intrauterine devices and emergency contraceptives, which prevent pregnancy several days after unprotected sex.

The bill lets the federal and state government, patients and health care providers bring civil suits against states or state officials that violate its provisions.

## NATION

# Man saves five from house fire

Associated Press

LAFAYETTE, Ind. — An Indiana man ran into a burning home and saved five people, including a 6-year-old girl whom he was holding when he jumped out of a second-floor window.

But Nick Bostic, 25, of Lafayette, says he's no hero and that the serious injuries he suffered were "all worth it."

Bostic was driving early on July 11 in the northwestern Indiana city when he saw a house in flames. He stopped and ran inside to alert its residents.

"I slammed on the brakes, I turned the steering wheel, I did a 180. I ran into the back of the house and I was yelling for anybody. Four faces, three or four faces, came out the top," he told WLFV-TV.

An 18-year-old woman was in the home babysitting her three siblings, ages 1, 6 and 13, along with a 13-year-old friend of the 13-year-old sibling, while the four siblings' parents were out playing darts, The Washington Post reported.

Bostic said the 18-year-old was able to get three of the children out, but she told him one child was still missing, prompting him to search the smoke-filled home for that child.

"I heard a faint whine, a faint crying noise and I went down there till I found that baby," he said.

Because of the dense smoke, he said his only option was to exit through a second-floor window. Bostic punched out the glass and jumped to safety with the 6-year-old girl in his arms. He suffered multiple injuries but the girl only suffered a minor cut to her foot.

Police body camera video captured the aftermath of the jump,



In this image taken from a police body camera on July 11, Nick Bostic, 25, of Lafayette rescues a 6-year-old girl from a house fire in Lafayette, Ind. Bostic punched out a second-floor window and jumped out with the girl in his arms, sustaining multiple injuries, while the girl suffered a minor cut to her foot. He rescued four others from the house before that.

with Bostic backlit by the burning home and walking toward first responders, the girl in his arms.

In the video, a police officer takes the crying child while Bostic — who is winded and wheezing, with a wounded right arm and blood on his clothes — sits down on the curb, saying, "I need oxygen."

After an officer helps Bostic to a safer spot across the street, a tourniquet is applied to his arm after he lies down in the grass. Bostic then asks, "Is the baby OK? Please tell me the baby's OK" before someone off camera assures him the child is fine.

"You did good dude, OK?" an officer tells Bostic.

Bostic, who suffered smoke inhalation in addition to his arm injury and other wounds, was airlifted to an Indianapolis hospital and discharged two days later.

He said he's not a hero, and just did what he would have wanted someone to do for him and his family if their home was on fire.

"It was all worth it. I kept reminding myself what a small sacrifice. This temporary pain ... it's so worth it," he told WLFV-TV.

A GoFundMe page set up for Bostic to help pay his hospital and medical bills had raised more than \$470,000 by Wednesday afternoon, far surpassing its \$100,000 goal.

David Barrett, the four siblings' father, told The Washington Post, that his family feels "very blessed for what Nick did."

"He's a real hero, and my daughter's a real hero for waking the kids up. I don't like to think about what might have happened if Nick hadn't shown up. I'm grateful beyond words," he said.

Lafayette Fire Investigation Chief Brian Alkire told the (Lafayette) Journal & Courier that the fire started on the front porch of the home in the city about 65 miles northwest of Indianapolis.

Police said the fire remains under investigation.

## Gunman killed after driving into family, shooting two

Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. — A man drove his pickup truck into a family as they walked in a tourist village bordering Glacier National Park and opened fire with a shotgun, killing one man and mortally wounding a toddler who was in her mother's arms before the mother's sister-in-law managed to kill the assailant after he ran out of ammunition, authorities said.

Killed in the weekend attack on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana were David Siau, 39, of Syracuse, New York, and Siau's 18-month-old daughter, McKenzie.

The assailant, Derick Amos Madden, 37, had been in a prior relationship with the woman who killed him and had mental health issues, the Glacier County Sheriff's Office said. Authorities on Wednesday would not say how he was killed.

Madden plowed a Toyota Tacoma onto a sidewalk and into the Siau family just before 9 p.m. Sunday as they walked in the small town of East Glacier Park, hitting some of them before crashing into a tree, the sheriff's office said.

Madden got out and shot and killed David Siau and mortally wounded McKenzie.

The young girl was being held by her mother, Christy Siau, 40, who was shot and wounded as she tried to run away.

Madden then ran out of ammunition and used a knife to attack the sister-in-law, Christina Siau, 30.

But the woman fought back and fatally wounded Madden, who authorities said died at the scene, said Capt. Tom Seifert with the Glacier County Sheriff's Office.

# Two indicted in migrant deaths

Associated Press

Two men were indicted Wednesday in the case of a hot, airless tractor-trailer rig found last month with 53 dead or dying migrants in San Antonio, officials said.

A federal grand jury in San Antonio indicted Homero Zamorano Jr., 46, and Christian Martinez, 28, both of Pasadena, Texas, on counts of transporting and conspiring to transport migrants illegally resulting in death; and transporting and conspiring to transport migrants illegally resulting in serious injury.

Both remain in federal custody without bond pending trial. Martinez's attorney, David Shearer of San Antonio, declined to comment on the indictments.

A message to Zamorano's attorney was not immediately returned.

Conviction on the death counts could result in life sentences, but the Attorney General's Office could authorize prosecutors to seek death penalties.

The serious bodily injury counts carry sentences of up to 20 years in prison.

It was the deadliest tragedy to claim the lives of migrants smuggled across the border from Mexico. The truck had been packed with 67 people, and the dead included 27 from Mexico, 14 from Honduras, seven from Guatemala and two from El Salvador, said Francisco Garduño, chief of Mexico's National Immigration Institute.

The incident happened on a remote San Antonio back road on June 27.

Arriving police officers detained Zamorano after spotting him hiding in some nearby brush, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

A search of Zamorano's cell phone revealed calls with Martinez concerning the smuggling run.

The tragedy occurred at a time when huge numbers of migrants have been coming to the U.S., many of them taking perilous risks to cross swift rivers and canals and scorching desert landscapes.

Migrants were stopped nearly 240,000 times in May, up by one-third from a year ago.



ERIC GAY/AP

Police and other first responders work the scene where dozens of people were found dead on June 27 in San Antonio. Officials said two men were indicted Wednesday, July 20 in the case.

NATION

# Comic-Con has returned

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The pop culture extravaganza that is Comic-Con International is back to its old extravaganza. Stars, cosplayers and hordes of fans are filling the San Diego Convention Center in full force for the first time since 2019. Here's a look at this year's version of the four day festival.

■ **Comic-crowds**

The pandemic necessitated virtual versions of Comic-Con in the summers of 2020 and 2021, and a scaled-back in-person version in November, but none were anything like the usual spectacle, with lovers of all things geeky descending from around the globe and arena-sized panels on films and TV shows that resemble sporting events.

It's not clear whether the convention will draw the estimated 135,000 people who flooded San Diego before the pandemic. But when the doors of the Convention Center opened for Wednesday's preview night, the fans came in droves, mobbing the floor. As required, nearly all wore masks — the protective kind, not the supervillain kind, though there were plenty of those too — and the excitement amid the crowd was palpable.

"Everybody's just been cooped up for a while, and they've been anticipating this," said Dinh Truong, 34, who came to Comic-Con for the second time from his hometown of Minneapolis. "It's nice just to see everybody in the same atmosphere. I'm excited to see the



PHOTOS BY CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Comic-Con attendees walk the convention show floor during Preview Night at the 2022 Comic-Con International at the San Diego Convention Center, on Wednesday, in San Diego.

program, see what's going on, see everybody cosplaying and all that, and just getting back to what we used to be."

Far bigger crowds are expected Thursday, when the events begin in earnest.

■ **Comic-cosplay**

It's likely no one has missed the in-person convention more than the captains, queens and connoisseurs of cosplay. Comic-Con is their Met Gala, and no getup is too elaborate.

Lorelei McKelvey, 54, who is from San Diego but now lives in Yokosuka, Japan, was dressed as Captain Carter, Captain America's British, World War II-era counterpart.

"I had to do one that I could authentically replicate," McKelvey

said. "I went and did my research and found out what were the authentic British officer leathers worn in World War II, and I found manufacturers to actually make those leathers."

She walked the Convention Center floor in real-as-possible officer cavalry boots and Royal Air Force gauntlets, and carried a 5-pound steel shield.

Others wandered the halls Wednesday as "Star Wars" Stormtroopers, the Mandalorian, Wonder Woman, and Sailor Moon. Chuckie from "Child's Play" emerged from one cosplayer's stomach.

■ **Comic-coming attractions**

Comic-Con makes most of its news as a venue to show off trailers and footage from forthcoming



Jay Acey, dressed as A-Train from the television series "The Boys," mingles with Maddox Cruz, 1, of Orange, Calif., outside Preview Night.

films and TV shows during star-studded mega-panels held in Hall H, which holds some 6,000 people. Announced panels include Warner Bros. and the DC Universe's "Black Adam." It will include Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, who plays the titular antihero and others.

Warner Bros. will also provide a preview of "Shazam: Fury of the Gods."

Marvel may hold back its best material for Disney's forthcoming D23 Expo, but is expected to tease its next film, "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" and the Disney+

TV series "She-Hulk: Attorney at Law."

A pair of much-anticipated fantasy prequels will also give fans a taste of their worlds. A new trailer dropped Wednesday in advance of a panel from HBO Max that will show off the "Game of Thrones" spinoff "House of the Dragon," set 200 years before the original series.

Amazon is going back in time 2000 years for "The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power," a tale of the emergence of evil among the elves long before Frodo and Bilbo walked Middle Earth.

## Monarch butterflies now endangered

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The monarch butterfly fluttered a step closer to extinction Thursday, as scientists put the iconic orange-and-black insect on the endangered list because of its fast dwindling numbers.

"It's just a devastating decline," said Stuart Pimm, an ecologist at Duke University who was not involved in the new listing. "This is one of the most recognizable butterflies in the world."

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature added the migrating monarch butterfly for the first time to its "red list" of threatened species and categorized it as "endangered" — two steps from extinct.

The group estimates that the population of monarch butterflies in North America has declined between 22% and 72% over 10 years, depending on the measurement method.

"What we're worried about is the rate of decline," said Nick Haddad, a conservation biologist



Nic Coury/AP

Monarch butterflies land on branches at Monarch Grove Sanctuary in Pacific Grove, Calif.

at Michigan State University. "It's very easy to imagine how very quickly this butterfly could become even more imperiled."

Haddad, who was not directly involved in the listing, estimates that the population of monarch butterflies he studies in the eastern United States has declined between 85% and 95% since the 1990s.

Emma Pelton of the nonprofit Xerces Society, which monitors the western butterflies, said the butterflies are imperiled by loss of habitat and increased use of herbicides and pesticides for agriculture, as well as climate change.

"There are things people can do to help," she said, including planting milkweed, a plant that the caterpillars depend upon.

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## WORLD

# 2 battle it out for Conservative votes in UK race

By JILL LAWLESS  
Associated Press

LONDON — The two candidates vying to become Britain's next prime minister began a head-to-head battle Thursday for the votes of Conservative Party members who will choose the country's new leader.

Former Treasury chief Rishi Sunak is promising fiscal prudence, while Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is offering immediate tax cuts to members of the right-wing governing party, which is divided and demoralized after three turbulent years under departing Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Sunak and Truss were chosen Wednesday by Conservative lawmakers — whittled down from an initial field of 11 candidates — as finalists to replace Johnson, who quit as party leader on July 7 after months of ethics scandals. He remains prime minister until his successor is chosen. The result of the party leadership contest is due on Sept. 5 and that person automatically becomes Britain's next prime minister.

Only about 180,000 Conservative Party members have a vote in choosing the country's next leader. The rest of the U.K.'s 67 million people must watch the campaign from the sidelines, as the candidates spar in televised debates and party meetings — against a backdrop of soaring prices, growing climate extremes that broke U.K. temperature records this week and the war in Ukraine.

The winner of the Conservative

contest will not have to face British voters until 2024, unless he or she chooses to call an early general election.

Odds-makers say the favorite is Truss, who has led the U.K.'s response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and is running as a low-tax, small-state conservative in the mold of Margaret Thatcher.

In interviews Thursday, Truss said she had the "toughness" and "grit" to lead the country in troubled times.

"We are in very difficult times. We need to be bold," she told the BBC. "We cannot have business as usual for the challenge we face."

Sunak, who steered Britain's economy through the pandemic before quitting Johnson's government this month, also claims to wear the mantle of Thatcher, whose free-market policies transformed Britain's economy in the 1980s. Sunak argues it would be irresponsible to slash taxes before getting inflation under control. He won the vote among party lawmakers, but his previous role as Britain's chief taxman may go down less well with the Tory grassroots.



Truss



Sunak



ROBERTO MONALDO, LaPresse/AP

Italian Premier Mario Draghi reacts as he addresses the Parliament in Rome, Italy, on Thursday.

## Italy's Draghi resigns, spelling trouble for nation and Europe

Associated Press

ROME — Italian Premier Mario Draghi resigned Thursday after his ruling coalition fell apart, and the country's president dissolved Parliament, which paves the way for new elections although no date was set.

The moves dealt a destabilizing blow to Italy and Europe at a time of inflation and economic uncertainty brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine.

President Sergio Mattarella said the new election must be held within 70 days under Italy's Constitution. He said he took the step because the lack of support for Draghi also indicated there was "no possibility" of forming another government that could carry a majority of lawmakers.

Parliament's five-year-term would have expired in March 2023.

Draghi tendered his resignation to Mattarella during a morning meeting at the Quirinale Palace. Mattarella, who rejected a similar resignation offer from the premier last week, asked Draghi's government to remain on in a caretaker capacity, the president's office said.

The turmoil couldn't have come at a worse time for the eurozone's third-largest economy. Like many countries, Italy is facing soaring prices for everything from food to household utilities as a result of Moscow's invasion. On top of that, it is also suffering through a prolonged drought that is threatening crops and struggling to implement its EU-financed pandemic recovery program.

Any instability in Italy could ripple out to the rest of Europe, also facing economic trouble, and deprive the EU of a respected statesman as it seeks to keep up a united front against Russia.

Draghi, who is not a politician but a former central banker, was brought in 17 months ago to navigate the economic downturn caused by COVID-19. But his government of national unity imploded Wednesday after members of his uneasy coalition of right, left and populists rebuffed his appeal to band back together to finish the Parliament's natural term.

Instead, the center-right Forza Italia and League parties and the populist 5-Star Movement boycotted a confidence vote in the Senate, a clear sign they were done with Draghi.

## WHO considers declaring monkeypox global danger

Associated Press

LONDON — As the World Health Organization's emergency committee convened Thursday to consider for the second time within weeks whether to declare monkeypox a global crisis, some scientists said the striking differences between the outbreaks in Africa and in developed countries will complicate any coordinated response.

African officials say they are already treating the continent's epidemic as an emergency. But experts elsewhere say the mild version of monkeypox in Europe, North America and beyond makes an emergency declaration unne-

cessary even if the virus can't be stopped. British officials recently downgraded their assessment of the disease, given its lack of severity.

"I remain concerned about the number of cases, in an increasing number of countries, that have been reported," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the emergency committee as its meeting got underway.

He said it was "pleasing" to note falling numbers of monkeypox cases in some countries but that the virus is still increasing elsewhere and that six countries reported their first infections last week.

## Europe's wildfire threat beginning to ease but blaze grows in Slovenia

Associated Press

MADRID — Europe's spate of fierce wildfires abated somewhat Thursday amid cooler temperatures, with French firefighters starting to get the upper hand over two major blazes, Spain taming a fire that killed two people and no new outbreaks reported in Portugal.

But a fire in Slovenia on the border with Italy kicked up strongly Thursday, forcing the evacuation of three villages.

Spanish firefighters were tackling nine blazes, with two said to be especially dangerous in the northwestern Galicia region. Some of the 11,000 people evacuated

because of the fires in Spain began returning home.

Temperatures above 104 Fahrenheit and a drought have worsened Spain's wildfires this year. Thursday's highest temperature in Spain was forecast to be 90 F.

In France, more than a week of round-the-clock battling against ferocious flames by more than 2,000 firefighters and up to 10 water-dropping planes was slowly winning out against two major wildfires in the tinder-dry pine forests in southwestern France.

The Gironde region's fire service said both blazes, which had forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people, were con-

tained.

Officials in Slovenia, meanwhile, said the raging blaze in the southwestern Kras region was the biggest since the country became an independent nation in 1991.

"The fire is nowhere near its end," Srečko Sestan, head of Slovenia's civil protection service, told the official STA news agency.

The fire has engulfed nearly 5,000 acres and set off unexploded ordnance left over from World War I. More than 1,000 firefighters have been fighting the blaze, aided by the Slovenian army and police, as well as helicopters from Austria, Slovakia and Croatia.

# WEEKEND



Pleasant puzzling at Escape Academy  
Video games, Page 18



## Horror and history

Writer-director Jordan Peele considers 'Nope' an antidote to racially flawed origins of film

Movies, Page 15

"Nope" writer-director  
Jordan Peele

JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

## WEEKEND: GADGETS &amp; TECHNOLOGY

# Cause for concern

Tech secrecy vexes scientists as AI language skills grow



MARY ALTAFFER/AP

Research engineer Teven Le Scao, who helped create the new AI language model BLOOM, is photographed July 11. BLOOM works across 46 languages including Arabic, Spanish and French.

By MATT O'BRIEN  
Associated Press

The tech industry's latest artificial intelligence constructs can be pretty convincing if you ask them what it feels like to be a sentient computer, or maybe just a dinosaur or squirrel. But they're not so good — and sometimes dangerously bad — at handling other seemingly straightforward tasks.

Take, for instance, GPT-3, a Microsoft-controlled system that can generate paragraphs of human-like text based on what it's learned from a vast database of digital books and online writings. It's considered one of the most advanced of a new generation of AI algorithms that can converse, generate readable text on demand and even produce novel images and video.

Among other things, GPT-3 can write up almost any text you ask for — a cover letter for a zookeeping job, say, or a Shakespearean-style sonnet set on Mars. But when Pomona College professor Gary Smith asked it a simple but nonsensical question about walking upstairs, GPT-3 muffed it.

"Yes, it is safe to walk upstairs on your hands if you wash them first," the AI replied.

These powerful AI systems, technically known as "large language models" because they've been trained on a huge body of text and other media, are already getting baked into customer service chatbots, Google searches and "auto-complete" email features that finish your sentences for you. But most of the tech companies that built them have been secretive about their inner workings, making it hard for outsiders to understand the flaws that can make them a source of misinformation, racism and other harms.

"They're very good at writing text with the proficiency of human beings," said Teven Le Scao, a research engineer at the AI startup Hugging Face. "Something they're not very good at is being factual. It looks very coherent. It's almost true. But it's often wrong."

That's one reason a coalition of AI researchers co-led by Le Scao — with help from the French government — launched a new large language model July 12 that's supposed to serve as an antidote to closed systems such as GPT-3. The group is called BigScience and their model is BLOOM, for the BigScience Large Open-science Open-access Multilingual Language Model. Its main breakthrough is that it works across 46 languages, including Arabic, Spanish and French — unlike most systems that are focused on English or Chinese.

Competitive pressure to build the most eloquent or informative system — and profit from its applications — is one of the reasons that most tech companies keep a tight lid on them and don't collaborate on community norms, said Percy Liang, an associate computer science professor at Stanford who directs its Center for Research on Foundation Models.

"For some companies, this is their secret sauce,"

Liang said. But they are often also worried that losing control could lead to irresponsible uses. As AI systems are increasingly able to write health advice websites, high school term papers or political screeds, misinformation can proliferate and it will get harder to know what's coming from a human or a computer.

While most companies have set their own internal AI safeguards, Liang said what's needed are broader community standards to guide research and decisions such as when to release a new model into the wild.

The trend for ever-bigger, ever-smarter AI language models that could be "pre-trained" on a wide body of writings took a big leap in 2018 when Google introduced a system known as BERT that uses a so-called "transformer" technique that compares words across a sentence to predict meaning and context.

But what really impressed the AI world was GPT-3, released by San Francisco-based startup OpenAI in 2020 and soon after exclusively licensed by Microsoft.

GPT-3 led to a boom in creative experimentation as AI researchers with paid access used it as a sandbox to gauge its performance — though without important information about the data it was trained on.

OpenAI has broadly described its training sources in a research paper, and has also publicly reported its efforts to grapple with potential abuses of the technology. But BigScience co-leader Thomas Wolf said it doesn't provide details about how it filters that data, or give access to the processed version to outside researchers.

"So we can't actually examine the data that went into the GPT-3 training," said Wolf, who is also a chief science officer at Hugging Face. "The core of this recent wave of AI tech is much more in the dataset than the models. The most important ingredient is data and OpenAI is very, very secretive about the data they use."

Wolf said that opening up the datasets used for language models helps humans better understand their biases. A multilingual model trained in Arabic is far less likely to spit out offensive remarks or misunderstandings about Islam than one that's only trained on English-language text in the U.S., he said.

Colorado-based researcher Janelle Shane, author of the AI Weirdness blog, has spent the past few years creatively testing these models, especially GPT-3 — often to humorous effect. But to point out the absurdity of thinking these systems are self-aware, she recently instructed it to be an advanced AI but one which is secretly a Tyrannosaurus rex or a squirrel.

"It is very exciting being a squirrel. I get to run and jump and play all day. I also get to eat a lot of food, which is great," GPT-3 said, after Shane asked it for a transcript of an interview and posed some questions.

## GADGETS

## Robot vacuum excels at cleaning all floor surfaces

By GREGG ELLMAN  
Tribune News Service

Not only does the new Yeedi Vac Max Robot Vacuum (model DVX34) ace the cleaning of carpet, tile and hardwood, it can also mop floors, and all for a budget-friendly price.

It's touted as an intelligent vacuum with technology to deliver superior cleaning. With the mapping system camera on top and floor sensors that accurately map the room, it cleans in neat rows. That's all great, but will it avoid needed obstacles such as a pet's water bowl? It will.

The Vac Max is guided by 3D obstacle avoidance technology with 10x obstacle avoidance precision, so it detects and avoids objects in its way. The fewer objects in its way, the better it cleans, so if you pick up shoes, children's toys or other obstructions, which would create a clear path, it's a plus.

For mopping, a 250 ml liquid container is built into the vacuum. To mop floors, it features a removable cloth. It can be set up to mop alone or a combination of mop and vacuum. It will not enter into carpet cleaning mode while mopping.

The suction power has Advanced Carpet Identification that automatically adjusts depending on the surface, increasing as it senses carpet and decreasing on wood or tile flooring. The robot's sophisticated and sleek design has a slim profile for easy cleaning under furniture and tables.

The Yeedi Vac Max Robot Vacuum is as easy as pressing a button. Once the pattern of the area to be cleaned is mapped, use the vacuum and the app to repeat the same area with adjustments. Setting up the mapped locations you want to be cleaned does take a few minutes with the app. After it's mapped, it can then select specific areas of the map for cleaning.

The vacuum cleans and mops floors and carpets with a 5200 mAh battery for 200 minutes, with adjustable power levels up

to 3000pa.

And finally, if you want to make it even easier and hands-free, including not touching the power button, the Yeedi Vac Max Robot Vacuum is compatible with Google Assistant and Alexa for voice controls.

Online: yeedi.com; \$254.99

The Hanasco H6 Sonic electric toothbrush isn't for floors, but it will do a great job on teeth.

The H6 has an IPX7 waterproof class rating and is built with four brushing modes: clean, white, polish and gum care. With speeds up to 38,000 vibrations per minute, the brush movements are powered by an ultrasonic motor and clean your teeth with Dupont nylon bristles.

A single lithium-ion 2000mAh rechargeable battery takes about four hours for a complete charge, yielding about 280 brushing minutes. There's a charging indicator on the brush handle along with each mode. A single button is pressed to cycle through the on and off modes and the power. And the charging cable connects to the bottom.

The clean mode is for everyday use and maintaining whitening treatments. It takes two minutes with the whitening mode to remove surface stains and another 30 seconds to brighten up your front-facing teeth.

When in the polish mode, it will remove stains from the surface of the teeth, and a smoother surface is left behind. Finally, gum care is a gentle mode for cleaning sensitive gums. This is the mode I was most anxious to use, and I found it successful.

Eight brush heads are included and should provide more than two years of use; each easily snaps on and off. A USB cable is included for charging; a hard travel case stores the base and two brush heads. The blue bristles begin to fade to white; that's your reminder to change out the head.

Online: hanasco.com; \$32.99 at Amazon



YEEDI/TNS

The Yeedi Vac Max Robot Vacuum works on bare floors and carpet.

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

Q&amp;A



GLEN WILSON, UNIVERSAL PICTURES/AP

Writer-director Jordan Peele on the set of “Nope,” in which a brother and sister who wrangle horses for films are visited by a violent force in the clouds.

# ‘There is a desensitization to spectacle’

Writer-director Peele discusses his third film, ‘Nope,’ and the Hollywood films, real-life events that influenced it

By JAKE COYLE  
Associated Press

There’s little in contemporary movies quite like the arrival of a new Jordan Peele film. They tend to descend ominously and mysteriously, a little like an unknown object from above that casts an expanding, darkening shadow the closer it comes.

“Nope,” the writer-director’s third film, is here. After Peele’s singular debut, “Get Out,” about the possession of Black bodies and the fallacy of post-racial America, and his follow-up, “Us,” a monstrous tale of doppelgangers and societal mirrors, the closely-kept-under-wraps “Nope” brings a new set of horrors and unsettling metaphors. For Peele, who writes through shooting and considers the conversation generated by a movie one of its main ingredients, “Nope” is far from a finished project.

“Movie’s done,” Peele said in a recent interview. “I’m still writing it.”

It’s Peele’s most ambitious film yet, a flying saucer horror that digs into the nature of spectacle and the desire to document it — a multithreaded theme that encompasses Hollywood history and “Nope” itself. Daniel Kaluuya and Keke Palmer star as a brother and sister in a family horse-wrangling business for film productions. Their California ranch is visited by a strange and violent force in the clouds that they strive to capture on film.

“Nope,” which opens in theaters this weekend, also extends Peele’s own self-conjured mythology. His movies

are very loosely tethered together (some fictional establishments appear in several of them), and now even encompass a “Nope” theme park attraction at Universal Studios Hollywood. Peele’s dark world is increasingly ours.

For Peele, as he said speaking recently by Zoom from Los Angeles, “Nope” is about reaching for a kind of Hollywood movie once unattainable. He pointedly opens the film with Eadweard Muybridge’s 1887 photographic study showing a Black rider on a horse. It was one of the first moving pictures. But while the name of the horse and its owner was recorded, the name of the Black jockey is unknown.

“I feel like this is the first moment that anyone would ever allow me or anyone to make this movie. And so I had to take advantage. I had to go as big as possible,” Peele said. “I was like: ‘Let’s go.’”

Responses have been edited for brevity and clarity.

**Associated Press: The Eadweard Muybridge loop looms over “Nope”; your characters are said to be descendants from its unnamed rider. To you, what does it mean that the erasure of Black men was there at the foundation of cinema?**

**Peele:** It’s a sad part of this industry. It was something I was learning at a good point for myself in this story. I felt like five, 10 years ago, I would never have been able to sell this movie to anyone. So I’m juxtaposing this origin story of film at the same time I’m trying to make a story that’s scary and joyous and adventurous and everything I

love about film. It just felt very fitting for that starting point to be acknowledged and have ancestral implications for our main characters.

**Do you think of your movie as like an antidote to that film?**

Yes. I’ve been trying to put that together. It’s a sequel, it’s an antidote, it’s a reboot, it’s an answer to the way films began and have continued.

