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EUROPE FLOODING

Spangdahlem officer's family recounts night trapped in home

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Capt. Matthew Shelly wasn't at home when the Kyll River began overflowing about 50 yards behind his house near Spangdahlem Air Base, trapping his family inside during Germany's worst natural disaster in more than half a century.

He was in Las Vegas for an exercise, while his wife, Brie Shelly, cared for their two young sons and talked with him on the phone throughout the harrowing night of July 14, as the water rose and flooded the house's basement and first floor.

It was a helpless feeling, Matthew Shelly said Wednesday, being so far away while his family faced danger.

The Shellys are among some 20 Spangdahlem families who were displaced in the rural Eifel region, base officials said.

At least 208 people died across western Germany and Belgium in last week's flooding and thousands are reported to be missing, federal emergency officials say. Hundreds of Spangdahlem personnel have volunteered to aid cleanup efforts, which German officials say will take months, if not longer.

At first, the deluge of rain wasn't much of a worry, Matthew Shelly said. The river had overflowed

SEE TRAPPED ON PAGE 6

RELATED

German regions hit by deadly floods expecting heavy rain **Page 6**

TOKYO OLYMPICS

'A place of peace'

Army's 1st Paralympic swimmer reflects on her journey to the pool and the Games

By SARAH CAMMARATA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lying in a hospital bed in Landstuhl, Germany, a 19-year-old combat medic had endured three operations to fix hip injuries suffered in Iraq and now faced the unthinkable: a medical discharge from the Army.

Neither she nor the Army will disclose what caused her injuries, but doctors told the young soldier that certain parts of her life might no longer be an option, including serving in the military.

Left feeling angry and discouraged at the constant reminder of all the things that she could no longer do, Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Marks was driven to become fit for duty again.

Eleven years later, the world record-holding Paralympic ath-

SEE PEACE ON PAGE 7

Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Marks prepares for the women's breaststroke finals, in which she took a gold medal, in the Invictus Games at the ESPN Wide World of Sports complex at Walt Disney World, Orlando, Fla., on May 11, 2016.

KEVIN WALLACE/U.S. Air Force



Marks



BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	..	..	\$4.014	..
Germany	\$3.428	\$3.867	\$4.114	\$3.619	..	..	..	..	..
Change in price	+2.0 cents	+1.9 cents	+2.0 cents	+0.6 cents	..	..	..	+2.0 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.312	\$4.607	\$4.209	..	..	\$3.076	\$3.301	\$3.166
Change in price	..	-1.8 cents	-2.0 cents	-1.8 cents	..	..	No change	No change	No change
U.K.	..	\$3.766	\$4.013	\$3.518	..	..	..	\$3.899	\$4.204*
Change in price	..	+1.9 cents	+2.0 cents	+0.6 cents	..	..	..	+2.0 cents	No change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	\$3.229	..	\$3.919	\$3.419
Japan	..	\$3.909	..	\$3.409	..	..	..	..	..
Change in price	..	+2.0 cents	..	+1.0 cents	..	..	..	+2.0 cents	No change
Okinawa	\$3.219	..	..	\$3.409	Guam	\$3.229	\$3.669	\$3.919	..
Change in price	+2.0 cents	..	..	+1.0 cents	Change in price	+2.0 cents	+2.0 cents	+2.0 cents	..

*DieselEFD **Midgrade
For the week of July 23-29

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		South Korea (Won)	1148.77
Euro costs (July 23)	\$1.15	Switzerland (Franc)	.9164
Dollar buys (July 23)	0.8244	Thailand (Baht)	32.87
British pound (July 23)	\$1.34	Turkey (NewLira)	8.5538
Japanese yen (July 23)	107.00		
South Korean won (July 23)	1122.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain(Dinar)	.3770		
Britain (Pound)	1.3767		
Canada (Dollar)	1.2580		
China(Yuan)	6.4665		
Denmark (Krone)	6.2943		
Egypt (Pound)	15.6689		
Euro	.8462		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7717		
Hungary (Forint)	302.76		
Israel (Shekel)	3.2714		
Japan (Yen)	110.18		
Kuwait(Dinar)	.3006		
Norway (Krone)	8.8373		
Philippines (Peso)	50.05		
Poland (Zloty)	3.86		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7506		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3599		

(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	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.10
3-month bill	0.05
30-year bond	1.93

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

Milley says Afghan government can prevail

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — As the Taliban's strength grows amid the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, top defense officials on Wednesday said the Afghan government can prevail after American troops leave the country.

Though there's "clearly a narrative out there that the Taliban is winning," Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the group is far from overthrowing the Afghan government.

"They are propagating an inevitable victory on their behalf — they're dominating the airwaves," Milley told reporters at the Pentagon. "But I will tell you ... you've got 34 provincial capitals in Afghanistan, none of them have been seized."

Still, the "strategic momentum appears to be with the Taliban" as they have seized "a significant amount of territory" over the past six to 10 months," he said. "[But] a negative outcome — a Taliban automatic military takeover — is not a foregone conclusion. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and make adjustments as necessary."

The U.S. on May 1 began withdrawing its troops and equipment from Afghanistan after nearly 20 years of war there. While President Joe Biden has said the U.S. completed its mission in Afghanistan of preventing another attack on American soil after 9/11, critics have questioned whether the U.S. should leave Afghanistan with the Taliban at large and regaining territory.

Milley said Afghan security

forces are "adjusting forces to consolidate into the provincial capitals" to protect the population, most of whom live in those cities and the capital of Kabul.

With so many changing factors, it remains to be seen what will happen in Afghanistan after U.S. forces leave, the general said.

As Taliban insurgents continue fighting, leaders of the terrorist group continue to say they want to reach a political agreement with the Afghan government to end the country's civil war, The Associated Press reported Sunday.

"There's a possibility of a negotiated outcome that's still out there. There's a possibility of a complete Taliban takeover," Milley said. "There's a possibility of any number of other scenarios. I don't think an endgame is yet written."

The U.S. drawdown process is about 95% completed as of Wednesday, with 9,000 troops and civilians moved out of the country so far and all U.S. bases in Afghanistan turned over to the Afghan government, he said.

"The sheer volume of movement involved in this operation has been extraordinary, 984 airlifts over the last less than three months have enabled us to reach almost 95% completion on the retrograde," Milley said.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday reiterated the full drawdown will be complete by the end of August, shortly ahead of the original deadline of Sept. 11 that Biden set in April.

After August, the military will focus only "on those threats that present a threat to the United

States," Austin told reporters at the Pentagon.

However, the U.S. will provide financial support and "over-the-horizon" military support to Afghan forces, such as airstrikes, he said. The Defense Department is already in talks with nearby nations to "stand up nodes to provide security assessments" in the region after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"Make no mistake that we remain committed to helping the Afghan security forces and the Afghan government going forward," Austin said. "We are doing what we said we're going to do in terms of putting the pieces in place to ensure that we can provide that support."

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German police: Video may show man moving body found last year

By MARCUS KLOECKNER
AND KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Rheinland-Pfalz police on Friday asked the U.S. community in Kaiserslautern for help identifying a man captured in newly released surveillance camera footage, who is suspected of involvement in the death of a woman whose body was found in a downtown alley in December.

"It is very important that clues from the American community reach us, even in English," Kaiserslautern police spokesman Bernhard Christian Erfort said. "We are especially looking for information regarding the person who can be seen in the video."

The blurry footage, shot by a security camera in a parking garage on Rosenstrasse in the center of Kaiserslautern, on Dec. 12 at 9:37 p.m., shows a tall, slim man wear-

ing a hoodie walking in the direction of Stauboernchenstrasse, the alley where Diana Bodi's body was found, before going back in the direction he came from.

He passes the garage again an hour later, heading toward the alley, and comes back with an empty shopping cart. Around 20 minutes after that, he again passes in front of the garage, this time pushing the cart with a large object wrapped in a white covering on the bottom rack.

"The object could be the body of Diana Bodi," the police said in a statement Friday.

Two nights after the video was shot, several people reported to the police that there was a body in the alley. The victim was later identified as Bodi, a home care provider from Hungary who was working in Germany.

The police also want to speak with a couple who were walking

their dog on Rosenstrasse and may have seen the man in the security camera video.

"The woman was wearing a silver-gray winter jacket with a hood and a red hat," they said. "The man had a black winter jacket and black hat on. The dog was probably a golden retriever or light-colored Labrador."

The large white object seen in the video footage was loaded onto the cart somewhere near the parking garage, the police concluded after looking at numerous videos shot in the area at around the time that Bodi, 48, was killed. She disappeared shortly after arriving at Kaiserslautern's main train station on Dec. 11, on her way to a new job in the Trier area.

The man seen in the video footage may not be Bodi's killer, the police statement said. But their investigation indicates he "knows



RHEINLAND-PFALZ POLICE

A screenshot, released by the German police July 22, shows a man pulling a shopping cart with a large object wrapped in white past a downtown Kaiserslautern parking garage last December.

his way around the area, and either spends a lot of time there or lives nearby," it said.

There are no indications that an American or someone with ties to the U.S. military community was involved in Bodi's death, but police have ruled nothing out as they continue their investigation, Er-

fort said.

"We are still evaluating lots of video material," he said. "There could be clues in the videos that help us find the perpetrator."

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Army contractor charged with lying about stabbing incident

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A contractor at an Army base in Georgia has pleaded not guilty to three felony charges after prosecutors say he stabbed himself and told investigators he'd been attacked and robbed.

Eric T. Nakamura, 49, of Beaufort, S.C., was charged with three counts of making a false statement to a department or agency of the United States, said David H. Estes, acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, in a statement this week.

Each charge carries a penalty of up to five years in federal prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both, and up to five years of supervised release after any prison term, a court document shows. There is no parole in the federal system, the Justice Department said.

Nakamura was indicted in March and appeared before a federal judge last week for arraignment, where he entered a not guilty plea, court records show. He was released on an unsecured \$15,000 bond.

Nakamura was at Hunter Army

Airfield in Savannah last July when he told an agent with the Army Criminal Investigation Command, or CID, that he was stabbed with a knife and robbed while he was working in a lab, the indictment said. He claimed an unknown person in an Army uniform with the name tape "Brown" was the assailant, it said.

A photo caption in a January 2012 edition of the base newspaper at Fort Stewart, Ga., and a 2019 schedule of training events indicate Nakamura worked for the Army Substance Abuse Program on

the post.

The indictment said Nakamura repeated the claims about the July 2020 stabbing incident in interviews with CID agents in October and again in February, despite knowing "he had stabbed himself with a knife, and had not been robbed," the indictment said.

"Army investigators spent substantial time and taxpayer resources investigating this alleged assault," Estes said.

CID is investigating the case. On Tuesday, prosecutors filed notice that they planned to present addi-

tional evidence to show that Nakamura had repeated his claims on other dates and to other investigators, including in August when they say he created an audio statement with his wife that he provided to CID.

Nakamura's attorney, Brian Joseph Huffman Jr., said he had no comment at this time, as he had only recently been appointed to the case and was still reviewing material prosecutors handed to him.

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MILITARY

Japan officials to test Marine water for toxic chemicals

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japanese officials collected samples of treated wastewater this week at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma as the government weighs a U.S. military request to dispose of the potentially contaminated water through the public wastewater system.

The treated water is stored in underground tanks and may contain traces of the toxic, organic chemicals PFOS and PFOA left over from spilled firefighting foam captured on the air station.

Monday's sampling follows local media reports that the Marine Corps had asked Okinawa prefecture to release the treated water into the local system. That water meets Japanese drinking-water guidelines that exceed U.S. standards, according to Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

Okinawa prefecture sent a team of four, including environmental officials, to the base Monday, a prefectural spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday. Ginowan city and the Japanese government also sent officials.

Early this month, a spokesman for the Okinawa Prefectural Enterprise Bureau said that putting the treated water into the public wastewater system means it would eventually reach the sea. Completely removing the contaminants is impossible, he said.

The water has been treated using the Army's PFAS Effluent Treatment System, or PETS, which uses ion exchange and granular activated carbon to reduce PFAS levels in water, according to a Marine Corps Installations Pacific statement Thursday.

Okinawa prefecture has asked the U.S. military to dispose of the contaminants thermally, a spokesman from the prefecture's Special Management Office of Military Installation Environmental Affairs told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday. Government officials in Japan customarily speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

Thermal processes, including incineration, use heat to destroy wastewater contaminants, according to a November paper in the journal Water Environment Research. One method, the liquid injection hazardous waste furnace, works



U.S. Marine Corps

Japanese officials collect samples of treated wastewater at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, on Monday. The U.S. military wants to dispose of the water through the public wastewater system.

like an afterburner in which the wastewater is mixed with fuel and burned.

The Marine Corps in its statement Thursday dismissed other disposal options.

The public wastewater system "is the quickest method available to safely dispose of PFAS-contaminated water and does not entail the risks associated with either keeping it on-hand or transporting the water to the mainland for disposal," according to the Marines' statement.

PFOS and PFOA are found in aqueous firefighting foam, aircraft grease, water-repellant materials and fluorine chemicals. They have been known to cause tumors, in-

creases in body and organ weight and death in animals.

The Marines permitted prefectural officials onto MCAS Futenma on July 13 to tour the treatment facility, the prefectural spokesman said. They were invited back Monday to obtain samples of the treated wastewater.

At a tank containing treated sewage, a base representative took samples from the bottom, middle and top, the spokesman said. They were mixed and split between prefectural, Japanese and U.S. military officials for testing.

The results will not be released until all three groups complete their testing, the spokesman said. That is

expected to take some time because the U.S. military's sample will be sent to the United States for analysis.

Keigo Wada, deputy mayor of Ginowan city, told the city's Assembly Steering Committee on Tuesday that the water stored at MCAS Futenma has a PFOS concentration "from 300 to 650 nanograms per a liter," or 0.3 to 0.65 micrograms per liter, which is 13 times higher at the maximum than Japan's safety target of 0.05 micrograms per liter, the Okinawa Times reported Wednesday.

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Hikers find body of missing Army lieutenant near Mount St. Helens

BY KAT BOUZA
Stars and Stripes

Authorities in Washington state have discovered the body of an Army lieutenant who went missing over the weekend on a trail near Mount St. Helens.

Hikers found 1st Lt. Brian Yang, 25, unresponsive in the Mount Whittier area shortly before 2 p.m. Wednesday, according to a Facebook post by the Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office.

"Mr. Yang appeared to have fallen about two hundred feet down a very steep embankment," the sheriff's office said.

Search-and-rescue personnel at the scene identified Yang and con-

firmed he had died, according to the post.

The Army's I Corps, based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, confirmed Yang's death in a Twitter post Wednesday evening.

"Regretfully, on July 21, 2021, at approximately 2 p.m., following an extensive search led by the Cowlitz County Sheriff's office, 1LT Brian Yang was found deceased along a run route near Mt. St. Helens," the command said. "Brian touched the lives of so many and will be sorely missed."

Yang was last seen Sunday afternoon near Coldwater Trail Head and was possibly training for an upcoming event, according

to a previous announcement from the sheriff's office. The search for Yang began after he did not come to work Monday, his sister Sheila Lor said in a Facebook post Tuesday.

Lor memorialized her brother in another social media post after his death was announced Wednesday.

"The search for Brian has finally come to an end, and I am deeply saddened to say that he has passed away," she wrote. "We have felt so touched by everyone who has reached out to us personally and prayed for our family."

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Kyodo News/AP

First lady in Tokyo for Olympics

U.S. first lady Jill Biden arrives at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Thursday. Biden represented the U.S. government at the Tokyo Olympics and arrived to attend the opening ceremony of the Games on Friday.

Senate panel adopts Gillibrand's proposal to change criminal prosecution

CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — The Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to change how the military decides to prosecute most major crimes.

The panel rendered that decision

just before approving by voice vote its portion of the fiscal 2022 defense authorization bill — including authority for a 2.7% pay raise for Americans in uniform and Defense Department civilian workers. The panel also adopted a package of 15 uncontroversial amendments, the

details of which were not disclosed.

When the full committee markup begins Wednesday behind closed doors, it will be the scene of a robust debate on military justice — not whether to change the system, but how much.

The Personnel panel voted 5-1 to

adopt an amendment by its chair, New York Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand, that would create special prosecutors' offices in the military services to decide which felonies go to courts-martial. Such decisions are now made by a handful of generals and admirals in the chain

of command. Under Gillibrand's amendment, the generals would retain control only over military-unique crimes, such as desertion.

Gillibrand's proposal reflects her legislation on the subject, which has garnered 66 co-sponsors.

PACIFIC

Employee pleads guilty to mishandling documents

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A 31-year-old civilian employee of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command pleaded guilty this week in Hawaii to mishandling classified information while she was on temporary duty in the Philippines.

Asia Janay Lavarello, in a plea agreement on Tuesday, admitted one count of “knowingly removing classified information concerning the national defense or foreign relations of the United States and retaining it at an unauthorized location” in U.S. District Court in Hawaii, the Department of Justice said in a news release Tuesday.

She is free on an unsecured bail bond, with sentencing scheduled for Nov. 4.

The count carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000, the release said.

The plea agreement states that Lavarello had also made false statements in the course of its investigation. The Justice Department agreed not to charge her for that as part of the plea agreement,

according to the release.

INDOPACOM referred queries on the case to the Justice Department. Lavarello’s attorney did not respond to a request for comment by Stars and Stripes.

Lavarello became a Defense Department employee in 2011, according to the plea agreement filed in federal court.

In March 2018, she became executive assistant to the commander of INDOPACOM’s Joint Intelligence Operations Center, for which she had a “top secret” security clearance, the court document said.

The center “produces and disseminates intelligence on political, military and asymmetric threats impacting U.S. and allied interests, and sustains air, space, land, sea, and subsurface military operations throughout the Asia-Pacific theater of operations,” according to a 2017 INDOPACOM news release.

Defense Department employees holding a top secret clearance must undergo an in-depth background clearance check and receive multiple briefings on handling, marking and transporting



KAYLEE CLARK/U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

Asia Janay Lavarello is seen at Camp Smith, Hawaii, in 2018.

documents.

The U.S. government classifies information “secret” if its disclosure could cause “serious damage” to national security. Information is classified “top secret” if its disclosure could cause “exceptionally grave damage.”

In January 2020, Lavarello was given a six-month temporary assignment in Manila, where she worked with the Philippines’ armed forces at Camp Aguinaldo and also out of U.S. Embassy Manila, the plea agreement said.

At the same time, she was working on her thesis as a student at Na-

tional Intelligence University, court documents said.

She had access to the embassy’s classified computers and the storage area for classified documents, called a secure compartmented information facility. She also attended weekly classified meetings at the embassy.

On March 20, 2020, Lavarello hosted a dinner party in her hotel room, attended by three Americans with whom she worked at the embassy, as well as two foreign nationals, according to the plea agreement.

“During the dinner party, one of the American guests discovered a stack of documents in the defendant’s bedroom with U.S. Government ... classified markings on them, including documents classified at the “SECRET” level,” the plea agreement said.

When confronted by the dinner guest, Lavarello said that she had them for use in her university thesis, the plea agreement said.

She did not return the documents to their properly secured area in the following days, and in late March her temporary duty was terminated due to the mishandling

of the documents, the plea agreement said.

Lavarello compounded the mishandling by maintaining a handwritten notebook with classified information gleaned from the mishandled documents, the plea agreement said.

Agents with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service retrieved and copied the notebook during a covert search of Lavarello’s work desk in June 2020, the plea agreement said.

During an interview with FBI and NCIS agents in January, Lavarello lied about possessing classified information after returning from the Philippines, the plea agreement said.

“Asia Janay Lavarello failed in her duty when she removed classified documents from the U.S. Embassy Manila,” Steven Merrill, the FBI special agent in charge of the investigation, said in the DOJ news release. “Government employees are entrusted with a responsibility to ensure classified information is properly handled and secured.”

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MILITARY

Joint Chiefs head defends military as 'apolitical'

BY DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's top officials on Wednesday defended the military's tradition of staying out of elections, after a new book reported that Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, feared former President Donald Trump would attempt a coup.

Milley repeatedly declined to confirm whether the comments attributed to him in the book "I Alone Can Fix It: Donald J. Trump's Catastrophic Final Year," are accurate, but said he and other senior officers upheld their constitutional obligations throughout the chaotic presidential transition.

"The military did not, and will not, and should not ever get involved in domestic politics," Milley said, speaking at a Pentagon news conference. "We don't arbitrate elections. That's the job of the judiciary and the legislature and the American people. It is not the job of the U.S. military. We stayed out of politics. We're an apolitical institution."

In the book, Milley compares Trump's frequent unfounded claims of widespread election fraud to behavior by Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, who insisted he was both a victim and savior.

"This is a Reichstag moment," Milley told aides, according to the book by Washington Post reporters Philip Rucker and Carol D. Leonnig. "The gospel of the Führer."

Another new book, "Frankly, We Did Win This Election: The Inside Story of How Trump Lost," describes Milley and Trump clashing over whether to use the military to quash racial-justice protests across the country. Milley sought to stay close with Trump through the final months of his presidency out of concern that he might invoke the Insurrection Act and deploy active-duty troops on America's streets, according to the book by Wall Street Journal reporter Michael Bender.

Milley declined to address those accounts Wednesday, but said he and the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff provided their best military advice to Trump, and have continued to do so with President Joe Biden. They take an oath to the Constitution, not any individual, Milley said, repeating comments he has made before.

"Not one time did we violate

"The military did not, and will not, and should not ever get involved in domestic politics."

Gen. Mark Milley
Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman

that," Milley said. "The entire time, from time of commissioning to today, I can say with certainty that every one of us maintained our oath of allegiance to that document, the Constitution, and everything that's contained within it."

Milley added that senior military leaders maintained "the tradition of civilian control of the military," and "we did that without fail" while remaining apolitical.

"We did that then, we do that now, and we'll do that forever," Milley said.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, the retired Army general whom Biden selected to run the Pentagon, defended Milley, saying he has full faith and confidence in him.

"I'm not guessing at his character," Austin said, noting that they had served together in combat. "He doesn't have a political bone in his body."

Milley has come under attack by Trump, who issued a statement last week denying he spoke to anyone about a coup.

"So ridiculous!" Trump's statement said. "Sorry to inform you, but an Election is my form of 'coup,' and if I was going to do a coup, one of the last people I would want to do it with is General Mark Milley."

Trump said he lost respect for Milley after the general "choked like a dog" by apologizing in June 2020 for appearing in his battle fatigues alongside Trump outside the White House moments after the area was forcibly cleared of protesters by federal forces.

Milley later acknowledged that he should not have been there, saying last year that his presence with the president "in that moment, and in that environment, created the perception of the military involved in domestic politics."



MATTHEW SHELLEY

Water came through the back door of Air Force Capt. Matthew Shelly's house in Brecht, Germany, and rose to about a foot in the living room.

Trapped: Many feel loss after flooding

FROM PAGE 1

about four times over the last year in the village of Brecht, about 30 minutes west of the base.

"There's a bush in our backyard," he said. "The water has never made it close."

He told his wife, "If it doesn't make it there, we're fine."

This time, the water passed the bush and engulfed a shed.

And the water kept coming.

Matthew Shelly encouraged his wife to stay calm while trying to reach his co-workers at the 52nd Operations Support Squadron to see who could rescue his family.

But the roads were impassable. Water rushed down the street so fast that Brie Shelly told her husband she wasn't comfortable trying to leave with the two boys in the couple's Jeep Wrangler.

In the early morning hours of July 15, with power out at the house, she told her husband she was going to turn off her phone to conserve the battery and go to sleep. It was still raining.

"If it gets worse, I don't know what to do," Matthew Shelly recalled thinking at the time.

The water never reached the second floor, where the family hunkered down with snacks and bottled water. Around noon the next day, when the water had receded enough, airmen from Shelly's flight retrieved the family and booked them a room on base. Matthew Shelly, meanwhile, boarded the first flight back to Germany.

The Shellys hope to move back into their home. Their landlord, who built the house, is doing extensive repairs that could take six weeks or more. The Air Force is footing their bill in base lodging

Heavy rain forecast to hit German flood regions

Associated Press

BONN, Germany — German regions hit by deadly floods last week could see more heavy rain this weekend, the country's national weather service said Thursday.

The DWD weather service said localized storms were likely from midday Saturday, expanding to large parts of Rhineland-Palatinate state later in the day.

Officials said Thursday that the death toll from last week's floods in the western state had

risen to 128.

Across Germany, 177 people have been confirmed dead, and 31 deaths were reported from neighboring Belgium, taking the total flood deaths to 208.

Authorities have built a huge camp for rescue workers at the Nuerburgring race track.

More than 4,500 civil defense workers, firefighters and soldiers have been deployed to help with cleanup efforts in the badly affected Ahr valley region of Rhineland-Palatinate.

for now, Matthew Shelly said.

The expense is covered for 30 days, he was told. Whether that will be extended if needed still has to be worked out, he said.

The family's renter's insurance should cover some \$17,000 in personal property destroyed by the flood, including tools, furniture, holiday decorations and children's items.

Base officials said they're not tracking the dollar amount of how much airmen lost in the floods. But for some it was substantial.

A staff sergeant in the 52nd Security Forces Squadron lost nearly everything after his one-story apartment was flooded with 4 to 5 feet of water, said Master Sgt. Casey Vargo, the unit's first sergeant.

"The only thing he was able to save was some clothes, a few uni-

forms," Vargo said.

Another staff sergeant in the squadron, living in Wittlich, "lost her car and her whole basement storage area," Vargo said.

The base's First Sergeant's Council is assisting those affected by damage through donations from members around the installation, housing officials have said.

The Shellys count themselves lucky. They lost "nothing that was of critical value to our lives," Matthew Shelly said.

A house four doors down from the family was destroyed when a large tree burst through with the rushing water, he said.

"Their roof is in our backyard. They had to be rescued by a helicopter," he said.

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MILITARY

Peace: Soldier has made mental health a top priority since Rio Olympics

FROM PAGE 1

lete laughed as she recalled thinking, “I could do anything, right?”

She became the Army’s first Paralympic swimmer, the service said. Marks said she considers herself a soldier first, then an athlete.

Marks said participating in adaptive sports that are modified to allow athletes with disabilities to participate has led her to a new calling. She can no longer care for wounded soldiers on the battlefield, but being a world-class adaptive sports athlete has shown her another way to help fellow soldiers.

“The biggest gift that [it] has given me ... is the ability to help other people who are ill, sick, injured or wounded in the military to find a different outlet and to share the healing power of adaptive sports,” said Marks, who now mentors other troops.

The 30-year-old from Prescott Valley, Ariz., is one of 17 soldiers who are traveling to Japan to compete in the Olympics. Twelve of them are part of the Army’s World Class Athlete Program, a unit that allows participants to fulfill their military responsibilities while training with the goal to qualify for the Olympics and Paralympics.

The program includes active-duty, National Guard and Reserve troops who train for the Olympics or Paralympics who have just started in a sport or who have been training for many years.

“We currently have soldiers that participate in 17 different sports. They’re located in six different areas around the U.S. Our No. 1 goal is to place soldiers on the national team so they can train with the national team,” WCAP Program Director Willie Wilson said this month.

Soldiers also must stay up-to-date with Army requirements, attend military schools, hold clinics, speak to high school and college audiences, talk with athletic teams and support Army recruiting efforts.

Marks is the Army’s only athlete in the Paralympics, which begin Saturday. Three coaches in the Army will also be in Tokyo for the games, which start Friday.

Other soldiers will compete in a range of events including shooting, boxing, para-shooting, modern pentathlon, wrestling, steeplechase, shooting skeet, air rifle, smallbore rifle, pole vaulting, and track and field.

Marks was inspired at 17 to enlist in the Army during her time at the Arizona Project Challenge, an academy for at-risk youth run by the National Guard.

“I didn’t have a lot of structure in my life and I didn’t have very clear goals for my future but going through [the] Arizona Project Challenge really saved my life and changed the trajectory of my whole life,” she said.



NATHANIEL GARCIA/U.S. Army

Army Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Marks won a gold medal and set a world record in the 100-meter breaststroke at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. She also won a bronze medal in the 4x100 medley.

The six-month program, run by service members and veterans, provides a military-based education for students who have dropped out of high school, according to a LinkedIn description.

Her father, a Marine Corps veteran who served in the Vietnam War, and his lifetime of work at a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in maintenance also made her admire the military.

But even after becoming injured, her fellow service members inspired her to stay in the service.

“I was obsessed with wanting to be the best medic, and when anyone is in that situation where they’re injured, the rug gets pulled from under you and all I really had to hold on to is how much I love the people that I served with,” she said.

Highly motivated to prove she was fit but unable to run, Marks tried competitively swimming for the first time at the Jimmy Brought Fitness Center at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

That’s where she met people who were training for the Warrior Games, a Defense Department-run annual event where wounded, ill and injured active-duty service members and veterans compete in a range of events. She began practicing with them, and eventually fell in love with the sport.

“Swimming just became a place of peace for me. It was the one place where I got to create my own pain, and push my own body and not just have to exist in that pain,” Marks said.

In 2012, two years after her injury, Marks was found fit for duty for Army service and still serves as a combat medic today. She was awarded a spot in the WCAP on the same day. Despite an illness causing her lung capacity to be reduced and the mobility in her legs to decrease that year, she continued to compete on a national level, according to the International Paralympic Committee.

Marks was also hospitalized in 2014 shortly after arriving in the United Kingdom for a competition. Fluid filled her lungs and she was unable to breathe. She was placed in a medically induced coma for one month at the U.K.’s Papworth Hospital, according to a 2016 ESPN profile.

She was back in the pool nearly a month later, despite lingering effects from her lung disease, which was never identified, according to ESPN.

Since then, she has won four gold medals at the 2016 Invictus Games, an international sporting event for wounded, injured and sick service members, where she asked Prince Harry to present one of her medals to the doctors and nurses at Papworth Hospital who saved her life two years earlier.

Marks also won a gold medal in the 100-meter breaststroke and set a world record for the race. She also won a bronze medal in the 4x100 medley at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Marks said she does not define success in terms of how many accolades she has. Instead, she said success is measured by, “How did this make you feel? What did it give you? What did it give your life?”

She called it “incredibly cathartic” to refocus her energy into something besides herself. And she feels grateful that’s been something she can help teach others.

As a member of the WCAP unit and an Army combat medic, Marks has certain training requirements that she fulfills on an annual basis.

She also does community out-

reach and works regularly with soldiers at Fort Carson, Colo., who are sick or injured and healing for a return to the force or civilian life.

“The Army has been very supportive of me mentoring other ill, sick, injured and wounded, not just in my respective branch but in other branches of the military as well ... that’s what gets me up every day,” Marks said.

At the same time, she said she still has much to learn.

“Oftentimes, I don’t see myself as a swimmer and I’m around all these phenomenal athletes and I’m always impressed even when they’re younger than me at how great and professional they are and how much they know and how much I don’t know. I definitely feel more confident as a soldier,” she said.

At the Rio Games, Marks said she felt like she was “out of her element” and “overwhelmed.” One of the most challenging aspects, beyond the “culture shock,” was feeling like she did not belong there.

She said the experience was difficult, but important, because it forced her to think about why she swims and why she wants to continue.

The reason always comes back to “my brothers and sisters in the military,” Marks said.

“Little things that we do for each other in the military to support each other and to take care of each other. That’s what I carry with me and there’s so many people who will never know how much they’ve meant to me because they’re no longer here,” she said.

Physically, Marks always car-

ries her father’s dog tags in her pocket at competitions and the “memorial” tattoos that cover her right leg also represent her time in service. She also has a polar bear tattoo on her big toe.

“It’s just like a goofy ugly tattoo. So, every time I look down on the block, the last thing I see is something that just makes me giggle. That’s [for] my husband,” she said.

Since the Rio Games, mental health has also been a focus for Marks, especially during the coronavirus pandemic, which caused all training to come to a halt.

“I had a lot of demons for a long time that I didn’t pay the appropriate amount of time to and I did overcommit and try to achieve maybe to avoid it,” she said.

While training was on pause, Marks said coaches helped develop programs to do at home to keep athletes in shape, and sometimes she even lifted weights in the parking lot where she is stationed in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Marks said she has full confidence in the organizers of the Olympics that they will keep athletes safe, despite concerns over the virus.

In August, the swimmer will compete in the 50-meter freestyle, 50-meter butterfly, the 100-meter backstroke, and the 200-meter individual medley, in which swimmers compete in all four strokes.

For those who are interested in adaptive sports, Marks said, “Just try it.”

“See if you like it. Why not? What do you have to lose?”

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

South Korea's case count hits all-time high

BY DAVID CHOI

Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — South Korea surpassed its record of daily coronavirus cases Thursday after accounting for hundreds of infections from an outbreak aboard a navy destroyer.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency reported 1,842 new patients, the highest daily uptick since the pandemic began in January 2020. That's up from 1,784 infections Wednesday and 1,600 in-

fections a week earlier.

Seoul, which continued to record higher numbers than any other city in the country, reported 499 new cases, down from 604 on Wednesday.

The latest tally includes more than 250 infected crew members from the South Korean destroyer *Munmu the Great*. The warship, which was patrolling the Gulf of Aden off East Africa, had its mission cut short after over 80% of its unvaccinated crew was infected.

The crew members were airlifted back to South Korea on Tuesday and placed in quarantine.

South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook apologized for the incident and said he would launch an investigation.

South Korea has reported 184,103 infections during the pandemic. More than 13% of South Koreans are fully inoculated and at least 32% of the population has received a first dose, according to the KDCA.

In light of the surge, a senior U.S. Forces Korea medical officer appeared to anticipate an increase in the number of infections in the command's community.

"If COVID starts circulating around the peninsula, it's going to affect us as well," Dr. Douglas Lougee, an Army colonel and the USFK command surgeon, said on American Forces Network Pacific radio Wednesday.

Six new cases between July 4 and July 18 were reported by USFK on

Thursday. All area recent arrivals to the country are placed in quarantine.

Over 80% of USFK service members and civilians are vaccinated, according to the command. There are roughly 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea, the majority of which are based at Camp Humphreys, 40 miles south of Seoul.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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Tokyo's COVID-19 numbers climb higher

BY JOSEPH DITZLER, MARI HIGA AND HANA KUSUMOTO

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japan's capital city recorded a third consecutive day of more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases Thursday, the day before the Olympic Games' opening ceremonies.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government said another 1,979 people had tested positive for the coronavirus respiratory disease, the highest one-day count since 2,044 on Jan. 15, according to public broadcaster NHK and metro government data. The seven-day moving average is nearly 1,300 new patients daily.

On Okinawa, prefectural Gov. Denny Tamaki, citing a rising number of new coronavirus cases, on Tuesday declared an "intensive restraint period" starting Thursday until July 31. The prefecture, like Tokyo, is under a state of emergency until Aug. 22.

A new wave of coronavirus has swept the island, from 34 new infections on July 4 to 169 on Wednesday, according to the prefecture's COVID-19 tracking website.

"There is no way to deny that Okinawa is in the fifth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic," Tamaki said at a Tuesday press confer-

ence. "Today we confirmed 154 new cases and it is the first time in 34 days, since the 14th of June, that we confirmed more than 100 cases a day."

Tamaki imposed stricter measures than imposed in Tokyo and in Kanagawa prefecture, Tokyo's neighbor on its southern border. Kanagawa Gov. Yuji Kuroiwa on Wednesday declared a state of emergency in the cities of Yokohama, Kawasaki, Sagami-hara and Atsugi effective until Aug. 22.

Okinawa is home to the greatest concentration of U.S. troops and their families in Japan. On Thursday, the Marine Corps reported four new patients at four of its camps there.

One person each at Camps Hansen, Foster and Courtney and Marine Corps Air Station Futenma had tested positive, according to a Facebook post Thursday by Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

Kadena Air Base on Okinawa in June and July experienced a bump in case numbers, tallying 39 in June and 43, so far, this month.

A statement from Tamaki's office Wednesday outlined further measures, including a request to island residents to stay home and refrain from unnecessary travel, and calling on vacationers and other visitors to postpone their



DANIEL BETANCOURT/Stars and Stripes

Japan has counted more than 853,000 COVID-19 cases during the pandemic and more than 15,000 deaths. About 29.4 million people, or 23.3% of its population, are fully vaccinated.

plans or "stay healthy for two weeks before coming to Okinawa."

Prefectural facilities will close until July 31, he said, including Churaumi Aquarium, Shurijo Castle Park and Kaihin Park. Public libraries and museums may also close.

The prefecture is also stepping

up enforcement of restrictions on restaurants, bars and clubs, sending "night patrols" to check on those who disregard government requests to limit their business hours.

