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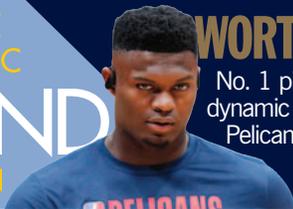
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EUROPE & PACIFIC
WEEKEND
EDITION

WORTH THE WAIT

No. 1 pick Zion Williamson's dynamic debut bodes well for Pelicans' present and future

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STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 78, No. 200 ©SS 2020

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020

平成32年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)
発行所: 星島新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥100

\$1.00

IRAQ

Iran looks to cash in on anti-US sentiment

By DAVID RISING
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Iran has long sought the withdrawal of American forces from neighboring Iraq, but the U.S. killing of an Iranian general and an Iraqi militia commander in Baghdad has added new impetus to the effort, stoking anti-American feelings that Tehran hopes to exploit to help realize the goal.

The Jan. 3 killing led Iraq's parliament to call for the ouster of U.S. troops, but there are lingering questions over whether Iran will be able to capitalize on the sentiment.

An early test will be a "million-man" demonstration against the American presence, called for by influential Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and scheduled for Friday.

It is not clear whether the protesters will try to re-create a

SEE IRAN ON PAGE 7



KHALID MOHAMMED/AP

Protesters damage property at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on Dec. 31. The killing of an Iranian general stoked anti-American sentiment that Iran hopes to use to get U.S. troops out of Iraq.



ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREA VILLARI/Stars and Stripes

Tightening the reins

New rules could bump emotional-support animals from planes

By DAVID KOENIG
Associated Press

The days of passengers bringing their pets on airplanes as emotional-support animals could be ending.

The U.S. Department of Transportation on Wednesday proposed that only specially trained dogs qualify as service animals, which must be allowed in the cabin at no charge.

Airlines could ban emotional-support animals including untrained dogs, cats and more exotic companions such as pigs, pheasants, rabbits and snakes.

‘The days of Noah’s Ark in the air are hopefully coming to an end.’

Sara Nelson
president, Association of Flight Attendants

Airlines say the number of support animals has grown dramatically in recent years. They lobbied the Transportation Department to crack down on what they consider a scam — passengers who call their pets emotional-support animals to avoid pet fees that generally run more than \$100 each way.

“This is a wonderful step in the right direction for people like myself who are dependent on and reliant on legitimate service animals,” said Albert Rizzi, founder of My Blind Spot, an advocacy group for people with disabilities.

SEE REINS ON PAGE 12

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	Change in price
Germany	\$2.800	\$3.203	\$3.446	\$3.300	--	-\$3.437
Change in price	-3.3 cents	-2.4 cents	-2.6 cents	-2.7 cents	--	-2.6 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.894	\$4.099	\$4.095	--	\$2.878
Change in price	--	-\$8.4 cents	-\$9.0 cents	-\$7 cents	--	No change
U.K.	--	\$3.113	\$3.356	\$3.210	--	\$3.247
Change in price	--	-2.4 cents	-2.6 cents	-2.7 cents	--	-2.6 cents

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	Change in price
Japan	--	\$3.239	--	\$3.089	\$2.619	--
Change in price	--	-2.0 cents	--	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	--
Okinawa	\$2.619	--	--	\$3.089	\$2.999**	\$2.999
Change in price	No change	--	--	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	-2.0 cents

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EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	Commercial rates
Euro costs (Jan. 24)	\$1.137
Dollar buys (Jan. 24)	60.8795
British pound (Jan. 24)	\$1.35
Japanese yen (Jan. 24)	107.00
South Korean won (Jan. 24)	1,137.00
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3769
British pound	\$1.3118
Canada (Dollar)	1.3145
China (Yuan)	6.9339
Denmark (Krone)	6.7510
Egypt (Pound)	15.7994
Euro	\$1.1069/0.9034
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7127
Hungary (Forint)	30.23
Israel (Shekel)	3.4562
Japan (Yen)	109.39
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3037
Norway (Krone)	9.0022
Philippines (Peso)	50.97
Poland (Zloty)	3.84
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7511
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3506
South Korea (Won)	1,168.87
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9677
Thailand (Baht)	30.57
Turkey (Lira)	5.9257

(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-euro, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	1.55
3-month bill	1.53
30-year bond	2.22

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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PACIFIC

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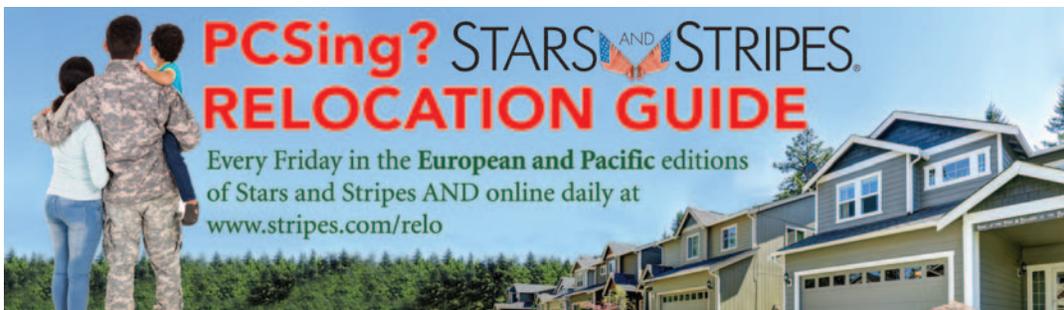
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PACIFIC

China shuts down more cities amid virus

By KEN MORITSUGU
AND YANAN WANG
Associated Press

BEIJING — Chinese authorities Thursday moved to lock down three cities with a combined population of more than 18 million people in an unprecedented effort to contain the deadly new virus that has sickened hundreds and spread to other parts of the world during the busy lunar new year travel period.

The train station and airport in Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, were shut down, and ferry, subway and bus service was halted. Normally bustling streets, shopping malls, restaurants and other public spaces in the city of 11 million were eerily quiet. Police checked all incoming vehicles but did not close off the roads.

Authorities announced similar measures would take effect Friday in the nearby cities of Huanggang and Ezhou. In Huanggang, theaters, internet cafes and other entertainment centers were also ordered closed.

In the capital, Beijing, officials canceled "major events" indefinitely, including traditional temple fairs that are a staple of holiday celebrations, in order to "execute epidemic prevention and control." The Forbidden City, the palace complex in Beijing that is now a museum, announced it will close indefinitely on Saturday.

Seventeen people have died in the outbreak, all of them in and around Wuhan. Close to 600 have been infected, the vast majority of them in Wuhan, and many countries have begun screening travelers from China for the symptoms of the virus, which can cause fever,



Chinese paramilitary police stand guard outside the closed Hankou Railway Station in Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province on Thursday. CHINATOPPIX/AP

coughing, trouble breathing and pneumonia.

The open-ended lockdowns are unprecedented in size, embracing more people than New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago combined.

Chinese officials have not said how long the shutdowns will last. While sweeping measures are typical of China's communist government, large-scale quarantines are rare around the world, even in deadly epidemics, because of concerns about infringing on people's liberties. And the

effectiveness of such measures is unclear.

"To my knowledge, trying to contain a city of 11 million people is new to science," Gauden Galea, the World Health Organization's representative in China, said in an interview. "It has not been tried before as a public health measure. We cannot at this stage say it will or it will not work."

Jonathan Ball, a professor of virology at the University of Nottingham in Britain, said the lockdowns appear to be justified scientifically.

"Until there's a better understanding of what the situation is, I think it's not an unreasonable thing to do," he said. "Anything that limits people's travels during an outbreak would obviously work."

But Ball cautioned that any such quarantine should be strictly time-limited. He added: "You have to make sure you communicate effectively about why this is being done. Otherwise you will lose the goodwill of the people."

During the devastating West Africa Ebola outbreak in 2014,

Sierra Leone imposed a national three-day quarantine as health teams went door-to-door searching for hidden cases. Frustrated residents complained of food shortages amid deserted streets. Burial teams collecting Ebola corpses and people transporting the sick to Ebola centers were the only ones allowed to move freely.

In China, the illnesses from the newly identified coronavirus first appeared last month in Wuhan, an industrial and transportation hub in central China's Hubei province. Other cases have been reported in the U.S., Japan, South Korea and Thailand. Singapore, Vietnam and Hong Kong reported their first cases Thursday.

Most of the illnesses outside China involve people who were from Wuhan or had recently traveled there.

Images from Wuhan showed long lines and empty shelves at supermarkets, as residents stocked up for what could be weeks of isolation. That appeared to be an over-reaction, since no restrictions were placed on trucks carrying supplies into the city.

Local authorities in Wuhan demanded all residents wear masks in public places. Police, SWAT teams and paramilitary troops guarded Wuhan's train station.

Liu Haihan left Wuhan last Friday after visiting her boyfriend in Beijing, she said. Everything was normal then, before human-to-human transmission of the virus was confirmed. But things had changed rapidly.

Her boyfriend "didn't sleep much yesterday. He disinfected his house and stocked up on instant noodles," Liu said. "He's not really going out. If he does, he wears a mask."

Coronavirus case near Tokyo spurs alert for US military

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. military has warned its personnel in Japan to watch out for symptoms of a deadly pneumonia-like virus after a man from Kanagawa prefecture, home to thousands of sailors and soldiers, contracted the disease in China this month.

Wuhan, a city of more than 11 million people in east-central China, planned to shutdown outbound flights and trains Thursday to contain the disease that has sickened hundreds and killed 17 in the country. The Associated Press reported Thursday.

The Air Force's 374th Medical Group at Yokota posted an alert to social media the same day, stating that the World Health Organization had been informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan. "A novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was identified as the causative virus by Chinese authorities on 7 January 2020," the alert states.

The alert cited four cases re-

ported outside of China, including patients in South Korea, home to 28,500 U.S. troops, and Japan, where another 50,000 service members are stationed, as well as thousands of civilian defense workers and family members.

"A local man from Kanagawa Prefecture developed a fever while visiting Wuhan, China, between January 3-6, 2020. The man was hospitalized upon return to Japan. He has since been released from the hospital," the alert states.

Kanagawa prefecture is home to Yokosuka Naval Base, home of the 7th Fleet and the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. Other U.S. facilities in the prefecture include Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Camp Zama, home of U.S. Army Japan. Yokota, the home of U.S. Forces Japan, is close to the border of Kanagawa in western Tokyo.

The Department of Defense has not yet provided guidance to military personnel about the virus. U.S. Forces Japan spokesman Capt. Michael Hopkins said in an email Thursday.

The Centers for Disease Con-



Theron Goodale/Stars and Stripes

Maj. Andrew Fisher, a flight surgeon for the 374th Medical Group, speaks about the Wuhan coronavirus at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Thursday.

trol and Prevention issued a level 2 travel alert, meaning people should take enhanced precautions, the medical group said in its warning.

The number of new cases has risen rapidly in China. Wuhan officials have confirmed 444 cases, bringing the national total to more than 500, AP reported.

The disease comes from a newly identified type of coronavirus, a family of viruses that can cause the common cold as well as more serious illnesses, such as

the SARS outbreak that spread from China to more than a dozen countries in 2002-03 and killed about 800 people, AP reported.

"It seems like the initial cases were associated with a large seafood and animal products market in Wuhan," Maj. Andrew Fisher, 47, a flight surgeon at Yokota and the base public health emergency officer, said Thursday. "It's not uncommon for coronaviruses to spread from animal to human."

Health officials are always concerned about the potential for an infectious disease to impact the military community, he said.

"Certainly, readiness is a concern, but we also care about our dependents and families," Fisher said. "If our families are sick that also impacts our ability to do our jobs."

There's some evidence that the virus may spread from person to person, he added.

"We don't know how infectious it is but the things you would do to protect yourself from the common cold are the things that you should do to protect yourself from this virus," Fisher said.

Signs and symptoms of the

virus include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory symptoms, kidney failure and death, the medical group's alert states.

Prevention recommendations are provided in the alert. Anyone who has traveled to Wuhan and feels sick should stay home, avoid to seek medical care, and avoid contact with others. "Seek medical care immediately but call ahead before arriving at a doctor's office or urgent care clinic and advise them of your symptoms and recent travel, the alert states.

Do not travel while you're sick, the medical group advises. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve — not your hands — when coughing or sneezing or wear a mask.

Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, the alert states.

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MILITARY

Navy's Osprey takes flight

By CATLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes



Bell Boeing

The CMV-22B Osprey is the Navy's version of the tilt-rotor aircraft used by the Marine Corps and Air Force. The variant was designed with increased fuel capacity for long-range flights.

The Navy's new Osprey, designed to replace the aging fleet of aircraft that ferry personnel and supplies between the shore and carriers at sea, has taken flight for the first time, Boeing Co. and Bell Textron Inc. announced this week.

The CMV-22B Osprey is the Navy's version of the tilt-rotor aircraft used by the Marine Corps and Air Force. The variant was designed with increased fuel capacity for long-range flights.

The CMV-22B has a range of 1,150 nautical miles, about 290 nautical miles more than that of the Marine Corps' MV-22B Osprey.

The CMV-22B's first flight took place Tuesday at Bell's Amarillo Assembly Center in Texas, according to the announcement. The company will deliver the first CMV-22B to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 21 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland for a developmental test early this year.

The service in October established the first Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Wing, which will

be charged with integrating the CMV-22B into fleet operations.

As a carrier onboard delivery aircraft, the Navy's Osprey will move personnel, supplies, mail and other cargo to and from an aircraft carrier. It can carry up to 6,000 pounds.

Specific data on passenger capacity were unavailable Thursday, but similar V-22s support up to 24 troops with crews of three or four.

The Navy in July 2018 awarded Bell Boeing about \$2.85 billion to develop and deliver 39 of the aircraft, according to the Defense Department. The service plans to deploy its first CMV-22B squadron aboard the USS Carl Vinson next year.

The contract was part of a \$4.2 billion deal that also included 14 MV-22B aircraft for the Marine Corps, one CV-22B for the Air Force and four MV-22B Osprey for Japan, according to the Defense Department. The aircraft are expected to be delivered by 2024.

The Navy's Osprey will replace its aging C-2A Greyhound — in use since the 1960s — by 2028. The newest Greyhounds in opera-

tion now were produced in 1990.

The Osprey's ability to take off and land like a helicopter but fly as a turboprop aircraft should provide "significant increases in capability and operational flexibility over the C-2A," according to a Naval Air Systems Command fact sheet.

"CMV-22B operations can be either shore-based, expeditionary or sea-based," the fact sheet said. "The Osprey is a critical warfighting enabler, providing the time-sensitive combat logistics needed to support combat operations."

Compared to the MV-22B Osprey, the Navy's version also has a "beyond line-of-sight high-frequency radio, improved fuel dump capability, a public address system for passengers and an improved lighting system for cargo loading," according to the fact sheet.

The MV-22B Osprey was first deployed in 2007, and the Air Force's CV-22B Osprey followed two years later, according to a Navy fact sheet.

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Union says big layoffs at air base in Turkey

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A U.S. defense contractor fired nearly half of its 890 employees at Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, according to local union officials who said the decision was connected to a contract dispute.

Vectrus, a Colorado-based company that provides base maintenance and operational support at various overseas military locations, laid off 424 employees at Incirlik, the Turkish Harb-1S union said in a statement to local media. Union officials told Turkey's Daily Sabah that the contracts were canceled Monday.

The decision comes at a time of tension between the U.S. and Turkey on a range of security issues, including Ankara's acquisition of a Russian air defense system and disagreements about strategy in Syria.

Last month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to kick the U.S. military out of Incirlik if Washington followed through with its own threat to impose economic sanctions on the country.

Vectrus did not respond to a request for comment about its decision to scale back at Incirlik. U.S. Air Forces in Europe said the cutbacks have not had an adverse effect on base operations or support services.

The 39th Air Base Wing defines mission requirements, and Vectrus determines how to support them," USAF said in a statement.

But Turkish union leaders are crying foul because of canceled labor contracts at the base.

Erdal Akalin, head of the union's Adana branch, told Turkish media that "these firings were not ethical and considering the economic circumstances that we are in, people would be affected

'These firings were not ethical ...'

Erdal Akalin
head of the union's Adana branch

by the move negatively."

USAFE said today there are about 2,000 military personnel at Incirlik and that the number fluctuates based on mission requirements.

The base has played a key role in operations against Islamic State in recent years. In 2017, there were about 2,500 military personnel at the base, which was a launching pad for airstrikes against militants, military officials said at the time. But operations against ISIS have slowed over the past year.

Vectrus provides day-to-day base operations and maintenance services at several locations across Turkey, according to the company's website.

The company provides support ranging from food services to civil engineering, mechanical maintenance and aircraft support.

The installation has been running out of some food items at its dining facility, though signs on base have attributed that to customs issues at the Turkish border, airmen at Incirlik said.

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Soldier convicted of sexual assault gets new trial

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — A soldier convicted of sexually assaulting his sleeping mother-in-law three years ago is being tried again after an Army court tossed the conviction because of a possibly biased juror.

Spc. Brian K. Hollenbeck's new court-martial is scheduled to begin Tuesday. He was convicted in 2017 after his mother-in-law testified she'd awakened during a visit to her daughter and son-in-law to find evidence of sexual activity and Hollenbeck standing off to her side, court documents stated.

Hollenbeck, assigned to U.S. Army Africa and winner of the "Best Warrior" competition for the command in 2014, was sentenced to a dishonorable discharge and 3½ years in prison.

But in June, the Army Court of Criminal Appeals set aside the verdict.

The court decided that questions a major on the jury had for a witness indicated the major had made up her mind to find Hollenbeck guilty before the case was completed.

"Do sexual predators look normal?" the juror wanted to ask a forensic psychiatrist. "How common is it for a sexual predator to choose a family member as their victims?"

Jurors are instructed to keep an open mind until a case is complete and they begin deliberations.

Court-martial juries, unlike those in most state courts, are allowed to submit written questions during trial. Judges and lawyers preview the questions and determine whether they're allowable.

The major's questions were

deemed inappropriate and were not asked. But the judge did not, as the defense requested, inquire further into the major's state of mind or remove her from the jury.

That was a mistake, the Army appellate court found.

"We cannot over-emphasize the importance to both judges and military justice practitioners of proactively identifying and addressing potential issues of panel member bias in a comprehensive fashion," the court said in its opinion.

The Army court primarily cited a 2012 appellate ruling to support its decision.

That case involved Marine Staff Sgt. Jeremy J. Nash, convicted in 2009 of long-term sexual abuse of three children and possessing child pornography. A gunnery sergeant on the jury sub-

mitted a question to ask if a witness believed "a pedophile can be rehabilitated?"

That question showed the gunnery sergeant was biased, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces ruled, and the judge should have removed him from the jury. Nash's conviction and 18-year prison sentence were overturned.

At Hollenbeck's 2017 trial, DNA testing revealed his semen on a pillowcase his mother-in-law gave to law enforcement.

But her daughter told the jury that she and Hollenbeck had sex on the pillow before her mother's arrival and that she had not washed the pillowcase.

Hollenbeck's defense argued that his mother-in-law's medications caused her to hallucinate a sexual assault that did not occur.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Taliban kill officer; bomb kills 2 troops

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban ambushed and killed an Afghan intelligence official in southern Helmand province as he was walking home from work while a roadside bombing in the country's north killed a military commander and his bodyguard, officials said on Thursday.

The attacks were the latest violence in Afghanistan even as the Taliban hold peace talks with a U.S. envoy tasked with finding a resolution to the 18-year war, America's longest conflict.

In the Helmand attack, the officer, who headed the intelligence department's press office for the province, was ambushed late on Wednesday, according to the provincial police chief's spokesman, Zaman Hamdard.

An investigation was underway to find the perpetrators, Hamdard added. Taliban spokesman Yousuf Ahmad claimed responsibility for the attack.

The roadside bombing in northern Faryab province took place on Wednesday morning, killing the commander of the Afghan army's First Battalion and his bodyguard, and wounding two other bodyguards.

CIA officials wept over waterboarding

By **TERRY McDERMOTT**
Los Angeles Times

The architect of the Central Intelligence Agency's post-9/11 interrogation program said on Wednesday that the waterboarding technique he employed was so gruesome that people — including CIA officials — cried when they witnessed it.

James Mitchell testified at a pretrial hearing in the case against Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the confessed mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Mohammed and four other defendants are charged with nearly 3,000 murders.

Mitchell and another psychologist, John "Bruce" Jessen, designed, oversaw and frequently participated in what the CIA termed enhanced interrogation techniques. Waterboarding, a simulated drowning, was one of them.

To employ the method, a prisoner would be strapped to a board placed on a modified gurney, tipped so that his head was near the ground. Under President George W. Bush, the Justice Department approved and issued guidelines for how to execute the method.

With guards steadying the

gurney, Jessen would pour water onto a cloth Mitchell held over the prisoner's mouth and nose. The water pour could last up to 20 seconds, then be paused, then another 20 seconds, paused, then 40 seconds. The subjects feel as though they are drowning. Typically, the subject spasms, expels water and snot, sometimes vomit, and squirms and flops on the gurney as if having a seizure. The practice is nearly universally condemned as torture.

Mitchell used the technique on at least three men, including Mohammed. This week, he testified that he would do it again if he believed he had to, but also said that the results repulsed him.

The first person to be subjected to the method was Abu Zubaydah, an al-Qaida functionary and the first so-called high-value detainee captured after 9/11. He was waterboarded 83 times over a handful of sessions in August 2002, according to an investigation by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

After Abu Zubaydah started cooperating with interrogators at a secret prison in Thailand in 2002, Mitchell and Jessen sought to stop using the waterboard. Officers at CIA headquarters in Virginia accused the two of having

lost their nerve.

"They said that we were pussies, that we had lost our spine," Mitchell testified. The CIA officers said that if another attack by al-Qaida occurred, Mitchell and Jessen "would have the blood of dead Americans on their hands."

Mitchell told the officers he would continue only if they came and witnessed application of the waterboard, to "bring their rubber boots and come on down," which they did.

They assembled in Abu Zubaydah's cell, which Mitchell described as small with an unpleasant, musky odor. The psychologists performed what Mitchell said was a dialed-back version of the technique.

"I don't want to use the word 'perfunctory' for something that horrible, but yeah," he said.

It didn't seem perfunctory to the visitors, many of whom began to cry.

"Their decision after witnessing this is that we don't need to do this," he said.

Mitchell has been a vigorous defender of the torture program. His description of himself as playing a role to limit the use of the program is confounding, especially because he went on to waterboard two more men, in-

cluding Mohammed, who was waterboarded 183 times. He testified that waterboarding was a step in a process; he urged the end of it for Abu Zubaydah because it had served its purpose. Abu Zubaydah was cooperating, he said, and might cease to cooperate if it were resumed.

He said that his objections to specific harsh techniques weren't limited to Thailand. He later attempted to stop what he regarded as rogue interrogation techniques at another so-called black site in Afghanistan, he said. He confronted an interrogator there and later reported him to CIA headquarters.

The hearing was interrupted several times on Wednesday when court security officers feared classified information was or was about to be revealed. They turned on a flashing red light — called the hockey light here — an action that also cuts the audio feed to the gallery, where reporters and visitors are seated. In at least one of the instances, the information thought to be classified — a CIA officer's name — can be discovered in a simple Google search. Additionally, the name had been spoken in open court the day before.

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MILITARY

45-day bar ban lifted in Vicenza

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Italian prosecutors are investigating several U.S. paratroopers after one of them was accused of punching a local man, fracturing his jaw and breaking most of his teeth, the man's lawyer said.

The incident in Vicenza's old town led the 173rd Airborne Brigade's commander to put Contra Paschiele Vecchie, a street home to several popular bars, off-limits to brigade soldiers for 45 days.

The ban on soldiers visiting the street expired last week, but other potential measures will be discussed at an upcoming disciplinary review board meeting, brigade spokesman Maj. Chris Bradley said.

Bradley declined further comment on the incident, citing the Italian investigation. Italian prosecutor Hans Roderich Blattner could not be reached for comment.

The soldiers involved in the Nov. 28 incident have not been named but were identified by city surveillance camera video. Some of them are African American and said they were responding to being called racial slurs, said an official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

But the injured man's lawyer, Alexandra Bocchi, said her client never talked to the soldiers.

The 21-year-old student was attacked after talking with a friend who, when asked how he got his black eye, told him he'd gotten into a fight with U.S. soldiers, Bocchi said.

As the two spoke, Bocchi said, a group of about 10 soldiers appeared.

One of the soldiers crouched in a wrestling stance and, flanked by others in the group, punched her client in the face, she said.

"Our client has had three operations. They had to rebuild his face," she said. "He has two titanium plates" and lost most of his teeth in the attack, she said.

Another Italian man's ribs were broken during the fight, Bocchi



NANCY MONTGOMERY/Stars and Stripes

Blue Bar was among the establishments put off limits to soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade for 45 days.

said. The same group of soldiers was suspected of being involved in other violent confrontations in the city, she said.

The attack is the latest high-profile incident in recent years involving Italy-based U.S. troops.

In November, 173rd Brigade Staff Sgt. Tyrekie Meyer was sentenced to four years in prison for the 2017 rape of an Italian woman at a house party. In 2018, local police responded to a murder-suicide involving a retired major who killed his wife.

U.S. Army Garrison Italy has over the past year stepped up efforts to keep troops out of trouble.

A year ago, Custom Club was placed off-limits after "more than a dozen cases of soldiers being hurt, robbed and taken advantage of," said James Brooks, U.S. Army Garrison Italy spokesman.

In late 2018, garrison military police and Italian Carabinieri began doing joint, late-night patrols on weekends twice monthly to night spots deemed problematic after a review of police reports.

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MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS NICK BAUER/U.S. Navy

A young boy watches as the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln returns to San Diego following a deployment. The city will become home to three Nimitz-class carriers, including the Abraham Lincoln, boosting the economy up \$1.6 billion per year.

San Diego expects economic boom as it becomes home to 3 carriers

By ANDREW DYER
The San Diego Union-Tribune

San Diego is poised to become the home port of three Nimitz-class nuclear aircraft carriers in 2020, tripling the carrier footprint in the region and bringing a \$1.6 billion per year boost to the local economy.

The additional ships and the roughly 3,000 sailors attached to each will bring additional strain to an already tight housing market and may threaten more traffic on the already congested city of Coronado streets, Interstate 5 and the San Diego-Coronado Bridge.

Currently, only the Theodore Roosevelt is based in San Diego. However, that will soon change, as the Abraham Lincoln arrived in San Diego today, after completing a record-setting 10-month around-the-world deployment.

And the Carl Vinson, which is undergoing maintenance in Bremerton, Wash., will be returning to San Diego this summer.

According to the 2019 San Diego Military Economic Impact Study, each aircraft carrier based in San Diego generates up to \$800 million in gross regional product.

Mark Baltmer, a retired rear admiral and the executive di-

rector of the San Diego Military Advisory Council, compares it to a new company bringing thousands of jobs to San Diego.

"We're all the way down to one (carrier), so to go up to three, it's a big impact," Baltmer said. "If it were a company opening with several thousand people, it would be big news — they buy homes, rent places to live and buy cars."

The military advisory council commissions the annual economic impact study.

The newly arriving sailors will be entering a housing market that's already strained, said Gary London, a San Diego land use economist.

"The market is very constrained right now," London said. "Occupancy in San Diego County is at 95%. In terms of units that are affordable to sailors, we have an absolute shortage. They're not profitable for builders to build them."

Much of the new housing in the county, according to London, is built for the upper-end of the market.

"It puts a measurable strain on the San Diego housing market when (sailors) come in, and we haven't really stepped up as a local economy to fully accommodate the demand," London said.

Along with the strain on the housing market, two more carriers — and the thousands of daily commuters that come with them — will strain the roads in and out of Coronado.

Kevin Dixon, a spokesman for Naval Air Station North Island, said the Navy had a plan to alleviate some of the traffic.

"The Navy will implement the staggering carrier work day start times when two carriers are in port," Dixon said in an email. "In addition, the Navy has agreed to explore funding options and road improvements at four intersections (and) will continue to subsidize transit and vanpooling for military and civilians working on the base."

North Island has not seen three carriers at the base since 2010, when the Carl Vinson, Ronald Reagan and Nimitz were all stationed there, said Cmdr. Ron Flanders, a Naval Air Forces spokesman.

Nimitz-class carriers have a service life of 50 years. The Navy frequently shifts carrier home ports as the ships require extensive and periodic maintenance, including a one-time mid-life overhaul in Virginia, where their nuclear reactors are refueled.

Esper: New security measures after Fla. attack should give assurance

By TARA COPP

Clutchy Washington Bureau

NAVAL AIR STATION PENSACOLA, Fla. — Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Wednesday acknowledged that a deadly shooting at this Florida military base had raised concerns about international students, but said new security measures should provide a "much higher degree of confidence."

On Dec. 6, a Saudi pilot training at NAS Pensacola as part of an international program opened fire, killing three U.S. service members. The shooting prompted review by the Pentagon of all Saudi mili-

tary students in the United States and led to the expulsion of 21 for various offenses including access to child pornography and supporting anti-U.S. sentiment.

In the weeks after the Pensacola attack, the Pentagon has rolled out additional safeguards, including prohibitions on international students having access to firearms and continued monitoring while they are in the United States. International students are still restricted from flight training.

During his visit to Pensacola, Esper met with first responders who ran into the building and returned fire, killing the shooter. "Thank you for all of your courage," he said, handing each a Defense Sec-

retary coin.

He later told reporters that additional security measures, including adding roving patrols, assigning international students more restricted card access entry privileges and more in-depth vetting of their social media postings should provide military families a "much higher degree of confidence" that their bases are secure.

At Pensacola, base commander Navy Capt. Tim Kinsella has held 25 town halls with concerned residents. While he said most are supportive of the international students, "there's a natural apprehension. What are we doing to make the base safer?"

NAS Pensacola trains 60,000 international students a year. Kinsella said the additional security measures are "just the beginning" and each military service branch will "dive in a little bit more" to see what additional safety requirements might be needed.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who was at the base with Esper, praised the international training program for building alliances, but said, "at the same time, we cannot be bringing people over here who want to do things like this to our country. So the fact they (Pentagon leadership) are taking action on this I think is very significant."

MIDEAST

Iran: In push for Iraq agenda, Tehran has long supported attacks by anti-US militias

FROM FRONT PAGE

New Year's Eve attack on the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad by Iran-supported militias in the wake of U.S. airstrikes that killed 25 militiamen along the border with Syria. Iran might simply try to use the march to telegraph its intention to keep up the pressure on U.S. troops in Iraq.

But experts say Iran can be counted on to try to seize what it sees as an opportunity to push its agenda in Iraq, despite a uprising that is targeting government corruption as well as Iranian influence in the country.

"Iran is unconstrained by considerations of Iraqi sovereignty, domestic public opinion, or legality when compared to the Western democracies," said David Des Roches, an expert with The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

"This is Iran's strategic advantage; they should be expected to press it."

A withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq would be a victory for Iran, and Tehran has long pursued a two-pronged strategy of supporting anti-U.S. militias that carry out attacks, as well as exerting political pressure on Iraqi lawmakers sympathetic to its cause.

Despite usually trying to keep attacks at a level below what might provoke an American response, Iran-backed Kataeb Hezbollah fired a barrage of rockets at a military base in Kirkuk in December, killing a U.S. contractor and wounding several U.S. and Iraqi troops. The U.S. responded first with deadly airstrikes on Iran-affiliated militia bases in western Iraq and Syria, then followed with the Jan. 3 drone attack that killed Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, Iran's most powerful military officer, along with Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as they left Baghdad's airport.