**Kaluuya and Palmer’s characters work on movie sets and “Nope” centers on their attempts to capture something on film. To you, is “Nope” about the movie industry?**

It became very meta very quick. Making a movie is basically like chasing the impossible, trying to bottle something that doesn’t exist. I was inspired by films like “King Kong” and “Jurassic Park” that really deal with the human addiction to spectacle and the presentation and monetization of that. The meta part is you’re commenting on this notion at the same time you’re trying to utilize it and trying to create something that people can’t look away from.

**Why do you think in writing “Nope” your thoughts went back to the beginning of film?**

Part of the world of “Nope” is flirting with real Hollywood and the Hollywood that takes place in my liminal dreams and nightmares. In real life, of the prominent Hollywood horse trainers, there’s not an African American one I’m representing. The Haywoods are a very

**SEE SPECTACLE ON PAGE 16**

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

## Say yes to alien-invasion western 'Nope'

Peele's latest flick both a finely-crafted throwback and a new approach to creature feature genre

By MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN  
*The Washington Post*

There's a reason virtually nothing is opening in movie theaters this week — virtually nothing, that is, except "Nope," the new sci-fi epic from writer, director and producer Jordan Peele. Based on the success of Peele's Oscar-winning horror debut "Get Out" and its follow-up "Us," the filmmaker's name alone has the power to strike fear into the hearts of studio heads and film distributors with a competing product to sell. And so a wide berth has been given to Peele's latest, a stylishly creepy alien-invasion tale starring Daniel Kaluuya and Keke Palmer.

Fittingly for a movie so big-footed it has scared away almost all comers, you're going to want to see "Nope" on the largest screen possible, and with the best and biggest sound system. Set on a remote ranch in the picturesque California desert town of Agua Dulce, the film centers on siblings OJ and Emerald Haywood (Kaluya and Palmer), Hollywood horse trainers who have an unearthly visitation.

"Nope" has been hand-tooled for the kind of presentation you can only get in a real theater — preferably Imax, to take full advantage of the film's striking production design and eerie sound mix, which ranges from a thunderous, cinderblock-shaking roar to the kind of hush that isn't so much a stillness as a sonic vacuum: the kind of silence in which you hear nothing but your own heartbeat. Kudos to sound



Universal Pictures

Daniel Kaluuya, left, and Keke Palmer star in Jordan Peele's new sci-fi epic "Nope."

designer Johnnie Burn (a BAFTA nominee for "The Favourite"), who deserves to be first in line for next year's Oscars.

Before settling into its unsettling groove, "Nope" must dispense with some perfunctory backstory involving the insolvency of the Haywoods' horse-wrangling business — who makes westerns anymore? — and the mysterious death of their father (Keith David) six months before the main action gets underway. We learn that OJ is a laconic cowboy type; Emerald is a talker, and often rather funny. There's also a subplot involving a former child actor (Steven Yeun) from a 1990s sitcom starring a chimpanzee that infamously went

berserk (in suitably horrific, bloody fashion), but that narrative pretty much goes nowhere.

Things pick up as OJ and Emerald decide they need to document some of the unexplained aerial phenomena (UAPs) they have lately begun encountering around their ranch: a cloud that never moves and a dark, saucerlike object that can be glimpsed slicing through it just behind the photogenic hills. Not just document, but potentially monetize, by capturing footage they have dubbed the "Oprah shot": an unimpeachable, high-quality image that someone will pay for. When it becomes clear that they're dealing with

something much stranger and deadlier than they originally thought, their plan evolves from making a quick buck to saving the Earth.

In that sense, at least, "Nope" feels like a throwback, and in a good way. It's an old-school creature feature, replete with a creature that causes electrical blackouts, but defies the stereotype of the little green man. And it gets a big jolt of contemporary juice from the fact it's set in moviemaking country. When OJ and Emerald realize they can't handle the mystery on their own, they team up with a 20-something specialist in surveillance systems from a chain electronics store (Brandon Perea) and a grizzled guerrilla cameraman with a hand-wound film camera (Michael Wittcott). It's a nod to the past, the present and the future of moviemaking, all at once.

The acting here is quite good, particularly by Kaluuya, who exudes the strong, silent air of a modern Gary Cooper, all shrugs and monosyllables, and Palmer, who is his much more expressive foil. But "Nope" ultimately belongs to its director, not its actors. Whether we're watching some heavy computer-generated imagery in the sky or flashback scenes featuring a rampaging primate (played by Terry Notary in an impressive motion-capture performance) or simply Kaluuya on horseback — a new kind of western hero in an orange hoodie — Peele tells his story visually, not verbally.

The dialogue is not so important but features the title word prominently, spoken by OJ and Emerald in response to what they see. You might find yourself saying "nope," too, once or twice, in a way that's really tantamount to saying "yes" to "Nope's" shivery pleasures, which feel both oldfangled and new.

"Nope" is rated R for coarse language throughout, some violence and bloody images. Running time: 131 minutes. Now playing at select AAFES theaters.

## Spectacle: Writer-director says working on franchises doesn't seem as fun

FROM PAGE 15

made-up family and notion. It was fun to weave the Hollywood fiction with reality and try and make a seamless immersion into what's real and what's not.

**A poster of Sidney Poitier's 1972 Western "Buck and the Preacher" is seen in the background of several shots. Was that an important film to you?**

It's the first film that I know of that had Black cowboys represented in it. The myth that cowboys were just white guys running around, it's just not true, but we don't know that because of Hollywood and the romanticized view of a very brutalized era. The film, it shares a spirit.

**Since seeing your film, clouds have taken on a sinister appearance to me. What led you to build your film around that image of an unmoving cloud?**

The beauty of the sky is enthralling — the first movies, in a way. Every now and then you'll see a cloud that sits alone and is too low, and it gives me this vertigo and this sense of Presence with a capital P. I can't describe it, but I knew if I could bottle that and put it into a horror movie, it might change the way people look at the sky.

**How much were you thinking about "Close Encounters of the Third Kind"?**

Yeah, "Close Encounters" [directed by Steven Spielberg] is something I think about a lot, as is "Signs" by M. Night Shyamalan. These are big-vision directors who have taken flying saucers and science fiction and have brought magic to the way they told those stories. I wanted to toss my hat in the ring to one of my favorite subgenres,

in UFOs, and do it in a way only I can.

**When the U.S. government declassified video of Navy pilots encountering unexplained aircraft — something your movie references — how did you react? Were you affected by those images?**

I was. It made it very real, very much in the moment. It's one of the reasons, I guess, I can proudly say this movie is based on a true story. But what was most nerve-racking or scary to me about the whole thing is that you'd like to think that when actual video proof of UFOs comes out that something would change in our lifestyle, not it's really business as usual. It just proves that there is a desensitization to spectacle. We're addicted and we're in over our heads with this addiction. We have proof of UFOs or UAPs (unidentified aerial phenomena), but the interest with the major public goes so far. It's very interesting.

**You seem to be referring to movies as spectacles, but were there also political dimensions to that? You developed this film through some very tumultuous times in American life, including the Jan. 6 Capitol riot.**

Attention can be a violent thing, and our addiction to spectacle can have negative consequences. I think sometimes if we give the wrong spectacle too much attention, it can give it too much power. If we are obsessed with the wrong spectacle, it can distract us from what's really going on. There's really a human need to see the unseeable that our entire society is based around. And in so many ways we see it. The last five years, it feels like

we've gone from seeking spectacle to being inundated with it. And that's the environment I wrote the film in.

**There aren't many filmmakers with as much freedom to make original studio movies as you. You've had chances to join major franchises. How focused are you on crafting your own films from the bottom up?**

Nothing is more rewarding than being able to lead the charge on something that comes from somewhere deep and to get the support of a team on something like that. I feel like if I were working off of someone else's property, I would owe something to someone else. Besides that core piece of inspiration, it just doesn't seem as fun to me.

**Have you been tempted?**

Yeah, there has been temptation. Sure. And there is temptation. There's so many things I love. And yet, when faced with my very favorite properties, it still doesn't beat the thing I haven't written yet or the thing I haven't figured out.

**Do you get asked a lot about a sequel to "Get Out"?**

I do get asked that a lot. Never say never. There's certainly a lot to talk about left. We'll see.

**After "Get Out," you suggested you would embark on a series of genre films that grapple with big societal issues. Three films in, where do you feel you are in that project?**

I feel like I'm off to the races. I just don't know if I could limit how many films I have that are me. I'm starting to lose sight of what I would be doing if I wasn't doing movies like this. So I would say the project has extended.

## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

# Action rules the day

Star-studded cast of 'Gray Man' barely stops to breathe

BY MARK MESZOROS  
The News-Herald

“**T**he Gray Man” is in constant danger of becoming a “John Wick” flick, as entertaining as those can be.

The big-budget, star-studded, spy-versus-spy affair from Netflix, which debuted in theaters last week and is now available on the streaming platform, is so packed with action that it tiptoes the line between a squint-for-it realism and all-out lunacy.

Ultimately, the latest from Joe and Anthony Russo — the sibling filmmaking tandem behind 2018’s “Avengers: Infinity War” and 2019’s “Avengers: Endgame” — manages to stay out of the realm of the completely ridiculous, if barely. That it maintains an emotional center even as scenes with a significant amount of dialogue increasingly give way to those booming with gunfire and explosions makes it a winner.

The Russos’ morally challenged villain is Captain America himself, Chris Evans, and Ryan Gosling is the leading man.

We are introduced to Gosling in prison, where he is being visited by a CIA man, Donald Fitzroy (Billy Bob Thornton), there to recruit him into Sierra, a top-secret program that trains criminals to be highly skilled operatives.

Court becomes Sierra Six, aka “Six,” and we next see him years later in Bangkok.

Six is in Thailand to assassinate a high-value target, who, he



Ana de Armas, left, and Ryan Gosling in “The Gray Man.”

comes to discover after things go sideways, is Sierra Four. Six wonders why his boss, Denny Carmichael (Regé-Jean Page, “Bridgerton”), would want a Sierra man dead and begins to follow a trail to the truth.

With Six no longer under his control, Carmichael wants him, like Four, permanently out of the picture. Carmichael turns to Evans’ Lloyd Hansen, a former CIA man whose tactics proved to be too dirty for the agency to accept.

Lloyd attempts to gain leverage on Six not only by threatening the life of Fitzroy, his since-retired handler, but also that of Fitzroy’s young niece, Claire (Julia Butters).

Also key to the mix is a fellow CIA agent, Dani Miranda, played by Ana de Armas, who shared the screen with Evans in 2019’s “Knives Out.” Dani was with Six

in Bangkok and eventually throws in with him — only after Carmichael accuses her of being in cahoots with the rogue agent.

Supporting players include Jessica Henwick, Alfre Woodard and Dhanush, a prolific actor in Indian cinema, here playing a skilled assassin.

“The Gray Man” is almost entirely about the game of cat-and-mouse being played by Lloyd and Six. It’s heightened by the enjoyably over-the-top performance by Evans, who seems thrilled to be chewing the scenery as the polar opposite of Captain America for the Russos.

Gosling, meanwhile, is much more subtle as the movie’s titular character, operating in the gray areas of espionage work. Rarely the fiery type, Gosling runs the risk here of seeming almost disinterested at times.

The overall action rarely stops



NETFLIX/AP photos

Ryan Gosling plays an ex-con recruited into a top secret CIA program in “The Gray Man,” now streaming on Netflix.

for long, and an elaborate, extended set piece in a historic square in Prague is something to behold. According to the film’s production notes, the shoot shut down the heavily trafficked section of Prague’s Old Town for 10 days.

“The Gray Man” delivers a lot

of bang for Netflix’s reported budget of 200 million bucks, and several of its action scenes alone, not to mention several highly watchable A-list actors, make it worth a spin.

“The Gray Man” is rated PG-13 for intense sequences of strong violence, and strong language. Running time: 127 minutes.

## ‘Paws of Fury’ is a cuddlier ‘Blazing Saddles’ with talking animals

BY THOMAS FLOYD  
The Washington Post

“Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank” is one mutt of a movie. If reimagining 1974’s western parody “Blazing Saddles” as a cuddly, computer-animated spoof of samurai movies sounds like a misguided idea, well, that’s because it is one.

Where “Blazing Saddles” confronted prejudice head-on, putting a Black sheriff in a narrow-minded, white frontier town, “Paws” takes the bite out of the earlier film’s satire by populating this kid-friendly tale with — wait for it — cats and dogs.

In this version, our hero is a naive pup named Hank (voiced by the eternally innocent Michael Cera), who dreams of becoming a katana-wielding warrior when he’s tasked with protecting the feline population of the fictional village of Kakamucho.

Rob Minkoff, Mark Koetsier and Chris Bailey co-direct a new screenplay credited not just to Ed Stone and Nate Hopper but



Paramount Pictures

Hank (left, voice of Michael Cera) and Jimbo (Samuel L. Jackson) in an animated retelling of the Mel Brooks classic “Blazing Saddles,” “Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank.”

also to the original “Saddles” team: Mel Brooks, Norman Steinberg, Andrew Bergman, Richard Pryor and Alan Uger. The loose framework of the “Saddles” plot remains, and the 96-year-old Brooks delightfully voices the shogun who rules over Kakamucho (riffing on his role as the

governor in “Blazing Saddles”). Yet this animated homage feels more hollow than honest, parroting the story beats and comedic stylings of “Saddles” without any of its subversive humor. Logical for a kid’s movie? Yes, but still jarring.

Setting aside the puzzling marriage of

source material and medium, “Paws” at least makes for a breezy summertime diversion.

Contrived but cute, the movie deserves credit for its indictment of insularity, as well as a few hearty laughs — all while clocking in at a scant 90 minutes, not counting the closing credits or the short film that plays before the feature.

For little ones oblivious to this movie’s inspiration, the rote character arcs and commendable morals should land just fine. And “Paws of Fury” does occasionally get its claws out with pointed observations about gun control, xenophobia and irrational intolerance. (“It just feels right to hate,” one cat casually muses.) Such barbs, however, get lost in a barrage of fart jokes and inane action. In the end, alas, this noisy spectacle is more bark than bite.

“Paws of Fury” is rated PG for action, violence, rude and suggestive humor and some strong language. Running time: 102 minutes.

## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Coin Crew Games photos

Players explore the Escape Academy campus in either single-player mode or as a co-op adventure. The game can be completed in five hours or less.

# Fun with higher learning

Escape Academy a co-op experience that accurately captures the frustration and giddy satisfaction of real-life escape rooms

BY ALYSE STANLEY  
*The Washington Post*

**E**scape rooms are a gimmick. You're not actually being held against your will by some kind of Willy Wonka-esque Bond villain; you're paying to pretend to be locked in a room with your friends, to scratch your head over puzzles and enjoy the scramble and inherent silliness of trying to find a way out. Escape Academy understands this — and embraces it wholeheartedly. It's a fun co-op experience that accurately captures both the frustration and giddy satisfaction of real-life escape rooms, and with a runtime of four or five hours, it manages not to overstay its welcome.

You begin the game in what appears to be a normal (if pretty janky) escape room that's revealed to be a covert front for the Escape Academy, a school where students train to become masters of escape room puzzles. As its newest recruit, you work to earn badges by breaking out of the school's escape rooms, securing your freedom and — more often than not — your continued survival. The faculty is fiercely committed to cultivating its students' skill sets, and burning buildings and ticking time bombs are compelling motivators.

Just like in real escape rooms, you'll comb through the play area looking for clues and using what you find to solve puzzles. Each stage involves a series of interlocking puzzles; maybe you notice some kind of cipher on the wall, but the key to decoding it is behind a locked door. Whenever you successfully crack a puzzle, a satisfying synth jingle plays to indicate you're on the right track.

At the start of one stage, for example, I needed to find the class pet rat to charge a generator with its running wheel to turn the power back on. I spotted a snack machine with a single doughnut I could use to coax the little dude out of hiding. But first I had to find the coins to buy it, and of course it isn't a normal snack machine but a snack-doku machine, so the item number that I need to tap in to buy the doughnut is the solution to a sudoku puzzle. That's just the first stage, though. With the power

back on, I can finally try to hack into the computers that unlock the next phase of the puzzle.

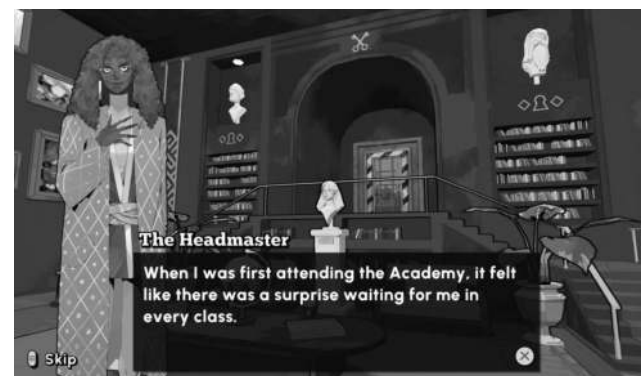
The gameplay loop gets a little repetitive, but that predictability doesn't stop you from feeling like a genius when you've finally cracked a difficult cipher and all the pieces start to fall into place. The game also throws in a couple of interesting twists by incorporating items you find throughout the level. For instance, after finding a fire extinguisher, it may immediately come to mind to use it on a burning plate in the microwave, but not necessarily on a lit chimney place several puzzles later. You'll have to keep your whole tool kit in mind to make it out quickly and safely.

The bulk of the solutions come from deciphering codes, which felt like a bit of a missed opportunity to incorporate the player's surroundings into the puzzle-solving process, and they only get more dense as the game goes on. Some of the later puzzles work in more physicality and spatial manipulation, particularly the final level. It's something I would have loved to have seen more of throughout the game rather than just in its final act.

While it has a single-player mode, Escape Academy is best enjoyed as a co-op adventure, either through online multiplayer or good old-fashioned split-screen. The design of each puzzle incentivizes you to collaborate.

My favorite stage of all involved directing a crew on a rescue mission, using hacked video feeds, blueprints and radio communications to instruct them where to go. It required frequently cross-referencing computer screens, navigational charts and other documents — all of which was much easier with two pairs of eyes.

Escape Academy reminded both of us of another co-op game, *Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes*, in that there was never really a time when we weren't communicating. One of us would find a piece of the puzzle that unlocked a flash of realization in the other — a frantic back-and-forth that felt more exciting than stressful. After each stage is a puzzle review, walking you through the steps and the time it took you to solve each one, which we often used as an



Escape Academy is more than a bunch of escape rooms; it's a new universe dedicated to puzzle craftsmanship.

opportunity to better explain our reasoning behind the rushed instructions we blabbered out after we got caught up in the high of an epiphany.

Escape Academy uses simple point-and-click controls, making it approachable to a broad audience. There's a hint option if you get stuck that recharges after each use, but nine times out of 10 the hint would tell us information we had already figured out, like pointing out the location of a clue while we were struggling to decipher its meaning.

Once you finish the main campaign, there's not much replay value since the puzzles remain unchanged, but what's there is a charming experience. The Escape Academy staff are memorable, and they're rendered in cut-scenes in a gorgeously detailed art style in the same vein as the game *Hades*. Your dorm room fills up with knick-knacks to reflect the puzzles you've solved and choices you've made (after getting an achievement for chatting up a lot of people, a book titled "How not to have an awkward conversation" appeared in my dresser drawer). Poking around a level and interacting with objects that aren't part of the puzzle almost always reveals silly descriptions and at least a pun or two.

Puzzle games have to manage a delicate balancing act: If solutions are too simple, players lose interest; too difficult, and they feel cheated, like the answer was never decipherable to begin with. Escape Academy was opaque at times, but the answer always felt like it was within my grasp. Giving players that sense of empowerment is hard, and games don't always get it right. But Escape Academy walks that tightrope with finesse, joining the pantheon of frantic-but-fun co-op greats.

**Platforms:** PC, PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Xbox Series X and Series S, Xbox One

**Online:** [escapeacademygame.com](http://escapeacademygame.com)

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Cultural treats in small-town Andalucía

The American image of Spain is Andalucía: the home of bullfights, flamenco, gazpacho and pristine whitewashed hill towns. This southern part of the country feels more quintessentially Spanish than perhaps anywhere else. When visiting this area, I always make a point to venture into what's called the Route of the White Hill Towns (Ruta de los Pueblos Blancos), a charm bracelet of cute villages perched in the sierras.

Arcos de la Frontera makes a good starting point. Arcos is a classic hill town, blanketing its little summit with a mosaic of whitewashed buildings and a tangle of shady lanes. The labyrinthine old center is a photographer's bonanza. I can feel the breeze funnel through the narrow streets — so narrow that drivers can only enter the town on one side and leave on the other. If you miss your stop, you need to drive out of town and circle all the way back to your starting point. (Better yet, park outside the old center and walk.)

The town's entertaining market is my first stop. The pickle woman encourages me to try a banderilla, named for the banded spear that a matador sticks into the bull. As I gingerly slide an onion off the tiny skewer of pickled olives, onions and carrots, she tells me to eat it all at once — the pickle equivalent of throwing down a shot of vodka. Explosivo! The lady in the adjacent meat stall bursts into laughter at my shock.

Like the pickle section, the meat stall —

or salchichería — is an important part of any Spanish market. In Spain, ever since Roman times, December has been the month to slaughter pigs. After the slaughter, Spaniards salt and dry every possible bit of meat into various sausages, hams and other pork products. By late spring, that now-salty meat is cured, able to withstand the heat and hanging in tempting market displays. Ham appreciation is big here. The word to know: jamón. When in Spain, I am a jamón aficionado.



Rick Steves

Asking for top-quality ham, I get a plate of jamón ibérico. While expensive, it's a worthy investment. Made from acorn-fed pigs with black feet, it actually tastes better, with a bouquet of its own and a sweet aftertaste. I make sure in bars to order a plate of it with my wine ... it goes just right with vino tinto con mucho cuerpo (full-bodied red wine) from the Rioja region.

Around town, I like to peek discreetly into private patios. These wonderful, cool-tiled courtyards, filled with plants, pools and happy family activities, are typical of the whole region. I also keep my eyes peeled for ancient columns tucked into building corners. Many are actually Roman, appropriated from their original ancient settlement at the foot of the hill; they were put up to protect buildings from reckless donkey cars (and tourists in rental cars).



RICK STEVES/Rick Steves' Europe

A cobble street in Spain's quaint Arcos de la Frontera serves as an alfresco dining spot.

I eventually make my way into a cool, dark bar. Inside, the old men are fixated on the TV, watching the finale of a long series of bullfights. El Cordobés is fighting. His father, also El Cordobés, was the Babe Ruth of bullfighting.

Marveling at the bar's cheap list of wines and hard drinks, I order a Cuba Libre for about \$2. The drink comes tall and stiff, with a dish of peanuts.

Suddenly the room gasps. I can't believe the vivid scene on the screen. El Cordobés has been hooked and is flung, doing a cartwheel over the angry bull's head. The gang roars as El Cordobés lands in a heap

and buries his head in his arms as the bull tramples and tries to gore him. The TV replays the scene many times, each time drawing gasps in the bar.

El Cordobés survives and — no surprise — eventually kills the bull. As he takes a victory lap, picking up bouquets tossed by adoring fans, the camera zooms in on the rip exposing his hip and a long, bloody wound. The men around me will remember and talk about this moment for years to come.

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

## Volksfests, wine fests offer a wide variety of summer appeal

With their scary rides, fast-paced games of chance and loud midways, Germany's famed "volksfests" promise days out packed with sensory stimulation. In contrast, the country's wine fests promise a somewhat different vibe. Most center around quality wines crafted with great care by local vintners, accompanied by regional specialties, and tend to usually (but not always) pack a more laid-back, mellow vibe than their volksfest counterparts. This is not to say that all wine festivals are created equally.

Careful planning will ensure you find the fest that's just right for the company you'll be keeping on your next day or night out.



Karen Bradbury

**For lovers of music across all genres — Wein am Stein, Würzburg:** High in the hills overlooking the stately city by the Main, this fest comes with an almost nonstop beat. Crisp white wines — typically Silvaner, Bacchus or Müller-Thurgau, along with Rotlings for lovers of good rosés — are bound to taste particularly fine when sipped in one of Franconia's most famous vineyards, the Würzburger Stein. Culinary specialties and a light show add to the festive ambiance.

Access to the event, running through July 26, is by ticket only, with a handful of options available. While packages for groups of six or more inclusive of seating and beverages have mostly sold out by now, single-entry tickets will be available at the point of entry for 9 euros. Entry begins at 4:30 p.m. on weekdays and 3 p.m. on weekends. The music plays until midnight on Friday and Saturday and until 11 p.m. on Sunday and Monday. Online: [wein-am-stein.de](http://wein-am-stein.de)

**For jazz fans — Jazzwoche Oestrich-Winkel and Palatia Jazz:** In the latter part of July each year, the cozy vintners' courtyards of this town in the Rheingau that's known for its top-notch Rieslings come alive with the sound of jazz in all its variations. In such intimate set-



iStock

**Local white wines will make their appearance at many summer festivals in Germany.**

tings, the sound of swing, soul, blues and other world beats moves listeners in a way not possible at larger, more impersonal venues. Concerts are offered July 22-25 and 27-31. Ticket prices begin at 15 euros and can be booked online in advance. Entry to the evening concerts starts at 6 p.m., and the concerts begin at 8 p.m. On Sundays, entry starts at 11 a.m. and the music plays from noon on. Online: [jazzclub-rheingau.de](http://jazzclub-rheingau.de)

The Palatia Jazz Festival centers around a single location this year. On four evenings over two weekends, artists will take to the stage at the Weingut Ökonomierat Lind in Rohrbach, a town near Landau on the German Wine Road. This year's program, which always includes international artists, focuses on Eastern Europe. Musicians from Poland and Ukraine take to the stage, as well as the trio with whom American pianist Gerald Clayton plays. Concert dates are July 22-23 and July 29-30, and each concert is a double bill featuring two groups. Ticket prices range from 25 to 45 euros. Online: [palatiajazz.de](http://palatiajazz.de)

**For parents in need of a break — Rheingauer Weinwoche:** Wiesbaden's wine fest is held in the center of Hesse's elegant capital city. With more than 100 wine-makers present, organizers bill it as the world's longest wine bar. Tasty regional fare from local restaurants and caterers, coupled with a variety of musical acts on stage nightly, will delight guests at the Aug. 12-21 event. On weekends, the local "Evangelische Familien-Bildungsstätte" offers babysitting services. Children ages 5-11 can engage in painting, games and other fun pursuits. Child care is offered from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Aug. 11 and 18 and from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Aug. 12 and 19. On the Saturdays, the hourly cost is 4 euros per child and an additional 2 euros per hour for each sibling; on Sundays, the service is offered for free. No advance registration is required for the child care services. The facility is located on the fourth floor of the building located at Schlossplatz 4. Online: [tinyurl.com/2jvaxrv5](http://tinyurl.com/2jvaxrv5)

**Something for everyone — Stuttgarter Weindorf:** The Stuttgart Wine Village is known and loved for its beautifully decorated stands; some 30 such "arbors" offer the chance to sample regional wines such as Trollinger, Spätburgunder or Riesling paired with Swabian specialties such as the ravioli-like "maultaschen," the cheesy noodle dish "käsespätzle" or the gnocchi-esque "schupfnudeln."

The festival, which runs from Aug. 21 through Sept. 4 in 2022, offers elements of interest to a variety of visitors. Sundays (Aug. 21, 28 and Sept. 4) begin at noon with short church services held on the steps of the Town Hall. Sundays are also known as family days. The LGBT community has its day on Aug. 29. The culinary-curious are sure to enjoy "Öchsle im Keller, Leckereien auf dem Teller," a tour of the market inclusive of wine tasting and nibbles, offered at 3 p.m. Aug. 19-20, 26-27 and Sept. 2-3. The 2.5-hour tour costs 33 euros per head and must be arranged in advance by writing to [info@translang.de](mailto:info@translang.de). Online: [stuttgarter-weindorf.de](http://stuttgarter-weindorf.de)

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Summer of lost luggage

Avoid baggage issues with tips from experts and fellow travelers

By HANNAH SAMPSON  
The Washington Post

**W**hen travel experts offer advice about dodging disasters this summer, one piece is ubiquitous: Carry-on luggage is the only way to go.