The government gave first notice to 287 businesses, ordered another 134 to comply with the restrictions, fining 29 of the latter for

violating the Special Measures Law, according to Tamaki. The law, passed by the national Diet in February, gives government authorities power to enforce coronavirus measures that were previously voluntary.

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Merkel says German rise in infections is worrying, urges vaccination

Associated Press

BERLIN — Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday that new coronavirus infections in Germany are once again rising at a worrying pace. She appealed to reluctant citizens to get vaccinated and urged compatriots to be more enthusiastic about the jabs to help persuade others.

Germany's infection rate remains very low compared with some other European countries. But it has been rising steadily since it bottomed out at 4.9 new weekly cases per 100,000 residents on July

6. The rise is being fueled by the more contagious delta variant, which is now dominant. On Thursday, the infection rate stood at 12.2.

The figures are rising with "worrying momentum," Merkel told reporters in Berlin. "We have exponential growth."

She appealed to Germans to stick to distancing and mask-wearing rules, but said that "we all know the key to overcoming the pandemic, the only way, is vaccination."

That, she said, would allow the country to deal with higher case numbers in the "looming fourth

wave" of infections without overloading the health system.

Slightly over 60% of the German population had received a first dose of vaccine by Thursday, while 48% were fully vaccinated. But the pace of vaccination has slowed in recent weeks even as new cases rise.

"We all want our normality back," Merkel said. "But we won't get this normality back alone — only as a community. And for this, we need significantly more vaccine protection."

Every shot is "one small step" to-

ward bringing life back to normal for everyone and contributes to protecting loved ones, she said, adding: "My request to all those who are already convinced of vaccination is, please try to help convince others."

The German government and many of its counterparts in the 27-nation European Union faced sharp criticism in the first months of this year when the EU's vaccination drive got off to a slower start than those in the U.K., the United States and Israel. It has since made up much of the difference.

But Merkel made clear Thursday that she considers the European approach vindicated, saying that it was "absolutely right" to order vaccines via the EU rather than Germany going ahead alone, and to allow significant European vaccine exports to the rest of the world.

"That distinguishes us and we can be proud of it," she said. "And if we see that, because of that, we are perhaps one or two months later than many other countries that gave away nothing at all, then I think this was all very good."

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Biden: Getting vaccine ‘gigantically important’

In 2 weeks, rolling average of new infections rises from 13K to 37K

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — President Joe Biden expressed pointed frustration over the slowing COVID-19 vaccination rate in the United States and pleaded that it’s “gigantically important” for Americans to step up and get inoculated against the virus as it surges once again.

Biden, speaking Wednesday night at a televised town hall in Cincinnati, said the public health crisis has turned largely into a plight of the unvaccinated as the spread of the delta variant has led to a surge in infections around the country.

“We have a pandemic for those who haven’t gotten the vaccination — it’s that basic, that simple,” he said on the CNN town hall.

The president also expressed optimism that children under 12 will be approved for vaccination in the coming months. But he displayed exasperation that so many

eligible Americans are still reluctant to get a shot.

“If you’re vaccinated, you’re not going to be hospitalized, you’re not going to be in the IC unit and you’re not going to die,” Biden said at the forum at Mount St. Joseph University. “So it’s gigantically important that ... we all act like Americans who care about our fellow Americans.”

U.S. hospitalizations and deaths are nearly all among the unvaccinated. But COVID-19 cases nearly tripled in the U.S. over two weeks amid an onslaught of vaccine misinformation that is straining hospitals, exhausting doctors and pushing clergy into the fray.

Across the U.S., the seven-day rolling average for daily new cases rose over the past two weeks to more than 37,000 on Tuesday, up from less than 13,700 on July 6, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Just 56.2% of Americans have gotten at least one



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

President Joe Biden speaks to reporters before boarding Air Force One at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport in Hebron, Ky., late Wednesday after speaking at a CNN town hall in Cincinnati.

dose of the vaccine, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Democratic president noted that the rise has become so concerning that even his critics are pushing back against vaccine disinformation.

Biden made an indirect refer-

ence to high-profile conservative personalities at Fox News Channel who have “had an altar call” and are now more openly speaking to their skeptical guests about the benefits of getting vaccinated. Sean Hannity recently told viewers, “I believe in the science of vaccination” and urged them to take

the disease seriously. Steve Doocy, who co-hosts “Fox & Friends,” this week told viewers the vaccination “will save your life.”

Before boarding Air Force One to return to Washington, Biden told reporters he was “glad they had the courage to say what they’ve said.”

US jobless claims rise to 419K from a pandemic low

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits rose last week from the lowest point of the pandemic, even as the job market appears to be rebounding on the strength of a reopened economy.

The Labor Department said Thursday that jobless claims increased last week to 419,000 from 368,000 the previous week. The weekly number of first-time appli-

cations for benefits, which generally tracks layoffs, has fallen steadily since topping 900,000 in early January.

Americans are shopping, traveling and eating out more as the pandemic has waned, boosting the economy and forcing businesses to scramble for more workers. Companies have posted the highest number of available jobs in the two decades that the data has been tracked. Hiring has picked up,

though businesses say they often can’t find enough employees at the wages they’re willing to pay.

At the same time, analysts are becoming concerned about the potential economic consequences of an uptick in confirmed viral infections as the highly contagious delta variant spreads, especially among the unvaccinated. The seven-day rolling U.S. average for daily new cases accelerated over the past two weeks to more than 37,000 as of Tuesday,

from fewer than 13,700, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Complaints by companies that they can’t find enough workers have led 22 states to prematurely end a \$300-a-week federal unemployment benefit, which comes on top of state jobless aid. Twenty states have ended their participation in two other federal programs — one of which provides benefits to the self-employed and gig workers, and another

that serves people who have been out of work for six months or longer.

The U.S. economy is also thought to have expanded briskly during the April-June quarter as Americans, flush with cash from stimulus checks and from stock market and home equity, stepped up their spending. Purchases at retail stores and restaurants rose in June, the government said last week. Retail sales are roughly 20% above pre-pandemic levels.

China rebuffs WHO’s terms for further COVID-19 origins study

Associated Press

BEIJING — China cannot accept the World Health Organization’s plan for the second phase of a study into the origins of COVID-19, a senior Chinese health official said Thursday.

Zeng Yixin, the vice minister of the National Health Commission, said he was “rather taken aback” that the plan includes further investigation of the theory that the

virus might have leaked from a Chinese lab.

He dismissed the lab leak idea as a rumor that runs counter to common sense and science.

“It is impossible for us to accept such an origin-tracing plan,” he said at a news conference called to address the COVID-19 origins issue.

The search for where the virus came from has become a diplo-

matic issue that has fueled China’s deteriorating relations with the United States and many American allies. The U.S. and others say that China has not been transparent about what happened in the early days of the pandemic. China accuses critics of seeking to blame it for the pandemic and politicizing an issue that should be left to scientists.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,

the director-general of WHO, acknowledged last week that there had been a “premature push” after the first phase of the study to rule out the theory that the virus might have escaped from a Chinese government lab in Wuhan, the city where the disease was first detected in late 2019.

Most experts don’t think a lab leak is the likely cause. The question is whether the possibility is so

remote that it should be dropped, or whether it merits further study.

Zeng said the Wuhan lab has no virus that can directly infect humans and noted that the WHO team concluded that a lab leak was highly unlikely. He added that speculation that staff and graduate students at the lab had been infected and might have started the spread of the virus in the city was untrue.

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NATION

California blaze now in Nevada

Associated Press

GARDNERVILLE, Nev. — A Northern California wildfire crossed into Nevada, prompting new evacuations, but better weather has been helping crews battling the nation's largest blaze in southern Oregon.

The Tamarack Fire south of Lake Tahoe had burned more than 68 square miles of timber and head-high chaparral in national forest land. It erupted on July 4 and was one of nearly two dozen blazes sparked by lightning strikes.

More than 1,200 firefighters were battling the Alpine County blaze, which has destroyed at least 10 buildings, forced evacuations in several communities and had closed parts of U.S. 395 in Nevada and California. Fire officials expected active or extreme fire behavior on Thursday, which could see 14-mph winds and temperatures approaching 90 degrees.

A request for voluntary evacua-



NATHAN HOWARD/AP

A firetruck responding to the Bootleg Fire is driven past a hand-painted sign thanking firefighters on Wednesday in Bly, Ore.

tions was also issued for portions of Douglas County, Nev. An evacuation center was set up at a community center in Gardnerville, Nev.

Evacuee Morgana-Le-Fae Veatch said she already had boxed up most of her belongings because she is starting community college next week but her parents lost their house in a 1987 blaze.

"So this has been really, really stressing to them," she said.

Meanwhile, Oregon on Wednesday banned all campfires on state-managed lands and in state campgrounds east of Interstate 5, the ma-

nor highway that is commonly considered the dividing line between the wet western part of the state and the dry eastern half.

The nation's largest wildfire, Oregon's Bootleg Fire, grew to 618 square miles — just over half the size of Rhode Island.

However, authorities said lower winds and temperatures allowed crews to improve fire lines. The fire also was approaching an area burned by a previous fire on its active southeastern flank, raising hopes that lack of fuel could reduce its spread.

Weinstein pleads not guilty in California assault cases

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Harvey Weinstein pleaded not guilty in a Los Angeles courtroom Wednesday to four counts of rape and seven other sexual assault counts.

Sheriff's deputies brought the 69-year-old convicted rapist into court in a wheelchair. He was wearing a brown jail jumpsuit and face mask. Attorney Mark Werksman entered the plea for the disgraced movie mogul a day after Weinstein was extradited to California from New York, where he was serving a 23-year prison term.

Weinstein spoke only to say "thank you" to Judge Sergio Tapia, who wished him good luck as the hearing ended.

He now awaits a second trial on a second coast, and the possibility of another lengthy sentence.

Weinstein's indictment involves five women in incidents spanning from 2004 to 2013. Most are said to have taken place in the hotels in Beverly Hills and Los Angeles that the New York-based Weinstein would make his headquarters for Hollywood business. Some took place during Oscars week, when his films were perennial conten-

ders before the #MeToo movement brought him down.

He pleaded not guilty to four counts of rape, four counts of forcible oral copulation, two counts of sexual battery by restraint and one count of sexual penetration by use of force, charges that together could bring a sentence of 140 years.

Werksman told the judge that he was filing documents requesting the dismissal of three of the counts, saying they were beyond the statute of limitations.

"They're baseless, they're from long, long ago, they're uncorroborated," Werksman said of the charges after the hearing. "We are confident that if we have a fair trial he will be acquitted."

The women were not identified in the indictment.

Attorney Gloria Allred, who represents two of them, said the age of the incidents was not a factor in their truth.

"Allegations of sexual assault and rape do take a long time to report, so the idea that they may not have disclosed to a law enforcement officer for many years does not mean that those are not credible," Allred said.



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NATION

Garland launches strike forces to address gun trafficking, violence

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department is launching an effort in five cities in the United States to reduce spiking gun violence by addressing illegal trafficking and prosecuting offenses that help put guns in the hands of criminals.

Attorney General Merrick Garland will launch the gun trafficking strike forces in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington. The effort will include stepped-up enforcement in so-called supply areas — cities and states where it's easier to obtain firearms that are later trafficked into other cities with more restrictive gun laws.

Besides prioritizing gun crimes, the strike forces will embrace intelligence sharing and prosecutions across jurisdictions, Justice Department officials said. Authorities have also embedded federal agents in homicide units of police departments across the U.S., have been deploying additional crime

analysts and are conducting fugitive sweeps to arrest people who have outstanding state and federal warrants for violent crimes.

Violent crimes, particularly homicides and shootings, are up in many cities around the country, and the Biden administration has sought to aid communities hamstrung by violence. But the initiative launched this week differs from other recent federal efforts to address violence, because it is not sending agents or prosecutors into cities with crime spikes. Justice officials say the strike forces are targeted prosecutions meant to be a longer-term effort to combat gun trafficking.

There is no federal gun trafficking law, so federal agents often must rely on other statutes, like lying on a firearms purchase form, to prosecute gun trafficking cases or stop straw purchasers, people who buy weapons legally to then provide them to others who can't legally have them.

But if the effort sounds familiar,

it is. In 2017, Chicago police, federal agents and prosecutors launched a similar initiative — the Chicago Crime Gun Strike Force — to try to stem the flow of illegal firearms in the city and curb rampant gun violence.

The Justice Department said that strike force was formed in response to a surge in firearm violence and its work is continuing, but it has been focused locally in Chicago on reducing violence and not on gun trafficking from other jurisdictions that put the guns in the hands of criminals. That's been the case with similar gun task forces, too, including in New York.

"These previous approaches generally surged resources to specific areas, without a sustained focus on cross-jurisdictional trafficking," the department said. "Now we are formalizing and standardizing coordination between districts. This strategy is focused on trafficking — keeping firearms out of the hands of those who will pull the trigger."

8 wounded in bus on same day Chicago sees fatal shootings

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A drive-by shooting in Chicago wounded eight people who had been riding on a party bus, one of several shootings in the city that left at least three people dead on the same day, police said.

The mass shooting happened late Wednesday in Lincoln Park on the city's North Side when one or more people in an SUV fired at the group, police said.

Following the party bus shooting, one man was hospitalized in critical condition with a gunshot wound to the chest, police said, while the other men and women who were wounded were in good, fair or serious condition.

No arrests were reported and police didn't immediately say what may have led to the shooting.

Earlier in the night, a drive-by shooting on the city's Near West Side left two men dead. The men were standing outside in West Town when someone in a passing SUV fired shots at them. No one was immediately taken into custody.

Ten other people were shot, one fatally, in two mass shootings within blocks and minutes of each other Wednesday evening in North Lawndale on Chicago's West Side, police said.

A 14-year-old boy died after being shot in the head in one shooting, which also wounded four other teens, including a 16-year-old who was in grave condition, police said.

The second shooting about the same time wounded five people, including an 18-year-old man who was in critical condition and a 14-year-old boy who was in good condition.

Chicago police Deputy Chief Ernest Cato visited the site of the second shooting and pleaded for the public's help in investigating the attacks.

"We're going to need an all-hands-on-deck approach, and that approach is going to involve ... our community getting involved, and saying what's going on," he said. "Our community who has cellphone pictures, who has Facebook information. We're going to need your help."

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WEEKEND



John Mayer finds solace in soft rock
Music, Page 28

Not toying around



Known for playing charming leading men, Henry Golding goes all-in on the tough stuff in G.I. Joe film 'Snake Eyes'

Profile and review on Page 15

PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



iStock

As people venture out from under the blanket of pandemic isolation and into the world of live music festivals, concerts and open movie theaters, virtual events could be here to stay.

What Zoom fatigue?

Pandemic virtual concerts may have changed live music forever

BY RYAN FAUGHNDER
Los Angeles Times

Americans may be bleary-eyed from Zoom fatigue, and many may be desperate to get back to live concerts and movie theaters.

But virtual events are here to stay, despite the return of music festivals, movies and comedy shows, after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, according to new data recently published by United Talent Agency.

Three out of four people attended an online event during the pandemic, according to a survey of 1,000 consumers by UTA IQ, the research and strategy division of the Beverly Hills, Calif., talent agency. Of those who participated in a virtual event, 88% said they plan to do so again even when in-person gatherings return.

Music and video gaming could be a significant draw for future streamed gatherings. Three-fourths of consumers surveyed said they plan to attend virtual music or gaming events post-COVID-19, according to UTA.

The findings are somewhat surprising given that the survey also found a high level of pent-up demand for the return of in-person events after the pandemic canceled or delayed music festivals, stand-up shows and blockbuster movies for more than a year.

According to UTA, whose business is heavily dependent on live event venues and movie theaters being open, 96% of respondents plan to return to some form of live entertainment event once it's safe. The survey indicated that people are "most excited" for sporting events, concerts and movies.

But streamed live shows — which many people experienced for the first time out of necessity dur-

ing lockdown — are likely to remain a supplement for people's entertainment diets, the UTA survey suggested.

This comes after concert promoters including Live Nation, streaming platforms such as Spotify and record companies like Warner Music Group invested in livestreamed concerts and events as a way to adapt to the crisis.

Major artists adopted the practice to keep engaging with fans when they weren't able to go on tour. UTA client Post Malone, for example, livestreamed an hour-plus live Nirvana tribute in April; it's now available on his YouTube channel.

Livestreamed shows can be a benefit for fans who can't make it to the actual concert in person because of timing or cost, and they also allow for a certain amount of interaction between the audience and the artists. Streamed shows can allow viewers to submit song requests and playlist suggestions, for instance.

"For a population that is seeking closer connections to each other and to the talent, being physically present at the event is the purest way to experience that," said Joseph Kessler, global head of UTA IQ. "But over the last 16 months or so, consumers have come to see the benefits of these virtual events."

Surveys are not always reliable predictors of behavior. However, the UTA data are the latest to indicate that some behaviors consumers picked up during the pandemic will not fade away with the virus, especially when it comes to streaming.

In an earlier UTA study, 56% of consumers surveyed said they added at least one subscription streaming service. After the pandemic, 71% of those surveyed said they plan to use more than one subscription video streaming service.

GADGETS

Headphones with a comfy fit and crystal-clear sound

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

The House of Marley Positive Vibration XL ANC over-the-ear Bluetooth headphones have taken over as my morning coffee companion. Not that they aren't great for almost any use, but just as I reach for cream to put in my coffee, I reach for the headphones to turn off the world for an hour or so every morning.

Regardless of the style, I've always thought the most important feature to consider when buying headphones is comfort. Without it, the sound doesn't matter. So like every other style of headphones I've tried, when I started testing these they didn't get charged, paired or play one note of music until they sat on my head.

After a few minutes, my ears and head were sold on the Ultra comfort memory foam ear cushions and headband, meaning it was time to move on with the music, which will be heard through 40mm high-definition drivers.

It's worth noting that the HOM Positive Vibration XL ANC headphones carry on the company's tradition of using eco-friendly materials for the headphones. According to HOM, they are crafted using environmentally conscious materials including FSC certified wood, recycled material fabric, recyclable aluminum, and cables from 99 percent post-consumer PE.

While all that's great, the sound passed my nonscientific testing with flying colors. In a quiet atmosphere, with the Hybrid Active Noise Cancellation turned on, the isolation of the sound was crystal clear, and had the right amount of bass. And all without any outside ambient noise.

The headphones feature advanced quick-charging (USB-C) for 26 hours of play with ANC on and 35 hours with it off. A built-in microphone works fine for hands-free calls, and they are built with a foldable hinge design for compact storage.

Controls for ANC, hands-free calls, music and track navigation are on the ear cups and worked well. A storage bag, tangle-free braided aux cable (for wired

listening), USB-C charging cable, paperwork and a Marley sticker are included.

Online: thehouseofmarley.com (\$149.99 available in black and copper)

Fugoo's new line of 2.0 portable speakers adds 20% louder volume and can be paired with any other Fugoo 2.0 speaker to

create a full surround sound atmosphere at any social gathering, regardless of the weather or surroundings.

The solid Tough 2.0 is built (2.5-by-8-by-3 inches, 1.2 pounds) to look exactly as the name describes. It's tough appearance is real, making it virtually indestructible with waterproof

seals, enhanced shock engineering with resilient end caps to absorb drops, bumps and scrapes. It can go into up to 3 feet of water and snow for up to 30 minutes.

A handheld ergonomic design is great for portability, and an upward angle of the speakers directs the sound toward your ears. The speaker's design lets sound escape from all four sides, resulting in 360-degree audio. Inside are two tweeters, two mid/woofers and one passive radiator.

The enhanced sound quality is a result of Fugoo's redesigned speaker topology, which according to Fugoo, delivers enhanced, richer, fuller sound at significantly louder volumes than the original models. Specific to the Tough, the driver topology creates an enhanced psycho-acoustic effect for a better overall soundstage.

What I hear is an amazing sound at any volume. They are true to their word about the increased volume, which often results in distorted sound with other speakers. But that's not the case with the Tough 2.0. It's able to take on the loudest volume setting while maintaining clarity the whole way.

Fugoo speakers work hands-free as a speakerphone with the built-in omnidirectional microphone. They also support Google Now and Siri voice support. The battery is rated for 12 hours of sound before the 3.4v 2500mAh Lithium-Ion rechargeable battery needs a USB charge.

Online: fugoo.com



HOUSE OF MARLEY/TNS

But streamed live shows ... are likely to remain a supplement for people's entertainment diets.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

Henry Golding is shown in a scene from "Snake Eyes: G.I. Joe Origins," based on the toys and comics.

'Jumping into the deep end'

Golding says training for his hand-to-hand, sword fighting sequences in 'Snake Eyes' was nothing like the boxing, muay thai he had done in past

By PETER SBLENDORIO

New York Daily News

Henry Golding wasn't toying around while preparing to bring to life a classic G.I. Joe hero in the new "Snake Eyes" film.

For two months before production even began, the actor immersed himself in the rigorous training and intricate stunt work necessary to embody the titular sword-wielding warrior trained by Japanese ninjas.

"Going into a movie like this, you cannot go in halfhearted," Golding, 34, told the Daily News. "You really have to commit because there's so much on the line. We wanted to see the actors doing the sequences. There's none of this flourishing swords, waving it around in the air. The movements are so acute and so efficient — the way it should be, especially in the world of samurais and ninjas."

"Snake Eyes: G.I. Joe Origins" provides a backstory for one of the most popular characters in the G.I. Joe line of action figures and comics.

For Golding, that meant uncovering the mystery behind a fighter known for his slick black mask in ways fans have never seen before.

"It's the guy before the mask," Golding said. "It's him before going to Arashikage and becoming the Snake Eyes that we know and love. It's the guy that has been led down a path, has been broken and kicked to a curb. The person that has made deals which, to an everyday person, seem so insane, but he has motives, and they're misled motives. That's what we delve into."

Known for leading roles in the romantic comedy

"Crazy Rich Asians" and the crime movie "The Gentlemen," Golding relished the chance to portray a full-blown action hero in "Snake Eyes."

Although Golding had trained in boxing and muay thai, nothing compared with the martial arts work and katana sword training he did for his new movie.

"I've always loved the physicality and the epicness of action movies," Golding said. "That's where my love of movies started, was sci-fi/action, like 'The Matrix' or growing up with Jackie Chan films. For me, it was always like, when will be the point where we get into that?"

"Snake Eyes" was literally like jumping into the deep end," he laughed. "Gun movies and shooting movies, they're fun and there's definitely a sense of physicality, but when you're hand-to-hand, when your main weapon is a sword, it's a different element altogether."

The actor said he appreciated how "Snake Eyes" director Robert Schwentke drew inspiration from iconic samurai movies where onscreen action was always "justified" and every combat move had a purpose.

"It just brings a sense of groundedness and a true storytelling factor to this," Golding said.

Golding, who was born in Malaysia and lived in the U.K. as a child, remembers the G.I. Joe franchise that launched in America in the early 1980s.

"Everybody knew who Snake Eyes was," Golding said. "That was the most iconic character. To be part of that (with the movie), it was like, 'Whoa, this is a dream.' To be able to put onscreen a story as rich as this, I think, is so necessary."

REVIEW

'Snake Eyes' misuses, miscasts lead actor in woefully generic role

By LINDSEY BAHR

Associated Press

Henry Golding has undeniable screen presence. He's handsome, sure. Lots of actors are. But Golding also has that effortless charisma that the biggest movie stars possess. It's no wonder that he was catapulted from relative, travel show host obscurity to film fame with just one role in "Crazy Rich Asians" and that his name often pops up as a fan choice for the next James Bond. If the powers in Hollywood don't mess it up, he's going to be around for quite some time.

It's also not surprising that the industry would capitalize on his breakthrough moment and come knocking with some piece of intellectual property for him to star in. Unfortunately that IP piece is "Snake Eyes," an origin story about a G.I. Joe character that completely misunderstands its star's appeal. Golding is simply not the right actor for the part. He's not exactly bad, just miscast and misused. And despite the novel trimmings and flash around him, his character is woefully generic.

"Snake Eyes" has some things going for it. For one, the names Cobra and G.I. Joe aren't uttered for almost an hour. Credited screenwriters Evan Spiliotopoulos, Anna Waterhouse and Joe Shrapnel seem to have some understanding that a mere G.I. Joe association isn't enough to get regular moviegoers into theaters. And after seeing Atlanta and Vancouver destroyed over and over again in superhero films it is a breath of fresh air to be transported to Tokyo, where director Robert Schwentke (RED, R.I.P.D.) makes sure to lovingly shoot both the neon and the ancient.

In fact, if you can make it to the Tokyo section, which takes almost a half hour to get to, you'll be in for a fairly fun ride as Snake Eyes starts to train with an ancient Japanese clan called the Arashikage. In the unnecessarily dull first part, we learn that Snake Eyes' father was murdered in front of him when he was a boy; he's spent his life since as a loner living on the streets and stuffing fish with weapons for the Yakuza, and he also saves the life of the Arashikage heir, Tommy (Andrew Koji).

Is he just naturally a good fighter? Did he have training? You won't learn that answer in "Snake Eyes," but pretty soon both the Arashikage and another

The true sin is that Snake Eyes as a character is so deathly dull. He barely has a personality. He is purely driven by revenge and also doesn't seem to have to work all that hard at anything.

well-established crime syndicate are using him as their go-to muscle and brains. In other words, his ascent through these established ranks is alarmingly swift.

This backstory also requires Golding to affect an unrefined American accent, which is a stretch and a mistake. His "ain't" doesn't sound like any "ain't" you've heard before. That can be forgiven: He's not the first Brit to be in over his head in that regard. The true sin is that Snake Eyes as a character is so deathly dull. He barely has a personality. He is purely driven by revenge and also doesn't seem to have to work all that hard at anything.

It's frustrating because he's actually surrounded by some fairly interesting characters, like the naive but arrogant Tommy, who is desperate for his grandmother's approval (Eri Ishida plays Sen, who leads the clan). And there's Akiko too, played by Haruka Abe, who is not a blood relation in the clan but has risen through skill and grit to become one of the trusted inner circle. Either of these women's stories would have been more interesting to focus on.

The IP takes over the story eventually and we meet a Cobra agent Ursula Corbero's Baroness, and a "Joe," Scarlett, played by Samara Weaving who as usual does wonders with a no expectations role. Although, like many toy-based movies, "Snake Eyes" might be betting too much on audiences caring more about the connections to a broader universe of Joes than the story in front of them.

"Snake Eyes" is rated PG-13 for sequences of strong violence and brief strong language. Running time: 122 minutes. Now in theaters.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

An expression of Joe Bell's purest love

Based on a true story, film tells of a father coming to terms with gay son's death

BY KATIE WALSH

Tribune News Service (TNS)

The new Mark Wahlberg-starring drama "Joe Bell," directed by Reinaldo Marcus Green, is based on a true story that took place in 2013, when a lumber worker, Joe Bell (Wahlberg), set out on a journey to walk from La Grande, Ore., to New York City. His stated goal was to bring awareness to bullying, spurred by the horrific experiences of his teen son, Jadin (Reid Miller), who came out as gay as a young teenager. Initially, Jadin joins his father on the walk, bopping along next to him, singing Lady Gaga's "Born This Way," ribbing his old man, the two sparring with each other about what Joe's trying to accomplish out here on the road.

If you've read a single log line for the film or have a familiarity with the real events, you know the twist, or, rather, the conceit at play here. Joe is walking across America because his son is dead, a phrase he finally speaks aloud about 30 minutes in, to a stricken drag queen in a gay bar somewhere between Idaho and Colorado. Jadin died by suicide because of the extreme bullying and harassment he suffered at the hands of his peers, and now, on the road, Joe toils with what part he played in his son's life and death.

By all accounts, the real Joe Bell was loving and supportive. But the Joe that Wahlberg plays in "Joe Bell" is tough, gruff and rough around the edges, mercurial, angry and defensive. Even though he frequently tells his wife Lola (Connie Britton) and kids how much he loves them, this Joe isn't easy to like. But you root for him anyway, because he continues to put one foot in front of the other, and his breakthrough seems imminent. Pushing a cart of supplies while 18-wheelers whiz by leaves him ex-



Roadside Attractions

Mark Wahlberg, right, and Reid Miller appear in a scene from "Joe Bell." Miller plays the son of Joe Bell (Wahlberg), who killed himself after being bullied and harassed by his peers for coming out as gay.

hausted, but his mind tumbles endlessly through memories. He walks because it gives him something to do while his mind cycles through guilt, shame and despair. He walks to make his son's death matter, to make sense in some way. He walks to leave the mark of Jadin's death on his body, on the world.

There are moments in "Joe Bell" where you wish the story opened up beyond Joe's blinkered point of view, but it is a laser-focused piece. Though it sometimes feels a bit treacly and hackneyed, or even predictable, "Joe Bell" resists expectation, and where this true story ends up is far more poignant and devastating than any work of

fiction could be.

The script, by Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana, contains a rough-hewn poetry, leaving little to the imagination; everything that needs to be is said, and a folksy country soundtrack underlines the woeful tone of this modern Western fable. Green applies a naturalistic visual style; the camera (the cinematographer is Jacques Jouffret) regards the crags of Wahlberg's dusty, tanned visage like the stark landscapes that surround him. In some of the more delicate moments, Green wisely employs restraint, so it rarely feels exploitative or manipulative.

"Joe Bell" is a tale of emotional redemp-

tion for a man who relearns what it means to "be a man," and his moments of triumph are the quietest ones, over a humble meal with a local sheriff (Gary Sinise), or in challenging family conversations. As Joe struggles to find purpose in his walk, it becomes clear that it's not about awareness, but simply as an expression of a father's purest love. For all the progress that's been made for "equality" and "tolerance," what's most important is that kids feel not just accepted, but loved, for exactly who they are.

"Joe Bell" is rated R for language including offensive slurs, some disturbing material and teen partying. Running time: 90 minutes. Now in theaters.

'Fear Street: 1666' brings Shadyside trilogy full circle

BY ADAM GRAHAM

The Detroit News (TNS)

The "Fear Street" trilogy — Netflix's ambitious three-horror-movies-in-three-weeks streaming experiment — comes to a satisfying conclusion with "Fear Street Part Three: 1666," which brings the tale of the cursed town of Shadyside, Ohio, full circle.

If the tale's first two 1994- and 1978-set chapters took their cues from "Scream" and "Friday the 13th," respectively, "1666" borrows from "The Witch," or other period tales of the threat of witchcraft and the resulting panic of townspeople.

It also brings back the series' strongest thread, the love story between Kiana Madeira's and Olivia Scott Welch's characters, which leads to the revelation of the source of the town's curse.

It's 1666, and the casts from the previous two films are back playing ancestral versions of their characters. Madeira is



Netflix

From left: Julia Rehwald as Lizzie, Kiana Madeira as Sarah and Olivia Scott Welch as Hannah in "Fear Street Part 3: 1666." When the romantic affair between Sarah and Hannah is exposed, a witch hunt ensues in the cursed town of Shadyside, Ohio.

Sarah Fier, who would come to haunt Shadyside for generations, and Welch is Hannah Miller. Their secret affair is exposed and inspires a good old-fashioned

witch hunt, proving fear and intolerance are as old as the hills.

"1666" loosely adheres to its time period — the characters speak with slight accents

but skip the "thous" and "arts" that were representative of the era — and director Leigh Janiak resists the urge to drop the needle on some bangin' soundtrack fare, which powered the first two chapters.

The timing and pacing of the action back "1666" into a corner — if things seem like they're ramping up to end well before the run time expires, it's because they are — which the film wiggles out of with an innovative narrative twist too good to spoil here.

The "Fear Street" films — they're based on a series of books by "Goosebumps" author R. L. Stine — will be remembered for their rollout, a first of their kind for a streaming property. But there's plenty to admire in this fun, bloody, cheeky and self-aware series beyond their release strategy. "Fear Street" is a gory good time.

"Fear Street Part Three: 1666" is rated R for strong violence and gore, language, some sexuality and brief drug use. Running time: 112 minutes. Now streaming on Netflix.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Strangely moving

Nic Cage is looking for a stolen 'Pig' in a film of — wait for it — enormous beauty and depth

By MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN
The Washington Post

If there's one thing Nicolas Cage could always be relied on to deliver, it's unpredictability. But in recent years, the actor has churned out a steady stream of — for lack of a better word — predictably cheesy trash, including “Mom and Dad,” “Mandy” and “Color Out of Space.” This has led some to wonder how the Oscar-winning star of “Leaving Las Vegas” and an Oscar nominee for “Adaptation” could have turned into what the website No Film School called a “B-movie god.”

Cage's newest film, “Pig,” is a drama about a misanthropic former chef named Robin who lives in the woods of the Pacific Northwest with no friends, phone or shower, and who — after his prized truffle pig is stolen — leaves his run-down shack for the upscale foodie subculture of downtown Portland in which he was once a superstar. He has one mission: to retrieve the missing animal.

The trailer for the film, in which Cage appears bearded, bloodied and with long, bedraggled hair, features his character whispering, with the actor's characteristic,

almost malevolent intensity, “Who has my pig?” Could this film go the way of so much of Cage's recent work — that is, over the top and back around again, with a tour de force of manic energy?

No.

Well, sure, it could go that way, but it doesn't. In this strangely moving little film — the feature debut of director Michael Sarnoski, working from a screenplay he co-wrote with Vanessa Block — Cage reins in the tendency to overdo things, delivering a soulful performance of unexpected depth and quiet beauty. It's his best work since the underrated “Joe,” from 2014, and a reminder what the actor is capable of.

Robin's quest peels away, like an onion, the layers of a backstory involving painful loss, and a relationship with the pig that transcends the animal's skills. Let's call it what Robin calls it: love. Sarnoski is aided in telling this story — which also involves other characters who have experienced loss — by a strong cast. Alex Wolff plays the truffle dealer Amir, who arrives in a yellow Camaro once a week to pick up the bounty that Robin and his pig have unearthed; and Adam Arkin is Amir's business rival, with a connection to Amir that



DAVID REAMER/Neon

Nicolas Cage goes looking for the thief who stole his prized truffle pig in “Pig.”

only reveals itself late in the film.

There are some elements of a thriller here. The trail pursued by Robin leads him to the literal underbelly of the Portland restaurant scene, including a subterranean fight club where the protagonist picks up the scent of his quarry. But the whodunit is never really the point.

“Pig's” stock in trade is a kind of visual and narrative poetry, and Sarnoski and Block ply it with the skill and light touch of master chefs.

There's a paradox at the heart of “Pig” that, rather than weakening the story, lends it strength. It has everything to do

with Cage himself, who has always been at the top of his game when he plays against the volcanic emotions inside his character, rather than indulging them. That paradox is embodied in the film's closing song, which plays over an almost beatific image of Robin: Bruce Springsteen's “I'm on Fire,” delivered in a gently folksy, almost fragile rendition by Cassandra Violet. Like the character at the heart of “Pig” — who is not, as it turns out, a pig at all, even metaphorically — it is smoldering and gentle.

“Pig” is rated R for strong language and some violence. Running time: 92 minutes.

‘Val’ offers a deep portrait of Kilmer

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

In his latest film, Val Kilmer gets an unusual screen credit for a bona fide Hollywood movie star: cinematographer.

That's because the documentary “Val” is built on thousands of hours Kilmer filmed since he was a boy — growing up, on movie sets, in cars, in hospitals. This is a lifetime-in-the-making cinematographer's credit.

Thanks to Kilmer's relentless drive to document things, “Val” is a remarkably intimate film and a moving one, too. For a performer who has come off as chilly and difficult, this doc doesn't counter those perceptions as much as explain them.

“I have behaved poorly. I have behaved bravely. I have behaved bizarrely to some. I deny none of this and have no regrets because I have lost and found parts of myself that I never knew existed,” he says toward the end. “And I am blessed.”

Actually, he leaves much of the talking to his son. The elder Kilmer's voice has been impaired from throat cancer treatments and Jack Kilmer narrates the majority of the film using his father's words, naturally while being filmed. “Now that it's more difficult to speak, I want to tell my story more than ever,” says the elder Kilmer.

“Val” would not be the film it is if Kilmer hadn't been an early adopter of hand-held video cameras, giving us home movies, audition tapes and live auditions. “I've kept everything,” he confides. His is a legitimate reason to be a hoarder.

Kilmer's screen credits include Batman in “Batman Forever” in 1995, brash fighter pilot Lt. Tom “Iceman” Kazansky in the 1986 hit “Top Gun,” and rock icon Jim Morrison in the 1991 Oliver Stone film, “The Doors.”

The film lingers on each of those roles but perhaps the most intriguing parts are Kilmer's earnest auditions for roles he never got. For “Full Metal Jacket,” he filmed himself using multiple voices to try to seduce director Stanley Kubrick and also made an audition video to play Henry Hill in “Goodfellas.” He got neither part.