The severity of the U.S. response surprised Iran and others, and it had the unanticipated result of bolstering Tehran's political approach by prompting the Iraqi parliament to pass the non-binding resolution pushed by pro-Iran political factions calling for the expulsion of all foreign troops from the country. In response, President Donald Trump has threatened sanctions on Iraq.

"What they want to do is get rid of U.S. troops in what they see as a legitimate political manner," said Dina Esfandiary, a London-based

expert with The Century Foundation think tank. "If Iraqis themselves are voting out U.S. troops, it looks a lot better for Iran than if Iran is a puppet master in Iraq trying to get rid of them — and on top of that it would be a more lasting decision."

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo bluntly rejected the call for the troops' removal, instead saying Washington would "continue the conversation with the Iraqis about what the right structure is."

Prime Minister Abdel Mahdi strongly supported the resolution, but since then has said it will be up to the next government to deal with the issue, and there are indications he has been working behind the scenes to help keep foreign troops in the country.

After closed-door meetings with German diplomats last week, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said the prime minister had assured them that he had "great interest" in keeping the Bundeswehr military contingent and other parts of the anti-Islamic State coalition in Iraq.

The U.S., meantime, said it had resumed joint operations with Iraqi forces, albeit on a more limited basis than before.

Trump met Iraqi President Barham Saleh on Wednesday on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and said Washington and Baghdad have had "a very good relationship" and that the two countries had a "host of very difficult things to discuss." Saleh said they have shared common interests including the fight against extremism, regional stability and an independent Iraq.

In a sign that bodes well for NATO's continuing mission in the country, Iraq's deputy foreign minister went to Brussels last week for talks with Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on the alliance's presence in Iraq.

The mixed message of publicly calling for the troops to go but privately wanting them to stay is an indication of Iran's strong influence, particularly among its fellow Shiite Muslims, Des Roches said.

"For any Iraqi politician in Baghdad — particularly a (Shiite) politician — to defy Iran openly is to risk political as well as physical death," he said. "So we shouldn't be surprised if the public and private lines espoused by Iraqi politicians differ."



VAHID SALEMI/AP

Women walk past a banner of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani in Tehran, Iran, this month. Soleimani was killed in Iraq by a U.S. drone, and the attack has stoked anti-Americanism that Tehran now hopes it can exploit to help realize the goal of getting U.S. troops out of Iraq.

American forces withdrew from Iraq in 2011 but returned in 2014 at the invitation of the government to help battle ISIS after the extremist group seized vast areas in the north and west of the country. A U.S.-led coalition provided crucial air support as Iraqi forces, including Iran-backed militias, regrouped and drove ISIS out in a costly three-year campaign. There are currently some 5,200 American troops in the country.

Even before the drone strike,

there were growing calls in nationwide protests across sectarian lines, which started in October centered in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, for the end of all foreign influence in the country. The demonstrations also targeted government corruption and poor public services.

Friday's march called for by al-Sadr is expected to redirect the focus onto the U.S. troops. The cleric, who also leads the Sairoon bloc in parliament, derives much of his political capital through

grassroots mobilization.

The Tahrir Square protesters initially rejected that call, saying they want the escalating conflict between Iran and the U.S. off of Iraqi soil.

Since then, al-Sadr has reached out to them directly, saying the demonstrations against the government and against the American troops are "two lights from a single lamp," and it is not yet clear whether that might convince them to participate in the march.

ACCOMPLISH THE TOUGHEST MISSIONS IN ALL ENVIRONMENTS

“If Iraqis themselves are voting out U.S. troops, it looks a lot better for Iran than if Iran is a puppet master in Iraq trying to get rid of them — and on top of that it would be a more lasting decision.”

Dina Esfandiary

a London-based expert with The Century Foundation think tank

NATION

Demos put focus on charge of abuse of power

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats declared that “no president” has ever abused power the way Donald Trump did in his Ukraine dealings as they opened their second day of arguments Thursday in the historic impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate.

The Democratic prosecutors pressing their case before skeptical Republican senators are focused on the first article of impeachment, abuse of power, arguing Trump sought a political investigation from Ukraine for his own gain to sway the 2020 election in his favor.

“The president’s conduct is wrong. It is illegal. It is dangerous,” Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, told the senators.

“No president has ever used his office to compel a foreign nation to help him cheat in our elections,” he said. “Prior presidents would be shocked to the core by such conduct, and rightly so.”

Republican senators, who hold a majority in the chamber and will vote on Trump’s conviction or acquittal, exhibited no shock.

The Democrats were putting forward “admirable presentations,” said Roy Blunt of Missouri. “But they’ve basically got about one hour of presentation, and they gave it six times on Tuesday and eight times yesterday. There’s just not much new here.”

Rep. Adam Schiff, the Democratic chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, agreed as he stood before restless senators forced to sit silently for another long day there would be “some repetition of information” from the overview heard on day one.

But he promised a stitching together of the facts to an inevitable conclusion.

“You’ve now heard hundreds of hours of depositions and live testimony from the House,” Schiff said. “We will now show these facts and many others and how they are interwoven ... to a finding of guilt and conviction.”

House Democrats impeached Trump last month, arguing he abused his office by asking Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden while withholding crucial military aid.

They also charged him with obstructing Congress by refusing to turn over documents or allow officials to testify in the House probe.

Republicans have defended Trump’s actions as appropriate and cast the process as a politically motivated effort to weaken



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer emphasizes a point as he speaks to reporters about progress in the impeachment trial Thursday.

the president in the midst of his reelection campaign.

The Democrats’ challenge is clear as they try to convince not just the senators but an American public divided over the Republican president in an election year.

The top Senate Democrat, Chuck Schumer, acknowledged Thursday that many senators “really don’t want to be here.”

But Schumer said Schiff has been outlining a compelling case about Trump’s pressure on Ukraine and the scheme to cover up the charges and many Republicans are hearing it for only the first time. He contended they can’t help but be “glued” to his testimony.

Once reluctant to take on impeachment during an election year, Democrats are now marching toward a decision by the Senate that the American public also will judge. They are one-third of the way through 24 hours of opening arguments.

Trump blasted the proceedings in a Thursday morning tweet, declaring them the “Most unfair & corrupt hearing in Congressional history!”

Campaigning in Iowa, Biden said, “People ask the question, ‘Isn’t the president going to be stronger and harder to beat if he survives this?’ Yes, probably. But Congress has no choice.” He said senators must cast their votes and “live with that in history.”

Each side has up to three days to present its case. After the House prosecutors finish, likely Friday, the president’s lawyers will have as much as 24 hours. It’s unclear how much time they will actually



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, right, arrives at the U.S. Capitol in Washington for the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump on Thursday.



STEVE HELLER/AP

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell walks to a luncheon prior to the start of the impeachment trial Thursday.

take, but Trump’s team promises not only to defend the president but to take apart the Democrats’ case. The Senate is expected to take only Sunday off and push into next week.

“There’s a lot of things I’d like to rebut,” said Trump lawyer Jay Sekulow at the Capitol, “and we will rebut.”

After that senators will face the question of whether they do, or do not, want to call witnesses to testify.

On the first day of opening arguments, Schiff appealed to senators not to be “cynical” about politics, but to draw on the intent of the nation’s Founding Fathers in providing the remedy of impeachment and removal.

He spoke directly to Republicans to join in voting to oust

Trump from office to “protect our democracy.”

Holding the room proved difficult. Most senators sat at their desks throughout, as the rules stipulate, though some stretched their legs, standing behind the desks or against the back wall of the chamber. Sometimes they yawned.

Republicans sometimes quietly smirked at the presentation from Schiff and the lesser-known House Democrats prosecuting the case.

Nearing nine long hours of arguments, the empty seats became glaringly apparent.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein D-Calif., was under the weather and left early.

Some lawmakers dashed down the hall to appear on television.

Visitors thinned from the galleries, one briefly interrupting in protest and being removed by Capitol police.

The impeachment trial is set against the backdrop of the 2020 election. All four senators who are Democratic presidential candidates are off the campaign trail, seated as jurors.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed the public slightly more likely to say the Senate should convict and remove Trump from office than to say it should not, 45% to 40%. But a sizable percentage, 14%, said they didn’t know enough to have an opinion.

One issue with wide agreement: Trump should allow top aides to appear as witnesses at the trial. About 7 in 10 said so, including majorities of Republicans and Democrats, according to the poll.

The strategy of more witnesses, though, seemed all but settled. Republicans rejected Democratic efforts to get Trump aides including former national security adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, to testify in back-to-back votes earlier this week.

Senators were likely to repeat that rejection next week, shutting out any chance of new testimony.

Republicans remained eager for a swift trial.

Yet Trump’s legal team passed on an opportunity to file a motion to dismiss the case on Wednesday, an acknowledgment that there were not enough Republican votes to support it.

The White House legal team, in its court filings and presentations, has not disputed Trump’s actions. But the lawyers insist the president did nothing wrong.

NATION

Trump to add more countries to travel ban

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Wednesday the U.S. would soon be imposing visa restrictions on more countries — though it's not clear yet how many nations will be affected by his expansion of the travel ban.

Seven additional nations were listed in a draft of the proposed restrictions — but the countries were notified by Homeland Security officials that they could avoid being included if they make changes before the announcement is made, according to two administration officials who spoke to The Associated Press on

condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations.

The tentative list featured Belarus, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Tanzania, according to the officials and a person familiar with the draft proposal. But several countries are believed to have taken action or demonstrated good faith efforts to comply in order to avoid inclusion, the officials said. The steps include better border security, better sharing of identification information among nations and better travel document security, one official said. It's not clear how many nations will wind up on the final list.

Trump told reporters at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that he's doing it to protect the United States.

"We're adding a couple of countries to it," he said. "We have to be safe. Our country has to be safe. You see what's going on in the world. Our country has to be safe. So we have a very strong travel ban and we'll be adding a few countries to it."

Five of the countries on the draft list have either Muslim majorities or substantial Muslim minorities.

The current ban suspends immigrant and non-immigrant visas to applicants from five majority

Muslim nations: Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, as well as Venezuela and North Korea.

But it allows exceptions, including for students and those who have established "significant contacts" in the U.S. And it represents a significant softening from Trump's initial order, which had suspended travel from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen for 90 days, blocked refugee admissions for 120 days and suspended travel from Syria.

That order was immediately blocked by the courts, prompting a months-long effort by the administration to develop clear standards and federal review

processes to try to pass legal muster. Under the current system, restrictions are targeted at countries that Homeland Security says fail to share sufficient information with the U.S. or haven't taken necessary security precautions, such as issuing electronic passports with biometric information and sharing information about travelers' terror-related and criminal histories.

Iraq, Sudan and Chad had been affected by the original order, which the Supreme Court upheld in a 5-4 vote after the administration released a watered-down version intended to withstand legal scrutiny. They were not part of the pared-down version.

President again sets new record for tweets

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump set a personal record for activity on his favorite social media platform Wednesday, tweeting and retweeting at length about the Senate impeachment trial, the Democrats who want to replace him and much, much more.

By 4:25 p.m., Trump had barreled through his previous record of 123 Twitter postings in a day that he set a little over a month ago, according to Factbase, a service that compiles and analyzes data on Trump's presidency.

Trump's previous record for tweets on a single day during his time in the White House was set on Dec. 12, 2019, the day the House Judiciary Committee opened its marathon session to approve two articles of impeachment against the president.

Trump set his all-time record for tweets in a day before he became president, with 161 posts in



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday. That day, he broke the record for the number of presidential tweets in a single day — a mark he set the previous month.

January 2015, according to Factbase. Most of his tweeting that day was dedicated to plugging his reality television show.

Trump, who began his day in Davos, Switzerland, where he was attending the World Economic Forum, started his Wednesday morning by hammering out 41 tweets between 12 a.m. and 1 a.m.

ET (6 a.m. to 7 a.m. in Davos).

The vast majority of his postings to his more than 71 million followers were retweets of messages, videos and images from Republican lawmakers and other backers haranguing Democrats over the impeachment trial.

His barrage of tweets included plenty of incendiary posts excori-

ating Rep. Adam Schiff, one of the House Democratic impeachment managers, and a retweet of a provocative image posted by White House social media director Dan Scavino that shows Trump walking in front of a fiery scene meant to symbolize the incineration of the "Deep State."

Rollback of water protections nearly completed

BY ELLEN KNICKMEYER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration was expected to announce completion as soon as Thursday of one of its most momentous environmental rollbacks, removing federal protections for millions of miles of the country's streams, arroyos and wetlands.

The changes, launched by President Donald Trump when he took office, sharply scale back the government's interpretation of which waterways qualify for protection against pollution and development under the half-century-old Clean Water Act.

A draft version of the rule released earlier would end federal oversight for up to half of the nation's wetlands and one-fifth of the country's streams, environmental groups warned. That includes some waterways that have been federally protected for decades under the Clean Water Act.

Trump has portrayed farmers — a highly valued constituency of the Republican Party and one popular with the public — as the main beneficiaries of the rollback. He has claimed farmers gathered around him wept with gratitude when he signed an order for the rollback in February 2017.

The administration says the changes will allow farmers to plow their fields without fear of unintentionally straying over the banks of a federally protected dry creek, bog or ditch.

However, the government's own figures show it is real estate developers and those in other non-farm business sectors who take out the most permits for impinging on wetlands and waterways — and stand to reap the biggest regulatory and financial relief.

Environmental groups and many former environmental regulators say the change will allow industry and developers to dump

more contaminants in waterways or simply fill them in, damaging habitat for wildlife and making it more difficult and expensive for downstream communities to treat drinking water to make it safe.

"This administration's eliminating clean water protections to protect polluters instead of protecting people," said Brian Holman, a senior attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center.

The Trump administration has targeted a range of environmental protections for rollbacks. Trump says his aim is to ease regulatory burdens on businesses.

Entitlement cuts possible for future

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump appeared to suggest in a television interview Wednesday that he's willing to consider entitlement cuts in the future, a move that would mark a tectonic shift from his stance during his 2016 run for the White House.

Trump suggested he was open to a cut in social safety net benefits, such as Medicare and Social Security, in comments during a CNBC interview on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

While Trump has repeatedly talked up strong economic growth, the federal budget deficit has swollen as his administration has pressed for tax cuts and increased government spending.

Asked if entitlement cuts would ever be on his agenda, Trump responded, "At some point, they will be."

As a candidate for the White House, Trump stood apart from much of the GOP primary field as he vowed to oppose cuts to Social Security and Medicare, while also ensuring every American had health coverage.

In the CNBC interview, Trump called tackling entitlement spending "the easiest of all things" and suggested higher economic growth would make it easier to reduce spending on the programs.

"Well, we're going — we're going to look," Trump said. "We also have assets that we've never had. I mean we've never had growth like this."

Asked for clarification following the interview, White House spokesman Judd Deere noted there had been "no benefit cuts" under Trump and said the president has kept "his commitment to the most vulnerable Americans, especially those who depend on Medicare and Social Security."

NATION

Court seems to favor religious schools funding

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared ready Wednesday to reinvalidate a Montana scholarship program and make it easier to use public money to pay for religious schooling in many states.

The court was sharply divided along ideological lines in arguments over a provision in Montana's Constitution that bars state aid to religious schools. Montana is among 37 states with similar "no aid" clauses for religious education.

Chief Justice John Roberts took the bench with his colleague at 10 a.m., showing no ill effects from a long day Tuesday presiding over the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump in the court, which Roberts gavelled to a close just eight hours earlier.

Like other conservatives, Roberts questioned a state Supreme Court ruling that struck down a scholarship program for private K-12 education that also makes donors eligible for up to \$150 in state tax credits. The scholarships can be used at both secular and religious schools, but almost all the recipients attend religious schools.

Parents who sued to preserve the program, created by the legislature in 1915, argue that the "no-aid" clause in the state con-

stitution violates their religious freedom under the U.S. Constitution. Several conservative justices appeared to agree.

"It's permissible to discriminate on the basis of religion," Justice Samuel Alito told the state's lawyer, Adam Unikowsky. "That's what you're saying."

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, whose two daughters attend Catholic schools, referred to the "grotesque religious bigotry" against Catholics that he said motivated the original adoption of the Montana provision and others like it in the 1800s, although Montana's constitution was redone in 1972.

The liberal justices saw the case very differently. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was among those who said that by ending the program for private secular and religious schools alike, the Montana court was treating all parents the same. "So where's the harm?" Ginsburg asked.

Richard Komer, representing the parents, said that ending the program for everyone was, in essence, a fig leaf intended to mask discrimination against parents who prefer religious education for their children.

Kendra Espinoza, the lead plaintiff, and her two daughters, Naomi and Sarah, came to the court from Kalispell, Mont. The children attend Stillwater Christian School, where Espinoza said she receives financial aid to afford the tuition of \$7,735 a year for kindergarten through eighth



JESSICA GRESKO/AP

Kendra Espinoza of Kalispell, Mont., center, stands Wednesday with her daughters Naomi and Sarah outside the Supreme Court in Washington. Espinoza is the lead plaintiff in a case the court heard Wednesday on state aid to religious schools.

grade. After the hourlong arguments, it appeared that the state could prevail only if the justices were to decide if Espinoza and the other parents who sued did not have the right, or legal standing, to be in court. Roberts asked one question along those lines.

But on the larger issues of discrimination against the parents, the chief justice said at one point pressed Unikowsky to explain why the court's analysis of allegations of religious discrimination would be any different from a case involving racial discrimination. Roberts said no one would defend shutting down all public swimming pools "because a higher percentage of African Americans come and use the pools."

"No, of course not," Unikowsky said.

"How is that different than religion?" Roberts asked.

Recent rulings from the Supreme Court, which now includes Trump appointees Neil Gorsuch and Kavanaugh, have favored religion-based discrimination claims.

In 2014, the justices allowed family-held for-profit businesses with religious objections to get out from under a requirement to pay for contraceptives for women covered under their health insurance plans.

In 2017, the court ruled for a Missouri church that had been excluded from state grants to put softer surfaces in playgrounds.

The Supreme Court also has upheld some school voucher programs and state courts have ratified theirs. But other state courts have relied on constitutional provisions banning the allocation of public funds to religious institutions to strike down school choice programs.

Va. man gets probation, fine for theft of dog tags

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
Associated Press

GREENBELT, Md. — A Virginia National Guard sergeant was sentenced Wednesday to 18 months of supervised probation for stealing World War II-era dog tags from the National Archives and Records Administration in Maryland.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Thomas DiGirolamo also ordered Robert Rumsby, 30, of Fredericksburg, Va., to pay a \$5,000 fine. Rumsby had faced a maximum sentence of one year of incarceration after pleading guilty in November to one misdemeanor count of theft.

Rumsby told investigators he took dog tags that belonged to four U.S. airmen killed in plane crashes in 1944, according to a criminal complaint. Rumsby's wife is the great-niece of one of the deceased airmen. Rumsby said he gave that airman's dog tags to his wife's grandmother as a Christmas gift and gave another airman's dog tags to a relative of that serviceman, the complaint says.

The magistrate said Rumsby's sentence is designed to promote respect for the law and serve as a deterrent to protect "national treasures" stored at the National Archives.

"They are there for everyone's benefit," DiGirolamo said.

Defense attorney Peter Payne said Rumsby wasn't motivated by greed or self-interest when he took the dog tags from the College Park, Md., facility.

"His heart and intent were in the right place, but he accepts full responsibility for the grave matter he made," Payne said.

Rumsby, who cradled his infant daughter in his arms during the hearing, said in a letter submitted to the court that he had asked National Archives officials in 2011 if dog tags and other personal items could be released to soldiers' relatives. He said he didn't get a response to his written request.

"I have not stood my tallest with the actions that have landed me here today, but in my honest and humble opinion, (neither) has NARA," he wrote.

Richard Christian Naylor, NARA's deputy chief operating officer, said four of the dog tags that Rumsby stole have been recovered.

"The items stolen by Mr. Rumsby are unique and irreplaceable," he said. "Ultimately, it is the American people who are most greatly victimized when artifacts are stolen."

Rumsby isn't the first visitor to be accused of stealing from the National Archives facility in College Park. Antonin DeHays, a French historian and author, was sentenced in April 2018 to one year in prison after pleading guilty to stealing at least 291 dog tags and other relics, most of which he sold.

Ariz. bill could allow building private border wall

By JONATHAN J. COOPER
Associated Press

PHOENIX — The Arizona Legislature would let property owners along the U.S.-Mexico border build a wall without seeking a city or county construction permit under a measure that advanced Wednesday.

Republicans on the House Federal Relations Committee approved the measure in a 4-3 party-line vote, saying state and local officials shouldn't be able to throw up barriers if they're philosophically opposed to building a border wall, a signature promise of President Donald Trump.

"We all know President Trump can't do everything on his own," said Rep. Warren Petersen, a Gilbert Republican and the House majority leader who sponsored the legislation. "There's private companies, private property owners who are willing to help build



MATT YORK/AP

Arizona has approved a measure to allow property owners along the border to build a wall without permits.

the wall on their property." Tom Tancredo, a former Colorado Republican congressman and high-profile anti-illegal immigration advocate, pointed to a

nonprofit organization that encountered red tape from local officials when it built a border wall on private land near the New Mexico-Texas state line. Tancre-

do is an advisory board member for the group, We Build the Wall. Art Del Cueto, vice president of the union representing Border Patrol agents, also urged lawmakers to advance the bill.

Most of Arizona's borderlands are publicly owned and would not be subject to the streamlined permitting process. But Democrats questioned whether it was worth eliminating local control over construction projects to advance a barrier they say is ineffective at stopping drug traffickers.

"I don't believe a border wall, no matter how tall you build it, is going to stop anything," said Rep. Alma Hernandez, a Democrat from Tucson.

There's no indication that state or local regulations have prevented Arizona landowners from building a wall on their own property, said Rep. Reginald Bolding, a Democrat from Laveen.

NATION

US updates rules limiting visas for pregnant women

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Thursday published new visa rules aimed at restricting “birth tourism,” in which women travel to the United States to give birth so their children can have U.S. citizenship.

Applicants will be denied tourist visas if they are determined by consular officers to be coming to the U.S. primarily to give birth, according to the rules in the Federal Register. It is a bigger hurdle to overcome, proving they are traveling to the U.S. because they have a medical need and not just because they want to give birth here. Those with medical needs will be treated like other foreigners coming to the U.S. for medical treatment and must prove they have the money to pay for it — including transportation and living expenses.

The practice of traveling to the U.S. to give birth is fundamentally legal, although there are scattered cases of authorities arresting operators of birth tourism agencies for visa fraud or tax evasion. And women are often honest about their intentions when applying for visas and even show signed contracts with doctors and hospitals.

The State Department “does not believe that visiting the United States for the primary purpose of obtaining U.S. citizenship for a child, by giving birth in the United States — an activity commonly referred to as ‘birth tourism’ — is a legitimate activity for pleasure or of a recreational nature,” according to the new rules, which take effect Friday.

While the new rules deal specifically with birth tourism, the Trump administration also has turned away pregnant women

coming over the U.S.-Mexico border as part of a broader immigration crackdown. Those women were initially part of a “vulnerable” group that included others like small children who were allowed in, while tens of thousands of other asylum seekers have been returned over the border to wait out their cases in Mexico.

President Donald Trump’s administration has been restricting all forms of immigration, but Trump has been particularly plagued by the issue of birthright citizenship — anyone born in the U.S. is considered a citizen, under the Constitution. The Republican president has railed against the practice and threatened to end it, but scholars and members of his administration have said it’s not so easy to do.

Regulating tourist visas for pregnant women is one way to get at the issue, but it raises questions about how officers would determine whether a woman is pregnant. And critics of the new policy say it could put pregnant women at risk.

Consular officers don’t have the right to ask during visa interviews whether a woman is pregnant or intends to become so. But they would still have to determine whether a visa applicant would be coming to the U.S. primarily to give birth.

Birth tourism is a lucrative business in both the U.S. and abroad. Companies take out advertisements and charge up to \$80,000 to facilitate the practice, offering hotel rooms and medical care. Many of the women travel from Russia and China to give birth in the U.S.

The U.S. has been cracking down on the practice since before Trump took office.

Trump to attend March for Life rally in Washington

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House says that President Donald Trump will become the first president to attend the annual anti-abortion gathering in Washington called the March for Life.

Trump has made it a priority to embrace social conservatives, particularly on the issue of abortion. In past years, he has sent members of his administration to speak at the march and has spoken via a video link. He’s going in person to this week’s event.

“See you on Friday ... Big Crowd!” Trump tweeted on Wednesday as he returned to the White House after a trip to Switzerland.

“We are so excited for him to experience in person how passionate our marchers are about life and protecting the unborn,” said Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life.

This year’s rally comes just weeks before the U.S. Supreme Court hears its first major abortion case since the addition of two justices appointed by Trump.



JOHN HANNA/AP

Members of a Kansas House committee indicate whether they want to be recorded as voting yes or no on a proposed amendment to the state constitution on abortion with thumbs-up and thumbs-down signs on Wednesday at the Statehouse in Topeka, Kan.

Abortion rights backers unsure of strategy in Kansas battle

By JOHN HANNA

Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. — Abortion rights backers grappled with how to derail a proposed anti-abortion amendment to the state constitution. Abortion foes marked Wednesday’s anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision by advancing two versions of the proposal in the Republican-controlled Legislature.

Top GOP lawmakers want to amend the state constitution to overturn a Kansas Supreme Court decision last year declaring access to abortion a “fundamental” right under the state constitution. The amendment would declare that the Kansas Constitution does not “secure” a right to abortion and allow legislators to regulate it as far as federal court decisions allow.

House and Senate committees approved separate but identical versions of the measure on

Wednesday, and either chamber or both could debate them next week.

Abortion rights lawmakers are wrestling with a dilemma: Do they bet on the measure being objectionable enough to fail if it’s left alone, or do they try to rewrite it to make it more palatable — and risk helping it get on the ballot?

“I’m not sure what the strategy is,” said state Rep. Jim Ward, a Wichita Democrat.

The debate played out as dozens of abortion opponents came to the Statehouse to mark the 47th anniversary of the Roe decision in 1973, which legalized abortion across the nation. Since then, the court has allowed states to enact restrictions if they don’t put an “undue burden” on women seeking abortions.

Top Republicans are seeking to put a proposed amendment on the ballot in the August primary election, when the electorate generally leans to the right and anti-

abortion groups believe they have the best chance of passage.

“We do have a sense of urgency,” said Kansas Senate President Susan Wagle, a Wichita Republican.

Supporters will need two-thirds majorities in both chambers for a proposed constitutional amendment to go on the statewide ballot. A simple majority of voters must then approve it.

Abortion rights advocates argue that however the proposed amendment is worded, it represents a step toward an eventual attempt to ban abortion.

Yet some abortion rights lawmakers said they couldn’t formulate a good strategy on stopping a proposed constitutional amendment until they saw its exact language. Anti-abortion groups unveiled it last week.

“It’s kind of new to us, which way they were going to go,” said House Minority Leader Tom Sawyer, another Wichita Democrat.

Federal government backs Ohio on Down syndrome abortion law

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The federal government took Ohio’s side on Tuesday in a lawsuit over a state law prohibiting doctors from performing abortions based on a fetal diagnosis of Down syndrome.

The disputed law is among nearly two dozen abortion restrictions that Ohio has enacted under the most recent two administrations.

Justice Department attorneys argue that Ohio’s Down syndrome law doesn’t actually outlaw any abortions, it only places restrictions on providers.

Taking up an argument used by the law’s supporters, including the abortion-opposing Ohio Right

to Life, federal attorneys also told the court the law protects against discrimination based on disability, sticking with the principle established in other laws, such as the Americans for Disabilities Act.

The full 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has agreed to rehear the case after a three-judge panel agreed with a lower court that the 2017 law was likely unconstitutional. That left in place a federal judge’s earlier order placing enforcement of the law on hold.

The American Civil Liberties Union sued the Ohio Department of Health, the state medical board and county prosecutors to overturn the law on behalf of Planned Parenthood and several abortion

providers.

The law would specifically outlaw abortions in cases where there is a positive test result or prenatal diagnosis indicating Down syndrome. Physicians who perform such an abortion could be charged with a fourth-degree felony, stripped of their medical license and held liable for legal damages under the law.

A pregnant woman would face no criminal liability.

Abortion rights groups say the law falls into a category of restrictions called “reason bans,” which they argue attempt to get into the mind of a pregnant woman as she decides whether to continue or end a pregnancy.

NATION

Best cookies baked in space took 2 hours

By MARCIA DUNN
Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The results are finally in for the first chocolate chip cookie bake-off in space.

While looking more or less normal, the best cookies required two hours of baking time last month up at the International Space Station. It takes far less time on Earth, under 20 minutes.

And how do they taste? No one knows.

Still sealed in individual baking pouches and packed in their spaceflight container, the cookies remain frozen in a Houston-area lab after splashing down two weeks ago in a SpaceX capsule. They were the first food baked in space from raw ingredients.

The makers of the oven expected a difference in baking time in space, but not that big.

"There's still a lot to look into to figure out really what's driving that difference, but definitely a cool result," Mary Murphy, a manager for Texas-based Nanoracks, said this week. "Overall, I think it's a pretty awesome



NASA/AP

U.S. astronaut Christina Koch and Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano pose for a photo with a cookie baked on the International Space Station in December.

first experiment."

Located near NASA's Johnson Space Center, Nanoracks designed and built the small electric test oven that was launched to the space station last November. Five frozen raw cookies were already up there.

Italian astronaut Luca Par-

mitano was the master baker in December, radioing down a description as he baked them by one in the prototype Zero G Oven.

The first cookie — in the oven for 25 minutes at 300 degrees Fahrenheit — ended up seriously under-baked. He more than dou-

bled the baking time for the next two, and the results were still so-so.

The fourth cookie stayed in the oven for two hours, and finally success.

"So this time, I do see some browning," Parmitano radioed. "I can't tell you whether it's cooked all the way or not, but it certainly doesn't look like cookie dough any more."

Parmitano cranked the oven up to its maximum 325 degrees F for the fifth cookie and baked it for 130 minutes. He reported more success.

Additional testing is required to determine whether the three returned cookies are safe to eat.

As for aroma, the astronauts could smell the cookies when they removed them from the oven, except for the first.

That's the beauty of baking in space, according to former NASA astronaut Mike Massimino. He now teaches at Columbia University and is a paid spokesman for DoubleTree by Hilton. The hotel chain provided the cookie dough, the same kind used for cookies offered to hotel guests. It's offering

one of the space-baked cookies to the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum for display.

"The reminder of home, the connection with home, I think, can't be overstated," Massimino said. "From my personal experience ... food is pretty important for not just nutrition but also for morale in keeping people connected to their home and their Earth."

Eating something other than dehydrated or prepackaged food will be particularly important as astronauts head back to the moon and on to Mars.

Nanoracks and Zero G Kitchen, a New York City startup that collaborated with the experiment, are considering more experiments for the orbiting oven and possibly more space appliances. What's in orbit now are essentially food warmers.

There's an added bonus of having freshly baked cookies in space.

"We made space cookies and milk for Santa this year," NASA astronaut Christina Koch tweeted.

Reins: Veterans groups welcome proposal

FROM FRONT PAGE

He said some people "want to have the benefits of having a disability without actually losing the use of their limbs or senses just so they can take their pet with them."

The main trade group for large U.S. airlines praised the proposal. Nicholas Calio, president of Airlines for America, said, "The proposed rule will go a long way in ensuring a safer and healthier experience for everyone."

Flight attendants had pushed to rein in support animals, and they too were pleased.