“I would never, ever check a bag,” said travel agency executive Marc Casto, president of leisure brands in the Americas for Flight Centre Travel Group, in an interview last month. “We spent two years living in our shorts and flip-flops. We really don’t need that many things to bring with us to a different destination.”

Sometimes that is true. But other times, it’s impossible to commit to carry-on life. Say your flight’s overhead compartments are full, and you’re forced to gate-check your bag. Or you have booked a rock-bottom fare that — whoops — only allows for checked luggage. Or you’re traveling with a pet, which counts as your carry-on.

“There are times where you just have to suck it up and check a bag,” said William McGee, an aviation expert and consumer advocate who just checked bags for the first time in seven years. “Unfortunately, this summer is not a good time for that.”

McGee, a senior fellow for aviation and travel at the American Economic Liberties Project, only suffered some delays and damage to his bags on parts of his trip to Greece and the United Kingdom — which he counted as a victory.

In a summer of travel disruptions, as hordes of passengers encounter a shortage of workers, baggage has been a casualty all over the globe. Department of Transportation data through April shows that airlines mishandled baggage at a much higher rate than April 2021, when far fewer people were traveling, but at a lower one than March 2022 or April 2019. This April, the airlines mishandled — or lost, damaged, delayed or pilfered — nearly 220,000 of the 40 million bags they dealt with, according to a department report.

During a call with reporters last week, Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian said the company had experienced baggage issues with flights in Europe more than in the United States. He said that after difficulty in May and June, the company was ahead of its baggage performance goal for July.

“We’ve gone as far as recently we had a separate charter just to repatriate bags back to customers that had been stranded because of some of the operational issues the European airports were having,” he said. “We did that on our own nickel just to reunite our Delta customers to their bags as quickly as possible.” Icelandair made a similar move by sending staff to Amsterdam, which has been plagued with staffing issues this summer, to unload baggage.

Social media is full of stories of pathos, rage, defeat and occasional victory. The pop duo Aly & AJ tweeted about bag issues twice — once during a June trip to Milan and once this month, flying from Montreal to Los Angeles. Multiple golfers have sought help for missing clubs. Photos have circulated of luggage piling up at London’s Heathrow Airport. The Irish Independent reported that a woman who traveled to Ireland from Chicago to spread her parents’ ashes was distraught when the bag containing the remains was lost and then sent back to Chicago. She had flown with her cat, which was considered carry-on luggage, the newspaper said.

A family member’s lost luggage from Miami to Baltimore meant Alex Howard, 31, of D.C. didn’t have photos of his grandparents at his wedding on July 3. His aunt



iStock

**Unclaimed luggage awaits processing at Frankfurt Airport in Germany over the July 4 holiday weekend. Airports in Europe have had a particularly high rate of mishandled bags in 2022.**

and uncle, who traveled from Nicaragua, weren’t able to carry on their bags with wedding clothes and the family photos; after their flight was delayed on July 2, the bags were delivered two days after the wedding.

Both were able to find last-minute clothes — important, since Howard’s aunt and father walked him down the aisle.

Sometimes a bag is a total loss even if it isn’t technically lost. Emilie Hofferber, a landscape photographer, flew on Delta with her 13-year-old chihuahua mix, Margaret, from Florida to Utah earlier this month and had to check two bags. She had heard about lost-bag nightmares and bought an Apple AirTag tracker to put in one of the bags. That one showed up fine, but she eventually discovered the other in an airline office looking like it was “put through the wood chipper,” she said.

“Even what wasn’t, like, absolutely torn to shreds, it ended up getting irreparably damaged,” she said. After Hofferber, 26, tweeted photos of the bag and ended up on Inside Edition, the airline became extremely responsive, she said; on Tuesday, they had agreed to a reimbursement amount of about \$3,670.

“Delta sincerely apologizes to this customer for the damage to her luggage and its contents,” the carrier said in a statement. “Delta teams have been in contact with the customer to offer compensation for this rare occurrence.”

Experts — and some travelers — offer these tips for not losing bags in the first place, or making the lost-luggage experience easier.

## Try luggage shipping services

Sometimes the solution might include avoiding airport baggage altogether, said Casto, of Flight Centre. Companies including ShipGo, LugLess and Luggage Forward specialize in bag-delivery alternatives.

“If you need to bring a wedding dress, ship it in advance,” he said.

## Know your bag

Make sure you have tagged your luggage properly and can identify it if it goes astray, McGee said. Take photos of anything that is being checked as well, and hold on to your claim ticket.

“That little strip that the airlines put on there, that is not the equivalent of an ID tag with your personal information,” he said.

## Arrive early

McGee said he arrives at airports three hours early to maximize the chance of his bag getting on the plane.

“If you’re going to check in at the very last minute, if you’re one of those people that needs an escort to security because you just got there late ... you know, I would say the probability of your bag not making it — I’m not saying it won’t, but it’s higher than if you had checked in two hours earlier,” he said.

## Don’t check anything crucial

Lindsey Renken, co-founder and chief executive of the travel app Airheart, told The Post earlier this year that valuables and must-have items like medication should always go in a carry-on, not checked baggage. Even if someone is not allowed a carry-on bag or forced to gate-check, those important pieces should be placed in a small bag that can fit under the seat.

## Use a tracking device

Social media users recommend trackers such as Apple AirTags so passengers can follow their bags’ progress, even if airlines don’t have a clue.

## Report any problems right away

Don’t leave the airport without reporting a missing or damaged bag, McGee said, even if the line is long.

“You can’t come back the next day and say, ‘Oh, by the way, you damaged my bag yesterday,’” he said. “They’ll be like, ‘Well, no, maybe it was the taxi driver or the hotel.’”

Lauren LaBar, the travel and experience manager at the travel concierge app Upaway, told The Post this winter that passengers should get a copy of the report and a follow-up contact for customer service. Travelers should also provide their preferred delivery address.

## Understand what you’re owed

The Department of Transportation says airlines are liable for up to \$3,800 for lost, damaged or delayed bags. The maximum liability for international flights is about \$1,780.

McGee said travelers should also look at their airlines’ contract of carriage and check for the compensation rules in Canada or Europe if they’re flying to those destinations.

## Reconsider flying

“I don’t care how far it is; just drive,” said Hofferber, who has also dealt with delays that caused her to miss a connecting flight this summer. “Until they figure out how to staff their airlines and treat their employees, it’s just going to be an absolute nightmare at the airport.”

She added: “It’s just not worth the headache.”

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Where the trails, spirits are elevated

Not even rain can dampen the good mood during a hike through the Bavarian Alps

By MIKE ECKEL  
Associated Press

At 23 minutes before midnight, at 5,600 feet above sea level, the lashing rain and furious winds outside the darkened bunkroom prompted two questions to turn over in my head: Will the roof of this hut be ripped off in the dead of night? Will I be able to continue my ridge trek to my next destination on the German-Austrian border the next day?

Several sleepless hours later, the answers emerged: 1) No, these aren't just simple mountain huts and 2) yes, this is typical Alpine weather for southern Bavaria.

And so at dawn, I trekked out, up through the undercast clouds.

The reward was the majesty of the Bavarian Alps, showering glory upon those willing to hike serious trails, and maybe endure copious amounts of apricot schnapps in the company of hearty German hikers.

This is Berchtesgaden, a national park in southeastern Germany, wedged into a thumb of land poking into Austria. The Alps slash the skies, in jagged granite and knife-drops into sudden valleys.

Berchtesgaden's huts are serious structures. Supplies are helicoptered in, or hefted on cable cars. They range from huge — Watzmannhaus has 200 sleeping spots — to small — Wasserhalm has a few dozen. Some are concrete and steel; others have simple wooden roofs and beams. All serve serious meals: soups, stews, beef-and-dumplings. And lots of beer and wine.

Spend your days trekking steep trails and meeting random people. Then swap stories about hiking, and life, and then you're drinking beer and schnapps, and then you're fumbling through languages and life tales, and then, by lights out, you're hugging and toasting and laughing and crying.

Trekking into Berchtesgaden is easiest from the northern tip of Königssee, a 5-mile impossibly turquoise lake. The town at the tip is a tourist mess: ice cream, T-shirts, lederhosen and Tyrolean hats. Privately run electric boats run passengers up and down the lake seasonally, offering access to Germany's highest waterfall or the stoic lakeside Church of St. Bartholomew's.

Many visitors forgo the hike and instead take the year-round Jennerbahn cable car up 6,200-

foot Jenner Mountain, where there's a massive restaurant and spectacular views.

For hikers, it takes about 15 minutes to leave the madding crowds for quieter wood trails. Some are rough footpaths; others allow service vehicles to supply a couple of smaller huts that dot the hillsides and provide meals to day-trekkers. Not far from Koenigsbachalm, you can poke your head into a tiny distillery where schnapps are made from the mountain waters.

On the eastern end of Berchtesgaden is the Austrian border and Carl von Stahl Haus, where I overnighted. I ate lentil stew and drank German pilsner into the evening, until the storm lashed us with marble-size hail and gale-force winds. In the midnight hour, the winds banged open the bunkroom windows.

At dawn, the soup of clouds gave many of us doubts. But after climbing further up a sodden trail, I crested at Schneibstein (7,467 feet) into brilliant skies. The clouds below shrouded everything but the highest peaks.

Trails are well-marked. They include degrees of difficulty, similar to ski trails. They also include not mileage, but estimated hiking times.

Once I realized that the times were very conservative, I worried less about making it to my destination on time and instead hiked in mesmerized awe.

Wasseralm in der Röh (4,469 feet), my next destination, was a cluster of three modest buildings folded into a hollow ringed by sub-peaks. Torrents of evening and overnight rain sent a raucous stream bursting its banks and nearly turned the buildings into islands.

It also made for a wet dinner conversation over vegetable stew and stacks of dark rye bread. The other hikers and I huddled under dripping eaves before retiring to a common room, where a wood-fired stove dried wet clothes and warmed bodies. White wine, beer and schnapps kept conversation going until 10 p.m. lights out — a strict rule of the huts.

Those of us headed out the next morning had to ford the stream — with or without shoes, which made for a good conversation starter. Being an American backpacking alone also made a good conversation starter, and I fell in with two German guys and a woman from a separate group as we clambered up.

Surprisingly for a German national park, the trails were in



PHOTOS BY MIKE ECKEL/AP

The rocky landscape in the Berchtesgaden National Park in Germany, a popular area for hiking.



Fog surrounds the Wasseralm in der Röh, located in the Hagen Mountains of Berchtesgaden National Park. Many of the huts in the Berchtesgaden National Park, and throughout the Alps of Germany, Italy, Austria and Switzerland, are serious concrete-and-steel-girder structures, built to stand year-round.

some places poorly maintained and not for the faint-hearted. Some places, we had to pick our way over scree fields, and hold onto steel cables bolted into the hillside. Wood ladders were broken or rotting, rain slippery. Bog bridges were under water.

Kärlingerhaus am Funtensee (5,374 feet), the next stop, was perched over a small lake, in a bowl ringed by ridges that caught the next morning's sun like facets on a gem. On the lake's other side, two low-slung wooden buildings were for the distillers who made schnapps from local waters. There was also a sheep herder who, I was told, was paid by valley farmers to mind their flocks in the summer and harvest wool and milk for cheese.

Alas, we got neither that rainy evening.

We did get tureens of chicken broth and heaps of beef slices and potato dumplings drenched in gravy, and dark rye bread — or pasta and tomato sauce for vegetarians.

We drank marillenschnaps — an apricot brew commonly associated with north-central Austria — and again, the presence of a solitary American sparked fun conversation, not to mention complimentary schnapps. Lights out: 10 p.m.

Back down to the lake, to meet a boat back to my car, the trail cut deep between two ridges, shrouding the trail in cool morning shade. An Alpine chamois — a type of antelope-goat — scrambled up the grass as I rounded one corner. She appeared unbothered by a solitary hiker, and grazed for several minutes as we

### If you go

Bring a sleeping bag or bag liner. Whether you're in a semi-private room or a larger bunkroom, huts provide pillows, heavy blankets and reasonable mattresses. An absolute must: "hut shoes" — slippers, sandals. It's a no-no to clomp around the interiors in your hiking boots.

Making reservations can be confusing; patience is in order. Most huts are individually managed, and they belong to different reservation systems. Some take credit cards for reservations; most accept only cash on site. Start with the German Alpine Club, which oversees 321 huts across Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Huetten Holiday is another online portal that manages reservations for huts, in Germany, Austria and Italy.

General information can be found on the Berchtesgaden's web page. You can also visit park headquarters, about 5 miles north of the lake, where you can get hiking maps and other information.

The Associated Press

stared at one another, before she hopped over a boulder, out of sight.

When I finally reached the Königssee's shoreline, it was impossible not to contemplate going for a swim. I had no swimsuit, however.

No matter.

A few moments later, a group of older German men showed up and, without hesitation, dropped their packs, dropped their clothes and hopped into the shimmering waters full monty.

Wouldn't you?

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



The walls of Framlingham Castle remain in good shape despite first being built in the 12th century. There are 13 towers, which are connected by suspended bridges that could be removed if enemies climbed the walls.

PHOTOS BY KYLE ALVAREZ/Stars and Stripes

## On the QT

**Address:** Church Street, Framlingham, England

**Hours:** Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Friday through Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

**Cost:** Entry for adults is 12.80 pounds and for children 5 and up is 7.60 pounds. Children 4 and under get in free. Families of one adult and up to three children, 20.40 pounds; Families of two adults and up to three children, 33.20 pounds.

**Information:** +44 1728 724189; [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/framlingham-castle](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/framlingham-castle)

Kyle Alvarez



Visitors walk to the main gate of Framlingham Castle. The castle has had many owners since its construction in the 12th century, but in 1553, it was owned by Mary Tudor, the first queen regnant of England.

# In the footsteps of 'Bloody Mary'

## Indulge in some living history at 12th-century Framlingham Castle

By KYLE ALVAREZ  
*Stars and Stripes*

**F**ramlingham Castle lies in the county of Norfolk, an area that has seen many historically significant moments for England.

The attention-grabber for my family was the story of Mary Tudor, aka "Bloody Mary." She was proclaimed England's first queen regnant in 1553 at Framlingham Castle, which was built in the 12th century.

From the tri-base area of RAF Lakenheath, Mildenhall and Feltwell, it's a pleasant one-hour drive through the English countryside. The market town of Framlingham is also charming and was bustling with activity on the day we visited.

The parking at the front gate of the castle might be the only downside, depending on the number of visitors. It isn't much of a parking lot.

The scale of the castle took our breath away as we approached. Imagining the engineering developed to build such structures in the 12th century, I was awestruck.

When we made it through the main gate, we were greeted with a large open courtyard to the right surrounded by the castle walls. In the castle's prime, a chapel and the Tudor rooms once stood in the courtyard. Now, only remnants of them can be seen.

To the left of the main gate lies the main building, which has three parts: the Red House, the workhouse and the great halls. Inside is where the tour starts.

While many prominent people spent time at the castle, the most famous was Queen Mary, a Catholic and daughter of King Henry VIII. In 1553, she rallied support from her base in the castle and deposed the Protestant Lady Jane Grey, known as the "nine-day queen."

After the tour, we went down to the cafe and grabbed sandwiches, scones, tea and the like. We then stopped at the gift shop and found a few things that piqued our interest.

Free samples of gin and mead were being offered. Not being much of a gin person, I went for the mead, and it



A combination of buildings erected in 1664 are situated within Framlingham Castle. The door to the left of the red building leads to the castle dungeon.

was delicious. The wife joined me and we bought a bottle for ourselves.

We then found a few knight-themed toys for the kids. My daughter was especially drawn to the wooden sword and the stuffed horse on a stick. She loved riding her hobby horse in the courtyard afterward and raising her sword, pretending to be a warrior princess.

Then my wife saw a gift she wanted to give me that truly made the experience special: a replica 13th century sword. I'm a big fan of "Lord of the Rings" and other books in the fantasy genre as well as games like Dungeons and Dragons.

We sat outside in a shaded area in the courtyard, which was a nice break from the hot summer day. My 4-year-old daughter and 11-month-old son found space aplenty to run around and play.

I've quite enjoyed visiting several English heritage sites. So far, though, Framlingham Castle is my favorite.



Stars and Stripes reporter Kyle Alvarez shows off his swordsmanship July 11 at Framlingham Castle.

My family gained a lot of precious memories on this trip.

If you are looking to get even more bang for your buck, the castle hosts several events throughout the year. A knights' tournament is happening Aug. 6-7. A medieval encampment will put such activities as weapons repair, period cooking and camp life on full display. The assorted events only enhance the delight of a visit to Framlingham Castle.

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## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING



At Osteria da Tonino in Naples' Chiaia neighborhood, outdoor dining tables are situated streetside, offering a chance to people-watch.



A rich, velvety tomato sauce finished with mozzarella cheese and covering pillowy pasta make Osteria da Tonino's version of gnocchi alla Sorrentina a worthwhile bite.



Among the Neapolitan favorites offered at Osteria da Tonino is polipetto alla Luciana, or octopus in a rich, chunky tomato sauce accented with capers.

PHOTOS BY ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

# Dinner and a show

Streetside seating at Osteria da Tonino offers opportunity to people-watch while indulging in classic Naples cuisine

BY ALISON BATH  
Stars and Stripes

With its unassuming exterior and small size, the Antica Osteria da Tonino eatery can easily be overlooked. But missing it would be missing out.

The family-owned restaurant is tucked away on a side street in the heart of Naples' fashionable Chiaia neighborhood and boasts a history of more than 100 years of offering traditional Neapolitan cooking.

Founded in 1880 by Antonio Canfora, Osteria da Tonino has a simple credo: offering a limited menu du jour focused on bringing out the best of fresh, in-season vegetables, meats and seafood.

Five generations later, the restaurant now is operated by Paolo Canfora, his wife, Rossella, and the couple's sons, Antonio and Simone, according to its website.

On a recent visit, a friend and I opted to dine al fresco at one of about six tables set streetside on Via Santa Teresa a Chiaia. The outdoor experience isn't for the faint-hearted.

Cars and motorcycles traveling the narrow lane pass just inches from your table, albeit at very slow speeds. But the adventure is well worth the chance to people-watch as a steady stream of Chiaia's well-dressed denizens hurry home for dinner, walk their pups or simply enjoy an evening stroll.

Our meal started with mixed seasonal side dishes, one of three appetizers on offer when we were there.

The generous platter of spiced eggplant, grilled zucchini, sauteed friarielli (broccoli rabe), garlic roasted potatoes and a



## Antica Osteria da Tonino

**Address:** Via Santa Teresa a Chiaia 47, Naples, Italy

**Hours:** Noon-4:30 p.m. (lunch), 7:30 p.m.-midnight (dinner), seven days a week

**Prices:** Starters, 8-9 euros; pasta, 10-15 euros; meat and fish, 10-15 euros; vegetable and other side dishes, 4 euros.

**Information:** Online: osteriadatonino.it; Phone: 081-421533; WhatsApp: +39 349-107-3337

Alison Bath

caponata was accompanied by a basket of thickly sliced bread.

Among my favorites were the lengthwise cuts of roasted eggplant seasoned with just enough crushed red pepper to balance the coolness of the vegetable.

The bread offered an excellent way to sop up the juices and olive oil. Frankly, this dish and a glass of wine would be enough for a light meal.

Gnocchi alla Sorrentina is one of my favorite Amalfi Coast dishes, and Osteria da Tonino's version didn't disappoint. The generous portion of pillowy potato pasta tossed in a rich, velvety tomato sauce was expertly finished with the requisite mozzarella.

After having filled up on vegetables and bread, I couldn't finish the gnocchi, but it didn't go to waste. Our host graciously offered to pack it up for me, an uncommon



Contorni misti di stagione, or mixed side dishes, at Osteria da Tonino includes garlic roasted potatoes, two kinds of eggplant and grilled zucchini. Paired with a glass of Fiano di Avellino, the appetizer is enough for a light meal.

occurrence in Naples.

Unfortunately, my friend had to wait a few more minutes for her polipetto alla Luciana, octopus on a toasted slice of bread covered in a chunky tomato sauce accented with capers.

The first dish our waiter brought out was meatballs, called polpette in Italian, which we didn't order. The mix-up seemed to be due more to our pronunciation than an error by the waiter, but the dish was quickly taken back to the kitchen without problem.

My friend said the entree was rich and

satisfying but the octopus was a bit mushy, indicating it may have been overcooked.

On the evening we visited, the restaurant's dessert menu was limited to strawberries or a torte of vanilla and chocolate gelato. We opted for the torte, which was rich and satisfying.

With friendly and efficient service and an ever-changing menu of Neapolitan favorites, Osteria da Tonino hits all the right notes and offers a chance to watch as the world walks — or drives — by.

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# WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

The Stranger Pronto cafe appeared in Tokyo as volume two of the fourth season of “Stranger Things” hit Netflix.

## An Upside Down meal

Be part of ‘Stranger Things’ at a pop-up cafe near Shibuya Station

BY KELLY AGEE  
Stars and Stripes

“S”tranger Things” mania continues unabated in Tokyo, where a pop-up cafe rooted in the popular Netflix show is open until Sept. 9.

Japanese cafe Pronto’s Fukuras opened the cafe on July 6 just a three-minute stroll from the Hachiko exit of Shibuya Station. The cafe, called Stranger Pronto, appeared as the

“Stranger Things” fourth season, volume two, started streaming on Netflix.

It’s also the third incarnation of “Stranger Things”

marketing opportunities in Japan.

The Parco department store in Tokyo’s Ikebukuro ward erected a pop-up store selling “Stranger Things” merchandise to coincide with the fourth season’s first half. And FamilyMart, a chain of convenience stores throughout Japan, also started selling a temporary stock of socks and small towels patterned after the show.

The cafe, which has 12 seats, is now taking online reservations in English. Diners who show up without reservations may be issued a ticket with a guaranteed spot, but the wait time can be up to four hours so clear your day if it includes a trip to Hawkins and the Upside Down.

That said, the cafe is a must for “Stranger Things” fans. The site is marked by a giant poster outside the building that promotes the show’s fourth season, and a video screen outside the cafe plays previews from all the show’s seasons.

Patrons order from a counter made to look like the Surfer Boy Pizza bus. The “bar” where guests receive food and drinks is patterned on Scoops Ahoy, the ice cream shop from the third season.

The employees dress in the Scoops Ahoy uniforms that “Stranger Things” characters Steve and Robin wore in the series.

Some of the menu items, like Elle’s waffles, sold out the day I visited.

My friend and I settled instead for drinks. We got a popcorn caramel latte, topped with sweet caramel sauce and popcorn. That was my favorite because it had that salty/sweet taste that I like. We also tried the Upside Down cream soda, a Nancy Halloween party mocktail, a Dr. Alexei cherry slurpy and a Dr. Alexei blue slurpy.

An essential part of the experience is the cafe’s playlist, which includes the “Stranger Things” theme song, “The



A 3D-looking Demogorgon makes an appearance at Stranger Pronto, a “Stranger Things”-themed pop-up cafe in Tokyo’s Shibuya district.

### Stranger Pronto

**Directions:** About a 3-minute walk from Shibuya Station. 1-2-3 Dogenzaka, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo Shibuya Fucras, first floor.

**Times:** Open daily, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**Costs:** Admission is free, but menu items run out quickly

**Food:** The American salami pizza is 990 yen, or about \$7.16; pancakes with maple syrup and scrambled eggs are 1,320 yen and the Demogorgon roast beef pasta is 1,650 yen. A dark side mocha and banana milkshake are 800 yen.

**Information:** Online: pronto-kissakaba.com/stranger-pronto

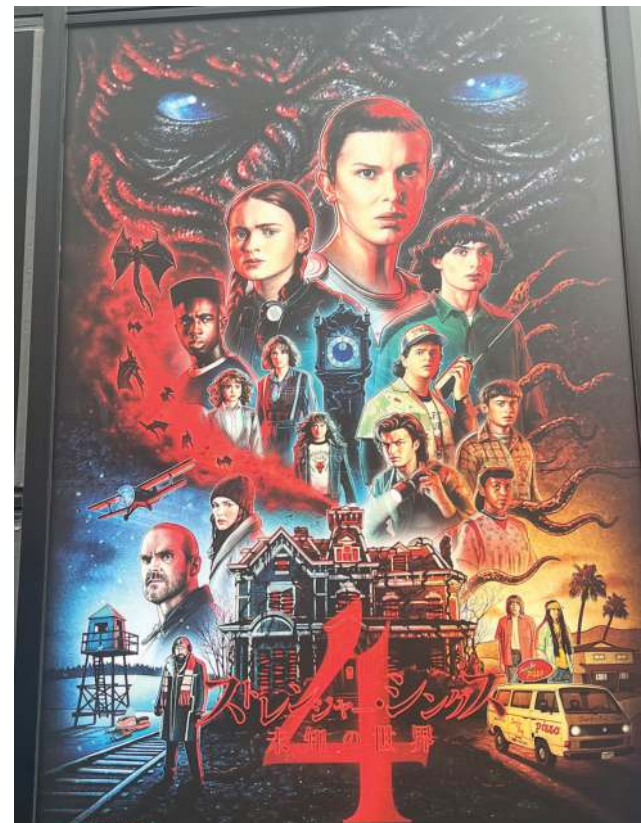
Kelly Agee

Never Ending Story” and “Ghostbusters” theme songs and Kate Bush’s “Running up That Hill.”

Guests will have plenty of opportunities to share their experiences from photo spots around the cafe. One wall has a 3D-looking Demogorgon, another a bike with a Hawkins background and a third shows the Byers’ living room. Have your favorite song handy for the spot that depicts Vecna’s grandfather clock.

During the 2½ hours we spent there I was transported into the hit series, which won’t return until its final season in 2024, according to the show’s creators, the Duffer Brothers.

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A poster for season four of “Stranger Things” welcomes patrons to Stranger Pronto.



Stranger Pronto patrons order their meals from a counter made to look like the Surfer Boy Pizza bus and receive their order at a counter patterned on Scoops Ahoy, the ice cream shop from the third season.

## ‘Stranger Things’ merch has come to FamilyMart

Another wave of “Stranger Things” merchandise has rolled ashore in Japan with a limited line of merchandise at FamilyMart.

The convenience store chain partnered with Netflix to mark the release of the show’s fourth season.

This latest merchandise collection follows a pop-up store with “Stranger Things” items that opened from June 2 to July 14 in Tokyo’s Ikebukuro district.

The new line of “Stranger Things” merchandise consists of unisex socks and small towels and is part of Convenience Wear, a clothing line by Japanese fashion designer Hiroshi Ochiai. The line includes T-shirts, long-sleeves, tank tops, shorts and socks.

Instead of the signature socks that come in the black and white options with the FamilyMart colors of blue and green, the “Stranger Things” socks come in black or white with the show’s signature colors of blue, purple, red, black and pink. They’re neat, with the bright colors and the “Stranger Things” logo on the sole of the socks. They cost 429 yen, or about \$3.11.

The towels are 539 yen. They come in stripes the same color as the socks with the “Stranger Things” label on the side.

— Kelly Agee

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Japan News-Yomiuri photos

Colorful wooden bird statuettes sit at Tsunashiki Tenmangu shrine in Kobe, Japan. Legend says a bird saved Sugawara no Michizane from a bee attack.

# Humorous spirit

Tsunashiki Tenmangu shrine in Kobe overlooking Suma Beach takes a quirky, unorthodox approach

Japan News

A statue of Sugawara no Michizane as a child holding a surfboard stands in the precincts of a shrine overlooking Suma Beach, a spot crowded with beachgoers during the summer.