Directors Ting Poo and Leo Scott have spun a mostly chronological profile, starting with Kilmer's childhood and then giving us an unvarnished look at the star's career, marriage and fatherhood, and ending it post-surgery as Kilmer struggles to be heard.

The filmmakers have a tendency to bring Kilmer to the scene of a favorite place — say, The Juilliard School in New York or a former family home — and then

melt back in time by using the old movies. They'll show images of Kilmer's family hiking in the '80s and then revisit the same area with the middle-aged Kilmer. Sometimes the images are forced, as when father and son dress up in cheap Batman and Robin costumes.

This is no glamour project. He and his estranged wife bicker over custody of their two children, he is shown laconically slapping bugs with a flyswatter poolside in middle age, and he looks fragile at a Comic-Con, puking at a signing station, a towel over his head as he's rushed out in a wheelchair.

Kilmer — enigmatic to the rest of us — is portrayed as a quirky soul. He is shown shooting Silly String at his loved ones, sobbing as he puts on his late mother's jewelry and pretending to pass out to freak out his son. He is much funnier than we expect and forces us to question why we thought him difficult at all.

The film leans on Kilmer's 2020 bestselling autobiography “I'm Your Huckleberry” — like the line “The distance between heaven and hell is the distance between faith and doubt” — but has more punch because of the footage.

Tune in to see backstage video from “Slab Boys” on Broadway,



A24/AP

A young Val Kilmer is pictured in a scene from the documentary “Val.”

with co-stars Kevin Bacon and Sean Penn slowly mooning the camera. He calls an early role in “Top Secret” just “fluff” and documents why “The Island of Dr. Moreau” was “doomed.” He's such a Method actor that he constructed a backstory for the arrogant Iceman in “Top Gun.”

Kilmer is an intense actor, to be sure. When he played Doc Holliday in “Tombstone,” he filled his bed with ice for the final scene to mimic the feeling of dying from tuberculosis. To play Morrison, he wore leather pants all the time and blasted The Doors for a year, neither of which helped his marriage.

The film is bookended by trag-

edy. The weight of loss after Kilmer's younger brother Wesley died accidentally at age 15 hangs over the actor and the documentary returns again and again to home movies the two made, heartbreakingly. And the loss of Kilmer's voice means he must grapple with legacy and death in his 60s.

Even so, a relentless optimism comes through, especially his relationship with his adult children, who clearly adore their dad. “I've lived a magical life,” Kilmer concludes. It's hard to argue back.

“Val” is rated R for language. It opened in theaters on Friday and is available on Prime Video on Aug. 6. Running time: 109 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Feels like a warm, fuzzy bear hug

A love letter to cozy games, the gentle game movement we need right now

BY TODD MARTENS
Los Angeles Times

Cozy Grove arrived in the spring as an Animal Crossing-inspired game with a bittersweet tone, characters struggling with unresolved trauma and bite-sized missions.

Now, it's become a ritual.

Cozy Grove, available for iOS devices, PCs and all major consoles, is often what I reach for first thing in the morning, a pre-coffee digital relaxant to ease into the world of the awake with daily lessons about attempting to live a life free of regrets. Most of the game's characters are bears, and they're dead — spirits — many struggling with remorse or shame that's carried over into their ghostly state.

These bears worry about ailments. They hate the way they look. They wish the living would stop treating them like ghosts rather than fully capable beings. They find out everyone was scared to tell them their baked goods were inedible.

Yet as anyone who has ever played Super Mario Bros. knows, games are metaphors. A treatise on the power of family, the struggle of the 9-to-5, the ability to find surrealism in daily life and a reminder to not give up on true love regardless of the obstacles — that's the Mario message, right?

In Cozy Grove, by helping the bears face reality, or sometimes simply the better parts of nostalgia, we heal lost souls. Doing so brings an island paradise to life, populating it with all the colors of a natural, wildlife-inspired spectrum. A bleak world of driftwood becomes a mystical campground, and we advance through the game essentially by building more mindful bears. As in Animal Crossing, we craft objects, go fishing and mostly hunt for lost items, but the story progresses simply by listening and becoming something akin to a therapist for the spirits.

It's thoughtful, a game that, like many released in recent weeks, possesses a healthy conscience. While independent games long ago helped popularize the idea of concocting digital worlds built primarily for exploration, a so-called "wholesome games" movement — led by a social media account and site of the same name — has created a makeshift genre that's brought more visibility to games in which the joy is uncovering a universe rather than obliterating it, often with ideas on how to be better custodians of our current one.

At the very least, Cozy Grove and other gentle games such as the coloring-book-like adventure Chicory: A Colorful Tale and the run-away-from-home fairy tale The Wild at Heart are conversational, using gameplay that deviates from running and jumping and pointing and shooting to get players to slow down and engage in an interactive dialogue with what's on the screen. They're games that don't just extend a hand; they feel like a hug.

Across its various social media platforms, Wholesome Games has tallied



Spry Fox

In Cozy Grove, players bring an island paradise to life by helping bear characters face reality to heal their lost souls.

more than 200,000 community members, and a recent online showcase, Wholesome Direct, provided looks at more than 75 games. They were diverse in genre and style, ranging from Beasts of Maravilla Island, a calming and beautiful celebration of mythical animals, which is available now, to the upcoming Lake, a game about a woman who quits her fancy job to be a mail carrier.

"Folks are curious to know 'why now?' with regards to an influx of wholesome games," says Matthew Taylor, independent game developer and founder of Wholesome Games. "As much as I'd love to take the credit, I genuinely think that the desire for these types of games has always existed."

Taylor and others partly attribute the popularity of Wholesome Games' online events to some of the same factors that led to the rise in indie games: the proliferation of university video game development programs, lower costs to develop games and the ubiquitousness of mobile games, which turned many of us into gamers and inspired some to be curious about and more deeply investigate the medium. Another factor is the pandemic, with old and new players alike looking for accessible, connective experiences that de-emphasize violence.

One more crucial shift is a long overdue acknowledgment that games and their action-focused genre classifications — shooters, platformers, roguelike — have catered to a specific, existing community rather than seeking to more broadly build a new one. Don't worry if you don't know what the above genres mean; as others have noted, they don't tell you much about the game.



FINJI/TNS

In Chicory, players learn that art heals. Chicory is a 2D RPG game featuring an anthropomorphic dog that uses a magical paint brush to paint the game world.

"At the end of the day, I think these narratives are interesting and partially true," says Taylor when asked why an estimated few hundred thousand tuned into this year's Wholesome Direct. "But they let an industry that's been catering specifically to young white men for almost its entire existence off the hook." A wider audience has "always existed. Now the games are finally catching up."

While the word "wholesome" has generated a debate over genre names and what to include or exclude, the movement feels revolutionary for the game space; unlike film, books or television, game genres have often been defined by what they ask the player to do rather than what they may want the player to feel. "Wholesome," like the words "punk," "hip-hop"

or "rom-com," isn't a brand so much as a welcome mat to someone looking for something to play.

For the Seattle-based Spry Fox team behind Cozy Grove, such terminology, particularly the word that graces its game, has become something of a mission statement. Cozy Grove, for instance, recently added the ability to hug a bear.

"We're hoping to take this to the next level and do a large-scale Animal Crossing-like game that will bring people together and hopefully make them feel less lonely, in addition to feeling cozy," says studio co-founder David Edery. "The absence of loneliness and coziness are very interrelated. We're feeling like this is a thing that we want to dedicate ourselves to for the next several years."

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Hair-trigger flamenco in sensual Andalucía

Until European travel becomes fully open to Americans, here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe.

In Spain's Andalucía region, revelry and religiosity go hand in hand. The same passion and energy dedicated to partying is put into long, solemn religious processions that clog the narrow streets of its towns and cities. In Andalucía, it seems there's always something going on. But you'll miss the action if you're in your hotel room after dinner. Yes, dinner is late ... and the impromptu festivities are often even later. The sun is gone, it's finally cool, and everyone — young and old — is suddenly energized.

I was enjoying dinner at a restaurant in Córdoba with Isabel, a charming local guide who talks about food with the passion of a mother talking about her children. With the olive oil, the lighting and her love of the cuisine all just right, every plate seemed to twinkle and shine. The meal was a montage of Spanish delights, from the roasted almonds and spicy green olives that hit the table automatically, to the local salmorejo (like a thick, bright orange gazpacho), boquerones (anchovies), fried eggplant, and "Arab salad" with cod and delicate orange sections.

The rabo de toro (bull tail stew) was as dark as meat can be ... almost inky, even in flavor. The jamón ibérico — a gift from the restaurant — was introduced as "the best

ham in Spain" and very expensive. With its fat not lining the meat but mixed in, it was glistening with flavor. Eating it was the culinary equivalent of pinning a boutonniere onto a tux. The wine was the kind that inspires servers to bring out the special glasses.



Rick Steves

Stepping out of the restaurant, we were swept into a somber procession, poignant and powerful. Trumpets blared a fanfare, children carried a homemade float and candles jostled in unison as the marchers glided in the night.

I happened to be in Córdoba for the Festival of the Crosses, a competition where each neighborhood parties proudly around its own towering cross made of red carnations. Church bells ring not only a call to prayer, but also a call to fiesta. Locals enthusiastically use this special day on the church calendar as a springboard for a community party.

The next morning, I stepped out and the neighborhood gang on one square was still lively. It was their first year entering the contest, their cross had won first prize, and it seemed they'd been celebrating ever since. It was a scene of exhausted, hung-over happiness — as if they'd been eating, drinking, and dancing for 24 hours (which they probably had). The last of the



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCELLI/Ricksteves.com

Andalucía celebrates life with soul and with passion, especially during its many festivals.

revelers gathered around the makeshift bar that seemed to provide physical support for those determined but barely able to carry on. I had to join them.

By joining the scene, I roused the exhausted gang on that little plaza to dance around their tired carnation cross one more time. Within seconds, the energy and magic of the previous night's party had reignited, and the yard was again thriving with slinky flamenco. Sinuous arms, toned torsos and legs, heels with attitude, flowing hair ... everything churned with a silky Andalusian soul. Like crickets rattling their wings in a mating ritual, Andalusian women — dressed in their peacock finery — fluttered their fans and clicked their castanets.

I'd been in Andalucía for a week, and I realized it's a hair-trigger flamenco socie-

ty. I like hair-trigger cultures. Just as Austria is eager to waltz and Ireland is always ready for a good folk song, Andalucía is just waiting for the simplest excuse to grab castanets and dance.

After a few minutes of dancing, I let the tired party die, and everyone resumed their positions — propped up by the bar. I joined them there to say thanks. They filled a bottle cap with a ritual shot of firewater and gave it to me. As a dozen onlookers watched, I downed it. With my head thrown back, knowing that all Andalusian eyes were on me, I wanted to say something really clever or meaningful. But I could only come up with a cliché. I sang, "Olé!" And everyone cheered.

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

Monuments, military hardware gain surprise second lives

Across the United States and in the United Kingdom, the debate rages on: What should be done with the statues and monuments to famous figures whose historic deeds were accompanied by norms of behavior found abhorrent by today's standards? Across Europe, monuments, military infrastructure and Cold War relics have been given a second life, often with interesting consequences.

Statues: With the fall of communism in the Soviet Union, statues of Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Lenin and other leaders traded prominent locations in capitals' squares for more pastoral settings. Some 80 miles southwest of Lithuania's capital city, Vilnius, in the town of Druskininkai, is found Grutas Park, where 86 relics remind visitors of the former socialist republic's not-so-distant past. The park features re-creations of gulag prison camps complete with guard towers and barbed-wire fences, alongside playgrounds and cafés from the Soviet era. The lawns of Maarjamäe Palace in Tallinn, Estonia, house 21 imposing, larger-than-life statues, including a Lenin head, bust and full body sculpture. The MUZEON Art Park in Moscow contains more than 1,000 sculptures, including many from the Soviet era and the period of Social Realism.

In Memento Park in Budapest, Lenin, Marx and Engels rub shoulders with Hungary's communist leaders. In Witness Square, a huge pair of bronze boots top a brick pedestal built upon a grandstand. The boots are the remnants of a statue of Stalin torn down during the Hungarian Revolution in 1956. The 26-foot-high bronze figure was yanked from its pedestal and sawed away until only the boots were left. A movie theater shows a film titled "The Life of an Agent," a documentary on the methods



Karen Bradbury



iStock

Serbia's Belgrade Fortress contains the Belgrad Military Museum, which has a vast collection of military weaponry.

used by the secret police.

Tanks: The Military Technical Museum Lešany in the Czech Republic displays a variety of military hardware, including a tank with an interesting backstory. In 1991, the sculptor David Cerný, an art student at the time, painted Prague's Soviet Tank Monument, commemorating the Soviet liberation of Czechoslovakia in 1945, a shade of pink, an act that got him arrested. The tank's return to its original green paint job was short lived, as some newly elected members of parliament painted it back to pink to protest the arrest. The tank now stands watch at the entry to the museum with its exposition of more than 700 historic tanks, cannons, motorcycles, armored vehicles, trucks, missile systems and other hardware. Online: vhu.cz/muzea/zakladni-informace-o-vtm-lesany

The Military History Museum in the former Soviet Army garrison town of Bornem Sulnowo is unique among museums in Poland. Most of the military vehicles making up its vast collection are fully operational, and visitors can take a ride in many of them. They are also frequently used for live-action shows, often accompanied by professional pyrotechnics. Online: muzeum-borne.pl

The Belgrade Fortress, perched high above the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers in the Serbian capital, houses the Belgrad Military Museum with its considerable collection of old and new military weaponry. The citadel is surrounded by Kalemegdan Park, whose grounds are littered with tanks and guns that children now use as jungle gyms and hiding places.

Bunkers: The St. Pauli bunker in Hamburg, Germany, was one of two towers built by the Nazis for air defense during WWII. Should all go to plan, the property will complete its ongoing transformation to a trendy lifestyle hotel by the end of this year. Five pyramid-shaped floors planted with greenery will house not only hotel rooms but a bar, coffee shop, exhibition spaces and a roof garden offering sweeping views of the port city. Parts of the new floors will also serve as a memorial to the victims of the Nazi regime. Online: bunker-stpauli.de/en/

Enver Hoxha, the leader of Albania from 1941-1985, was so convinced an invasion was imminent that he oversaw the construction of more than 173,000 bunkers across the country. Never used for the purpose he envisioned, most bunkers are now derelict, although a few have been put to good use as food stands and seaside changing rooms. Tirana's Bunk'Art is a museum and contemporary art gallery housed in an underground nuclear shelter. Exhibits cover 20th-century Albanian history, including the Fascist Italian occupation and the Communist era. Online: bunkart.al/1/home

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



SLOBODAN LEKIC/Stars and Stripes

One of the entrances to the Simserhof fortification in eastern France. The underground complex, which was part of the Maginot Line of defenses that ran along France's eastern border, produced its own electricity, had air filters that ran 24/7 and contained enough food and drinks for soldiers to live underground for months.

A cool history lesson

Escape the heat with a visit to the Simserhof underground complex in France and get a glimpse into WWII troops' lives and the folly of war

BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

There's nothing like a visit to France to get away from a German summer of nonstop rain or un-airconditioned buildings during a heat wave. The escape is even better when the attraction in France is free or inexpensive, and full of history — like Simserhof this summer.

An hour west of Kaiserslautern, and two hours from Spangdahlem, Simserhof was built between 1929 and 1938 as part of the Maginot Line, a string of fortifications along France's eastern border, which were supposed to protect against another invasion by Germany after World War I.

Today, it's a museum where visitors walk through miles of well-preserved tunnels, mess halls, barracks, kitchens and medical facilities. They look at World War II weaponry, electrical and air filtering systems, the tables French troops dined at during their long months underground, the rough beds they slept on, even the toilets they used.

Simserhof's website says it's still closed, more than a year after it went dark as the coronavirus swept across Europe. But a call to the museum found that it had quietly reopened, with tours available in English, French or German. And they're free, for the moment.

Writing on a travel website, one visitor described a tour of the fortification as a lesson in masterful engineering and "the madness of war."

The temperature in the tunnel complex in mid-July was around 50 degrees. A musty smell hung in the air, and damp pierced the fleece tops and leather jackets of a group of 12 French and American visitors who descended into the Simserhof to get a sense of what hundreds of

French soldiers lived through, 90 feet underground, in the early months of WWII.

Pre-coronavirus tours included a ride on a narrow-gauge train, but since the museum reopened at the end of June, tours have been entirely on foot. They start with a video showing how French jubilation at the end of World War I shifted a few years later to fear and an effort to bolster defenses, as fascist governments came to power in neighboring Italy in 1922 and later in Germany.

The Maginot Line was a key part of the French government's defensive strategy. It cost tens of millions of dollars in today's money.

Gen. Charles de Gaulle, who led Free France against Nazi Germany during the war and was elected president in 1958, was against the project, arguing that France would do better to invest in armor, aviation and reconstruction.

"But we were leaders in building fixed fortifications," Simserhof guide Benjamin Bellott said during a two-hour tour of the site on Bastille Day. "Our big mistake was believing that the fortifications would hold."

Soldiers from France's 153rd Fortress Infantry Regiment, the 155th Position Artillery Regiment, and three engineering units went into the Simserhof on Sept. 3, 1939, after the German invasion of Poland started WWII.

For nine months, those soldiers slept, showered, were treated by dentists and doctors, and, during the one-month Battle of France in 1940, tried to hold off the Germans.

One of the soldiers painted Snow White and the seven dwarfs on the walls of the mess hall, adding a little gaiety to life underground.



KARIN ZEITVOGEL/Stars and Stripes

A photo on the wall of the Simserhof fortification shows some members of the 153rd Fortress Infantry Regiment, who spent months inside the underground complex, one of the biggest forts in the Maginot Line.

On the QT

Address: Simserhof, Rue André Maginot, Le Légeret, 57410 Siersthal, France

Hours: Open for guided tours in English, German or French from Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Cost: Tours are usually 13 euros for adults, 9 euros for children aged 6 and up, free for kids 5 and under. In July, they were free of charge for everyone.

Food: Coffee and other beverages are available in the cafe in the reception area, which also has a souvenir shop (currently closed) and restrooms. Ample dining opportunities are available in the French town of Bitche, 10 minutes away, or in Zweibrücken, Germany, about 20 minutes away.

Information: For information and to book a tour, call +33 (0)3 87 96 39 40.

Karin Zeitvogel



KARIN ZEITVOGEL/Stars and Stripes

A kitchen in the Simserhof fortification in eastern France. French soldiers spent months in the underground tunnel facility during World War II.

At Christmas, the troops drank champagne and lit sparklers.

A menu on a table in the kitchen featured beef every day and included a 35-minute recipe for potatoes cooked with onions and bacon.

Germany got around the Maginot Line defenses by invading France via Belgium, where there were few fortifications — the French believed Germany would respect Belgium's neutrality.

But France did not heed de Gaulle's exhortation to develop aviation capabilities, focusing instead on technologies of the previous war. Germany, on the other hand, had built the Luftwaffe, and used its superior air power and airborne infantry to quickly capture or take out fortifications like Simserhof.

The soldiers inside the Simserhof were the last in a Maginot Line fortress to surrender when France fell in June 1940.

Germany occupied the fort for nearly five years after that, until the 44th Infantry Division captured it in December 1944, according to the Army's Center of Military History. It was retaken by the Germans a few months later, before being liberated in March 1945, two months before the war in Europe ended, by the U.S. 100th Infantry Division.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Eat like an Englishman

The Victorian House in Munich kick-starts the day with breakfast the British way

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

Germans aren't big on hearty breakfasts as a rule. They have plenty of bakeries open on mornings, and sometimes all you need is a little cereal at home. But you won't find many Waffle House clones here.

The English, on the other hand, are seriously into breakfast and brunch, its more upscale cousin. That's where The Victorian House in Munich fulfills a craving.

I've been to the restaurant several times and the service never fails. The staff is cordial, quick and most importantly, the atmosphere and food are top-notch.

The Victorian House is in the heart of Munich, or roughly 120 miles away or south of the Army's bases in Vilseck and Grafenwoehr. For those of you with an English background or who have spent some time there, the Victorian-style furnishings and decorations should feel familiar.

It is open for dining and takeout, with reservations typically lasting an hour and 45 minutes. I'd encourage you to book through the OpenTable app, as it tends to fill up quickly.

The strong cappuccino they serve is a good way to start. If you're not a fan of coffee, the orange juice is a good option.

My go-to brunch starter is the Belgravia, which features smoked salmon, horseradish, crab salad, a slice of pâté, cheddar cheese, Branston pickles and of course,



The Victorian House

Address: Frauenstrasse 14, 80469 Munich
Hours: Open daily from 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.
Prices: Between 3 and 23 euros. Most credit cards accepted.
Menu: Available in German and English.
Information: +49 089 25546947; <https://victorianhouse.de>.

Immanuel Johnson

some breakfast rolls with jam and butter. You can comfortably split this between two and five people.

If it is your first time and you have no idea what to get, the staff will guide you. In my opinion, you cannot go wrong with the eggs Benedict, featuring crispy bacon and cooked ham.

Should you have a late night or don't feel like having brunch food, they also feature a lunch menu that I have yet to try, as well as an ample selection for possibly the most well-recognized British culinary tradition, afternoon tea. It closes before dinner, but by then you'll have English pub options if you like — or you can dive into just about any other type of cuisine in Bavaria's sprawling capital city.

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IMMANUEL JOHNSON/Stars and Stripes

The eggs Benedict, left, and the Belgravia, right, with smoked salmon, horseradish, crab salad, a slice of pâté and breakfast rolls with an assortment of spreads.



The Victorian House in Munich, Germany, serves a hearty breakfast or brunch and is now open for dining in.



Start your meal at The Victorian House with a cappuccino and bread rolls with an assortment of spreads.



MILK STREET/AP

Thin, seared steak makes this salad a snap

BY CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL
Associated Press

The best beef dishes start with the right technique. For weeknight cooking, that usually means skipping the low and slow roast and sticking with thin cuts that do well with a good, quick sear.

So for this recipe from Milk Street's book "COOKish," which limits recipes to just six ingredients without sacrificing flavor, we sear quick-cooking flat iron steak in a hot skillet for a main course salad.

We use pomegranate molasses in the dressing for its fruity, tangy-sweet flavor, which pairs well with the savory meat and peppery watercress. Toasted walnuts contribute texture and a slight bitterness that balances the bright pomegranate.

Be sure to take the time to finely chop the walnuts; broken down into

small pieces, the nuts better cling to the greens, rather than fall to the bottom of the bowl.

We recommend bulking up this meal with warm, crusty bread, which is delicious for sopping up the steak juices that mix with the dressing.

Steak salad with walnuts and goat cheese

Ingredients

1 pound beef flat iron steak, trimmed
Kosher salt and ground black pepper
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 teaspoons ground coriander
3 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
4-ounce package baby watercress or 5-ounce container baby arugula

½ cup walnuts, toasted and finely chopped

2 ounces fresh goat cheese (chèvre), crumbled (½ cup)

Directions

Season the steak with salt and pepper. In a 12-inch skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil until barely smoking. Brown the steak on both sides until the center reaches 120°F (for medium-rare). Transfer to a platter.

In a large bowl, whisk the remaining 4 tablespoons oil, coriander, pomegranate molasses, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper.

Thinly slice the steak and return to the platter. Whisk the accumulated juices from the steak and 2 tablespoons water into the dressing; toss in the watercress and walnuts. Top the steak with the salad and sprinkle with cheese.

Serves 4.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

A little Grecian adventure

How one writer spent 3 days sampling beaches and tavernas on the Greek island of Paros

BY SARA LIEBERMAN

Special to *The Washington Post*

My scrambled eggs on toast arrived at the same time as my rental car.

"Don't worry," said my server, with a smile. "We'll keep it warm or bring you a new one."

I sneaked a crispy milk pie from the breakfast buffet on my way to meet the Rental Car Guy in the hotel lobby. I had been told having a car on Paros, a Cycladic Greek island that's a three-hour fast ferry from Piraeus port in Athens and about 64 square miles, was ideal for getting a feel for its spirit — not to mention seeing some of its dozens of beaches and sampling its many tasty tavernas. So, with the help of the concierge at Parilio Hotel in Naoussa where I was staying, I reserved one for two of my three days there. I had driven solo through other foreign countries before — Israel and France to name two. But, it turned out, there was one thing I had then that I did not have now: my license.

I ran back to my room and dug through my handbag and suitcase a second time.

Did I really leave it at home? I wondered. Could I have been that careless?

To be sure, I had identification with me. I had just forgotten the one that proves I know not to make a right on red.

Thankfully, there are no traffic lights on Paros. This is a vacationer's island, after all. In which case, vacationer rules apply. While I would not get a car from this Rental Car Guy, calls were made, a digital version of my license was procured, and before a new plate of scrambled eggs on toast could be prepared, I had a four-door Nissan wait-

ing for me in the parking lot.

"Just be careful," said this Rental Car Guy with a forgiving smile. "You'll be fine."

I starred and circled spots on a map, denoting the destinations I wanted to visit, and placed it on the passenger seat. There is only one main "highway" that circles the island with a dozen or so off-roads and another that crosses the center, so although my car had Bluetooth and it felt reassuring to be connected, it was unnecessary. Plus, all beaches and towns were clearly marked.

I found my first stop without a hitch: Kalogeros Beach, known for its clay-based boulders used to make mud mixtures. I had no idea how to properly exfoliate my skin using nature, so I befriended another beachgoer who showed me how to shed dry rubble from the rocks, mix it with water to form a gluey gray paste, and then cover my arms, legs and face. Sure enough, after rinsing 30 minutes later, my skin was newborn baby smooth.

Next up, I drove a bit farther south toward Golden Beach; a stretch of sand with a variety of "clubs" including the Beach Project, which boasts cushioned loungers, umbrellas, and a menu serving grilled talagani cheese wraps and brain-freeze-inducing beverages. It was either pay for a seat or get it free with a snack, so I ordered a smoothie and applied some SPF.

After ambling to the other end of the beach and back, collecting shells along the way, I paid my bill — about \$7 — and was off to the seaside town of Drios. A friend recommended the taverna Markakakis, so I sat for a salad with oregano-topped feta and salty black olives while watching the sea crash onto the shore just feet away.

With prime sunning hours behind me, I drove

inland to Lefkes, Paros' original capital. After parking, I found myself squeezing through narrow passageways via stone steps to reach what appeared to be the town center. But I didn't see much activity, aside from stray cats roaming the alleys and fuchsia bougainvillea bushes draping white stone houses with blue shutters.

After an hour of wandering, I decided to call it a day. Unfortunately, what Google Maps thought was the way to exit Lefkes and what was actually the way to exit Lefkes did not align. At one point, I ended up driving the wrong way on a one-way street at the top of a very steep, crumbling, cobblestone hill. Unable to make the narrow right turn I supposedly needed to make — for fear of crashing into a car coming from the other way — I backed up, which was a feat for a city girl more accustomed to swiping Metro cards than filling gas tanks. After another 20 minutes of white-knuckle navigating, I finally made it out, passing what appeared to be the actual town center on the way; I was thankful to be dining at the hotel's Mr. E restaurant that evening where I could walk, not drive, back to my room.

Another day, another beach — and another test of my driving skills. The day's plan was to venture to Antiparos, a smaller island accessed only by ferry from the southwestern town of Pounta. I would once again have to back up my car — only this time onto a moving ship. Miraculously, I managed it without crashing and seven minutes later was cruising along this quieter island with wilder terrain.

In search of a lounge chair, I rolled into Beach

SEE PAROS ON PAGE 23



The sun sets in Naoussa, one of Paros' more lively towns for dining, drinking and shopping.

SARA LIEBERMAN/For The Washington Post

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Paros: Island has dozens of beaches and tavernas to explore

FROM PAGE 22

House, a hotel and restaurant that rents sun beds for about \$12. I laid there for a while, sipping a cafe frappé by the rocky shore, before ordering a creamy plate of labneh and bread.

When a group tour disembarked a yacht at the property's private dock, I took it as my cue to move on. After driving up a seemingly endless, winding road to the island's highest point, I then descended 278 feet into a cave where I was surrounded by stalagmites and stalactites dating back millions of years. The cool temps underground were a welcome relief from the heat outside, though the hike back up 411 steps — and the two-lane cliff drive back to the ferry dock — brought the sweats back real fast.

Finally, it was that time of day where the sun no longer feels too intense on salty skin to sit directly in it, but you want shade and a cool breeze anyway. I chose a wooden table under some pine trees, steps from the sea, at Thalassamou restaurant in the town of Aliko back on the main island. A furry feline hopped up onto my lap as I tucked into a "kataifi nest," tomatoes, fried basil leaves and local goat cheese wrapped in a hay-like pastry, and enjoyed a rare moment of shared bliss.

I walked it off along the shore, the aqua Aegean tickling my bare feet. As I made my way to Aliko's port, I saw giant fresh octopuses hung out to dry by their tentacles.

Despite all I had already snacked on throughout the day, there was still one restaurant I wanted to try, so I popped back to the hotel for a quick refresh before heading into town. Naoussa comes alive at night, whether over by the port where the fishing boats seem to bob along to the music coming from the restaurants, or inside the mazelike streets where boutiques boast unique pottery and covetable straw handbags.

Getting lost felt par for the course on my way to find Statheros, a tucked-away, farm-to-seaside-table restaurant. Once I arrived, only the moonlight and a small candle lit my menu, which listed so many things I wanted to try but knew I couldn't finish on my own. I enlisted the help of co-owner Giannis, who suggested I order half-portions of a few items.

"I can do that?" I asked, feeling silly for not having thought of this sooner.

"Of course you can," he said. "You'll be fine."

Whether at the wheel without a license or at the table without a dining partner, as long as I've got the desire to seek and savor, I often am.

If you go

Where to stay

Parilio Hotel

Kolymythres, Naoussa, Paros
011-30-22840-51000

pariliohotelparos.com/

A member of Design Hotels, this 33-suite boutique hotel just outside Naoussa glows with natural light — no matter the time of day. The arched doorways, concrete columns and whitewashed rooms represent traditional Cycladic architecture and feature a neutral color palette with an occasional burst of blue and yellow. The pool is designed to mimic nearby Monastiri beach known for its giant boul-

ders. The breakfast buffet, which is spread out on five tables, is truly spectacular. From about \$772 per night.

Where to eat

Statheros

Naoussa, Paros

011-30-22840-51888

facebook.com/statherosmeze/

At family-run Statheros in Naoussa, second-generation chef Konstatina Manolaki shows she has inherited cooking talent from her mother, celebrity chef Argiro Barbarigou, serving stewed chickpeas and a cheese pie with thyme honey so good it's sinful. Go for sunset and sit at a table on the pebbles. Main courses from about \$17.

Thalassamou

Aliko Beach, Paros

011-30-2284-091461

facebook.com/thalassamourestaurant

There is no shortage of desirable places to sit at this beachside restaurant on the southern end of the island, just a quick beach walk from the fishing village of Aliko. But under the pine trees, close to the sea, is the most idyllic. Main courses from about \$20.

Markakis

Drios, Paros

011-30-22840-42177

markakisrestaurant.gr/en/home110/

This casual mom-and-pop taverna in the small town of Drios on the island's south eastern end is ideal for a crispy Greek salad with oregano-topped feta. You may even get a complimentary ice cream bar for dessert. Entrees from about \$9.50.

Mr. E Restaurant

Kolymythres, Naoussa, Paros

011-30-22840-51000

pariliohotelparos.com/dining/

A destination in its own right, even if you're not staying at Parilio Hotel, this gastronomic restaurant boasts an airy setting for serving modern Mediterranean dishes such as pappardelle zucchini with mint pesto, grilled halloumi cheese and grapes. Signature cocktails like the "Woo Woo" with vodka, passion fruit and watermelon are refreshing and buzz-inducing. Entrees from about \$17.

What to do

Kalogeros Beach

Located on the east side of the island, this quiet swath of sand is known for its clay-based boulders used to make mud mixtures to rub on the skin as a smoothing mask. Bring your own towel or sarong if you want to stay for a DIY spa treatment and sunbathing. But watch your stuff: The tides come in fast. Free entry.

Lefkes

Paros's original capital is smack dab in the middle of the island, on a huge hill, and reached by winding roads. Park at the top, then follow stray cats through narrow alleys blooming with fuchsia bougainvillea and get lost on the stone streets dotted with doorways of a bygone era.

Naoussa

This popular town is dotted with quirky boutiques boasting locally crafted jewelry, sandals and pareos, not to mention some of the island's best restaurants and bars. Ditch the car on the outskirts and walk within its mazelike stone streets and buzzing summer scene.

Golden Beach

A bit further south, this longer beach with mellow waves, features a variety of clubs such as the Beach Project where you



PHOTOS BY SARA LIEBERMAN/For The Washington Post

Fishing boats bob in Naoussa's port during a September sunset.



Windmills have become iconic in Paros and many other Greek Islands. This one acts as a round-about between villages.

can rent lounge chairs and umbrellas and order snacks and beverages for a full (or half) day of worshipping Greek sun god Helios. Free entry.

Antiparos

This smaller, sister island is accessible only by ferry from the southwestern town of Pounta. The terrain is a bit more wild and the beaches even more secluded. (Case in point: Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson reportedly have a house here.) Follow signs for any of the beaches or pop into Beach House to rent a lounge chair or grab a cafe frappé. Ferry runs daily Mon-



A colorful mermaid mural brightens up whitewashed walls in Naoussa.

day to Sunday; see schedule for more information. Ferry tickets \$1.40 per passenger and \$7.50 (for cars less than 14 feet in length), per car each way.

Katafygi Cave, Antiparos

antiparos.com/explore/antiparos-cave/

Up at the island's highest point, this ancient cave goes down 278 feet. Surround yourself by stalagmites and stalactites and get a refreshing dose of natural air conditioning before hiking back up the 411 (somewhat slippery) steps. Open daily 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Entry about \$7.15.

Information: paros.gr/en/

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Ascending to the highest heights

Take an elevator ride at Tokyo's Skytree, Japan's tallest building, for sprawling views of the city below

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

The most interesting of many intriguing spots in Skytree Park in northeast Tokyo is the last one that people can visit on high:

Floor 340 (so numbered for its metric height) and its glass-bottomed floor.

The two panels of steel-reinforced glass, each measuring 6½ feet by 10 feet, can be a joy for height enthusiasts ... and a bane for acrophobiacs.

"Are you sure this is safe?" a Japanese woman said during a recent visit, eyes wide, hand covering mouth, as she tapped a toe against the glass and gazed anxiously at the Skytree guide.

"Oh, don't worry, it's very safe," the guide said, jumping up and down a few times on one of the panels.

Reassured, the woman agreed to be photographed by the Skytree Tembo Deck staff, her feet on the glass panels, the ground 1,115 feet below, in plain view through the glass, as she smiled and flashed twin peace signs for the camera.

From there, the staff took her and several others down to ground level, via high-speed elevators that whisk passengers hundreds of feet up and down in a matter of seconds, 365 days a year since Skytree opened to the public on May 22, 2012.

Those elevators propelled an average of about 400,000 visitors per month to the tower's observation decks until April 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic put a serious dent in those numbers, according to The Mainichi newspaper.

Skytree stretches 2,080 feet from the ground to the transmission tower in its topmost turret. It displaced Tokyo Tower, opened in 1958, as the tallest structure in Japan at 1,092 feet.

When it opened, Skytree became the second-highest structure in the world behind Burj Khalifa (2,716 feet) in Dubai and just ahead of Shanghai Tower (2,073 feet) in China.

For visitors coming from U.S. bases in the Kanto Plain, public trains and subways are the wisest choice to get to Skytree; drivers will find a lack of parking there.

Oshiage Station, accessible via the Hanzomon and Asakusa subway lines, is the preferred final destination.

After a short walk from Oshiage Station, you'll find the big Tokyo Skytree Town sign on the wall above, where the journey begins on several escalators. It can be a

On The QT

Directions: A short walk from Oshiage Station on the Hanzomon and Asakusa subway lines.

Times: Skytree is open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, last entry 7 p.m.

Costs: A Skytree combo ticket to both observation decks is 3,100 yen for adults, 2,350 yen for ages 12 to 17, 1,450 yen for ages 6 to 11. Prices are higher on weekends.

Sumida Aquarium: 2,300 yen for adults, 1,700 yen for high school students, 1,100 yen for middle-school and elementary students, 700 yen for children 3 and older.

Food: The complex has myriad dining options available.

Information: www.tokyo-skytree.jp/en/; www.sumida-aquarium.com/en/index.html

Dave Ornauer

maze but follow the signs to the ticket counters on the fourth level.