"The days of Noah's Ark in the air are hopefully coming to an end," said Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants. She said some of her union's members were hurt by untrained pets.

Veterans groups also sided with the airlines, arguing that a boom in untrained dogs and other animals threatens their ability

to fly with properly trained service dogs. Last year, more than 80 veterans and disability groups endorsed banning untrained emotional-support animals in airline cabins.

On the other side are people who say that an emotional-support animal helps them with anxiety or other issues that would prevent them from traveling or make it more stressful. They aren't a very organized group, but there are lots of them.

Southwest Airlines handles more than 190,000 emotional support animals per year. American Airlines carried 155,790 emotional support animals in 2017, up 48% from 2016, while the number of checked pets dropped 17%. United Airlines carried 76,000 comfort animals in 2017.

Transportation Department officials said in a briefing with reporters that they proposed the changes to improve safety on flights. Some passengers have

been bitten by support animals, and airlines complain that they relieve themselves on planes and in airports.

The public will have 60 days to comment on the proposed changes. Officials highlighted a few areas where they are most eager to get comments, including whether miniature horses should continue to qualify as service animals.

The Transportation Department proposes a narrow definition in which a service animal could only be a dog that is trained to help a person with a physical or other disability. Passengers with a service dog would have to fill out a federal form on which they swear that the dog is trained to help them. A dog trained to help with psychiatric needs would qualify as a service animal.

Current rules do not require any training for emotional-support animals. However, airlines can demand that the animal's



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Oscar the cat sits in his carry-on travel bag after arriving at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport in 2017. Airlines might soon be able to turn away cats, rabbits and all animals other than dogs that passengers try to bring with them in the cabin for emotional support.

owner show them a medical professional's note saying they need the animal for support.

The proposed rules would prohibit airlines from banning particular types of dog breeds if

the animal qualifies as a service dog, although they could refuse to board an individual dog they deem a threat. Delta Air Lines, which bans pit bulls, said it is studying the proposal.

Wild shootout in downtown Seattle leaves 1 dead, 7 injured

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Three people including a 9-year-old boy remained hospitalized Thursday morning, after police say several people opened fire in the busiest part of downtown Seattle during the Wednesday evening commute.

One person was killed and seven wounded.

Seattle Fire Chief Harold Scoggins said authorities began receiving calls of multiple gunshots victims at about 5 p.m. The person who died was a woman approxi-

mately 40 to 50 years old, fire officials told the Seattle Times.

Hospital spokeswoman Susan Gregg and fire officials said later Wednesday that a total of seven people were treated at a hospital for gunshot wounds. Three of them were still in the hospital Thursday morning, according to a statement from Gregg. A 55-year-old woman was upgraded to serious condition. A 32-year-old man and a 9-year-old boy were listed in satisfactory condition.

Police Chief Carmen Best said based on

video from the scene, several people fired weapons after a dispute outside a McDonald's. Police including homicide and gang units were investigating, she said. No arrests were immediately reported.

Samantha Cook said she was refilling her transit card in a nearby station when she heard gunfire. "I was on the first set of escalators," Cook told the Times. "There were a lot of gunshots that started going off — maybe 10 or 11. It was just rapid fire."

Tyler Parsons told the Times he was working nearby when he saw people drop

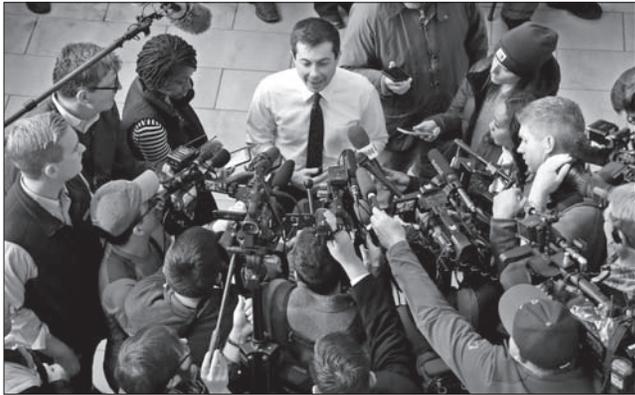
to the ground.

People took cover behind the register where he worked. "Terrifying it's so close," he said.

It was the third downtown Seattle shooting in two days. Police found a man with a gunshot wound in a mall stairwell Tuesday, and he later died at a hospital. Police shot a person in another area of downtown earlier on Wednesday.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said in a statement that he was "horrified and dismayed to hear about the shooting"

NATION



GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Democratic presidential candidate and former South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg, top center, talks to media following a town hall meeting at the University of Dubuque in Iowa on Wednesday.

Buttigieg's unlikely Iowa rise now carries high expectations

Associated Press

DUBUQUE, Iowa — Pete Buttigieg finds himself in a place that he could hardly have contemplated when he began running for president a year ago. He likely cannot finish lower than second in the Iowa caucuses if he wants to advance in the Democratic presidential nominating campaign.

But less than two weeks before the first preferences of the 2020 presidential campaign are recorded, that's the narrow path he is navigating as his strong campaign organization, competitive poll numbers and wildly successful fundraising meet a reckoning moment.

Can he now meet lofty expectations, or is he relegated to the category of candidates with exceptional promise only to come up short?

"I'm not sure a win is necessary, but he's got to be in the top two, I

would think, to have any chance of moving on," said Joe Trippi, campaign manager for former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean's 2004 presidential campaign.

Each of the top four candidates in Iowa faces his or her own version of the challenge. But the 38-year-old former mayor of a midsize Midwestern city, presenting himself as the worst-case Democrat to stand against President Donald Trump, faces a particular burden of proof, and now the very plausible potential of a top finish in the first nominating state.

Buttigieg told supporters Wednesday he's within striking distance, but stopped short of predicting victory. Still, advisers say finishing lower than second makes the lift heavier in next-up New Hampshire, where he is well-positioned.

"I'm not going to create a goal post. But what I will say is we've

got to do well here in Iowa because it's our first opportunity to actually demonstrate, versus say, that we're able to win an election," Buttigieg told reporters after a rally in Dubuque.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, whose team early on said nothing below a second-place finish in Iowa would suffice, could finish lower and still move on, given his campaign's high hopes of winning in South Carolina, where his lasting relationship with African American voters makes him the favorite.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren could take disappointing Iowa finishes to New Hampshire, and try to quickly cancel out the first contest.

Sanders, and less so Warren, also have more online donors who can sustain them through a setback.

GOP works to solicit votes in Iowa caucuses

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With all eyes on Democrats as they prepare to cast their ballots in Iowa's highly anticipated kickoff caucuses, President Donald Trump's reelection campaign is working to try to persuade Republican voters to turn out at their caucus sites, too — even if there's no real competition.

The push — complete with a presidential rally, GOP-led training sessions and a new video featuring the president's daughter-in-law — makes clear the campaign is trying to avoid the optics of empty Republican rooms on caucus night juxtaposed with Democratic gatherings brimming with enthusiastic voters.

But they also demonstrate just how dramatically Trump has seized control of his adopted party, ensuring that no Republican could credibly take him on, despite his historic popularity. And they show the remarkable daylight between Trump's threadbare 2016 operation and his current Iowa campaign, which has more staffers on the ground today than it had in November 2016.

But the caucuses also provide the campaign a test run of sorts, serving as an organizing and party-building tool that reaches across the state's 99 counties and nearly 1,700 precincts, bringing in new volunteers, building enthusiasm and testing ground operations, officials say.

"It's an amazing tool that will pay dividends for us for the entire year," said Eric Branstad, a senior campaign adviser in the state who also directed Trump's Iowa campaign in 2016. "It really

gives us an opportunity to activate our base."

"The Iowa caucuses are a chance to flex the organizational muscles of President Trump's campaign," said Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh, who promised a "heavy presence across the entire state" in the days ahead.

While states such as South Carolina, Nevada, Arizona, Alaska and Kansas chose to cancel their Republican primaries and caucuses outright to save cash and signal Trump's lock on the nomination, Iowa chose to press forward, in part to maintain its status as the first-in-the-nation nominating contest.

"That has never been a consideration for us out here in Iowa. We were going to hold this caucus. Period," said Jeff Kaufmann, the chairman of the Iowa Republican Party.

While "it would have been so much easier and so much less expensive for us to just go ahead and cancel this," he said, the state couldn't risk giving the Republican National Committee a reason to reconsider the calendar.

"In some ways, my audience for this is about 160 people in the RNC," Kaufmann said.

Nonetheless, he and other GOP officials have been working to remind their voters to turn out on Feb. 3, even if Trump is a shoo-in among Republicans in the state. The state party has organized over 100 caucus training sessions. Vice President Mike Pence is planning a bus tour. And Trump himself will be holding a marquee rally in Des Moines next week, just days before the caucuses to build excitement.

Watchdog files FEC complaint against pro-Sanders nonprofit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The watchdog group Common Cause filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission on Wednesday, alleging that Our Revolution, a political nonprofit organization founded by Bernie Sanders, violated campaign finance law by accepting donations in excess of federal limits while boosting his White House ambitions.

The complaint comes after The Associated Press reported earlier this month about the donations.

Our Revolution has denied any wrongdoing. A spokesman declined to comment. Sanders' campaign also did not respond to a request for comment.

The campaign finance act says groups established by federal officeholders or candidates cannot raise money for federal electoral activity that exceeds the limitations of the law. Those contributions are currently set at \$2,800 for candidates and \$5,000 for political action committees.

Our Revolution has taken in nearly \$1 million from donors whose contributions exceeded those limits and whose identities it hasn't fully disclosed, according to tax filings for 2016, 2017 and 2018. Much of it came from donors who contributed six-figure sums.

The group has paid for some social media ads backing Sanders' campaign and is working to



JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

A political nonprofit founded by Sen. Bernie Sanders is accused of violating campaign finance law.

turn out voters who will support the senator in the Democratic presidential primary. The group will not have to disclose its 2020 spending until after the election.

"Because Sanders set up Our Revolution and they have raised and spent money in candidate elections, Our Revolution is required to comply with contribution limits, register with the FEC and discloses its donors — but it hasn't," said Paul S. Ryan, an attorney for Common Cause. "It's his establishment of the group that triggers these laws. That means \$5,000 limit, full donor disclosure and no contributions from prohibited sources."

Candidates are barred from accepting contributions from corporations, labor unions, federal contractors and foreign nationals. The group does not fully disclose who its contributors are.

For years, Sanders has railed

against the torrent of money allowed to flood the political system following the Supreme Court's landmark 2010 Citizens United decision. But he has saved special ire for super political action committees, or super PACs.

Our Revolution is not a super PAC. The tax-exempt political nonprofit functions much like one — but without having to reveal its donors. Like super PACs, these nonprofits were similarly empowered to raise and spend unlimited sums after the Citizens United decision.

But such groups must take steps to keep their activities separate from the candidates they support.

NATION

Capturing the moment

9-foot statues recreate Eisenhower's address on eve of D-Day as part of WWII general's memorial

By MICHAEL E. RUANE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — In the gray light of dawn, master stonemason Joe Sieiro gently wrapped a white towel around Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's throat.

The general, his right hand raised as if in midsentence, his pants perfectly creased, was lying on a wooden pallet, his back and feet cushioned by blue blankets.

The towel was to protect his neck, around which Sieiro then looped a yellow fabric halter, so a crane could lift the 9-foot bronze Ike across the landscape of the new memorial in his honor in downtown Washington, D.C.

At 7:30 a.m. on a recent Saturday, the 500-pound statue of Eisenhower, the World War II general, statesman and 34th U.S. president, was lowered into place before a scene from D-Day carved in limestone and the words to his men: "The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!"

It was a milestone in the construction of the four-acre, \$150 million memorial on Independence Avenue, as the mammoth bronzes of Eisenhower and men from the 101st Airborne Division rose from their pallets and took their places in the nation's landscape.

Many years and controversies later, the memorial is scheduled to be dedicated on May 8, the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. Other sculptures, depicting Eisenhower as president and Eisenhower as a boy, will be added in coming weeks.

The tableau that Saturday was inspired by a photograph of Eisenhower addressing men of the 101st Airborne Division before they went to battle in Normandy on June 6, 1944.

In the photograph, the men, their faces blackened for combat, their uniforms rumpled, gather around Eisenhower as he gestures with one hand.

The arrangement of the sculptures is similar, with the men in their uniforms, their belts cinched, their pockets packed with gear.

The installation was carefully choreographed, with Sieiro, of Lorton Stone, operating the mobile crane and the sculptor, Sergey Eylanbekov, overseeing the action.

Each of the three statue sets had to be lowered so that steel rods protruding from their feet slid into holes drilled in the stone where they were to stand. The two groups of soldiers — one with four men, the other with two men — weighed several thousand pounds each, Sieiro said.

Eylanbekov first sculpted the statues in clay in a studio in Pietrasanta, Italy, studying portraits of Eisenhower and shots of the general with his men the day before D-Day. Molds were made from the clay and molten bronze poured into the impressions.

The statues were shipped to Norfolk, Va., and arrived at the memorial site earlier this month.

On the evening of June 5, 1944, Eisenhower had waded into a crowd of men from the 101st Airborne Division, clambering over barbed wire and chatting with the paratroopers before they boarded their airplanes for France.

The photo shows men from the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division at Greenham Common, England, according to the Library of Congress.

In bronze, the faces of the paratroopers appear as if they were modeled on living people.

Eylanbekov said that an elderly woman who experienced the war in fascist



The Washington Post

A screenshot from video shows 9-foot-tall bronze statues of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, right, and soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division at the new Eisenhower Memorial in Washington, D.C. The sculptures depict Eisenhower speaking to the paratroopers the day before the D-Day invasion of France in 1944 during World War II.



U.S. ARMY SIGNAL CORPS/National Archives and Records Administration

On the eve of D-Day, Eisenhower gives the order of the day, "Full victory — nothing else," as paratroopers in England prepare to board their planes to take part in the first assault in the invasion of Europe.

Italy, where the Americans fought the Germans in bitter combat, spotted one of the statues at his Pietrasanta studio and began to cry. "I saw him," she said, indicating the figure.

But the images of the paratroopers are all invented and are symbols rather than precise reproductions of anyone. "I didn't want to make any particular person," Eylanbekov said.

The moment he sought to capture is larger than the photograph, he said from his home on Long Island: "It's about soldiers and a great general doing something very fundamental ... for the future, for freedom."

He said he wanted to capture the intensity of the moment. He exaggerated the angles of the folds in the uniforms and gave the giant soldiers oversized hands. "Everything

was supposed to work toward tension," he said. "Expressed in hands, in faces ... in the eyes and the way their stand, the way they bunch together."

He said the sculptures, which began with sketches and small models in 2011, were the most important of his life.

"My goal was ... to use every bit of skill and every bit of my soul to make something meaningful for the people," Eylanbekov said. "I'm an immigrant (from Russia). I'm a citizen of the U.S. ... I feel very honored and inspired" to do the work.

The dramatic scene was "the moment before the storm," Eylanbekov said in a video on the memorial's website. "Probably was a very difficult and emotional moment for Gen. Eisenhower," who had just made the decision to launch the Allied inva-

sion of Nazi-occupied France despite poor weather.

"What captured me reading about this (was) that he had this certain warmth and humanity in him," he said. "And this was the thing that was indispensable, because he was not just a leader. He had this human characteristic ... and I imagine that's exactly what would be the best for the soldiers. Many of them were to die in a very short period of time."

Wearing a white hard hat, jeans and a yellow safety vest, Eylanbekov paced with his hands clasped behind his back as his creations dangled from the crane and were maneuvered by workers.

He snapped photos with his cellphone. It was the first time he would see all the elements in place as he actually wanted, he said.

The statues were covered with a protective layer of resin and wax, but the 101st Airborne Division's distinctive screaming eagle insignia was clearly visible on one uniform.

They were placed against a limestone backdrop, also designed by Eylanbekov, depicting in relief landing boats on placid water off a Normandy beach.

"It was intentionally supposed to be quiet," he said. "I didn't want any commotion in the background."

The memorial's original design, by architect Frank Gehry, was unveiled in 2010 but met with strong disapproval from Congress and Eisenhower's relatives, among others. The design was revised and tweaked and argued over for years before a ceremonial groundbreaking was held in 2017.

Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., who as a teenager met Eisenhower and serves as chairman of the Eisenhower Memorial Commission, said it was "surreal" to see the memorial nearly finished. "Now, we've truly come full circle," he said in a statement.

After the sculptures were set in place, Eylanbekov looked them over and said it was content.

Almost a decade in the making, "they're finally in the place where they're supposed to be," he said.

NATION

Sciorra confronts Weinstein from witness stand

BY MICHAEL R. SISAK
AND TOM HAYS
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Actress Annabella Sciorra confronted Harvey Weinstein in court on Thursday after keeping her rape accusation against the former Hollywood honcho largely hidden for decades.

For more than a quarter century, she told only a few friends that the once-revered producer had pinned her to a bed and violated her, until she came forward publicly in 2017.

Now, Sciorra has become the first of Weinstein's accusers to testify at his New York City rape trial.

Sciorra, best known for her work in "The Sopranos," stands to be a key witness in a watershed trial for the #MeToo movement.

Sciorra, 59, started acting in the late 1980s and soon drew acclaim for her leading part in Spike Lee's 1991 film "Jungle Fever" and her role as a pregnant woman molested by her doctor in 1992's "The Hand That Rocks The Cradle" the next year.

The New York trial involves just a pair of the dozens of allegations that surfaced against Weinstein in recent years. It is charged with forcibly performing oral sex



Actress Annabella Sciorra, left, arrives as a witness in Harvey Weinstein's rape trial, with Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi, right, in New York on Thursday.

RICHARD DREW/AP

on former "Project Runway" production assistant Mimi Haley in his apartment in 2006 and raping an aspiring actress in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013.

Weinstein has insisted any sexual encounters were consensual. As he left court on Wednesday, he told reporters that he felt "very

confident" about the case.

A guilty verdict could put the 67-year-old disgraced movie mogul in prison for life.

Sciorra's allegations date back too long to be prosecuted on their own, but her testimony could be a factor as prosecutors look to show that Weinstein has engaged in a

pattern of predatory behavior.

Her testimony about events in the mid-to-late 1990s could give the jury of seven men and five women a sense of the breadth of Weinstein's alleged wrongdoing and insight into the power dynamics at play in his interactions with young actresses.

Prosecutors previewed Sciorra's testimony in a lengthy, at times graphic opening statement Wednesday that painted Weinstein as a sexual predator who used his film industry clout to abuse women for decades.

She's one of four other accusers that prosecutors plan to call as witnesses during the month-long trial.

Sciorra alleges that Weinstein showed up at her Manhattan apartment after dropping her off from a dinner, forced himself inside and raped her sometime in late 1993 or early 1994.

"The evidence will show that despite her protests, despite her fight, despite her body revolting, Harvey Weinstein felt he was entitled to take what he wanted from Annabella, forcing her to live in terror of him for decades," prosecutor Meghan Hast told jurors in her opening statement. Weinstein lawyer Damon Cheronis, in his opening statement, made clear that the defense intends to go on the offensive.

He questioned the validity of Sciorra's account, saying she once told a friend she "did a crazy thing and had sex with Harvey Weinstein" and that she had a consensual encounter with him.

"She didn't describe it as rape because it wasn't," Cheronis said.

Just a few
days left:

Thursday,
January 23rd
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Friday,
January 24th
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Saturday,
January 25th
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Sunday*
January 26th
11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Monday,
January 27th
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

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WORLD

Firefighting plane crash kills 3 Americans

Associated Press

SYDNEY — Three American crew members were killed Thursday when a C-130 Hercules aerial water tanker crashed while battling wildfires in southeastern Australia, officials said.

New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian confirmed the crash deaths in the state's Snowy Monaro region, which came as Australia grapples with an unprecedented fire season that has left a large swath of destruction.

Oregon's Coulson Aviation said in a statement that one of its Lockheed large air tankers was lost after it left Richmond in New South Wales with retardant for a firebombing mission.

It said the accident was "extensive" but had few other details.

"The only thing I have from the field reports is that the plane came down, it crashed and there was a large fireball associated with that crash," said Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne said she had conveyed Australia's condolences to U.S. Ambassador Arthur Culvahouse Jr.

"Our hearts go out to their loved ones. They were helping Australia,



A large air tanker drops fire retardant on a wildfire burning close to homes at Penrose, Australia, earlier this month.

DAN HIMBRECHTS, AAP IMAGE/AP

lia, far from their own homes, an embodiment of the deep friendship between our two countries," she said in a statement.

"Thank you to those three, and to all the brave firefighters from Australia and around the world. Your service and contribution are extraordinary. We are ever grateful," she added.

The tragedy brings the death toll from the blazes to at least 31 since September. The fires have also destroyed more than 2,600 homes and razed more than 25.7 million acres, an area bigger than India.

Coulson grounded other firefighting aircraft as a precaution pending investigation, reducing

planes available to firefighters in New South Wales and neighboring Victoria state. The four-propeller Hercules drops more than 4,000 gallons of fire retardant in a single pass.

Australian Transport Safety Bureau, the national air crash investigator, and state police will investigate the crash site, which firefighters described as an active fire ground.

"There is no indication at this stage of what's caused the accident," Fitzsimmons said.

Berejiklian said there were more than 1,700 volunteers and personnel in the field, and five fires were being described at an "emergency warning" level—the most dangerous on a three-tier scale — across the state and on the fringes of the national capital Canberra.

At 11:30 Thursday, Canberra Airport closed temporarily because of nearby wildfires, and residents south of the city were told to seek shelter. The airport reopened after several hours with Qantas operating limited services, but Virgin and Singapore Airlines canceled flights for the rest of the day.

Eruption turned ancient victim's brain to glass

MILAN — The eruption of Mount Vesuvius turned an incinerated victim's brain material into glass, the first time scientists have verified the phenomenon from a volcanic blast, officials at the Herculaneum archaeology site said Thursday.

Archaeologists rarely recover human brain tissue, and when they do it is normally smooth and soapy in consistency, according to an article detailing the discovery in the New England Journal of Medicine. The eruption of Vesuvius in the year 79 instantly killed the inhabitants of Pompeii and neighboring Herculaneum, burying an area 12 miles from the volcano in ash in just a few hours.

The remains of a man were discovered at Herculaneum in the 1960s. A team led by Pier Paolo Petrone, a forensic anthropologist at the Federico II University in Naples, determined that the victim's brain matter had been vitrified, a process by which tissue is burned at a high heat and turned into glass, according to the study published by the New England Journal of Medicine. The fragments presented as shards of shiny black material spotted within remnants of the victim's skull.

Switzerland's gold coin is world's smallest

BERLIN — No joke: Switzerland has minted a gold coin so small you'd need to look very closely to see Albert Einstein sticking out his tongue at you.

State-owned Swissmint said Thursday that the 0.12-inch gold coin is the smallest in the world. It weighs 1/500th of an ounce and has a nominal value of \$0.26. Swissmint said the coin, of which just 999 have been made, will be sold for 199 francs with a special magnifying glass so owners can see the famous physicist on its face.

Police arrest 23 in migrant smuggling ring

PARIS — French and Dutch police have arrested 23 suspected members of a criminal network that has smuggled as many as 10,000 migrants from France to Britain, according to the European police agency Europol.

The network was suspected of earning \$7.6 million in profits by organizing illegal passages for migrants from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Iran, Europol said Thursday.

The migrants traveled to Britain from around the western French cities of Le Mans and Poitiers. Many of them faced life-threatening conditions, hidden in refrigerator trucks crossing the English Channel by ferry or undersea train. As many as 20 migrants were held in each truck and each paid as much as \$7,760 for the crossing, Europol said.

From The Associated Press

Leaders rally in Jerusalem against anti-Semitism

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Dozens of world leaders gathered Thursday in Jerusalem for the largest-ever gathering focused on commemorating the Holocaust and combating rising modern-day anti-Semitism — a politically charged event that has been clouded by rival national interpretations of the genocide.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Prince Charles, Vice President Mike Pence and the presidents of Germany, Italy and Austria were among the more than 40 dignitaries attending the World Holocaust Forum, which coincides with the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

The three-hour-long ceremony at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial is called "Remembering the Holocaust: Fighting Antisemitism" — looks to project a united front in commemorating the genocide of European Jewry amid a global spike in anti-Jewish violence.

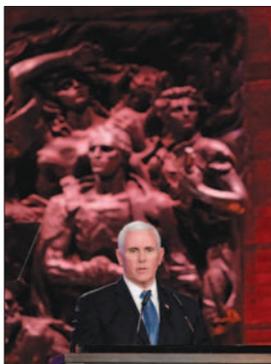
But the unresolved remnants of World War II's politics have permeated the solemn assembly over the differing historical narratives of various players. Poland's president, who's been criticized for his own wartime revisionism, has boycotted the gathering since he wasn't invited to speak. Putin was granted a central role even as he leads a campaign to play down the Soviet Union's pre-war pact with the Nazis and shift responsibility for the war's outbreak on Poland, which was invaded in 1939 to start the fighting.

On the eve of the gathering, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin implored visiting dignitaries to "leave history for the historians."

"The role of political leaders, of all of us, is to shape the future," he said.

But Putin quickly ventured into the sensitive terrain shortly after his arrival Thursday, claiming that 40% of Jewish Holocaust victims were Soviet.

Of the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis, historians say about 1 million were Soviet. Putin's controversial figure appears to in-



ABIR SULTAN/AP

Vice President Mike Pence joined dozens of world leaders Thursday at the World Holocaust Forum at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem.

clude an additional 1.5 million Jewish victims from eastern European areas occupied by the Soviets under their pact with the Nazis.

"When it comes to the tragedy of the Holocaust, 40% of tortured and killed Jews were Soviet Union Jews. So this is our common tragedy in the fullest sense of the word," he said during a meeting with Rivlin.

Arkadi Zeltser, a Yad Vashem historian, said the accuracy of the statement depended on rival "definitions" of when the war began.

Yad Vashem, along with all other reputable institutions, considers the war to have been sparked on Sept. 1, 1939, with the invasion of Poland. The Soviets generally consider their

"Great Patriotic War" to have started two years later, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

It was the latest chapter in a bitter dispute over Soviet actions in World War II. Putin has been leading a campaign to downplay the Soviet Union's pre-war pact with the Nazis and focus instead on its role in defeating them.

Israel has appeared eager to oblige, giving Putin a fawning welcome and hosting him for the dedication of an imposing monument honoring the nearly 900-day Nazi siege of Leningrad. The city, now known as St. Petersburg, is Putin's hometown.

"We mustn't for even one second blur the sacrifice and the contribution of the former Soviet Union" in defeating "the Nazi monster," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the ceremony.

The forum at Yad Vashem marks one of the largest political gatherings in Israeli history, as a cascade of delegations including European presidents, prime ministers and royals, as well as American, Canadian and Australian representatives, arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport. More than 10,000 police officers were deployed in Jerusalem and major highways leading to it. Large parts of the city were shut down ahead of the event.

For Netanyahu it offered another opportunity to solidify Israel's diplomatic standing and boost his profile as he seeks re-election on March 2. He was hoping to use his meetings with world leaders to bolster his tough line toward Iran and rally opposition to a looming war crimes case against Israel in the International Criminal Court.

"I am concerned that we have yet to see a unified and resolute stance against the most anti-Semitic regime on the planet, a regime that openly seeks to develop nuclear weapons and annihilate the one and only Jewish state," he said of Iran. "For the Jewish people, Auschwitz is more than the ultimate symbol of evil. It is also the ultimate symbol of Jewish powerlessness. ... Today we have a voice, we have a land, and we have a shield."

WORLD

Hotshots Down Under

US firefighters adapt and battle bush fires in Australia

By JOSEPH SERNA
Los Angeles Times

OVENS, Australia — It was a rare victory for the seasoned Americans battling flames Down Under.

Beneath a green eucalyptus canopy in the country's Australian Alps, the continent's tallest mountain range dividing New South Wales and Victoria, some of America's most versatile firefighters, mostly from Southern California, are laboring to help the Australians gain the upper hand against their worst fire season ever.

The work, up until Saturday afternoon, had not always been fruitful for these two dozen firefighters, nearly all of them from the Angeles National Forest. Weekly lightning storms have sparked new fires beyond their defensive positions, and even some older fires have spread so quickly they have outrun crews finishing containment lines.

But that afternoon, word crackled over the radio that a containment line they'd dug days before had held up, stopping another blaze's progress. It was their first success since arriving in Australia on Jan. 8.

"We finally got a win," said firefighter Benjamin Covault, 40, from McCall, Idaho. "It's been kicking everyone's ass."

"You want the work to be meaningful, but these are huge fires we're talking about," said Justine Gude, one of 20 Angeles firefighters in Australia for a monthlong deployment. "You try to take a bite out of it and if it doesn't work, you pull back and you take another bite. We're used to it."

More than 170 U.S. firefighters are in Australia, a country halfway around the world that some of them had never visited. Helping their Aussie counterparts, they have been adjusting to a unique firefighting culture, unusual lingo and landscapes that, while similar in some respects, differ from those of the American West.

Here in the Alpine National Park near Mount Buffalo, the ground is softer and the shal-



PHOTOS BY CAROLY COLE, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

Hector Cerna, 39, from Palmdale, Calif., works to put out hot spots in the Alpine National Park on Saturday, where he and an American crew have been working for the past two weeks. Cerna has 14 years of firefighting experience.

low-rooted eucalyptus generally are heavier and burn hotter than the conifers and oaks of the Sierra Nevada, creating a tree-fall danger that's unpredictable and potentially lethal. As crews carve their way through dead standing trees, venomous ants jump onto their wrists and bite while spiders lower themselves onto their backs.

"Crazy spiders, man, big spiders the size of your hand. Big ants, bullet ants and jumping jacks, 'hoppers,' they call 'em," said Travis Braten, a U.S. For-

est Service firefighter based in Shoshone, Wyo., who was working with the Californians over the weekend. "Some guys have seen snakes. I haven't seen any, which is just fine with me. Sounds like everything is poisonous."

While these firefighters will bring home anecdotes about everyday oddities — lounging koalas, kangaroos standing by the roadside, brightly colored birds and huge insects — they have been doing the manual labor that comes with an "arduous crew" label, which is how the Angeles National Forest men and women have been categorized while in Australia.

It's the kind of muscle-aching work that firefighters grind through early in their career until they become more specialized. But because resources are stretched razor-thin in Australia, with so many fires at once, the Forest Service sent over hotshots and veteran firefighters who usually lead their own teams back home and can do it all.

"They say it takes a village, where it takes all types to make a successful hand crew," Gude said, as she stained her hands and nail-polish black with grit, dirt and oil while cleaning a chainsaw.

"You need the funny guy, you need the smart guys, you need the strong guys."

"Mc, I'm the strong guy," Gude said laughing, noting that her

body weight was just twice the poundage of the gear and chainsaw she was carrying. "I'm like an ant."

Fires have inundated Australia since November, when a series of lightning storms sparked multiple blazes in the country's eastern, drought-parched bush lands, known as forests in the United States.

Over several months, the fires have killed at least 31 people, including three Americans who were killed Thursday, when a C-130 Hercules aerial water tanker crashed in southeastern Australia, The Associated Press reported.

Thousands of homes, most of them in New South Wales have been destroyed.

The estimated area burned ranges from 12 million to 46 million acres, an area roughly the size of Florida.

While not all towns have been engulfed, despite what social media might suggest, those close to the bush fires have been coping with sporadic evacuations and days and weeks of unhealthy air.