Sugawara no Michizane, a powerful aristocrat who lived in the late 9th to early 10th century, was deified after his death and is widely worshipped throughout Japan as Tenjin, the patron deity of academics. Because of the popularity of this deity, Tsunashiki Tenmangu shrine in Kobe is known to many locals as Tenjin of Suma, and many students visit to pray for success on entrance exams.

But why does the patron deity of academics hold a surfboard? Is it because the shrine is near a beach?

Michizane was an influential politician and scholar in Kyoto, but he was transferred to Dazaifu in the Kyushu region because of a false rumor that he was plotting treason. It is said that as he was sailing to Kyushu, he was met with rough seas caused by a storm off Suma, and he took shelter in the area. Legend has it that the local residents made a round seat cushion out of rope to serve as a rug for Michizane and there entertained him.

This episode is the origin of the shrine's name, Tsunashiki, which means "to lay a rope" in Japanese.

The Tsunashiki Tenmangu shrine was

founded in 979, giving it a relatively long history even compared with the many other shrines throughout Japan named Tenmangu or Tenjin shrine that celebrate the scholar.

But despite this lofty pedigree, Tsunashiki Tenmangu is home to many quirky objects. The statue of Michizane holding a surfboard is one such example. It takes for its inspiration the legend around the scholar overcoming rough seas, says Keita Kunogi, the 56-year-old priest of the shrine.

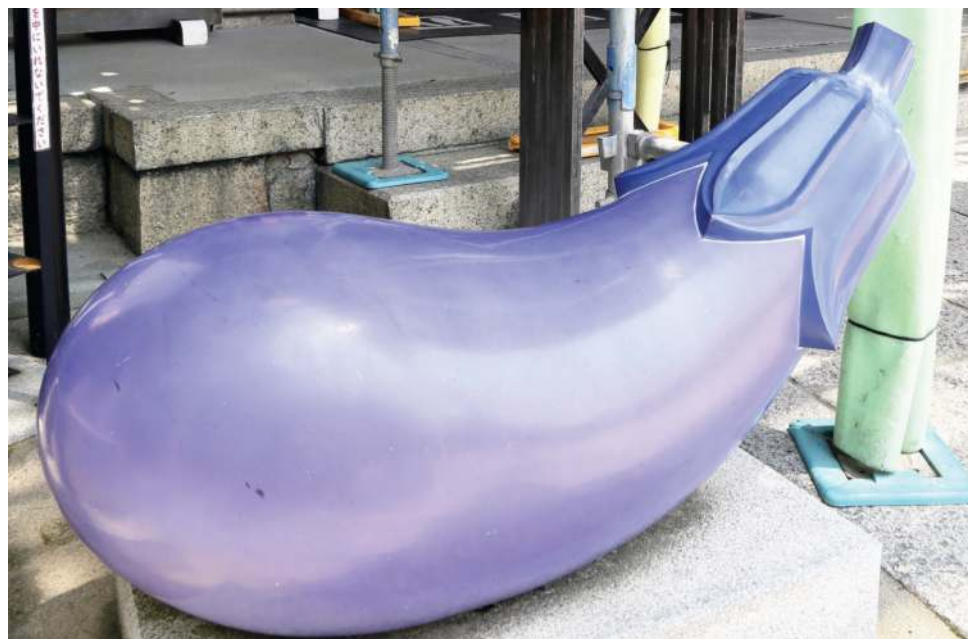
"He's praying that we may ride the waves of life," said Kunogi.

In the stone pavement leading to the precincts of the temple, there are two surfboard-shaped stones said to be lucky charms; if you stand on these stones, you will be able to catch a good wave, according to the shrine.

In front of the main shrine building, there is an artistic reproduction of Michizane's legendary round seat of rope, but even more eye-catching is a giant purple eggplant. It is also a lucky charm, touted to make any wish come true if a visitor sits on it, according to the shrine.

"Eggplant blossoms bear fruit without any wasted energy. You will achieve your great desire," said Kunogi, laughing at a pun on the Japanese word for eggplant and clearly enjoying the joke.

More than 50 colorful wooden statuettes of uso birds, or Eurasian bullfinches, are



This giant eggplant statue, touted to be able to make wishes come true for anyone who sits on it, is representative of the humorous spirit welcome at the shrine.

lined up at the amulet and lucky charm stand. These, too, come from a legend about Michizane — when he was attacked by a swarm of bees, he was saved by the bird.

The statuettes are popular for their social media appeal, and there is no end to the number of people snapping pictures of them. They have been made by hand by the staff of the shrine for the past five years.

The shrine got its upbeat atmosphere in the aftermath of tragedy: The 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake caused severe damage to the shrine, including causing the collapse of the main shrine building and the torii gate. Kunogi had taken over as shrine priest at the age of 29, a year before the earthquake.

He was determined to offer upbeat topics for conversation, trying to cheer up

the community and pull it out of its dejection. The shrine staff began to devise ways to attract more visitors, even as the shrine underwent major renovations.

"I want people to feel close to the shrine, and I hope those who visit our shrine feel motivated to do their best again," Kunogi said.

Visitors to shrines and temples often get a stamp called a goshuin to commemorate the visit. Tsunashiki Tenmangu has about 70 different goshuin; it changes the design every month.

The shrine is also a prime spot during the Shichi-go-san festival, celebrating the growth of children. Young visitors dress up in clothes from the time of Michizane or in junihitoe, the formal attire of ancient female nobles.

I can't wait to see what kind of playful spirit I will encounter on my next visit.

## WEEKEND: FOOD

# Perfectly portable

## A snackle box is a charcuterie board you carry with you

BY SAMANTHA CHERY  
The Washington Post

**D**imitria Hare-Michael has been going to her family's fall fishing trip at Ross Lake in northern Washington state every year since she was a little girl. Last fall, she decided, she was going to get creative with her packing.

Hare-Michael, 31, has made charcuterie boards with meats, cheeses and berries for nearly four years as part of her side business, Grate Boards.

"I was trying to think, 'How can I switch this up? ... What kind of fishing-themed thing can I do?'" she said in a phone interview from her home near Lake Washington.

Then it came to her: Put the snacks in a tackle box.

She bought a brand new three-tiered tackle box and filled it with crackers, cheeses, olives and grapes, plus mini bottles of booze to help keep people warm.

The box was compact enough to carry onto the boat, yet spacious enough to hold a variety of snacks for family members to munch on, she said. They even had leftovers for a few days. And when it rained while they were on the water, they simply closed the box to save the snacks. Hare-Michael's family was hooked.

Her brother-in-law wanted her to come up with a name for the concept, and he suggested "snackle box." When she looked up the term online and found pictures of snackle box feasts similar to her own, she learned they weren't alone in their discovery.

Snackle boxes carry a variety of snacks in compartments in the same way that a tackle box holds a fisher's tools, lures and line. The ingredients to make a box have been at people's disposal for quite some time. Bento boxes have sectioned off Japanese lunches and snacks for centuries, and the first commercial kids' lunch boxes appeared in the early 20th century, according to Smithsonian Magazine. But now, snackers who seek a supersized way to put together and describe the catch-all container no longer need to search. Snackle boxes picked up steam on social media last year and have made a splash this summer as people make their own.

Vanessa Calkins didn't expect her snack tray to make waves on her Facebook crafts page, Owl B Crafty.

Calkins' close circle knows how much she loves making charcuterie boards. So when Calkins, 38, saw snackle boxes on Pinterest, she decided it was the perfect way to bring her charcuterie boards from Keene, N.H., to Wells Beach in Maine for an end-of-the-school-year day at the shore.



DIMITRIA HARE-MICHAEL/The Washington Post

**Loaded with finger foods like sliced meats, cheeses, fruit, vegetables, nuts and crackers, the snackle box is a perfectly portable alternative to the popular charcuterie board. Don't forget to throw in a few extra sweet treats.**

She packed four snackle boxes for the parents on the trip and eight mini ones for the kids, much to the group's surprise and delight.

"They were like, 'Vanessa, what did you do? These are awesome,'" she said.

Pictures of the snackle boxes fascinated many of Calkins' 52,000 Facebook followers. "That looks delish! I like your way of thinking," one user commented. "Where did you buy the tackle box?" wrote another.

Calkins then made a Facebook Live video demonstrating how she put together her tray, which included mini Reese's cups and gummy bears. Although Calkins' page is dedicated to craft projects, she said she would make a snackle box on Facebook Live again if the opportunity arose.

For people like Sarah Brooks, that chance comes around often. She said the snackle box has been a saving grace for families with children.

Brooks, 43, who runs the online blogs "Keep Calm and Eat Ice Cream" and "The Aussie Home Cook" in Melbourne, loves how she can keep her family of four full until dinner when she packs a snackle box.

"You can't leave the house without snacks because guarantee the kids will be hungry within 30 minutes," Brooks said.

"You either have food with you, or you have to spend lots of time and money going and finding them food."

She didn't want to face the latter, so she found hardware boxes from a local store and packed them for picnics and playground trips. She has also made mini snackle boxes that can fit into coolers.

One of the best things about snackle boxes, Brooks said, is their ability to separate different snacks — and their spillage.

"Charcuterie boards are great, but they tend to be everything mixed in together. Not everybody wants that," she said. Snackle boxes are "a good way of keeping those foods in their own little containers doing their thing."

Brooks said they're ideal for game day parties, camping, and of course, fishing.

When Ginny Wilson, co-owner of the Tullahoma, Tenn., chocolate shop Water's Edge Chocolates, brainstormed recently with team members about what to sell for Father's Day, they shared sweet memories of fishing with their own fathers and grandfathers.

So they decided to build a Father's Day snackle box, which featured sweet and salty snacks to honor dads: Swedish fish, goldfish, gummy worms, cashews, almonds, as well as chocolate-covered pea-

### How to make a snackle box

**Start with a container with dividers.** You don't need a real tackle box, but make sure what you use is clean and preferably made with food-grade materials.

**Add proteins.** Fold in meats such as sliced salami, pepperoni or prosciutto, or fill spaces with such nuts as almonds, cashews, peanuts or pistachios.

**Include cheeses.** Cracker-cut cheeses are best, especially when paired with chips or crackers. Try colby jack, cheddar or small chunks of feta.

**Supplement with fruits and vegetables.** Look for seasonal produce. Summertime calls for raspberries, strawberries, cherries and grapes, while carrots and celery go well with winter.

**Finish with sweet treats.** Don't forget dessert: Gummy bears and chocolate are stellar, but be mindful of the weather so your snacks don't melt.

The Washington Post

nut butter crackers, a favorite of one employee's grandpa.

The box was such a success, Wilson said, Water's Edge will probably start carrying snackle boxes year-round.

"It's just a fun gift that you don't normally see," she said.

## WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

# Readying their home away from home

Shopping for all of your college freshman's dorm needs may be intimidating, but these tips can help

BY LEANNE ITALIE  
Associated Press

For the uninitiated, outfitting a college dorm room can be a dizzying experience. Doing it at a time of high inflation can make it even more daunting.

The first step: Meticulously go over what the school allows and provides. If you want a microwave and minifridge, are the energy-saving combo models required? Exactly how thick can a mattress topper be?

"You can see the look of terror on parents' faces," said Marianne Szymanski, an independent product researcher who has sent two kids to college. "You know, did I get the right mattress pad? It's crazy."

Etsy's trend expert, Dayna Isom Johnson, said self-expression is top of mind for dorm-bound kids in such things as faux headboards and unique dresser knobs.

"Two of my favorite dorm trends right now are mood-boosting hues that incorporate bright and energetic colors like neon tones, and heritage styles, a nostalgic trend that embodies the traditional collegiate look with items like plaid linens, wood-toned furniture and monograms," she said.

There's no end to help out there, from parents swapping tips in social media groups to seasoned college students offering hacks on TikTok. Some suggestions:

## Lighting & charging

Dorm rooms have notoriously bad light and notoriously few electrical outlets in convenient spots. Many schools don't allow extension cords. For power strips, which are almost always permitted, consider going vertical with a tower that offers surge protection, USB ports and outlets that can accommodate a range of differently shaped plugs.

It may be time to get a three-way charger. Storage carts, headboards and stands with charging capability are plentiful.

Use double-sided tape or hook-and-loop strips to fasten a power strip to the frame of an elevated bed for easy access.

For students so inclined, putting on makeup can be a problem that a lighted makeup mirror can solve. A desk or clip-on lamp is a must for studying. Consider a shared floor lamp. Neon signs are also popular as decorative lighting.

## Bedding & laundry

Think extra-long twin sheets, mattress protector and thick, cozy mattress pad, but do know some schools don't allow certain types of gel toppers, Szymanski said. As for all those throw pillows, where do they go when it's time to sleep? Usually on the perhaps-not-so-clean floor, so maybe buy fewer. Better yet, take along a body pillow.

Buying two or three sets of sheets does mean using up some already limited storage, but students not terribly laundry-responsible won't go into crisis when the dirties pile up. And if beds are elevated for storage, get curtains to cover the clutter.

What type of laundry hamper to get is a hot topic, and depends on how far from the room the washers and dryers live. There are rolling hampers, compact mesh ham-



PHOTOS BY DORMIFY / AP



Shower caddies available at Dormify.com.

pers and all manner of bags. For trekking up and down stairs, huge laundry backpacks (some with padded shoulder straps) are perfect.

A hack: Invest in a clothing steamer or wrinkle release fabric spray rather than an iron.

## Shelving & hooks

Extending storage with shelving is a dorm-size jigsaw puzzle. Is there room for over-the-bed shelving? Does the school permit hutchies on top of desks, or provide them?

Pro tip: Not a great idea to swap sturdy shelving for an over-the-toilet bathroom version that might not be able to handle something heavy, like a microwave. Also, if a bed will be elevated but not all the way up, a tall bedside stand with extra shelves or drawers might be useful.

Ask the school: Can shelving or stands of any kind be placed in front of windows? And remember those locker shelves from high school? Use them to extend space in a nightstand or desk.

Those Command stick-on hooks? Bring oh so many, along with the removable poster strips made not to damage walls. Also pick up a couple of over-the-door hangers for bags, coats, robes and hoodies.

## Closets & other storage

For the closet, consider sturdy vertical hanger extenders and hanging shoe and clothing storage. Yes, such storage takes up space and adds weight. Can an extra rod be installed?



A storage ottoman from Dormify.com.

Storage cubes can triple as seating and step stool, as opposed to a decorative pouf that is simply pretty and comfy.

Under-bed or in-closet storage drawers are essential, along with extra baskets, or at least a bowl for random, easily lost smaller items. Medium plastic baskets for scarves, socks and the like can be used on the top closet shelf.

## Cleaning & cooling

Vacuum cleaners are often available, but they're usually heavy and must be lugged back and forth. Szymanski has a hack for that. Not your run-of-the-mill portable vacuum but an ultra-mini handheld and battery-operated version called the Ayla. It's tube-like and just 11 inches tall.

Some students recommend a duster with cling power, along with a dehumidifier or air purifier.

Portable fans are tiny but mighty. Woozoo, a cult favorite, makes oscillating and remote-controlled versions.

Another Szymanski hack: A roll of Rakot75 towels for cleaning. They're 100% bamboo, come in a 75-count roll, and each sheet can be reused up to six months. Just rinse and reuse.

Don't forget small trash cans for the bathroom and sleeping area, after coordinating with roommates, of course, on this and other shared items.

## Decor & style

Style is everything for some dorm dwellers.

"People really take pride and they really strive for a sophisticated, grown-up space," said Adar Kirkham, a do-it-yourself designer and star of the new digital series "Freestyled" on HGTV.com. "It's now considered cool to decorate your room."

The pros are mixed on whether removable, peel-and-stick wallpaper is a good idea. Some schools may not allow it and it might not adhere to textured walls. Kirkham suggests using it to decorate desk drawers or other storage units.

Some kids bring along decorative mirrors to hang, rather than the usual all-body vertical kind, or they hang strings of twinkle lights.

The site Dormify.com is full of design inspiration and products. This year's freshmen are more confident than last year's about personalizing their dorm rooms, said Amanda Zuckerman, Dormify's co-founder and CEO.

"More saturation and color is really popular, so bringing in bright pink, bright orange, bright green and turquoise," she said.

According to Pinterest, searches are up for hippie and preppy dorm styles.

"People are increasingly searching for things like funky mirror ideas, which have tripled since last year. Indoor plant styling is also on the rise. Searching for preppy dorm room has increased 80%. Pink and blue are some really strong colors for that preppy aesthetic," said Pinterest's data insights lead Swasti Sarna.

## Bathroom & miscellaneous

Consider getting some scented Steripod toothbrush protectors. Dorms are dusty. Bathrooms get gross. Toothbrushes might have to be toted around. They should be changed every three months.

Bathrooms are often shared, and stuff gets mixed up. An organizer is essential. Pro tip from the trenches: Use an over-the-door organizer for bathroom stuff. Dormify sells one with a small face mirror built in.

Kirkham suggests a rolling bathroom caddy with just the essentials for quick trips in and out.

Minifridge tip: If allowed leeway on what kind to use, pick one with a separate freezer compartment. It might just guard against freezing food below. Some kids forgo the freezer completely to get more fridge space.

Kirkham suggests a minifridge stand that elevates the unit and includes additional storage.

"Everything in a dorm room has to have multiple functions," she said.

A small, portable, battery-operated blender could be useful. It doesn't take up a lot of space and it helps students eat healthy options stored in room fridges. Szymanski likes the Blendit.

A tool kit comes in handy, as does a first-aid kit. To help elevate a bed, Szymanski said, bring along a rubber mallet. And rather than a bedside canvas caddy, try an attachable bunk bed tray table. It can hold a drink, a phone and more.

Last but not least: a permanent marker good for labeling fabric as well as plastic.

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

## Original question

## How many founding band members must remain for a legendary band to be legit?

BY GEORGE VARGA

The San Diego Union-Tribune

**W**hen is a band not a band? No, that's not a Zen Buddhist koan designed to perplex music fans and philosophers alike.

But it is a question that perhaps can best be answered — at least in part — by posing two other questions.

What is the difference between a legendary band and a tribute band that is devoted to reverently performing the music of that legendary band?

And what do The Beach Boys and Motown music mainstays The Four Tops and The Temptations have in common with Steely Dan and pioneering German electronic group Kraftwerk?

Each of them has sold millions of records and been inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Each of these bands was launched 50 or more years ago (Kraftwerk, Steely Dan), or 60 or more years ago (The Beach Boys, Temptations and Four Tops).

And each has just one original member on board, be it Steely Dan's Donald Fagen (who is 74), Kraftwerk's Ralf Hutter (75), The Temptations' Otis Williams (80), The Beach Boys' Mike Love (81) or the Four Tops' Duke Fakir (88).

Depending on your perspective, this could be a cause for applause.

Each of these pioneering bands is led by a tireless original member. Each is devoted to honoring rich musical legacies that have endured for half a century or more.

They are the keepers of the flame. This holds especially true for The Four Tops' Fakir and The Temptations' Williams, who have outlived all the other original members of their respective bands.

Crucially, all of them — like many other bands of a similar vintage — continue to draw sizable audiences, year after year, decade after decade, long after their commercial heydays as recording artists who scored hit singles and albums.

Many of their listeners are graying fans eager to experience, live in concert, the music that has been such an integral part of their lives for so long. Why wouldn't these artists be happy to provide that experience, or as close an approximation to it as they can? And why wouldn't their audiences — which often include some of the adult children or grandchildren of the band's first generation of fans — welcome the opportunity?

### Standing the test of time

That so many bands have endured longer — in one form or another — than many of their now-deceased founding members is undeniable.

Songs that have stood the test of time still resonate for a significant number of fans, no matter who is singing or playing them. Often, the name alone of a veteran band is what draws ticket-buyers, not how many original members are on stage.

For some listeners, however, this may

be a cause for dismay. Because, ultimately, each of these bands is just one member away from becoming a certified tribute act. And they are hardly alone.

The list of other bands that rose to fame in the 1960s or '70s — and now only have one original member left — is formidable indeed.

It includes at least seven additional Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees — AC/DC, Deep Purple, Eagles, Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, Journey, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Santana, whose current tour has had six concerts postponed after its namesake guitarist, Carlos Santana, 74, collapsed on stage from dehydration and heat exhaustion during a July 5 concert near Detroit.

The list also includes such veteran acts as Boston, Foreigner, Little Feat, The 5th Dimension, King Crimson, War, Marshall Tucker Band, Wishbone Ash, The Yardbirds, REO Speedwagon, Thin Lizzy, The Hollies, the recently reactivated Jethro Tull and dozens more.

Especially notable is the blues-rocking band Savoy Brown, which has had 48 different lineups since its inception in England in 1965. Guitarist-singer Kim Simmonds, a longtime American resident, is the only member to play in each iteration.

"I kept going," Simmonds said in a 2015 interview promoting his band's 50th anniversary tour that year.

"I don't think I ever thought: 'I have a brand that's pretty important.' It just fell to me (because) I started the band. And if you start something, you end up with it, I guess. Subconsciously, I realized this was the right thing to do, and I'm glad I did. That's the hardest thing to do — to continue, with a marriage or a band."

Not to be outdone, Foghat — the band launched in 1972 by three former Savoy Brown members — has gone through 10 lineups. Two of its four co-founders are dead and drummer Roger Earl has been the sole original member since 2005.

### 'Most concertgoers are pretty aware'

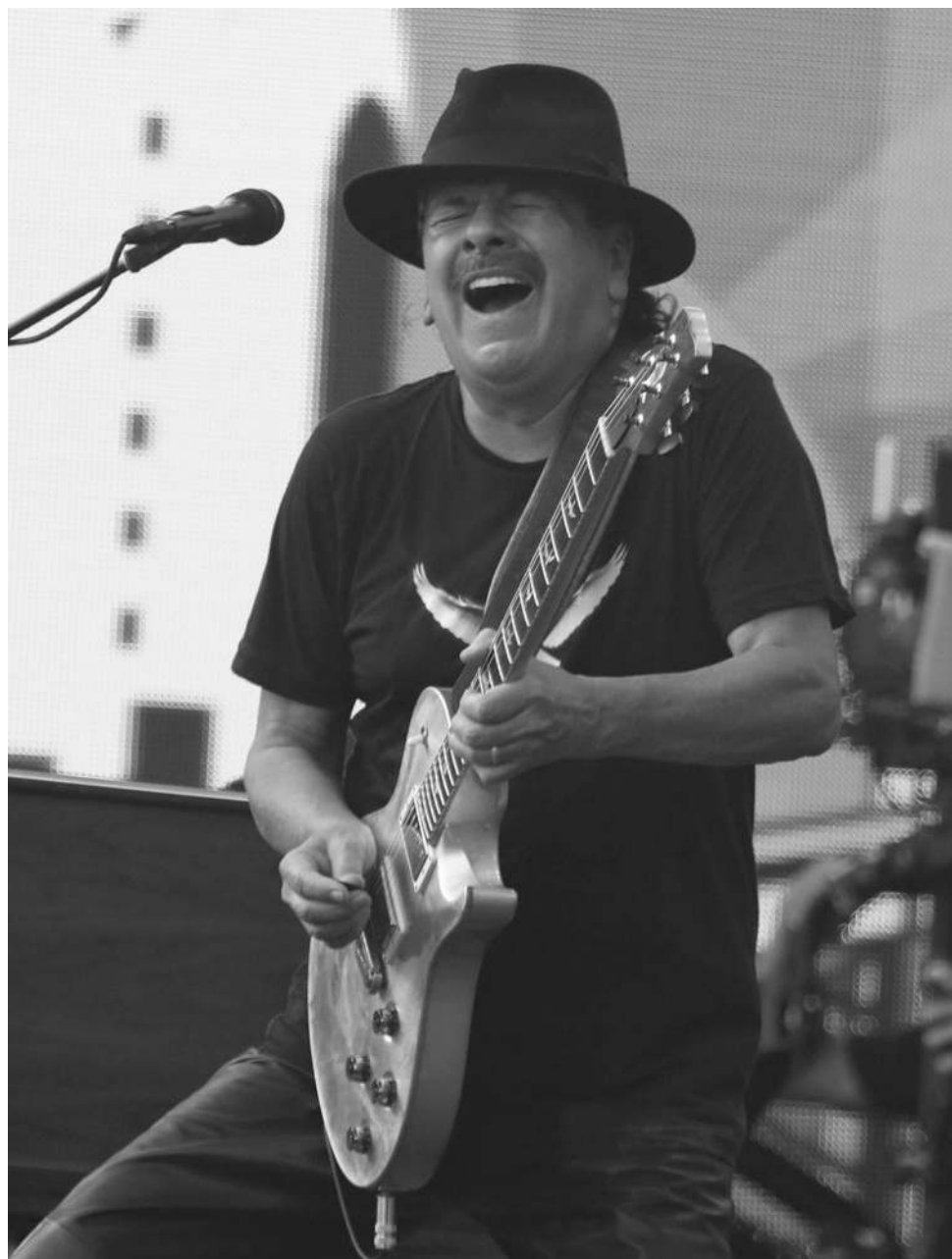
How much does it matter if a band just has one original member performing at its concerts? That depends whom you ask.

"When I was younger, I might have taken umbrage," said San Diego-bred guitar whiz and band leader Mike Keneally, 60. His many collaborators have included Frank Zappa, Joe Satriani and XTC mastermind Andy Partridge.

"At this point," Keneally continued, "I think most concertgoers are pretty aware the veteran bands they are seeing aren't the bands they grew up with — even though the name is the same — and they don't care. It comes down to: 'How well is the music being played?' If the audience doesn't feel ripped off and feels they got their money's worth, everyone should go home happy."

Keneally's sentiments are shared by

**SEE ORIGINAL ON PAGE 29**



NANCY KASZERMAN, ZUMA PRESS WIRE/TNS

Carlos Santana, 74, has been leading Santana since the 1960s and is its only original member still in the band.



TNS

The Beach Boys' Mike Love, right, and Bruce Johnston perform in Ventura, Calif., in 2020. Love is the sole original member in the current edition of the 61-year-old band.



TNS

Donald Fagen, right, and his band, Steely Dan, perform at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles in 2016. Fagen is the band's only original member.

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

## Original: Emotional connection a factor

FROM PAGE 28

Skid Row guitarist Dave “The Snake” Sabo, 57.

He and bassist Rachel Bolan are the two remaining original members in the five-man band, which formed in 1985, imploded in 1996 and regrouped in 1999. Skid Row has thus far had six different lead singers and a similar number of drummers.

“The only reason we’re able to keep doing it after 37 years,” Sabo said, “is because people still come and want to see us play. Why? Because we have touched them emotionally on some level.

“Skid Row is legitimate because Rachel and I started the band, we wrote most of the songs and we own the name. If there are a couple of guys in the band that weren’t in the original lineup, that’s the way life goes. Divorces occur, but the family still moves on. I applaud anybody who can go out and continue to make a living making their music.”

Veteran San Diego singer-songwriters Happy Ron Hill, 57, and Cliff Keller, 67, see it differently.

“I only enjoy seeing one (original) band member in a band,” Hill said, “if their name is Paul or Ringo.”

“Unless the original singer and/or songwriter is there,” Keller said, “it seems like a cover band.”

For lifelong music fan Dick Botte, the number of original members in a band is paramount.

“It matters to me,” said Botte, an account executive at One Ring Networks.

“It does depend on the band, of course. The Stones can get away with just Mick and Keith as original members. But otherwise, just Mick coming out? Nope. That would be like Paul McCartney coming out as The Beatles. On a lesser level, Foreigner only has (guitarist) Mick Jones as the original member. Without (original lead singer) Lou Gramm, they’re not Foreigner.”

So, where should the line be drawn in determining a band’s legitimacy?

“If they aren’t at least, say, 70% original, I’d think of them as a tribute band,” said San Diego music fan Jean Walcher, a communications specialist. “I would still probably go to a concert and enjoy it, but would expect a smaller venue and much smaller (ticket) price.”