Purchase a ticket on that fourth deck for the elevator ride, on which you'll feel a slight G-force pull. Your ears may pop, much like they do during an aircraft take-off and landing.

Your first stop is Tembo Deck, with its three floors, 350, 345 and 340. Glass panels on all sides provide a panoramic view of the city. On a clear day, one can see Mount Fuji far to the southwest, aided by a high-resolution telescope.

Want a view from even higher? Purchase a ticket for all floors at the start, or buy one for the top decks while on Floor 350.

Back to the elevator you go for a quick ride up to Tembo Galleria, Floor 450, and views of Tokyo and even farther.

You might pick out Yokosuka Naval Base, Yokota Air Base, Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Camp Zama, each visible from the tower on a clear day, and again aided by a high-res telescope.

Had enough of the heights yet? The first stop on the way back down is Floor 340 — and the celebrated/dreaded glass floor bottom. And finally, via that same elevator that makes those ears fill up again, a return ride en route to the ground and base-level levels.

And how many levels there are! Plus, a whole gaggle more in Skytree Park's 31-story East Tower next door. There are shops galore, where one can find the latest fashions, a Tokyo Olympics apparel store, a Pokemon center and a whole shop dedicated to Hello Kitty.

Restaurants? What's your pleasure?



AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

Tokyo Skytree stretches 2,080 feet from the ground to the transmission tower in its topmost turret. It displaced Tokyo Tower at 1,092 feet as the tallest structure in Japan.

Anything from a grab-and-go at McDonald's, Starbucks or Tully's for a few hundred yen, to the most top-shelf elegant of international delicacies, Italian, French, Chinese.

Had your fill of heights but still not enough sightseeing? There is just as much to be seen underwater in the Sumida Aquarium, a few hundred yards west past the entrance to Skytree.

The aquarium's two floors are home to some 260 species and 7,000 different types of sea life, ranging from jellyfish to penguins, seals to coral reefs, all in a black-light setting.

Admission to the tower and aquarium set me back 5,400 yen, or \$49, a meal at a high-class Italian bistro 8,400 yen, commemorative images 3,000 yen (print and download), and the subway from the New Sanno Hotel and back just under 600 yen.

To take in all of it, one might need a full day, and prepare for the ol' feet to be sore at day's end. Whether one likes heights or doesn't, that view through the glass-bottom floor could be unforgettable.

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Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Sip, rest and revive

How tea became part of Australia's travel culture

By RILEY WILSON

Special to *The Washington Post*

Along Australia's 9,000-mile Highway 1 — a ribbon of asphalt that connects all the country's major cities and is the longest national highway in the world — there are a smattering of rest stops. On long weekends or the weeks of school breaks, cars will pull away from the throng in search of a hot beverage, following a road sign featuring a cup and saucer.

These sites, named Driver Reviver, are staffed by volunteers from community organizations, serving up free tea, biscuits and conversations to those driving long distances.

"A cup of tea is a very important part of the Australian road trip," says Allan McCormac, the national director of Driver Reviver. "It always was, and it always will be."

In non-pandemic times, the 180 stops across the mainland and Tasmania deliver hot cups of tea to over 400,000 people traveling the nation's roads annually. McCormac, 80 this year, estimates they have served over 26 million cups of tea (and coffee) since 1990.

"The concept of Australians providing refreshments and rest for weary travelers probably goes back to the coach days," McCormac says. "It's common for country people to offer hospitality. That concept still persisted in the days when cars became more common ... It was very common for people traveling — even maybe a long day trip, let alone on holidays — to call in to cafes all over Australia, that were open in little country towns and villages, to stop for a cup of tea."

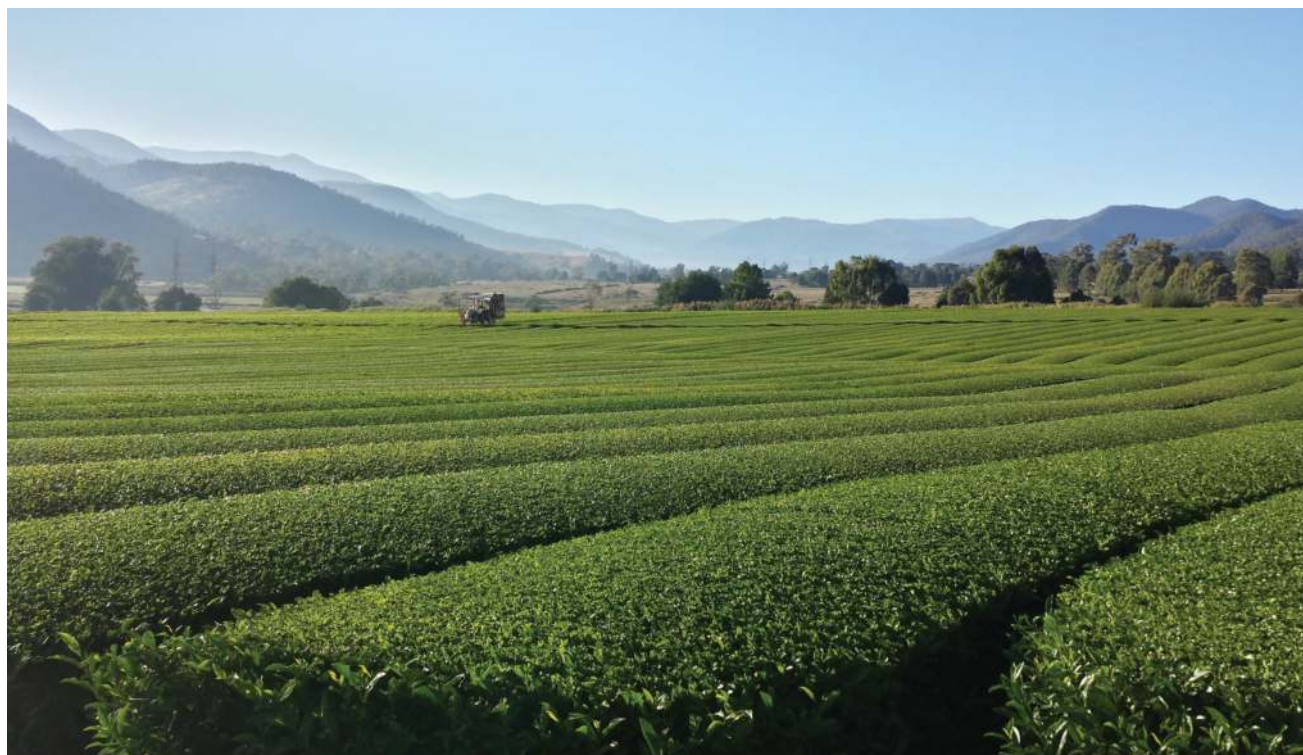
Many of those cups have been served to itinerant holiday drivers, hauling from state to state with restless kids in the back seat. Driver Reviver's main goal is to ensure travelers can "stop, revive, survive" and continue driving alert and refreshed. The additional benefit is the sense of community.

"We don't provide lids. We don't encourage people to take a hot beverage in the car while they're driving," McCormac says. "We get people to stop and enjoy a cup of tea while they're at the site ... and learn a bit more about the area they're in."

Tea is ingrained in Australian culture, from the tinctures and tonics of First Nations Australian communities for tens of thousands of years to the wartime tea rations supplied to Australian and New Zealand troops during World Wars I and II to the influx and happy adoption of Asian tea trends such as tapioca-heavy bubble tea and Japanese-style green teas, now grown in Victoria. It's even present in "Waltzing Matilda," a song written in 1895 by Australian bush poet Banjo Paterson about a wandering traveler, considered by some to be Australia's unofficial national anthem.

"From the get-go in 1788, tea helped fuel the expansion of colonial Australia and its rural and metropolitan economy — at first native alternatives to imported tea and then Chinese and later India tea," says Jacqui Newling, a culinary historian and Sydney Living Museum curator. "Tea was, and for many people now, most definitely a community experience in Australia. Putting material trappings aside, it was accessible in some form or another across all classes ... All one needed was boiling water."

But while Australia's climate makes it well suited for



CHLOE HOLLIDAY, AUSTCS/The Washington Post

Green-tea fields in the Victorian Alpine region. The Australian climate is ideal for growing a variety of teas.

growing tea, logistical and structural issues plague the growth of the sector, says David Lyons, founding director of the Australian Tea Cultural Society (AUSTCS).

Right now there are a handful of plantations, with the largest tea-growing regions situated in far-north Queensland and northeast Victoria. In the former, there is the 790-acre Nerada plantation. As lore goes, the four Cutten brothers — the first white settlers in an area that had been solely occupied by the Djiru people, who are the traditional custodians of the land — established a tea, coffee and fruit plantation in Bingil Bay in the 1880s. It was then battered by tropical storms until nothing remained. In the 1950s, Allan Maruff — a botanist and physician — visited the area and found the lost tea plants. He took clippings home to Innisfail in Queensland, and he started what would become the Nerada tea plantations.

These days, Nerada's tea rooms are open to visitors, welcoming guests from around the world to the site, which processes 3.3 million pounds of tea annually. Domestic tourism has been a boon for regional tea shops, too. In the country town of Berry on the southern coast of New South Wales, the shop sells 48 different teas and also serves them, at sit-down tables and in decorative teapots, with homemade cakes and scones.

"Our weekdays now are more like what weekends were. We have a lot more visitors to the south coast, which means there are a lot more people walking around the store," owner Paulina Collier says. "We've had people who would say, 'I've even driven from Sydney for the day. I just want to come and have tea and scones.'"

The Berry Tea Shop is focused on providing a "country tea experience," complete with loose-leaf tea and pots fashioned on British tea culture. Educating people about the joy of tea is one of Collier's goals. It's one for Grace Freitas, too. She started her tea company, the Tea Nomad, with travel as the core focus. She was living in Singapore, with an idea for a tea-focused blog and a passion for travel, when she decided to experiment with blending her own teas.

Freitas, who runs her small business out of Sydney, wants her teas — Provence, Shanghai and Sydney — to represent the experiences of the cities they're named after, through scent, taste and feeling. Freitas sees irony in the general national approach to hot beverages in cafes: using tea bags often and having greater awareness about coffee.

It's a frustration Lyons shares. For a country built on tea consumption, and with so many Australians being so particular about the way they take tea at home, the enduring national sentiment in cafes, Lyons says, puts tea in the back of the proverbial cupboard.



RACHAEL TAGG PHOTOGRAPHY/The Washington Post

The Berry Tea Shop provides a "country tea experience" with loose-leaf tea in British inspired tea pots.

In the 1950s, Lyons says, "Australia was one of the top consumers of tea." There were times when tea was rationed to keep up with demand. Pots of loose-leaf tea in establishments were commonplace.

"The tea bag, which came into its own in Australia in the 1970s, although much maligned for taking the ritual out of tea-making, has added to the portability and ease of making a cuppa at home, in the workplace and when traveling," says Newling, the historian.

A team from AUSTCS is working on an app that will enable travelers to find venues serving "proper tea" across the country. The ideal, Lyons says, is to change the perception of tea and meet growing consumer demand.

"If you're traveling along and you hit a town ... if you could literally pop on [the app] and it shows 'real tea served here,' that would be so much easier," he says. "People would be able to go, 'Okay, what's in the Potts Point, Edgecliff area?', read a couple of the recommendations and reviews, and then make a decision."

"A cup of tea is a very important part of the Australian road trip."

Allan McCormac

National director of Driver Reviver

WEEKEND: FOOD

Social media content worth eating up

Restaurants, TikTokers helped each other survive the pandemic

BY NATACHI ONWUAMAEGBU
The Washington Post

It's really quite simple, food blogger Caroline Ponseti explains while nodding her head toward the tall ferns nestled within carefully selected ceramic pots that dot the stairwell. A good TikTok restaurant review must have one of two things: some level of camera-grabbing aesthetics (which this Mediterranean restaurant has plenty of) or a good story. Luckily for her, Sospeso, on Washington's H Street NE, has both.

Ponseti leaves her booth — complimentary vermouth cocktail in hand — then stands in front of the stairs and raises her glass to the 13,000 followers on her account, @TheThriftySpoon. Later, she adds a voice-over reminding them to “hit that follow button for more D.C. dining.”

The relationship between a TikTok food blogger and restaurant is a complex one, but in most cases, it's a business deal. The influencer gets free food and content for their channel, and the restaurant gets to reach an audience most advertisers can't: young people on TikTok. At the height of the coronavirus pandemic, restaurants were closing at record numbers and letting go of employees; meanwhile, on social media, food bloggers such as Ponseti were struggling to find material.

As restaurants were forced to get creative with takeout options and delivery services, so were food bloggers. With TikTokers gaining a broader audience during the pandemic — a Pew Research Center study in April found that 21% of U.S. adults say they use TikTok, including about 50% of 18- to 29-year-olds — food bloggers used the platform to highlight small food businesses that needed exposure more than ever.

The result: Some restaurants and food bloggers survived the pandemic — together.

“Restaurants have grown to like the social media [marketing] space more,” said Aba Kwawu, president of D.C.-based TAA Public Relations. “It's not just pretty. It is now core to business.”

Kwawu's goal was always to bring people into brick-and-mortar storefronts. Forced to pivot during the pandemic, she encouraged businesses to send meals to influencers, promote takeout cocktails — do anything to get people to know the busi-



NATACHI ONWUAMAEGBU/The Washington Post

Food blogger Caroline Ponseti raises a glass to her TikTok followers while filming a restaurant review at Sospeso in Washington, D.C., on June 27. Ponseti used the story of the restaurant to grow her following while Sospeso used Ponseti's following to attract customers, especially during the pandemic.

ness was out there and needed help. TikTokers ate up the content (literally), and businesses noticed an increase in customers.

Ponseti, who created her TikTok account in February, first contacted the owner of Sospeso in 2017, the same year she started her blog and the restaurant had its grand opening. The initial connection was easy: Ponseti wanted a story to grow her following, and Sospeso wanted to attract customers. Ponseti featured the restaurant on her Instagram several times in recent years, then in March 2020, when the restaurant was forced to close, she highlighted Sospeso's takeout options.

“It really helps, you know?”

said Hatice Rosato, who owns Sospeso with her husband, Mike Rosato. “I had people coming and telling me, ‘Oh, by the way, I'm a friend of Caroline's,’ or ‘I saw her TikTok and wanted to come in.’”

Most influencers are either paid or have their meal comped in return for a quick feature (Ponseti paid only a tip during her latest visit to Sospeso), but restaurants find that this gamble can pay off.

Alex Hussein, the owner of @DCSpot, another food blog and TikTok account, featured his uncle and aunt's business on his TikTok account in April. Mom's Pizza Restaurant in suburban Arlington, Va., had just been robbed and was about to close

after 32 years.

“That video got over 500,000 views — it blew up,” said Hussein, a student at George Mason University. “Lots of locals saw it. My family said they were packed with people the next day and the days after that until they closed the place.”

His uncle's restaurant wasn't especially aesthetically appealing, Hussein said, so he had to rely on the story. With more than 40,000 TikTok followers, he knows what kinds of videos go viral. It's important to grab a user's attention in the first few seconds — people tend to scroll away fast.

“Tell people what they want to know,” said Hussein, who works

as a freelance social media consultant. “Tell them the interesting parts, and show off the good-looking parts.”

New York City-based TikTok influencer Janneh Konneh tries to keep her restaurant reviews to less than 30 seconds. Those are the ones that perform the best.

“You've got to know what are people looking for,” said Konneh, whose TikTok account has more than 45,000 followers. “The food and the camera angles and all is what keeps them intrigued in the video.” The story is what gets them there.

Konneh started her account at the beginning of the pandemic, and she has had to continuously adapt. She began by filming her favorite takeout options before venturing to outdoor dining and eventually bars, bottomless brunches and rooftops.

Her restaurant reviews usually begin the same way: Konneh films herself walking into the restaurant, panning over whatever exposed brick, plants, paintings or bright lights surround the doorway. Then there's the aerial view of the food (always vegetarian) and a short panning video of her cocktail(s). They're compelling and brief — viewers are in and out of the restaurant with a drink, starter and entree in less than a half-minute.

The TikTokers who continue to succeed during and after the pandemic have to be adept at following the trends, Kwawu said. Gaining viewers is easy, but keeping them is difficult. One thing that has worked, Kwawu noted, is that influencers have used the pandemic as an opportunity to get personal — about the restaurants they love, their political views and their lives.

“Now, I always look for influencers who know how to humanize restaurants,” Kwawu said. “That's what social media brings to the table.”

To do that successfully, sometimes close relationships are necessary — like the one between Sospeso and Ponseti. In her TikTok feature, she pans through the restaurant's embossed front windows and tells the Rosatos' story. They're “a neighborhood couple that wanted to open a restaurant that reflects their respective Italian and Turkish heritages.”

Ponseti doesn't normally interview the restaurateurs, but in this case she had met the owners and, more than anything, wanted them to succeed.

“It's definitely a symbiotic relationship; one could not exist without the other,” she said. “Everyone was feeling helpless last year, and this gave me a way to do some good.”

WEEKEND: BOOKS

BY MARK WHITAKER

Special to The Washington Post

Call them Woodward rules. For 40 years, legendary Washington Post investigative reporter Bob Woodward has been turning out books offering scoop-filled, behind-the-scenes accounts of recent presidential administrations based on off-the-record interviews with key players. Of a younger generation of reporters who have sought to emulate Woodward, few have been as successful as his Pulitzer Prize-winning Post colleagues, investigative staff writer Carol Leonnig and former White House bureau chief Philip Rucker, authors of one of the richest fly-on-the-wall chronicles of the first years of the Trump administration, “A Very Stable Genius.”

Now Leonnig and Rucker are back with a book on the last year of President Donald Trump’s reign, also with a title inspired by one of the former president’s grandiose utterances: “I Alone Can Fix It.” As the authors argue in their introduction, it’s a vital sequel, given the momentous public health, racial and electoral crises that unfolded during Trump’s bid for a second term. Like their first book, this one is filled with vivid, often alarming, occasionally humorous reconstructions of private White House meetings, complete with enough F-bombs to fill an episode of the classic HBO series “Deadwood.” But more than ever, it raises a question for readers of this and similar Woodward-style books coming out this summer and fall: How much skepticism should be applied to versions of events based primarily on the anonymous testimony of protagonists in the story — many of whom, in this case, are trying to soften history’s judgment of their roles in the mishandling of a pandemic that has killed more than a half a million Americans, as well as a “big lie” about the 2020 election that led to the gravest political insurrection since the Civil War?

One Woodward rule is that those promises of anonymity and a novelistic narrative style excuse reporters-turned-book-writers from the usual journalistic requirements of attribution. But the format itself — such as the appearance of verbatim dialogue and interior thoughts — provides ample clues as to which characters played ball. Based on that evidence, dozens of top Trump administration officials and aides cooperated with the authors in order to put distance between themselves and the former president’s most egregious actions, as well as to settle scores with Rudy Giuliani and White House aide Stephen Miller, both of whom are resented by virtually everyone else for their arrogant meddling and stoking of Trump’s basest impulses. Among the longtime enablers who are depicted as



JABIN BOTSFORD/The Washington Post

President Donald Trump speaks at the White House early in the morning after Election Day in 2020.

QUID PRO QUO

Dozens of Trump officials, aides cooperated with the authors of ‘I Alone Can Fix It’ to distance themselves from the president in his final year

attempting to get Trump to back off the “big lie,” or to intervene to stop the Jan. 6 riot, are White House aides Pat Cipollone and Hope Hicks, and former aide Kellyanne Conway; allies Chris Christie and Lindsey Graham; and, predictably, the image-conscious first daughter.

Whether personally or through close aides, Mike Pence provided enough anecdotal detail for a dramatic, newsworthy account of his last-minute acquisition of a spine in the face of Trump’s attempt to bully him into stopping the electoral college certification. As rioters breached the Capitol and roamed the hallways shouting, “Hang Mike Pence!,” the vice president was evacuated to “a secured subterranean area,” the authors report. But when the head of his security detail, Tim Giebels, tried to persuade him to wait inside an armored limousine,

Pence refused, suspecting that the Secret Service would try to drive him to safety, making him look like either a conspirator or a coward unwilling to carry out his constitutional duty to ratify Joe Biden’s victory.

Based on their own self-serving testimony but presumably also on corroborative reporting by Leonnig and Rucker, three other major players get more favorable treatment than conventional wisdom might suggest. In public, Robert Redfield, the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, came across as a dour waffler who allowed his agency’s long-held reputation for independence to be trashed by Trump’s attempts to wish away the coronavirus crisis. But in this account, Redfield was a private truth teller who — having taken a big pay cut to accept the CDC post, the authors inform us —

recognized the severity of the pandemic earlier than most of his colleagues did and eventually went over the heads of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and White House officials to appeal for emergency funds for vaccine distribution.

Some readers may balk at seeing Bill Barr get credit for anything, and with good reason. The former attorney general deserves to be forever remembered for helping Trump falsely claim exoneration by the Mueller report and for corrupting the Justice Department in the service of protecting the president’s friends and pursuing his partisan aims. But in this account, when Trump toyed with invoking the Insurrection Act to put down Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of

2020, Barr stood firm against it. And after the election, in key public statements and in several tense private confrontations, Barr drew the line at supporting the “big lie,” depriving Trump of backup in his desperate attempt to mount legal challenges to voting results in the states that put Biden over the top.

The most sympathetic of these burnished portraits is of Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. To his former-Catholic-schoolboy shame, Milley participated, in uniform, in Trump’s infamous Bible photo op after the violent clearing of Lafayette Square. After that “wake-up call,” the authors write, Milley told aides: “He burned me. F— these guys. I’m not playing political games.” From then on, Milley joined Barr in opposing the scheme to unleash the military on Black Lives Matter protesters. And as Trump installed “acolytes” at the Pentagon after the election, Milley stayed on to guard against a scenario in which they would go along with an attempt to cling to power through force.

Fortunately, it never came to that, although questions remain about what role some of those Pentagon loyalists played in the delayed security response to the Jan. 6 riot. While refusing to concede defeat, Trump eventually relinquished power peacefully and departed for his home at Mar-a-Lago. Seventy days later, he sat down with Leonnig and Rucker at the posh Florida resort for an on-the-record interview that was scheduled for an hour but rambled on for more than two and a half. Surrounded by hangers-on and endorsement seekers, Trump was as aggrieved and vengeful as ever, whining about the “rigged and ... stolen” election and lashing out at onetime allies and aides who wouldn’t go all the way in supporting his bids to deny science and overturn democracy.

In keeping with Woodward rules, the Mar-a-Lago interview provides a cinematic epilogue to the book, evoking the rantings of an exiled King Lear or the delusions of washed-up silent-movie star Norma Desmond in “Sunset Boulevard.” But it also serves to underscore what’s missing in this kind of “rough draft of history,” in addition to self-reflection on the journalistic quid pro quos involved in the genre. That is, any discussion of the larger social forces that made Trump’s rise possible: the backlash against America’s growing demographic diversity, the working-class resentment of globalism and cultural elitism, and the emotional appeal of nativism and authoritarianism. As the former president prattles this book to its conclusion, one is left with the sense that future historians will find Trumpism a far more consequential subject of study than the petty tyrant himself.

Like their first book, this one is filled with vivid, often alarming, occasionally humorous reconstructions of private White House meetings, complete with enough F-bombs to fill an episode of the classic HBO series “Deadwood.”



WEEKEND: MUSIC

**John Mayer**

Sob Rock (Columbia)

Tasty tribute

John Mayer's love letter to soft rock is more than just easy nostalgia

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

John Mayer's savvy use of Instagram and TikTok has made him one of the very few over-40 guitar wizards to connect with kids from the generation (or two) behind his. Yet it's easy to imagine that the most meaningful engagement he's had on social media lately came with somebody in his mid-60s.

"Killer new track John," Steve Lukather of Toto wrote in a comment on Mayer's June 9 Instagram post about his latest studio album, "Sob Rock," and its lead single, "Last Train Home." Lukather, an architect of the highly chillaxed soft-rock sound developed in Los Angeles in the early 1980s, went on to praise Mayer's "tasty playing" and to say that "Last Train Home" had the makings of "a smash" — the ultimate proof of concept for Mayer's homage to the era of soulful white dudes, pastel color schemes and Bret Easton Ellis bestsellers.

A pop heartthrob with a comedian's wit and an instrumentalist's chops, Mayer, 43, says he took up this style — think Don Henley, Steve Winwood, synthed-up Fleetwood Mac, non-God-mode Eric Clapton — because he found it comforting during the pandemic to be reminded of music he heard in his youth. You also get the sense, given his pre-COVID stint touring with members of the Grateful Dead, that he was eager to flex different muscles — and to hook into an already-blooming '80s revival that counts Tame Impala and Thundercat among its practitioners. (A recent essay in *GQ* referred to this aesthetic, with its spirit of coolly laid-back adulthood, as "Spago rock" after Wolfgang Puck's iconic LA eatery.)

From its picture-perfect album cover on down, though, "Sob Rock" — Mayer's eighth studio LP and his follow-up to 2017's "The Search for Everything" — is so crisply rendered that it achieves an almost art-project-like quality that transcends those emotional and commercial circumstances. In an interview with the *Blackbird Spyplane* newsletter, the singer spoke with characteristic precision about his vision, saying his goal was to "make a new record from archival cloth" — to "find a way not to reproduce something," he added, "but continue to produce it from the original loom."

Inspired, he's said, by Quentin Tarantino's casting various OGs in his movies, Mayer recruited '80s studio standouts like keyboardist Greg Phillinganes and per-

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Tasty: Tribute full of solid tunes

FROM PAGE 28

cussionist Lenny Castro to complement his usual players; their work provides just the right sparkle and groove to conjure the moment when blues-based rock was giving way to something shinier and more synthetic — a sonic manifestation of the affluent optimism of the day. (Don Was co-produced the album with Mayer.)

Of course, Mayer's expert world-building — the latest act of curation by this discerning collector of high-end wristwatches — wouldn't be nearly as fun to take part in if he didn't fill the place with solid tunes, and "Sob Rock" has plenty of those. A restless romancer once known for his willingness to kiss and tell, Mayer here addresses his reputation as a crummy partner: "Some people 'round here been calling me crazy/ Some people say I'll never love someone," he sings in "Til the Right One Comes," which shimmers like an outtake from "Tango in the Night."

But he also presents himself as a sensitive man who's been mishandled by women; more than one song depicts him in a heroic light for having used those experiences to learn to change his ways, which feels like a very Don Henley approach to maturity.

As with Henley, what brings you around to Mayer's side is his songwriting — the luscious melodies in "Why You No Love Me" and the Dire Straits-ish "Wild Blue" and the vivid images in "Carry Me Away" ("You carnivore, you loose cannon") and "New Light," where his self-pity takes this gorgeous shape: "I'm the boy in your other phone/ Lighting up inside your drawer at home, all alone."

In the wistful "Shot in the Dark," one of several tunes with backing vocals from country star Maren Morris, Mayer longs for an ex by rhyming "I want you in the worst way" with "Is the gate code still your birthday?" — an instant-classic addition to the ranks of great monied LA love songs.

Then there's "Shouldn't Matter But It Does," a strummy, slow-mo ballad about another broken relationship in which he ponders what might've been: "It could have been always / It could have been me / We could have been busy naming baby number three."

Mayer's sore-throat voice sounds so cooled-out in that one that you can almost picture him lying down as he sings. But with a wink of his eye — or, wait, is that a tear? — the tender and knowing "Sob Rock" is his testament to how hard it is getting easy right.

The continued impact of Roy Hargrove

BY SHANNON J. EFFINGER
Special to *The Washington Post*

Roy Hargrove was a gateway into jazz. For younger listeners who respected the tradition but felt it lacked a tangible connection to the present, the jazz trumpeter — who emerged as a blazing talent in the 1990s — was able to delicately straddle hard-bop and hip-hop, serving as a generational translator for the genre.

Early in his career, he established himself as a seamless connector of different sounds without ever compromising the integrity of his musicianship. "If you grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, there's no way you could avoid playing funk or hip-hop," says bassist Christian McBride, one of Hargrove's good friends and frequent collaborators.

"We got a lot of criticism from older musicians," McBride continued. "It was from them where the words actually carried the most weight. But even still, we just kind of collectively looked at each other like, 'Man, we got to do this. How are we not going to play with D'Angelo? How are we not going to play with the Roots?' Everybody knows how much I love James Brown — I'm not ever going to avoid that, as a matter of principle. We're 'funk children.' We can't get rid of that."

Alongside artists like McBride, Nicholas Payton, Marc Cary and Joshua Redman, Hargrove shepherded a new vanguard for the genre, one that could not be defined by the era in which it was created nor limited by it. Jazz itself is built on the careers of the musicians who pushed its boundaries; Hargrove and his contemporaries helped ensure that a new generation's experiences were both valid and had a rightful place within this music's continuum. Hargrove died in 2018 at the age of 49, and this month sees the release of "In Harmony," the first archival recording released since his death. A collaboration with pianist Mulgrew Miller (who died at age 57 in 2013), the album serves as an opportunity to look at Hargrove's sizable — and lasting and growing — legacy.

Born in Waco, Texas, before moving to Dallas as a child, a young Hargrove became obsessed with the trumpet and eventually attended Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, an arts magnet with other notable alumni such as Norah Jones, Edie Brickell and future Soulquarians collaborator Erykah Badu. When Hargrove was 16, Wynton Marsalis heard him play and invited him to perform with him at a local gig.



Wouter Hogendorp

Early in his career, jazz trumpeter Roy Hargrove established himself as a seamless connector of different sounds without ever compromising the integrity of his musicianship.



"In Harmony" is the music of Roy Hargrove and Mulgrew Miller. It's an appreciation of the trumpeter, accompanied by a pianist with whom he had a special connection.

"He played with an unusual and infectious combination of fire, honesty, and sweet innocence," recalled Marsalis of their initial meeting in a tribute blog post after the trumpeter's death. "The first time I heard him, it was clear, he was an absolute natural with phenomenal ears, a great memory, and tremendous dexterity on our instrument."

After just 18 months at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Hargrove transferred to the New School, as he was already a fixture at New York jam sessions (which continued even after he became a star). He fielded many label offers and ultimately signed with Novus, a jazz imprint of RCA, where he released a number of albums as leader between 1989 and 1994, including "Diamond In The Rough" and "The Vibe." Although there were varying iterations of his earlier groups, his original core quintet featured Rodney Whitaker on bass, Greg Hutchinson on drums, saxophonist Antonio Hart and pianist Marc Cary. Hargrove's later recordings for Verve found him his most fame; the earlier

work recorded for Novus was crucial to his artistic development.

"In Harmony" marks the only duet album from Hargrove and Miller. Taken from concerts on Jan. 16, 2006, at Merkin Concert Hall/Kaufman Music Center in New York and Sept. 11, 2007, at Lafayette College in Easton, Pa., it is being released in partnership with Resonance Records and both of the late musicians' estates.

"Mulgrew was one of the main arteries of the New York jazz scene," says McBride. "He was the most beautiful friend and big brother that all of us could have. And his playing, dare I say, was superior — he was one of the leading voices on the piano for his entire life. So it only makes sense that those two made a recording together because (of) their similar sensitivities to the music and similar language — they both had a deep love of the American songbook."

"In Harmony" renders a touching nod to their frequent collaborations at the beloved jazz club Bradley's in Greenwich Village but also honors the bond Hargrove shared with the musicians he worked with, notably his pianists — Cary, Gerald Clayton, Jon Batiste and Sullivan Fortner among them.

"It is an interesting observation that there is that special connection between trumpet players and pianists," said Clayton. "The trumpet is maybe sort of the closest to being a vocalist, as far as instruments go, and there's been a strong relationship between vocalists and pianists throughout history — that's a match made in heaven."

Hargrove died of cardiac arrest on Nov. 2, 2018, after suf-

fering from kidney disease for more than a decade. Aside from family members, one of the few people to see him before he died was saxophonist and lifelong collaborator Justin Robinson.

"My last performance with him was the night before his birthday," Robinson recalls of a concert just a few weeks before Hargrove's death. "On that particular night, he played as good as I ever remembered him playing. He had been having problems with his teeth, like minor trumpet problems. But that night, it was almost like he was back; I mean, he played wonderfully that night."

Rather than recede during his final years as his illness worsened, Hargrove stayed active. He toured regularly and continued to serve as a mentor; his late-night residency at Smalls Jazz Club was a regular spot where he helped young talent. Hargrove's influence reaches beyond his own body of work — there's the Jazz Gallery, a nonprofit jazz venue he helped launch more than 25 years ago, to his contributions on albums by D'Angelo, Common and Badu that both fortified and re-envisioned the bond between hip-hop and jazz. These collaborations not only helped elevate the role of sampling but created something else far more organic and original, positioning instrumentalists at the front and as equals with the marquee artists.

"In Harmony" is a reminder that for all of those extracurriculars, one of the best ways to appreciate Hargrove remains him in his element — the trumpet playing that turned him from virtuoso to visionary, accompanied by a pianist with whom he had a special connection.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Old ways skewered with song and dance

Classic Broadway norms clash with modern sensibilities in genre-bending ‘Schmigadoon!’

BY MARK KENNEDY

Associated Press

A pair of modern-day hikers step out of the woods and into a town where they are greeted by something strange: suspiciously friendly residents who burst into a high-kicking, knee-slapping group welcome song.

“What is this and why is music coming from everywhere?” says one of the hikers in disbelief. “It’s like if ‘The Walking Dead’ was also ‘Glee.’”

So starts the charming, genre-bending Apple TV+ comedy “Schmigadoon!,” which combines Cecily Strong with Keegan-Michael Key and finds hilarity in the clash between modern sensibilities and classic Broadway musical theater norms.

“This is not a show that is only for musical audiences. I love that it is for musical audiences so much, but I think it’s special and I think it’s genuinely very funny and I think it’s genuinely very sweet,” Strong says. “In that way, I think it’s kind of can be for everybody.”

The town of Schmigadoon is stuck in the overly cheery Technicolor age, where two hotel rooms cost \$1 — unmarried couples should never sleep in one bed, of course — and residents suddenly sing about corn pudding to the astonishment of the strangers.

“Oh no. It’s a song. You just started another song,” Key’s character exclaims to his partner at one point.

Behavior typical in apple-cheeked musicals from the 1940s and ’50s is skewered, like when one resident flips his mate over and gives her a smack on her behind during a group dance number.

“No, no, that’s not OK! Unless it’s consensual,” says Strong’s character.

Cinco Paul, who co-created and co-wrote the series with Ken Daurio, said he adores old musicals but also knows that they’re often highly problematic in parts and wanted to explore the tension.

“I would be thrilled to be stuck in a musical town,” he says. “But I also am hyper-aware of the things that are just not



APPLE TV+/AP

Cecily Strong, left, and Keegan-Michael Key star in “Schmigadoon!” as hikers who wander into a musical town but realize that they can’t leave until they find true love.

great about them. And so I wanted the show to point those things out and have fun with them.”

The creators managed to convince a bushel of Broadway A-listers to fly to Vancouver and quarantine for two weeks before joining the show, including Alan Cumming, Kristin Chenoweth, Aaron Tveit, Jane Krakowski, Ann Harada and Ariana DeBose.

Cumming plays the top-hatted mayor, Chenoweth is a sour Bible-thumper, Tveit is a rapsallion carnival worker and Martin Short has a cameo as a leprechaun. The backpacking couple learn they can’t leave the magical town until they find true love, putting a strain on their already crumbling relationship.

The title is a joke on another village unaffected by time from the splashy Broadway musical “Brigadoon” and it

skewers such escapist and naive shows like “Seven Brides for Seven Brothers” and “Hello, Dolly!”

Lorne Michaels, an executive producer, says the show’s genius lies in reexamining strict post-World War II gender, sexual and racial roles without the show being overtly political, not to mention offering plenty of songs and dancing.

“It’s a very light touch,” he said. “We’re in a very heavy-handed time right now, where people feel making a point about justice is kind of enough. And you go ‘Well, no. You also have to entertain.’”

The show’s writers also include Allison Silverman, Julie Klausner, Kate Gersten and Bowen Yang. Paul jokes he picked people who “maybe have a bit more of a poison pen than I would.” But “ultimately, all of us in the room loved musicals so much and that came through.”

Premise of HBO’s ‘White Lotus’: Vacations are wasted on the rich

BY INKOO KANG

The Washington Post

It takes true perversity to program “The White Lotus,” a new HBO miniseries about tourists whose expectations for their stay at a luxury Hawaiian hotel fall far short, at a time when Americans can finally travel in mass-vaccinated safety. What more relatable fantasy is there right now than the one of quarantine-induced marital or familial tensions dissipating in the island breeze or under the sway of a mai tai on the beach at sunset?