Near Mount Buffalo, a park roughly 200 miles northeast of Melbourne, the firefighters have made their base camp along the Owens River tourist town of Bright. With the fires and smoke, businesses have been struggling to stay afloat, but the influx of Americans has been welcomed.

Australian officials say the U.S. crews have earned their reputation as among the profession's best.

"I've worked with the Americans before and here there's no surprises. The arduous crews of America are hard workers," said David Ross, operations chief for the Abbey Road Fire. "These guys have definitely lived up to ... expectations."

The United States, Australia and New Zealand have helped each other fight fires for more than 15 years, federal officials say. The two countries dispatched crews to U.S. fires in 2018, and the U.S. Forest Service last sent crews Down Under in 2010. There were 178 U.S. personnel in Australia as of Monday, with an additional 40 expected to arrive on Friday, said Forest Service spokeswoman Traci Weaver.

It can take a personal toll on firefighters not fully prepared.

Jonathan Merager, 47, from La Cañada Flintridge, Calif., won't see his wife and four sons for a month. Twenty years ago he would have gone weeks without speaking with them. But with digital technology, they can chat every day, meaning the separation isn't as hard as it once was.

"It's not easy for a lot of folks in this business," Merager said. "It just takes a lot of coordination, a lot of patience, understanding and empathy."



Justine Gude, a 7-year veteran of the Angeles National Forest Texas Canyon hotshot firefighters, cleans a chainsaw before going out into the field.

WORLD

Burano is stitching together a survival plan

Venetian islands recast traditions to help counter depopulation

By COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

VENICE, Italy — The Venetian island of Burano's charms are rooted in its fishing legacy: the colorful fishermen's cottages, the traditional butter cookies that kept fishermen going at sea and the delicate lace hand-stitched by their women.

But as the island's population dwindles, like that of Venice itself a 40-minute boat ride away, so do the numbers of skilled artisans who keep the traditions and economy alive.

To counter the trend, Venezia Nativa, an association of entrepreneurs on Burano and two neighboring islands, is trying to breathe fresh life into old trades to attract new residents and persuade young islanders to stay.

Domenico Rossi, 49, is a crab fisherman, like his ancestors back to the glory days of the Venetian Republic.

But that way of life is dying. When Rossi was a boy, about 100 fishermen plied the northern Venetian lagoon for soft-shell crabs. Now, he's the youngest of the 20 still operating, and he figures in a couple of decades there will be none left.

"Once we disappear, Venice disappears," the Burano native said.

Still, he has forbidden his 18-year-old son to take up the trade, seeking to protect him from long hours, uncertain profits and the threat of tightening fishing regulations.



PHOTOS BY LUCA BRUNO/AP

The legacy of Italy's Burano island as a fishing village remains the source of its charms: small, colorful fishermen's cottages, butter cookies and delicate lace still stitched by women in their homes. But as Burano's population dwindles, echoing that of nearby Venice, so too are the numbers of artisans and tradespeople who have kept traditions and the economy alive.

His son is training to be a chef. And Rossi is transforming his own work into a tourist attraction, bringing small groups on boat tours in the off-season.

Venice has long sounded the alarm about being reduced to a living museum, as tourism mushrooms and population levels shrink, threatening the city's viability. Permanent residents in the historic center — which includes St. Mark's Square and the Grand Canal — have sunk to 53,000, down by a third in one generation.

About 1,000 people leave each year for cheaper, easier living in the city's mainland districts. With

them, the social fabric of the city wears, the number of neighborhood stores offering staples dwindles — as do public services.

On Burano and its two neighboring islands of Mazzorbo and Torcello, the impact of depopulation is even more evident. Residents currently number 2,700, dropping by 60 a year.

Just 40 years ago, there were two elementary schools with about 120 children in each grade. Each now has no more than a dozen.

About 30 island business owners are trying to secure the northern lagoon's future by relaunching local trades and encouraging sustainable tourism. Whereas Venice suffers under the pressure of some 30 million visitors a year, only about 1.5 million of those continue on to Burano.

"We want these three islands in the northern lagoon to become a tourist destination apart from Venice," said association vice president Roberto Pugliese. That means offering activities like fishing or boating and promoting the allure of the quiet lagoon life, beyond the existing tourist draws of lace shops, Instagrammable backdrops of brightly colored fishing cottages and the quiet Byzantine cathedral on Torcello.

Across a footbridge from Burano, on the neighboring island of Mazzorbo, a winemaker from the prosecco region north of Venice has relaunched a long-dormant vineyard, Venissa, opening a Michelin-starred restaurant and hotel along with it. A decade on, most of its 30 employees live on the islands.

Makers of the traditional Bura-

'When we see blue or pink ribbons around Burano announcing a birth, it gives the sensation that yes, we can repopulate the island!'

Federica Molin
bakery owner and resident of the Italian island of Burano

no lace also are looking to revitalize their sector, mostly by moving from traditional decorative uses such as tablecloths or wall hangings into creating works of art or fashion.

At dalla Lidia, a Burano lace shop, Japanese textile maker Yuka Miyagishima is spending three months to learn the craft practiced today by no more than 100 women, most of them elderly. It's painstaking work, using a thread and needle to create intricate stitches and knots on paper that is later torn away.

Pugliese said it would be ideal for Miyagishima to remain on the island and work — but Miyagishima says she intends to return home and practice the tradition there.

Getting outsiders to move to Burano is complicated not only by the convenience factor, but also by its peculiar housing stock. About 80% of the island's housing is picturesque fishing cottages. They're adored by tourists for their colorful facades — but less so by residents long restricted by preservation laws on how they can renovate the two-story structures, each level just 215 square feet. In a sign of the times, many are for sale.

Officials have recently given tentative approval to changes that will make it easier, for example, to combine adjoining houses into a single abode. Pugliese is also hoping that Venice will allow hotels to operate with rooms dispersed throughout the island. At the moment there are fewer than 20 hotel rooms on the island, limiting overnight stays.

It's just as complicated to get Burano's young people to stay on the island.

Federica Molin and her husband run a bakery that makes the famed bussolai cookies, traditionally shaped in big O's so fishermen could hang them on their mast and nibble away during long turns at sea.

Their eldest child lives in Milan, studying to be a veterinarian, and is unlikely to resettle on the island any time soon. Molin is happy for her but hopes she'll come back some day.

"When I hear about young couples that come back ... I get excited," Molin said. "Then when we see blue or pink ribbons around Burano announcing a birth, it gives the sensation that yes, we can repopulate the island!"



A woman works a "merletto" at a traditional lace shop on Burano. Today the craft is practiced by no more than 100 women.



On Burano and its two neighboring islands of Mazzorbo and Torcello, residents currently number 2,700, dropping by 60 a year.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Cold-stunned iguanas falling from trees

FL MIAMI — The National Weather Service routinely warns people about falling rain, snow and hail, but temperatures are dropping so low in South Florida the forecasters warned residents Tuesday about falling iguanas.

"This isn't something we usually forecast, but don't be surprised if you see Iguanas falling from the trees tonight as lows drop into the 30s and 40s. Brrrrrr!" NWS Miami tweeted.

The low temperatures stun the invasive reptiles, but the iguanas won't necessarily die. That means many will wake up as temperatures rise.

Lawmakers give OK to taking ballot selfies

WI MADISON — Wisconsin voters could legally take selfies with their marked election ballots under a bill the state Senate approved Tuesday.

Wisconsin is one of 18 states with a law barring the showing of a completed ballot, but it is rarely enforced. The Senate approved the bill on a voice vote. It goes next to the state Assembly.

The measure's supporters call the ban archaic, especially in an era in which voters are increasingly posting pictures of themselves with their marked ballots on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. But county election clerks warned last year that changing the law could open the door to undoing the secrecy of the ballot.

The Wisconsin County Clerk Association registered against the bill. Clerks warned lawmakers that making it commonplace to show a marked ballot could lead to employers, unions or others forcing people to prove they voted a certain way to receive a benefit or avoid being punished. They also voiced concern about how people legally taking photos in a polling location could infringe on the confidentiality rights of other voters.

'Unluckiest guy': Snake bites hunter on head

MS JACKSON — In a scene that could provoke nightmares, a Mississippi hunter walking to a truck soon found himself racing to the hospital after a venomous snake struck him in the head, a rare attack that had one scientist calling the hunter "the unluckiest guy in America."

Tyler Hardy of Philadelphia, Miss., said he was jumping across a flooded ditch Jan. 15 when a copperhead snake coiled on a tree limb bit him above his ear.

"I thought somebody had shot me or hit me with an ax. It knocked the fire out of me. I just could not believe the force the snake had when it hit me," Hardy told The Clarion Ledger.

When Hardy shined a light to determine what hit him, he said the snake struck at him again and fell out of the tree. Hardy and his hunting partner both identified the snake as a copperhead, which



DON CAMPBELL, THE (ST. JOSEPH, MICH.) HERALD-PALLADIUM/AP

Icicle works

A woman walks along ice-covered North Pier on Tuesday in St. Joseph, Mich., where temperatures will barely get above freezing this week.

is common in Mississippi.

When the two hunters got to the hospital, Hardy received an antivenom treatment and then was airlifted to a medical center in Jackson. He was released a day later.

Victim uses phone app to find her stolen car

KS WICHITA — A woman who was attacked and had her car stolen at a Wichita church used an app to help police find her car and two suspects in the case.

The 53-year-old victim was walking into Trinity Lutheran Church on Sunday when two people attacked her and drove away with her Ford Escape, KAKE-TV reported.

On Monday, she called 911 and said she was tracking the vehicle with a Ford app. Officer Charley Davidson said, Police tracked the vehicle to a Quik Trip and arrested Ryan Dittmer, 21. Dittmer was booked into jail on possible charges of aggravated robbery and a state parole violation.

Woman wins lifetime hunting, fishing license

VT MONTPELIER — A Vermont woman is entitled to hunt and fish for free for the rest of her life.

Elizabeth Grady, 42, of Underhill, won the 2019 Vermont Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License Lottery, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department announced.

More than 13,000 tickets were

THE CENSUS

\$250K

ton, are all charged with first-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny. Shelton police said in a statement Tuesday. Investigators discovered that a small portion of the collectibles were sold to a comic book store in New Haven by the three suspects. The remainder of the books have been recovered.

purchased for the annual drawing. Sales of the \$2 tickets brought in more than \$26,000 that can be leveraged with federal funds to produce more than \$104,000 to support the department's mission to conserve fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats, the department said.

Sheriff on the lookout for cattle rustler

TN GREENEVILLE — Authorities in northeastern Tennessee are looking for a cattle rustler.

Sheriff's deputies were investigating the theft of 36 head of cattle from a farm in Greene County, news outlets reported.

The victim told investigators that someone pulled onto his property late on Jan. 16 and took the animals, Deputy Frank Cedillo said in a report. A neighbor told the victim he heard two trucks pull onto the property, but thought it was the owners, the report said.

The animals have a combined value of \$40,000. The owner says he's been watching cattle sales in

The value of 500 rare comic books stolen last summer from a storage unit in Shelton, Conn., police say. James Wadsworth Sr., 49, of Ansonia; James Wadsworth Jr., 30, of Ansonia; and Saul Salazar, 32, of Shelton.

the vicinity since the theft.

Deal will bring bighorn sheep to reservation

ND BISMARCK — A new agreement between the state and Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation means bighorn sheep could be roaming the reservation in the next couple weeks.

North Dakota Game and Fish director Terry Steinwand said 30 to 40 bighorns will be brought to North Dakota once they are captured on a Montana reservation. They'll be released in the Mandaree and Twin Buttes areas.

The Bismarck Tribune said the state-tribal agreement includes a provision for a ram hunting season. Williams says that will depend on how well the animals do in their new habitat.

Deputies: Teen secretly taped woman for year

NC STATESVILLE — An 18-year-old man secretly recorded a woman in her bedroom for nearly a year, a

North Carolina sheriff's office said.

The Iredell County Sheriff's Office said in a news release that Cody Daniel Wells, of Statesville, was arrested last week on five counts of felony secret peeping and was released from jail after posting a \$50,000 bond.

Sheriff Darren Campbell said the woman discovered "an electronic video recording device" hidden in her home in western Iredell County.

The woman filed a report with the sheriff's office on Dec. 20. The sheriff's office said the peeping dates back to Jan. 1, 2019.

Man accidentally shoots his scrotum while in bed

RI PROVIDENCE — A Rhode Island man accidentally shot himself in the scrotum while sitting on his bed, police said.

Providence police officers found Edward Martinez, 22, in a hallway wearing no pants with a gunshot wound to his scrotum Thursday night, said Commander Thomas Verdi.

Martinez told police he took his pants off after he fired the gun and located the wound, the Providence Journal reported. He was taken to Rhode Island Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

Police seized three guns that were found inside Martinez's bedroom, including a semi-automatic pistol on his bedside table. He isn't facing any criminal charges at this time, Verdi said.

From wire reports



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WEEKEND



Titles that parents, kids
can feel good about

Video games, Page 26

POWER PACKED

Even without Avengers assembling,
2020 promises fun for superhero fans

Page 23



iStock

WEEKEND: GADGETS

Saving the DVD

Universal, Warner Bros. announce joint proposal to preserve near-dead format

By RYAN FAUGHNDER
Los Angeles Times

The market for DVD and Blu-ray discs has been on life support for years as streaming has become the technology of choice for home video customers.

In the past decade, the U.S. market for physical discs has gone from a more than \$10-billion business in the U.S. to roughly a third of that in terms of consumer spending, according to data from Digital Entertainment Group.

But studios aren't ready to give up on the format just yet. Two of the major studios, Universal Pictures and Warner Bros., have proposed an unusual plan to stay in the business of selling shiny physical discs.

The studios announced a proposal Jan. 15 to team up on a joint venture that, if approved by regulators, will handle North American distribution for DVDs, Blu-rays and 4K UHD discs for new releases, library titles and television shows. The idea is to combine resources to continue selling discs while saving money.

The joint venture is expected to operate for up to 10 years, according to a news release.

Details are sparse and the venture won't launch until the beginning of 2021. The studios did not say how many people would work for it, or what the new entity would



DEAN COPPOLA, CONTRA COSTA TIMES/TNS

Gabe Santos restocks DVD rentals at Silver Screen Video at the El Cerrito Plaza in El Cerrito, Calif., in 2010.

be called, but the move is expected to coincide with an unspecified number of job cuts in their existing home video divisions.

Industry veteran Eddie Cunningham, president of Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, will oversee the new venture.

The idea is a direct response to the collapsing DVD market. Physical disc sales plummeted 18% in 2019 alone, generating \$3.3 billion in revenue in the U.S., according to DEG's latest report. Meanwhile, consumer spending on subscription streaming services surged 24% to nearly \$16 billion.

Yet physical discs remain important to some consumers, including fans of classic cinema. Not all titles are easily available for streaming. Also, though the category

is shrinking, it remains an important source of revenue for the industry.

The planned joint venture "presents a significant opportunity to continue to work with our retail partners to ensure the format's strength and sustainability for years to come," said Universal Chief Distribution Officer Peter Levinsohn in a statement.

Additionally, Warner Bros. and Universal plan to save costs by splitting up international DVD releases by country.

Los Angeles-based Universal will take on distribution of Warner Bros. discs in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Japan, while Burbank-based Warner Bros. will handle Universal's sales in Britain, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

GADGET WATCH

Electronics show full of goodies you didn't know you needed

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Practical or impractical, here are some items from this month's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas that caught my attention.

Finding what you want to watch on TV can be a challenge with the number of programming, streaming services, and channels to choose from, but the Dabby from DaKick is set to simplify it for you. No more trying to figure out which TV box, app or station your favorite show is on, Dabby does it for you. Just tell Dabby what you want to watch and it will find it from your services. The futuristic home entertainment device eliminates the need for existing remotes and upon command, it patented Content AI engine, which uses a combination of user-friendly touch and voice capabilities, instantly searches, finds and plays your TV selection or social media content.

Online: heydabby.com; \$399

Motion Pillow's 2nd generation pillow to assist snorers will be available this April after a successful Indiegogo campaign. Setting it up is plug-and-play with a charging box connected to the pillow. It will detect the unique rhythmic snoring sounds of the snorers once the head and pillow make a bedtime connection. The pillow detects the head's position and will

gently inflate internal airbags to reposition the sleeper's head, slightly moving the neck to improve airflow through the nose and temporarily silencing the snoring. An accompanying app analyzes your snoring data so when you awake, you'll know what others had to hear.

Online: motionpillow.com; \$420

I'm a big fan of the comeback that vinyl records have made, which was evident on the CES show floor with many companies displaying turntables. But one company, Tangible Formats, has taken it a step further by offering

a service to cut custom vinyl records for anyone needing quantities with no minimum order. There's a bunch of options to choose from; one choice is a custom 12-inch vinyl record for \$60 (7- and 10-inch also available). It includes up to 22 minutes of audio per side, full-color labels and cover foldovers, an inner white paper sleeve, and an outer clear poly sleeve. I watched Tangible Formats making records in minutes and the final product looked perfect, just like advertised, with the durability, look and sound of pressed vinyl.

Online: tangibleformats.com

Stopskate calls the EBS 480 electronic brake system for inline skates the brake you've always dreamed of. It's a system built by the new company with a mission to effectively, reliably and safely brake in-line skates. They want to put a stop to falls, abrasions, fractures and other unpleasant injuries caused by inline skate falls. The brake system consists of a remote control and two brake calipers, one for the right skate and the other on the left skate. A remote control simultaneously controls both brake calipers to brake the wheels of both skates simultaneously and smoothly. Both calipers run off of rechargeable Li-Ion batteries for two to four hours of use.

Online: stopskate.com; \$249



TANGIBLE FORMATS/TNS

Tangible Formats will cut custom vinyl records with no minimum order.



DAKICK/TNS

Dabby searches your programming services to find a specific show for you.



STOPSKATE/TNS

Stopskate's EBS 480 electronic brake system aims to minimize injuries.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



WARNER BROS./DC Entertainment

From left: Renee Montoya (Rosie Perez), Huntress (Elizabeth Winstead), Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), Cassandra Cain (Ella Jay Basco) and Black Canary (Jurnee Smollett-Bell) star in "Birds of Prey," the first big superhero movie of the year. It will be released Feb. 7.

2020 is going to be super

New films will be released in the DC, Marvel and Valiant Comic universes

By DAVID BETANCOURT
The Washington Post

This new year won't give us another "Avengers" movie, but there will still be plenty of superhero action on the big screen.

Warner Bros. and DC Comics are releasing films featuring their two most popular big-screen characters of the moment (Wonder Woman and Harley Quinn), Valiant Comics is finally seeing one of its heroes hit the big screen (Bloodshot) and Venom hopes to best its previous movie's \$856 million worldwide haul in a sequel that looks to be a lot bloodier.

Marvel Studios is looking to provide a mild Avengers flashback ("Black Widow") before they move on to bigger out-of-this-world aspirations ("Eternals").

Here's the upcoming superhero movie slate for 2020.

'Birds of Prey,' Feb. 7

Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie) gets a new movie and a new team all in one film in this post-Joker-breakup adventure (no Jared Leto in sight, but no worries, he appears later on this list). Helping Quinn in the fight are lethal archer the Huntress (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), ultrasonic-voiced Black Canary (Jurnee Smollett-Bell), quick-handed Cassandra Cain (Ella Jay Basco) and veteran Gotham City cop Renee Montoya (Rosie Perez), as they go up against a Batman villain not commonly known by the general public (Ewan McGregor's Black Mask).

'Bloodshot,' March 13

Vin Diesel gets a superhero role with a lot more lines than when he played Groot in the "Guardians of the Galaxy" series. He stars as an indestructible soldier looking to put together the mystery of a past he can't remember. This is the first live-action film from the Valiant Comics universe, which features other heroes hoping to make it to the movies, such as X-O Manowar and Shadowman.

'The New Mutants,' April 3

Can a classic Marvel Comics series make for a good horror movie without the involvement of Marvel Studios? There's a scary thought. "The New Mutants" is Twentieth Century Fox's last stand with the X-Men universe as this film wrapped before it merged with Disney. Whether it will link to whatever Disney has planned for the X-Men is unknown. What we do know is this film features young mutants from that universe, as they get in touch with their powers for the first time while in a very creepy, prisonlike institution of some kind. Magik's (Anya Taylor-Joy) mystic sword looks cool, though. That's a start.

'Black Widow,' May 1

Scarlett Johansson finally gets a solo-starring turn as superhero/Russian spy Natasha Romanoff. This movie obviously takes place before her death in "Avengers: Endgame" and involves her connecting some dots about her past. David Harbour also stars as Russia's version of Captain America, the Red Guardian.

'Wonder Woman 1984,' June 5

Is this DC's most anticipated sequel ever? "Wonder Woman" was DC's first undisputed hit of the Justice League era and this follow-up, set in Washington, D.C. in the 1980s, could be the biggest superhero hit of 2020. Going up against Gal Gadot's Princess Diana is Pedro Pascal's not-to-be-trusted Max Lord, and somehow Chris Pine's Steve Trevor is back from the dead.

'Morbius,' July 31

Jared Leto's Joker didn't work out at DC, so he's giving the role of Marvel's second-most-popular vampire a try. (We see you, Blade.) Morbius the Living Vampire is a classic Marvel character, known more by die-hard fans than general moviegoers, and is yet another example of Sony trying to milk its rights to Spider-Man and any character connected to him. A rumored appearance by J.K. Simmons as J. Jonah Jameson could go a long way.

'Venom 2,' Oct. 2

Speaking of Spider-Man villain movies, Tom Hardy's Venom is back. This time, he'll likely be up against the villain everyone wanted to see in the first movie (Carnage, played by Woody Harrelson). Both Hardy and Harrelson should get some top-notch CGI movement instruction from "Venom 2" director Andy Serkis, who's no stranger to such performances over his career.

'Eternals,' Nov. 6

So far all we know about "Eternals" is that Kumail Nanjiani got super-swore for his role as Kingo, and that the film will also feature Salma Hayek, Angelina Jolie, Gemma Chan, Brian Tyree Henry and a "Game of Thrones" reunion between Richard Madden and Kit Harington. The Eternals, created by the late comic-book legend Jack Kirby, are an advanced alien race with the power of apparently being Marvel Studios' next big thing.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

‘We’re both pretty fortunate’

Al Pacino and Robert De Niro crown 5 decades of friendship with Oscar-nominated ‘Irishman’

By GLENN WHIPP
Los Angeles Times

If you had pure intentions of watching Martin Scorsese’s 3½-hour movie epic “The Irishman” in one sitting — and for whatever reason — a failure of focus, too many interruptions, general exhaustion — couldn’t make it through to the end, Al Pacino wants you to know that he feels your pain.

When Pacino arrived at Scorsese’s New York office a few months ago to watch “The Irishman” for the first time, the 79-year-old actor could last only through the film’s first half before asking for a break.

“I didn’t know what I was in for,” Pacino says. He’s seated on a sofa next to his friend and “Irishman” co-star Robert De Niro, and he’s trying to find a delicate way of explaining what happened that day.

“You’re seeing yourself for the first time, so sometimes your bladder reacts to it.”

De Niro looks at Pacino, confused. “Your bladder?” Pacino lets out a bel-low. “I don’t know. But I had to go! I couldn’t make it through the whole thing. So I went, and I came back and it made no difference to me. I was

very moved by it. It reminded me of the feeling I get after having absorbed a novel. There’s a lot there to reflect on. And

I don’t usually get that from a movie.”

With 10 Oscar nominations, including best picture and one for Pacino, “The Irishman” is a reunion, a farewell and a summation. It’s the fourth movie Pacino and De Niro, 76, have made together, though they shared no screen time in one of those films (“The Godfather Part II”) and had only one scene together in another (“Heat”). It’s the ninth movie De Niro has made with Scorsese and the first time Pacino has worked with the director.

“The Irishman” affords the two actors an abundance of fellowship, with De Niro, a producer on the film, playing Frank Sheeran, a mobster and Teamsters official who worked for charismatic Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa (played by Pacino), came to regard him like a brother and then, according to Sheeran anyway, murdered him, an act that can be seen both as a betrayal and an expression of love.

We sat down on an early winter day in a West Hollywood hotel. De Niro, polite but reticent, let Pacino do most of the talking. “You do an interview and you learn a lot of things — especially about Bob!” Pacino joked about his reserved co-star. Earlier Pacino copped to being a little hyper. “I’m sorry, Bob. I’m taking all the ques-tions!” De Niro flashed

a crinkly smile and raised his hands in surrender. “It’s OK, Al. You’re good at this.”



NETFLIX/AP

Robert De Niro, from left, Al Pacino and Ray Romano star in “The Irishman.” Pacino received an Oscar nomination for best supporting actor for his role in the film.

Los Angeles Times: Scorsese says you come at acting from different places. “Al tends to go more toward fluidity and music, while Bob likes to locate state of mind and being, settling in.” Do you agree with that?

Pacino: “Fluidity and music” is interesting. I love music. I can’t really sing. I can’t play an instrument. But I’d say that music is my first love. I’ve used it at various times in roles, particularly when I was younger. I remember making the Godfather movies, especially “Godfather II”... De Niro begins to loudly hum Nino Rota’s love theme to the films.

Pacino: That’s very good, Bob. (Laughs) It’s close. I went to Mozart. I listened to a lot of Mozart and also Stravinsky and it put me in the mindset of Michael Corleone. I tried different pieces to see where they’d put me. You ever try it?

De Niro: I listen to some music to help get me in an emotional state. Sometimes it works. You can’t rely on it. If you’re going to cry, even a silly thing can help. I’ve listened to things from commercials. There was this one sentimental commercial, years ago, and I’d play it and it would help me.

What are we talking about here? Like the Paul Anka Kodak commercial?

De Niro: (Chuckles) No, no. (Pauses) Though ... I might have to try that. I think mine was a public service thing. But music ... doing a scene, like with Al, I feel there’s a musical connection. Ad-libbing, improvising, it’s like two musicians playing.

Did you do any of that in your scene in “Heat”? (Director) Michael Mann said you do free-form psychological absorption, Al.

Pacino: That’s a lot of multi-syllable words! ... while Bob is determined to be completely in the moment.

De Niro: That’s interesting that he said that. It’s similar to what Marty said.

Tell me about free-form psychological absorption.

Pacino: Oh, I will!

De Niro: Michael uses big

words sometimes. He has a very extensive vocabulary.

Pacino: I did a lot of theater early in my life, and that’s all about rehearsing. The more I rehearsed, the more I played a role, the more things would happen. That’s the psychological absorption, my friend. I love repeats! But you don’t often get that in film. There’s not much rehearsal.

With that scene in “Heat” with Bob, I went off to think about it and learn it. Then you can be in the moment and you listen and look and see what Bob’s doing and it changes. If he does something strange, I have to be there.

De Niro: We didn’t rehearse that scene in “Heat.” I didn’t want to.

Pacino: And that was wise. Because these two guys have never spoken to each other. And when we finally meet for the first time, there’s an energy in that wariness.

De Niro: It’s one of the favorite scenes I’ve ever done.

Do you have a favorite scene you did together in “The Irishman”?

De Niro: I don’t know if I could single one out. Just the fact that we did another film together means a lot.

Pacino: There’s no guarantee that a movie like this happens. You look at (Paul) Newman and (Robert) Redford. They stayed friends. They wanted to work together again. But they didn’t. And people don’t understand why, but it’s just tough for things to line up. I’m thankful they did for us.

De Niro: Al wrote me a beautiful email that meant a lot to me.

Pacino: I did. Immediately after seeing the movie. I called Marty and I wrote Bob. **What did you tell him?**

Pacino: Ha! (Long pause) You know ... I was moved by it and what he did. And I wanted to tell him that.

De Niro: I didn’t expect that. I was very, very moved by what you wrote.

You’ve known each other since the ‘60s. How did you connect as friends, beyond the work?

Pacino: Early in the ‘70s, without consciously doing it, we bonded because we were both dealing with the fact that, all of a sudden, we were well known. You go from being a young, out-of-work actor to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



Robert De Niro, left, and Al Pacino pose with their Critics Choice Award for best acting ensemble for “The Irishman” on Jan. 12. The movie is their fourth together, and has the most shared screen time.

RICHARD SHOTWELL, INVISION/AP

WEEKEND: MOVIES

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having people recognize you everywhere you go. That's a peculiar experience, and there was comfort in talking to someone else going through it. Because it was very strange what was going on.

Like what?

Pacino: Well, I remember a friend of mine once said to Lee Strasberg in an elevator, "Oh, I know you." And Lee says, "No. You know who I am. But you don't know me." Same friend was with me one time at a grocery store and I'm inside getting a cup of coffee to go. And a woman came up to my friend and asked, "Is that really Al Pacino in there?" And he said, "Yeah. Somebody's gotta be." That's fame.

De Niro: It's disconcerting. You can't prepare for it.

Pacino: We'd call each other and compare notes. "You want to get together?" And we'd get together...

De Niro: ... and it was always fruitful. There's a trust.

Pacino: Something always came out of it. And here we are today.

Because you're playing characters in "The Irishman" who pass through decades, thanks to the de-aging technology, there was a guy on set who'd yell out your character's age when you were doing a scene.

Pacino: This is 'ninie! Because I was getting off the couch like a 70-year-old man! And, in the scene, Hoffa was supposed to be 39. You forget how you moved. Later on, there was a scene where Hoffa has to run up a flight of steps. That I could do, because I was already studied.

De Niro: (Laughs) When I saw him running up those steps, I thought, "Jesus, he really went up those steps!" You couldn't keep up with him.

When you think of your age, how old do you feel?

De Niro: My best friend said it's sort of rude asking how old I am. It's almost like asking someone who's older, "How much longer do you think you have left?" (De Niro laughs)

I know how old you are. I'm wondering what age you feel.

De Niro: Most of the time, I feel younger than 76. But then sometimes, you look at yourself in the mirror and you say, "Oh, geez." I remember I was standing outside a building one time and I said, "Who's that old guy over there?" He had a hat on. Then he turned around and it was somebody I'd known and we'd said hello. But it was weird. And that's how I probably look to people.

Pacino: The worst thing is when you're walking somewhere and, by accident, you see yourself in the mirror and you turn around and say, "Whoa! Who's that?" And it's like, "Who am I? It brings you down a little bit."

But there's all that hard-earned wisdom that comes with all that experience, right?

Pacino: (Laughs) You don't always want that hard-earned wisdom. It's like that little Hoffa has in that "Charley" bit. With a knife you run. If Hoffa said it, it's probably true. He got 13 stitches in the back of his head. So if I had to take anybody's advice on that, it'd be Hoffa's. But do you want that hard-earned wisdom in your life? You just have to live with the decisions you've made and be grateful.

De Niro: Make the best of things. We're both pretty fortunate.



STXfilms/AP photos

A bitter aftertaste

Alpha male toxicity clouds 'The Gentlemen'

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Guy Ritchie's latest British gangster yarn, "The Gentlemen," opens with a bartender pulling a beer tap printed with a logo reading: "Gritchie's English Lore." It's on-brand appropriate branding for this return to roots for Ritchie, who burst onto the scene in the late '90s with the rollicking London crime flick "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels." With "The Gentlemen," co-written with Ivan Atkinson and Marn Davies, Ritchie invites the audience to belly up to his bar for a full pint of his signature brew: a wordy, bloody, Cockney-accented blend of colorful criminals. As you might expect, despite the title, these gentlemen aren't gentlemanly in the least.