Either way, one co-founder on stage is better than none, as evidenced by the array of veteran bands whose lineups do not include a single original member.

Their ranks include such Rock & Roll Hall of Famers as The Coasters, The Drifters and The Platters, virtually all of whose original members are deceased.



KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI, AFP/TNS

**The Rolling Stones — with Mick Jagger (center), Steve Jordan (back), Keith Richards (right) and Ronnie Wood (left) perform Sept. 26 in St. Louis. Jagger and Richards are the only remaining original members.**

The list of varied acts whose lineups no longer include any original members ranges from Blood, Sweat & Tears, Yes and Canned Heat to Jefferson Starship, Humble Pie and Iron Butterfly.

But the absence of any original members in Blood, Sweat & Tears does not concern Bobby Colomby, the jazz-rock group’s excellent first drummer and now its manager.

In the concert programs given to audience members at Blood, Sweat & Tears’ August 2021 concert at Sycuan Casino & Resort in San Diego, Colomby wrote that the band’s current edition is superior to the original lineup, “man for man, pound for pound.”

He also likened Blood, Sweat & Tears to a storied Major League Baseball team, writing: “When you’re at a Yankee game you do not expect to see Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. They’re not going to be there. But what you will see is a top-notch brand, the pinstripes, and the best possible combination of players on the field to represent the Yankee legend.”

### In and out

The reality of bands performing and touring with few or no original members is not a new phenomenon and it is not unique to rock or R&B music.

It started during the big-band era in jazz and dates back to at least 1946. That was when “the Glenn Miller Orchestra, under the direction of Tex Benecke,” debuted — two years after Miller perished during World War II while flying from England to France.

Other big bands have continued for years or decades after the death of their leaders, including what is now billed “The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra.” The 18-piece ensemble features two members, trombonist Clarence Banks and singer Carmen Bradford, whose tenure in the group predated Basie’s 1994 death.

There are, of course, multiple reasons why veteran bands in any genre do not include all their original members.

Some quit. Some get fired. Some leave to start their own bands, sometimes fueled by intense personal or creative differences, or financial issues.

On a more sobering note, death has claimed a sizable number of baby-boomer musicians — and their fans. That leaves the surviving members, or member, the options of calling it a day or continuing with replacement members.

Pride keeps some veteran musicians going long after many of their concertgoing fans have retired. So does ego and audience demand.

“It seems quite plausible to be a musician in your 70s or 80s now,” Jethro Tull co-founder Ian Anderson said in a 2019 Union-Tribune interview.

This year saw the release of the first new Jethro Tull album in 19 years, “The Zealot Gene.” Anderson has been the band’s sole original member since the 1970s.

“We can continue to be productive and die with our boots on,” Anderson continued, “which is a lot better than being spoon-fed in an old-folks home.”

Rock and roll, once a music of reckless abandon made for and by young people, counts senior citizens as perhaps its biggest demographic — on stage and off. The two biggest stadium tours of 2022 so far have been by Paul McCartney, 80, and the Rolling Stones, a band now celebrating its 60th anniversary.

The Stones have two original members, co-founders Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. The death last August of the band’s 80-year-old drummer, Charlie Watts, did not prevent the Stones from launching their U.S. stadium tour a month later with New York native Steve Jordan, 65, holding down the drum seat.

## REVIEWS



CHARLES SYKES, INVISION/AP

**Lizzo performs on NBC’s “Today” show July 15 in New York.**

### Lizzo

“Special” (Atlantic Records)

Singer and rapper Lizzo’s ode to body positivity doesn’t shy away from how hard it can be to get there and the dark times we endure to feel love-worthy.

“Special” features the funky single “About Damn Time,” already a TikTok sensation (“In a minute, I’m a need a sentimental / Man or woman to pump me up / Feelin’ fussy, walkin’ in my Balenci-ussies”) and “Grrrls” — modified after its release due to backlash over the use of a derogatory term towards some people with disabilities.

While the album sticks to Lizzo’s proud and loud style towards body acceptance, the slow ballad, “If You Love Me,” explores the doubts and uncertainties we encounter on the way and is sure to bring a tear down your cheek — or a waterfall (“When the world can’t love me to my face / When the mirror lies and starts to break / Hold me close, don’t let me run away / Don’t be afraid”).

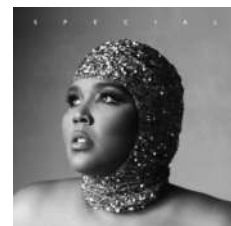
The album feels closer to and more personal than her previous work, unlocking a more vulnerable side of the extroverted artist.

However, this is Lizzo we are talking about, therefore “Special” has to be a celebration as well. Pop song “The Sign” is sure to be this year’s summer anthem during brunches and nights out. “Special” is about friendships, heartbreaks, self-doubts, empowerment and, most importantly, love: Love for the people in our life and for ourselves and who we are.

Lizzo is still the undefeated queen of self-love, the hero we all need to feel our most authentic and special selves. Just as it happens in real life, this album is a ride through exhilarating happiness and rainy days.

If you need a friendly pep talk or a soundtrack to a good cry, “Special” will be the right companion for the moment.

— Martina Rebecca Inchingolo/AP



### Mabel

“About Last Night...” (Capitol Records)

If you’ve ever sent a “So, about last night” text, Mabel’s newest album is for you. A follow-up to the English singer’s 2019 debut album, “About Last Night...” is a blend of disco, dance and pop that captures every emotion experienced during a cathartic night out.

One moment she’s confidently showing off on the dance floor with her new man (“Animal” and, ironically, “Shy”), in another she’s giving a bathroom pep talk to a friend (“Good Luck”) or crying in the club herself (“Take Your Name”).

Mabel rallies with “Let Love Go (feat. Lil Tecca),” only to fall victim to the emotions that stir when going out and seeing an ex on “Overthinking” and “Crying on The Dance Floor.” By the time the party comes to an end, it’s morning already, and there’s the question of “what now?” on the aptly titled “When The Party’s Over.” This wrap-up to a whirlwind night could be a metaphor for any exciting chapter of life coming to a close.

As far as takeaways from this album, while there is an awful lot of focus on ex-partner drama, there’s an accompanying fair share of empowerment songs that stand out like “Let Them Know,” an encouragement to go out and show ‘em your worth, or “LOL,” a delightful slap in the face for an ex who is trying to come back into your life.

Conceived in lockdown, this album is a snapshot of a simpler time and is just one of many products of female pop artists who have been able to create party anthems during a pandemic. Is that strange? Resilient? Strangely resilient? Jury’s still out on that one, but for now, maybe we can just enjoy joining Mabel on her night out.

— Kiana Doyle/AP



## WEEKEND: TELEVISION

# The baking of 'American Pie'

'The Day the Music Died' a Paramount+ documentary about the singular McLean song, its cultural relevance

By MARK KENNEDY  
Associated Press

Don McLean has listened for decades as people belted out his classic song "American Pie" at last call or at karaoke — and applauds you for the effort.

"I've heard whole bars burst into this song when I've been across the room," McLean tells The Associated Press from a tour bus heading to Des Moines, Iowa. "And they're so happy singing it that I realized, 'You don't really have to worry about how well you sing this song anymore. Even sung badly, people are really happy with it.'"

Happy might be a bit of an understatement. "American Pie" is considered a masterpiece, voted among the top five Songs of the Century compiled by the Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts.

McLean — and his singular tune about "the day the music died" — are now the subject of a full-length feature documentary, "The Day the Music Died: The Story of Don McLean's 'American Pie,'" on Paramount+.

It's mandatory viewing for McLean fans or anyone who has marveled at his sonic treasure. It also represents an elegant film blueprint for future deep dives into a song and its wider cultural relevance.

For those fans who have wondered about the lyrics they are singing loudly in bars and cars, McLean shares the secrets. "That was the fun of writing the song," he tells the AP. "I was up at night, smiling and thinking about what I'm going to do with this."

The documentary starts when a single-engine plane carrying Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and Jiles P. Richardson, the "Big Bopper," plunged into a cornfield north of Clear Lake, Iowa, on Feb. 3, 1959, killing the three stars and their pilot.

McLean was 13, living in a suburban, middle class home in New Rochelle, N.Y., when the crash occurred.

He had bronchial asthma, prompting the description of him in "American Pie" as "a lonely teenage broncin' buck." The "sacred store" he sings about was the House of Music on Main Street, where he

bought records and his first guitar.

Young McLean was a paperboy — "every paper I'd deliver" — and adored Elvis, Gene Vincent and Bo Diddley but especially Holly, whose death deeply affected him.

"I was in absolute shock. I may have actually cried," he says in the film. "You can't intellectualize it. It hurt me."

Years later, McLean would plumb that pain in "American Pie," baking in his own grief at his father's passing and writing an eulogy for the American dream. He was creating his second album in 1971 while the nation was racked by assassinations, anti-war protests and civil right marches. He thought he "needed a big song about America." The first verse and melody seemed to just tumble out. "A long, long, time ago ..."

It climaxed in the huge singalong chorus: "We were singin', 'Bye-bye, Miss American pie' / Drove my Chevy to the levee, but the levee was dry / Them good old boys were drinkin' whiskey 'n rye / And singin', 'This'll be the day that I die.'"

"I said, 'Wow, that is something. I don't know what it is, but it's exactly what I've been wanting to try to get ahold of — that feeling about Buddy Holly — for all these years and that plane crash,'" McLean tells the AP. "I always feel a tug inside me whenever I think about Buddy."

The 90-minute documentary incorporates news footage of the '70s and uses actors in recreations. Cameras capture McLean visiting the hallowed Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake, the last place Holly and his fellow musicians played before their fatal flight in 1959.

There are interviews with musicians — Garth Brooks, "Weird Al" Yankovich and Brian Wilson, among them — as well as Valens' sister, Connie, and actor Peter Gallagher, whose character's death on "Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist" promoted an on-screen performance of "American Pie." The British singer Jade Bird, Cuban-born producer Rudy Perez and Spanish-language singer Jencarlos Canela speak to how the song has resonated far past America.

The documentary reveals that recording



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Don McLean poses Aug. 16 over his new star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

the album was not exactly a smooth process. Producer Ed Freeman was unimpressed with McLean's clutch of songs and didn't think McLean was up to playing rhythm guitar on "American Pie." He eventually relented.

McLean — along with a few session musicians — rehearsed for two weeks without nailing the song, getting increasingly frustrated. The addition of pianist Paul Griffin at the last minute was a "Hail Mary" stroke of genius that made the whole tune click.

But recording the song was just the

beginning of trouble ahead. At over 8 minutes, radio stations balked at playing it, and McLean's record label, Media Arts, went bust just as it was to release the album "American Pie."

After seeing the documentary, McLean was struck by a common strand in his career: "What I noticed was that I had to fight so many battles to get this thing done, to get everything. I've been fighting everybody my whole life," he says. "I'm not difficult. I just want things the way I want them."

SEE PIE ON PAGE 31

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION

## Pie: Artist says song can also teach history

FROM PAGE 30

“American Pie” is packed with cultural references, from Chevrolet to nursery rhymes, while namechecking The Byrds, John Lennon, Charles Manson and James Dean. The lyrics — dreamlike and impressionistic — have been pored over for decades, dissected for meaning.

The documentary answers some questions, but not all. McLean reveals that his oblique references to a king and a jester have nothing to do with Elvis or Bob Dylan, but he’s open to other interpretations.

He explains that the “marching band” means the military-industrial complex and “sweet perfume” is tear gas.

The line in the chorus “This’ll be the day that I die” comes from the John Wayne film “The Searchers” and the farewell is a riff off “Bye Bye, My Roseanna,” a song his friend Pete Seeger sang. McLean was going to use “Miss American apple pie” but dropped the fruit.

The end of the song asks for “happy news” — an echo of the first verse — but there is none. The three men McLean admires most — the Father, Son and Holy Ghost — “caught the last train for the coast,” meaning Los Angeles. “Even god has been corrupted,” McLean says in the film.

“He was glad to open up because he and his manager thought it was the time to do it and this was the platform to do it in,” says music producer and songwriter Spencer Proffer, CEO of media production company Meteor 17, which helped make the film. “My hat’s off to Don for writing something this magnificent. My job was to bring it to life.”

For McLean, the song is a blueprint of his mind at the time and a homage to his musical influences, but also a roadmap for future students of history:

“If it starts young people thinking about Buddy Holly, about rock ‘n’ roll and that music, and then it teaches them maybe about what else happened in the country, maybe look at a little history, maybe ask why John Kennedy was shot and who did it, maybe ask why all our leaders were shot in the 1960s and who did it, maybe start to look at war and the stupidity of it — if that can happen, then the song really is serving a wonderful purpose and a positive purpose.”



FX photos

Natasia Demetriou as Nadja and Matt Berry as Laszlo appear in a scene from “What We Do in the Shadows.”

# Can vampires have midlife crises?

‘What We Do in the Shadows’ enters season 4 with the roomies at turning points in their lives

BY KATE FELDMAN  
New York Daily News

“**W**hat We Do in the Shadows” is determined to find out if an immortal being can have a midlife crisis.

The hit vampire comedy series on FX returned for its fourth season July 12, with the four remaining housemates back together in their Staten Island home. And they’re all searching for something new.

The action picks up a year after the mockumentary show’s Season 3 finale, which saw the split of the roomies. Nandor was off to travel the world, Nadja went to London to serve on the Supreme Vampiric Council, Guillermo was forced to tag along to England and Laszlo stayed home to deal with the death and possible rebirth of their former basement-dwelling energy vampire Colin Robinson.

But the show couldn’t keep them apart for long.

“The relationships in the house really create the atmosphere of the show, allow for the jokes to happen, the ennui, the more grounded ideas of what these characters want, what makes them happy,” Kayvan Novak, the 43-year-old British actor who plays the lovesick Nandor, said. “They all inform each other in that way and



Kayvan Novak, left, as Nandor and Harvey Guillén as Guillermo in a scene from the vampire comedy series.

they’re all calling each other out, too.”

When Nandor, Laszlo, Nadja and Guillermo are reunited, nothing and everything has changed. They are still the same cold, often cruel four, but they want more this time. Nandor still wants a wife, but now uses a jinn spirit to reanimate his previous 37 partners in hopes of rekindling what once was. Nadja opens a nightclub to secure her legacy. Laszlo has decided to raise baby Colin Robinson. And Guillermo, once again, finds himself at a crossroads: vampire wannabe or vampire slayer.

“He’s had a lot of time to self-reflect on what’s important and what he’s missing in life,” Harvey Guillén, who plays the still-

human sidekick Guillermo, said. “When you spend 13 years of your life devoted to this group of a—holes who mistreat him, even though he does have love for them, he’s starting to ask himself if this is the life for him. Is it going to happen? What are the other roads or options?”

Every year, the plots for “What We Do in the Shadows” become funnier and more ridiculous, none more so than the one involving Laszlo spending the past year raising the rapidly aging baby that emerged out of Colin Robinson’s body when he died.

“He had no choice. Everybody else had bugged off and he was left there, literally, holding the baby. Rather than doing

something despicable, he raised the baby,” Matt Berry, the 48-year-old English actor who plays the ever-horny vampire, told The News. “I don’t know if it’s a midlife crisis because I don’t know if immortals can have a midlife crisis, but it’s something completely different for that character.”

“What We Do in the Shadows” has never quite explained the film crew in the house that records the housemates’ every crude joke and bad deed. Mostly they exist as a narrative device for the characters to break the fourth wall.

Guillén says the documentarians serve as a reminder for Guillermo that he’s not actually alone, even when the vampires make him feel like he’s losing his mind.

“Guillermo’s a murderer. He’s killed so many people for the household to feed or feast, but no one ever holds him responsible for that. But that’s always the fear that he has,” the 32-year-old actor said. “When the cameras are rolling, the vampires don’t care, but they’ll cut away to my face because I’m thinking what the audience is thinking. They don’t care because they’re not human. They’re immortal. They don’t care about the repercussions of their actions. I’m still human. I can still be held responsible in a court of law.”

## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

By ELIZABETH HEATH

*The Washington Post*

**M**y timing was cinematic. I had no sooner admonished my family for repeatedly cautioning me to watch my step on the thawing, muddy mountain trail than I slipped spectacularly on a patch of frozen terrain. My feet flew out from under me, and I landed hard — with my tailbone, cervical spine and the back of my head taking the brunt of the impact. I lay there, momentarily stunned, thinking, “I’m really going to feel this tomorrow.”

After I could move again, we gingerly made our way 2 more miles down the trail to the car, me with my morale crushed and my clothes covered in mud. When we passed a group that had witnessed my fall, they asked how I was doing.

“Ask me tomorrow,” I grumbled. My husband added: “Her pride’s a little hurt, too.”

It’s true that my ego and my tailbone both took a hit. But although the latter felt better after 10 days or so, the injury to my self-confidence has lingered.

Since I took that tumble, I find myself constantly thinking about falling again — while hiking on uneven terrain, walking on a loose gravel path or just going down the stairs in my home — and questioning whether I need to scale back my soft adventure activities. Yet, at 55 and in reasonable shape, I feel as if it’s a little too early to give up on outdoor activities I enjoy, especially those we do as a family.

This got me wondering about that blurry space between over-reactive worry and justified concerns about falling or injuring oneself anew. How do we know when it’s time to hit the trail again, or when it’s time to hang up the hiking shoes and find a new, less perilous activity?

“People fall all the time,” says Helen Lach, a professor at Saint Louis University’s nursing school whose research specialty is falls and fears of falling. “Hiking is a high-risk thing. A rough patch of ground, or terrain that’s rocky or slippery ... you’re challenging yourself to some degree, and everyone falls doing those things.”

But when taking a hard fall is a new experience, as it was for me, Lach says it can feel “more dramatic.” There’s even a name for what I’m feeling: low falls self-efficacy, which Lach describes as “the loss of confidence that you can do everyday activities without falling.”



# Getting the mind, body back on solid ground

Experts offer post-fall tips for banishing worry, regaining confidence

In older populations especially, individuals may get to the point where they’re not comfortable leaving the house or doing activities they normally enjoy — and, as a result, they may not get enough exercise, or they may even become isolated and depressed.

Although my falls self-efficacy isn’t so low that I’ve become a recluse, it is typical, even if I’m in a slightly younger demographic.

“Decreased confidence and fear of reinjury are two common side effects of any injury,” says Amber Shipherd, a certified mental performance consultant based at Texas A&M University who works with professional athletes, coaches, musicians and members of the military — “anyone who performs as part of their daily job.”

Kyle Martino, a former Major League Soccer player and the founder of the Over Under Initiative, says that, for athletes, fear of reinjury happens “every time” after an injury on the field, although Shipherd says the same concepts apply to casually active people like myself.

“The hardest part of overcoming injury is trusting your body again,” Martino says. “It’s almost like you have a physical you and a mental clone of you.” They both get hurt, he says, except that the body often heals faster than the mind does.

Shipherd, who has a background in counseling, kinesiology and performance psychology, says she looks for the root of the problem. If physical limitations can be ruled out, she says, then a counselor can set out to help rebuild client confidence.

The techniques Shipherd uses to help star athletes reclaim their A game are essentially the same as those that might apply to a middle-aged woman who fell on her derriere: positive self-talk and baby steps. “We fall back on mental skills and goal-setting.”

In the case of hiking, she says, “let’s get you back on short, flat trails. Once you get to the point where you’re feeling good, we up the difficulty.” As someone experiences success on trails of escalating difficulty, hopefully their self-confidence will return.

Lach, who had to bounce back after a broken ankle resulting from a backyard fall, agrees with slowly building back to prior performance levels and being realistic about one’s fitness level.

“An older person who’s really out of shape might need to start with physical therapy,” she says,

including working on mobility and balance. But mostly, she adds, “it’s about improving physical strength. If you feel stronger, you feel more confident.”

At 67, she sees a personal trainer once a week. And although her downhill skiing days may be behind her, she feels confident while playing golf and hiking — both activities that might have seemed unattainable during the three months she was non-weight-bearing.

It’s also about reframing, not ignoring, your fear, Shipherd says. “The fear of injury is still there. It’s not realistic to deny it. But we frame it differently. ‘This trail is rough; I’m nervous about it,’ becomes, ‘This trail is going to help me get better.’”

The confidence-building process happens off the trail or playing field, too, Shipherd says. You don’t have to get right back into the activity. “A break is a great opportunity to make sure you’re fulfilling yourself in other ways and get other things, like family, school or work, aligned in your life.”

Martino, whose soccer career was cut short because of injuries, says this slow rebuilding of confidence and form is a shift from the performance coaching of old, when people would “battle through pain” to return to top condition as soon as possible.

“My way of overcoming injury was not the healthiest,” he says, recalling that his career was shortened and his quality of life affected because of rushed recoveries. “If I could go back, I would listen to my body more and take time to heal properly.”

“For an athlete or exerciser of any type,” Shipherd says, “one of the most challenging things is not being able to do the same things you used to do.” Some may wind up accepting that they can’t run as fast or as far but that they still enjoy running. Others may acknowledge that they just can’t run at all anymore, or that the risk isn’t worth the reward.

And “when you just don’t love what you’re doing anymore, it’s time to find a new sport,” Shipherd says.

My situation lacks the drama of a professional athlete having to retire. But Lach suggests some of the same realism, and risk-vs.-reward analysis is advised, especially at my age. “It’s all about right-sizing your activity for your own self, being realistic, but still doing the things you enjoy doing as much as you can,” she says.

And maybe waiting until the ice has thawed on those mountain trails.

**“The fear of injury is still there. It’s not realistic to deny it. But we frame it differently. ‘This trail is rough; I’m nervous about it,’ becomes, ‘This trail is going to help me get better.’”**

Amber Shipherd

certified mental performance consultant based at Texas A&M University

## WEEKEND: FAMILY



JESSICA GRIFFIN, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

Jamie Winder stands in Washington Square Park in Philadelphia. After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, Winder, who supports abortion rights, has avoided talking about the topic with her parents, who are against abortion.

# No room for debate?

Abortion views dividing families, friends in wake of overturn of *Roe v. Wade*

By ERIN MCCARTHY  
*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

Jamie Winder hasn't communicated with her parents much since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

"I've been keeping it pretty short," said the 30-year-old Philadelphia resident, "because I don't want to open the door to that conversation."

People across the political spectrum say they have become accustomed to avoiding such topics with loved ones over the past few years — and they have doubled down since the landmark abortion-rights case was overturned and now leaves it up to the states to determine whether people have the right to an abortion.

Winder, who supports abortion rights, and her parents, who oppose abortion, have had versions of the discussion before, particularly around the time that Donald Trump was elected president.

In her Christian household growing up, "it's pretty much a given that abortion is this terrible thing," Winder said. When she disagreed with her parents and opposed Trump, who pledged to appoint Supreme Court justices who would overturn *Roe*, "I got accused of suddenly being super liberal and being a baby killer."

She didn't want that to happen again, she said, so for now she is skirting the subject with her parents.

About 56% of Americans oppose the court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, according to a recent NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll, while 40% support it.

When Peter DeMaio, 45, of Broomall, Pa. posted on social media celebrating the decision, he received many responses that were equally joyful, as well as one middle-finger emoji.

"I don't think that we should have the division that we have right now," said DeMaio, a devout Catholic who volunteers for Pennsylvanians for Human Life and who recently started a podcast called MenForLife.

In his in-person interactions, he said, he tries to avoid discussing the issue with those close to him who he knows have different views. But he wouldn't cut people out of his life for supporting abortion rights, he said.

"I see people doing that, and that bothers me," he said. "From a Christian perspective, we can't make

our beliefs more important than loving other human beings."

Mickey Kelley, 32, of Fairmount, Pa., said he, too, was "thrilled" with the ruling and has tried to debate the topic in a "civilized" way in the days since.

"My family is a mixed bunch; a majority are in favor of what I'm doing," Kelley said. "It takes humility to understand where people are coming from with this and engage in a more civilized discussion."

Megan, who works in the Capitol in Harrisburg, said she hasn't spoken with her father since an emotional FaceTime three days after the decision. She said she feels as if women's rights are being stripped away, and her father not only disagrees but has failed to allay her fears.

Megan, who asked to be referred to only by her first name so she could speak freely about her relationship with her father without upsetting her family, said the pair have disagreed about politics for years. Her father is a staunch Trump supporter, she said, and she is a Democrat.

But their recent conversation was a gut punch, she said, and left her unsure how to mend the relationship.

She said she told her father that "I'm really scared about what is going on," noting that the governor's race is set to determine whether Pennsylvania has abortion rights. When he said he would still vote for Republicans, Megan said, she became upset and visibly "distracted."

In the high-stakes election for Pennsylvania governor that will decide the future of abortion access in the state, the two candidates' records on the matter could hardly be more divergent.

"I've never gotten mad at him before because of his politics. Because I've never felt personally hurt by it before," she said. "That's where the difference lies this time."

Ultimately, she said, her father hung up the phone, saying he didn't want to talk to her at the moment.

As for Megan, she said she's deciding whether to reach out again and, if so, how.

"I'm very torn. Of course, I want to, because he's my father and I want to have that relationship with him," she said. But "I don't know if I can allow someone [to be a major part of my life] who almost doesn't see my worth, like my rights aren't worth protecting."

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## Outing reveals husband's vacation double standard

The drive to Maine was long, so we didn't arrive until well after dark. "I think this is it," said my husband Francis, pulling onto a gravel driveway off of lonely Highway 1. A nearby sign read "Twin Hills Motel," which was a row of outdated pastel cottages with bugs orbiting their porch lights.

"There's ours, No. 6," Francis said, approaching the powder blue one on the end. But a car was parked outside and the living room lights were ablaze.

Francis left our car to knock on No. 6's door. I envisioned several scenarios. A fistfight. The motel owner absconding with our reservation money. Us sleeping in our car on the side of Highway 1, which didn't seem half bad considering our sketchy circumstances.

Francis rapped on the cottage door until it opened, releasing a puff of smoke. The occupants, a young man and his girlfriend, were obviously partaking in a newly-legal activity that rendered them easygoing and, thankfully, nonviolent. Francis chatted with them while dialing the motel owner, who explained that there was another "No. 6" cottage on the other end of the gravel drive. This made about as much sense as the gnome statue at the base of the Twin Hills Motel sign, but we followed his instructions nonetheless.

We'd come to Maine for a friend's birthday party, which would be held the next afternoon. I'd been excited to get away from home without the kids for a little weekend adventure with my husband, just the two of us, and I'd packed a bottle of wine and some cheese for our Friday night.

Adventures were harder to come by now that Francis was retired from the Navy. For 28 years on active duty, he traveled often for his military job to far-flung places like Japan, Italy, Spain, England, Norway, Columbia, Chile, Korea, Botswana, Hawaii, Alaska and more.

When he was home, I was our family travel planner, finding charming yet affordable places for us to stay, eat and visit while stationed stateside and overseas. This weekend in Maine had been Francis' idea, so he'd offered to book the trip himself.

Francis cursed under his breath while repeatedly punching a code into the keypad lock on No. 6 cottage — the second one, that is. While he fiddled, I noted the mismatched plastic porch chairs and a hanging pot of dying plants. On the fifth try, a green light blinked and I lunged for the doorknob.

Francis reached inside and clicked a switch. A bare halogen bulb on the room's ceiling fan garishly illuminated a living-dining-kitchen space decorated with dumpy brown curtains and sparse, mismatched furniture.

Silently glancing around, I felt queasy. Was it the long drive? Had I inhaled a whiff of that smoke? What was wrong with me? I poked my head into the bedroom, which housed a sagging bed topped with flat pillows. A digital alarm clock perpetually blinked "12:00" in red.

My uncharacteristic silence made Francis nervous. He fumbled through our bags to find the wine, and opened cabinets in search of glasses. There, he found an eclectic mix of kitchen items, no two the same. He poured our Cabernet into two vessels. For me, a mug adorned with candy canes. For him, a jelly jar.