But creator Mike White (“Enlightened”), who wrote and directed all six episodes, isn’t interested in dreams so much as the nightmare of reality. His shots of Hawaii’s palm trees, shorelines and sunrises should please the state’s tourism board, but their tropical idyll only underscores the fact that hardly any of his characters are able to appreciate the lush nature they presumably came to experience. The sun-dappled White Lotus Hotel, too, is the kind of secluded, opulent retreat that the closest most of us can get to is through Instagram. But its guillotine-worthy guests spend most of their time convinced that they’re not being pampered and catered to enough, goading the hotel manager, Ar-



HBO

In ‘The White Lotus,’ Sydney Sweeney and Brittany O’Grady play sarcastic, know-it-all college friends Olivia and Paula, who typify the series’ satirical mordant wit.

mond (Murray Bartlett of HBO’s “Looking”), first into small rebellions against a customer, then a full-blown spiral in a textbook case of trickle-down callousness.

The series’ satirical mordant wit is typified by college friends Olivia (Sydney Sweeney of HBO’s “Euphoria”) and Paula (Brittany O’Grady), sarcastic, know-it-all teens whose vacation reading list of Freud, Nietzsche and Butler unnerve those around them. On the boat ride from a larger island

to the more exclusive one the White Lotus occupies, Olivia and Paula size up, with rough precision, the other guests headed to the hotel. The attractive honeymooners with their arms around each other? He’s (Jake Lacy) a Dartmouth type; she’s (Alexandra Daddario of HBO’s “True Detective”) pretty enough to work in fashion or marketing. The solitary older woman (Jennifer Coolidge) whom they guess is meeting her friends on a girls

trip? “She gets on their nerves but she pays for everything so they put up with her.”

The photogenic middle-aged couple (Steve Zahn of HBO’s “Treme” and Connie Britton) whose outward ease may conceal an everyday sort of insidiousness are Olivia’s parents, who badly want to reconnect with her and her 16-year-old brother Quinn (Fred Hechinger), not least because one of them is nervously anticipating a phone call with an oncologist about some test results.

Overlaid with an insistent, percussive score (by Cristobal Tapia de Veer) that could just as readily soundtrack a movie about a man being hunted in a jungle, the miniseries finds most of the characters ripening toward putrescence. Days after her wedding, Rachel (Daddario), a struggling journalist, discovers that her obscenely wealthy husband, Shane (Lacy), whom she hasn’t known for very long, sees her as little more than a trophy wife. Rachel is also disturbed that Shane can’t be satisfied with the extravagant room they’re in, because his mother (Molly Shannon of HBO’s “Divorce”) arranged for them to stay in the hotel’s best suite, not its second.

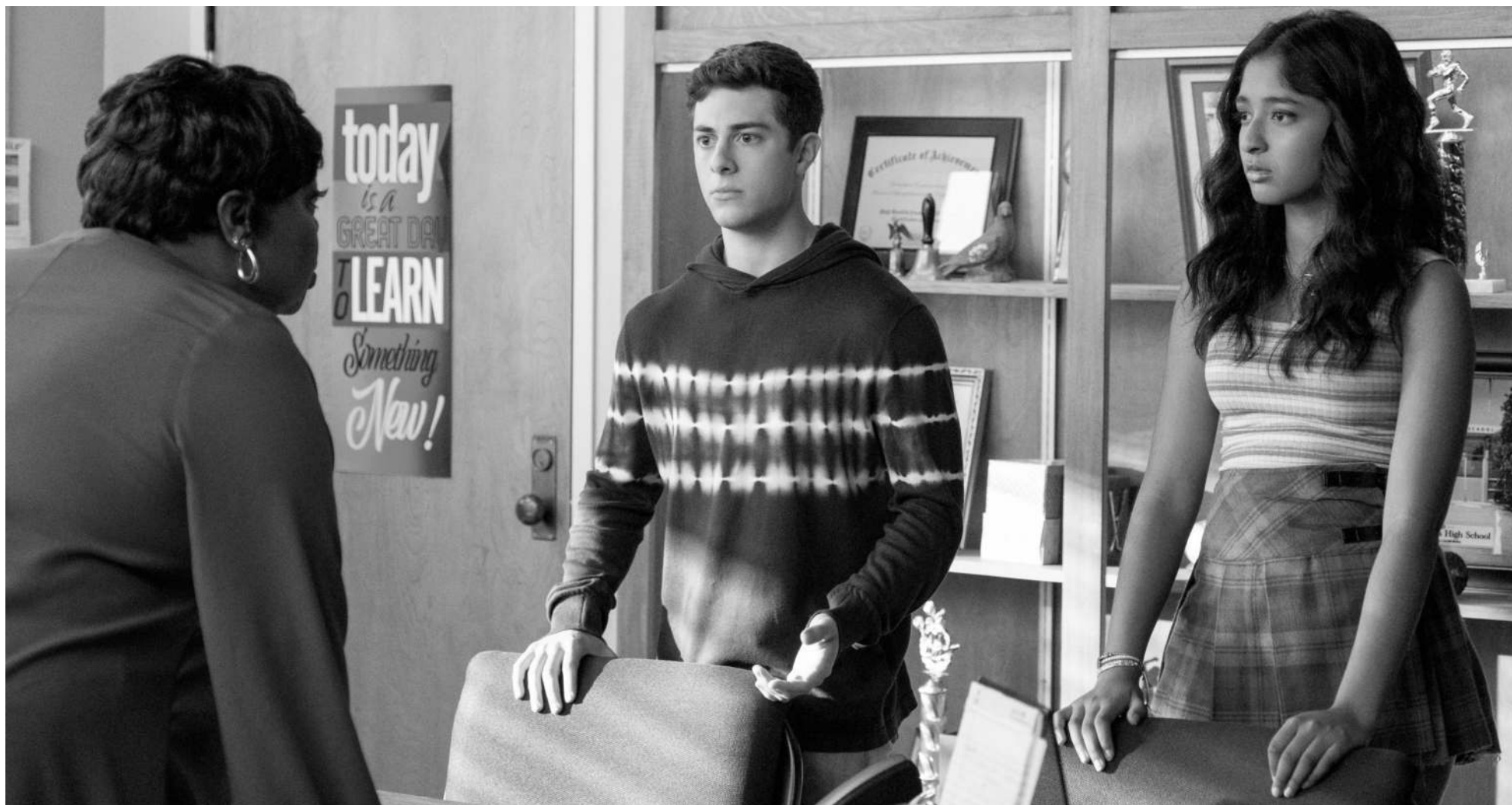
Elsewhere in the building, family secrets emerge like crabs

after high tide, especially after Olivia’s dad, Mark (Zahn), decides he’d rather not repeat his own father’s mistakes. But his efforts to be more transparent with his kids does little but aggravate his wife, Nicole (Britton), who’s already busy squabbling with her college-sanctimonious daughter about colonialism and privilege. Yet even their chronic discontent feels like a holiday compared with the misery that subsumes Tanya (Coolidge), who has traveled to Hawaii alone to scatter her mother’s ashes and relies on a hotel spa staff member (Natasha Rothwell of HBO’s “Insecure”) for emotional support while dangling the opportunity of a lifetime in front of the underpaid masseuse.

There’s plenty here of White’s tart sensibility and serrated observations of how self-loathers tend to spread their wretchedness to those around them. The trollish timing of the show’s premise, that vacations are wasted on those who least need them, certainly deserves some grudging admiration. But a swerve late in the series disappointingly sails the story toward calmer waters. Once the turbulence is over, only froth remains.

“The White Lotus” airs Sundays on AFN-Spectrum.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION



NETFLIX/AP

Cocoa Brown, from left, Jaren Lewison and Maitreyi Ramakrishnan appear in a scene from the series "Never Have I Ever." Lewison plays high school student Ben Gross, who is committed to graduating at the top of his class, getting into Ivy League schools and proving himself to his father. To do so he needs to compete with Devi (Ramakrishnan).

'Stop and remember how lucky you are'

'Never Have I Ever' actor, 20, juggles show and full course load at college with ease, maturity and gratitude

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

Jaren Lewison was at his USC freshman orientation when he got the call to screen test for the Netflix series "Never Have I Ever." He got the job and filmed season one while living in his college dorm, which he remembers returning to at night after working on set.

"Sometimes I would show up at like 3 in the morning from a late Friday night shoot. I would see everybody coming home from the bars and parties," he said.

Lewison, now 20, spoke recently via Zoom while on summer break at his parents' house in Dallas. A psychology major with a minor in forensics and criminality, he is also fulfilling a writing course requirement while at home but takes four classes a semester.

With his foot already planted firmly in the door of Hollywood, Lewison could leave school, but he says graduating is a priority.

"I love being in class," he said. He is on track to graduate in the spring of 2022, while technically a junior. "I'm excited to get started on what's next and devote 24 hours a day to my career and growth as an actor."

On "Never Have I Ever," which debuted its second season July 15, Lewison plays Ben Gross, an ambitious high school student who is committed to graduating at the top of his class. He is fiercely competitive with Devi Vishwakumar, played by Maitreyi Ramakrishnan, who is his nemesis, frenemy, confidante and crush combined.

Ben's father is a successful entertainment lawyer and so he name-drops his dad's famous clients with boastful pride, although his classmates don't understand how his parents, while loving, regularly leave him home alone and how his housekeeper is the stable adult figure in his life.

Lewison credits his psychology studies for helping him understand his character: "Ben wants to feel validated. He is so competitive with Devi and wants to get into Ivy

League schools because he wants to prove to himself and his family that he is as good as his father. That's a lot of pressure for a sophomore in high school to put on himself."

He also admires how Devi's character is so layered and "portrayed unbelievably" by Ramakrishnan, in her first acting role. Devi sometimes has bursts of misplaced anger over the recent, unexpected death of her father, and often makes poor decisions. She sees a therapist (played by Niecy Nash.)

"Devi is an incredibly complex character and written so beautifully," Lewison said. "Our show handles the messiness of teen life really well and approaches those topics with such care."

He may be juggling a full course load when filming, but one of Lewison's lecturers, Leslie Berntsen, credits his follow-through. Berntsen had Lewison as a student in her Introduction to Psychology class and says he reached out early with a heads up about his crazy schedule.

She recalled over email: "He said he had just been cast in a new Netflix show and was committed to balancing that job with a full course load." She said her response was congratulatory, but she also made clear that he would be "held to the same standards" as his classmates.

Lewison also makes sure to communicate with the production coordinators on "Never Have I Ever" about school conflicts.

"If I give them enough notice, if they're able to, they may switch a scene around so that if I have a midterm and I have to sit for it, they'll help me do that. We work together," he said.

Lang Fisher, the "Never Have I Ever" co-creator and showrunner, says she was aware early on that Lewison was choosing to attend college while on the show, but it's never been an issue. He's always prepared and organized.

"When I think of 20-year-old men, I think of open ramen containers, like, underwear, beds unmade and just

like slob basically. I have three younger brothers and I think of slob," she said. "And he is just so mature and really just pushes himself. He comes to set. He knows his lines cold. He always has the smartest questions about a scene. Whenever we have table reads, he's like the one person who's got his Zoom ready to go and has no technical difficulties and has the right headphone setup."

Co-creator Mindy Kaling believes Lewison made the right decision to continue with school and thinks he will be better for it.

"I learned so much during my collegiate years, and I think his years at USC will inform his artistry. I admire Jaren for tackling two major, life-changing challenges," she said over email.

Lewison says while he has good time management skills, he was naturally worried about the demands of both work and school.

"I thought I'd be more stressed out and I'd have a lot of anxiety. It's really been the opposite," he said. "I've found that every second that I'm at work, I can't believe it. It genuinely feels like my dreams come true every time that I'm there."

That optimism and commitment to being present is a family mantra: Remember the feeling. He often uses it in social media posts.

"It was passed down from my grandfather, from my father to me, and I'll pass it on to my kids one day," he said. "And oftentimes what that means is you stop and remember how lucky you are in a specific situation."

"Never Have I Ever" debuted its first season during the height of the pandemic and was one of the critically-acclaimed shows of 2020.

Lewison says he's just happy the show made an impact during a dark time: "Mental health is something that I'm really passionate about. To be a part of a show that was such a light for so many people is really impactful for me personally, and for the rest of our cast and crew."

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

BY ALLYSON CHIU
AND SARAH KAPLAN
The Washington Post

With hotter-than-usual weather affecting millions of people across the United States and Europe this summer, millions of people are dealing with blistering temperatures. Experts say it's critical to have a plan for staying cool and safe, especially if you don't have air conditioning.

"Air conditioning saves lives in these times of very extreme heat," said Matthew Levy, an associate professor of emergency medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "Tragically, when we see people who succumb to heat-related illness or severe outcomes, it's usually lack of access to air conditioning."

But many homes aren't outfitted with air conditioning, particularly in temperate climates such as the Pacific Northwest, where hundreds recently died during a historic heat wave. Meanwhile, people who do have air conditioning may be concerned about skyrocketing utility bills and overloading electrical grids.

If you're trying to safely beat the blazing heat while living in a home without air conditioning, here's what you need to know:

When is it too hot to be home?

Everyone tolerates hot weather differently. But people who have problems regulating their body temperature, such as the elderly, pregnant people, babies and children, and those with chronic or mental health conditions are among the most vulnerable to heat.

Experts recommend knowing and watching out for the symptoms of heat-related conditions, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, to gauge whether an environment is no longer safe. But, Levy said, if the temperature in your home starts to approach or exceeds 90 degrees, you should leave and find a place with air conditioning. When indoor temperatures reach the high 90s, electric fans won't prevent against heat-related illness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ideally, if you don't have air conditioning, you should be planning to go elsewhere long before temperatures reach 90 degrees, said Craig Crandall, a professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern and a research scientist at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas.

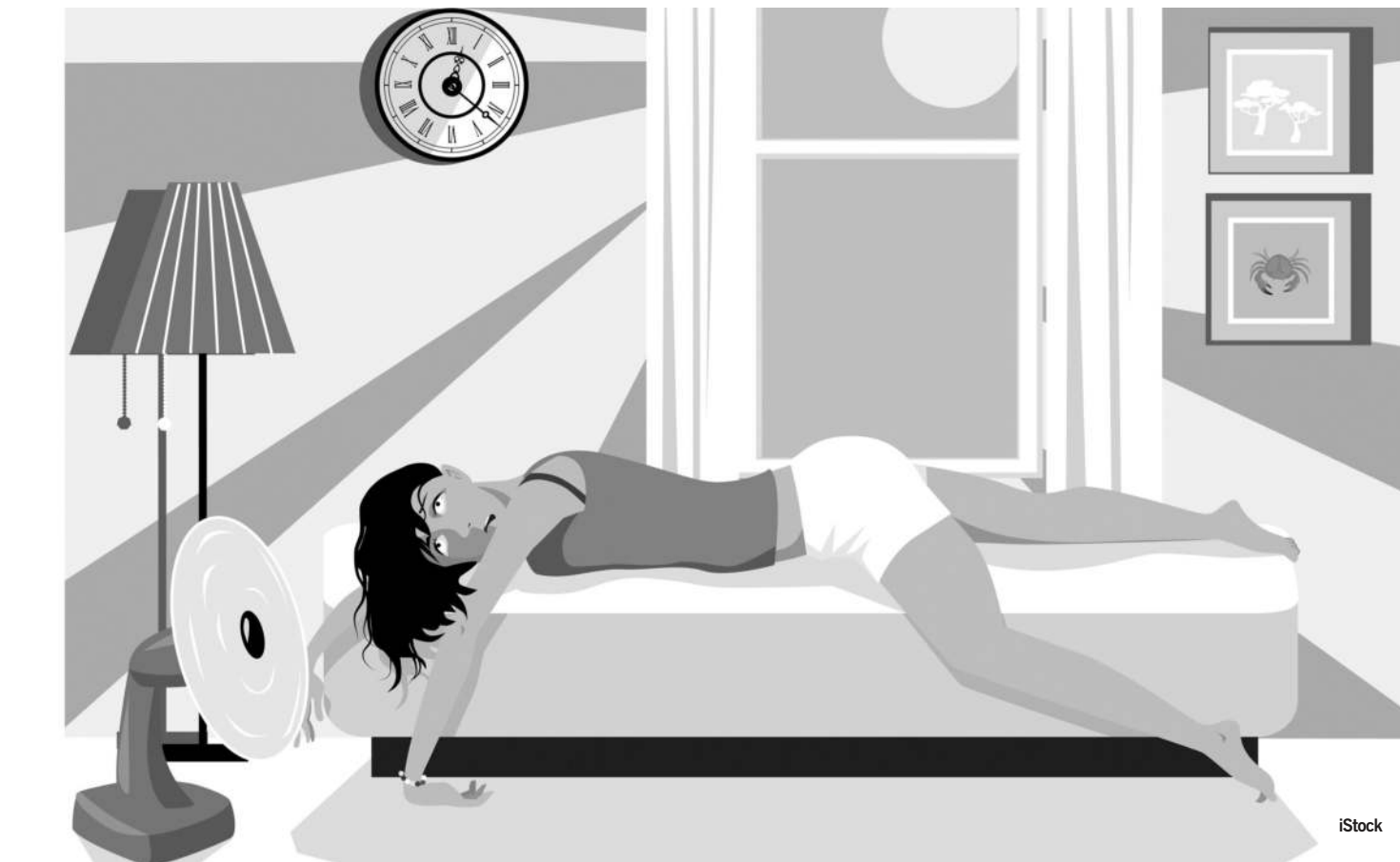
"By you just staying in your apartment and waiting for it to get so hot that you have to leave, you're essentially, in my opinion, playing at the edge of a cliff," Crandall said, adding that it's especially risky for those who are more vulnerable.

How can I effectively use fans?

Remember that fans don't cool air, they just move it around, said University of Oregon buildings scientist Alexandra Rempel. Having a fan blow air that is hotter than your body temperature can actually make it more difficult for your body to shed heat by sweating. Humidity will also affect your ability to sweat.

Crandall compared using a fan in a hot room to cooking a turkey in a convection oven.

"Typically, it's an oven with a fan that's blowing the hot air on the turkey and the turkey cooks a lot faster," he said. "It's the same theory with humans that if you've got



iStock

No air conditioner? No sweat

Experts offer tips keep your home, body cool and comfortable during a heat wave

a fan blowing hot air around you, you're going to cook, if you will, or your temperature is going to be up higher faster."

But if the indoor air temperature is in the low 90s or below, turning on a fan can create an artificial breeze that helps evaporate sweat from your skin, making you feel cooler, Rempel said. Make sure any ceiling fans are spinning counterclockwise, so they push air down in a column. If you're using a window fan, place it where it will draw in the coolest air — a fan in a window overlooking a leafy backyard is preferable to one that pulls in hot air and car exhaust from a busy roadway.

Position yourself so that you're exposing large areas of skin to a fan's breeze, said Robert Bean, a distinguished lecturer with the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers.

"It might feel better to have the air flow in your face, but that's not removing the amount of stored heat that you're retaining," Bean said.

The effect of fans can be enhanced by adding water, experts said. Have a spray bottle handy and keep your skin moist by misting yourself often.

Can I place ice in front of a fan?

A fan that blows air over ice can essentially create "a really low-cost little AC," said Jin Wen, a professor in the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering at Drexel University.

While using ice and a fan might provide some personal relief, it's not likely to cool the entire space and isn't a long-term solution, said Wes Davis, technical services director of the Air Conditioning Contractors of America, a trade association. But for those who want to try it, Davis suggested adjusting the fan speed, if that's an

option, to a lower setting.

"It's all about transferring heat, so if the air moving across [the ice] is moving very, very quickly, the time for heat transfer is reduced," he said.

Should I keep my windows open?

Staying safe during a heat wave is all about managing the amount of energy that comes into your home, Rempel said.

During the day, when sunlight is beating down, you'll want to keep your windows closed and covered. Because glass readily transmits heat, it's most effective to have coverings on the exterior of the house, such as shutters or retractable awnings. If that's not an option, you should close any interior curtains or blinds. And in a pinch, try covering a piece of cardboard in aluminum foil and pressing it into the window frame. The foil will reflect sunlight outward, keeping that energy out of your home.

Open up your windows as the outside temperature falls at night and through the early mornings, as long as security and noise won't be an issue, Bean said. "Let the cool air from the outside blow through the house ... You want to remove the stored heat inside and get it outside, and the air becomes that mechanism to do that."

But be mindful of the humidity levels, Wen said. "When indoor and outdoor temperature are not that different or outside is a couple degrees lower, but it's much more humid, then I would say, don't open a window."

If you're trying to cool down your home by bringing in air from outdoors, experts recommend creating cross ventilation by opening windows and doors on opposite sides of rooms. Strategically placed fans blowing hot air out and channeling cooler air in can help speed up the process, Bean

said.

In homes with more than one story, make sure rising hot air can flow out through windows on upper floors or openings in the roof, Rempel said. This allows cool night air to flow through the home, removing heat energy that has accumulated in the very structure of the building.

What else can I do to stay cool?

Water is essential, Crandall said. "Drinking it and spraying it on your body, those are the best things that you can do when you don't have air conditioning."

Wear less clothing and choose loose-fitting garments. Place ice packs or wet and, if possible, chilled towels or cloths on your body.

It's not generally recommended to sleep on wet bed linens. "They can become musty or moldy," Levy said.

Take cool showers or baths, or fill up a kiddie pool, but be careful where you put it, Levy said. "Kiddie pools on terraces in high-rise buildings — not a good idea. People don't realize that, but that's a lot of weight to put on a balcony or terrace."

Experts also suggested keeping activity levels low, especially during the hottest parts of the day. Try to limit or avoid using devices and appliances that generate heat, such as stoves, ovens and dryers.

Spend your time in the cooler areas of your home, said Krystal Pollitt, an environmental health studies professor at the Yale School of Public Health. During the day, steer clear of west-facing rooms with windows, and sleep in the basement or lower levels of your home.

To control humidity, consider buying a dehumidifier. Indoor humidity should be below 80%, Wen said, which "will help you to continuously sweat, and then that will take away your body heat."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



DREAMSTIME/TNS

The pandemic has had profound impacts on pregnancy and birth rates, as well as birth outcomes, and the long-term consequences could ripple through economies, education systems and more.

Baby boom or bust?

Some countries' pregnancy, birth rates rose during the pandemic; others fell

BY MARIE McCULLOUGH
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Early in the pandemic, there were predictions that stay-at-home orders would spawn a baby boom. “Nine months after folks are forced to hunker down and ride out a natural disaster, the birth rate suddenly spikes,” explained an article on Fatherly, a parenting news website. “Whether it’s the boredom ... or the sense of impending doom, there’s something about these situations that makes people do what comes naturally.”

This month, Fatherly ran a sequel titled, “The COVID-19 Baby Boom is a Lie.”

But it isn’t a lie. In the Philippines and other poor countries where families were already struggling to make ends meet, lockdowns did cause a spike in pregnancies, largely because women were unable to access birth control.

The pandemic has had profound impacts on pregnancy and birth rates, as well as birth outcomes, and the long-term consequences could ripple through economies, education systems and more. The thing is, some effects have defied expectations, and some are hard to explain.

For example, the premature birth rate declined last spring and summer — around the world. Vincenzo Berghella, director of maternal-fetal medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, was one of the first to document the phenomenon, using data from his hospital. One possible partial explanation: Telemedicine visits eliminated frequent, inconvenient, time-consuming treks to the obstetrician’s office, which lessened expectant mothers’ stress.

“You’d think the in-person care which we’ve been doing forever is beneficial, but maybe not in some ways,” Berghella said in an interview. “The bottom line is we don’t know why preterm births declined, but most people say this is real. It has been shown in Europe and Asia, as well as the U.S.”

But this unexpected pandemic benefit has socioeconomic nuances, researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center found. At UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital, the rate of births before 37 weeks of pregnancy declined by a percentage point among white women and those living in affluent neighborhoods, but not Black women.

“Systemic disparities in health care outcomes are at

play here, too,” said Hyagriv Simhan, vice chair of obstetrical services at Magee.

U.S. fertility indicators — the annual birth rate and lifetime births per woman — have been falling fairly steadily for decades.

Meanwhile, deaths have outpaced births in many parts of the country. In 2019, before the pandemic hit, deaths exceeded births in almost half of U.S. counties, and the nation added just 892,000 people, the lowest population growth in a century, according to an analysis by University of New Hampshire demographer Kenneth M. Johnson. This trend was pronounced in farming, mining and older industrial regions, as well as in counties with lots of elderly residents.

In 2020, population growth shrank even more. The U.S. added 229,000 people, reflecting the tsunami of pandemic deaths and diminished immigration, Johnson’s updated snapshot found.

But 2020 was marked by another anomaly: A sudden, sharp decline in women getting pregnant.

At the height of pandemic restrictions in late March and early April, more than 310 million Americans were stuck at home. Modified shutdowns persisted in many places for a year. Grappling with economic hardship and zoom schooling, many couples decided to forgo, or at least postpone, reproducing.

“The decline in births could be on the order of 300,000 to 500,000 fewer births” in 2021, predicted a Brookings report published in December 2020.

To help with that prediction, the authors, economists Melissa Kearney and Phillip Levine, extrapolated from two historic crises. During the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-19, birth rates dropped sharply with each of the three big waves of deaths. During the Great Recession of 2007-2009, the birth rate decreases correlated with increases in unemployment.

“An analysis of the Great Recession leads us to predict that women will have fewer babies in the short term, and for some of them, a lower total number of children over their lifetimes,” the authors wrote.

The short- and long-term distinction is important. If the rate of pregnancies this spring is inflated by pregnant women who postponed because of the pandemic, then not only could there be a rebound in births later this year, but a big spike. On the other hand, there might not be a spike, depending how many women who postponed discover their biological clocks have run out.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



How would a military ‘Real Housewives’ be?

I’ll admit it: I love reality television. Ever since the early days of MTV’s “The Real World,” “Cops” and “Survivor.” I tried others, like “Big Brother,” “The Amazing Race,” “The Bachelor” and “The Apprentice.” But it wasn’t until I stumbled upon reruns of “The Real Housewives of New York” that I found my reality television “spirit animal.”

I gobbled up all the “Real Housewives” reruns until I was up to speed with the franchises filmed in Orange County, New York City, Atlanta, New Jersey, the District of Columbia, Beverly Hills, Miami, Potomac, Dallas and Salt Lake City — each featuring women with thick accents, and even thicker makeup.

Some say that the “Real Housewives” shows perpetuate gender stereotypes, blah, blah, blah. I say, lighten up. The shows ARE morally and intellectually bankrupt, but I tune in for entertainment, not self-improvement. The outlandish cast members and ridiculous storylines are nothing like my reality. However, there have been moments during my 23 years as an active-duty Navy wife when I detected hints of the catty drama that is the cornerstone of every “Real Housewives” franchise. I can imagine a Real Housewives show featuring gossipy, judgmental military spouses ...

[After a car insurance commercial, four military spouses posing in ball gowns appear on the screen, under a show title, “The Real Housewives of the Military.” The camera zooms in on each woman, as she announces her “tagline” over introductory instrumental music.]

“You might drive a tank, but ain’t nobody rolling over me,” quips Army wife Janelle with a petulant grin.

“I may look fragile, but I can hold down the fort,” claims Marine wife Angela, flexing a sequined bicep.

“My husband is out to sea, but our family is shipshape,” brags Navy wife Mona, striking a Rosy the Riveter pose.

“I’m no stranger to a cockpit, but I’m always on solid ground,” cracks Air Force wife Bridget in a sultry voice.

Opening scene: All four women sit around a picnic table at the base housing community playground.

“I swear, if her kids leave their scooters in the cul-de-sac again tonight, I’m calling the ombudsman,” whispers Mona about Wendy, who recently moved into the neighborhood.

“Seriously. Just because your husband is deployed for a year doesn’t give you the right to make the rest of us pick up your slack,” says Bridget, rolling her eyes dramatically.

Just then, Wendy approaches the picnic table and says cheerfully, “Hi guys!” The women plaster smiles on their faces and greet her, while glancing sideways at each other.

“What are you wearing to the military ball this weekend, Wendy?” asks Janelle with an arched eyebrow.

“I’m not sure I can go ... can’t find a babysitter,” Wendy says, looking back at her three boys swinging and squealing like wild gibbons in a nearby tree.

“Well, Bridget’s daughter ...,” starts Angela, but stops short when Bridget kicks her hard under the table. “... Uh, never mind. I think she’s busy actually,” she lies, rubbing her shin. For a moment, it seems like Wendy wants to sit at the table, but the women quickly spread their elbows, knees and diaper bags to take up as much room as possible.

Feeling rejected, Wendy slinks off. Janelle, Angela, Mona and Bridget turn to each other and snicker.

[Cut to breakfast cereal commercial.]

This imaginary episode of “The Real Housewives of the Military” illustrates something important. We may think that we are better than the people we see behaving badly on television, but if the lens was turned on us, what would we see?

As military spouses, we should always strive to support each other through our uniquely challenging lives of service and sacrifice. If military spouses had television taglines, I’d like to think ours would be, “Our spouses may wear the uniforms, but we’ll always be sisters and brothers in arms.”

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com, and in Lisa’s book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com.

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

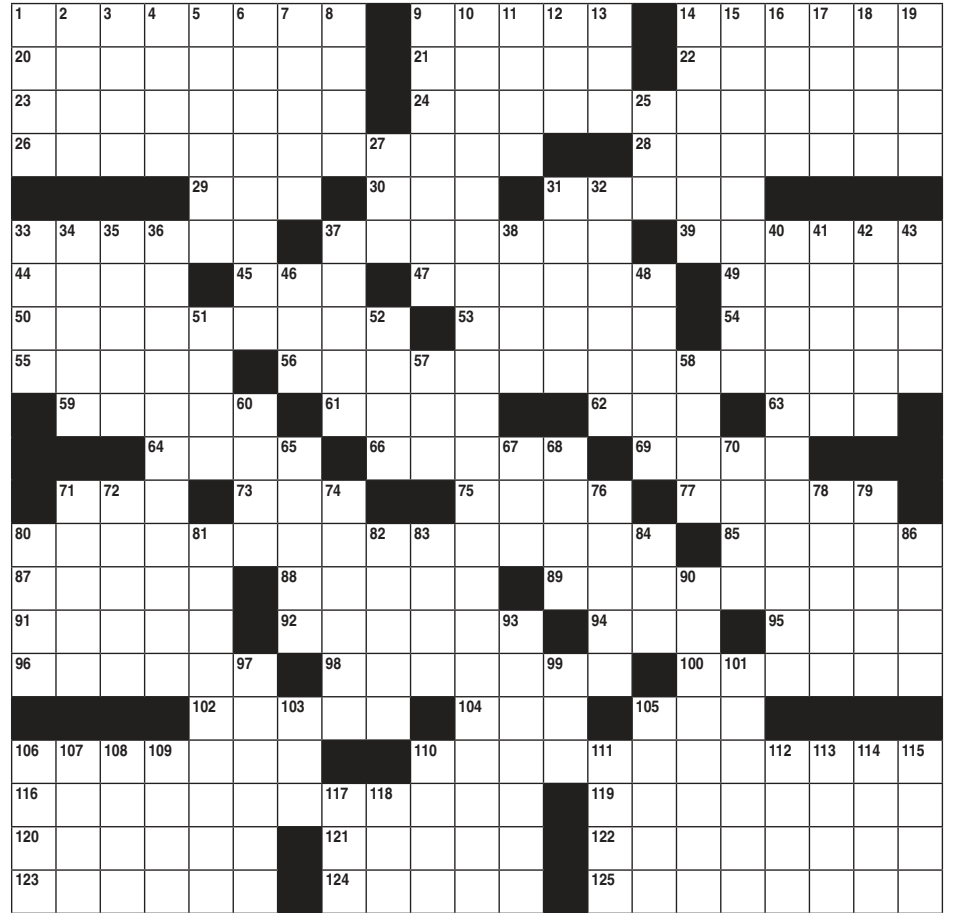
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

NO RUSE

BY ASHISH VENSGARKAR / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Ashish Vengsarkar, of Scotch Plains, N.J., is the head of Optical Networking Technologies at Google. Besides puzzles, he enjoys playing raga and table tennis. (He and I have a longstanding annual rivalry in the latter.) The seed entry of this puzzle was 10-Down, which came to Ashish while he was at the dentist's. The symmetrical pairing of 36- and 40-Down (a favorite artist of his during college) was fortuitous. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Art of riding and training a horse
 - 9 "Mea culpa"
 - 14 Campania's capital
 - 20 Put in other words
 - 21 Bob Marley's "____ You Be Loved"
 - 22 Mark in the World Golf Hall of Fame
 - 23 Lacking self-assurance
 - 24 Onus for a magician's disappearing act?
 - 26 Study of how gels gel?
 - 28 All together
 - 29 Little, to a Scot
 - 30 η
 - 31 Fizzle (out)
 - 33 Miscellaneous task
 - 37 Irish writer Behan
 - 39 Increased, with "up"
 - 44 Actress Polo
 - 45 Pablo Neruda's "____ to Wine"
 - 47 They'll put you head and shoulders above everyone else
 - 49 Constellation almost above the North Pole
 - 50 Autobiography subtitled "The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban"
 - 53 Red card
 - 54 ____ Khan, prime minister of Pakistan beginning in 2018
 - 55 Sports broadcast feature
 - 56 Angry Wisconsin sports fans?
 - 59 Fire sign?
 - 61 Like n, where n = 2k (and "k" is a whole number)
 - 62 Unagi, at a sushi bar
 - 63 President Bartlet of "The West Wing"
 - 64 Singer Astley
 - 66 Totalitarian?
 - 69 Law enforcement, slangily
 - 71 Tajikistan, e.g., once: Abbr.
 - 73 "How was ____ know?"
 - 75 Loll
 - 77 Many a marble bust
 - 80 Getting "Amscray!" under control?
 - 85 Like yoga instructors
 - 87 Greet the day
 - 88 One of the Earps
 - 89 -
 - 91 Bathroom-cabinet item
 - 92 Certain bridge positions
 - 94 McEachern a.k.a. the "Voice of Poker"
 - 95 Cake topper
 - 96 Wealthiest professional sports org.
 - 98 Abrogates
 - 100 Party animal?
 - 102 Reveals
 - 104 Reply to an oversharer
 - 105 One in a hundred: Abbr.
 - 106 Parrot
 - 110 Power of a cowboy's shoe?
 - 116 Odysseus' wife whispers sweet nothings?
 - 119 Bliss
 - 120 With wisdom
 - 121 In a sense, colloquially
 - 122 Activity for some pen pals
 - 123 Port on the Black Sea
 - 124 Colorful food fish
 - 125 Giveaways during some pledge drives
 - 15 Bands you might listen to in the car?
 - 16 Salt's musical partner
 - 17 Where "khop jai" means "thank you"?
 - 18 God who "loosens the limbs and weakens the mind," per Hesiod
 - 19 Call at home
 - 25 Not gross
 - 27 Île be there?
 - 31 ____ paneer (dish with puréed spinach)
 - 32 Way in
 - 33 "The Adventures of Milo and ____" (1989 film)
 - 34 Cyber Monday offerings
 - 35 She might take care of a kid on a sick day
 - 36 Rock star who wrote the poetry collection "The American Night"
 - 37 Contradict
 - 38 "Mon ____!"
 - 40 36-Down's anagrammatic nickname
 - 41 "Gay" city in a Cole Porter song
 - 42 Hallmark.com purchase
 - 43 Opposite of "takes off"
 - 46 Something to leave to beavers?
 - 48 Precipitous
 - 51 Grammy-nominated D.J. Steve
 - 52 Thomas ____ Edison
 - 57 Join with rings
- DOWN**
- 1 What the doctor ordered
 - 2 Where Johnny Cash shot a man, in song
 - 3 Bruins legend Phil, to fans
 - 4 "Cut it out!"
 - 5 Pronounced with authority
 - 6 Twitter handle starter
 - 7 Davis of "Thelma & Louise"
 - 8 Icelandic saga
 - 9 Chicken ____ (discontinued fast-food snack)
 - 10 Dramatic accusation at a dentist's office?
 - 11 Stickers
 - 12 City council representative: Abbr.
 - 13 Overtime White House inits.
 - 14 Lunchtime liaison



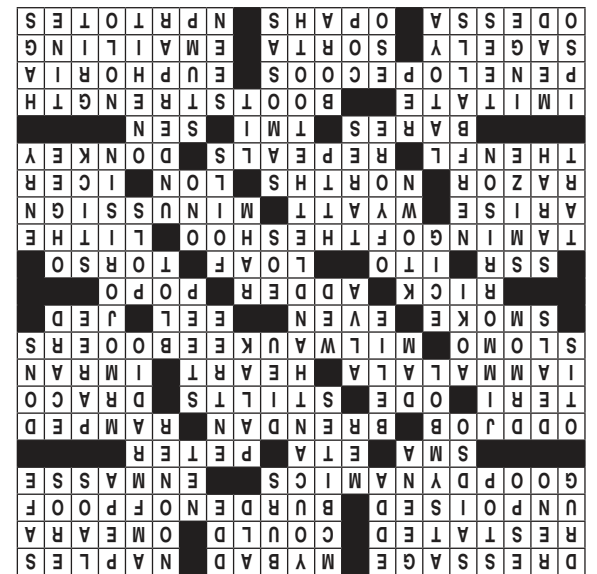
- 58 Smudge
- 60 Vaper's purchase
- 65 Neighborhood where you might get kimchi, for short
- 67 Goddess of the dawn
- 68 Obama chief of staff Emanuel
- 70 Campaign pros
- 71 ____ Gilbert, co-developer of a Covid-19 vaccine
- 72 Smile with one's eyes, per a modern coinage
- 74 Long past
- 76 Some fencing swords
- 78 Something to play fetch with
- 79 "Well, golly!"
- 80 Biting
- 81 Spongy toys
- 82 Resets to zero, as a scale
- 83 ____://
- 84 John Winston ____ Lennon
- 86 Professor 'iggins
- 90 Eaglelike?
- 93 Appetizers filled with potatoes and peas
- 97 One of the Jacksons
- 99 Word following English or green
- 101 Kind of wonder?
- 103 Cred
- 105 Campaign (for)
- 106 Itself: Lat.
- 107 World's oldest alcoholic beverage
- 108 Pulitzer-winning playwright from Independence, Kan.
- 109 Seriously annoys, with "off"
- 110 Tora ____, Afghanistan
- 111 Not overlooked
- 112 Defendant's plea, for short
- 113 Determination
- 114 Fork point
- 115 Storied caldron stirrers
- 117 Spanish "that"
- 118 Admit (to)

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE

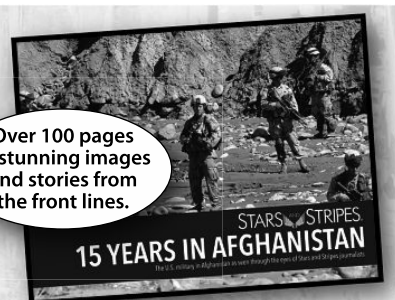


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FACES

Rolling Stones relaunch American tour Sept. 26

The Rolling Stones announced on Thursday the relaunch of their U.S. “No Filter” tour, which had been derailed by the pandemic, beginning in St. Louis on Sept. 26.