This time, Ritchie expands his horizons to England's upper crust (the "toffs," if you will). The lords and ladies are a means to an end for the protagonist, Mickey Pearson (Matthew McConaughey), an American Rhodes scholar-turned-weed dealer who has worked out a deal with the landed gentry. They have the land he needs for

his grow operation; he has the money they need to sustain their titled lifestyles. Now Mickey wants to get out of the game, and he's trying to sell his organization to the highest bidder. Will it be the fey Jewish billionaire Matthew Berger (Jeremy Strong), or the aggressive young Chinese upstart Dry Eye (Henry Golding)?

It's not just the tale of a simple sale, though. It's recounted by an opportunistic private eye, Fletcher (Hugh Grant), who has turned up on the doorstep of Mickey's right hand man, Ray (Charlie Hunnam), hoping to sell his highly embellished version to Mickey for a higher price than the local tabloid has offered. Fletcher has even helpfully written it all into a screenplay, in a small bit of self-reflection about storytelling, as the saga grows wilder and wilder in Fletcher's telling.

It can be easy to be swept away by all the beautiful people, unreliable narrators, classic rock needle drops, wild costumes and regional accents. Ritchie still has undeniable attitude and swagger in spades. But kick the tires and you'll start to realize the story's a lemon. It's fairly simple underneath the layers of unreliable narrators and

An American drug kingpin in London (Matthew McConaughey, top) faces threats to his empire in "The Gentlemen," co-starring Michelle Dockery and Colin Farrell, above left, with Charlie Hunnam.

unnecessarily extravagant plot twists, which end up having all the intrigue of a potato. Story shortcomings can be forgiven. But the insidious and lazy cultural stereotypes Ritchie, Atkinson and Davies overly rely on are too unfortunate to be excused.

Colin Farrell is predictably fantastic as a track-suited boxing coach whose students raid one of Pearson's secret spots. The resulting music video they film, toplined by British grime MC Bugzy Malone, is easily the highlight of the film. Farrell's Coach, a loyal, protective tough guy with a rigid (if untraditional) moral code, is an oddball breath of fresh air. He's more like one of the rough and tumble characters from "Snatch," rather than the slick and slimy monied likes of Pearson. One wonders what the film would have been like centered around him, or even around Pearson's cool Cockney wife, Roz (Michelle Dockery). But "The Gentlemen" is so blinkered by its outdated (and often offensive) alpha male perspective that it's blind to the elements that could have made it great.

"The Gentlemen" is rated R for violence, language throughout, sexual references and drug content. Running time: 113 minutes.

'The Turning': Less about answers, more about horror to savor

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

At the end of Florida Sigismond's "The Turning," after all the credits had rolled, some members of the audience at a press screening were visibly and vocally upset. They were seemingly enraged at the film's unwillingness to offer up a single definitive answer about the perceived haunting in this take of Henry James' 1898 novella "The Turn of the Screw," joining a century's worth of questioners who have puzzled over the story of a young governess bedeviled by ghosts at her new job. Are these ghosts real, or is she just crazy? It's an age-old question, but Sigismond is confident simply not answering it, as frustrating as that may be.

Jack Clayton adapted the novella into 1961's "The Innocents," starring Deborah Kerr, and now "The Runaways" helmer and music video director Sigismond updates the tale to a more modern era, all

the moody gothic vibes enhanced by the film's grunge-era Washington state setting. Mackenzie Davis stars as the young governess, Kate, who leaves behind her life in Seattle out of a desire to help a wealthy young girl, orphaned and abandoned by her last teacher.

Flora (Brooklyn Prince) is indeed a charming and delightful child, though the stern British housekeeper Mrs. Grose (Barbara Marten) is anything but, and Flora's older brother, Miles (Finn Wolfhard), is entering his teen years angrily and violently. The crisp Kate intends to shape the privileged "thoroughbreds" right up, if only she can get through the night in this sprawling, creepy manor, packed with huge oil paintings of dead ancestors, overstuffed Baroque furniture, a forbidden East Wing, terrifying mannequins and the journal of Miss Jessel, the prior governess who just up and vanished from her post.

The script, by "The Conjuring" screenwriters Carey W. Hayes and Chad Hayes,

does not hold the viewer's hand. Explanation and speculation around the mysterious events is jettisoned for tone and atmosphere, which "The Turning" has in spades, thanks to the lush production design by Paki Smith and spectral cinematography by David Ungaro.

Davis conveys Kate's contention between her intuition and the duties she's promised to fulfill as things start to swerve toward the surreal in the emotional hellscape, which she can't discern as internal or external. The suspense burles up like a slow-burning, queasy sense of dread, a sickening feeling of invisible imprisonment rather than a high-strung high-wire tension act derived from jump scares or the supernatural.

"The Turning" might not work for everyone, but those for whom it works will find much to savor and puzzle over

"The Turning" is rated PG-13 for terror, violence, disturbing images, brief strong language and some suggestive content. Running time: 94 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Game on!

5 titles you can feel good about buying for children

By KYLE HILLIARD

Special to The Washington Post

I love my child more than anything in the world, but her taste in video games leaves a lot of room for improvement. Of course, that's partly the old man in me that considers the things I liked growing up to be better than the things kids enjoy today. Even with that understanding of my bias, I still look at the games my kid plays and cringe.

It's not the content, nor the art, nor the storytelling. It's the free-to-play nature and microtransaction minefields of what she enjoys. My kid mostly plays mobile games, preferring the kinds of experiences that avoid confrontation and killing and encourage her to squeal, "Awww!" from her room every few minutes. I'm glad she found her niche, but I am always trying to remind her of the world out there where the gameplay stands on its own and progress is encouraged, not stymied by frustrating timers or is otherwise blocked by a pay-wall.

With that in mind, here are a handful of video game experiences you can feel good buying for your kids that avoid such pitfalls and are just good for the sake of being good. And as a bonus, my kid enjoyed them, too.



Nintendo

Luigi's Mansion 3

Platform: Nintendo Switch

My wife and daughter basically marathoned Luigi's Mansion 3 over the course of a weekend and I am jealous they got to experience the game together while I just hung out pretending I was part of their cool ghost-hunting crew. Luigi's Mansion 3 is a puzzle game with occasional ghost-catching combat. You have to play for a little while to unlock Googigi (Luigi's clone made of goo that can travel through vents and pipes), but once you do, you can control Luigi, while your young partner handles goo duty.

Googigi is genuinely helpful, and also basically invincible so there is no downside to having him around and there are plenty of opportunities to solve puzzles and fight ghosts together. The boss battles represent an occasional difficulty spike, which can be frustrating, but there is probably a lesson for kids about overcoming obstacles or something hidden in there.



Thatgamecompany

Sky: Children of the Light

Platform: iOS

As a cynical adult video game person, I have issues personal to me about Thatgamecompany's follow-up to Journey. I don't like that it is currently only available on a platform where my fingers get in the way of the impressive visuals and I don't like the microtransactions. But with those caveats in place, Sky is a great free-to-download cooperative experience. The story shows and doesn't tell, which is great for young players, and when the going occasionally gets tough, you can literally grab your kid by the hand and shepherd them to the next destination. The finale is dark and moving, but it's the kind of entertainment experience where you come out from the darkness happy and optimistic about the future of humanity. Those pesky microtransactions are also, thankfully, very easy to ignore.

Apple Arcade (Sneaky Sasquatch, Word Laces, etc.)

Platform: iOS

My kid often runs to me with her device asking for permission to download something that makes me scowl with concern. When an Apple Arcade subscription, I discovered I can just point to the Arcade shortcut on the App Store's front page and say, "Only get games from here." I still need to offer my parental oversight to tell her things like, "You probably wouldn't like Neo Cab," but I rest assured knowing that whatever she finds in there will at least be free of predatory transactions or other questionable mobile game practices — a requirement of every Apple Arcade game.

The two big hits so far have been RAC7 Games' Sneaky Sasquatch and Minimega's Word Laces. Sneaky Sasquatch is a friendly story about a Sasquatch trying to collect food and blend into society. It's silly, colorful and is good about making sure you're not

Untitled Goose Game

Platform: Nintendo Switch, PC

House's bizarre waterfowl simulator has moved beyond obscure indie game thanks to its online ubiquity and consistent spot in the top-selling games list on Switch. It also bears the new mark of success that every video game aspires to: tweets from Chrissy Teigen.

All of that success and praise is helped by Untitled Goose Game's meme potential, but it's also a fun game, and an especially good one for playing with kids. You can't play co-op, but it's great for passing the controller and solving puzzles together, and you don't have to solve every puzzle to complete the game. You also never enter a fail-state, which means even if you mess up, you never have to leave the game. Nothing frustrates a young player more than having to start something over just because you can't figure it out right away.



Nintendo

Ring Fit Adventure

Platform: Nintendo Switch

The Wii became one of the top 10 best-selling video game consoles of all time thanks in part to how it encouraged kids to move, which was attractive to parents. As a parent who plays video games, I like the idea of my kid playing something that makes them move, but I also recognize the fun-value of a game where you just sit down, motionless, and get lost in an interactive world. Ring Fit Adventure is on this list not because it encourages my kid to move around and work up a sweat (which is a nice bonus), but rather because the video game side of it is engaging and interesting.

Rumor has it the game was built using Zelda: Breath of the Wild's engine. That fact is difficult to verify because Nintendo doesn't love to share those kinds of insider secrets, but I am a believer. The world's grass sways in similar ways, the colors are bright and inviting, and it just makes the world of Ring Fit Adventure an exciting place to visit. My kid and I are competing to see who can make more progress, and she is winning thanks to the energetic vibrancy of her youth. (That, and she's playing at a lower difficulty.)



Apple

Sneaky Sasquatch is available through Apple Arcade.

always doing the same thing. Word Laces is a word puzzle game that I like for new readers because it helps with spelling and offers all the hints you want without any penalty. You also can't go wrong with Rayman. He has always been surprisingly comfortable on the phone.



Nintendo

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

Peek into the world of printing

Museum in Mainz is dedicated to Johannes Gutenberg and movable type

By DAVID L. EDGE
Stars and Stripes

Just a 20-minute drive from Clay Kaserne in Germany, in the heart of Mainz's old town sits the Gutenberg Museum, dedicated to Johannes Gutenberg and the movable type printing press that he invented around 1440.

Gutenberg's printing press wasn't the first — Korean bookmakers were printing with movable metal type a century before him — but by allowing books to be mass produced inexpensively, it gave people access to new ideas and knowledge, which dragged Europe out of the Dark Ages and ushered in the information era, historians say.

Admission to the museum is 5 euros and for another 3.50 euros, you can rent an easy-to-use audio guide, available in English, French or German. The guide offers six tours that, combined, last an hour and provide a detailed explanation of everything in the museum.

Once I'd finished all six tours

and knew just about everything I will ever need to know about Gutenberg and printing across the centuries, in different cultures and around the world, I took time to browse the museum displays, including the famed Gutenberg Bible, the first thing he printed on his press. Two sets of ancient Chinese printing wheels that have more than 600 movable clay stencils caught my eye in the East Asia section of the museum before I moved on to the Islam section, where I was awed by a burial cloth with Arabic prayers woven into it, the words so small that they were hard to see.

In the Druckladen, which is part of the museum but has a separate entrance, visitors big and small can try their hand at ages-old artisanry like bookbinding or lino printing.

The museum is tucked away behind some shops and an apartment building, but if you look for Mainz's 1,000-year-old St. Martin's Cathedral, it's immediately opposite.

edge.david@stripes.com



Gutenberg Museum, Mainz

The Gutenberg Bible is one of the main attractions at the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz, Germany.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Address: Gutenberg Museum, Liebfrauenplatz 5, 55116 Mainz
The address for the Druckladen is the same, but the entrance is on Seilergasse 1. There's free parking about a two-minute walk from the museum.

TIMES

Gutenberg Museum: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Closed

Monday and German holidays.
Druckladen: Same as the museum from Tuesday to Saturday, but 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sunday.

COSTS

Gutenberg Museum admission: 5 euros for adults, 3.50 euros for kids 8-18. Group discounts available.

Druckladen: Workshops cost around 100 euros. A schedule is available on the museum website

under Einrichtungen and then Druckladen.

INFORMATION

Gutenberg Museum:
Phone: +49 (0)6131 12-2640;
Online: gutenberg-museum.de
Druckladen: For more information and to book a spot at a workshop, call +49 (0)6131-122686 or email gm-druckladen@stadt-mainz.de

— David Edge



DAVID EDGE/Stars and Stripes

The Gutenberg Museum is located near the historical center of Mainz, across from the 1,000-year-old St. Martin's Cathedral.



DAVID EDGE/Stars and Stripes

A replica of a book binding station from Johannes Gutenberg's era is on display.



BERND ESSLING/Gutenberg Museum, Mainz

A museum staffer demonstrates how pages were printed.



BERND ESSLING/Gutenberg Museum, Mainz

In the Gutenberg Museum's educational print shop, the Druckladen, visitors can give typesetting and printing a try, or take part in a number of workshops.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

France's enduring Gothic cathedrals

Despite many years of traveling to France, I still can't help but marvel at the towering Gothic churches that mark the heart of many French cities.

The Gothic style of architecture, primarily employed in churches, evolved in medieval France as a way to give interior spaces a better-lit, more upward-reaching feel than the dark, heavy Romanesque architecture that preceded it. As French urban life grew more stable, churches didn't need to be so fortress-like—and engineering innovations allowed architects to build airier, vertical churches that seemed to stretch heavenward, their walls given over to windows to allow maximum illumination. Newly pointed arches allowed churches to grow higher and more dramatic on the outside, while making space for colorful stained-glass windows on the inside. Counterweight “flying buttresses”—stone arches that reach up from the ground to push back inward on relatively weak external walls, thereby supporting the roof—go even farther in making the interior of giant stone buildings feel almost weightless.

While it will be some time before visitors can once again take in France's most famous Gothic wonder, Paris' Notre-Dame cathedral, many other magnificent Gothic cathedrals are sprinkled across the country like jeweled pins on a map.

I like to imagine what it was like to be a pilgrim 600 years ago, hiking for days to a particular church on a particularly holy day—and feeling the awe when the soaring spire of the cathedral finally appeared on the horizon.

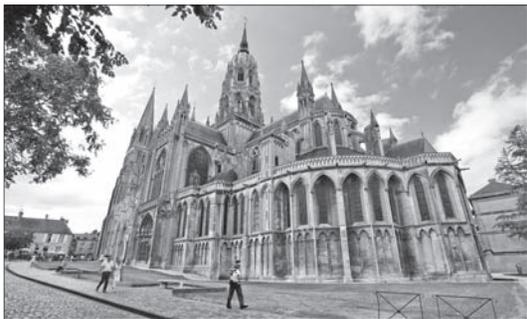
Nowadays you can hop on a train in Paris and, for example, arrive in just over an hour in Chartres, home of the cathedral that is arguably Europe's best example of pure Gothic. Officially known as the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres, it's one of more than a hundred

churches dedicated to “Our Lady” (‘‘Notre Dame’’) scattered around France—and, like Paris' Notre-Dame, Chartres' also experienced a harrowing fire.

While mostly made of stone, many Gothic churches feature a wooden roof and/or spire, making them susceptible to fires. Amazingly, after Chartres' cathedral burned to the ground in 1194, it took just 30 years to rebuild—astonishing when you consider it took centuries to build cathedrals such as Paris' Notre-Dame. What visitors see now is a unity of architecture, statuary and stained glass that captures the spirit of the 13th century “Age of Faith” like no other church.

Two of my favorite Gothic cathedrals are just north of Chartres, in neighboring Normandy. In contrast to small-town Chartres, Rouen was France's second-largest city in medieval times. Its cathedral, also dedicated to Mary, is primarily famous as a landmark of art history. Visiting today, you can see essentially what Claude Monet saw when he painted 30 different studies of this Flamboyant Gothic (mid-14th century) facade at various seasons and times of day, capturing his “impressions” as the light played across its exquisitely detailed masonry.

Rouen's cathedral was constructed between the 12th and 14th centuries, though lightning strikes, wars (the cathedral was accidentally bombed in World War II), and other destructive forces meant constant rebuilding. Inside is a chapel dedicated to Joan of Arc (she was convicted of heresy in Rouen and burned at the stake there in 1431) and several stone tombs that date from when Rouen was the



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONICELLI/RickStevens.com

The centerpiece of a small town, Bayeux's cathedral is as large as Paris' Notre-Dame.

capital of the dukes of Normandy (including one containing the heart of English King Richard the Lionheart).

Two hours west of Rouen, Bayeux's cathedral—is as big as Paris' Notre-Dame—dominates its small town. Its two towers and west facade were originally Romanesque, but the towers were later capped with tall Gothic spires, and the facade embellished with a decorative Gothic “curtain” of architectural details. Its interior is also a mix of styles, with solid round arches in the nave's ground level supporting gracefully Gothic upper stories that soar high above. Historians believe the Bayeux tapestry, the 70-yard-long embroidery telling the story of William the Conqueror's victory in the Battle of Hastings, was originally designed to, and did, encircle the nave.

The most impressive Gothic church in

eastern France is in Strasbourg, where its venerable cathedral—another “Notre-Dame”—is a true jaw-dropper.

This Gothic spectacle somehow survived the French Revolution, the Franco-Prussian War and both World Wars. The interior is worth savoring slowly, with its wide nave, exquisite gold-leaf organ and elaborately carved stone pulpit. The marvelous stained glass, 80 percent of which is original, dates as far back as the 12th century. The church's exterior, with its cloud-piercing spire (at 466 feet, it was the world's tallest until the mid-1800s) and red sandstone (from the 13th and 14th centuries) stands out from the other great Gothic churches in France.

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

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Chinese New Year celebrations in Europe

Chinese New Year, also referred to as the Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, is the biggest holiday of the year in China. The date on which it falls is determined by a lunisolar calendar, based on both the cycle of the moon and Earth's course around the sun. The first day of the Chinese New Year begins upon the appearance of the new moon on a date between Jan. 21 and Feb. 20. In 2020, January 25 will kick off the Year of the Rat, the first of all animals to appear in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. A holiday traditionally spent with family, several news outlets estimate the population of China will take some 30 billion trips within a span of 40 days before and after the big day.

A handful of European cities host festivities as well. The biggest Chinese New Year celebrations outside Asia take place in London, where the holiday will be marked on Jan. 26. Festivities take place across the West End, where revelers enjoy performances on stage, the eating of traditional foods from street vendors and a vibrant parade. The colorful floats, including



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do around the Europe Traveler blog: [strips.com/blogs/europe-traveler](https://www.strips.com/blogs/europe-traveler)

Europe's largest assembly of Chinese lions and dragons, depart from Charing Cross Road at 10 a.m. and make their way along Shaftesbury Avenue in China town. Trafalgar Square is the site of dance and music shows, with many artists from China taking to the stage. Leicester Square hosts a family fun zone. Entry to the activities is free. Online: tinyurl.com/tjp7an

Paris takes to the streets in celebration one week later. On Feb. 24 at 2 p.m., about 2,000 marchers representing about 40 groups will take part in the French capital's lively parade. The route begins at 44, Avenue d'Ivry and

continues along the avenue de Choisy and the boulevard Massena. Online: tinyurl.com/rwnjyl

Other European cities hosting celebrations include Amsterdam (Dam Square and Nieuwmarkt/Zeedijk neighborhood; Jan. 25); Dublin (historic fruit and vegetable market; Jan. 25-26); Madrid (Usera, Jan. 26) and Rotterdam, Belgium (Wijkpark Oude Westen; Feb. 1).

Hahnenkamm World Cup Races

One of the Alps' most notorious downhill ski races is held in the Tyrolean ski resort town of Kitzbuehel, Austria. The 80th anniversary edition of the legendary Hahnenkamm World Cup Races unfolds through Jan. 26.

On a mountain whose name translates to “rooster's comb,” the racecourse known as the Streif (stripe) challenges some of the world's top skiers with its nail-raising turns, blind drops, jumps and unbelievably steep gradients. Skiers can achieve speeds in excess of 86 mph along its harrowing two-mile course.

The Men's super-G takes place on Jan. 24, followed by the Men's downhill on Jan. 25 and the men's slalom on the nearby Ganslernhang course on Jan. 26.

Tickets to enter the spectator's zone are unlimited and can be purchased on the spot. Organizers warn to beware of tickets being sold online by disreputable agencies at an inflated cost. Admission to the Jan. 25 race costs 30 euros and up; entry is free to those born in 2003 or later. The race begins at 11:30 a.m. Off the track, the resort town buzzes with fans, athletes, celebrities and VIPs, making people-watching here a sport unto itself. Online: hahnenkamm.com

Carnival parade in Austria's Tyrol region

Telfs, Austria, is a market town in the region of Tyrol about twenty miles west of Innsbruck. Once every five years, it holds a carnival parade so unique that it's made its way into UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The “Schleicherlaufen” traces its origins back to ancient fertility rites, and its proceedings are documented in writings dating as far back as 1571.

On the main day of festivities, the exclusively male participants don elaborate, masterfully designed hats towering more than three feet high and weighing up to 17 pounds. These are paired with intricately crafted masks

designed to make the wearers appear young, silk breeches and white ruffled blouses. Other essential characters include the “Wilde” who wear wooden masks with beards and exaggerated features and shaggy costumes made out of tree lichen. A bear always features in the celebration, along with “bear baiters” and numerous costumed characters representing monkeys, camels, an elephant, a turtle and others animals, along with those in the dress of various nationalities. Decorated floats complete the scene.

The spectacle kicks off at 7 a.m. Feb. 2 with the parading of the sun through town, and the Schleicherlaufen itself starts at 11 a.m. Telfs is an approximately 50-minute drive from Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Entry to the festivities is free. Online: schleicherlaufen.at

Other UNESCO-listed carnival events include the Schemenlaufen in Innsbruck, Austria, on Feb. 9; the Busujaros in Mohacs, Hungary, Feb. 20-25; the Granville Carnival in Granville, France, Feb. 21-25; the Carneval de Binche in Binche, Belgium, Feb. 23-25; and the Basler Fasnacht in Basel, Switzerland, March 2-5, among others. Complete list online: ich.unesco.org/en/lists

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe

Welcome change

Cicchetteria Chinese Zhu serves high-quality, low-cost Chinese food in downtown Vicenza

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

The crispy duck was the best thing I'd tasted in weeks.

The fried rice, with scrambled egg, bean and peas, was the best since spending time in Asia many years ago. The steamed vegetable dumplings were delightful.

I can't say enough good things about Cicchettiaria Chinese Zhu, a sleek but inexpensive Chinese restaurant that recently opened on a canal-side street in downtown Vicenza.

I'd previously noticed the Chinese red lanterns outside the restaurant and what looked like happy diners within. That seemed like a good sign.

A taste of some zuppa agro piccante or pollo all'ananas — hot and sour soup and pineapple chicken — would be good, I thought, a nice change from pasta and pizza, from olives and tomatoes and the usual Italian fare.

To have it be so fresh and flavorful was great, and kind of a surprise, particularly at the restaurant's price point.

Most entrees are 6 euros, as was my delicious crispy duck. How do they get it so crispy, I wondered? First they pour boiling water on the duck to tighten the skin, then let it air dry for several hours, then glaze it with honey or rice wine before cooking it at a high temperature. That's a lot of prep for 6 euros.

Soups and appetizers are 2.50 to 6 euros. The most expensive dishes — steamed and braised fish — cost 16 euros.

The extensive menu focuses on Cantonese-style cookery, the most popular of China's many regional cuisines, which includes items like spring rolls, shredded pork in garlic sauce, Chinese casserole or chop suey, mushrooms and bamboo, braised tofu and bok choy. There are several vegetarian dishes. There is also a small bar and a selection of beer and wine.

The interior of the restaurant, which has been open for only a couple of months, is clean and shiny, with a restrained, serene decor. There are white walls and tablecloths, black chairs and touches of red. It's a good find for anyone in the area looking for an excuse to celebrate the Lunar New Year, which begins Saturday.

The friendly service is also a plus. With no idea what to order, I asked my server for advice. She didn't demur and say everything is good or it depends on what you like. She made her recommendation, and it was right on.

montgomery.nancy@stripes.com
Twitter: @montgomerynancy

CICCHETTERIA CINESE ZHU

Address: Contra Barche 22, 36100 Vicenza

Phone: (+39) 0444 310114

Hours: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. every day except Tuesday

Menu: Chinese, Italian and English

— Nancy Montgomery



PHOTOS BY NANCY MONTGOMERY/Stars and Stripes

Above: The crispy duck at Cicchettiaria Chinese Zhu is a steal at 6 euros. Below right: Steamed dumplings arrive hot and pillowy in a wood bowl.



The restaurant is open for lunch or dinner every day except Tuesday.



Celebrate Lunar New Year this weekend in the clean, serene dining room.

Pasta Alla Gricia gets a makeover

By ANN MALONEY
The Washington Post

If you're a traditionalist, look away. What follows is a modern twist on an ancient dish, Pasta Alla Gricia. If you do turn away, however, you'll miss out on a one-pot wonder that is perfect for evenings when you're craving an easy indulgence but don't want to order that cheesy pizza.

Traditional Pasta Alla Gricia, which is said to be a dish of Roman origins, first enjoyed centuries ago by Roman shepherds, is enduring because it delivers big flavor with simple ingredients. It is part of the "cucina povera," a term used to describe the cooking of the country's poor. Such dishes as carbonara and cacio e pepe also fall under that category.

Pasta is tossed with crispy guanciale (cured pork jowl), pasta cooking water and grated pecorino Romano. The fat from the rendered meat, the starchy water and the grated cheese, when vigorously stirred with the pasta, emulsify into a glossy, porky, cheesy sauce that coats the individual spaghetti strands.

Pile it into a bowl, and dig in. So good. In her cookbook "Keep It Simple: Easy Weeknight One-Pot Recipes," author Yasmin Fahr recommends the traditional guanciale, but she adds bite-size pieces of kale to help us meet our daily vegetable requirements.

She also gives us permission to substitute pancetta or bacon for the harder-to-find guanciale. And she gives the thumbs-up to trying other cheeses, such as Parmesan.

Waiting for the water to come to a boil and then for the pasta to cook until almost al dente is what takes the most time.

CHEESY PASTA WITH BACON AND KALE (PASTA ALLA GRICIA)

Total time: 40 minutes
4 to 6 servings

Ingredients

Kosher salt, optional
1 pound spaghetti
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, with more for pasta
8 ounces bacon, guanciale or pancetta, cut into ¼-inch cubes or strips
10½ ounces curly kale, stems removed, chopped or torn into bite-size pieces
1 cup (3½ ounces) finely grated pecorino Romano cheese or Parmesan cheese
Freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Bring a large pot filled with 2 quarts of water to a boil. Add salt, if desired. Cook the pasta in the boiling water for 7 minutes, about 4 minutes less than the package instructions indicate.

When the pasta is cooked, drain, reserving 1½ cups of the cooking water. Immediately drizzle the drained pasta with olive oil. Use tongs or a wooden spoon to toss and coat the pasta with the oil.

Drain the pot with a kitchen towel and it set over medium heat. Add the 1 tablespoon of oil and heat until shimmering. Add the bacon and cook, stirring frequently, until the fat is mostly rendered, about 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to low. Fluff the cooked pasta with a fork and then add it, the cheese and 1 cup of the reserved pasta water to the pot. Stir vigorously until the cheese melts and transforms into a creamy sauce that coats the pasta, 4 to 5 minutes. If the sauce is too thick or dry, add more pasta water, 2 tablespoons at a time, until it reaches the desired consistency.

Taste and season with pepper, as desired.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



BUERGENSTOCK RESORT/TNS

Switzerland's Buergenstock Resort stands out, even among Switzerland's five-star hotels.



BUERGENSTOCK RESORT/TNS

The Buergenstock, which reopened in 2017 after nine years of renovation, sits on a ridge with views of Lake Lucerne and the Alps.



RAFFLES SINGAPORE/TNS

The Raffles Hotel, first opened in 1887, is a Singapore National Monument and reopened in 2019 after a complete renovation.

Swissapore

No, it's not a real place. But seemingly dissimilar Switzerland and Singapore have much in common

By GEORGE HOBICA
Tribune News Service

We live in unsettled times. Angry mobs are striking and marching in France. Paris is nearly paralyzed. Protest is pandemic around the world: in Poland, they march against a creeping autocracy; in Hong Kong, they oppose mainland China's heavy hand; in India, they inveigh against a new citizenship law; and in Lebanon, a country so divided by sect and religion that people never agree on anything, they gather in public as one to rail against widespread corruption. Similar protests are taking place, in no particular disorder, in Iran, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Italy, Germany, Spain and Ecuador, and, from time to time, in the United States and the United Kingdom.

This past summer, seeking some sanity, I flew to Singapore and from there to Switzerland. I struggle to think of any other two countries where the citizenry is as contented. In my imagination, the two countries meld into a single entity: Swissapore.

Plato tells us that the distinguishing gift of the poet is the ability to see similarities in dissimilar objects. I'm no poet, but I've visited Singapore and Switzerland many times over the past 40 years and after my most recent trip I began to better understand what these two seemingly dissimilar countries have in common and why I find them both so healing, a tonic to banish the feeling that the world is falling apart.

The similarities are more interesting

Casual observers disparage Swissapore. Here's Harry Lime, the swindler played by Orson Welles in the 1949 film "The Third Man": "Switzerland had 500 years of democracy and peace. And what did that produce? The cuckoo clock." As if 500 years of peace isn't enough. (For the record, the cuckoo clock was invented in Germany.) Singapore gets some scurrilous shade as well: science fiction writer William Gibson belittled it as "Disneyland

with the death penalty." Was he put off by the meticulous trimmed shrubs lining the highways? Irrate at the lack of black blobs of discarded gum marring the sidewalks? Miffed by the government's strict drug laws?

I'm not the first to notice the Swissapore connection. Gibson refers to "Singapore's Swiss-watch infrastructure," which I guess is a backhanded compliment, and he dismisses the country as a "smug neo-Swiss enclave of order and prosperity." The horror! Order! Prosperity! If he longed for disorder, he could have gone elsewhere.

Indifferent to their detractors, both countries go about their business, safely ensconced on their islands (Switzerland, as Dicon Bewes writes in her book "Swiss Watching," is "the landlocked island"). To keep potential invaders at bay, both nations require two years of military service from all able-bodied males, and maintain strict neutrality in geopolitical affairs.

Is all the shade just jealousy? Life is good in Swissapore: the Swiss and the Singaporeans on average live four years longer than Americans do and, according to the Paris School of Economics, their Gini score, a measure of wealth equality, is also identical, higher than in most countries, including the U.S. Economic insecurity and inequality are behind much of the unrest we see in so many countries today.

And, since this is meant to be a travel story, I'll point out that both countries are tourist magnets, yet neither is over-touristed, another valid reason to visit if serenity isn't enough.

Bragging not allowed

One more thing: even though both countries are relatively well off, and things are otherwise hunky-dory, Swissapore disdains conspicuous displays of prosperity.

So when the over-the-top Buergenstock resort (buergenstock.ch) reopened in 2017, one critic sniffed, "it's not Swiss to show off."

Switzerland, famous for its five-star hotels, such as the Alpina Grand in Gstaad and the Royal Savoy Hotel in

Lausanne, had never seen the likes of the Buergenstock when it emerged from nine years of construction and renovation, high on its ridge with views of Lake Lucerne and the Alps. It's another world, peaceful and rarefied. Misty whiffs of clouds float over the green hills and hug the Alps and the lake below, while cowbells and chirping birds serenade guests. The air is fresh. There's a scent of pine and new-mown hay.

In the lobby of one of the four hotels on the property, I bent over a table to sniff an overabundance of four or five dozen luscious pines, sure they were artificial this late in the season. I noticed an employee nearby wearing a quizzical smile that said, "Yes, of course they're real!" Perhaps I just imagined this. Or maybe he was just enjoying my enjoyment. There are three full-time florists on staff, I later learned.