As I peered into my mug, anger as red as the blinking alarm clock display began to surface. I thought of all the texts and photos Francis had sent me during his years in the Navy from exotic locations and luxury hotel rooms, all made possible because his spouse was home with the kids. He had worked hard in the Navy and deserved to stay in nice places. But what about me? By the time I'd finished my wine, I was ready to let him have it.

I don't quite recall what I said, but Francis got the gist. And then we had a good laugh about the ugly decor and our wine glasses. Our motel had twin hills and two No. 6 cottages, but Francis would no longer have a double standard.

Read more at [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com) and in Lisa's book, "The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com." Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com)

# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

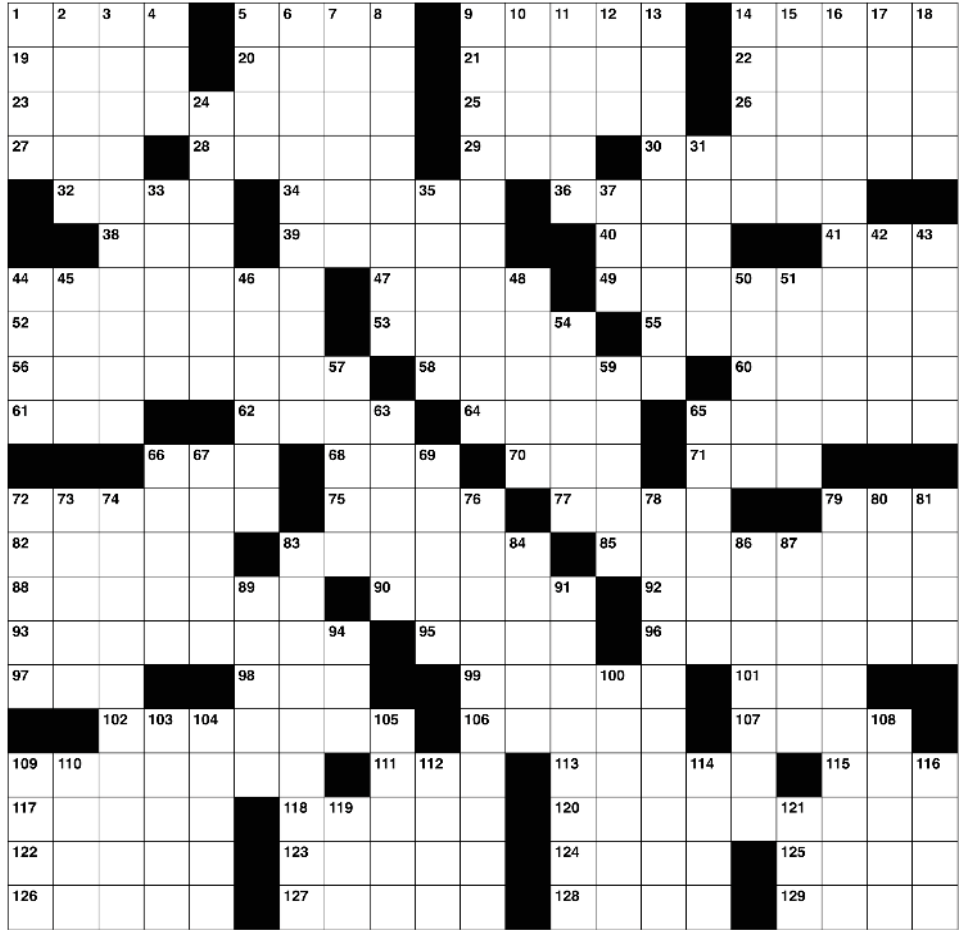
## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### MOVIN' ON UP

BY CHRISTINA IVERSON AND SCOTT HOGAN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Scott Hogan is making his New York Times debut with this puzzle, after many submissions. He is a patent attorney from Midland, Mich. Christina Iverson is a crossword constructor and editor from Ames, Iowa. They met through the Cruciverb Facebook page, a forum for crossword constructors. Scott says he takes inspiration from the lyric of "Movin' On Up," the theme song from "The Jeffersons" — "It took a whole lotta tryin', just to get up that hill!" — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 [omg haha!!]
  - 5 Left speechless
  - 9 Reward for sitting, say
  - 14 Entice
  - 19 Something we share
  - 20 Rocker John whose surname sounds like a leafy vegetable
  - 21 "\_\_\_ Man Chant," song by Bob Marley and the Wailers
  - 22 Diarist Nin
  - 23 Where some stable relationships form?
  - 25 San Diego State athlete
  - 26 Verge
  - 27 Name that's 98-Across backward
  - 28 The sky, they say
  - 29 "All the Light We Cannot \_\_\_" (2015 Pulitzer-winning novel)
  - 30 Certain Chinese teas
  - 32 Roman emperor after Nero and Galba
  - 34 Heap of "David Copperfield"
  - 36 Drop the "Donuts" from "Dunkin' Donuts," e.g.
  - 38 Some four-year degrees: Abbr.
  - 39 Kind of attack with no attacker
  - 40 Michael Jackson hit whose title is heard 88 times in the song
- DOWN**
- 1 Santa \_\_\_\_, Calif.
  - 2 Closing section
  - 3 Banana wielded by a maestro in a pinch?
  - 4 Drug that can be microdosed
  - 5 Berry in a bowl
  - 6 Animated short before a Pixar movie?
  - 7 New York resting place for Mark Twain
  - 8 In the stars
  - 9 Give a scathing review of a major camera brand?
  - 10 Demolish
  - 11 Compound with a fruity smell
  - 12 Had a hero, say
  - 13 Mexican street-food mogul?
  - 14 Pair of small hand drums
  - 15 Defunct company of accounting fraud fame
  - 16 Smaug, in "The Hobbit"?
  - 17 Send an e-message to
  - 18 Makes shame-y noises
  - 24 Does a fad 2010s dance
  - 31 Pro using cutting-edge technology?
  - 33 Movie rating that's practically NC-17
  - 35 Political staffers
  - 37 Retreat
  - 42 "Fingers crossed!"
  - 43 Window units
  - 44 Small amounts
  - 45 God whose name sounds almost like the ammunition he uses
  - 46 Starts to go haywire
  - 48 Where 122-Across can be found
  - 50 Places for placentas
  - 51 Surrounding lights
  - 41 What might accompany a grave admission?
  - 44 Claws
  - 47 Cheese with a light, nutty flavor
  - 49 Quite an uproar
  - 52 Design style influenced by Cubism
  - 53 Fabric often dyed with indigo
  - 55 Each of its interior angles measures 135 degrees
  - 56 Swing preventer, of a sort
  - 58 Like some vows
  - 60 Run off together
  - 61 Personal ID
  - 62 Like a sweater that shrank in the dryer, maybe
  - 64 Its alphabet includes delta
  - 65 Some Brothers Grimm villains
  - 66 Artless nickname?
  - 68 Tease
  - 70 Sarcastic punch line
  - 71 That guy's
  - 72 40 winks
  - 75 Threads
  - 77 Tepid greeting
  - 79 Second word of many a limerick
  - 82 Sans-serif font
  - 83 Thesis writer
  - 85 Meaning of a signal flare
  - 88 2021 Aretha Franklin biopic
  - 90 Strained
  - 92 Greek name meaning "golden one"
  - 93 Something filmed in Broadway's Ed Sullivan Theater, with "The"
  - 95 Journalist Skeeter in the Harry Potter books
  - 96 Train segment
  - 97 Butt end
  - 98 Name that's 27-Across backward
  - 99 "Sweet dreams!"
  - 101 Rapper \_\_\_ Rida
  - 102 It's not a good look
  - 106 Family/species go-between
  - 107 The last thing you need?
  - 109 Like the community portrayed in Netflix's "Unorthodox"
  - 111 Piercing tool
  - 113 Tickle
  - 115 Evian, in its native land
  - 117 Cruciverbalist's favorite cookies?
  - 118 "Well, gosh!"
  - 120 Topsy trips
  - 122 Teatro alla \_\_\_
  - 123 Takes a car, in a way
  - 124 Lab assistant in "Young Frankenstein"
  - 125 It may be upper or lower
  - 126 Blue-book filler
  - 127 Much of a sponge
  - 128 Mad, with "off"
  - 129 Word of surprise



- 54 Movement championed by the Silence Breakers
- 57 Get rid of
- 59 Light-headed sorts?
- 63 Word after gas or ice, in astronomy
- 65 Novelist Achebe
- 66 Wizard's name in books and movies
- 67 Spun things
- 69 Kind of patch that may create holes instead of repairing them
- 72 Otis and \_\_\_ (1960s R.&B. duo)
- 73 Disciplines
- 74 Response to "Why art thou queasy?"
- 76 What Amazon retirees enjoy most?
- 78 Result of love at first sight?
- 79 What a dog greets its returning family with?
- 80 Inter \_\_\_
- 81 Trade jabs
- 83 Retail takeover scheme?
- 84 Fix, as laces
- 86 Nomad
- 87 Annyeonghaseyo : Korean :: \_\_\_ : English
- 89 Tailgating dish
- 91 "Tarnation!"
- 94 Very, colloquially
- 100 Compassionate
- 103 Actress Davis who was the first African American to win the Triple Crown of Acting
- 104 Start of a guesstimate
- 105 Like a proverbial beaver
- 108 Model material
- 109 Place for a run?
- 110 Rainbows, e.g.
- 112 "\_\_\_ saved!"
- 114 Large amount
- 116 Bookstore sticker
- 119 "Euphoria" aircr
- 121 Excellent service?

## GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

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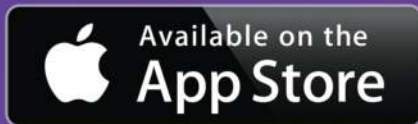
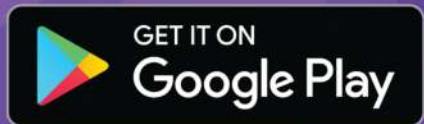
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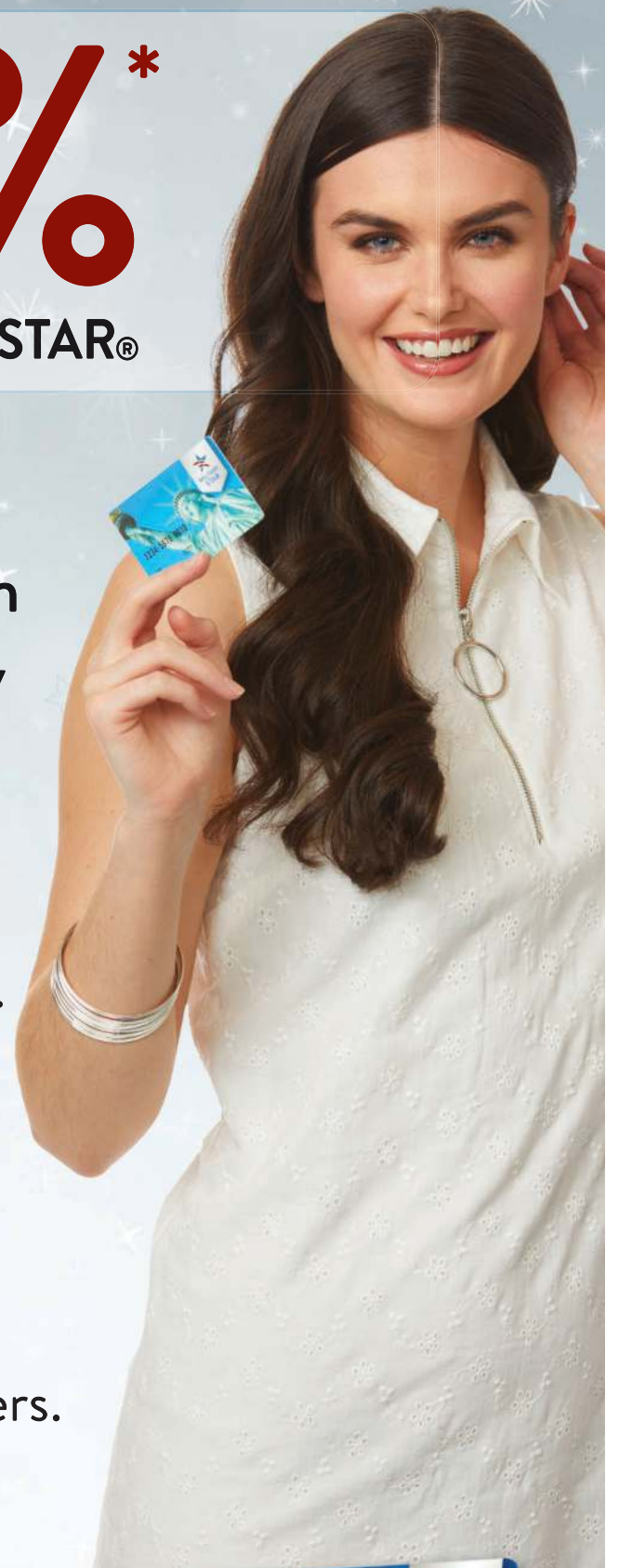
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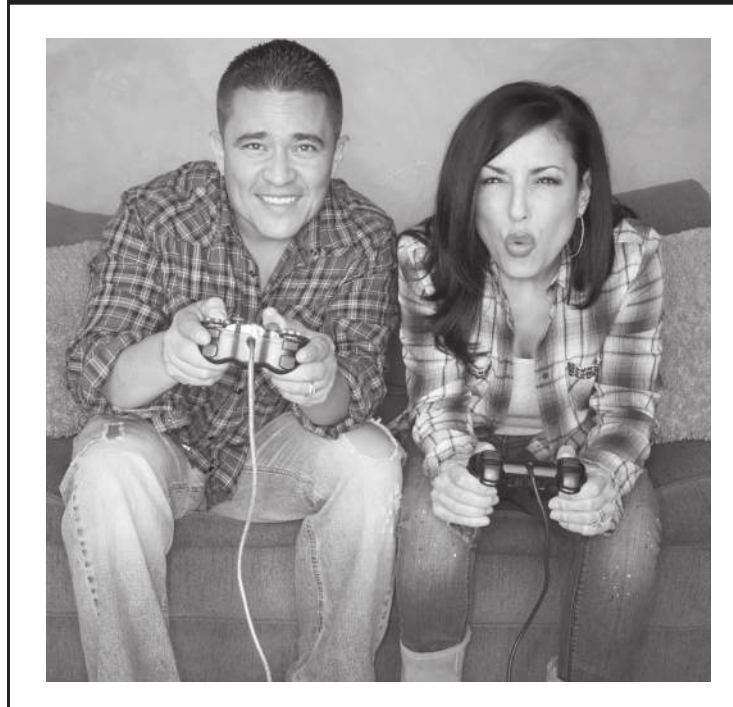
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## Permanent change of station or military exercise?

By Brock Johnson

Special to Stars and Stripes

The military's permanent change of station cycle every two to four years, on average, is a way of life to which active-duty members are accustomed. Change of duty stations within the continental United States can be challenging. PCS'ing outside the continental United States adds an additional level of difficulty. Case in point: my recent PCS to Japan. Recently I found several aspects of the transportation involving the military's Patriot Express (Rotator) flight for my PCS to Japan to be sufficiently arduous that I began to question if I was PCS'ing or taking part in a military exercise.

This event for my family and I began with our five-plus hour flight from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport the night before our international flight to Japan. We arrived at Sea-Tac, approximately 10 hours prior to flight departure to Japan, loaded with gear — approximately 300 pounds that we were lugging with us. Given the foreign terrain we were dropped into at day's end, we had limited options on locations to set up our temporary camp. After conducting land navigation, we settled for the main concourse hallway. We implemented bags of luggage to fortify our makeshift base camp and our best strategies to engineer a feasible sleeping arrangement for our baby daughter. We still had several hours to endure, along with other members of the military who were arriving to join our operation, until the next evolution.

At 0430 we were directed to muster at the Patriot Express boarding counter for roll call. And at 0-dark-thirty troop movement began as this family military unit prepared itself to encounter the dreaded obstacle known as the "Check-In Counter." Responsibility to manage and advance family gear still fell on the individual service member, so we continued to

slowly maneuver all of our goods to the check-in area. Successfully navigating past the Check-In Counter, it was time to move from our temporary base camp to a forward operating base beyond the terminal gates. Proceedings at this step in the exercise continued with holding in a waiting area before the call to board the "Freedom Bird" for transit to Japan.

Air transport culminated by landing at a U.S. duty station in Japan. Off-loading from the Rotator was a regimented exercise departing by rank with O-6's being given the first call to disembark. Our welcoming committee — a wall of heat and humidity — made its overwhelming presence known as we descended the passenger staircase onto the tarmac. We then marched to the austere waiting area to hear further orders for the next step in troop movement.

Overheating, groggy from numerous hours of transport and insufficient sleep, it was now time to storm the G.I. (general infantry) "Ant Colony" (also known as Luggage Quest). Gear/luggage pickup was staged from a space about as big as a large breakroom. One small conveyor belt was circulating a full-sized passenger bird's worth of luggage for pickup. Crawling over each other like a bunch of not so eusocial ants, we clawed our way to the unloading zone. With an insufficient number of luggage carts, we each toiled on like no limit soldiers to secure all pieces of our gear to one common holding place in the ants' nest.

With the exercise nearing its completion, movement now entailed transferring all our family gear to a military style bus. Once the onload was complete we engaged in about a two-hour trip to our new duty station where, upon arrival, mission accomplishment was declared.

The government advocates that the Rotator is "par for the course" in air transport for U.S. defense personnel and their families. Others

say, "You joined the military so tough it out and be thankful that you get free transportation to go see a whole new country." What these individuals overlook is that it is that these exact service members who are protecting their right to be able to openly express this view in the first place.

There are several improvements to this "exercise" that can easily be instituted for a better overall experience. Move check-in time to a more accommodating hour than in the middle of the night. Establish a waiting area in the main concourse for check-in in order that the concourse hallways do not have to serve as the only available space for this.

Unloading from the plane does not need to be by rank. An alternative would be to allow everyone to disembark in an unregimented fashion carried out by civilian airlines. Provide shuttle service from the Rotator to the next stop inside the building. Welcoming accommodations in the receiving auditorium could be made to be a bit more, well, welcoming.

Updated seating and improved climate control would be two easy places to start. Additionally, increase the size of the baggage pickup area and provide a sufficient number of luggage carts for members, especially given that passengers have so much weighty luggage in light of their international move.

With "less than one-half of 1 percent of the U.S. population" volunteering to serve as active-duty service members and protect their country, it is a small price to pay to provide those service members and their immediate families with quality travel to international duty stations. Implementation of the improvements outlined above would help shift service members from a posture of trying to avoid the military's ticketing on the Rotator to being grateful for this transportation option.

Brock Johnson is a commander in the U.S. Navy Dental Corps.

## How ending affirmative action at colleges could help

By David Von Drehle

The Washington Post

The ideological lurch at the Supreme Court that ended the right to abortion probably spells doom for affirmative action in higher education as well. The court agreed this year to hear challenges to the admissions programs at two prestigious universities, one private (Harvard University) and one public (the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

In fact, the clock has been ticking on affirmative action since 2003, when a more moderate court sustained the use of race as a factor in college admissions. Writing in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, then-Justice Sandra Day O'Connor predicted that "25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary" to advance the goal of diversity on campus.

Necessary or not, that 25-year window is closing a few years early. Among the justices sure to vote against affirmative action is the senior member of the court, Justice Clarence Thomas. As a Black man with long experience of affirmative action, Thomas has argued — echoing the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass — that the supposed benevolence of racial preferences is harmful to those it purports to help. Underprepared students are set up for failure at elite institutions, while well-prepared minority students are placed under a cloud of suspected inferiority.

Thomas' critique can point a way forward, if

Americans agree not to retreat into culture-war crouches. However the policy was intended, affirmative action in college admissions has propped up a lack of action in grade schools and high schools. The truly affirmative idea is to ensure that minority students are just as prepared for college as anyone else.

Wall Street Journal columnist Ben Cohen recently profiled one example of an affirmative educator in action.

Will Frazer made a bundle on Wall Street, then retired early to Florida, where he soon grew bored. He found new purpose at a local public high school, where he has built the Buchholz Math Team into the best competitive mathematics program in the country.

Frazer's teams, from an otherwise average school, have won 13 of the last 14 national math competitions sponsored by Mu Alpha Theta, the honor society for mathematics students. Cohen visited a bustling summertime practice session and observed a range of reasons for the success. One key to the Buchholz dynasty jumped out at me as I read his report.

Frazer "believes the pipeline for the high school's math team must begin long before students reach high school," Cohen wrote, so he "searches for prospects in elementary school and steers them to accelerated math classes in middle school." At that stage, the students begin to encounter stars of the high school team as teachers and tutors, and to envision possibilities for themselves.

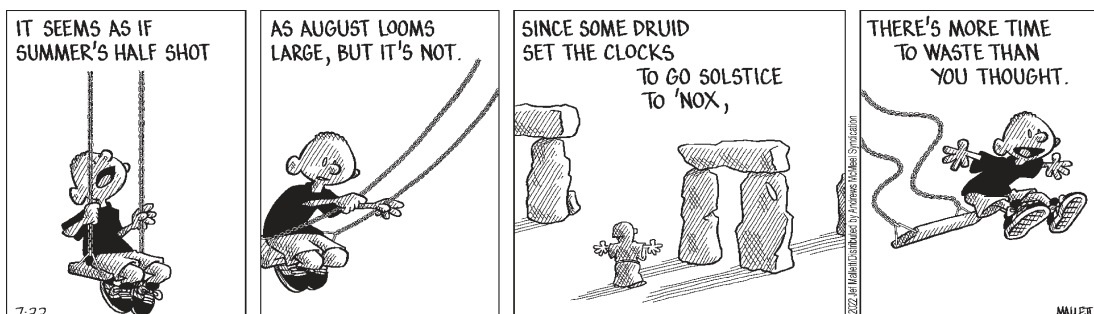
Early identification and cultivation of talent is nothing new to the U.S. education system, as Frazer himself suggested when he said to Cohen: "You wouldn't grab a kid in ninth grade who's never played football and expect him to be a great high-school football player. For most of these kids, this is their football." The United States is extremely good at finding athletic promise in children and developing that talent for college programs and beyond.

Frazer is proof that the same approach can work with academically talented children. And judging from photos of his team, math talent comes in every race and color.

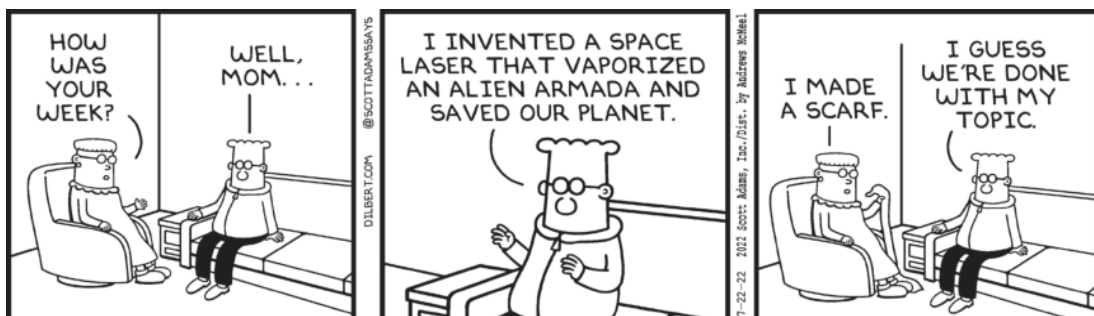
From a young age, children of color in the U.S. are directed toward careers in sports and entertainment, but those whose talents are academic don't necessarily receive the same early guidance. If they did, the question of diversity in higher education might simply melt away. For too long, affirmative action at the college level has been a smokescreen for our failure to act affirmatively enough in the formative years. But if the Supreme Court's likely decision forces the country to start taking the development of young scholars as seriously as it takes the development of young athletes, the end of affirmative action could be the start of something much, much better.

Washington Post columnist David Von Drehle is the author of "Rise to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America's Most Perilous Year."

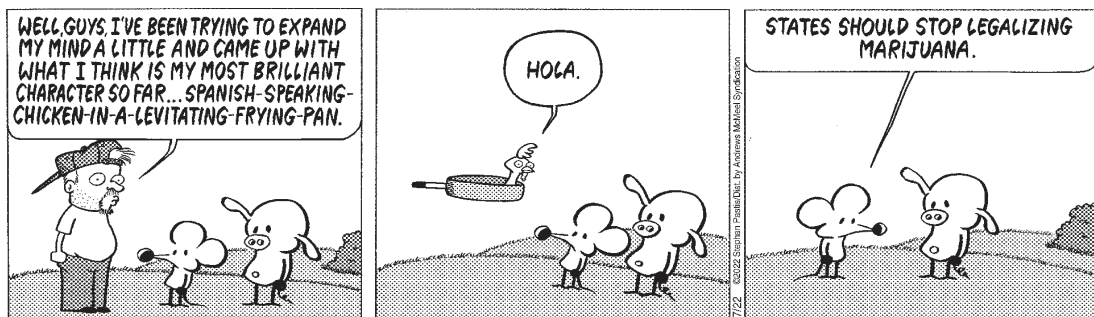
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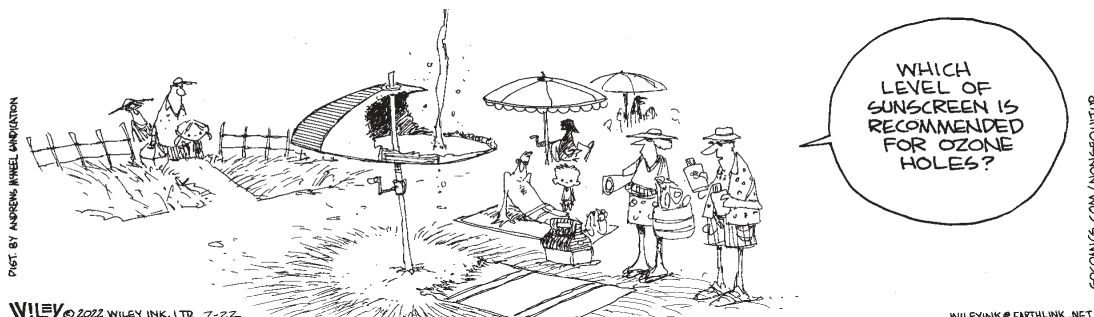
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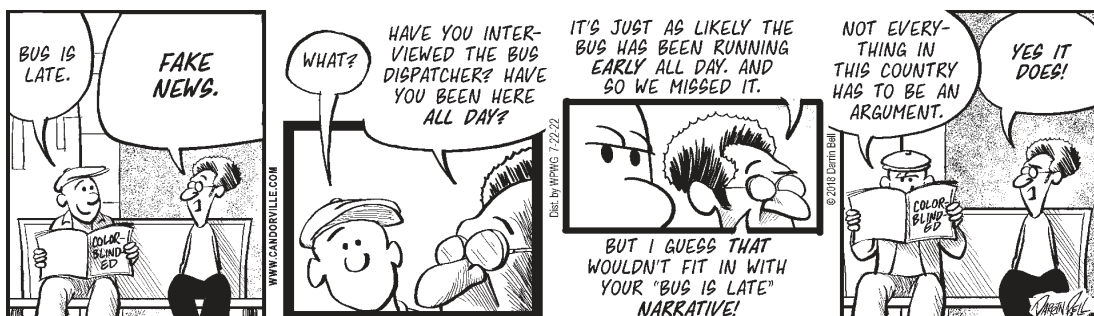
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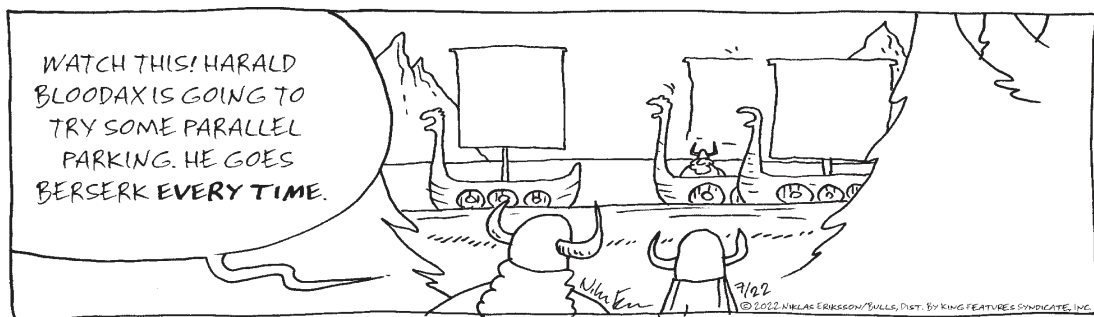
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Candorville



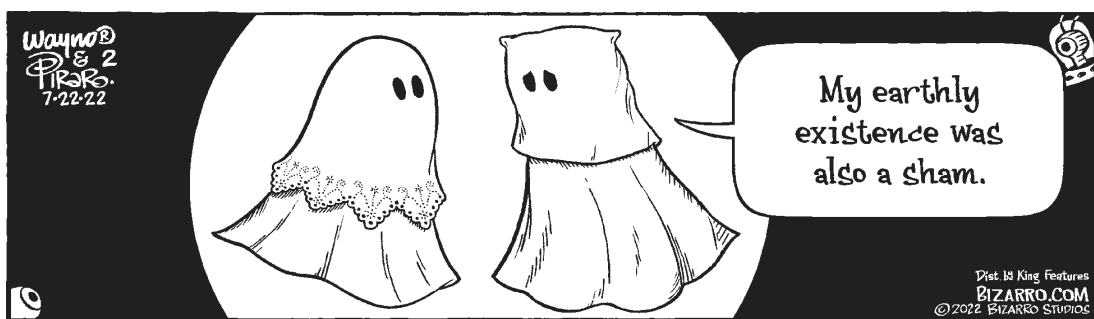
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



### Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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53						54				55		
56						57				58		

#### ACROSS

- 1 Buddy
- 4 Rm. coolers
- 7 Bashes
- 12 Epoch
- 13 Speck
- 14 Mowing sites
- 15 Goal
- 16 Handel compositions
- 18 Author Harper
- 19 Purse part
- 20 Trudge
- 22 Mess up
- 23 Prejudice
- 27 Mardi Gras VIP
- 29 Borneo beasts
- 31 Pocket breads
- 34 Harley rider
- 35 Delphi figure
- 37 In shape
- 38 Title for Helen Mirren
- 39 Gorilla
- 41 Wild guess
- 45 Cornell and Yale, e.g.
- 47 E.T.'s craft
- 48 Citrus drink
- 52 Carnival city
- 53 Sal of "Exodus"
- 54 Just out
- 55 Rage
- 56 Croc's kin
- 57 Hosp. areas
- 58 Homer's neighbor

#### DOWN

- 1 Daily trio
- 2 Disney mermaid
- 3 Star's bit part
- 4 Big fusses
- 5 Brain layer
- 6 Fab Four drummer
- 7 Dud
- 8 Hearing thing
- 9 Prefix with night
- 10 Rock producer Brian
- 11 Snake's warning
- 17 Tropical tuber
- 21 Preprandial prayer
- 23 Entices
- 24 Pen filler
- 25 Get older
- 26 Old map letters
- 28 Immigrant's subj.