The 2021 No Filter tour begins Sept. 26 at The Dome at America’s Center in St. Louis, followed by rescheduled stops in Charlotte, Pittsburgh, Nashville, Minneapolis, Tampa, Dallas, Atlanta, Detroit and Austin. The band has also added three new dates, including the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival — their first time playing there — on Oct. 13, Los Angeles on Oct. 17 at SoFi Stadium, and Las Vegas on Nov. 6 at Allegiant Stadium.

Tickets will go on sale July 30 for the new shows. The statement added that previously scheduled dates for Vancouver, Louisville, Cleveland and Buffalo could not be rescheduled; ticketholders will be contacted by Ticketmaster. All previously purchased tickets will be honored at the rescheduled performances. Further information is available on www.rollingstones.com.

Obama-Springsteen book coming in October

There’s a new chapter in the friendship between Barack and the Boss.

“Renegades: Born in the USA” is a bound edition of the popular “Renegades” podcast featuring conversations on everything from fame to cars to the country itself between former President Barack Obama and Bruce Springsteen. Penguin Random House and Obama’s Higher Ground company announced Thursday that “Renegades” will come out October 26. The \$50 book will include rare photographs, handwritten Springsteen lyrics and annotated Obama speeches.

“Over the years, what we’ve found is that we’ve got a shared sensibility,” Obama said in a statement. “About work, about family, and about America. In our own ways, Bruce and I have been on parallel journeys trying to understand this country that’s given us both so much. Trying to chronicle the stories of its people. Looking for a way to connect our own individual searches for meaning and truth and community with the larger story of America.”

“This is a time for serious consideration of who we want to be and what kind of country we will leave our children,” wrote Springsteen, who in 2016 received a Medal of Freedom from Obama. “Will we let slip through our hands the best of us or will we turn united to face the fire? Within this book you won’t find the answers to those questions, but you will find a couple of seekers doing their best to get us to ask better questions.”

From The Associated Press

Kindred spirits on- and off-screen

Zoe Lister-Jones’ friendship with Cailee Spaeny at the heart of ‘How It Ends’

BY LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Zoe Lister-Jones wasn’t expecting to make a best friend while casting her reboot of “The Craft.” Then Cailee Spaeny walked in.

On paper, the two are worlds apart. Lister-Jones, 38, grew up in Brooklyn and has starred in network sitcoms and films and written and directed for both. Spaeny, meanwhile, is a 23-year-old up-and-coming actor from Springfield, Mo., who is just starting to make a name for herself in television and movies (she recently played the ill-fated Erin McMenamin in HBO’s “Mare of Easttown.”)

But it didn’t take long for them to realize that they were kindred spirits. And in less than a year, they would find themselves collaborating twice. First as director and actor on “The Craft: Legacy,” in which Spaeny is playing a loose version of teenage Lister-Jones, and then as co-stars in “How It Ends,” in which Spaeny is literally playing Lister-Jones’ younger self.

“It’s always so exciting when you see someone with such incredible talent and screen presence who then is also such a deep thinker and feeler as a person,” Lister-Jones said. “We had such an immediate connection... It feels like a very deep and old friendship.”

The quick re-teaming was mostly pandemic related. They wrapped “The Craft: Legacy” in January of 2020. When lockdown started in March, the two women started taking a lot of walks and engaging in deep conversations about unpacking trauma and their inner child. It would provide the basis for “How It Ends,” in which Liza (Lister-Jones) goes on a cathartic walking tour of Los Angeles with her younger self (Spaeny) on the last day on Earth before a meteor destroys everything.

Lister-Jones and her husband, Daryl Wein, who co-wrote and co-directed the film, had been doing a lot of virtual therapy sessions in early quarantine and were worried about the future of filmmaking and when they’d be able to make art again. So they challenged themselves to do something that would be safe, creative and, hopefully, healing for both themselves and the audience.

They called on their local friends to round



RICHARD SHOTWELL/AP

Zoe Lister-Jones, left and Cailee Spaeny arrive at the Los Angeles premiere of “How It Ends” at NeueHouse Hollywood on July 15 in Los Angeles. The film is the second collaboration between Lister-Jones and Spaeny, who have formed a strong bond, in less than a year.

out the cast and ended up with an army of notable cameos, like Colin Hanks, Fred Armisen, Lamorne Morris, Whitney Cummings, Nick Kroll, singer Sharon Van Etten, Olivia Wilde, Charlie Day and many, many more.

The film debuted in January as part of the virtual Sundance Film Festival, where it was mostly well-received, but some criticized it for being lighter in tone and not reconciling with the horror of the moment in a satisfying way. But months later and in a more hopeful moment as many people are getting a chance to finally reconnect with loved ones, “How It Ends” plays differently and, perhaps, more rewardingly.

“We wanted to create something that could bring some levity to this time in our world but

without denying the impact of what we’ve all been through and are continuing to go through,” Lister-Jones said. “Those are the films that I gravitate to, that are semi-escapist while still grounding themselves in the deeper, existential queries of our time.”

And this second experience has brought Spaeny and Lister-Jones even closer. Lister-Jones couldn’t even bring herself to watch “Mare of Easttown” for quite some time knowing that it would mean seeing Spaeny in peril.

Spaeny said Lister-Jones is both mentor and family to her. And Lister-Jones said that despite the age difference, she often finds herself calling Spaeny for advice. That they also then can feed off each other creatively is what makes the bond truly unique.

Dolly Parton knows she’s still ‘a hot chick’ at 75



TWITTER/TNS

Dolly Parton dressed up in a Playboy bunny outfit to celebrate her husband’s birthday.

Los Angeles Times

After sponsoring everyone’s shot girl summer by funding a COVID-19 vaccine, Dolly Parton just had a hot girl summer moment of her own. Megan Thee Stallion agrees.

In honor of her husband’s birthday, the legendary country queen recently re-created her 1978 Playboy magazine cover, which pictured Parton in the Playboy bunny costume and a bedazzled bow tie.

“It’s always #HotGirlSummer for my husband, Carl,” Parton captioned a Tuesday video of herself rocking the classic Playboy body-suit and bunny ears 40-plus years later. “Happy birthday my love!”

The video, which has already racked up more than 5.4 million views on Twitter alone, even

earned Parton a shout-out from Megan Thee Stallion, who coined “hot girl summer” in 2019. After seeing Parton’s post, the Grammy-winning rapper shared it on Twitter and lovingly dubbed the “Jolene” hit-maker “hot girl dolly.”

“You’re probably wondering why I’m dressed like this,” Parton says in the clip. “Remember some time back, I said I was going to pose on Playboy magazine when I was 75?”

“Well, I’m 75 and they don’t have a magazine anymore, but my husband always loved the original cover of Playboy, so I was trying to think of something to do to make him happy. He still thinks I’m a hot chick after 57 years, and I’m not gonna to try to talk him out of that. ... What do you think?”

As a gift to her longtime partner, Carl Thomas Dean, the Grammy winner staged a photo shoot “in this little outfit” reimagining her Playboy cover-girl moment — sparkly pink cuff links and all — and had it framed alongside the 1978 version.

“I was kind of a little butterball in that one. Well, I’m string cheese now, but he’ll probably think I’m cream cheese, I hope,” she said with a wink.

Parton has been a comforting presence on social media throughout the pandemic, reading virtual bedtime stories to children and promoting Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine — which she helped fund by donating \$1 million to Vanderbilt University’s coronavirus research efforts last year.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Pilot, 18, safely lands banner plane on bridge

NJ OCEAN CITY — The 18-year old pilot of a banner plane made an emergency landing Monday on a bridge in southern New Jersey, snarling traffic but causing no injuries, authorities said.

Landon Lucas reported that his plane started having engine trouble around 12:30 p.m. as he was flying near Steel Pier in Atlantic City, officials said. Lucas released his banner into the ocean and was trying to fly to a nearby municipal airport in Ocean City when he spotted a gap in traffic in the westbound lanes of the Route 52 causeway, which connects Ocean City and Somers Point.

Lucas landed the plane without incident, witnesses said, and officials said the aircraft was not damaged.

Man arrested after rocks thrown on freeway

WA SEATTLE — Washington state troopers on Tuesday arrested a man in Seattle they believe was throwing rocks and debris at cars on the freeway — a recent trend officials say has become a growing problem in the Seattle area.

The Seattle Times reported authorities arrested the 31-year-old man from Seattle for allegedly throwing rocks and debris at seven vehicles going west on Interstate 90 around 4 p.m.

Trooper Chase Van Cleave said one of the three drivers who remained on scene reportedly started chasing the suspect after their vehicle was hit.

The man stopped fleeing after a state trooper arrived on scene.

No one was injured, although Van Cleave said several of the vehicles suffered “pretty good damage.”

Child, 3, finds gun in parents' car, dies of gunshot wound

MS MERIDIAN — A 3-year-old child found a gun in his parents' car and was killed when it discharged, authorities said.

The child died Saturday in Newton County, south of Hickory, The Meridian Star reported.

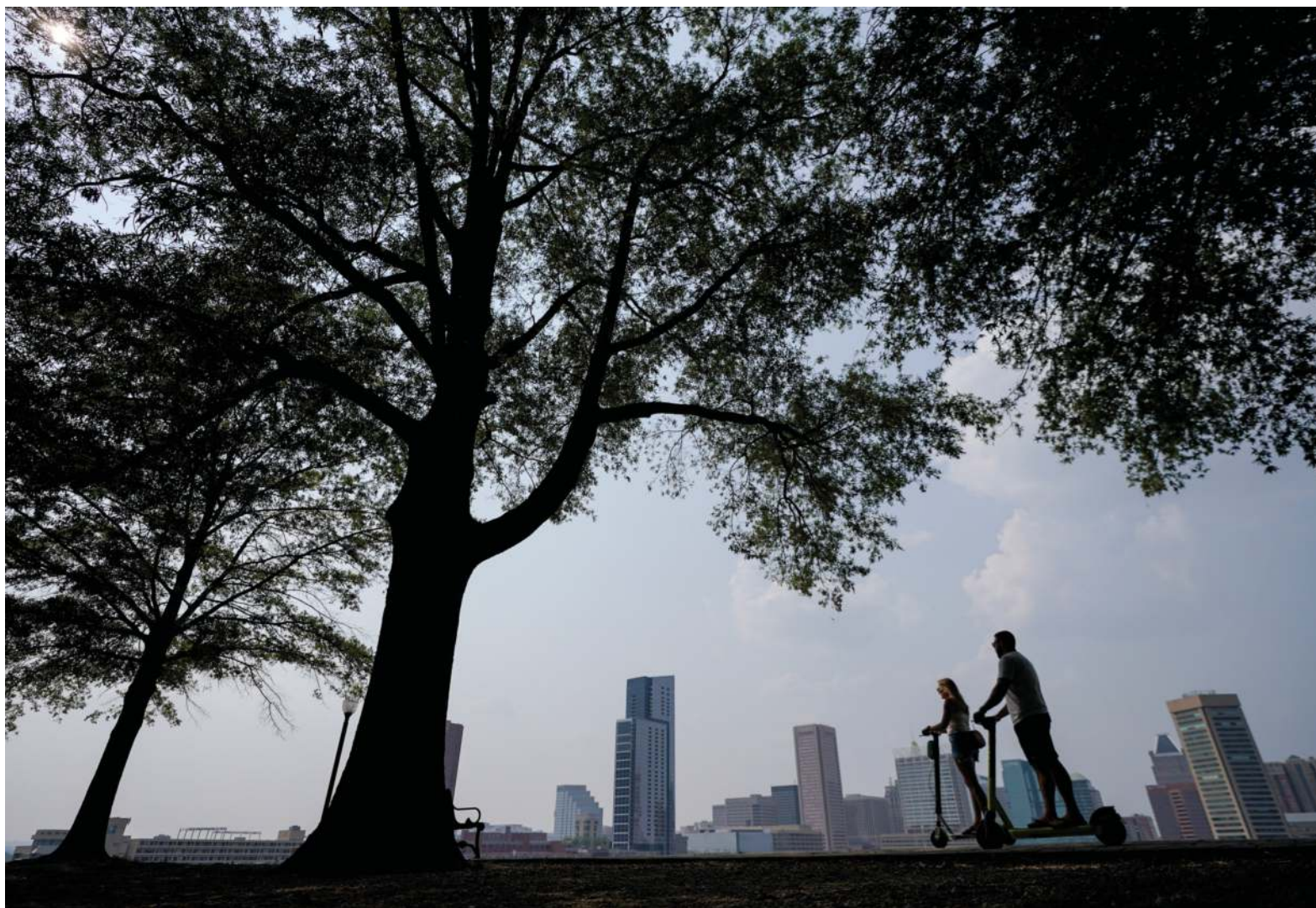
Sheriff's deputies performed CPR on the child before paramedics arrived, but the child was later pronounced dead, Newton County Sheriff Joedy Pennington said.

The child's parents were going door-to-door for a revival and briefly left the child in the vehicle, Pennington said. The child found the gun in the glove compartment, he said.

The parents are not being charged in the case.

Governor pardons man imprisoned for shooting

VA NORFOLK — Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam has pardoned a man who served 22 years in prison for a role in a drive-by shooting in which testimony indicated he wasn't involved.



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Keeping it moving in Baltimore

People atop ride-share scooters roll by at Federal Hill Park with the Baltimore skyline seen through haze, on Tuesday, in Baltimore.

THE CENSUS

21 The number of mopeds seized by police on Rhode Island's Block Island last weekend after their drivers were seen operating them unsafely and in violation of their rental contracts. New Shoreham police said in a release Monday that an off-duty police officer spotted a large group of moped riders driving erratically Sunday. The agency said the drivers were weaving through traffic, standing up while riding and not wearing helmets and protective eyewear. Another nearby officer stopped the mopeds and contacted the rental agencies that own them. Police say the companies requested the vehicles be impounded so that they could take possession of them.

The driver of the pickup truck that was towing the excavator “did not heed” the height limit of 10 feet, 11 inches, and was charged with motor vehicle violations, state police said.

The bridge, painted schoolhouse red, was built in 1841 and spans 172 feet over the Housatonic River.

County to pay \$1.25M to crash victim's family

NC SMITHFIELD — The family of a woman killed in a crash with a North Carolina sheriff's deputy earlier this year will receive \$1.25 million in a settlement agreement.

The News & Observer of Raleigh reported the settlement was approved by the Johnston County Board of Commissioners on Monday, said Adam Carroll, a spokesman for the county. No lawsuit was filed by the family, and claims against Johnston County sheriff's deputy Quinton Rhue and the sheriff's office were settled without admitting liability, Carroll said.

In January, Shirley Ann James,

63, was killed in a crash with a patrol car driven by Rhue, 24, The News & Observer reported. Rhue had been driving with his lights and siren on when he began to pass traffic on U.S. Highway 301 as James was traveling in the same direction. She was turning when she was struck by Rhue's patrol car.

Rhue was injured in the crash.

New owners plan to rebuild iconic movie set

AZ BENSON — The Mescal Movie Set once made Benson one of the most recognizable western cinematic towns on the big screen.

The set was built in 1939 by Columbia Pictures for a movie called “Arizona.” Some 215 films followed — such as “Tombstone” and “The Quick and the Dead” in the early 1990s — and 28 television series also were shot on the location.

The last movie filmed at Mescal was in 2014 and the deteriorating set was saved from destruction by local ranchers.

Now, the new owners of the iconic

set plan to rebuild it into an 1860-1920 era Western frontier town that is compatible with a production company's filming needs.

Tucson TV station KVOA reported Tuesday that Kartchner Ventures plans to renovate 27 buildings and construct new buildings such as a church, blacksmith shop and stage depot.

While the ultimate goal is to get the Mescal set back on the big screen, the new owners say the rebuilt frontier town can also be used for public tours, special events, historic reenactments and western heritage education opportunities.

Region sees record sockeye salmon run

AK FAIRBANKS — It has been a record-breaking year for sockeye salmon catches in Alaska's Bristol Bay Nushagak District this year, an official said.

“We're approaching 27 million total run,” said Tim Sands, a state Department of Fish and Game area management biologist. “Our average run would be 9 million, so to be triple the average is amazing.”

The region has experienced numerous record-breaking days, Fairbanks television station KTVF reported. The all-time record for catch in the Nushagak District on one day was more than 1.7 million set on June 30. “Then the very next day we broke it again at 1.8 million,” Sands said.

From news services

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Ernie Gates

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Instead of insulting Trump voters, talk to them

BY GARY ABERNATHY

Special to The Washington Post

When supporters of former President Donald Trump hear media pundits analyze them with the usual collection of belittling observations, they must be tempted to respond, "Hey, we're right here! We can hear you!"

Yes, they are indeed here, and living among us. And they have every right to be insulted by being accused of believing a "big lie," and by the implication that they are violent, or traitors, or mindless sheep — racist sheep, of course. They're fed up not just with the overt insults, but also with more subtle digs, such as former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta saying last week that he worries that Trump "will continue to try to somehow sway his followers" to attempt another Jan. 6-style uprising. Followers? No one refers to President Joe Biden's "followers." It's a word generally reserved for adherents of cult figures.

I live in Trump Country. I was a Trump supporter, until he lost me with his actions after the 2020 election. But most Trump voters have stuck with him. With Trump's encouragement, they sincerely believe the election was stolen. They're not racists. They're not traitors. Some of them think anyone who accepts Biden's win is a traitor. Some of them think I'm traitorous — or at the very least I've succumbed to the evil influences of the mainstream media — for accepting Trump's defeat.

Polls are occasionally produced to perpetuate the myth that Trump voters are ready for war. Even the conservative American Enterprise Institute reported in February that 39% of Republicans polled agreed with the statement "if elected leaders will not protect America, the people must do it them-

selves, even if it requires violent actions." The survey's director, Daniel Cox, acknowledged the speculative nature of the question by cautioning, "We shouldn't run out and say, 'Oh my goodness, 40% of Republicans are going to attack the Capitol.'" No, they aren't. In fact, the Capitol riot wasn't mentioned in the question, so it wasn't necessarily what respondents were thinking of when they answered.

It's my unscientific conclusion that about half of Trump's supporters will go to their graves believing the election was stolen. The other half can be persuaded otherwise, but only by time and reflection, like accepting a death. Shaming will never work.

Don't forget how the left loudly claimed in 2016 that Russian hackers had influenced millions of Americans to vote for Trump — an accusation that put an unfair cloud on his victory and his ability to govern. In fact, the 2016 election was fair and honest, but foreign powers tried, as they will try again, to impact the result. The 2020 election was also fair and honest, but don't pretend there weren't problems, as always, even if they did not change the outcome.

Considering the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism recently found that the U.S. media ranks last in trust among 46 countries, some self-examination on this issue should be welcomed. In 2016, The New York Times decided to start applying the word "lie" to many of Trump's claims. "We owed it to our readers," executive editor Dean Baquet said at the time. Others followed suit. But using words such as "lie" and "falsely claimed" in news stories arrogantly supposes an absolute knowledge of truth and makes it appear the news outlet has chosen sides.

So stop calling people liars. The media should return to the non-accusatory style that worked for decades. Instead of writing

that election fraud is a lie, or Republicans are "falsely claiming" fraud, go back to the style that worked for decades: "Republicans again claimed the 2020 election was rigged, but no evidence has emerged to support that allegation and courts have dismissed all suits challenging the results."

Next, abandon the narrative that Trump supporters are insurrectionists, and stop elevating groups such as QAnon and the Proud Boys beyond the fringe elements they are. As shameful as the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol was, only about 800 people were involved — hardly representative of millions of Trump supporters. Despite their suspicions, the vast majority of Trump voters are not interested in invading federal buildings or overthrowing the government. They're interested in going to work and church and soccer games, taking care of their families and voting in the next election.

There's no big mystery to effectively communicating with Trump supporters — or for Trump supporters to communicate with everyone else. Treat each other with politeness and courtesy. Respect other opinions even if you disagree. Acknowledge each other's patriotism and love of country. Don't assume you understand each other because you've read some think-tank analysis. Reach out, be curious and start a dialogue.

Trump supporters aren't going away, and those who continue to paint them as the lowest forms of life reveal themselves to be more interested in perpetrating stereotypes and nurturing divisions than in achieving what's needed for our nation to survive — reaching across our political chasm, respecting our differences and finding common ground where we can.

Gary Abernathy, a contributing columnist for The Washington Post, is a freelance writer based in southwestern Ohio.

Anti-vax speech should be shunned, not censored

BY HENRY OLSEN

Special to The Washington Post

There is no debate among reasonable people about coronavirus vaccines. The overwhelming weight of scientific evidence supports that they are safe, that side effects are extremely rare and that they are highly effective at preventing death and serious illness.

Nevertheless, President Joe Biden is venturing into troubling territory as he attempts to push Facebook to censor anti-vaccination speech. He may be on the moral high ground on the facts of the issue, but in pursuing this strategy, he is posing a threat to the principles of the First Amendment.

The First Amendment is designed to prevent government from establishing an intellectual orthodoxy. Governments throughout history have attempted to do this, creating official established religions that could not be criticized or banning the profession of certain ideas. James Madison, author of the First Amendment, stood athwart the tide of history and yelled stop. The new democratic republic would, from its onset, be the first government in history to dedicate itself to individual intellectual freedom.

There is no exception to that rule for speech that the government believes is untrue. In the United States, people can say the most ridiculous things in full confidence that the government will not try to silence them.

Biden's ham-fisted attempts to get the so-

cial media giant to remove anti-vaccine speech suggests he simply doesn't grasp this elemental truth. He is correct that people who believe the falsehoods are harming themselves, perhaps even leading to their deaths. He's free to promote the opposite viewpoint far and wide, combating false speech with more speech. What he's not permitted to do is try to shut speech down.

One might argue that Biden is not trying to shut down speech because he is not using government's coercive power to force Facebook's compliance, but this is naive. Biden has staffed his administration with people who believe that Facebook and other Big Tech firms are engaging in monopolistic, anticompetitive behavior. They hold the hammer that can force firms such as Facebook to bend to the government's will. Faced with such power, what firm wouldn't consider currying favor with the big boss by suppressing speech he doesn't like in a bid to prevent lawsuits or worse?

Those who think the circumstances demand an exception to the general rule should think again. Public health emergencies arise all the time. Should speech the government thinks untrue or unwise be suppressed whenever it sees fit? A government can provide strong reasons that suppressing speech in an emergency is in the public interest. That doesn't mean it is, or that the public's purported interest outweighs the liberty that Americans would lose as a result.

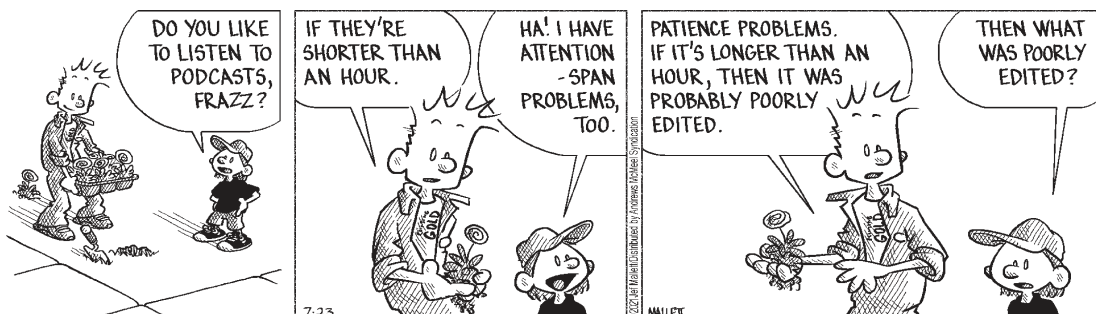
Nor should we think governments that suppress speech once will stop. Biden surely believes that former President Donald Trump and others are lying when they say the 2020 election was stolen. There's as little evidence to support these claims as there is to support those of anti-vaxxers. And it's surely clear that such statements weaken public support for our democracy. Why wouldn't the same standard that applies to anti-vaxxers be applied to the political speech of people who believe the election was stolen?

One can imagine a president or a court devising ingenious exceptions to basic First Amendment principles to permit banning speech in some cases. We should reject that temptation. Exceptions of this type will grow like fungus according to the political winds. The courts that will ultimately have to decide these cases are also not immune to those winds. Slow but steady erosion of our core democratic freedom will become a bipartisan pursuit if we walk down this path.

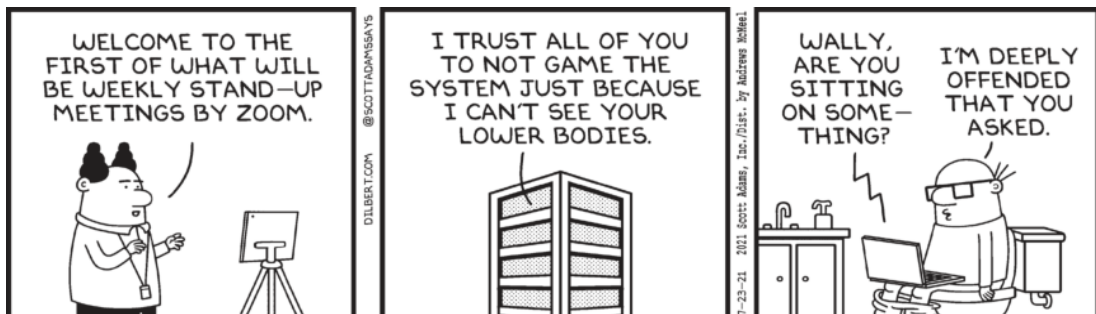
Biden's laudable compassion is clouding his judgment. Presidential words matter, even those spoken in anger or exasperation. He should immediately reverse course on his efforts to coerce Facebook to restrict speech. All Americans should take note if he doesn't.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

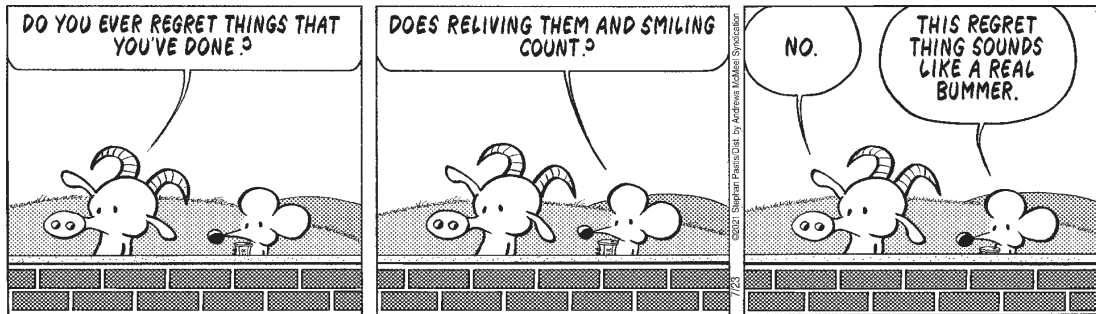
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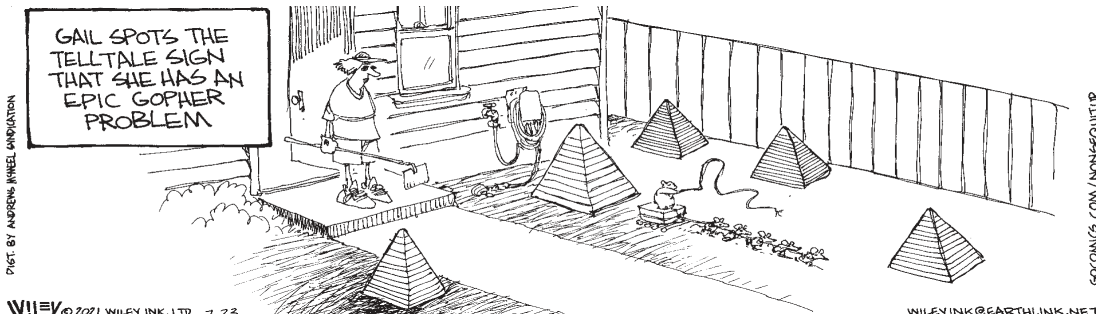
Dilbert



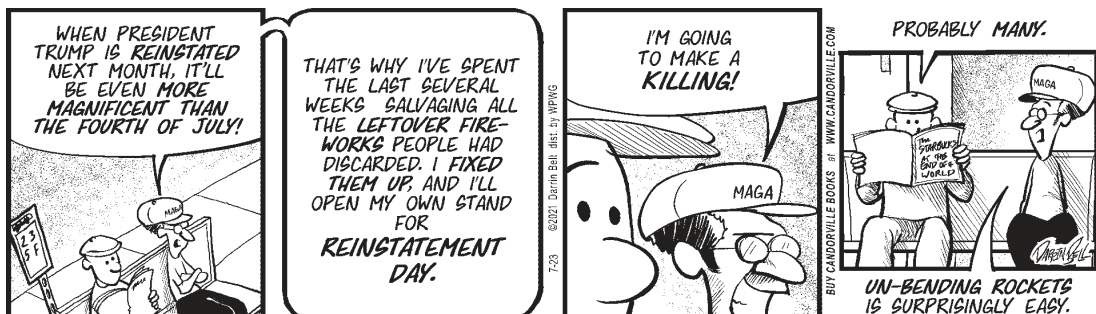
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



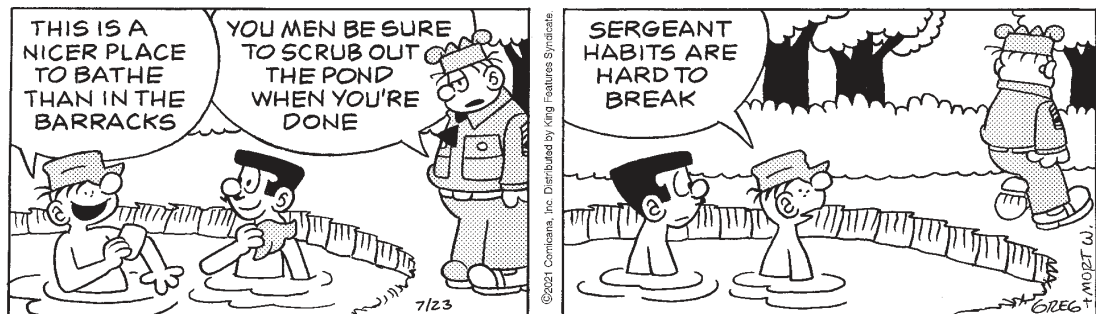
Candorville



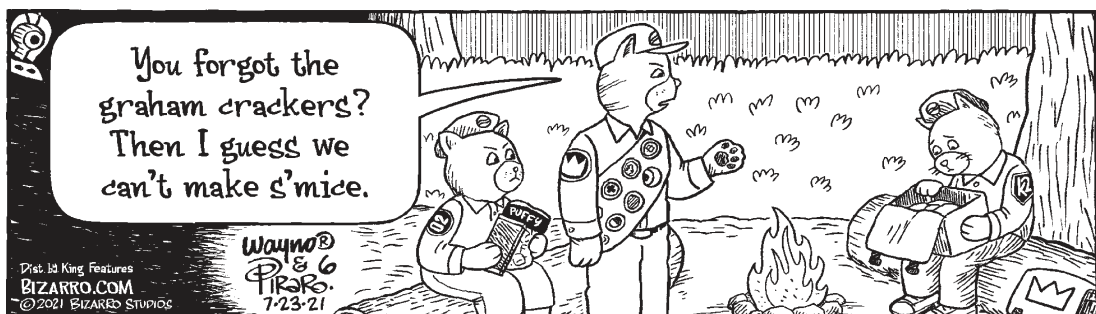
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19								
20			21		22				23	24	25	26
			27	28				29	30			
31	32	33						34				
35					36			37				
38					39	40			41	42	43	44
				45					46		47	
48	49	50	51								52	
53						54					55	
56						57					58	

ACROSS

- 1 Stick with a kick
- 4 Curator's concern
- 7 Old Testament book
- 12 Irish actor Stephen
- 13 — Na Na
- 14 Tolerate
- 15 Resistance unit
- 16 Cowboy's greeting
- 18 Three, in Rome
- 19 Boredom
- 20 Bath bubbles
- 22 Coloring agent
- 23 Dines
- 27 Airport screening org.
- 29 "Get a move on!"
- 31 Proprietor
- 34 Pick up the tab
- 35 "Frida" or "Ray"
- 37 Salt source
- 38 Hostels
- 39 Ms. Thurman
- 41 Genie's offering
- 45 Condition
- 47 Scot's denial
- 48 Assent from a sailor
- 52 Turkish title
- 53 Discover
- 54 Prefix with athlete
- 55 Bankroll
- 56 Top floor

- 57 Moment
- 58 Golfer Ernie

- 24 Exploit
- 25 Links org.
- 26 Drunkard
- 28 — Lanka
- 30 Paris summer
- 31 Kimono sash
- 32 Victory
- 33 "Smoking or —?"
- 36 Adorable
- 37 Lampoon
- 40 Ship poles
- 42 Amazed
- 43 "Rebel" actress Katey
- 44 Coin toss call
- 45 Harmonization
- 46 Guitarist Clapton
- 48 In the manner of
- 49 Still
- 50 Take courses?
- 51 Shapiro of NPR

DOWN

- 1 Easy gaits
- 2 India's first prime minister
- 3 No longer wild
- 4 Tennis legend Arthur
- 5 "Help Me, —" (Beach Boys hit)
- 6 Lion's color
- 7 Polite query
- 8 "Big Blue"
- 9 Spy org.
- 10 Nabokov novel
- 11 Skirt edge
- 17 Face-off
- 21 Dance moves
- 23 Scarecrow stuffing

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	A	G		M	A	W	R		J	U	S	T		
U	N	O		O	S	H	A		A	L	L	Y		
G	O	D	S	P	E	E	D		R	E	U	P		
				S	A	P		W	A	R	H	E	R	O
S	E	P	T	E	T			R	O	E				
O	L	E		D	A	B		B	A	R	D	S		
R	I	L	L		B	O	K		D	O	R	A		
T	A	L	E	S		D	I	V		M	U	G		
				S	A	C		N	E	W	A	G	E	
P	A	R	S	N	I	P		R	O	N				
A	L	O	E			G	R	E	E	K	G	O	D	
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S	T	E	S			R	Y	A	N		D	R	S	