There are also four full-time tour guides on staff. The resort is so vast you almost need a St. Bernard carrying a map and a keg of Evian, and so intriguing that those not staying for the night pay \$40 for a 90-minute guided site visit. And if you were thinking of sending your drone for a birds-eye tour, don't: "We shoot them down," a security officer told me. "We Swiss are all good marksmen thanks to our mandatory military service."

No more wild boars

There are also guided tours of the sites appearing in "Crazy Rich Asians" now, one of which is Singapore's Raffles Hotel, reopened in 2019 after its own cost-banned, top-to-bottom renovation. It's just jaw-dropping, a splendor in marble and mahogany. The famous white-turbaned Sikh doormen, as regal and imposing as ever, fustooned with gold braid and medals, remain as they were. In 1904, one of their predecessors chased a wild boar through the lobby and wrestled it to the ground.

Wild boars no longer roam the streets, but not all of Singapore has been tamed. One Saturday night, K. F.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

FROM PAGE 30

Seetoh, a local restaurateur and the country's answer to Anthony Bourdain, took me for a tour of the city's sequestered red-light district, where dozens of young ladies gather for inspection by the South Asian guest workers who build the Swiss-watch infrastructure. The government takes a pragmatic approach to the sex industry, as it does with much else; sex work is legal here, and the workers are subject to health inspections.

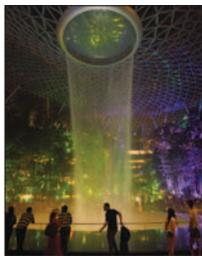
One day, Seetoh took me to sample the culinary bounty of the hawket centers, also subject to government health inspections, where the signs read no touting, no smoking, no pets, no littering. And please bus your tray. There are 114 hawket centers and 13,000 street food vendors here. The centers are a Singapore staple, but how long will they last? "The chefs' kids can't wait to go into business, just not their fathers' business," Lionel Chee, a local food-tour guide (foodtourcompany.com), told me. "It's hard work, long hours, low pay. Food costs keep rising, but too much competition keeps prices low."

Another place Singaporeans like to eat is the airport, even if they're not flying anywhere. Changi is, after all, the world's best airport (just ask anyone who flies a lot). There's a butterfly garden, a rooftop swimming pool, a free movie theater, dozens of restaurants and a huge mall. And now there's the Jewel, opened last year, a mixed-use Xanadu with gardens, shops, dining and a hotel, all upstaged by the world's largest indoor waterfall, under a climate-controlled, geodesic-like pleasure dome. This HSBC Rain Vortex, as it's called, discharges a torrent of reclaimed rainwater (130,000 gallons of it), descending 130 feet from an orifice in the building's ceiling, a deluge so fierce it could serve as Paul Bunyan's power-shower: My 11-hour flight to Switzerland on Singapore Airlines didn't leave until 1 a.m., so I took in the 9:30 p.m. light and sound and water and mist show. I use "spectacular" rarely, but in this case, my tongue is tied.

What would Gibson make of this high tech waterfall? It is Disneyish. Heck, it out-Disneys Disney.

OK, yes, Swissappor does seem a bit make-believe.

So what, I say. Disneyland, eat your heart out. You, too, William Gibson.



Georec Hosaka/TNS

The HSBC Rain Vortex, located at Singapore's Changi Airport, recirculates 130,000 gallons of rainwater every day.

Germany DIRECTORY

Restaurants

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific



Rugged beauty

Camper vans offer a fun and flexible way to experience New Zealand's South Island



PHOTOS BY MALCOLM FOSTER/AP

Top: This photo taken with a fish-eye lens shows Mount Cook and a boardwalk section of the Hooker Valley Track that leads to Hooker Glacier on the South Island of New Zealand.

Above: The Foster family, from left, Miles, 16, Jacob, 17, and Mio, pose in front of their rented camper van in Glenorchy, New Zealand, on Dec. 23.

BY MALCOLM FOSTER
Associated Press

We crested a hill on the winding lakeside road, and there it was: Middle-earth.

Rugged, snow-capped mountains glowed in the setting sun, and dappled green pastures tumbled down to the water's edge. White peaks soared in the distance. The Misty Mountains, perhaps?

It was past 8 p.m. in late December — summer in New Zealand — and our family was on Day 4 of an eight-day camper van adventure around the South Island. We were headed to a campground in Glenorchy, a village at the northern tip of Lake Wakatipu, where several scenes from “The Lord of the Rings” movies were filmed. It is one of the most unspoiled, magically beautiful places I’ve ever been.

We had just left the picturesque if touristy extreme-sports mecca of Queenstown, where commercial bungee jumping started (no, we didn’t try that).

A New Zealander friend had recommended we stay in the quieter, more pastoral Glenorchy, and I’m glad we did. We spent two nights at a charming campground with hot showers and a pleasant communal kitchen. It ended up being the highlight of a trip filled with breathtaking beauty and memorable experiences.

Our 800-mile loop south from Christchurch, the South Island’s biggest city, took us through countryside that at turns reminded me of Scotland, Switzerland, northern Japan and the U.S. Southwest. We drove past craggy mountains, lush forests, huge barren hills dotted with scrub brush, and green pastures with lots and lots of sheep. We stopped at milky blue lakes whose hue comes from “glacial flour,” rock sediment ground up by glaciers. We hiked through meadows, past rushing streams and huge bushes of yellow wildflowers. The sun set around 9 p.m., giving us gloriously long days to explore. We didn’t want to leave.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific



PHOTOS BY MALCOLM FOSTER/AP

These photos taken with a fish-eye lens show the Foster family eating lunch in the kitchen, top, and brothers Jacob, left, and Miles Foster, above, gaming in the rear of their camper van.

FROM PAGE 32

Touring in a camper van gave us flexibility to go at our own pace and stop where we wanted. It's a popular way for both Kiwis (as New Zealanders call themselves) and international tourists to see the country.

New Zealand has a well-organized network of campsites. Some are spartan, with just public toilets and access to water, while others have hot showers, washing machines, shared kitchens and barbecue grills.

Campsites are largely divided between "powered sites," where you can hook up your van to an electrical outlet, and those without power.

Renting a camper van isn't cheap, but you save on lodging and dining since you're in a home on wheels. You're also paying for the freedom of movement. The most basic campsites are free, and many others cost between 10 and 25 New Zealand dollars (US \$7-17) per person per night. Apps such as Campable and CamperMate provide helpful information.

Our 29-foot-long vehicle—a Fiat truck refitted by Germany's Burstner—had two double beds, one in a back room that included a toilet and shower, and another that descended from the ceiling of the front cabin with the push of a button.

It also had a tiny kitchen with three gas burners, a sink and small refrigerator. The front two seats swiveled around to face a table behind which the other two members of our family sat while driving and for meals. We also ate at picnic tables or communal dining areas.

Every other day, we dropped by a "dump site" to dispose of toilet waste and "gray water" (sink waste water). Our teenage sons helped with the dumping duties, and the experience taught us all to be more aware of our daily water, energy and waste needs—things we take for granted at home.

I found the vehicle easy to drive, although extra caution was needed going around corners. Driving on the left may be challenging for some, as well as using roundabouts, or traffic circles, which are common in New Zealand.

'Cloud piercer'

It quickly became clear that my initial route, which included a run out to Milford Sound, was overly ambitious, so we scaled back. Instead of covering a lot of ground, we spent more time savoring fewer locations, and that



Above: The northern end of Lake Wakatipu in Glenorchy, New Zealand, where several scenes from "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" were filmed.

Left: The Hooker Valley Track leads to the base of the Hooker Glacier at the bottom of Mount Cook, New Zealand's tallest mountain, also known as "Cloud Piercer."

proved to be the right call.

Our first objective was Mount Cook, New Zealand's tallest mountain, also known as "Aoraki," or "Cloud Piercer," in the indigenous Maori language.

After a long international flight and connection in Auckland, we picked up the camper van near Christchurch airport in the afternoon and got a helpful explanation about how everything worked. (There are many rental companies, including Maui, Jucy and Wilderness Motorhomes, which we used and liked.)

After stocking up on groceries, we drove a couple hours inland before weariness prompted me to pull into a simple roadside campsite just as it began to rain. We paid the on-site manager, cooked a simple dinner in our vehicle and soon fell asleep in our beds as the wind whistled outside.

Waking refreshed to sunny skies, we drove into hilly country, stopping to admire fields of purple lupins and turquoise glacier-fed lakes, Tekapo and Pukaki.

As we approached Mount Cook, its huge white peak suddenly emerged from a break in the clouds, rising starkly from the flat land. We spent two nights at Glentanner Park Centre, a powered campsite with nice facilities and views of Mount Cook and surrounding peaks.

We had glorious weather the next day for an easy hike along a popular trail beneath snow-capped ridges to near the bottom of the shrinking Hooker Glacier, at the foot of Mount Cook.

How many days a week do you get clear skies like this? I asked a park official. Maybe one, he said.

We hiked beyond the end of the trail, clambering over rocks toward the glacier—which appeared gray, like dirty ice at the end of winter—and stopped at a little hill where my son built a cairn and my wife sun-bathed on a boulder.

Enchanting light

I thought that experience would be hard to beat, but Glenorchy topped it.

As we drove south past river valleys and vineyards to Queenstown, set on a tiny inlet of Lake Wakatipu, the late-afternoon sun cast an enchanting light on the rugged mountains across shimmering water.

After driving through town, filled with tourists and chic apartments, we stopped at a little beach where our boys skipped rocks and played with driftwood.

Hopping back in the camper van and driving to Glenorchy on a road hugging the lake, we crested a hill about a half-hour later for a breathtaking view that made me smile: We're spending the night in Middle-earth.

Actually, we stayed at Mrs. Woolly's Campground in the middle of the little town. It had a clean communal kitchen and pleasant indoor/outdoor eating area. A seven-minute hike shop newer cost NZ \$2 (US \$1.33), and there was a cute gift store next door.

We traveled at Christmastime, when lots of other camper vans are on the road, so I reserved a couple campsites online ahead of time, including this one. Otherwise, we found space at sites along the way.

Lake Wakatipu is too cold for swimming, but you can rent kayaks and bikes, go parasailing or hire a helicopter to fly you over the peaks and lake. Or just go for one of the area's many scenic walks. Some outfits offer tours of locations where scenes from "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" movies were filmed.

360 degrees of beauty

Our family took a memorable hike up nearby Mount Judah. Under cloudless skies, we walked up a trail lined with yellow wildflowers. This expedition turned into our own mini-"Lord of the Rings" adventure when the trail led away from the summit, prompting us to bushwhack the final third, up a steep slope of grassy underbrush to the top. (New Zealand has no snakes or large wild mammals, although we did encounter some goats.)

From the summit, we were rewarded with stunning views of Lake Wakatipu and craggy, snowcapped peaks in every direction.

After a picnic, we bushwhacked back down to the trail and descended to our camper van in the afternoon sun. We met only six people during the entire hike.

Our travels would go on to include stops at Wanaka, on another lovely lake, and Oamaru, on the east coast where we encountered small penguins that came ashore at night to sleep. We could hear them squawk from inside our van.

After a fulfilling eight days, we returned the camper van without any mishaps, having gained a new love for this beautiful country and its friendly people—and a renewed appreciation for hot showers, sewage systems and our larger kitchen at home. It was a great way to experience New Zealand and build family memories, and I'm already envisioning my next camper van adventure.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Not cleared for takeoff

Aviation industry's seat innovations don't have enough fuel to get off the ground

By HANNAH SAMPSON
The Washington Post

To judge by the headlines, aviation was heading for some major changes last year. “Standing up on planes moves a step closer to reality,” the Daily Mail wrote in April. “Airlines are finally fixing the middle seat,” Fast Company proclaimed in July. And, in a statement that surely made budget travelers swoon, CNN wrote this in December: “New airplane seat design will make it easier to sleep in economy.”

History is full of such proposed innovations: solutions that will eliminate armrest battles, allow flexibility in seat dimensions and, frequently, make the middle seat less terrible. But more often than not, the concepts — for better or worse — stall before ever moving past the prototype.

Seth Miller, an airline analyst who writes about passenger experience for PaxEx.aero, said he experiences “short bursts of optimism followed by years of disappointment and despair” when it comes to seat design innovation. At least twice a year, he says, design companies and manufacturers show off creative ideas at trade shows that get attention from airlines, the broader industry and journalists. And then, typically, very little changes.

The creative options that are out there definitely don't get the chance many of them probably deserve to actually get on airplanes,” Miller says.

That's because, experts say, airlines are often reluctant to try something new if there's even a chance that it won't work for their needs.

It is a complex industry that sometimes is more complicated than it needs to be, because people are very set in their ways and have very low tolerance for risk,” says Marisa Garcia, a writer about the aviation industry and an analyst who worked in aircraft seating manufacturing. “If they think something's going to go badly, they'd rather not do it — even though it might be innovative and practical — just because of the chance that they

will be facing a massive run of failure.”

Garcia's favorite example of a solid idea that fizzled is the Cozy Suite, a concept from Thompson Aero Seating. In 2015, she called the design “a brilliant idea that rethinks economy seating without sacrificing the passenger experience for anyone — including the person stuck in the middle seat.”

The Cozy Suite featured staggered seats in a row that would let airlines fit more

was just a concept meant to “explore the potential for innovation within the economy airline seating space.”

“As it was conceptual, the project has not gone any further since,” he added.

Hailed by Wired in 2014 as “A Brilliant Double-Decker Armrest That Would Make Flying Less Hellish,” the Paperclip Armrest featured a swooshy design that provided two levels so people sitting next to each other could both have some elbow

“Budget travelers, they don't want to pay a lot of money; they want to pay the least amount of money. So it's a little difficult for the airline to provide higher-quality seats on the one hand and be able to charge very little on the other.”

NAWAL TANEJA

airline business strategist and executive-in-residence at Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business

passengers in economy — and make them more comfortable. But, as she pointed out at the time, the concept had already existed for seven years without gaining traction. She wrote that the design was probably too different for airlines and passengers to embrace; today, she calls it a “gone concept.” Thompson Aero Seating, which was bought by Aviation Industry Corporation of China in 2016, could not be reached for comment.

Another idea that never took off: Morph. A concept that Wired described in 2013 as “A Genius Design for Airplane Seats as Comfy as Aeron Chairs.” Standout features, according to the magazine, included inside armrests that could be adjusted to make seats bigger or smaller — for example, to better fit a child in the middle and accommodate their parents in the window and aisle, or to widen the outside seats if no one sat in the middle. Passengers could also control the firmness of their own seat. A spokesman for the design firm, Seymourpowell, said in an email that Morph

room. A representative for the company, Paperclip Design Limited, said in an email that the armrest hasn't “progressed much, as we have other priorities.”

The Skyriders, a semi-standing seat that was first created in 2009, continues to make the rounds at trade shows — version 3.0 got some attention last year. But Gaetano Perugini, engineering adviser for the airline seat manufacturer Aviointeriors, said in a recent email that there have still been no orders for the model.

“This project continues to raise the interest of a number of companies, not only airlines,” he said.

Even designs that move beyond the concept phase and collect some interest can face a long road to eventual liftoff.

Molon Labe Seating started a long process in 2012 with a design that it calls the S3 Side-Slip Seat, in which the middle seat was wider than the aisle and window seats and was set slightly back from the other two in a staggered row. The aisle seat slid on top of the middle when passengers

got on and off the plane to make the aisle wider. Two years ago, said founder and CEO Hank Scott, the company “decided to ‘de-innovate’” to another version, the S1 Space Seat, that didn't slide the aisle seat over.

“Both seats have the same advantages, such as staggered layout and wider middle seat and staggered armrest, but we realized that as a new player in the aerospace field that a sliding seat may be too risky for airlines in this risk-averse industry,” he said in an email. “Staggered and sliding — too much innovation!”

The S1 is FAA-certified as of June, he said, and he thinks the company would ultimately upfit to the S3 once the simpler version is flying.

Now, Scott said, Molon Labe is delivering seats around the world for airlines to assess. He said one airline (he can't say which) placed a “rather large order,” but has since deferred the contract.

“We expect we will be selling them seats in a couple of years when their current seats are ready to be replaced,” he said.

That kind of journey is not uncommon, says Garcia, the writer and analyst.

“It can take 20 years easily for a new concept to take root,” she says. But to do so, it has to be technically viable, easy to maintain, easy for crew to serve during flights and, ideally, it should generate some revenue. Airlines also want new seats to weigh less and, often, they want to fit more of them on the plane.

“If you don't have those elements in place, it's a very hard sell,” Garcia says.

Another requirement: Passengers need to be willing to pay if airlines are going to make significant investments in new seats.

“Budget travelers, they don't want to pay a lot of money; they want to pay the least amount of money,” says Nawal Taneja, an airline business strategist and executive-in-residence at Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business. “So it's a little difficult for the airline to provide higher-quality seats on the one hand and be able to charge very little on the other.”

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Hung up by the usual hangover remedies?

These 5 morning-after cures have been used around the world for centuries

By EMILY HEIL

The Washington Post

So much of the human experience is universal: love, loss, joy ... and hangovers.

Mankind all over the globe has grappled with the morning-after effects of booze since our ancestors first gobbled up that overripe fruit that made them feel so good — and then woke up feeling like prehistoric garbage.

These days, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the number of high-tech products that claim to cure or prevent the dreaded hangover. There are patches, pills and little bottles of elixirs to swig. Plus unpronounceable ingredients and marketing that uses the lingua franca of both startup culture and the commercial "wellness" cult: "Win the morning!"

With so much sickly packaged snake oil around, perhaps it's better to stick to these time-tested remedies that people have been serving up for centuries, all around the world, to comfort their pounding heads and cotton-swaddled tongues.

PHOTOS BY TOM MCCORKLE/The Washington Post



Iron-Bru

Scots have long claimed that their rust-hued soda, introduced in 1909, has magical hangover-curing powers. Dubbed "Scotland's other national drink" (second only to the whiskey that might have caused said sad state), it's been the subject of controversy. Originally called "Iron Brew," it re-branded in the 1940s, and in 2018 it reformulated with a less-sweet formula to skirt a sugar tax, a move that drew outcry from fans of the original.

Despite the color, which might have your taste buds expecting a citrus quaff akin to a Sunkist, the soda actually delivers a flavor that's closer to ... bubble gum? It's sweet, and there is something vaguely medicinal about it that could convince me that it's working. Maybe it's the quinine, a common ingredient in tonic water that is listed as a flavoring in Iron-Bru. (In Scotland but not in the U.S. version there's also ammonium ferric citrate, a food additive that's a source of iron.) With sugar and caffeine for energy and stomach-settling bubbles, it does seem like it could be a soothing tonic.

Erik Neff, a government contractor from Alexandria, Va., says he first encountered the orange concoction when attending the University of St. Andrews in Fife. Determined to experience the culture of his temporary home, he tried the drink that so many of his classmates preferred.

"They are very proud of their food and their sports and their culture, and they are happy to share," he said. His Iron-Bru verdict? "I love it, actually."

Now stateside, he sometimes orders it online by the 30-pack. With this enthusiasm for his adopted country, he claims it's a solution for any situation where he might need a jolt, whether it's fighting jet lag, recovering from illness — or a rough night. "There's a pickup quality to it," he says.



Migas

There's actual science behind the reputed power of eggs at taming the aftereffects of a night of boozing. The humble orbs contain the amino acid cysteine, which helps break down acetaldehyde, which is thought to be one of the causes of hangovers. And migas, the renowned Tex-Mex hangover slayer, combines them with salty tortilla chips — in some preparations, they're all tossed together, often with onions and peppers. At Republic Cantina in Washington, the eggs-and-veg scramble is topped by crushed chips, pico de gallo, tangy cotija cheese and avocado slices.

Whether it's the chemical reactions happening or just the comforting hug of a breakfast of carbs, eggs and heat (and maybe even a michelada, if you really need some extra help), it somehow seems to do the trick. Republic co-owner Sam Lipnick has seen it work, but thinks there's also an intangible component that goes into the remedy that's more than the sum of its parts. "It makes you spiritually feel better," he swears.



Katerfruhstuck

After a night of overindulgence, Germans turn to katerfruhstuck (translation: "hangover breakfast") to get themselves right. That term encompasses a category of dishes, and one of the most popular (i.e., thought to be effective) is rollmops, filets of pickled herring wrapped around pickled fillings.

There's something counterintuitive about the proposition that a queasy hangover would be eased by a hunk of dense, oily fish encasing mouth-puckering pickled onions and cornichons, but who am I to argue with tradition? So I gave it a try, and the snack did seem strangely curative. Bracing, even.

Unlike many other purported fixes that involve heavy starches, it doesn't weigh you down. And hey, at least you're distracted from that headache, if only by a strange thought: You know, a martini would go great with this.



Yakamein (aka Old Sober)

When it comes to anything having to do with a party, it's a good idea to look to the professionals. In New Orleans, good times (and cocktails, and so recovering from cocktails) are a lifestyle. The city that boasts signature dishes famed the world over also gives us yakamein, a soup of mysterious origins.

Some say that the soup, so known for its booze-taming effects that it's also called "Old Sober," was introduced by Chinese immigrants who came to the city to build railroads in the mid-1800s. Whatever its origins, the dish has taken on a host of influences: Its main ingredients are beef and beef broth doused with Cajun spices, soy sauce, ketchup and hot sauce, all enriched with plain old spaghetti noodles.

It has since been adopted by revelers looking for sustenance. Attendees at all-booze-soaked festivals and parades know to look for Linda Green, the self-styled "Ya-Ka-Mein Lady," for a bowlful.



Haejangguk

Chicken soup might be for the soul, but for your raging hangover, there's Korea's "hangover soup." Danny Lee, chef at Washington's Mandu, explains that haejangguk is generally considered to be not just a dish itself but a slew of soups that will help set you straight after a long night out. At his downtown restaurant, one such option is the yookgejang, a complex concoction of beef brisket and threads of egg, scallion and bean sprouts, all infused with fiery hot beef broth.

The key to a good hangover soup is the spicy broth, he says, which is believed "to help you sweat out the toxins." Even more traditional haejangguk might include blood sausage, he says, which is thought to provide extra nutrients to cure a hangover and to settle a roiling stomach. "This all sounds like a lot of magical thinking by people with early meetings to make. Lee is a believer, though: 'I can attest to it,'" he says.

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS



Selena Gomez, shown in June 2016, has her best album yet in the just-released "Rare."
KYLE GUSTAFSON/Washington Post

'Rare' opportunity

Gomez gets mid-career reset with new album

BY ALLISON STEWART
The Washington Post

UNTIL the release of her newest and best album, "Rare," Selena Gomez's career as a pop singer was the least interesting thing about her.

An actress, brand ambassador and one of the most followed celebrities on Instagram, Gomez has also been a reliable, if not thrilling, provider of whispery pop hits. Her often multi-tracked vocals are thin as paper; she isn't really a dancer, or an electrifying live performer, or the possessor of a singular creative vision; and her awards show performances tend to look like hostage videos.

In spite of, or maybe partly because of, her ambivalence toward pop stardom and her triumphal backstory, Gomez inspires a fierce combination of affection and worry and protectiveness not seen since the turbulent heyday of fellow child actor-performer-turned-pop star Britney Spears.

Like Spears, she devoted years to a famous Justin who was unworthy of her and publicly contended with mental and physical health issues (Gomez had a kidney transplant after being diagnosed with lupus and sought help for her depression and anxiety at an inpatient mental health facility).

In November, Gomez landed her first No. 1 hit, "Lose You to Love Me," a skyscraping ballad about letting go of a toxic relationship to save yourself. It's not just a great song, it's also a nifty summation of most of what Gomez has been singing about for years. It's a "11dr" ("too long, didn't read") of her entire career. After years of skillfully made but forgettable pop, "Lose You" feels consequential and adult, the midcareer reset Britney never got.

It's also the best thing on "Rare," a modest, likable collection of come-ons, kiss-offs and dance floor self-affirmations. "Lose You" excepted, these aren't dig-deep internal excavations. "Rare" is more interested in new beginnings than in breakups and places a premium on self-

love. The disco-inspired "Dance Again" and the understated "Let Me Get Me" ("No self-sabotage / No letting my thoughts run / Me and the spiral are done") are the #selfcare Instagram tag in musical form.

Though it's vague enough to allow the listener to see themselves in it, "Rare" often toys with tabloid perceptions of Gomez's relationships. "Look at Her Now" details a fast-burning romance ("Shiny till it wasn't / Feels good till it doesn't") with a troubled bad boy ("Fast nights that got him," sings Gomez, sounding sympathetic. "That new life was his problem").

The slinky, somewhat lesser "Cut You Off" ("Emotionally messin' with my health / How could I confuse that s--- for love?") examines the resulting wreckage. Gomez has the lead songwriting credit on every song, part of a vast scaffolding that undergirds "Rare." Among the dozens of collaborators are several from her last album, "Revival," including the songwriting team of Julia Michaels and Justin Tranter, who co-wrote the twin standout tracks here, "Lose You" and "Look at Her Now" (they also co-wrote Bieber's career-defining "Sorry").

Gomez doesn't entirely inhabit this album, but she feels more present and more central to its narrative than she has on any of her other adult-era releases. "I can't believe I can be loud," she sings, not loudly, on the album closer "A Sweeter Place," an echo-y, torpid track that collaborator Kid Cudi, whom no one would ever call lively, can't help.

"Rare," like any superstar pop album, is at least partly fan fiction. "Young woman finds self-acceptance, leaves her troubles on the dance floor" is necessarily an exercise in wish fulfillment, but it still feels like it's true, or one day could be. Unlike too many female pop singers who came before her, Gomez might yet get the chance to write her own ending.



Various artists

Bad Boys for Life Original Motion Picture Soundtrack (Epic/We the Best Music)

Some soundtracks are as important to their movies as the actors delivering lines on-screen. But the "Bad Boys for Life" soundtrack is less of an unseen character, and more of a mood. And that mood is decidedly "fast-life Miami" — a perfectly adequate sonic backdrop for Mike Lowrey (Will Smith) and Marcus Burnett (Martin Lawrence) to chase bad guys all over the Florida city.

The soundtrack features hometown favorites, including Mr. 305 himself, Pitbull, on the Lil Jon-assisted anthem "Damn I Love Miami." Then there's Rick Ross alongside Bryson Tiller on "Future Bright," which samples '90s R&B hit "Touch Me, Tease Me" by Case. It's true Miami fashion, the musical influence covers a few different lanes. Buju Banton delivers dancehall fan on



"Murda She Wrote," and Meek Mill exudes vacation vibes over a Latin-influenced beat on "Uptown

II," featuring Puerto Rican singer Farruko.

Jaden Smith pops up twice on the soundtrack and he's enjoyable but not groundbreaking. He has a solo song called "The Hottest" and he appears on the club-ready "RITMO (Bad Boys for Life) (Remix)," with The Black Eyed Peas and J Balvin.

Overall, the "Bad Boys for Life" soundtrack does its job — abounding in references to food, clothes and cars, all set to lively production. And while the set lacks unforgettable lyrics, the upbeat energy is a perfect fit. Sometimes, good enough is good enough.

—Melanie J. Sims
Associated Press

Mac Miller

Circles (Warner Bros.)

"Why does everybody need me to stay?" Mac Miller asks on the first single from his latest release. He answered his own question with the superb posthumous "Circles."

Miller's 12-track album is heartbreakingly sublime, a portrait of a wry and honest musician acknowledging his demons but looking past them. "I'm here to make it all better with a little music for you," he sings.

Miller died of an accidental drug overdose in 2018 at 26 and was working on "Circles" as a sort of companion album to his Grammy-nominated "Swimming." Producer Jon Brion, who worked on "Swimming" and also produced for Kanye West and Dido, was asked to finish Miller's work.

"Circles" shares the appealing confessional lyrics of "Swimming" but is more airy, more muted and understated. Miller



was always an idiosyncratic artist, mixing hip-hop beats and samples with soul and warm funk, even jazz. Here, he is low-key, moody, spacey and anesthetized. He sings more than he raps. There's nothing flashy. Everything's thoughtful.

"Woods," which flows on a bed of airy synths, is Miller at his most seductive, funky and mature. It's remarkable to look back and listen to his cluttered and more juvenile stuff of just seven years ago. Miller's evocative voice even tries at a tender falsetto in "Surf," with the optimistic lines: "Until we get old / There's water in the flower / Let's grow." That he didn't get a chance to grow himself is a tragedy that this album only somewhat alleviates.

—Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

Marcus King

El Dorado (Fantasy Records)

Marcus King's solo debut is an enticing mix of deep soul, rock and country in the best Southern traditions.

King, though just 23 years old, has been a professional musician for more than a decade and already has three albums with the Marcus King Band.

Produced and co-written by Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys, "El Dorado" is a smoothly-paced release, with acoustic-based and mid-tempo soul tunes and a few fuzzy rockers with cutting guitars and rumbling bass.

You could say King has been "Auerbached," with the producer's distinct approach — shaped by recording in his own Eye Sound Studio in Nashville and relying on the timeless talent of legends like drummer Gene Chrisman, bassist David Roe



and Bobby Wood's Wurliizer.

King is known for his vocalic vocals and his amazing six-string dexterity. But "El Dorado" finds King, a South Carolina native now based in Nashville, mostly dialing down the overall volume without sacrificing intensity or feeling. By putting his songwriting and more nuanced singing at the fore, King expands his guitar hero profile with excellent results.

King's instrumental prowess is present, but the 12 songs usually have at least two or three other guitarists on hand, including Auerbach himself, steel guitarist Paul Franklin, Nashville stalwart Billy Sandford and Russ Paul. —Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Members of the country group Little Big Town, from left, Karen Fairchild, Jimi Westbrook, Kimberly Schlapman and Phillip Sweet, have released a new album, "Nightfall."

MATT LICARI, INVISION/AP



Striking a nerve

Little Big Town rides a wave of controversy to a Grammy nomination



“We got picketed one night at a concert. Somebody saying we were going to hell. I mean, you’re talking about four people who grew up with faith in the church.”

Karen Fairchild
Little Big Town

BY KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

Little Big Town’s Grammy-nominated song “The Daughters” struck such a nerve with its pointed lyrics about double standards for women that a protester even showed up at one of their concerts.

“Wow, we’ve really made it,” joked singer Karen Fairchild.

The song, which they debuted at the Academy of Country Music Awards last April, features a chorus with the lyrics, “I’ve heard of God the son and God the father / I’m still looking for a God for the daughters.”

Some fans took offense, but Grammy voters nominated the track for best country duo/group performance — an award the band has won three times. Little Big Town will go up against songs by Brooks & Dunn featuring Luke Combs, Dan + Shay, Maren Morris featuring Brandy Carlile and Brothers Osborne during the awards show in Los Angeles on Jan. 26.

“We got picketed one night at a concert,” said Fairchild, who co-wrote the song. “Somebody saying we were going to hell. I mean, you’re talking about four people who grew up with faith in the church.”

Singer Kimberly Schlapman had one response to the protester: “No, we’re not.”

Fairchild, Schlapman, Jimi Westbrook and Phillip Sweet have had some experience with generating a bit of controversy with their songs, but it’s worked out well for them in the long run.

When “Girl Crush” initially hit the airwaves at the end of 2014, a small number

of fans thought the lyrics were about a same-sex relationship. That didn’t slow the momentum of the song, however, which became a multi-platinum, multi-week No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot country songs chart and went on to win two Grammy Awards and two CMA Awards.