- 30 Hitter's stat
- 31 Group of seals
- 32 Nest egg acronym
- 33 Highland hat
- 36 Roof overhang
- 37 Birdseed holder
- 40 Steinway product
- 42 Shroud city
- 43 Blazing
- 44 Greeted a bully
- 45 Borodin's "Prince —"
- 46 Gives a darn?
- 48 Texter's "Heavens!"
- 49 Estuary
- 50 Busy insect
- 51 Opposite of paleo-

#### Answer to Previous Puzzle

E	V	A		N	A	P	S		D	A	W	N	
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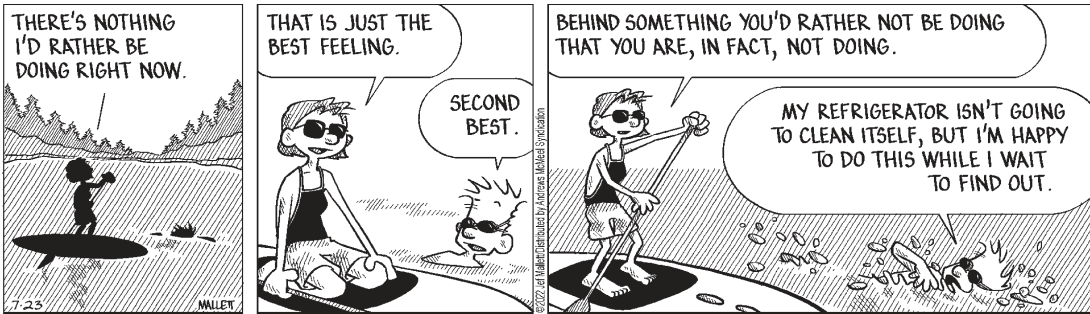
#### CRYPTOQUIP

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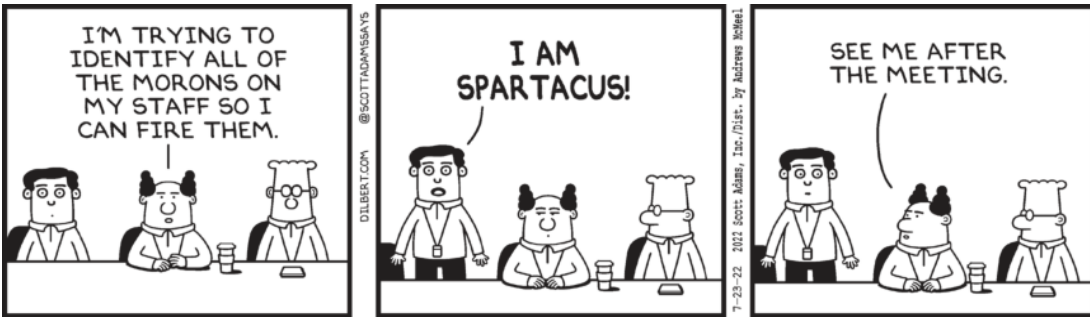
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BEING THAT THE ROVING ROBBER CONSIDERED ONE OF HIS ACTIVITIES OFFENSIVE, THE BANDIT BANNED IT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals I

Frazz



Dilbert



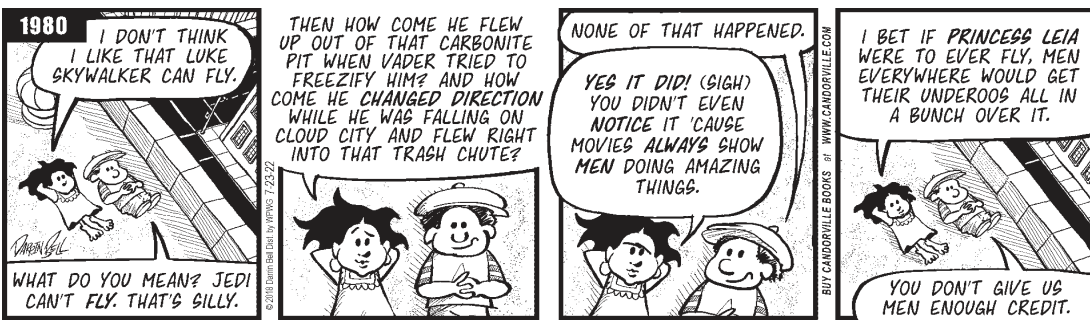
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#### ACROSS

- 1 "Kapow!"
- 4 Makes a choice
- 8 Release money
- 12 Actress Merkel
- 13 Boyfriend
- 14 Celestial bear
- 15 MSNBC rival
- 16 Lawman Wyatt
- 17 Some HDTVs
- 18 James Caan's role in "The God-father"
- 21 Shoe width
- 22 Aachen article
- 23 Tire pattern
- 26 LBJ's successor
- 27 Faux —
- 30 Shower bar?
- 31 Chart format
- 32 Shed
- 33 Cauldron
- 34 Hit show letters
- 35 Symbol of freshness
- 36 HBO rival
- 37 Serena, to Venus
- 38 Grammy-winning Shawn Colvin song
- 45 Exotic berry
- 46 Eventful periods
- 47 Actor Harrison
- 48 Brisk pace
- 49 Vogue rival
- 50 Microwave

- 51 Curly cabbage
- 52 Ken or Barbie
- 53 Oklahoma tribe

- 23 Recipe abbr.
- 24 Kanga's kid
- 25 Have dinner
- 26 Carnival city
- 27 Luau dish
- 28 Gore and Pacino
- 29 Farm pen
- 31 "Continue!"
- 32 Prepare potatoes
- 34 Bashful
- 35 Truck fuel
- 36 Marsh bird
- 37 Lowercase
- 38 Bag
- 39 Pac-12 team
- 40 Hammer target
- 41 Woody's son
- 42 Rice-shaped pasta
- 43 Vegan's no-no
- 44 Big fair, for short

#### DOWN

- 1 Tampa Bay team, for short
- 2 — Domini
- 3 "Death in Venice" author
- 4 Heeded
- 5 Quiet partner?
- 6 Tropical tuber
- 7 Paramount
- 8 President Martin Van —
- 9 Not pizzicato
- 10 "This — outrage!"
- 11 Zap with a beam
- 19 Tide variety
- 20 Author Yutang

#### Answer to Previous Puzzle

M	A	C		A	C	S		F	E	T	E	S		
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O	R	A	N	G	E	A	D	E			R	I	O	
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G	A	T	O	R		O	R	S			N	E	D	

7-23

#### CRYPTOQUIP

VGRSZ OCXQL O GONUAHRLRS

VDGGXF FJX SXQGB XAGU

WIDQZ QWRAH JRW CNDOLJ:

"LJD JXONWD FJRWIDNDN."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DECLARATION MIGHT PEOPLE MAKE IF A WOMAN IS WATER-SKIING? "SHE'S AT THE END OF HER ROPE."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals L

# SCOREBOARD/TRACK AND FIELD

## PRO SOCCER

### MLS

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	10	2	9	39	33	15
NYFC	11	4	5	38	39	21
New York	9	6	6	33	30	22
CF Montréal	10	8	2	32	34	35
Orlando City	8	7	6	30	26	30
Columbus	7	5	8	29	27	22
Cincinnati	7	8	6	27	32	37
Charlotte FC	8	11	2	26	25	27
Inter Miami CF	7	9	4	25	22	31
New England	6	7	7	25	32	34
Atlanta	6	8	6	24	29	31
Chicago	6	10	5	23	21	27
Toronto FC	5	12	4	19	26	39
D.C. United	5	11	3	18	25	41

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LAFc	13	4	3	42	40	22
Austin FC	12	4	5	41	42	24
Real Salt Lake	9	6	6	33	28	26
Minnesota	9	8	4	31	29	25
Nashville	8	7	6	30	27	27
FC Dallas	7	6	8	29	31	25
LA Galaxy	8	9	3	27	28	27
Portland	6	6	9	27	33	30
Seattle	8	10	2	26	26	24
Vancouver	7	9	5	26	23	34
Houston	7	10	4	25	27	29
Colorado	6	8	6	24	24	27
San Jose	5	8	7	22	33	41
Sporting KC	5	12	5	20	19	38

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

#### Saturday, July 16

CF Montréal 1, Toronto FC 0  
Philadelphia 2, New England 1  
Chicago 1, Seattle 0  
Miami 3, Charlotte FC 2  
Minnesota 2, D.C. United 0  
Colorado 2, LA Galaxy 0  
Austin FC 1, FC Dallas 1, tie

#### Sunday, July 17

Orlando City 1, Atlanta 1, tie  
New York City FC 1, New York 0  
Columbus 2, Cincinnati 0  
Los Angeles FC 2, Nashville 1  
Real Salt Lake 3, Sporting Kansas City 0  
Houston 2, San Jose 1  
Vancouver 1, Portland 1, tie

#### Saturday's games

Miami at New York City FC  
Nashville at Cincinnati  
New England at Columbus  
Philadelphia at Orlando City  
Charlotte FC at Toronto FC  
CF Montréal at D.C. United  
Minnesota at Houston  
Los Angeles FC at Sporting Kansas City  
FC Dallas at Real Salt Lake  
Colorado at Seattle  
Chicago at Vancouver  
San Jose at Portland

#### Sunday's games

New York at Austin FC  
Atlanta at LA Galaxy

#### Friday, July 29

Seattle at Los Angeles FC

#### Saturday, July 30

Portland at Minnesota  
Atlanta at Chicago  
Columbus at Charlotte FC  
New York City FC at CF Montréal  
Houston at Philadelphia  
Cincinnati at Miami  
Vancouver at Nashville  
Toronto FC at New England  
Austin FC at Sporting Kansas City  
LA Galaxy at FC Dallas  
Real Salt Lake at San Jose

## NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
SD Wave FC	6	3	4	22	19	11
Portland	5	1	6	21	29	10
Chicago	5	2	5	20	20	16
Houston	5	4	3	18	20	14
Kansas City	5	4	3	18	12	14
OL Reign	4	3	5	17	11	9
Angel City FC	5	4	2	17	10	11
Orlando	3	5	4	13	12	26
Gotham FC	4	6	0	12	7	18
Louisville	2	5	5	11	13	18
Washington	1	5	7	10	11	15
North Carolina	2	5	2	8	14	16

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

#### Saturday, July 16

Houston 4, Chicago 1  
Portland 5, Gotham FC 0

#### Sunday, July 17

Orlando 0, Washington 0, tie  
Kansas City 1, OL Reign 0

#### Friday, July 29

Washington at North Carolina  
Portland at Louisville

#### Saturday, July 30

San Diego Wave FC at Chicago  
OL Reign at Angel City FC

## PRO BASKETBALL

### WNBA

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	20	6	.769	—
Connecticut	17	9	.654	3
Washington	16	11	.593	4½
Atlanta	12	14	.462	8
New York	9	16	.360	10½
Indiana	5	23	.179	16

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Las Vegas	18	8	.692	—
Seattle	17	9	.654	1
Los Angeles	11	14	.440	6½
Dallas	11	14	.440	6½
Phoenix	11	16	.407	7½
Minnesota	10	17	.370	8½

#### Tuesday's games

Connecticut 82, New York 63  
Atlanta 92, Las Vegas 76  
Los Angeles 86, Indiana 79

#### Wednesday's games

Chicago 78, Seattle 74

#### Thursday's games

New York at Washington  
Atlanta at Los Angeles  
Indiana at Las Vegas

#### Friday's games

Connecticut at Minnesota  
Dallas at Chicago  
Seattle at Phoenix

#### Saturday's games

Chicago at New York  
Los Angeles at Las Vegas

## TENNIS

### Palermo Ladies Open

#### Wednesday

##### At Country Time Club

Palermo, Italy  
Purse: Euro 203,024  
Surface: Red clay  
Women's Singles  
Round of 16

Anna Bondar (7), Hungary, def. Panna Udvardy, Hungary, 6-2, 6-4.

Jasmine Paolini, Italy, def. Zhang Shuai (3), China, walkover.

Sara Sorribes Tormo (4), Spain, def. Leolia Jeanjean, France, 6-0, 6-2.

Irina-Camelia Begu (6), Romania, def. Oceane Dodin, France, 1-6, 6-2, 6-4.

#### Women's Doubles

Round of 16

Jessy Rompies, Indonesia, and Olivia Tjandramulia, Australia, def. Nuria Parrizas Díaz, Spain, and Nadia Podoroska, Argentina, 7-5, 6-2.

Oksana Kalashnikova, Georgia, and Anna Danilina (2), Kazakhstan, def. Gabriela Lee, Romania, and Jaimee Fourlis, Australia, 4-6, 6-4, 10-2.

Paula Kania-Chodun, Poland, and Anastasia Detiuc, Czech Republic, def. Carolina Alves and Rebeca Pereira, Brazil, 6-1, 3-6, 10-6.

Kimberley Zimmermann, Belgium, and Anna Bondar (3), Hungary, def. Ekaterina Yashina and Alena Fomina-Klotz, Russia, 6-2, 6-0.

### Hamburg European Open

#### Wednesday

##### At Am Rothenbaum Rot-Weiss Tennis Club

Hamburg, Germany  
Purse: Euro 203,024  
Surface: Red clay  
Women's Singles  
Round of 16

Aliaksandra Sasnovich (4), Belarus, def. Aleksandra Krunic, Serbia, 6-3, 6-2.

Anastasia Potapova, Russia, def. Maria Carle, Argentina, 6-1, 6-4.

Maryna Zanevska (7), Belgium, def. Alexandra Cadantu-Ignatik, Romania, 6-4, 6-1.

Bernarda Pera, United States, def. Joanne Zuger, Switzerland, 6-1, 6-1.

Anett Kontaveit (1), Estonia, def. Rebecca Peterson, Sweden, 6-3, 6-2.

#### Women's Doubles

Quarterfinals

Angela Kulikova and Sophie Chang, United States, def. Laura Pigossi, Brazil, and Maria Carle, Argentina, 6-4, 6-1.

Yana Sizikova and Anastasia Potapova, Russia, def. Han Xinyun, China, and Alexandra Panova, Russia, 6-1, 3-6, 10-7.

Monica Niculescu and Irina Bara (1), Romania, def. Misaki Doi, Japan, and Rebecca Peterson, Sweden, 6-3, 3-6, 10-4.

### Swiss Open

#### Wednesday

##### At Roy Emerson Arena

Gstaad, Switzerland  
Purse: Euro 534,555  
Surface: Red clay  
Men's Singles  
Round of 16

Jaume Munar, Spain, def. Alexander Ritshard, Switzerland, 6-3, 6-3.

#### Men's Doubles

Round of 16

Andrea Vavassori and Lorenzo Sonego, Italy, def. Vit Kopriva, Czech Republic, and Pavel Kotov, Russia, 6-3, 6-3.

Robin Haase, Netherlands, and Philipp Oswald, Austria, def. Hugo Nys, Monaco, and Jan Zielinski, Poland, 6-4, 6-4.

Elias Ymer and Mikael Ymer, Sweden, def. Marc-Andrea Huesler and Dominic Stephan Stricker, Switzerland, 6-4, 7-6 (5).

## CYCLING

### Tour de France

#### Wednesday

##### 17th Stage

##### A 129.7-km (80-mile) Saint Gaudens to Peyragudes

1. Tadej Pogacar, Slovenia, UAE Team Emirates, 3:25:51.

2. Jonas Vingegaard, Denmark, Jumbo-Visma, same time.

3. Brandon McNulty, United States, UAE Team Emirates, :54 behind.

4. Geraint Thomas, Great Britain, Ineos Grenadiers, 2:07.

5. Alexey Lutsenko, Russia, Astana-Qazaqstan Team, 2:34.

6. Romain Bardet, France, Team DSM, 2:38.

7. David Gaudu, France, Groupama-FDJ, 3:27.

8. Aleksandr Vlasov, Russia, Bora-Hansgrohe, 3:32.

9. Louis Meintjes, South Africa, Inter-marche-Wanty-Gobert Materiaux, same time.

10. Nairo Quintana, Colombia, Team Arkea-Samsic, same time.

#### Also

22. Neilson Powless, United States, EF Education-EasyPost, 8:59 behind.

25. Sepp Kuss, United States, Jumbo-Visma, 9:24.

42. Matteo Jorgenson, United States, Movistar Team, 19:00.

45. Quinn Simmons, United States, Trek Segafredo, 20:09.

51. Joe Dombrowski, United States, Astana-Qazaqstan, 21:38.

#### Overall Standings

1. Jonas Vingegaard, Denmark, Jumbo-Visma, 67:53:54.

2. Tadej Pogacar, Slovenia, UAE Team Emirates, 2:18 behind.

3. Geraint Thomas, Great Britain, Ineos Grenadiers, 4:56.

4. Nairo Quintana, Colombia, Team Arkea-Samsic, 7:53.

5. David Gaudu, France, Groupama-FDJ, 7:57.

6. Romain Bardet, France, Team DSM, 9:21.

7. Louis Meintjes, South Africa, Inter-marche-Wanty-Gobert Materiaux, 9:24.

8. Aleksandr Vlasov, Russia, Bora-Hansgrohe, 9:56.

9. Adam Yates, Great Britain, Ineos Grenadiers, 14:33.

10. Enric Mas, Spain, MovieStar Team, 16:35.

#### Also

12. Neilson Powless, United States, EF Education-EasyPost, 27:07 behind.

19. Sepp Kuss, United States, Jumbo-Visma, 54:22.

21. Brandon McNulty, United States, UAE Team Emirates, 1:00:39.

23. Matteo Jorgenson, United States, Movistar Team, 1:15:28.

51. Joe Dombrowski, United States, Astana-Qazaqstan, 2:08:27.

65. Quinn Simmons, United States, Trek Segafredo, 2:40:25.

## DEALS

### Wednesday's transactions

#### BASEBALL

##### National League

CINCINNATI REDS — Reinstated RHP Dauri Moreta from the 15-day IL.

#### BASKETBALL

##### National Basketball Association

ATLANTA HAWKS — Named Kyle Korver director of player affairs and development.

OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER — Re-signed G Kenrich Williams to a veteran extension Waived F JaMychal Green.

##### Women's National Basketball Association

CONNECTICUT SUN — Released F Joyner Holmes and G Jazmine Jones.

#### FOOTBALL

##### National Football League

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Placed WR Devon Williams on the reserve/did not report list. Placed RB Ricky Person on the exempt/left squad. Placed WR Binjimen Victor on the non-football injury (NFI) list.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed WR Christian Watson to a four-year contract.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Released S Dallin Leavitt and G Jordan Meredith. Signed CB Ike Brown.

NEW YORK JETS — Signed S Craig James.

#### HOCKEY

##### National Hockey League

WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Signed D Gabriel Carlsson to a one-year, two-way contract.

#### SOCCER

##### Major League Soccer

COLUMBUS CREW — Acquired up to \$325,000 in general allocation money (GAM) from D.C. United in exchange for F Miguel Berry.

NASHVILLE SC — Extended contract of general manager Mike Jacobs.

NEW YORK CITY FC — Named Jose Kleber assistant coach.

ORLANDO CITY FC — Acquired F Nicholas Gioacchini from Stade Malherbe Caen (France Ligue 2) pending receipt of his international transfer certificate (ITC) and P-1 visa.

PHILADELPHIA UNION — Transferred D Stuart Findlay to Oxford United FC (EFL League One) in exchange for an undisclosed transfer fee.

VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC — Transferred M Simon Colyton to Jong PSV (Eerste Divisie).

##### National Women's Soccer League

NWSL — Suspended Angel City director Eni Aluko one game and fined him an undisclosed amount for entering the field during a match on July 9 against San Diego Wave FC.



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

**South Africa's Caster Semenya finished 13th in a women's 5000 meters heat Wednesday at the world championships in Eugene, Ore.**

# Semenya finishes 13th in 5,000 heat

By EDDIE PELLIS

Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — In one way, this race was like so many in the

## TRACK AND FIELD/SPORTS BRIEFS



MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

Neeraj Chopra, of India, smiles during the medal ceremony after winning the gold medal in the javelin at the 2020 Summer Olympics on Aug. 7, which is now National Javelin Day in India.

## Chopra has made javelin cool in cricket-crazed India

BY PAT GRAHAM  
Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — There was no grand plan that launched Neeraj Chopra on the path to becoming an Olympic champion javelin thrower, only a simple suggestion.

Pudgy and pampered — his description — as a kid growing up in the northern part of India, Chopra's uncle suggested one day that he head out to a nearby stadium to get some exercise.

It was there that Chopra first saw the javelin. Some might say it was love at first flight — a twist of fate that has made him a gold medalist and a recognizable name in a country of a billion people. Chopra will try to add another title to his growing list of achievements starting Thursday in the qualifying round at world championships in Eugene, Ore.

"I keep hearing stories about kids wanting to take up athletics and parents also being more open to allowing their children to take up sport," the 24-year-old Chopra said in an email interview with The Associated Press. "That is what I believe is the true legacy of my medal, and it is something I am incredibly happy and proud about."

Since he became India's first Olympic gold medalist in track and field last year, Chopra has appeared on the cover of Vogue India and his name has become one of the most searched on the internet among athletes in a country where cricket rules. Aug. 7 in India is National Javelin Day — the day he took the gold in Tokyo.

It wasn't all by accident.

Growing up, he always loved to throw. He'd get the family's cattle out of the water by throwing stones close to them, no matter how far

away he was. He loved throwing sticks as far as he could while walking around his family's wheat and rice farm.

It helped turn his right arm into a potent machine. His very first javelin throw was a modest 30 or so meters (98 feet, 5 inches). Two weeks, and a few tips later, he was already up to 45 meters (147-7).

"I remember it felt very good to be able to throw so far," he said.

He was only getting started. His winning throw in Tokyo was 87.58 meters (287-4). These days, he's recognized everywhere he goes in India — streets, malls, airports and restaurants. Everyone wants to take a picture with Chopra or get his autograph.

"It's different from earlier when I could be more carefree about roaming around in public, but I like to think of it as me being privileged to receive so much adulation," Chopra said. "I'm mostly grateful for the support."

There's pressure, too, as one of the most familiar faces in a country that reveres cricket, soccer, badminton, field hockey and, now, the javelin.

"I try to go into every competition with the same aim, which is to do my best and try to achieve my best throw," Chopra said. "As long as I've been training well and feeling good about my body, I am confident about my chances and that's the mindset I usually use going into any competition, be it the Olympics or world championships. It's worked for me in the past, so hopefully, it continues to work for me."

In May, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) debuted a kids' javelin to encourage an even safer way to take part in the sport. The launch was announced by none

other than Chopra in a video message.

"We cannot let go of the spike in interest for athletics among youngsters in India," AFI President Adille J. Sumariwalla said in a release.

Chopra also is in the Indian Army, holding the rank of subedar, which is one higher than junior commissioned officer, he explained. He's been given no specific military requirements other than to keep doing what he does best — throw.

In that regard, Chopra is still searching for that "perfect" throw, where everything comes together. He had a setback in May 2019 when he underwent elbow surgery to remove bone fragments that had dislodged. That led him to miss the world championships in Doha that season, which makes him more eager for this version of worlds in Oregon. His biggest challenger figures to be Anderson Peters, the reigning world champion from Grenada.

Chopra is returning to the shape he was in before elbow surgery. In late June, he threw 89.94 (295-1) — the longest throw of his career. For perspective, the world record is 98.48 (323-1) set by Jan Zelezny in 1996.

"Despite the many competitions I've competed in and throws I've thrown, there's always this feeling that something could have been better," Chopra said. "Having said that, I think that feeling is also important to keep the hunger and drive to do better alive."

It also helps knowing there are kids in India getting involved because of him.

"I am known as Neeraj Chopra," he said, "because of javelin."

## BRIEFLY

## Murray, Cardinals agree to contract

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Kyler Murray has agreed to a long-term contract that will keep the quarterback with the Arizona Cardinals through the 2028 season.

The two-time Pro Bowl selection was taken with the No. 1 overall pick out of Oklahoma after he won the Heisman Trophy and has largely delivered in his quest to make the Cardinals a better franchise. The team announced the new contract on Thursday.

Arizona had a 5-10-1 record during his rookie season in 2019 but the Cardinals improved to 11-6 last season before losing to the Los Angeles Rams in the NFC Wild Card round during the playoffs.

The move brings an end to a strange, passive-aggressive off-season contract squabble. At one point, Murray wiped his social media accounts of all references to the Cardinals and it wasn't clear if the franchise was ready to make a long-term investment.

Now that's all cleared up and Murray can take the field for training camp next week knowing his football future is secure.