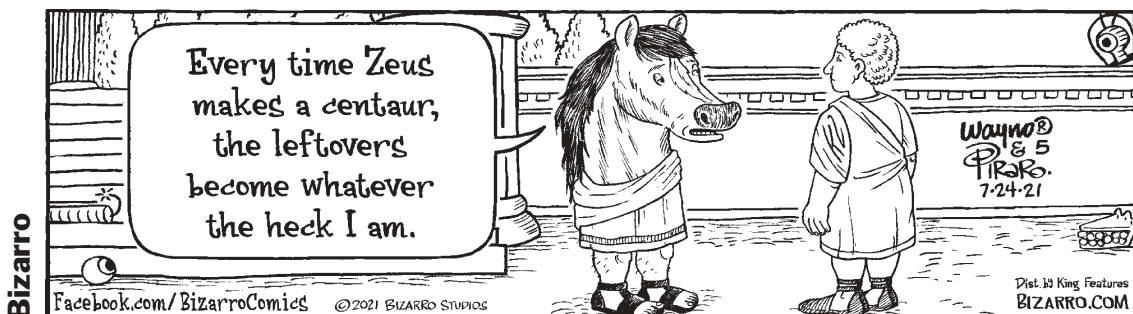
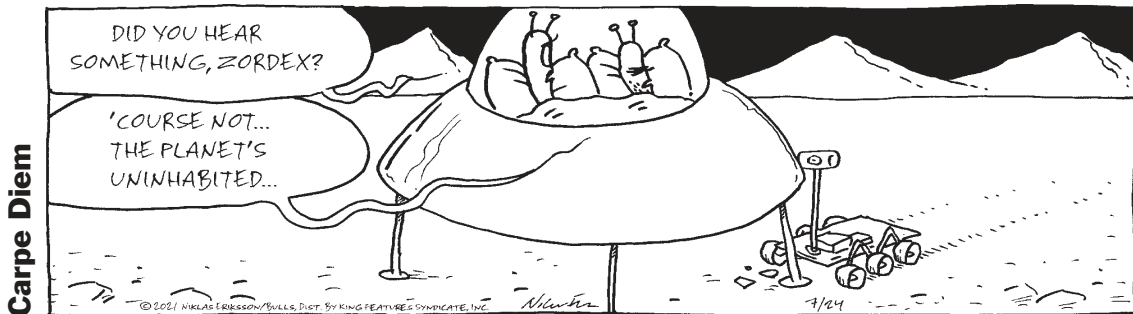
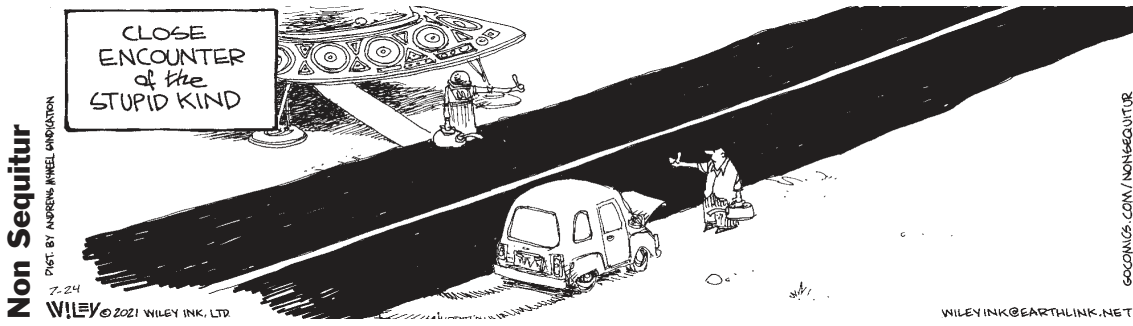
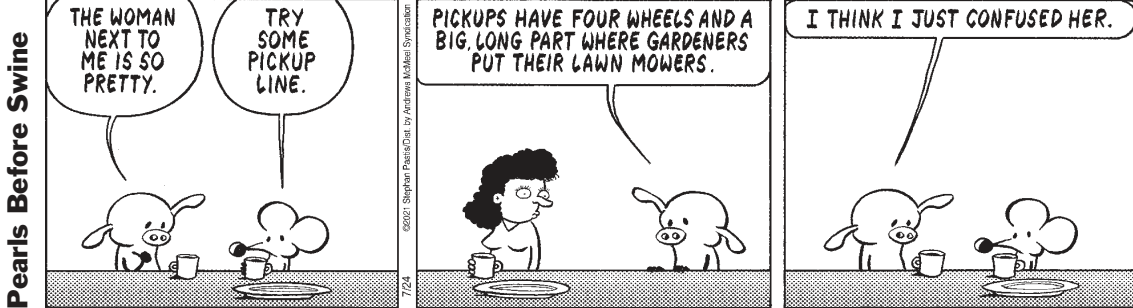
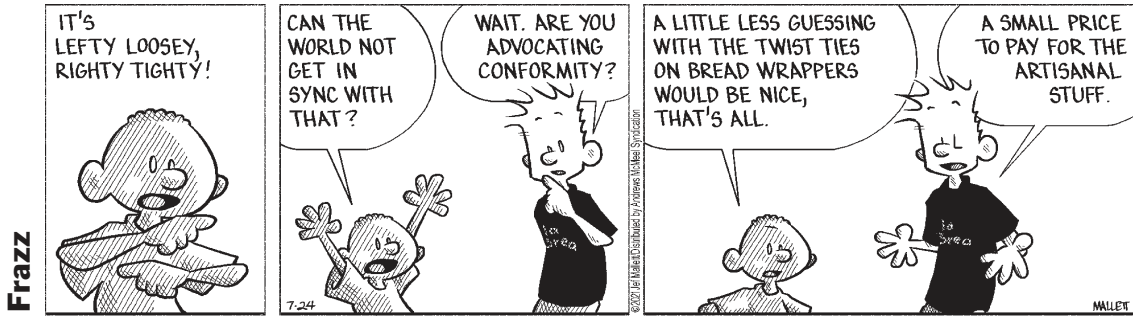
7-23

CRYPTOQUIP

AOIQ YBRA OIYJS QAGSU MJKXT
 DOU WJJTFUA YJ VAJVXA, B
 WKADD QA'T FBT YQAR O
 LJGTO LOSAMAXX.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DO CURATORS BURN WHILE THEY'RE BUSY DISPLAYING PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES? ART CALORIES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals T



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19						20			
			21				22					
23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31				32			
33				34					35			
			36				37					
38	39	40				41				42	43	44
45					46					47		
48					49					50		
51					52					53		

ACROSS

- 1 Speed (up)
- 4 Settled the bill
- 8 Soda flavor
- 12 Yale grad
- 13 Play opener
- 14 Portent
- 15 Jargon suffix
- 16 Some July babies
- 17 Loony
- 18 Pink flamingos and the like
- 21 Early hrs.
- 22 Preventive shot, in slang
- 23 Florida city
- 26 Mom's mate
- 27 Perched
- 30 Farm unit
- 31 Stitch
- 32 Casual shirt
- 33 — Beta Kappa
- 34 Schlep
- 35 Spiteful
- 36 Flow out
- 37 Many millennia
- 38 Quickly formed opinions
- 45 Male turkeys
- 46 — avis
- 47 "Caught ya!"
- 48 Twistable treat
- 49 Raised
- 50 Sportscaster Scully

- 51 Eggplant — (Italian dish, for short)
- 52 Collector's goals
- 53 Compass dir.

- 20 Pirate's chart
- 23 Spigot
- 24 Berliner's cry
- 25 X-ray's cousin
- 26 Cribbage scorer
- 27 "Mayday!"
- 28 Flight stat
- 29 Gift from Santa
- 31 Areas outside of cities
- 32 Glazier's sheet
- 34 JFK's veep
- 35 Wanderers from Taiwan
- 36 — salts
- 37 Heron's kin
- 38 Halt
- 39 Asta's caretaker
- 40 From the U.S.
- 41 Challenge
- 42 Cathedral area
- 43 Reedy
- 44 Logical

DOWN

- 1 Stagger
- 2 "Frozen" snow queen
- 3 Perspective
- 4 Designer Picasso
- 5 Computers from Taiwan
- 6 Lay — the line
- 7 Repudiate
- 8 Ancient manuscript
- 9 Yemen neighbor
- 10 Departed
- 11 Picnic interlopers
- 19 Scruff

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	N	T		A	R	T		M	I	C	A	H
R	E	A		S	H	A		A	B	I	D	E
O	H	M		H	O	W	D	Y	M	A	A	M
T	R	E		E	N	N	U	I				
S	U	D	S		D	Y	E		S	U	P	S
				T	S	A		L	E	T	S	G
O	W	N	E	R				T	R	E	A	T
B	I	O	P	I	C			S	E	A		
I	N	N	S		U	M	A		W	I	S	H
					S	T	A	T	E		N	A
A	Y	E	A	Y	E	S	I	R			A	G
L	E	A	R	N		T	R	I		W	A	D
A	T	T	I	C		S	E	C		E	L	S

7-24

CRYPTOQUIP

W I Q U N K I V Y I Y L T I G ' K
 W U Q T D U Q T L K K V N S S I M P L V Y
 Y U G M A L R A I G Q E E T L I K , L
 P E N B M Q U B B L V U K R U D - K U Q T .
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: EACH TIME ACTOR
 HENRY WOULD SAY GOODBYE TO PEOPLE, I
 GUESS HE'D BID THEM A FONDA FAREWELL.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals H

SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New England	9	3	3	30	28	18
Philadelphia	6	3	5	23	18	13
Nashville	5	1	8	23	21	14
Orlando City	6	3	4	22	21	13
CF Montréal	6	4	4	22	19	16
Columbus	5	3	6	21	15	12
NYFC	6	5	2	20	21	15
New York	5	5	3	18	18	16
D.C. United	5	7	2	17	20	18
Atlanta	2	4	8	14	14	17
Cincinnati	3	6	4	13	17	26
Chicago	3	8	3	12	16	25
Toronto FC	2	8	4	10	18	31
Inter Miami CF	2	8	2	8	9	22

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	8	1	5	29	23	9
Sporting KC	8	3	3	27	25	16
LA Galaxy	8	5	1	25	23	22
Colorado	7	3	3	24	21	13
LAFc	6	5	3	21	18	15
Portland	6	6	1	19	17	20
Minnesota	5	5	3	18	13	16
Real Salt Lake	4	4	5	17	21	16
Houston	3	4	7	16	16	19
Austin FC	3	6	4	13	10	14
San Jose	3	7	4	13	16	24
Vancouver	3	7	4	13	14	23
FC Dallas	2	7	5	11	14	23

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Wednesday's games

Nashville 0, Columbus 0, tie
 New York 1, Toronto FC 1, tie
 New York City FC 1, CF Montréal 0
 New England 5, Miami 0
 Atlanta 1, Cincinnati 1, tie
 D.C. United 2, Chicago 2, tie
 San Jose 1, Sporting Kansas City 1, tie
 Colorado 2, FC Dallas 0
 LA Galaxy 2, Real Salt Lake 2, tie
 Portland 2, Los Angeles FC 1

Thursday's games

Philadelphia at Orlando City
 Seattle at Austin FC

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	6	3	1	19	16	7
Chicago	5	4	2	17	11	15
North Carolina	5	4	1	16	15	8
Gotham FC	4	1	4	16	10	5
Houston	5	4	1	16	13	11
Orlando	4	3	4	16	14	13
Washington	4	3	3	15	12	11
Louisville	3	4	2	11	7	13
Reign FC	3	6	1	10	8	13
Kansas City	0	7	3	3	5	15

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Friday's game

North Carolina at Kansas City

Saturday's games

Reign FC at Orlando
 Portland at Houston

Sunday's games

Washington at Louisville
 Chicago at Gotham FC

Saturday, July 31

Orlando at North Carolina
 Louisville at Reign FC

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Connecticut	14	6	.700	—
Chicago	10	10	.500	4
New York	10	11	.476	4½
Washington	8	10	.444	5
Atlanta	6	13	.316	7½
Indiana	4	16	.200	10

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	16	5	.762	—
Las Vegas	15	6	.714	1
Minnesota	12	7	.632	3
Phoenix	9	10	.474	6
Dallas	9	12	.429	7
Los Angeles	6	13	.316	9

Wednesday's games

No games scheduled

Thursday's games

No games scheduled

Friday's games

No games scheduled

Saturday's games

No games scheduled

TENNIS

Los Cabos Open

Wednesday
At Solaz Resort & Spa Los Cabos
Los Cabos, Mexico
Purse: \$598,545
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

Men's Singles

Round of 16

Alex Bolt, Australia, def. Emilio Gomez, Ecuador, 6-3, 6-1.
 Ernesto Escobedo, United States, def. Denis Kudla, United States, 6-4, 7-6 (9).
 Cameron Norrie (1), Britain, def. Elias Ymer, Sweden, 7-6 (4), 6-3.
 Jordan Thompson (5), Australia, def. Sebastian Ofner, Austria, 3-6, 6-4, 7-5.
 Steve Johnson (6), United States, def. Yasutaka Uchiyama, Japan, 7-6 (4), 6-3.
 Brandon Nakashima, United States, def. Sam Querrey (4), United States, 6-3, 6-4.
 John Isner (2), United States, def. Evgeny Donskoy, Russia, 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (5).
 Taylor Fritz (3), United States, def. Ilya Marchenko, Ukraine, 6-1, 6-7 (9), 7-5.

Palermo Ladies Open

Wednesday
At Country Time Club
Palermo, Italy
Purse: Euro 189,708
Surface: Red clay
Women's Singles
Round of 16
 Elena-Gabriela Ruse, Romania, def. Jil Teichmann (3), Switzerland, walkover.
 Oceane Dodin (6), France, def. Vitalia

Diatchenko, Russia, 7-6 (7), 6-4.
 Lucia Bronzetti, Italy, def. Grace Min, United States, 6-3, 6-1.
 Jaqueline Adina Cristian, Romania, def. Qinwen Zheng, China, 6-1, 6-4.

Croatia Open

Wednesday
At ITC Stella Maris
Umag, Croatia
Purse: Euro 419,470
Surface: Red clay
Men's Singles
Round of 16
 Richard Gasquet (4), France, def. Alessandro Giannessi, Italy, 7-6 (4), 6-4.
 Stefano Travaglia, Italy, def. Carlos Taberner, Spain, 6-4, 6-3.
 Albert Ramos-Vinolas (1), Spain, def. Duje Ajdukovic, Croatia, 7-5, 6-4.
 Damir Dzumhur, Bosnia-Herzegovina, def. Marco Cecchinato, Italy, 6-3, 6-1.

Poland Open

Wednesday
At Arka Tennis Club
Gdynia, Poland
Purse: \$235,238
Surface: Red clay
Women's Singles
Round of 32
 Maryna Zanevska, Belgium, def. Jamie Loeb, United States, 6-2, 6-0.
 Viktoria Kuzmova, Slovakia, def. Varvara Gracheva (7), Russia, 6-4, 6-7 (4), 7-5.

DEALS

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL

American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Recalled CF Ryan McKenna and LHP Alexander Wells from Norfolk (Triple-A East). Placed RF Anthony Santander and LHP Keegan Akin on the 10-day IL.

CLEVELAND INDIANS — Recalled 1B Yu Chang from Columbus (Triple-A East). Optioned RHP Justin Garza to Columbus.

DETROIT TIGERS — Optioned RHP Alex Lange to Toledo (Triple-A East). Recalled RHP Matt Manning from Toledo. Released RF Nomar Mazara.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Agreed to terms with OF Tyler Whitaker, OF Joey Loperfido, SS Chad Stevens, INF Kobe Kato, RHPs Kasey Ford and Deylen Mileo on minor league contracts.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Agreed to terms with C Carter Jensen, INF Dayton Dooney and SS Brennan McNair on minor league contracts.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Placed INF/OF Alek Kirilloff on the 10-day IL, retroactive to July 20. Recalled C/INF Williams Astudillo from St. Paul (Triple-A East).

NEW YORK YANKEES — Agreed to terms with RHP Asher Wojciechowski on a major league contract and assigned him to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (Triple-A East). Outrighted INF Hoy Park off major league roster.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Agreed to terms with SSS Max Muncy, Drew Swift and Jack Winkler, RHPs Mason Miller, Grant Holman, Mitch Myers, Aaron Holiday, Luke Anderson, Kyle Virbitsky, Blake Beers and Hunter Breault, 3B Brett Harris, C Shane McGuire, LHPs Eduardo Rivera, Colton Johnson and Jack Owen, OF Jonny Butler, 2B Mariano Ricciardi and 1B Nick Brueser on minor league contracts.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Selected the contract of RHP Darren McCaughan from Tacoma (Triple-A West). Optioned RF Dillon Thomas to Tacoma. Sent INF Wyatt Mathisen outright to Tacoma.

TAMPA BAY RAYS — Recalled RHP Chris Mazza from Durham (Triple-A East). Placed RHP J.P. Feyereisen on the 10-day IL.

TEXAS RANGERS — Agreed to terms with SS Cameron Cauley and C Ian Miller on minor league contracts.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Traded RHP Joel Payamps to Kansas City in exchange for cash considerations. Sent RHP Anthony Castro to Buffalo (Triple-A East) on a rehab assignment. Recalled RHP Patrick Murphy from Buffalo. Agreed to terms with RHPs Gunnar Hoeglund, Chad Dallas, Irv Carter, Hayden Juenger, Hunter Gregory, Conor Larkin, Connor Cooke, Matt Svanson and Justin Kelly, LHPs Ricky Tiedemann, Trenton Wallace, Jimmy Burnette and Harry Rutkowski, OFs Jaden Rudd and Garrett Spain, 3B Riley Tirota and C Juan Gonzalez on minor league contracts.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Claimed RHP Ty Tice off waivers from Atlanta and optioned to Reno (Triple-A West). Designated LHP Alex Young for assignment. Optioned RHP J.B. Bukauskas to Reno. Reinstated RHP Tyler Clippard from the 60-day IL.

ATLANTA BRAVES — Recalled RHP Bryse Wilson from Gwinnett (Triple-A East). Op-

tioned C Alex Jackson to Gwinnett. Sent C Jonathan Lucroy outright to Gwinnett.

CINCINNATI REDS — Reinstated RHP Jeff Hoffman from the 10-day IL. Optioned RHP Ashton Goudeau to Louisville (Triple-A East).

COLORADO ROCKIES — Reinstated LHP Austin Gomber from the 10-day IL. Optioned RHP Antonio Santos to Albuquerque (Triple-A West).

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Designated RHP Jake Reed for assignment. Optioned LHP Darien Nunez to Oklahoma City (Triple-A West). Recalled 2B Sheldon Neuse from Oklahoma City.

MIAMI MARLINS — Agreed to terms with OF Kyler Castillo on a minor league contract. Optioned CF Monte Harrison to Jacksonville (Triple-A East). Recalled RHP Nick Neidert from Jacksonville.

NEW YORK METS — Recalled RHP Nick Tropeano and 2B Travis Blankenhorn from Syracuse (Triple-A East). Optioned RHP Geoff Hartlieb to Syracuse. Placed RHP Robert Stock on the 10-day IL. Claimed RHP Roel Ramirez off waivers from St. Louis and optioned to Syracuse. Acquired OF Carlos Rincon from Los Angeles Dodgers in exchange for OF Billy McKinney and cash considerations and assigned him to Binghamton (Double-A Northeast).

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Optioned CF Mickey Moniak to Lehigh Valley (Triple-A East). Recalled RHP Spencer Howard from Lehigh Valley.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with RHPs Carlos Lomeli and Drew Irvine on minor league contracts.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Recalled RHP Reiss Knehr from El Paso (Triple-A West).

FOOTBALL

National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Released C Lamont Gaillard.

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Signed CB Brandon Stephens to a four-year contract. Placed G Ben Cleveland and TE Jacob Breeland on the non-football injury list.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Agreed to terms with DE Chauncey Golston on a four-year contract. Signed CB Nahshon Wright to a four-year contract.

DENVER BRONCOS — Signed C/OG Quinn Meinerz to a four-year contract.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Agreed to terms with DL Christian Barmore. Placed RB Rhamondre Stevenson, LB Cameron McGrone and DB Joshua Bledsoe on the non-football injury list.

NEW YORK JETS — Signed OL Alijah Vera-Tucker.

PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Announced that LB Vince Williams has decided to retire after eight seasons. Signed OL Kendrick Green.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Signed LB Fred Warner to a five-year contract extension. Claimed WR Nsimba Webster off waivers from Los Angeles Rams. Signed RB Trey Sermon to a four-year contract.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Signed OT Robert Hainsey to a four-year contract.

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

FC DALLAS — Acquired D Caiser Gomes on loan from North Texas SC (USL) pending receipt of his P-1 visa and international transfer certificate.

National Women's Soccer League

NWSL — Rescinded all disciplinary actions against D Sam Stabb's red card on July 18th after club's appeal was successful.

GOLF

World rankings

Through July 18

1. Jon Rahm	ESP	10.08
2. Dustin Johnson	USA	9.69
3. Collin Morikawa	USA	8.78
4. Justin Thomas	USA	7.59
5. Xander Schauffele	USA	6.74
6. Bryson DeChambeau	USA	6.42

7. Brooks Koepka	USA	6.38
8. Patrick Cantlay	USA	6.10
9. Louis Oosthuizen	SAF	6.04
10. Harris English	USA	5.47
11. Viktor Hovland	NOR	5.45
12. Tyrrell Hatton	ENG	5.45
13. Patrick Reed	USA	5.45
14. Jordan Spieth	USA	5.38
15. Rory McIlroy	NIR	5.38
16. Webb Simpson	USA	5.04



LM OTERO/AP

Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlsby speaks to reporters during Big 12 media days on July 14 in Arlington, Texas.

Source: Texas, OU explore joining SEC

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

The last time Texas got a wandering eye for another conference it fueled a series of realignments in college sports that nearly killed the Big 12.

Texas is once again exploring free agency, stealing the headlines at the Southeastern Conference media days and cranking up speculation about another round of conference shuffling. And the Longhorns aren't alone in looking around.

There have been discussions between Texas and Oklahoma and SEC officials about switching conferences, but no formal invitations have been extended, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Wednesday night.

The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks were intended to be confidential, said officials from Texas initiated the discussion. The Houston Chronicle first reported the discussions.

Adding two members would give the powerhouse SEC 16 teams, the most in major college football. Losing two schools would be a devastating blow to the 10-member Big 12.

Questions about the report were greeted by a series of no comments from the primary parties involved, but no denials.

"I'm talking about the 2021 season," SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey said at SEC football media days.

Texas A&M athletic director Ross Bjork was adamant about not wanting the Longhorns, once the school's greatest rival, in the SEC. "We want to be the only SEC program in the state of Texas," Bjork told reporters. "There's a reason why Texas A&M left the Big 12, to be standalone, to have our own identity. And that's our feeling."

SEC bylaws require at least three-fourths (11) of the members to vote in favor of extending an invitation to join.

"The college athletics landscape is shifting constantly," Oklahoma said in a statement. "We don't address every anonymous rumor."

A Texas statement offered a similar response: "Speculation always swirls around collegiate athletics. We will not address rumors or speculation."

Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby did not return messages from AP seeking comment. Just last week at Big 12 media days in Arlington, Texas, he talked about how conference realignment was no longer a top concern for the Big 12.

"Not to say it couldn't happen, but it's not one of the things that keeps me up at night," he said.

Any move to leave the Big 12 would be complicated by an agreement its schools made after the last round of realignment to hand their media rights over to the league through their current television deals. The grant of rights lines up with the Big 12's contracts with Fox and ESPN and runs through the 2024-25 school year.

Oklahoma is the only Big 12 team to make the playoff, doing so four times. The road to the CFP would be tougher through the SEC but a bigger field could provide more paths.

When Texas A&M coach Jimbo Fisher was asked about Texas and Oklahoma being interested in the SEC during his session with the media in Hoover, he said: "I bet they would."

"Listen, we've got the greatest league in ball," Fisher said. "That's the choices they make or what they do, I don't know, but I don't know how I feel about it."

AP sports writer John Zenor in Hoover, Ala., contributed to this report.

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	58	38	.604	—
Tampa Bay	57	39	.594	1
New York	50	44	.532	7
Toronto	48	44	.522	8
Baltimore	31	64	.326	26½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	58	38	.604	—
Cleveland	48	45	.516	8½
Detroit	46	51	.474	12½
Minnesota	41	55	.427	17
Kansas City	39	55	.415	18
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	58	39	.598	—
Oakland	55	42	.567	3
Seattle	51	45	.531	6½
Los Angeles	46	48	.489	10½
Texas	35	61	.365	22½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	50	43	.538	—
Philadelphia	47	47	.500	3½
Atlanta	46	48	.489	4½
Washington	45	50	.474	6
Miami	41	55	.427	10½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	56	41	.577	—
Cincinnati	49	47	.510	6½
St. Louis	48	48	.500	7½
Chicago	47	49	.490	8½
Pittsburgh	36	60	.375	19½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	60	35	.632	—
Los Angeles	59	38	.608	2
San Diego	56	42	.571	5½
Colorado	42	54	.438	18½
Arizona	30	68	.306	31½
Wednesday's games				
Tampa Bay 5, Baltimore 4				
Kansas City 6, Milwaukee 3				
Colorado 6, Seattle 3				
Detroit 4, Texas 2				
Boston 7, Toronto 4				
Cleveland 5, Houston 4				
N.Y. Yankees 6, Philadelphia 5, 10 innings				
Minnesota 7, Chicago White Sox 2				
San Diego 3, Atlanta 2, 7 innings, 1st game				
San Diego at Atlanta, sus., 2nd game				
N.Y. Mets 7, Cincinnati 0				
Arizona 6, Pittsburgh 4				
Miami 3, Washington 1, 10 innings				
St. Louis 3, Chicago Cubs 2, 10 innings				
San Francisco 4, L.A. Dodgers 2				
Thursday's games				
Texas at Detroit				
N.Y. Yankees at Boston				
Tampa Bay at Cleveland				
L.A. Angels at Minnesota				
Oakland at Seattle				
Atlanta at Philadelphia				
San Diego at Miami				
Chicago Cubs at St. Louis				
San Francisco at L.A. Dodgers				
Friday's games				
Washington (Corbin 6-8) at Baltimore (López 2-12)				
N.Y. Yankees (Cole 10-4) at Boston (Rodríguez 7-5)				
Tampa Bay (Fleming 7-5) at Cleveland (Plesac 5-3)				
Toronto (Matz 8-4) at N.Y. Mets (Megill 0-0)				
Chicago White Sox (Giolito 8-6) at Milwaukee (Peralta 7-3)				
Detroit (Peralta 3-1) at Kansas City (Bubic 2-4)				
L.A. Angels (Cobb 7-3) at Minnesota (Happ 5-5)				
Texas (Allard 2-7) at Houston (Odorizzi 3-5)				
Oakland (Montas 8-8) at Seattle (Kikuchi 6-5)				
Arizona (Gallen 1-4) at Chicago Cubs (Davies 5-6)				
Atlanta (Fried 7-5) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 7-5)				
San Diego (Musgrove 5-7) at Miami (Thompson 2-2)				
St. Louis (LeBlanc 0-2) at Cincinnati (Mahle 7-3)				
Pittsburgh (Kuhl 3-5) at San Francisco (Cueto 6-5)				
Colorado (González 3-6) at L.A. Dodgers (Price 4-0)				

Brewers find success on the road

Team has the largest division lead in the NL, thanks to a 29-18 mark when it is on the road

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee Brewers are up 6½ games in the National League Central, the largest division lead of any National League team. It's their success away from Milwaukee that has helped them build that cushion.

Milwaukee's weekend sweep at NL Central rival Cincinnati improved the Brewers' road record to 29-18, the best in the majors. The Brewers lost two straight at home on Tuesday and Wednesday to the Kansas City Royals.

Outfielder Christian Yelich credits the Brewers' road success to their togetherness.

"Everybody really likes each other, picks each other up," Yelich said. "Just the toughness. Everybody just wants to win, and we're willing to do whatever it takes to get that done."

For whatever reason, those traits have stood out more when they're away from Milwaukee. The Brewers have been even better on the road than at home, where they're 27-23.

"There's not an explanation for that," manager Craig Counsell said. "You just play a good baseball game and that's what happens. We get into that all the time — day-game records, road records. It's just playing good baseball."

The Brewers have been playing great baseball for the last two months as they've withstood a multitude of injuries. Their 35-18 record since May 22 is the best in baseball during that stretch.

May 22 was the day shortstop Willy Adames made his Brewers debut, and his acquisition from Tampa Bay has played a big role in Milwaukee's emergence. Adames, who was hitting .197 with



BRYAN WOOLSTON/AP

The Milwaukee Brewers' Jace Peterson, left, celebrates with Willy Adames after the team's win at Cincinnati on Sunday. The team has the best road winning percentage in the majors.

.617

The Milwaukee Brewers' road winning percentage, the best in baseball. The team is .540 at home.

SOURCE: Associated Press

the Rays, has batted .302 with a .388 on-base percentage, 11 homers and 38 RBIs in 51 games with Milwaukee.

But there are plenty of other reasons why Milwaukee leads the NL Central.

The trio of All-Stars heading the rotation — Brandon Woodruff, Corbin Burnes and Freddy Peralta — have helped the Brewers lead the majors in strikeouts (985) and rank third in ERA (3.39). Opponents are hitting .213 against Milwaukee.

All-Star closer Josh Hader struggled in the week leading up to the All-Star break but has otherwise been exceptional. All-Star catcher Omar Narváez has batted .288 with a .383 on-base percent-

age, up dramatically from his .176 average and .294 OBP in 2020.

Avisaíl García's 17 homers are three off his career high. Luis Uriás, who didn't homer at all last season, has gone deep 13 times this year. Role players such as Jace Peterson and Tyrone Taylor have provided a boost.

That has enabled the Brewers to thrive even without getting the expected contributions from notable position players.

Lorenzo Cain hasn't played since May 31 due to a hamstring injury, though he's getting closer to a return. Jackie Bradley Jr. is hitting .177. Kolten Wong has gone on the injured list three times. Yelich, the 2018 NL MVP, isn't hitting for much power — his slugging percentage is .383.

Yelich showed signs of progress by hitting a go-ahead RBI double in the 11th inning Saturday and homering Sunday.

Although the Brewers have reached the postseason each of the last three years, this big lead puts them in an unfamiliar position.

Last year, they capitalized on MLB's expanded playoff format to reach the postseason without ever being above .500. They reached the playoffs in 2018 and 2019 by making huge stretch runs.

"It's a bad week away from being a really tight race," Yelich said. "It's far, far, far from over."

The surging Brewers aren't the biggest story in Milwaukee, where the Bucks won their first NBA title since 1971. The Bucks' run caught the attention of the Brewers, who moved Tuesday's game to an afternoon start so it wouldn't conflict with Game 6 of the NBA Finals.

"We're all excited," said Counsell, who attended the Bucks' Game 4 victory. "We really are. I mean, the clubhouse is excited for them, I know that. We've been talking about it a lot and we're thrilled and happy for the city and happy for all the fans. It's a really, really cool thing."

The Brewers would love to keep the excitement going around Milwaukee well into October.

Beyond Ohtani's greatness, some first-half lessons

By BILL MADDEN
New York Daily News

NEW YORK — Shohei Ohtani is drawing comparisons to Babe Ruth, Jacob deGrom is drawing comparisons to Bob Gibson and the two Latin juniors, Fernando Tatis and Vladimir Guerrero, are living up to all their hype and off to what is shaping up as the first of many MVP seasons for both.

Those are the obvious. Here are some other more subtle things we've learned from the first half of the season:

Diaz trade not looking so bad

It's taken a couple of years, but Edwin Diaz seems to have adjusted to the pressures of New York and become a dependable closer (19-

for-21 saves, no homers allowed, 1.17 WHIP, 50:14 strikeouts-to-walk ratio) for the Mets. On the other hand, Jarred Kelenic, the much acclaimed lefty-slugging center fielder ex-GM Brodie Van Wagenen traded for Diaz, flopped miserably in his Mariners debut this year (.096 in 23 games, five hits in his last 84 plate appearances including 0-for-39 before being demoted to Tacoma). Kelenic is now back with Seattle.

La Russa has silenced his critics

The media jackals, who have been waiting (or is it rooting?) for the 76-year-old Hall of Fame manager to fail, are probably hard-pressed to explain how the White Sox, despite a devastating spate of injuries to so many of their best players — Eloy Jimenez, Luis Robert,

Nick Madrigal and most recently Yasmani Grandal — went into the break with the largest gap of any of the six division leaders. Moreover, it would appear no team in baseball has better clubhouse chemistry than La Russa's White Sox.

Cora a difference-maker in Boston

OK, so maybe this isn't your old fashioned nuclear-powered American League East anymore, but who among us would have predicted the Red Sox, mostly dreadful last year (when Cora was in exile) with one of the worst pitching staffs in baseball, would be leading the division at the All-Star break. This despite the 21st worst starters' ERA (4.47) and the most errors (65) in the majors.

Calendar

July 25 — Hall of Fame induction, Cooperstown, N.Y.
Aug. 12 — New York Yankees vs. Chicago White Sox at Dyersville, Iowa.

NHL

New franchise sets its roster

Kraken take 30 in expansion draft

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — What the expansion draft of the Seattle Kraken lacked in drama it made up for with quirks, production and a giant party to celebrate one of the biggest steps in the launch of the NHL's newest team.

"I envisioned this a lot of different ways and this is unbelievable," Seattle coach Dave Hakstol said. "All the boats on the lake behind us, the scene on the other side of the stage. It's awesome."

Any unknowns about Seattle's selections evaporated when all 30 names leaked hours before the team announced its selections on the shore of Lake Union. It was still a celebratory night to introduce the nucleus of a team that will make its debut at Vegas in a matchup of the league's two newest teams in mid-October and play its first home game on Oct. 23 against rival Vancouver.

One pick was announced by an octopus from the Seattle Aquarium. Another came written on a fish thrown in the city's legendary Pike Place Market. And there was an assembly line of Seattle sports celebrities taking part, from Sue Bird to Marshawn Lynch.

Fans on all types of aquatic devices — paddleboards, kayaks and all sizes of boats — created a flotilla

Scoreboard

NHL expansion draft list

SEATTLE — Players taken Friday by the Seattle Kraken in the NHL's expansion draft:

Seattle

Goaltenders — Chris Driedger, Florida; Joey Daccord, Ottawa; Vitek Vanecsek, Washington.

Defensemen — Jeremy Lauzon, Boston; William Borgen, Buffalo; Dennis Cholowski, Detroit; Cale Fleury, Montreal; Gavin Bayreuther, Columbus; Jamie Oleksiak, Dallas; Carson Soucy, Minnesota; Vince Dunn, St. Louis; Haydn Fleury, Anaheim; Mark Giordano, Calgary; Adam Larsson, Edmonton; Kurtis MacDermid, Los Angeles.

Forwards — Yanni Gourde, Tampa Bay; Jared McCann, Toronto; Morgan Geekie, Carolina; Nathan Bastian, New Jersey; Jordan Eberle, New York Islanders; Colin Blackwell, New York Rangers; Carsen Twarynski, Philadelphia; Brandon Tanev, Pittsburgh; Tyler Pitlick, Arizona; John Quenneville, Chicago; Joonas Donskoi, Colorado; Calle Jarnkrok, Nashville; Mason Appleton, Winnipeg; Alexander True, San Jose; Kole Lind, Vancouver.

traffic jam on Lake Union. There were giant inflatable octopuses, makeshift Stanley Cups and when Gary Bettman appeared next to the shore, he was soundly booed as all commissioners are.

"It proves you're true hockey fans," Bettman said to the group on the water, leading to chants of "Gary, Gary, Gary!"

It was clear that flexibility with the salary cap was one of Seattle's biggest priorities in setting its first roster. Of the 30 players selected, Seattle committed only \$54 million



TED S. WARREN/AP

New Kraken players, from left, Jordan Eberle, Chris Driedger, Brandon Tanev, Jamie Oleksiak, Haydn Fleury and Mark Giordano pose for a photo Wednesday after the expansion draft in Seattle.

of a possible \$81.5 million, not including a few restricted free agents who will push the number closer to \$60 million should they stay.

The side deals and trades that Vegas fleeced the league with four years ago were absent this time around. Vegas announced 10 trades during its expansion draft; Seattle, zero.