They felt certain “The Daughters” would find an audience, even without sending it to country radio, because of the timely message about how women are objectified.

“When Karen brought the song to us, I identified with every line, especially growing up in the South where those kinds of expectations are placed on young women,” Schlapman said.

“The Daughters” isn’t the only song with a message on their ninth studio album, “Nightfall,” which dropped Jan. 17. “Sugar Coat” examines the facades created to cover up fractures in a relationship, although those pearl-clutching listeners who were offended earlier might not like it when Fairchild sings the lyrics, “Go to hell.”

The orchestral string and piano ballad “Problem Child,” written by the foursome with co-writers Sean McConnell and Tofer Brown, is a call-out to lost and lonely children everywhere.

“That’s another song that speaks to a lot of what we’re seeing in the world, especially with young people feeling disenfranchised and feeling like they are outsiders, like they don’t belong, that they’re alone in their struggle,” said Westbrook, who is married to Fairchild. “Having kids, that’s just an absolutely heartbreaking thought to me.”

After working for years with producer Jay Joyce, the group found themselves

self-producing this time around and they take a light touch with instrumentation and production that lends the album an airy, dreamy and romantic feel.

“We’ve learned a lot about actually the space on the track being just as important as anything that’s going down,” Fairchild said.

The album opener, “Next to You,” features all four singing in unison and their close harmonies blend and build to a crescendo of choral voices, reminiscent of Arcade Fire.

“Because we were in the (vocal) booth together, we’re seeing each other breathe so that the phrasing is connected,” Fairchild explained.

They worked with some new co-writers including Daniel Tashian, best known for co-producing Kacey Musgraves’ Grammy-winning “Golden Hour,” on the spacey and vibey title track, “Nightfall.” And the Northern Irish artist Poy Vance, who is signed to Ed Sheeran’s label, helped them write a gospel-soul-country track, “Forever and a Night,” in which Sweet takes the vocal lead.

But the singers of “Pontoon” and “Day Drinking” know how to party as well, and they serve up the drinks and jam out to trumpets and marching drums on “Wine, Beer, Whiskey,” a reprieve from some of the record’s moodier tracks.

“The trumpets started off as mouth trumpets in the (writing) room that day, and we were really close to making it mouth trumpets (on the track,)” Westbrook said.

“Cause we think we’re really good at mouth trumpets,” added Schlapman.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Get happy!

When it comes to contentment, Americans are doing it wrong. These 4 books are here to help

BY ANGELA HAUPT ■ *Special to The Washington Post*

There's a British antidote to our cold, chaotic world — and it's called coziness. The feel-good, sock-heavy concept is a nice addition to “new year, new you” routines, right up there with *ichigo ichie*: the Japanese expression that reminds us to put down our phones, because each moment is unique and isn't coming back. Both are among the practices outlined in a rush of new books from other countries that seem to imply that Americans are doing it wrong and could be happier. Here's a look at the lessons four of these new guides impart.

To learn how to be anchored in the present, consult “*The Book of Ichigo Ichie*,” by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles. You could spend the next beautiful moment opening the zillionth tab on your internet browser, or you could smell the rain-soaked earth or contemplate the citrusy tones of your hot tea. Whatever you choose, know that each tiny speck of time, though it might feel like all the others, is unique and will never happen again — so relish it.

That's the idea behind the ancient Japanese concept “*ichigo ichie*.” “The moment is a jealous love that demands we give it our all,” Garcia and Miralles write, a fairly dramatic description for a tenet of Zen Buddhism. “Every unrepeatable moment is a small ocean of space and time. Passes together make an ocean of happiness.”

To savor each moment like it's the last, one must fully employ the five senses. Keep your phone in your pocket as you go for a walk and check the color of the sky and shapes of the clouds instead of your texts. Walk barefoot on the grass or dirt, floundering yourself and then eat an apple, noting how it feels in your hand and in your mouth — chewing “as if it were the only thing in the universe.” It's ultimately a hopeful practice, a promise that while we'll never get these moments back, we can squeeze a whole lot of life out of them before they go poof.

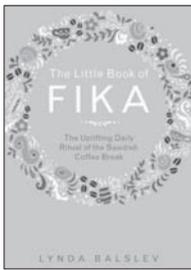
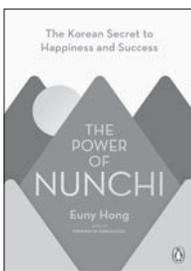
To de-stress, curl up with “*Cosy*,” by Laura Weir.

There are parallels between British coziness and the Danish concept of *hygge*. But *hygge* carries a “certain elitism ... now that it's been hijacked by hipsters and interior design magazines,” Weir warns. So, no, no twigs are necessary to feel cozy. But socks? Now, those are divine.

Over the past few years, Weir, a London-based journalist, found herself “seeking comfort from politically dark winters and the relentlessly bleak news cycle.” *Reverie* came in the form of coziness — which essentially means resting and relaxing with whatever makes you happy, doing whatever you do when no one is watching.

In breezy chapters complemented by charming illustrations, Weir evangelizes on the joys of quotidian pleasures such as warm feet, warm fires and, obviously, tea. There are recipes for cozy feasts, cottage pie, apple crumble — plus craft ideas and suggestions for comfy, layered outfits. She likens napping to a “decadent snack” and extols the virtues of dimly lit rooms.

“*Cosy*” might be British, but warm, fuzzy feelings are universal, and Weir's guide to comfort and contentment is pleasant if not particularly novel. Homebodies will appreciate the permission to stay in and practice self-imposed lethargy — which, to be sure, is good for overworked and over-socialized brains.



To have better balance, take a break with “*The Little Book of Fika*,” by Lynda Balesv.

Sad desk lunch, meet *fika*: the Swedish ritual that pairs short, twice-daily coffee breaks with conversation and a goopy treat. Americans can have their to-go cups; Swedes — consistently ranked among the world's happiest people — see coffee as an opportunity to slow down and appreciate a simple pleasure.

“In many cultures, the notion of drinking coffee is active and frenetic,” Balesv writes. “Swedish *fika* is quite the opposite. It's a moment to relax and reflect, [and] connect with friends and family, nature or oneself.” “The Little Book of Fika” is short enough to devour during a 15-minute break. The practice, which traces back to the 1600s, is part of the *lagom* movement, or the concept of “not too much, not too little — just enough.” It's observed at home, at coffee shops, in parks, in the office; wherever there's coffee, there can be *fika*.

“Consider it a caffeinated meditation,” Balesv suggests. Leave your desk to make a dark roast, or take a thermos to savor in a park. Don't multitask — his is a break, after all — but catching up with a friend or colleague is encouraged. You'll return to regularly scheduled life feeling clear-minded and satiated.

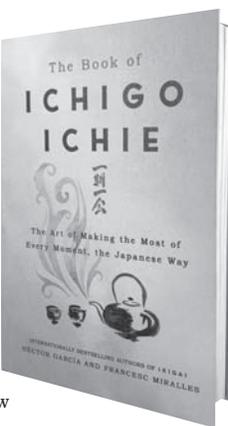
To make more friends, study “*The Power of Nunchi*,” by Euny Hong.

Let's say you're going to a party. Think of the room as a beehive, Hong suggests. Each person has a specific job, and yours is “eye-assessing,” or careful observation. Inferring what your peers are thinking and feeling will make the waters part for you. “Nunchi is like a sixth sense, an innate ability to choose the right partner in life or business, ask for a raise at the right time or make everyone you meet like you, even if they can't articulate why. Some people are born with it; others hone it. Korean parents teach it alongside such important life lessons as “look both ways before you cross the street” and “don't hit people.”

It's “the Korean superpower,” Hong declares. “Some people even go as far as to say it's how Korean people can read minds ... In the short term, *nunchi* will save you from social embarrassment. In the long term, *nunchi* will make the waters part for you.”

Nunchi is like a sixth sense, an innate ability to choose the right partner in life or business, ask for a raise at the right time or make everyone you meet like you, even if they can't articulate why. Some people are born with it; others hone it. Korean parents teach it alongside such important life lessons as “look both ways before you cross the street” and “don't hit people.”

The 5,000-year-old concept is nuanced but ultimately simple: Pay attention. Hong delivers a set of rules including “never pass up a good opportunity to shut up,” and “if you just arrived in the room, remember that everyone else has been there longer.” All you need is your eyes and your ears, and with Hong's guidance, you, too, can become a *nunchi* ninja in the New Year.



‘Everyday Ubuntu’ helps us to make sense of the world and our place in it

BY VICKY HALLETT
Special to The Washington Post

Maybe it was the paparazzi. Maybe it was the tension over Race. Or maybe it was “Everyday Ubuntu: Living Better Together, the African Way.”

OK, this is kind of a long-shot theory for explaining Megxit — the decision by Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, to step back as senior royals. But during their recent southern Africa tour, the couple was photographed holding “Everyday Ubuntu,” a new self-help book by Mungo Ngomane.

Ubuntu comes from a proverb found in languages throughout Africa that translates as, “a person is a person through other persons.” Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains in the foreword. In practice, “ubuntu can help us to be someone in the world who builds bridges, someone who sees each interaction as a chance to foster a more positive environment.” Tutu, who is Ngomane's grandfather, describes ubuntu as “one of Africa's greatest gifts to the world.”

And as Ngomane breaks down the concept into 14 easy-to-digest lessons, some do seem tailor-made for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

For instance, chapter 1, “See Yourself in Other People,” offers a rebuke to influencer consumer culture and the idea that a handful of individuals are somehow superior to the rest of us. If Markle decides to restart her lifestyle blog, *The Tig*, perhaps she'll adopt Ngomane's ubuntu messaging: “We don't need to compare our lives to others' and what they may or may not have in them.”

Chapter 2, “Strength Lies in Unity,” devotes a section to why wealth doesn't equate to worth, which bolsters the couple's plan to seek financial independence. The most valuable assets you can have are real connections with other people, Ngomane writes, noting that in the era of social media, loneliness has skyrocketed. Her suggestions for how to find your own community, including joining parent groups and volunteering for charities, certainly seem applicable to a young family about to split their time between Britain and Canada.

Ngomane's advice is most powerful when referencing the history of ubuntu in South Africa, where the principle guided the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work after the end of apartheid. She writes that her grandfather “thought that if people were to become ‘one’ again, they needed to share a common history. And you can only do that if you are allowed to experience what the other side has experienced.” So, in the spirit of ubuntu, as people came forward to talk about what they did and why, everyone listened and tried to understand.

Mandela and Archbishop Tutu serve as examples of ubuntu in many of her anecdotes, as they perform a gesture he's famous for. There's President Mandela wearing a Springbok jersey at the 1995 Rugby World Cup, signaling that he supports South Africa's team and its Afrikaner players. There's Tutu, cracking jokes about nose size to help ease the tension at an event in post-genocide Rwanda.

In any other book, Tutu and Mandela might seem to set an unattainably high bar for readers. But ubuntu is all about how every person matters and has the power to effect change.

The message particularly resonates in an election year in an increasingly divided nation. Although Ngomane never explicitly references American politics, her encouragement to maintain hope — while taking action — can read like a playbook for people frustrated by seemingly intractable partisanship.



WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

'Tis the season for Oscars catch-up, including the top DVD picks for Jan. 28. (The ceremony airs Feb. 10 on AFN-Movie.)

"Parasite": The genre-defying class warfare masterpiece by South Korean director and screenwriter Bong Joon-ho is up for six major Academy Awards, including best editing, production design, original screenplay, foreign language film, director and picture.

It follows the struggling Kim family, as they transition from folding pizza boxes for a living to, one by one, conning their way into working for a wealthy family in Seoul. Son Ki-woo (Choi Woo-shik) kicks things off as a humble tutor for the family's teenage daughter, daughter Ki-jung (Park So-dam) swoops in as a savvy, cool art tutor from Chicago, Dad (Song Kang Ho) takes over as the chauffeur, Mom (Chang Hye-jin) as the housekeeper.

Everything about the film, from its acting to its writing and cinematography, is infectious, wrote Tribune News Service critic Katie Walsh in her review.

"Parasite" is Bong's most sophisticated film to date, expertly plotted with breathtaking reveals, and shot with a smooth, slippery sheen, each frame and camera movement communicating a subconscious plot twist or theme," she wrote.

"Harriet": This powerful film follows the life of famed abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman, who led hundreds of countless others to physical and spiritual freedom. Cynthia Erivo's brilliant performance earned her an Academy Award nomination for best acting, putting the singer just one step away from EGOT status.

"It work that emphasizes the unstoppable power of a persuasive performance, Erivo not only convincingly conveys the strength of the celebrated abolitionist's fierce personality, she creates her as a realistic, multidimensional character, a complex woman of formidable self-belief and not any kind of plaster saint," wrote Los Angeles Times critic Kenneth Turan in his review.

Also available on DVD: **"Terminator: Dark Fate":** Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton) and a hybrid cyborg human (Mackenzie Davis) must stop a new kind of Terminator (Arnold Schwarzenegger) to save the human race.

"Motherless Brooklyn": A detective who has Tourette's syndrome (Edward Norton) must solve the murder of his only friend.

"My Life is Murder Series 1": An investigator (Lucy Lawless) solves confounding crimes in this Australian series.

"Roswell, New Mexico: The Complete First Season": In the CW drama/sci-fi series, a woman (Jeanine Mason) discovers her high school crush (Nathan Parsons) is an alien and must help keep his secret.

—Katie Foran-McHale
Tribune News Service



A group of guanaco, close relatives to the llama, in Torres del Paines National Park in Chile, is featured in the nature series "Seven Worlds, One Planet," premiering Jan. 26 on AFN-Prime.

PHOTOS BY CHADDEN HUNTER, BBC AMERICA, BBC STUDIOS/AFN

Our rapidly changing planet

New BBC America docuseries studies life on each continent

BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

If sheer drama is what you crave on TV, look no further than the tale of a fearless mother at the far edge of South America.

She is a puma, and this big cat repeatedly launches herself over and over at a llama-like creature more than three times her size, desperate to get meat for her three cubs.

Repeatedly, she is flung into the air like a rag doll and injured. But she does not back down. When she finally manages to fell a guanaco, more than just her children cheered. So did the filmmakers.

"We could almost have cried, we were so happy that those cubs had some food," said Chadden Hunter, a producer and director who was part of a team that followed the puma for weeks. "It was incredibly emotional. We're not cold-blooded filmmakers."

That rare footage is one of the highlights of "Seven Worlds: One Planet," a new seven-part documentary series airing on AFN-Prime.

David Attenborough provides the narration.

Each one-hour episode highlights one of the seven continents, tracing how life formed and how life evolved to live on them. The series was four years in the making, with filmmakers exploring 40 different countries and bringing back more than 2,200 hours of footage.

Front and center, of course, are fabulous animal sequences — the filmmakers like to use the term "stories" — but the

topic of climate change also gets plenty of airtime. It's part of the narrative this time as opposed to being an afterthought.

"This may be the most critical moment for life on Earth since the continents formed," Attenborough says in the opening. In the Australian show he warns: "Which of its unique species will survive the coming decades now depends on us."

Emma Napper, a veteran documentary-maker who previously worked on the series "Planet Earth II" and "Life," said she and the filmmakers this time felt they had no choice but to discuss human activity like deforestation, dams, pollution and climate change.

"We all felt very strongly it was not only important and timely, but you couldn't really tell the story of the continents without mentioning it. That would be crazy," said Napper, who produced the Asia and Australia episodes of "Seven Worlds: One Planet."

Executive director Jonny Keeling said framing the series according to continental change gave the filmmakers the chance to explain how animals have adapted to changing environments over millions of years. It also revealed how those adaptations have become stressed during a single human lifetime due to mankind's actions. "We are rewriting the rules," Keeling said.

In a nod to current events, the series scrambled its lineup to start with the Australia episode in the wake of devastating fires there. The show will also inform viewers how they can support relief efforts.

Hunter, who worked on the original "Planet Earth" some 14 years ago, noted that it contained no mention of conservation. "We can't get away with not bringing that into the story now. We can't pretend that the world is pristine jungles, mountains and forests any more," he said.

The trick now is to find a way to weave in proof of human-created consequences without being preachy. "It's finding that deft touch. We've got to still keep people's awe and wonder about the natural world but find a way to wake them up as well," Hunter said.

The series is bursting with fascinating animal behavior, from male river chubs in Tennessee who carefully build nests of rocks for their mates to the jumping spiders of Australia whose mating ritual is as theatrical as a Broadway show. We see wolves on the hunt in Italy, fireflies exploding into light in a North American forest and wild hamsters living in a Vienna graveyard.

One welcome shift is allowing more context for the predators. In so many previous nature documentaries, cute antelope or gazelles are cruelly stalked and felled by heartless carnivores. In the new series, we see a dingo female chase and capture a cute kangaroo, but soon learn that she's a mother to a clutch of pups and, like the puma, if she hadn't killed there would be nothing to feed her young.

"It's very easy to vilify the predators," said Keeling, who was part of the team that captured the dingo attack and spoke with deep respect for the mother's determination. "It was a conscious decision to make sure people see the full side of it."

"Seven Worlds" premieres Jan. 26 on AFN-Prime.



David Attenborough narrates "Seven Worlds: One Planet."

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS



By **BRIANNA RANDALL**
Special to *The Washington Post*

As I stepped on the sharp edge of a Lego buried in our carpet, my temper snapped. “That’s it! I’ve asked you five times to brush your teeth and put away these toys. It’s way past bedtime!”

My 5-year-old son looked up at me over the elaborate helicopter he was building. “Mom, maybe you should take a belly breath.”

My scowl turned into a smile. I’d started teaching him a few yoga poses and breathing exercises at home, like how to dive into dolphin pose to get out the wiggles or explode with a “volcano breath” when his little sister made him mad.

And now here he was, teaching the teacher. I took his good advice and felt more leveledhead after a deep breath.

Although I’ve practiced and taught yoga for two decades, I’ve only recently realized its value for kids. And I’m not

the only one: From toddlers to teens, yoga for children is more accessible than ever before. Defined as the union of mind and body, yoga includes everything from simple deep breaths to mellow seated stretches to complex strength-building poses.

According to an article published on the Harvard Health Blog, 3% of all children in the United States are practicing yoga — many of them in schools.

Physical benefits of yoga include improved flexibility, balance, strength and cardiovascular health. Research also shows mental and emotional benefits for youth from ages 5 to 18, including decreased anxiety, boosted concentration and memory, improved confidence and self-esteem, and better academic performance.

The goal of yoga is to generate self-awareness, which teaches kids to recognize their emotions. While it doesn’t erase feelings, yoga can give them a way to process frustration, anger or sorrow in a healthy way. This in turn helps kids learn to act thoughtfully rather than react impulsively.

Kids who practice yoga can learn to tune into their body’s sensations — like butterflies in the stomach, clenched fists or

A yogi’s journey starts young

Children who practice yoga with their family benefit physically, emotionally and mentally



sweaty palms — and then use breath and movement to address uncomfortable feelings before they get out of control.

In a recent study from MIT on the effects of an eight-week mindfulness program (comprising breathing exercises), sixth-graders reported feeling less stress and fewer negative emotions after the program. Brain scans revealed reduced activation of their amygdala, the region in the brain that processes fear.

“These results show that yoga’s benefits extend beyond the meditative state — it can change how the brain responds to everyday stressors,” said John Gabrieli of MIT’s McGovern Institute for Brain Research.

But the positive results tend to fade once the mindfulness practice stops, Gabrieli said. “Like with healthy eating or physical exercise, a consistent daily exper-

ience is important.”

One way to ensure that the benefits of yoga extend beyond school-based or extracurricular programs is to encourage kids to practice at home, too.

“Yoga can help kids regulate their own energy, which is a universal goal for parents,” said Ann Huber, program director of YogaKids, a teaching certification program.

Huber said that yoga for kids usually includes songs, stories or games.

“Teaching grown-up yoga to kids doesn’t work. It’s best to keep it simple, short and fun.”

One way to do that

is by watching an online video together, such as one of the Cosmic Kids yoga stories — books are also available. Co-founder Jaime Amor said that her “yoga adventures” are perfect for parents who aren’t comfortable with initiating yoga themselves. Since so many schools offer yoga programs, kids may be the ones introducing their parents to yoga instead of vice versa.

“Let the kids lead you,” Amor said. “Often they are better than adults at doing the movements, which is a great way to build their confidence.”

Erin Hurley is a registered children’s yoga teacher and an elementary school counselor in Virginia who has helped bring yoga programs into schools. She trained staff at Cherry Run Elementary School in Fairfax County, later expanding to three other elementary and middle schools. She started

leading workshops for parents because many of them asked how to integrate yoga at home.

Hurley gives parents tips for helping kids get to sleep (place a stuffed animal on their belly as a “breathing buddy” and rock it to sleep with deep breaths), as well as tools for helping children address conflicts with siblings (first use “flying bird breaths” to calm down by inhaling arms overhead, then exhaling arms back down).

Hurley is appearing this spring at the National Kids Yoga Conference in the Washington suburb of Alexandria, Va., hosted by the nonprofit YoKiD. The goal of the conference is to empower and inspire more caregivers from around the country to teach kids yoga.

“Paying attention to what’s happening inside of yourself makes everything easier for kids and adults,” said Liz Bolton, YoKiD board member and owner of the Birth Club yoga studio in Alexandria.

Bolton said she’s adding a kids yoga class at her studio — partly so she can bring her toddler to the class.

At home, Bolton encourages her son to join her whenever she gets out her mat, and said she uses yoga to help when he’s “overwhelmed by big feelings.”

For other parents interested in practicing yoga with their children, Bolton says to start simply: “Take a few deep breaths together or dance around to your favorite song — any mindful movement is yoga, as long as you do it with intention.”

Giselle Shardlow, founder of Kids Yoga Stories, recommends that families start by spending five minutes per day on a routine that makes yoga meaningful and relevant to your child. “Does your toddler like dinosaurs? Move and breathe like them. Does your teenager like to exercise? Take a walk outside together.”

Shardlow believes that bringing yoga into the home allows a more “intimate experience” than kids might find in a studio or at school, one that can change and grow as the child matures.

“Yoga helps us live life to the fullest potential by anchoring us in ourselves,” Shardlow said. “It’s a lifelong journey you can take together as a family.”



WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Cleaning that's more than physical

6 spring organization tips that are also mentally satisfying

By **BARTON GOLDSMITH**
Tribune News Service

We all have things to do that we hate doing, and make us uncomfortable. That being said, a little organization can ease your anxiety and actually make you feel better. We all have mindless tasks that we need to do but tend to put off for various reasons, but the truth is we just don't choose to make the time to do them. If you approach this as emotional cleansing as well as a physical one, it will give you the added motivation you need and benefit of helping to clear out your mind.

Computer cleanup

Clean out your email box, update your online accounts, unsubscribe to anything you don't read, re-set your passwords (add a password app), and delete any old files that aren't going to be opened again. File your loose documents and make sure everything is backed up.

Donate your old clothes, blankets, shoes and reading glasses

So many people can use these items you have grown out of or that no longer work for you. My feet grew a half size, so out with the old and in with feeling good about yourself for making the effort to be mindful and giving: it's more work than just throwing things out, but it feels right.

Consolidate your credit cards

These can collect. If they offered a bag of brown rice for signing up, I would get one. The Star Trek card didn't even come with a T-shirt, just like the Harley Davidson, I liked the way it looked. Unfor-

tunately, when a card came along that I wanted for the point perks, I was declined because I had too many cards. Lesson learned. Now I have only three, and they all have perks that we actually use.

Clean out your junk drawers

Most of us have too many. I know of several in my office alone. Some even have themes; stuff that I had as a kid, old sunglasses, things we might need in the house but really should go to the garage. Much of this stuff can be thrown out or given away. Sometimes it's hard to figure out what needs to go where, but if you just do a little online research, you can find lots of good ideas.

Organize your pictures

The older you get, the more important these will become. Don't rely on the Cloud or Facebook; make sure you have a separate backup for photos. When your computer or phone crashes, gets stolen or lost, you will thank yourself for doing this. Special backup drives and apps are available.

Clean your desk

Where I once thought that a messy desk was a sign of creativity if not genius, I now appreciate being able to find things without digging through a bunch of papers. It also helps you keep better track of important things like bills from your health insurance (which I found on a messy desk while searching for a misplaced credit card).

Most of us need some motivation and even a little assistance in this area. I once cleaned out a home-office desk for an old friend, and she did the same for me, and it was a great exchange. Organization will give you more peace of mind and ultimately save your most valuable asset: time.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Dust in the wind, on my coffee table

Dust bunnies are the bane of my existence. That might sound dramatic, but let's just say that I pretty much hate dusting. Then again, Mom told me to never use the word "hate," so let me rephrase: Dusting is an activity of which I am not particularly fond. (And I get bonus points for not ending with a preposition.)

As a military spouse in charge of housekeeping, I've had to clean all kinds of quarters over the past 26 years. A two-bedroom apartment overlooking a supermarket, shabby army housing on the perimeter of an abandoned artillery range, a stone house in England, a roach-infested townhouse with shag carpeting, a vinyl-sided Dutch Colonial on a cul-de-sac, a fourth floor walk-up base apartment in Germany, an oceanfront base house in Florida, a base duplex with a really scary basement, a gardener's cottage on the grounds of a Gilded Age mansion — and now, our 129-year-old house a block from the Narragansett Bay.

I've learned that housework is pretty ugly all the way around, but dusting is, by far, the most frustrating and futile of household chores.

Take, for example, vacuuming. On the cleaning satisfaction scale (this doesn't exist, but just go with it), vacuuming is a 10. There's something about the whirring, the amps, and a sound of debris being slurped up the suction tube. Popcorn kernel on the rug? THWUMP! Gone. Crumbs on cushions? SHLUSH! Gone. Sand on hardwoods? FFWHUMP! Gone.

Other tasks such as folding laundry and ironing are not as exhilarating, but the monotony can be minimized by turning on the television. Putting a crease in my husband's cammies could seem quite riveting if done while watching a catfight on "The Real Housewives of New Jersey." And I must admit, there are days when I'd rather chew my own arm off than empty the dishwasher for the umpteenth time, but I'm not so sure I'd catch "House Hunters" on the kitchen TV in the process.

It's safe to say that there's not a soul on this planet who truly enjoys cleaning bathrooms. However, the revolting nature of this foul chore is so universally recognized, there are a plethora of products on the market to make the job palatable. Flushable toilet scrubbing wands, scum-eating shower sprayers, disinfecting wipes, bleaching toilet tank tablets, and just in case you can't even stomach harmless soap scum, there are Scrubbing Bubbles who will gladly do it for you.

But dusting? Dust is one of those sad facts of life, like stretch marks and male pattern balding. It's always there, so you've just got to deal with it.

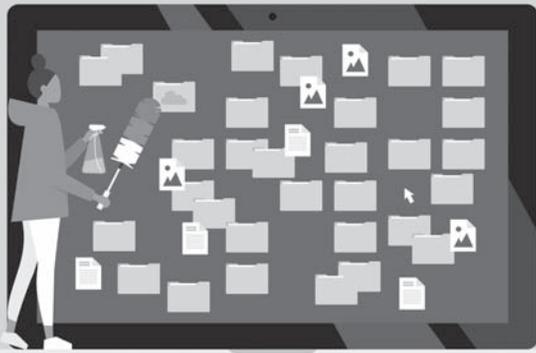
And unfortunately, no one has invented anything to make dusting any easier. Here we are in the 21st century, and in order to dust your house, you've still got to grab a rag — an old T-shirt is as good as anything else — and a can of furniture polish and get to work.

You may be able to catch a few minutes of a favorite show while tackling the family room, but that brief distraction is short-lived. You've still got to plod, slowly and methodically, room to room, spraying, rubbing and wiping. Starting with the cob-webby ceiling fan blades and hitting every last desk, lampshade, molding, photo frame, table, piano key and baseboard, all the way down to the tumbleweeds of dusty dog hair on the floor.

Then, to make matters worse, the instant your ionically charged ShamWow glides over the coffee table, there are millions more minute particles depositing themselves right back on its surface. We can't see the little buggers, but every minute of every day, they're there, coursing through our ductwork, wafting from room to room, floating from the ceiling to the floor, landing silently on every horizontal surface.

Where do these particles come from, and why are they hell-bent on banishing us to a lifetime of dusting drudgery? Unless you want to read about dead skin cells, I don't recommend Googling this question. Just accept dust as a fact of life, and be thankful that you have a house that needs dusting, because it means you have a home.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com



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WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

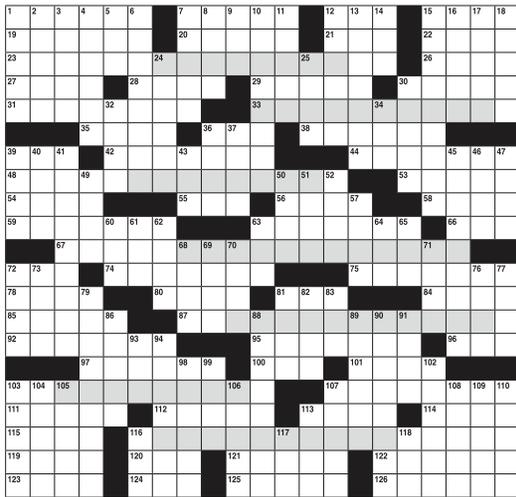
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

STATE OF CONFUSION

BY EVAN MAHNKEN AND DAVID STEINBERG / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Evan Mahnken is a high school chemistry teacher in Amherst, Mass. David Steinberg is a puzzle-and-games editor for Andrews McMeel Universal syndicate in Kansas City, Mo. They're each 23. They met at a crossword tournament two years ago. He originally sent a daily-size version of this puzzle to David, who proposed Sunday-sizing it with more theme examples. They collaborated on the grid by sending each other screen shots by email. — W.S.

- ACROSS
1 Some Japanese cars
7 Judean king, in Matthew
12 Medical-insurance grp.
15 Freedom of the ____
19 Like a short play
20 Brick material
21 Sushi fish that's never served raw
22 School with its own ZIP code — 90095
23 Voice box? [Wolverine State]
26 33-Across's sound
27 "Dang!"
28 Like a soufflé
29 ____ Kea
30 2014 film with the tagline "One dream can change the world"
31 Losers
33 Safari sighting [Golden State]
35 Captain of science fiction
36 Spleen
38 Wiggle room
39 Rehearsed
42 Device that keeps fish alive
44 Pay a brief visit
48 Stashed for later [Blue Hen State]



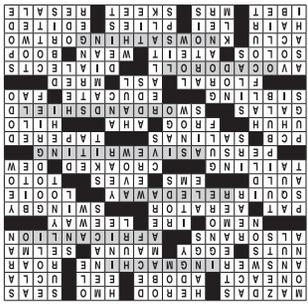
- DOWN
1 Disney heroine of 2016
2 Invalidee
3 Cocktail garnishes
4 ____ City, Yukon Territory
5 Nail
6 Bit of party decoration
7 Puts up
8 Pushing the envelope
9 Letters after CD
10 Most of the 2010s
11 Innomiac's order
12 Tush
13 Pans a danger to
14 Cry with an accent after training is finished
15 Emphatic rejection
16 Food inspectors test for it
17 Thrifty competitor
18 Sticky roll
24 Snub
25 Let fly
30 One leaving a trail
32 What scared horses do
34 "That's so sweet!"
36 Article
37 40 make up a furlong
39 Exam for the college-bound
40 ____ fortis (another name for nitric acid)
41 Nod of export from Holland
43 Something North Carolina's Alcohol Law Enforcement regulates, aptly
45 Charlie Brown catchphrase
46 Ask the obvious question, so to speak
47 "Ouch!"
49 Indent
50 "____ here!"
51 Maintain
52 Reading on the dashboard of the DeLorean in "Back to the Future"
57 Improv offering
60 Fed. agency that helped take down Al Capone
61 Secretive org.
62 Wide gap
63 Walgreens rival
64 Symbol for viscosity, in chemistry
65 Short swim
68 What phonics put on
69 Word before cap or shoe
70 Shakespearean schemer
71 Classic pop brand
72 Flat-faced dogs
73 Kind of tea
76 "____ Minnow Pea," 2001 novel with an alphabetically punny title
77 Dummy
79 Setting for some pickup basketball
81 Uses sigma notation, in calculus
82 Tow
83 Nelson Mandela's org.
86 George Eliot's "____ Marse"
88 It's no bull
89 Musician Marley, son of Bob
90 Outlander
91 Command to a dog
93 Go-ahead
94 Many a dad joke
98 Stella ____ (imported beer)
99 Big name in theaters
102 Flotsam and jetsam
103 Japan's largest brewer
104 English class quiz subject, informally
105 Skateboard jump
106 Imitates Daffy Duck, in a way
107 Many a founding father, religiously
108 Terra ____
109 Dry (off)
110 Fine china
113 "This is fun!"
116 Airline with a crown in its logo
117 1-1, for one
118 Something that might accompany a dedication

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

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FACES

Sonic youth

Relative newcomers Lizzo, Billie Eilish and Lil Nas X poised to rake in Grammys

BY MESFIN FEKADU AND NEKESA MUMBI MOODY
Associated Press

The 2020 Grammy Awards are shaping up to be the night of the new kids, with Lizzo, Billie Eilish and Lil Nas X leading in nominations.