In other NFL news:

■ While they await a ruling on Deshaun Watson, the Cleveland Browns are working out quarterbacks this week to make sure they're prepared for training camp, a person familiar with the team's plans told the Associated Press on Thursday.

The Browns want to open camp next week with four quarterbacks, according to the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the team has not disclosed the tryouts.

A.J. McCarron and Josh Rosen, who have been on Cleveland's radar previously, are among the quarterbacks getting a look, the person said.

ESPN was first to report Cleveland's QB workouts.

### Harden, 76ers agree on 2-year, \$68 million deal

James Harden has agreed to terms on a two-year contract to stay with the Philadelphia 76ers and will make about \$14.5 million less this coming season than he could have earned under his previous deal, a person with knowledge of the negotiations said Wednesday.

Harden will sign a deal worth slightly over \$68 million, paying him about \$33 million this season and with a \$35 million player option for the 2023-24 season, according to the person who spoke to

The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team has not announced the deal.

Harden had a \$47.4 million option for this coming season that he declined last month, saying he wanted to give the 76ers flexibility to improve their roster and compete for a championship. Giving back that much money — Harden basically gave himself a 30% pay cut for this coming season — allowed the 76ers to make moves such as signing power forward P.J. Tucker and small forward Daniel House earlier this month.

### Texas A&M WR Smith suspended after arrest

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Texas A&M receiver Ainius Smith was arrested early Wednesday on charges of driving while intoxicated, unlawful carrying of a weapon and possession of less than 2 ounces of marijuana, according to Brazos County jail records.

Smith, 21, was arrested by Texas A&M police and was booked into the Brazos County jail. He posted \$8,000 bond and was released later Wednesday, according to jail records. The records did not indicate if he had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

Smith has been suspended from the football team per athletic department policy following his arrest, according to Alan Cannon, a spokesman for Texas A&M. Cannon added that coach Jimbo Fisher was aware of the situation and looking into it.

Smith was scheduled to attend SEC Media Days on Thursday in Atlanta with Fisher and two other players.

Smith is Texas A&M's top returning receiver after grabbing 47 catches for 509 yards and six touchdowns last season. He has 1,321 yards receiving with 15 touchdowns in three seasons with the Aggies.

### ATP cancels 4 China tournaments

LONDON — The ATP men's tennis tour is canceling all four of its tournaments held in China this year, citing COVID-19 restrictions.

The Rolex Shanghai Masters, China Open, Chengdu Open and Zhuhai Championships were called off by the ATP on Thursday. It is the third consecutive year that the tour scrapped its China swing, which usually runs after the U.S. Open in September and October.

MLB

# Countdown begins for pitch clock

Shift limits, larger bases, restrictions on pickoff attempts also likely in MLB's future

By RONALD BLUM  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Justin Verlander, Gerrit Cole and the rest of major league pitchers are likely to be looking over their shoulders next season — at a pitch clock.

Clocks have cut the length of minor league games by about a half-hour this year, and baseball officials appear certain to promote the timers to the majors.

"I think it needs it, obviously. And I think it's coming regardless of opposition of the players. It's kind of our fault," the Yankees' Cole said ahead of Tuesday's All-Star Game. "We've known it's been an issue and its importance and we don't seem to clean it up."

Major League Baseball also is considering shift limits, larger bases, restrictions on pickoff attempts and — perhaps in 2024 — limited use of robot umpires to call balls and strikes. The new collective bargaining agreement includes an 11-person competition committee with six management representatives, four players and one umpire, and it is empowered to make changes by majority vote with 45 days' notice.

Average time of nine-inning games increased from 2 hours, 43 minutes in 2003 to 3:13 in 2020 before dropping to 3:02 so far this season through July 12, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. A clock experiment in the minor leagues cut the average this year to 2:37 from 3:04 at a similar point for non-clock games last year.

"At first, I wasn't buying into it. But then we started the season, I was, 'Oh, this is pretty good.' I like it. I think it's more efficient," Brooklyn Cyclones manager Luis Rivera said before a 9-0 win over Greensboro on July 12 that breezed along in 2:27.

Time between pitches with no runners on base ranges from 12.6 seconds for Milwaukee's Brent Suter and San Francisco's Sam Long to 26.6 for St. Louis' Giovanny Gallegos and 26.0 for Atlanta's Kenley Jansen. With runners on, San Diego's Tim Hill leads at 18.1 and Gallegos (32.1) and Jansen (31.1) are the slowest.

MLB's average through Thursday was 20.5 seconds with no runners and 27.3 second with runners. Boston manager Alex Cora notices call-ups are working more quickly than veterans.

"Little by little, everything they're doing in the minor leagues is going to affect their big league game, which is great," he said.

Long the most traditional of U.S. major pro sports, baseball adopted video review for home runs in 2009 and for a broad array of umpire decisions in 2014. All 30 teams are using the electronic pitching signaling device introduced this spring.

A clock is being used this year throughout the minors: 14 seconds with the bases empty and 19 with runners on at Triple-A, and 14/18 at lower levels. The clock starts "when the pitcher has possession of the ball and the catcher is in the dirt circle surrounding home plate." In addition, "the batter must be in the box and alert to the pitcher with at least nine seconds remaining."

"I'm not opposed to a pitch clock, but I think it needs to be a reasonable amount of time to not feel rushed," said Houston's Verlander, a two-time Cy Young Award winner. "Fourteen is quick. I was kind of like on the fence about it, maybe pro pitch clock, but then talking to a couple of the Triple-A guys we've had, they feel in certain situations that they don't even have enough time to shake off pitches. Granted, they don't have PitchCom down there."



JOHN MINCHILLO/AP

A pitch clock is seen during a minor league game between the Brooklyn Cyclones and Greensboro Grasshoppers. Major League Baseball is considering a pitch clock for next year.

Yankees pitcher Ryan Weber, who spent the first two months this season in the minors, favors a clock but with four additional seconds. He pointed to a 3-2 fastball he threw to Norwich's Patrick Dorrian on April 17 that ended a nine-pitch at-bat with a flyout. He feared a violation that would cause ball four.

"If I throw a pitch, catch the ball and then go around to the rosin bag, and then when I get on the mound and I'm looking for the sign, it's running low and I got to say yes to that pitch," Weber recalled. "I just grooved it. I felt that I was forced to throw."

Violations dropped from 1.73 per game during the opening week to 0.52 in Week 11.

MLB's goal is to eliminate dead time, such time-consuming tics as Nomar Garciaparra tapping toes and adjusting batting gloves between pitches.

"It's something that takes a while to get used to, but I think overall the impact it had on the pace of the game was good," said the Yankees' Matt Carpenter, who spent April at Triple-A with Round Rock.

Minor league pitchers also have been limited to what the regulations call "two disengagements per plate appearance" with runners on — pickoff attempts or stepping off the runner. A third attempt that is unsuccessful results in an automatic balk.

Bases have been increased to 18-inch squares from 15, promoting safety — first basemen are less likely to get stepped on — but also boosting stolen bases and offense with a slightly decreased distance.

Shifts have been limited all season at Double-A and Class A, where teams are required to have four players on the infield, including two on each side of second base. The Florida State League adds an additional restriction starting July 22 by drawing chalk lines in a pie shape from second base to the outfield grass, prohibiting infielders from the marked area pre-pitch.

Use of shifts has exploded in the past decade, from 2,357 times on balls hit in play in 2011 to 28,130 in 2016 and 59,063 last year, according to Sports Info Solutions. Shifts are on pace for 71,000 this year.

There has been a corresponding drop in the big league batting average from .269 in 2006 to .255 in 2011 to .242 this season, on track to be the lowest since 1967 — before the mound height

was cut.

"I like organic primarily," said former Rays, Cubs and Angels manager Joe Maddon. "If we have to legislate our game to become better, I would put the all the infielders on the dirt, but I'd still permit three on the one side."

Shift ban tests are hard to interpret, given there is far less shifting and defensive data in the minors.

MLB also is piloting an Automated Ball-Strike System in the minors, which could reach the majors as soon as 2024. Defining the computer strike zone is still being worked on.

Big league umpers are much criticized in an age of high-speed video cameras analyzing every pitch. Jeremie Rehak and Pat Hoberg have been the most accurate plate umpires this season at 95.6% correct, according to UmpireScorecards.com. Among umpers who have worked more than one game calling balls and strikes, Andy Fletcher (91.4%) and CB Bucknor (91.7%) have been the least accurate.

A test in the Class A Florida State League uses the robot umpers in the first two games of each series, then has a human call ball and strikes in the remaining game with a challenge system. Each team gets three challenges and keeps its challenge if successful. Only the pitcher, catcher or batter may appeal.

"I love that," Verlander said of the ball/strike challenge system. "These guys get a lot of flak, but they have one of the hardest jobs in the world. We're throwing 100 mph, nicking corners. If I were an umpire, I like that: 'Oh, you think you're better than me? Appeal it and find out.' I think it's a fun back and forth."

Decisions fall to the technical committee, which includes players Jack Flaherty, Tyler Glasnow, Whit Merrifield and Austin Slater, umpire Bill Miller and six team officials.

MLB hopes quicker games will be more appealing to fans as it tries to rebuild attendance following the pandemic. Cyclones general manager Kevin Mahoney said minor league teams haven't experienced a drop in concessions sales.

"We used to notice that at 9:30, fans would get up in like blocks of 10, 12, 14 at a time from different sections and leave. And I used to think, why is everybody leaving in the seventh inning?" Mahoney said. "Now on most nights we're in the ninth inning at 9:30 and they don't leave because the game is almost over."

## Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	64	28	.696	—
Tampa Bay	51	41	.554	13
Toronto	50	43	.538	14½
Boston	48	45	.516	16½
Baltimore	46	46	.500	18
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	50	44	.532	—
Cleveland	46	44	.511	2
Chicago	46	46	.500	3
Detroit	37	55	.402	12
Kansas City	36	56	.391	13
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	59	32	.648	—
Seattle	51	42	.548	9
Texas	41	49	.456	17½
Los Angeles	39	53	.424	20½
Oakland	32	61	.344	28
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	58	35	.624	—
Atlanta	56	38	.596	2½
Philadelphia	49	43	.533	8½
Miami	43	48	.473	14
Washington	31	63	.330	27½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	50	43	.538	—
St. Louis	50	44	.532	½
Pittsburgh	39	54	.419	11
Chicago	35	57	.380	14½
Cincinnati	34	57	.374	15
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	60	30	.667	—
San Diego	52	42	.553	10
San Francisco	48	43	.527	12½
Colorado	43	50	.462	18½
Arizona	40	52	.435	21
Tuesday's games				
All-Star Game: AL 3, NL 2				
Thursday's games				
N.Y. Yankees at Houston				
Texas at Miami				
Detroit at Oakland				
N.Y. Yankees at Houston				
Detroit at Oakland				
San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers				
Friday's games				
N.Y. Yankees (TBD) at Baltimore (TBD)				
Toronto (TBD) at Boston (Eovaldi 4-2)				
L.A. Angels (Ohtani 9-4) at Atlanta (TBD)				
Cleveland (Quantrill 6-5) at Chicago White Sox (Giolito 6-5)				
Tampa Bay (Rasmussen 5-3) at Kansas City (TBD)				
Texas (Howard 1-1) at Oakland (TBD)				
Houston (TBD) at Seattle (Gonzales 5-9)				
St. Louis (Wainwright 6-7) at Cincinnati (Ashcraft 4-2)				
Chicago Cubs (Steele 3-6) at Philadelphia (Gibson 5-3)				
Miami (TBD) at Pittsburgh (TBD)				
San Diego (Darvish 8-4) at N.Y. Mets (Scherzer 6-1)				
Colorado (Senzatela 3-5) at Milwaukee (Burnes 7-4)				
Washington (TBD) at Arizona (TBD)				
San Francisco (Webb 9-3) at L.A. Dodgers (TBD)				
Saturday's games				
Cleveland at Chicago White Sox				
Houston at Seattle				
Toronto at Boston				
Minnesota at Detroit				
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore				
Tampa Bay at Kansas City				
Cleveland at Chicago White Sox				
L.A. Angels at Atlanta				
Texas at Oakland				
Chicago Cubs at Philadelphia				
St. Louis at Cincinnati				
Miami at Pittsburgh				
Colorado at Milwaukee				
San Diego at N.Y. Mets				
San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers				
Washington at Arizona				
Sunday's games				
Cleveland at Chicago White Sox				
Houston at Seattle				
Toronto at Boston				
Minnesota at Detroit				
N.Y. Yankees at Baltimore				
Tampa Bay at Kansas City				
Cleveland at Chicago White Sox				
L.A. Angels at Atlanta				
Texas at Oakland				
Chicago Cubs at Philadelphia				
St. Louis at Cincinnati				
Miami at Pittsburgh				
Colorado at Milwaukee				
San Diego at N.Y. Mets				
San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers				
Washington at Arizona				

## MLB

# Guardians improving faster than expected

## Young players coming along quickly, developing into playoff contenders

By TOM WITHERS  
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — It's still three hours from the scheduled first pitch and the young Cleveland Guardians are already playing games.

Meet the kinder-Guardians.

Jumping on an electric scooter, pitcher Triston McKenzie rolls by a ping-pong table and barely taps the brakes while jetting past the Mario Kart arcade game, whose joystick is often manned by All-Star third baseman José Ramírez.



Hedges

In the corner, utilityman Ernie Clement fires shots on a Nerf basketball court with a three-point line taped to the clubhouse carpet. The team's trash-talking chess club will get a match going soon, and a card game will break out before the Guardians take the field.

"This is absolutely as much fun as I've ever had, and it's not just the team," said catcher Austin Hedges, who at 29 is one of Cleveland's oldest players. "We enjoy each other and pull for each other. There's no cliqueness."

"I don't think that happens in every clubhouse."

Under manager Terry Francona, baseball's youngest team — the Guardians' average batting age (26.1) and average pitching age (26.5) are below Triple-A averages — is having fun while also developing into a playoff contender sooner than expected.

They're a work in progress, but making strides.

"We're so young," said the 63-year-old Francona, invigorated by his team's youth in his 10th season with Cleveland after health issues sidelined him the previous two. "But that's not an excuse. When you have youth, you have some enthusiasm that comes with it."

"We make mistakes, but we don't play dumb baseball. I get a kick out of that."

The Guardians reached the All-Star break at 46-44, only two games behind first-place Minnesota in the AL Central despite an uneven unofficial first half that included scheduling challenges due to wet weather.

Perhaps it was fitting their last game before the break was postponed — Cleveland's ninth home rainout.

And while they lack household names or national TV appearances, the Guardians, whose solid first half could prompt the front office to make moves at the Aug. 2 trading deadline, are a team to watch, both this season and beyond.

In Ramírez, they've got one of the game's best all-around players and he's under contract through 2028 after signing a seven-year, \$141 million deal. Ramírez hit the break leading the AL with 75 RBIs.

Second baseman Andrés Giménez, acquired last year when Cleveland sent Francisco Lindor to the New York Mets, made the All-Star team in his first full season and has the look of a perennial star.



NICK CAMMETT/AP

**The Cleveland Guardians' Steven Kwan, left, Myles Straw, center, and Oscar Mercado celebrate the team's 4-0 win over the Texas Rangers on June 8 in Cleveland. Under manager Terry Francona, baseball's youngest team is having fun while also developing into a playoff contender sooner than expected.**

Shane Bieber anchors a starting staff that hasn't been as good as advertised, but the bullpen's loaded with power arms, none bigger than 24-year-old flamethrower Emmanuel Clase, the team's third All-Star selection.

This season was supposed to be about development, but the Guardians have played their way into contention. They just might stay there.

They've already had 10 players make their major league debuts in 2022 with rookie outfielders Steven Kwan, Oscar Gonzalez and Nolan Jones all making positive contributions.

"It's impressive," New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone said during a recent series in Cleveland. "They're kind of coming of age. They're athletic. They have a lot of young, interesting players that are turning out to be winning players, winning pieces."

The Guardians' style is unorthodox in today's swing-for-the-fences-or-bust game. They've only hit 71 homers, third fewest in the majors. But with a patient approach at the plate, they attack in smaller ways, using a base-to-base approach that has worked.

And they don't quit.

Following fiery first baseman

Josh Naylor's lead as he makes his own comeback from a gruesome leg injury, Cleveland has posted 19 come-from-behind wins. After a recent walk-off homer, Naylor head-butted a helmeted Francona, bending his glasses.

"They might not show us on SportsCenter for very long, but if we're winning, it doesn't really matter," said right-hander Cal Quantrill. "I feel like we've kind of bought into that. We'll do things the right way. We're going to grind, we're going to continue to play good baseball after the fifth inning, we're going to really show up and do things the right way."

## Front: Astros have 9-game lead, but Mariners are on a tear

### FROM PAGE 48

Welcome back, indeed.

"We still got a long way to go," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "A lot of baseball to play."

Roberts' club is one of three teams with at least a nine-game lead in their respective divisions heading into the second half. Led by Betts and Freddie Freeman, Los Angeles is 10 games up on Manny Machado and the San Diego Padres in the NL West.

"Just a lot of good things happened in the first half for us," Freeman said.

Altuve and Houston still have a nine-game lead in the AL West, even with the win streak for Seattle. The Astros and Mariners close out their season series with seven more games this month, beginning Friday night in Seattle.

"I thought the Mariners had a good team from the very beginning, and I told everybody that then at the time, they finished extremely strong last year, and you know, you have to beat them," Houston manager

Dusty Baker said. "They are not going to beat themselves."

The AL East has been the best division in baseball — every team is .500 or better, even the 46-46 Baltimore Orioles — but that hasn't affected New York very much at all. The Yankees begin the second half with a gaudy 64-28 record and a whopping 13-game lead over Tampa Bay.

While Giancarlo Stanton has delivered his usual power and Clay Holmes has been one of the game's most dominant relievers, it's Judge leading the way for the Bronx Bombers. He is batting .284 with 33 homers and 70 RBIs, joining Shohei Ohtani among the frontrunners for AL MVP.

"I think he continues to get better and better as a leader, which has always been, I think, a positive trait of his," New York manager Aaron Boone said. "But I would just say he's a more complete, refined, veteran player that is also in the prime of his career."

Judge and the Yankees are trying to

chase down the franchise's first championship since 2009 and No. 28 overall. But there are all sorts of potential roadblocks — both nearby and further away.

The crosstown Mets are on top of the NL East, looking to hold off the Braves and take the franchise's first division title since 2015. Each of baseball's Central divisions had a mediocre first half, but Milwaukee and St. Louis have an array of stars, and Carlos Correa could power Minnesota back into the playoffs after it finished last in the AL Central in 2021.

Even the Chicago White Sox, who underperformed early on, showed some positive signs while taking three of four at the division-leading Twins in the runup to the break.

"We've been talking about it for a while. We're going to turn the corner," White Sox right-hander Michael Kopech said. "Things are going to start going our way."

The return of switch-hitting catcher Yasmani Grandal could provide a lift for the

White Sox, who are looking for their third consecutive playoff appearance. The injured list might have a more dramatic effect on the pennant races than the trade deadline.

Mets ace Jacob deGrom is coming back after he was sidelined by a stress reaction in his right scapula. Second baseman Ozzie Albies could rejoin Atlanta's loaded lineup next month after he broke his left foot on June 14. Philadelphia slugger Bryce Harper, San Diego shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. and Houston right-hander Lance McCullers Jr. also could return in time to help their teams down the stretch.

DeGrom, a two-time NL Cy Young Award winner, hasn't pitched all year. He could team with Max Scherzer to give New York a dominant 1-2 punch at the top of its rotation.

"We all want Jake back," Mets left-hander David Peterson said. "We all want him healthy, that's the most important thing. We want him to be productive and we want him to be Jake, the Jake that we love."



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## COLLEGE FOOTBALL



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Georgia head coach Kirby Smart speaks on Wednesday during SEC Media Days. The Bulldogs won the national title last year.

## High expectations just part of life for Georgia, Alabama

By CHARLES ODUM  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — It's no easy task to live with expectations at the top of the Southeastern Conference.

Alabama's 2021 season has been described as a disappointment even though the Crimson Tide won the SEC title and played in the national championship game.

Georgia won its first national championship since 1980 by beating Alabama. After having 15 players selected in the NFL Draft, including three defensive linemen, Georgia now faces criticisms that its time at the top will be only a one-year stay.

The Bulldogs are viewed as underdogs to the Tide in this year's SEC race. Alabama, Ohio State and possibly others are more popular picks in early national championship projections.

Coach Kirby Smart said Wednesday he doesn't worry about his Bulldogs getting complacent.

"I don't think any of our guys would rest on the laurels because we don't really have a lot of guys that have laurels to rest on," Smart said at the SEC Media Days. "I think that's the biggest thing because everybody keeps bringing up you won a national championship, so do you worry about complacency? Well the guys who won it, they're mostly in NFL camps, so there's a lot of hungry guys on our team."

Alabama standout linebacker Will Anderson says just winning the SEC title last season wasn't enough.

"The biggest goal of our team is always to win a national championship and we didn't meet that goal last year," Anderson said Tuesday. "So that season was not the successful season that we wanted, because all the blood, sweat and tears we put in, all the

hard work, all the long meetings — is to get to the national championship and win it. And we got there and didn't finish the way we wanted to finish."

If Smart's read on his new starters' motivation is correct, the Bulldogs' hunger is most prominent on defense. There were five Georgia defensive players selected in the first round of the NFL Draft, including defensive end Travon Walker as the No. 1 overall pick by Jacksonville. Three more were picked later in the draft.

Georgia linebacker Nolan Smith said he attended Walker's draft party and wasn't worried about the impact of the draft on this season's defense.

"It made me really happy, seeing all my friends realize their dreams," Smith said. "There's nothing more that a friend should ask for than to see your other friends be successful."

Including LSU in 2019, Alabama in 2020 and Georgia, the SEC has had three different teams win the past three national championships. That can provide encouragement for coaches trying to build championship programs, including first-year Florida coach Billy Napier.

"I think we're all aware if you can win your division, the championship here, you can be a national championship contender," Napier said. "The path, it's been proven. ... We're consumed with Florida right now. We've got a lot of grass to mow, right? It's our grass, not anybody else's. We've got a lot of work to do."

Georgia has won the SEC East four of the last five years and is 27-2 in the division since 2017.

"I think we're all aware there's a large gap between Georgia and No. 2, and we're working on closing that," Kentucky coach Mark Stoops said.

# Despite record revenue, ACC looking for a boost

By AARON BEARD  
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Atlantic Coast Conference commissioner Jim Phillips leads a league bringing in record revenues, with more and more money going to member schools.

It's also a league struggling to keep up with peers in the Big Ten and Southeastern conferences.

League schools have talked for years about finding ways to close that growing gap. But as the Big Ten and SEC expand to add marquee names, the ACC's concern becomes more pressing and even stirs uncertainty about its long-range future in terms of whether schools might eventually try to chase money elsewhere.

For now, that means trying to squeeze more money out of a long-running TV deal, kicking around ideas and even holding out hope that Notre Dame might one day shed football independence to join the ACC and boost the bottom line.

At ACC Kickoff preseason media days on Wednesday, Phillips said "all options are on the table."

"It's significant ... so it deserves your attention," Phillips said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It deserves creativity. It deserves all that you have to try to figure a way for a path forward that really makes sense and that brings additional value to the conference."

The league's deal with ESPN, which included the long-sought 2019 launch of its own network, runs through 2036. It also has an extension of a grant-of-rights provision that gives the league control of media rights for any school that attempts to leave for the duration of the deal, which is a move to deter defections in future realignment.

That appears to have the ACC on stable footing for the immediate future. But for how long? Figuring out a way to better grow the financial picture could determine that.

Phillips described the league and ESPN as partners with a mutual interest in making the ACC Network as profitable as possible to support the league.

"How can they have a partnership and an asset and not want it to really be thriving over the next 14 years?" Phillips told the AP. "That doesn't make any sense. So they are motivated. And when you talk about (how) we're considering multiple options, it's just that."

"You're not trying to eliminate potential opportunities, you're trying to create. ... You can do something with your network. You can do something with events. You can do something certainly with expansion if you so choose. But there has



NELL REDMOND/AP

Atlantic Coast Conference commissioner Jim Phillips answers a question during a news conference at the ACC media days.

## "If one school is getting \$30 million more than another school, they can do more things with the money."

Dave Doeren  
NC State coach

to a value in whatever move you end up making."

The ACC's most recent tax filing listed a record \$578.3 million in total revenue while distributing an average of \$36.1 million per school for the 2020-21 season, which included Notre Dame as a one-year full football member for scheduling purposes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, TV revenue has increased from roughly \$288.6 million in the 2018-19 fiscal year before the launch of the ACC Network to \$397.4 million in 2020-21.

And yet, years of healthy growth are heavily outpaced by numbers coming out of the SEC and the Big Ten. For that same 2020-21 season, the SEC reported nearly \$833.4 million in revenue and an average distribution of \$54.6 million, while the Big Ten checked in at \$679.8 million and an average \$47.9 million payout.

And with those leagues announcing upcoming name-brand additions — Texas and Oklahoma to the SEC, USC and UCLA to the Big Ten — the revenue gap could grow more aggressively.

"It's a concern, yeah," North Carolina State coach Dave Doeren said. "If one school is getting \$30 million more than another school, they can do more things with the money. It's been that way for a while, though."

"If you look at what's happened, we've still had a team in the playoffs (seven of eight) years. So we've overcome it. But you wouldn't like to overcome it if you didn't have to."

Several others shrugged off the topic. Louisville offensive lineman Caleb Chandler, a sixth-year senior, wasn't focused on it because he'll be gone next year and "won't affect me in any way." N.C. State quarterback Devin Leary said he wasn't worried about it, either.

"You want to talk about revenue and gaps, like that's just — I coach football," Boston College coach Jeff Hafley said. "That's beyond me."

And then there was Clemson coach Dabo Swinney, whose program has reached six College Football Playoffs with two national championships.

"I don't have any concern because other people worry about all of that stuff and deal with it and figure out whatever," Swinney said. "I mean, Lord have mercy, in 2036 I don't know where I'll be. That's a long time and they will figure all of that stuff out."

Besides, there's little the ACC teams can do other than win games and become more appealing brands. Beyond that, it's up to league leadership to figure out the next moves.

"I think you have to be measured and it has to be ultimately good for the long-term health of the conference," Phillips told the AP. "To make a move just to make a move is not the right thing for the ACC. It just isn't."

# SPORTS



## Fails to advance

Semenya finishes 13th in heat of 5,000 » **Track and field, Page 42**



**Aaron Judge leads the New York Yankees with a .284 average, 33 homers and 70 RBIs, joining the Los Angeles Angels' Shohei Ohtani among the frontrunners for AL MVP.**

ABBIE PARR/AP

**MLB**

# Out front

## Yankees begin second half with best record in league

BY JAY COHEN  
*Associated Press*

Aaron Judge and the New York Yankees, Mookie Betts and the Los Angeles Dodgers, Jose Altuve and the Houston Astros — they're all just looking for more of the same. The Atlanta Braves' title defense is rolling along, and Julio Rodríguez and the Seattle Mariners are looking to crash the playoff party.

As baseball returns from the All-Star break — all packed up and ready to go after the AL's 3-2 victory at Dodger Stadium on Tuesday night — the postseason picture is quite crowded, thanks to the addition of a third wild card in each league.

The October equation can change in a hurry, too. Just ask Rodríguez and the Mariners, winners of 14 in a row. Or the contenders looking at the Aug. 2 trade deadline, with Cincinnati Reds ace Luis Castillo, Chicago Cubs catcher Willson Contreras and, yes, Washington Nationals slugger Juan Soto, all believed to be on the market to varying degrees.

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MARK J. TERRILL/AP

**Mookie Betts and the Los Angeles Dodgers have a 10-game lead over second-place San Diego in the NL West.**

# UGA: National champ to SEC underdog » College football, Page 47