"Last time around (with Vegas), teams were paying a price to stay away from guys. This time, they weren't willing to do that because GMs learned," Seattle general manager Ron Francis said. "What they were looking to do is get us to take bad money or bad contracts in order to leave somebody exposed and for us we think (cap space) was the most valuable asset we had

right now, especially in potentially a flat cap environment for a year or two."

Defense was clearly a priority for Seattle, whether to build its own depth or for the opportunity to flip players for other options. A few seem locks to stay, like Adam Larsson and Jamie Oleksiak, both unrestricted free agents who signed long-term deals with Seattle. Larsson got a \$16 million, four-year deal and Oleksiak got \$23 million over five years.

Veteran Mark Giordano from Calgary was thought to be a possible option for flipping, but seemed unlikely when he walked on stage and pulled on the Kraken home jersey.

Giordano, 37, has the biggest cap

hit of any player taken but could soon wear the captain's "C" when they open their inaugural season.

"It feels a little bit different today, but it's been crazy last day or so," Giordano said. "This is the first time in my career I've ever been drafted, so thank you to the Kraken and I'm happy to be here."

As far as other players selected, the Kraken got their goaltender in late-blooming Chris Driedger, and veteran forwards Jordan Eberle and Jared McCann. Seattle took Tampa Bay forward Yanni Gourde but he will miss at least the first month of the season following shoulder surgery.

AP hockey writers Stephen Whyno and John Wawrow contributed to this report.

Three Wolverines among top prospects for draft

By JOHN WAWROW
Associated Press

So much attention on Michigan's hockey program, and too few seats for scouts at Yost Ice Arena due to COVID-19 restrictions, created early season challenges for Wolverines coach Mel Pearson.

"NHL people were trying to find their way into our building in a lot of different ways, whether as an usher or working in the press box or whatever," Pearson said with a chuckle, recalling some of the more creative credential requests he received from scouts after being initially limited to 16 seats for 32 NHL teams.

Eventually, everyone who needed a spot got one.

The sudden surge in interest was readily apparent, and not simply because the Big Ten — unlike Canada's three top junior leagues — was one of North America's few developmental leagues able to pull off a full season last year.

Ann Arbor, Mich., became a must-stop on the scouting trail because of a Wolverines lineup featuring a trio of highly touted freshmen in defenseman Owen Power and forwards Kent Johnson and Mathew Beni-



SERGEI GRITS/AP

Mathew Beniers helped the U.S. win gold at the World Junior championships.

niers.

At 6-foot-6 and 213 pounds, the smooth-skating, play-making Power is the NHL

Central Scouting Bureau's top-ranked North American player, with Johnson listed third and Beniers sixth entering the draft on Friday night.

Michigan could become the first college hockey program to have three players selected in the first round. Michigan State in 1990, Boston College in 2000 and Ohio State in 2001 each had two players selected in the first round.

"It's an extraordinary year to say the least. And I'm coming up on my 40th year in college hockey at the Division I level," Pearson said. "I've been around some high-end players, but never the quality and the quantity that we're seeing here at Michigan. Just extremely proud and extremely happy for the young men and their families."

Add in defenseman Luke Hughes (ranked fourth), who is committed to playing at Michigan this season, and the draft will have a distinct Go Blue theme to it while being held remotely for a second consecutive year due to the pandemic.

Canadian junior center Mason McTavish is the second-ranked North American skater, while Swedish left wing William Eklund

is the top-ranked European.

The Buffalo Sabres hold the first pick, followed by the expansion Seattle Kraken and Anaheim Ducks.

Power finished with three goals and 16 points in 26 games to earn conference all-rookie team honors. From Mississauga, Ontario, he then represented Canada at the World Championship, where he finished with three assists and won gold. His performance, especially being able to showcase his skating ability on the larger European ice surface in Latvia, cemented his top ranking.

Power could be the third NCAA player selected first in the NHL Draft, joining Michigan State's Joe Murphy, who went No. 1 to Detroit in 1986, and Boston University goalie Rick DiPietro (New York Islanders, 2000).

Johnson, from North Vancouver, British Columbia, finished second among college freshmen with 27 points (nine goals, 18 assists) while making the switch from center to wing. Beniers, from Hingham, Mass., finished with 14 goals and 14 assists, and helped the U.S. win gold at the World Junior championships.

NBA/OLYMPICS



MITCH ALCALA/AP

Oklahoma State's Cade Cunningham brings the ball up the court. The Detroit Pistons have the first pick in the draft on July 29 and Cunningham is the favorite to be that pick.

NBA gears shift quickly into very short offseason

BY TIM REYNOLDS

Associated Press

Detroit, you are on the clock.

The NBA offseason — if you can call it that — is here. The Milwaukee Bucks officially flipped the league calendar to summer on Tuesday night, capturing their first title in 50 years and turning out the lights on a season that navigated its way through a pandemic to crown a new champion.

There isn't much of a break, of course.

The NBA Draft, with the Pistons holding the No. 1 pick and presumably the chance to choose Oklahoma State's Cade Cunningham, is fast-approaching on July 29. Free agency starts in less than two weeks, on Aug. 2. Most new contracts can be signed starting Aug. 6, and summer league opens two days after that.

"We made it. We crowned a champion," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said during the trophy ceremony in Milwaukee on Tuesday night. "I have to say playing through a pandemic required enormous resilience from all 30 teams. Thank you to every team and every player in the league for a tremendous season."

And now, it's already next season.

The good news is there's a sense of normalcy, even amid a pandemic, and the NBA plans to continue along that path. Training camps will begin in late September, as is the new normal. Preseason games are back in early October, and the league's 76th season — even though it'll be celebrating its 75th

anniversary all year long — starts Oct. 19.

That's not even three months away.

The pandemic was the storyline of the entire season — obviously, since it has been the storyline across the entire planet — and no one in the NBA expects that next season will be able to start without the continued threat of COVID-19. Protocols will remain in place; how many and how strict will depend on the virus and what's happening in the world in a few months.

"I think the players have a better understanding of sort of what we're up against in trying to run this business and I think we have a better understanding of the players and what it's like to travel the amount they do and to the stresses they're under, the emotional and physical burdens they're under by competing at this level," Silver said at the start of the finals. "And hopefully we can continue to build on that."

Some issues to watch over the coming days and weeks:

Injuries

Players missing time with injuries was a major issue this season and the offseason already has seen more news on that front.

Kawhi Leonard of the Los Angeles Clippers just had surgery to repair a partially torn ACL; injuries to that ligament, unfortunately, aren't rare in basketball, but partial tears are not exactly common. The Clippers haven't said how long they think he'll be side-

lined. ACL reconstruction tends to cost players several months, and that means the start of Leonard's season is in obvious doubt.

Free agency

Chris Paul helped Phoenix get to the NBA Finals and now has a decision to make about his \$44 million option for next season. He could opt-in and stay, or opt-out — and quite possibly still stay, if he and the Suns work out a new deal.

There will be plenty of seasoned veterans on the market, including Kyle Lowry and Mike Conley. Leonard could be a free agent as well, if so inclined.

An interesting situation to watch will be Victor Oladipo, most recently of Miami and someone who would like to remain with the Heat. He's coming off another leg surgery and may not be ready to start next season, which could certainly affect his number of suitors — and how much they will be willing to offer him.

The draft

Detroit picks first, followed by Houston, Cleveland and Toronto. Orlando has two picks in the top eight and Oklahoma City has three picks in the first 18 — the start of the massive haul of draft capital that the Thunder have acquired in recent years.

New coaches

At minimum, seven teams will open next season with new coaches — Washington, New Orleans, Dallas, Indiana, Orlando, Boston and Portland.

OLYMPIC ROUNDUP

Abbott 1-hitter lifts US over Canada for 2-0 softball start

Associated Press

FUKUSHIMA, Japan — Six outs from her second Olympic no-hitter, Monica Abbott was clinging to a one-run lead when she walked Canada's Jen Gilbert leading off the sixth inning, and pinch-hitter Sara Groenewegen lined a 0-2 pitch to the right-center field gap.

Center fielder Haylie McCleney picked up the ball at the wall and fired to Ali Aguilar. The second baseman made a perfect one-hop throw to catcher Aubree Munro, who moved up the third-base line and swiped a tag on sliding pinch-runner Joey Lye for the out.

"It's fun to be on the mound to watch that," Abbott said after her one-hitter led the United States over Canada 1-0 on Thursday. "I don't want to give up a hit like that, but, man oh man, it took a lot of confidence in me on our defense."

Amanda Chidester hit an RBI single in the fifth off loser Jenna Caira that scored McCleney, who went 3-for-3 with a walk and has reached base seven times in two games.

Trying to regain the gold medal it lost to Japan in the 2008 final, the U.S. improved to 2-0. After a day off for the opening ceremony in Tokyo, the tournament shifts to Yokohama on Saturday.

Abbott, 6-foot-3 and slim, has a Randy Johnson-like reach that reduces her release point from the 43-foot rubber to about 37 feet from the plate. Pitching a week before her 36th birthday, she struck out nine, walked three and needed 102 pitches in the Americans' second consecutive one-hitter.

Australia stuns Argentina in men's soccer

SAPPORO, Japan — Two-time Olympic men's soccer champion Argentina was stunned 2-0 by Australia in their opening game at the Tokyo Games on Thursday.

In its first Olympic game since 2008, Australia took the lead through Lachlan Wales' tap-in the 14th minute at the Sapporo Dome.

Argentina had Francisco Ortega sent off after being booked twice late in the first half. Marco Tilio then secured the victory in the 80th, just a minute after coming off the bench.

In other Olympic soccer news:

■ Just 11 days after losing the Copa America final to Argentina in Rio de Janeiro and now 10 time zones away with Brazil's under-23s team, Richarlison scored a hat trick inside the opening half hour against Germany on Thurs-



JAE C. HONG/AP

United States pitcher Monica Abbott threw a one-hitter in a 1-0 defeat of Canada on Wednesday.

day.

It helped Brazil open the men's soccer tournament with a 4-2 victory.

Brazil beat Germany in a shootout for the gold in Rio.

Crabb out, Bourne in for US beach volleyball team

TOKYO — American beach volleyball player Taylor Crabb is out of the Olympics after four positive COVID-19 tests, and Tri Bourne will take his place as the partner of four-time Olympian Jake Gibb when the competition begins this weekend.

Crabb confirmed his withdrawal on Thursday in a statement to The Associated Press, noting that he was vaccinated and tested negative before he left the United States but tested positive when he arrived in Japan.

The Olympic beach volleyball tournament begins Saturday at Tokyo's Shiokaze Park, with Gibb and Bourne scheduled to play their first match on Sunday night against Italy.

Top shooter out because of positive COVID test

TOKYO — Top-ranked shooter Amber Hill has tested positive for COVID-19 at home in Britain and will miss the Tokyo Olympics.

The world No. 1 in women's skeet says: "There are no words to describe how I'm feeling right now."

Hill's event is scheduled on Sunday and Monday and no shooter will take Britain's entry as her replacement.

OLYMPICS



RICARDO MAZALAN/AP

The United States' Christen Press reacts as Sweden's players celebrate their third goal during Wednesday's women's soccer match at the Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

US women regroup after loss to Sweden

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

TOKYO — While it certainly wasn't the Olympic start the U.S. women's soccer team had anticipated, a rare loss didn't skewer the squad's hopes for gold.

The United States fell to Sweden 3-0 Wednesday night in the team's opener in Tokyo, snapping a 44-match unbeaten streak. It was a surprising result for the favorites in the field.

In fact, it may have lit a fire.

Defender Tierna Davidson said Thursday that veteran Kelley O'Hara was rallying the squad ahead of Saturday's match against New Zealand.

"She was like: 'We don't have a choice. We have to come out the next game and we have to be absolutely ruthless.'" Davidson said. "So I think that's what everyone has on their mind right now."

There's still a good chance that the world's top-ranked team makes it to the knockout round and even a medal match. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the United States fell 2-0 to Norway in the first match, then went on to win gold — a fact U.S. forward Christen Press pointed to after the game.

"We've had a long string of wins and I think we haven't had a lot of games where we had to come back," Press said. "I think it was actually really good to have this match. In 2008 we lost our first match and team won gold. So I think now we're seeing this as a learning opportunity. And the message is already 'Heads up, put it behind us, next game.' There's no time in a tournament like this to dwell."

It was the first loss for the United States since January 2019, when the team fell to France 3-1 in Le Havre. The U.S. went on to win the World Cup that summer.

The Americans are vying for



RICARDO MAZALAN/AP

The United States' Julie Ertz reacts after the loss to Sweden.

their fifth overall gold medal, more than any other nation, in a sport that joined the Olympics only in 1996. They're aiming to be the first women's team to win an Olympic title following a World Cup.

The United States failed to medal at the Rio de Janeiro Games after it was ousted in the quarterfinals by — yep — Sweden. And the Swedes drew 1-1 with the Americans in April, the team's only non-victory this year.

"I think we just got a little bit in our head," Megan Rapinoe admitted. "We'll obviously watch film and all that, but you drop points in the beginning of a tournament and now you're in sort of a do-or-die mode. So you've got to pick up points, otherwise we're going home quick, and you don't want to do that."

The United States moves on to Saitama, where they'll play the Ferns on Saturday as the group stage continues. Sweden will play Australia in the group.

Boast: Gains for women at times meant fewer opportunities for men

FROM PAGE 48

the Tokyo Games in a push toward gender equity. There are an equal number of women and men for every sport, excluding baseball and softball because of differing roster sizes.

The IOC said women's participation in Tokyo will be 49%, up from 45% at Rio, a nearly even split with the men. The committee also noted that when women made their Olympic debut at the Paris Games in 1900, there were only 22 females out of 997 total athletes. Those pioneers competed across five sports, among them croquet and equestrian.

"Tokyo 2020 is predicted to be the most gender equal yet with female participation," the IOC said.

The new opportunities come in several sports and several sizes: Great Britain, for example, is sending more women than men to the Olympics for the first time. In water polo, two additional teams were added, for a total of 10. It's still two shy of the men's tournament, but a win for the women's movement.

Gains for women in many cases meant fewer opportunities for men. Boxing will feature 100 women in five classes, up from 36 fighters over three classes in Rio. But two men's classes were dropped.

Weightlifting this year is equal at seven teams for both men and women, but reached the mark by dropping a men's team. Women's canoeing was added, but the men's 200 and men's kayak double 200 were dropped — a decision met with unfavorable reactions from male athletes when it was announced in 2016.

Erik Vlcek, who took silver with Slovakia in Rio, argued when women's canoe was added that females should only kayak because females canoeing "doesn't look good." A Czech paddler joked canoeing is harmful to a woman's posture.

The changes went through, to multiple sports, with rifle probably undergoing the most change. The sport lost men's prone rifle, men's free pistol and men's double trap, all replaced by mixed team events in air rifle, air pistol and trap.

Luczak, now 32, knows she benefited at the expense of male teammates. The women's coxless four returns to competition for the first time since 1992, but it replaces the men's lightweight coxless four.

"It's not great when you have to take something away from the men's side to add to the women's. It's never fun seeing people find out their opportunity is gone," Luczak said. "But in creating an



JAE C. HONG/AP

Maggie Steffens, a member of the U.S. women's water polo team, trains at MWR Aquatic Training Center in Los Alamitos, Calif., in April.

49%

Women's participation in Tokyo will be 49%, up from 45% at Rio — a nearly even split with the men — according to the International Olympic committee.

SOURCE: Associated Press

equal number of opportunities, it shows there is a pathway for female athletes."

Luczak left her fiancé behind at home and moved in with a host family in Princeton, N.J., while she trained. She also traded a paycheck for a stipend, simply because the four additional seats were too tantalizing for her to not even try.

Tightening the gender gap was a cause for many women. The equality issues were heightened when discrepancies for men and women were exposed at this year's NCAA basketball tournament. Images shared on social media of the women's grossly under-equipped weight room became the symbol for the injustices all female athletes have suffered in the shadow of men.

Former Stanford water polo player Maggie Steffens said the gender inequality at the NCAA tournament "hurt my heart to see" but was also an eye-opener. Steffens is a two-time Olympic gold medalist, two-time Olympic MVP and captain of the U.S. women's team, but she had always assumed the better-known women's sports

received better treatment than water polo.

"The women's basketball teams are in the tournament, they have all these fans, they're on TV and you think 'Look how lucky they are,'" Steffens said. "But the behind-the-scenes stuff comes out and you find out they have it just the same as you."

"For it to all come out and see it from the athletes' point of view, for what people don't see to now be visible, maybe it showed that women can get it done. We don't need all the fancy stuff, we don't care. We'll do it anyway."

Not every addition was a blow to men's sports. Swimming added the 1,500-meter freestyle for women for the first time, while the men's 800 free was returned to competition for the first time since 1904. The mixed gender relay makes its Olympic debut.

Five new sports were added this year — baseball/softball, karate, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing — and the IOC demanded they have equal numbers of men and women.

There are still large gaps to close, particularly in funding and prize money outside of the Olympics. Steffens this year saw a long push for equal pay at one particular tournament come to fruition and posted a photo of the triumph labeled #equalpay. Pioneer women's water polo player Maureen O'Toole commented, "Wait what. You get paid!! That must be nice!!!" on the social media post.

OLYMPICS

Cold War added fire to 1964 Olympics

East vs. West tensions raged while the Games were played in Tokyo

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO

Emperor Hirohito led a crowd of 72,000 people packed into Japan's National Stadium in cheering 7,000 young athletes as they marched into the arena for the Olympic opening ceremonies on Oct. 10, 1964.

"Tokyo Lights the Olympic Flame" was the front-page headline in Pacific Stars and Stripes the next morning announcing the start of the first games to be held in Asia.

"Guns sounded, 10,000 gaily colored balloons were released, and pigeons fluttered around the stadium after the athletes gathered before the crowd," the newspaper reported. "The Olympic flame ... was ignited by a torch brought from Mount Olympus in Greece."

The "biggest Olympic Games in history" began after "three years of break-neck preparations" that saw Japan's once war-torn capital transformed into a modern wonder with newly built skyscrapers, elevated expressways and the country's first bullet train, which began operating the month of the games.

But that Olympics was also held with Cold War tensions at a fever pitch as the Russians vied with the West for nuclear and space supremacy and communist insurgencies threatened to topple Southeast Asian nations like dominoes.

"US Wins Its 1st Gold Medal," Stars and Stripes announced in a front-page headline on Oct. 14, but that news was overshadowed by the lead story: "Historic First — 3



Stars and Stripes

Joe Frazier of the United States is declared the winner over Vadim Yemelyanov of the Soviet Union during the heavyweight boxing semifinals at the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. Frazier went on to win gold.

MEN IN SPACESHIP; ORBITED BY SOVIETS."

Cold War, cold drinks

At the Olympic Village in Tokyo, "a billboard went up under the hammer and sickle flag over the Russian headquarters ... charting, in Russian, the Soviet Union's medal scores for the last three Olympics and their target for the 18th Olympiad here," The Associated Press reported Oct. 16.

The billboard, which showed Russia targeting a record 210 medals at the games — 39 more than the United States won in Rome four years earlier — was removed after a Russian-speaking American reporter was spotted jotting down the information, according to the story.

That same day AP reported that capitalist Coca-Cola and Pepsi

were being served on three huge Soviet ships moored in Tokyo Bay as floating hotels for Russian and Eastern European visitors to the Olympics.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was overthrown midway through the games. In the Oct. 17 edition reporting his ouster, Stars and Stripes ran an aerial photograph of the USS Kearsarge cruising in the South China Sea while its crew paraded on deck forming the Olympic rings and the message "64 OLYMPICS."

Meanwhile, China tested its first atomic bomb, according to an Oct. 18 story above a photograph of American Wyomia Tyus sprinting to gold in the 100-meter race. Days later, scientists detected fallout from the blast in Japan, according to an Oct. 20 United Press International story.

Along with the Olympics, newspapers during the games were also full of reports on the fighting in Vietnam.

James Pickerell, a former Navy and Stars and Stripes photographer, was shot by the Viet Cong while working as a freelancer, becoming the first newsman to be wounded in the conflict, according to an Oct. 21 UPI report.

Military memories

On Oct. 16, Stars and Stripes ran another UPI story that said Japanese boy scouts handed out 50,000 portable ashtrays to fans entering the main stadium.

The same day, sports writer Staff Sgt. Dick Kelly wrote of U.S. games athletes: "Wearing their



Stars and Stripes

Emperor Hirohito led a crowd of 72,000 people packed into Japan's National Stadium in cheering 7,000 young athletes during the Opening Ceremonies.

cowboy hats, they were easy to spot. You could find them dancing in the International Club, trying on Oriental clothes in the (Olympic) Village stores and enjoying the favorite pastime here of girl watching."

Kelly interviewed Army Sgt. Mel Pender at the hospital on the now-closed Tachikawa Air Base in Tokyo for an Oct. 20 story. Pender ran the semifinal and final of the 100 meters with a torn abdominal muscle.

He placed sixth and collapsed after the race, won in a record 10.06 seconds by teammate "Bullet" Bob Hayes. But Pender still wanted to compete in the 400-meter relay, according to the story.

"I promised my wife and daughter I'd bring them home a gold medal," he told Kelly. "If there would have been more time between the semifinals and the finals of the 100, I think I could have won

it."

Pender was too injured to compete again in Tokyo but, after the games, he became an officer and was awarded a Bronze Star in Vietnam. He went on to win relay gold at the 1968 games in Mexico City.

Former Pacific Stars and Stripes librarian Toshi Cooper, 95, worked at the Olympic press center during the games.

She recalled, during a July 9 phone interview, putting on a smart uniform, translating for an army of international press and building up an impressive collection of Olympic pins.

Cooper saw the finish of the marathon, won by Abebe Bikila of Ethiopia, who had raced to gold in bare feet four years earlier in Rome.

"I didn't get to see too many other games because of my job, but I really wanted to see this famous runner," she said. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime type thing, you know. I can still hear the roaring cheers that covered the big stadium."

'The crowd is everything'

Masahiko Nakamura, 87, a Stars and Stripes photographer at the games, recalled the throngs of cheering people who lined the marathon route.

"Everywhere there were big crowds," he said in a July 12 phone interview.

The 1964 Olympics were the first broadcast in color and the first beamed to Americans by satellite. Nakamura said he bought his first color television to watch the events.

Mike Mealey, 81, of Park City, Utah, reported on the '64 games as a 23-year-old private first class after he was drafted into the Army.

Stars and Stripes sent the former Oakland Tribune reporter to work as a combat correspondent in Vietnam, but he was back in Tokyo for the Olympics, he recalled in a July 12 telephone interview.

"The Japanese were the Japanese," he said of the games' organizers. "They did everything to the nth degree. They did a beautiful games."

Mealey covered events ranging from swimming to athletics, boxing and judo. A highlight was sitting in a press box next to Jesse Owens, a four-time gold medalist in track and field from the 1936 Berlin Olympics, he recalled.

At each event, enthusiastic locals were an important part of the action, Mealey said.

"It's going to be strange with no spectators (this year), because the crowd is everything," he said.



U.S. Navy

In the Oct. 17, 1964 edition reporting the overthrow of Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Stars and Stripes ran this photograph of the USS Kearsarge cruising in the South China Sea.

OLYMPICS



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Spain's Pau Gasol, left, goes after a rebound along with Argentina's Andres Nocioni during the semifinals of the World Basketball Championships in Saitama, Japan, on Sept. 1, 2006.

Spain reigned, US was upset last time Japan hosted hoops

By BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

When major international basketball last came to the Tokyo area, the U.S. sent LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, Chris Paul and Carmelo Anthony.

All great players.
Just not good enough.
“We lost,” Paul said.

The 2006 world championship was perhaps the last truly wide-open international basketball event. Argentina arrived as Olympic champion and Spain left as the world champion, the last time for a long while anyone other than the U.S. would hold either title.

It's where Marc Gasol's career took off and where a devastated Mike Krzyzewski contemplated his ending — as the U.S. coach, anyway, after what was his lone loss.

Even now, 15 years later, players can still recall certain moments as if they happened only 15 minutes earlier.

“I think it was a very good tournament,” Argentina's Luis Scola said, adding there were “good memories” for his basketball-loving country.

And the Argentines didn't even win a medal.

The Olympic tournament that begins Sunday in Saitama — about 20 miles northwest of Tokyo — has some of the same feel as those worlds. The U.S. has the best individual talent, though maybe not the best team. Spain and Argentina are both formidable, just as when they played a thrilling semi-

“The 2006 world championships were loaded with talent... amazing coaches and players from top to bottom.”

Tommy Sheppard

Washington Wizards general manager

final at Saitama Super Arena.

The Spanish won that night, then beat the Argentines again in 2019 in the final to win a second world title. Ricky Rubio was MVP of the 2019 tournament, a star for his country who was too young for his chance to dance at center court with his teammates in 2006.

“It was special,” the Minnesota Timberwolves guard said. “It was special for Spain because it was a generation that was trying to win gold a couple years before in the Olympics and then they got beat by the USA team (in the quarterfinals).”

“It was a great tournament all around, with the semifinal against Argentina was one of the best games I've ever seen and then the final was just, like, amazing.”

Games like those gave the late-summer event a March Madness feel.

“The 2006 world championships were loaded with talent!” said Washington Wizards general manager Tommy Sheppard, who was at the event and said it had “amazing coaches and players from top to bottom.”

The U.S. doesn't remember the tournament so fondly.

In the first tournament after

Jerry Colangelo took over the USA Basketball program following the Americans' third-place finish in the 2004 Olympics, the U.S. stormed to the semifinals without a loss and had a double-digit lead against Greece in the first half. The Greeks turned the game around with sensational shooting in the second and third quarters, leaving the U.S. without a gold medal in a major event since the 2000 Olympics.

“The worst day of my life in coaching,” Krzyzewski said. “The worst day. I wanted to end it, that's it.”

In the other semifinal, Spain edged Argentina 75-74 when Andres Nocioni missed a three-pointer from the corner on the game's final shot.

Tournament MVP Pau Gasol broke his foot in that game and missed the final, but younger brother Marc came off the bench to cap his debut with the national team as Spain crushed Greece 70-47.

The U.S. bounced back from its loss to Greece to beat Argentina for bronze, but that was little consolation. Colangelo said he didn't even watch the tape of the loss for about a year and a half.

Adebayo wants name among other gold medal winners in Miami rafters

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

MIAMI — The banners are all aligned next to one another, swaying from the rafters over the court where the Miami Heat play their games. LeBron James has one. So does Dwyane Wade. Alonzo Mourning and Tim Hardaway, too.

They commemorate Olympic gold medals won as a member of the Heat.

And Bam Adebayo wants one.

The Heat center and his USA Basketball teammates — those who were cleared to fly or weren't still playing in the NBA Finals, anyway — arrived in Japan on Tuesday for the Tokyo Olympics. The Americans are seeking a fourth consecutive gold medal, and if they come home with that shiny prize, then Adebayo's banner plan will be complete as well.

“That's my goal,” Adebayo said. “I want Miami to think of me as one of the greats to come through the city. I want to be able to warm up and see my name in the rafters. A lot of guys don't get this opportunity, so my goal is just to make sure that I seize this moment and not mess around with it.”

Adebayo is one of two centers on the Olympic roster. New addition JaVale McGee — who replaced the injured Kevin Love — is the other. The Americans start Olympic play Tuesday against France, a significant game considering the French are the team that eliminated the U.S. from medal contention in the Basketball World Cup two years ago.

Adebayo will play a significant role in the U.S. rotation.

“He does what he does,” U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said. “He's going to be very valuable to us and obviously our best rebounder.”

It's a much different feeling for Adebayo now, compared with his first USA Basketball experience.

He was cut from the World Cup team in 2019 after a week of work-

outs in Las Vegas, and Adebayo hadn't been back to that city until July 5 — when he flew there from Miami to start Olympic training camp. Walking through the airport that day, he acknowledged some of the frustration from not making that U.S. roster two years ago was still present.



Adebayo

“I'm not the type of person that holds grudges,” Adebayo said. “But it's a motivation factor, for sure.”

Mourning and Hardaway won their banners as members of the Heat at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Wade won his at the 2008 Beijing Games; James won at the 2012 London Games. James also won in 2008 and several other players who have worn the Heat uniform are among those who have Olympic gold in their collection as well.

But the banners are reserved for those who win gold while members of the Heat.

“Of course, I want one of those,” Adebayo said. “I'm going to the Olympics to represent my country. I'm also going to represent my city.”

These days, that phrase — “my city” — takes on a different meaning.

Miami is hurting right now, a month or so removed from the condo collapse in Surfside, Fla., a waterfront town just a few miles north of downtown Miami. The middle-of-the-night crumbling of that building has been blamed for at least 97 deaths with a handful of people still unaccounted for.

“The least I can do is go out and try to win my country a gold medal, win my city a gold medal,” Adebayo said. “To bring that back to Miami, it would just give some people a little light, a little spark that they need right now.”



CHASE STEVENS/AP

The United States' Bam Adebayo dunks the ball in front of Argentina's Marcos Delia during an exhibition game in Las Vegas on July 13.

OLYMPICS



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Caeleb Dressel reacts after the men's 50-meter freestyle during wave 2 of the U.S. Olympic trials on June 20 in Omaha, Neb. Dressel could win as many as seven gold medals in the Tokyo Olympics.

The reluctant star

Spotlight beckons swimming's Dressel

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

For a man tabbed as swimming's next superstar, Caeleb Dressel couldn't be more disinterested. Of course, he cares about being fast in the pool. He just isn't into anyone else's expectations or comparisons. Fame isn't his thing, either.

"I'd rather just shut up and swim," the 24-year-old Floridian said.

Dressel could win as many as seven medals in Tokyo. He'll compete in the 50- and 100-meter freestyles and the 100 butterfly, as well as up to four relays.



Troy

Sound familiar? Michael Phelps won a historic eight golds in Beijing in 2008. But don't suggest to Dressel that he's the next coming of the all-time winningest Olympian.

"I swim different events than Michael," he said. "I'm not chasing someone else's goals. I want to chase my own."

Dressel was a bit player in his first Olympics five years ago in Rio, winning two relay gold medals while Phelps and Ryan Lochte's careers as the world's two dominant male swimmers were winding down.

The 2017 world championships in Budapest, Hungary, were Dressel's personal coming-out party. He won seven gold medals — more than any other country.

Two years later in Gwangju, South Korea, he smashed Phelps' 10-year-old record in the 100-meter

DID YOU KNOW?

At the 2019 world championships in Gwangju, South Korea, Caeleb Dressel smashed Michael Phelps' 10-year-old record in the 100-meter butterfly while winning six golds and two silvers for a record haul of eight medals.

SOURCE: Associated Press

butterfly while winning six golds and two silvers for a record haul of eight medals.

Dressel is fast and powerful in the sprint events, usually the first one off the blocks. He stands out even before he dives in. At 6-foot-2 and 198 pounds, with a sleeve of tattoos on his left arm and the Olympic rings tattooed on his right forearm, his upper body is all muscle. He's the one doing the insanely high vertical leaps behind the starting block.

"His talent and his explosion is just mind-blowing," said Lochte, who trained with Dressel in Gainesville, Fla., before coming up short in his bid to make a fifth Olympic team. "In practice, there is no mercy. He doesn't back down."

Dressel is just as hard on himself. "I trash myself more than anybody," he said.

"If you didn't have a good swim, but you don't learn anything, that's a complete throwaway. That's a failure. If you have a bad swim and you learn something from it, then it's not a bad swim anymore," he said.

Unlike young swimmers, who may unquestioningly follow a coach's orders, Dressel is frank in his exchanges with coach Gregg Troy.

"It gives us a great cooperative effort to put ourselves in the best possible situation," Troy said.

While Dressel shuns comparisons to Phelps, he doesn't hesitate to reach out to the retired superstar. In the midst of the pandemic last year, a frustrated Dressel fired off a ranting text to Phelps.

"It's been great to have that support from him, from someone I don't even know that well, but he knows how the sport works," Dressel said.

So does his wife, Meghan. She swam in high school and briefly in college, giving her shared experience in understanding the ups and downs. She has a master's degree in marriage and family therapy, which she puts to good use in her own home.

"We're in this together," she said. "Some days it's 50-50 and other days it's 90-10, and I'll pick up the slack for him."

The high school sweethearts married on Valentine's weekend last February, only moving in together after the wedding. She whips up his favorite dish — chicken piccata — since Dressel admits the only thing he can cook is eggs.

"I could have cried the first day after the wedding," he said. "I came home from practice and there's food ready. She dropped me off at a doctor's appointment, and I was like, 'That's how you know you're married.'"

"I told Meghan two months into dating her I was going to marry her. I should have done it way earlier."

Dressel is just as interested in leading an adventurous life outside the pool.

"He's in this for himself and for his own self-improvement," Meghan said. "What he can learn as a human, what he can take away for himself."

Athletes go it alone with no family near

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

Michael Phelps reached for his mother's hand through a chainlink fence near the pool. The 19-year-old swimmer had just won his first Olympic medal — gold, of course — at the 2004 Athens Games, and he wanted to share it with the woman who raised him on her own.

That kind of moment between loved ones won't be happening at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics.

No spectators — local or foreign — will be allowed at the vast majority of venues, where athletes will hang medals around their own necks to protect against spreading the coronavirus. No handshakes or hugs on the podium, either.

"I like to feed off of the crowd," defending all-around champion gymnast Simone Biles said, "so I'm a little bit worried about how I'll do under those circumstances."

Catching sight of familiar faces during competition can bolster an athlete on a big stage. It helped Matthew Centrowitz at the U.S. track trials, where fans were allowed.

"Seeing my family in the crowd and hearing them gave me a little sense of comfort, and what I needed to hear and see to calm my nerves a little bit," said Centrowitz, the defending Olympic 1,500-meter champion.

The youngest athlete on the U.S. team in Tokyo calls it "weird" that her family won't be in the stands.

"They're usually at all my meets," said Katie Grimes, a 15-year-old swimmer from Las Vegas.

Katie Hoff was the same age as Grimes when she was the youngest member of the U.S. team in Athens. Nerves got to her in her first event, and Hoff hyperventilated and vomited on the pool deck.

"I hope us older swimmers can

show them the ropes a little bit and create that family environment," three-time Olympian Katie Ledecky said. "We will make sure we stay in touch with our families and keep them connected to what we're doing."

The decision to prohibit fans was made for health and safety concerns. The Games will be held during a state of emergency in Tokyo, with rising coronavirus infections in a country where 16.8% of the population is fully vaccinated. Variant strains of the coronavirus are emerging around the world, too.

Those reaction shots of excited, shocked or crying family members in the stands? Forget it. Singing, chanting and cheering among flag-waving fans at the venues? TV producers will have to look elsewhere. Phelps' son, Boomer, who was 3 months old at the time, became an adorable sight at the Olympic pool in 2016. No kids allowed this time.

The people who raised them, comforted them, financed them, and encouraged them through injury and defeat will have to be content to keep up with their athletes through calls, texts and video chats, when they're not watching the competition on various devices.

"She said, 'On TV, I can see it better anyway,'" Dutch swimmer Kira Toussaint said of her mother, Jolanda de Rover, a gold medal-winning swimmer at the 1984 Olympics.

American discus thrower Mason Finley is prepared to hunker down at the athletes village with his Nintendo Switch for endless gaming while his pregnant wife and two dogs wait at home.

"I'm just going to kind of nest in there and stay entertained," he said.

AP sports writers Andrew Dampf, Pat Graham and Will Graves contributed to this report.



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Michael Phelps celebrates winning his gold medal in the men's 200-meter butterfly with his mother Debbie, fiancée Nicole Johnson and their baby, Boomer, during the 2016 Summer Olympics.

SPORTS



Kraken set roster
Seattle franchise selects 30 players in expansion draft » **NHL, Page 42**

OLYMPICS

Equality first

Tokyo Games boast nearly even gender participation split

BY JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

Grace Luczak had left competitive rowing and taken a job in the private sector when a move toward gender equity at the Tokyo Games lured her back into a boat.

A women's rowing event was added to create a more inclusive Olympics, which meant four additional seats on the U.S. team and a spot for Luczak.

"It's really hard to make the decision to come back, to plan financially to be out of work for a year," Luczak said. She thought a second consecutive Games wasn't possible for a veteran until the seats were added.

"There are four more seats. Four. And it's the first gender-equal Olympics. How can you not try?"

Most of the public attention goes to the big sports — gymnastics, swimming, track and field — but away from the spotlight, women from niche sports are being recognized and given an Olympics chance.

The International Olympic Committee added 18 new events to

SEE BOAST ON PAGE 44

Grace Luczak had left competitive rowing and taken a real job when the opportunity to compete at the Olympic Games in Tokyo lured her back into a boat for the U.S. women's rowing team.

AP photo



Source: Texas, Oklahoma eyeing SEC » College football, Page 40