Those acts, who all released huge No. 1 hits in the past year, have strong chances of beating their more-seasoned competitors, from Lady Gaga to Vampire Weekend to Ariana Grande.

Or maybe they won't. If there's one thing we can predict about the Grammys, it's that the oddball act might actually win. Remember when Beck beat out Beyoncé? Or when Steely Dan won album of the year over Eminem? Or when Milli Vanilli ... OK, we'll stop.

Who knows how things will really play out Sunday, when the awards are handed out live from the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Here are some good guesses from Associated Press music writers Mesfin Fekadu and Nekesa Mumbi Moody.

Album of the year

Nominees: "I.I." Bon Iver; "Norman (Expletive) Rockwell," Lana Del Rey; "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?," Billie Eilish; "Thank U, Next," Ariana Grande; "I Used to Know Her," H.E.R.; "7," Lil Nas X; "Cuz I Love You (Deluxe)," Lizzo; "Father of the Bride," Vampire Weekend

Fekadu: This could go so many ways, but let's start with who most likely won't win: Lil Nas X, Ariana Grande, H.E.R. and Lizzo. The other four will split a lot of the votes, eliminating Bon Iver and Vampire Weekend as possible winners. Left are Lana Del Rey, whose album was critically acclaimed and praised, and Billie Eilish, who was not just the year's brightest newcomer, but arguably the year's most successful singer. Something in my gut is telling me that Lana, who has consistently released top-notch music for the past eight years, will be celebrating her first-ever Grammy win Sunday night.

Moody: It would be a cool moment to have the 18-year-old Billie become the youngest to ever take home a best album Grammy, and she certainly deserves it! But with arguably the night's top honor, Grammy voters tend to want their winners to have a few years under their belt before granting them the biggest win of their career. While none of the nominees here has their AARP card, Lana Del Rey is the veteran. After with a career that got off to a rocky start, she has become one of the more acclaimed singer-songwriters of her generation, and therefore will be victorious Sunday night.

Record of the year

Nominees: "Hey, Ma," Bon Iver; "Bad Guy," Billie Eilish; "7 Rings," Ariana Grande; "Hard Place," H.E.R.; "Talk," Khalid; "Old Town Road," Lil Nas X featuring Billy Ray Cyrus; "Truth Hurts," Lizzo; "You," Post Malone and Swae Lee

Moody: Lil Nas X clearly had the most popular song of the year with the country-rap hybrid "Old Town Road." But this isn't the American Music Awards where popularity counts, and I don't think a song that started out from TikTok is going to win voters over. "Truth Hurts" wasn't at No. 1 as long as "Old Town Road," but resonated farther. Lizzo is 100% getting this Grammy.

Fekadu: In the past, the ubiquitous, unconventional No. 1 hit doesn't take this trophy home. "Despacito," "All About That Bass" and "I Gotta Feeling" are some good examples. However, "Old Town Road" seemed to get past being the silliest song of the year, becoming an undeniably good tune that was hard to resist, which is why it topped the Hot 100 chart for 19 weeks. That's why I think Lil Nas X is going to take his horse to the Grammys stage.

Song of the year (songwriter's award)

Nominees: "Always Remember Us This Way," Lady Gaga, Natalie Hemby, Hillary Lindsey and Lori McKenna; "Bad Guy," Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell; "Bring My Flowers Now," Tanya Tucker, Brandi Carlile, Phil Hanseroth and Tim Hanseroth; "Hard Place," H.E.R., Rodney Jerkins, Ruby Amanfu, Sam Ashworth and D. Arcecius Harris; "Lover," Taylor Swift; "Norman (Expletive) Rockwell," Lana Del Rey and Jack Antonoff; "Someone You Loved," Lewis Capaldi, Tom Barnes, Pere Kelleher, Benjamin Kohn and Sam Roman; "Truth Hurts," Lizzo, Ricky Reed, Tele and Jesse Saint John

Fekadu: The top candidates here are Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish and Lewis Capaldi. Swift has some edge since she wrote "Lover" alone, but if the song had performed stronger, I would be more convinced to pick her. That leaves me with Eilish and Capaldi, who might be a bit too new to win such a huge award. Good guys do finish last because "Bad Guy" will win.

Moody: Swift really should win this one. But the Grammys love a comeback story, and giving Tanya Tucker's "Bring My Flowers Now" would be that moment.

Best new artist

Nominees: Black Pumas; Billie Eilish; Lil Nas X; Lizzo; Maggie Rogers; Rosalind; Tank and the Bangas; Yola

Moody: It really comes down to two: Lizzo and Billie Eilish. Both are singer-songwriters, musicians, and have paved unique paths in the journey to fame. But as brilliant and entertaining as Lizzo is, she's hardly a new artist, with at least two albums released already. My money is on the kid! Billie will likely take this one.



AP photos

Top to bottom: Lizzo, Lil Nas X and Billie Eilish are up for the top Grammy Awards.



Fekadu: The truth does hurt, Lizzo: Billie wins here.

Best pop vocal album

Nominees: "The Lion King: The Gift," Beyoncé; "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?," Billie Eilish; "Thank U, Next," Ariana Grande; "No. 6 Collaborations Project," Ed Sheeran; "Lover," Taylor Swift

Fekadu: Love Taylor, but she won't win here. Everything Beyoncé releases is a gift, but the holidays are over. And we all know how much the Grammys love to

Aerosmith drummer loses bid to reinvent band

A judge has told Aerosmith's drummer Joey Kramer to dream on if he hopes to rejoin the band as it's set to perform and be honored at Grammy events this week.

Massachusetts Superior Court Judge Mark Gilda on Wednesday denied Kramer's request to order the band, whose first hit single was 1973's "Dream On," to let him participate in an award celebration in Los Angeles on Friday as well as Sunday's prime time Grammy Awards show.

"Given that Kramer has not played with the band in six months and the dearth of available rehearsal time before the upcoming performances, Kramer has not shown a realistic alternative course of action sufficient to protect the band's business interests," the judge's decision reads in part.

Kramer, 69, said in a statement that he's "extremely disappointed" but respects Gilda's decision.

Kramer had argued that the band, which he helped found in Boston 50 years ago, is in breach of contract because it required him to re-audition for his job after an ankle injury last year caused him to miss a chunk of the band's residency at a Las Vegas casino.

From The Associated Press



Kramer

shade Ed Sheeran — oops, I'm just thinking out loud. That leaves us with Ariana Grande, who won this award last year and dominated the Billboard charts with multiple songs from "Thank U, Next." And in the other corner is newcomer Billie Eilish, who made an influential pop project in her bedroom with her brother, Finneas, in the producer role. Methinks Eilish will edge Grande for the win.

Moody: The fact that this is just Taylor's second nod shows Grammy voters aren't in a loving mood toward Swift this year (maybe she'll call them out on her next album). Grande had such a brilliant year and a hot tour that something tells me she'll be saying "Thank You" for this win.

Best alternative music album

Nominees: "U.F.O.F.," Big Thief; "Assume Form," James Blake; "I.I." Bon Iver; "Father of the Bride," Vampire Weekend; "Anima," Thom Yorke

Moody: Thom Yorke has already won this category twice as a member of Radiohead. Expect this Rock and Roll Hall of Famer to win it once again with his solo work.

Fekadu: James Blake's album is totally epic, and he has continuously been the go-to guy in music, with Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar, Jay-Z, Travis Scott and others requesting his services. That'll give him enough votes to take this home.

Best rap song

Nominees: "Bad Idea," YBN Cordae featuring Chance the Rapper; "Gold Roses," Rick Ross featuring Drake; "A Lot," 21 Savage featuring J. Cole; "Rocks in the Middle," Nipsey Hussle featuring Roddy Ricch and Hit-Boy; "Suge," DaBaby

Moody: Nipsey Hussle was up for his first Grammy and lost last year, and weeks later he was shot dead. I can't see them not honoring him by giving him his first Grammy posthumously this year, as tough as this category is.

Fekadu: The Marathon Continues, with Nipsey winning here.

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0471900) is published weekly, except Dec. 23 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002.

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OPINION

It's still difficult to see Trump losing Iowa

By STUART ROTHENBERG
 CQ Roll Call

Iowa gave Barack Obama a resounding 9.5-point victory over John McCain in 2008. Four years later, Obama's margin shrank to 5.8 points against Mitt Romney. But in 2016, something odd happened.

Donald Trump carried Iowa by 9.4 points — a dramatic change in the state's recent voting behavior and close to the same winning margin as Obama's eight years earlier.

Iowa had gone Republican before, of course. It voted narrowly for George W. Bush in 2004, and it backed Ronald Reagan twice, in 1980 and 1984.

But Michael Dukakis carried it comfortably in 1988, and Al Gore's narrow victory in 2000 seemed to suggest Iowa was shifting ever so slightly toward the Democrats. That is what made 2016 so noteworthy.

Did Trump's solid victory say something about the state's fundamental partisan bent?

Yes and no. As reporter Paige Godden asked in a *Washington Post* column, a stunning 31 Iowa counties voted twice for Bush but flipped to Trump in 2016. Their statewide map shows the bulk of the shifts occurring in eastern Iowa (and particularly northeast Iowa), areas of traditional Democratic strength.

While much of the Vermont area has more in common with Nebraska and South Dakota (including its Republican bent), northeast Iowa has more in common with Minnesota and Wisconsin, and eastern Iowa looks toward Illinois.

The shift in eastern and northeast Iowa in 2016 probably reflects the shift seen elsewhere among working-class voters

who were once reliably Democratic but responded enthusiastically to Trump's message.

According to a 2017 analysis by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Iowa ranked third in the nation with blue-collar jobs as a share of total nonfarm employment in each state. (The group defined blue-collar jobs as those in goods-producing sectors — manufacturing, construction, mining and logging.)

Given that, maybe Iowa's dramatic shift was not so surprising. But there is more to the story. And it suggests that the state's swing was not quite as dramatic as it first looked.

Trump drew almost 801,000 votes in Iowa, more than 20,000 fewer votes than Obama did in 2008 (823,000 votes) or in 2012 (829,000 votes). Trump's showing, in percentage terms, was right in line with other presidential nominees who carried Iowa in the previous five contests. He drew 51.2%, while Obama drew 52% in 2012 (against Romney) and 53.9% in 2008 (against McCain). George W. Bush drew 49.9% in 2004 (against John Kerry) and Gore drew 49.6% in 2000 against Bush.

In 1996, Bill Clinton drew 50.3% in Iowa against Bob Dole.

So while Trump's margin of victory was large (9.4 points), especially for a once-hypercompetitive state, the percentage of the vote that he received (51.2%) was not particularly noteworthy. How could that be?

As in a handful of other competitive Midwest and Great Lakes states, Trump's margin of victory was more a reflection of Hillary Clinton's weak performance than his own strength. Clinton drew just 41.7% of the vote in Iowa, a showing far worse than that by other recent presidential candidates, including Romney (46.2%), McCain

Sanders' divisiveness could be harmful in 1st caucuses

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF
 The Dallas Morning News

As the Iowa caucuses campaign enters its final two weeks, Sen. Bernie Sanders' combative nature is coming to the fore. It could pose a problem for him when Iowans vote.

Over the weekend, the Vermont senator reiterated that gender was a handicap for female candidates, though he continues to reject Sen. Elizabeth Warren's charge that he told her a woman can't beat President Donald Trump. He said he hopes voters "would look at the totality of a candidate."

Sanders also said he would reportedly "talked about the need to cut Social Security," referring to the former vice president's past calls for curbing entitlements to get a handle on the federal budget deficit. The issue flared after Biden accused the Sanders campaign of a misleading video about his Social Security position.

And the Sanders campaign circulated an op-ed by supporter Zephyr Teachout accusing Biden of "a big corruption problem" for accepting big donors' contributions, though the senator later disavowed it.

Meanwhile, 2016 challenger Hillary Clinton poured unnecessary fuel on the fire by taking a shot at Sanders, declaring in a new documentary that "Nobody likes him, nobody wants to work with him."

But Sanders is the 2020 candidate who risks damaging his chances by criticizing two leading rivals amid renewed signs that Iowa Democrats want unity rather than division from the candidates.

A recent poll showed the candidates' ability to unite the country was more significant for Iowa voters in making their choice than who best could beat Trump or whose positions they most favored.

It's an area where the more moderate

hopefuls — Biden, Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Pete Buttidge — may have an advantage over the two outspoken progressives, Sanders and Warren.

More than two-thirds responding to the latest Des Moines Register-CNN Iowa Poll said the candidate's "ability to unite the country" was "extremely important" and most others said it was "very important." That was significantly higher than those who said it was extremely important which candidate had the best chance of winning, held positions on issues important to them or was most likely to inspire a turnout of new voters.

To be sure, there is no precise way to judge who could best unite the country, but most candidates have illustrative track records. Biden has a history of seeking compromise during his 36 years in the Senate and his eight years as Barack Obama's vice president. Indeed, rivals have criticized his statements he expected to work with some Republican post-Trump era.

Klobuchar, meanwhile, scored best of the 2020 candidates in last year's study of congressional bipartisanship by the Lugar Center, started by the late Indiana Republican senator, Richard Lugar, and Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy. She ranked 23rd among the 100 senators in the study, which rated senators according to the degree they reached out in the last Congress to opposition party members to co-sponsor legislation.

By contrast, Sanders, who has often decried compromises, ranked 100th with the lowest record of bipartisanship. Though he helped craft a bipartisan veterans care bill some years back, his rating underscored his reputation as an ideologue who has difficulty working with others.

Warren, who has touted her ability to unite the Democratic Party, ranked 68th

(44.4%), Kerry (49.2%) and George W. Bush (48.2%). The only recent losing nominees to draw a lower vote percentage in Iowa than Clinton were Dole (39.9% in 1996) and George H.W. Bush (37.3% in 1992), both of whom lost a substantial number of votes to independent Ross Perot.

This is good news for Democrats, putting Iowa back in play in 2020.

Hillary Clinton's showing in Iowa reflected a unique weakness, and Democrats have a chance to nominate someone who doesn't have her baggage, which would improve their prospects in the state.

But Trump's margin was substantial, and Democrats would need to bring out voters who stayed home in 2016 and also win back some former Democrats who backed Trump three years ago. That's quite a challenge.

So far, there is little reason to believe that more than a trickle of 2016 Trump voters are ready to defect (or, more correctly, return to the Democratic Party), and that, plus rural republican voters who opted out the state, make it difficult to see Iowa supporting the Democratic nominee in November.

Of course, 2020 certainly should see a much closer race in Iowa if the Democrats nominate someone who can turn out new voters, rally the party base and appeal to swing voters with Trump's language and governing style.

Trump's margin in Iowa is likely to shrink in November to the mid- or even low-single digits. That means he is still likely to carry the state (barring new developments), but it also means that Iowa is worth competing for only as a test case as to whether Democrats are rallying behind their party's nominee.

in bipartisanship. Buttidge does not have a legislative track record but has sought to separate himself from the acrimony among his rivals.

The Iowa Poll showed another potential handicap for Sanders: fewer Iowa Democrats described themselves as socialists compared with 2016, when the Vermont senator narrowly lost the caucuses to Clinton. When asked to describe themselves according to an array of characteristics, 28% described themselves as socialists, a sharp decline from the 43% in a similar survey four years ago. The proportion describing themselves as capitalists was down slightly.

The issue of Sanders' socialism arose in the last Democratic debate, when CNN's Iowa Phil Iker asked Sanders if his description of himself as a democratic socialist would handicap him against Trump, since, she noted, "more than two-thirds of voters say they are not enthusiastic about voting for a socialist."

"Nope, not at all," Sanders replied. "My democratic socialism says health care is a human right. We're going to raise the minimum wage to 15 bucks an hour. We're going to make public colleges and universities tuition-free. We're going to have a Green New Deal. That is what democratic socialism is about and that will win this election," he said.

By contrast, Sanders' socialism is a lesser handicap among Democrats than general election voters. But the Iowa numbers suggest it's less of an asset in 2020 than in 2016. Any success Sanders has in portraying Biden as eager to cut Social Security might have appeal in Iowa. But it could also fly in the face of Iowans' desire for a candidate who can unite the country.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is a former Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

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

House might want witnesses, but likely not the Bidens

The Wall Street Journal

The Senate impeachment trial began Tuesday with political theater over bogen. Senate Republicans prefer an expeditious trial while Democrats who rushed to impeach in the House are suddenly demanding witnesses and crying “coverup.” So let’s break down what’s really going on in this fight over the president’s conduct.

By our deadline, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell looked set to keep his caucus together for his organizing resolution. His framework provides Democratic House impeachment managers 24 hours over three working days to make their case, called the “White House” trial. The House defense. Bill Clinton’s trial also provided each side 24 hours, though neither ended up using even half.

But Democrats are demanding that the Senate also call former national security adviser John Bolton; acting White House Chief of Staff Mark Mulvaney; White House defense lawyer Robert Blair; and White House budget official Michael Duffing.

This is more than a little disingenuous. House Democrats could have gone to court to challenge President Donald Trump’s assertion of executive privilege over testimony, and then House Democrats initially advised former House Deputy Charles Kupperman. But House Democrats abandoned their demands when litigation didn’t fit their rushed political timeline. They declared instead that the existing evidence more than justified impeachment. Yet now their “overwhelming” evidence has become a “gotcha” for Democrats.

We wouldn’t mind hearing from Bolton. But even if he does appear as a witness, he’d have to abide by Trump’s claims of executive privilege. A president doesn’t give up that privilege in an impeachment trial. The difference with Clinton’s trial is that Clinton litigated his privilege claims against independent counsel Kenneth Starr before impeachment. Yet Democrats still opposed most witnesses, including Monica Lewinsky.

Maybe Democrats hope witnesses will turn up something more damaging to Trump. Our only guess is that the real game is political and geared to taking back the Senate. Democrats figure Republicans will vote down witnesses, and they can run from here to November claiming the trial was “rigged” and hid the truth.

We think Republicans are justified in wanting to know what the president has to say about the current evidence without witnesses. But if they want to rebut the coverup claims, then call the Democrats’ bluff. Give them witnesses, but insist on calling those the president’s team would also like to call, such as Hunter and Joe Biden.

The Senate could call more witnesses, let’s hear both sides of this dispute.

Senators’ capitulation could embolden future presidents

The Washington Post

Senate Republicans on Tuesday laid out the framework for the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump that would be a perversion of justice. Proposals by Democrats to obtain critical evidence were voted down. Unless several senators changed their positions, votes to acquit Trump on the House’s charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress would come as soon as next week without any testimony



by witnesses or review of key documents. That would be unprecedented compared with previous presidential impeachments. It would gravely damage the only mechanism the Constitution provides for checking a rogue president.

Yet the rigging of the trial process may not be the most damaging legacy of the exhibition Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, is orchestrating in full collaboration with the White House. That might flow from the brazen case being laid out by Trump’s lawyers. The defense brief filed Monday argued that the president “did absolutely nothing wrong” when he pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to launch investigations of Joe Biden and a Russian-promoted conspiracy theory about the 2016 election. It further contends Trump was within his rights when he refused all cooperation with the House impeachment inquiry, including rejecting subpoenas for testimony and documents. It says he cannot be impeached because he violated no law.

By asking senators to ratify those positions, Trump and his lawyers are, in effect, seeking consent for an extraordinary expansion of his powers. An impeachment would confirm to Trump that he is free to solicit foreign interference in the 2020 election and to withhold congressionally appropriated aid to induce such interference. It would suggest that he can press foreign leaders to launch a criminal investigation of any American citizen he designates, even in the absence of a preexisting U.S. probe, or any evidence.

The defense would also set the precedent that presidents may flatly refuse all cooperation with any congressional inquiry, even though the House’s impeachment power is spelled out in the Constitution. And it would establish that no president may be impeached unless he or she could be convicted of violating a federal statute — no matter the abuse of power. Those are principles that Republicans will regret if they conclude that a Democratic executive has violated his or her oath of office. Yet Trump demands they adopt his maximalist position regardless of the consequences.

We know that many Republican senators do not accept this unacceptable defense. Some, such as Rob Portman, of Ohio; Pat Toomey, of Pennsylvania; Mitt Romney, of Utah; Ben Sasse, of Nebraska; and Susan Collins, of Maine, have publicly criticized Trump for calling on Ukraine or China to investigate Biden. Portman and Toomey have taken the position that Trump’s behavior was wrong but not worthy of impeachment — a response that would, at least in theory, leave some guardrails on the president’s behavior.

Trump’s defense is designed to destroy those guardrails. If Republican senators go along with it, they will not only be excusing behavior that many of them believe to be improper. They will be enabling future assaults by Trump on the foundations of American democracy.

Electing nation’s first female president only a big deal in US

South Florida Sun Sentinel

Yes, a woman can be elected president of the United States.

It’s time to put that non-issue behind us. One nearly was, and it wasn’t her gender that dealt her a loss.

As Bernie Sanders pointed out in the Democratic debate in Iowa this month, “Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by 3 million votes.”

Everywhere else, that would have been enough.

Regrettably, the United States is burdened with an anachronism called the Electoral College, reflecting the mistrust of small states for large ones. A system crafted to elect George Washington most recently served up someone most unlike him.

Just 77,000 more votes in three key states made the difference between a President Clinton and a President Donald Trump four years ago; between having a first man or a first lady in the White House.

That was so close, it could have been Ron’s wedding that made the difference. Or James Comey’s October surprise. Or Clinton’s failure to campaign in three normally safe states — Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — that she had lost to Sanders in the Democratic primaries.

It used to be said that a Roman Catholic can’t be elected president. Then John F. Kennedy was.

Divorce was assumed to be a disqualification. Ronald Reagan disproved that.

Race was the next frontier. Then Barack Obama was elected.

In the current campaign, Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, is a formidable contender. She’d be even stronger if she weren’t contending with Sanders for the votes. She scored points in the Des Moines debate by observing, truthfully, that the men on the stage had collectively lost 10 elections while she and Sen. Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, were undefeated.

That Klobuchar remains in a dwindling field reflects her potential as the moderate alternative to Sanders or Warren if Joe Biden doesn’t do well in the early caucus and primary states. There is no question that either of those women is a qualified rival to Trump and would make a far superior president.

Male machismo and misogyny — the only reasons for even asking whether a woman could be elected — are hardly unique to the United States. Yet 59 other nations, spanning the globe and every region and ethnicity, have had women as heads of government. Why hasn’t it happened here?

One reason is that it took time to break the glass ceilings in Congress, state capitals and the vice presidency, which are the traditional proving grounds for presidential prospects.

Since women were enfranchised 101 years ago, only five Democratic women and two Republicans have attained enough political exposure and stature to be taken seriously as candidates in the two major parties. Margaret Chase Smith, of Maine, was the first, opposing Barry Goldwater for the 1964 GOP nomination. Clinton gave Obama strong competition in 2008 before winning the nomination eight years later.

Another reason is that many of those other nations, notably Great Britain and Israel, are parliamentary democracies that do not directly elect their heads of government. Their prime ministers have generally come up through party ranks, showcasing their talents. In our nation’s infancy, it was the party caucuses in Congress that nominated presidential candidates.

So, can a woman be elected president? Yes.

So can a man. There is no material difference.

What really matters is who are qualified, competent and trustworthy.

Trump’s claims of ‘prosperity’ undercut by climate change

(Minneapolis) Star Tribune

President Donald Trump rightly touted “America’s extraordinary prosperity” in his speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday. But his history of overlooking the global component of that success is wrongheaded, especially because transnational threats can reverse the uninterrupted U.S. economic growth that began during the Obama era.

Chief among these threats is climate change, which the president has previously called a hoax. He didn’t go that far in Davos, but he did decry the “perennial problem of doom and their predictions of the apocalypse.”

No, conditions aren’t apocalyptic. (Unless you’re a kangaroo in Australia’s wildfires.)

A more adult reckoning came from 17-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg, who told the gathered elites in Davos that “the facts are clear, but they’re still too uncomfortable for you to address.” That alacrity was amplified by a more stout source, 81-year-old WEF founder Klaus Schwab, who said that “the world is in a state of emergency and the window to act is closing fast.”

States of emergency are possible because of other transnational threats, too. Responding to them multilaterally is much more effective, especially in cases like pandemics (possibly including the coronavirus China is straining to contain), as well as the borderless scourge of terrorism. Trump met with Pakistani, Iraqi and Kurdish leaders in Davos, but his “America First” foreign policy that’s led to the abolition of climate, nuclear and trade accords undermines U.S. security.

This includes the economic security that undergirds everything else. It’s welcome news that the administration reached a “phase one” trade deal with China, and that in the midst of Washington’s gridlock an accord between the U.S., Mexico and Canada was passed on a bipartisan basis. The progress on trade as well as fiscal stimulus from 49 central banks — was among factors cited Monday by the International Monetary Fund as it predicted global growth of 3.3% in 2020, up from last year’s 2.9%. But IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva also noted ominous echoes of a previous era. “The beginning of the end of the economic recovery of the 1920s — high inequality, rapid spread of technology and huge risks and rewards in finance,” Georgieva said. “For the analogy to stop right there and go no further, acting together in a coordinated way is absolutely critical.”

Indeed, good governance and the rule of law are the bedrock of the economic strength Trump talked about in Davos.

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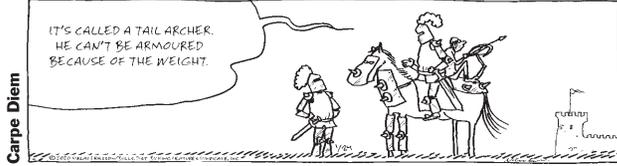
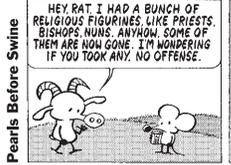
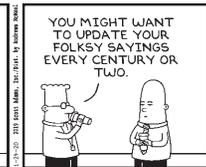
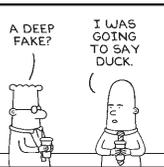
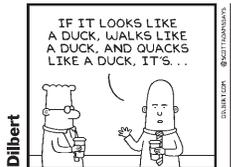
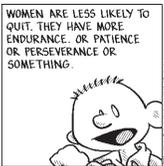
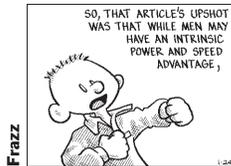
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities
- Purple Heart recipients
- Former Prisoners of War
- Primary registered caregivers

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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		
26	27	28					29				30	
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37							38				39	
							40				41	
45	46	47					48	49			52	
50							51				52	
53							54				55	

ACROSS

- 1 Wee dollop
- 4 Campus mil. group
- 8 Castle defense
- 12 Frozen water
- 13 Culture medium
- 14 Against
- 15 Take everything from
- 17 Cajole
- 18 Ice cream parlor order
- 19 Resort
- 21 Directional ending
- 22 Garish
- 26 Unlocks
- 29 Festive
- 30 Sundial numeral
- 31 Guns the engine
- 32 Lass
- 33 Freebie
- 34 Historic period
- 35 Identify
- 36 Tiresome types
- 37 Miscellaneous
- 39 Pouch
- 40 "For — a jolly good ..."
- 41 Wore down
- 45 Galileo's birthplace
- 48 Martini specification
- 50 Basra resident
- 51 Memory method
- 52 Pub order
- 53 Polite query

DOWN

- 19 Any time now
- 25 Thumbs-up
- 27 Novelist
- 28 Anavel Hunter
- 29 Joke
- 32 Yellowstone attractions
- 33 Winter quaff
- 35 Opposite of "post."
- 36 Lacking vegetation
- 38 Abu —
- 39 Brawl
- 42 Crucial time
- 43 Perry's creator
- 44 Salon jobs
- 45 Nonstick spray
- 46 401(k) alternative
- 47 Utter
- 49 Tic-tac-toe loser

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	O	C	O	T	O	M	B	S	H	O	
A	A	H	S	R	E	A	R	O	O	O	
W	H	A	T	N	E	R	V	E	M	O	P
S	U	P	E	R	S	A	B	E	T	S	
			A								
H	O	W	L	W	A	Y	T	H	U	D	
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S	T	E	I	N	T	R	A	I	N	S	
E	E	L	G	U	E	S	S	W	H	A	
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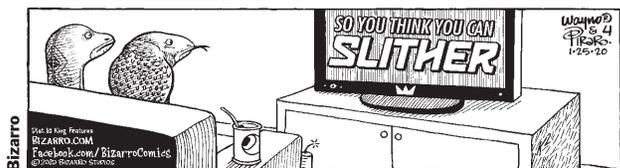
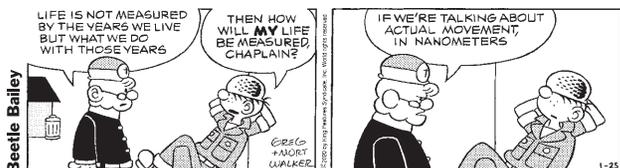
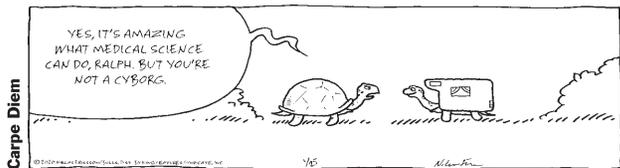
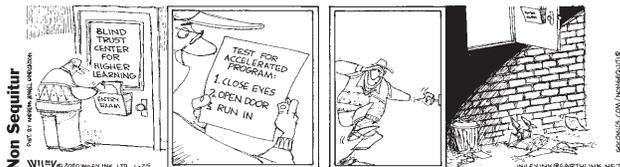
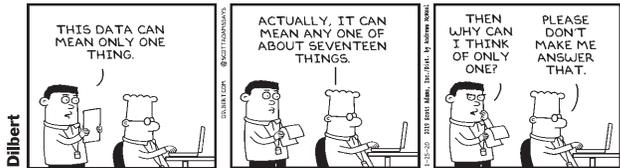
1-24

CRYPTOQUIP

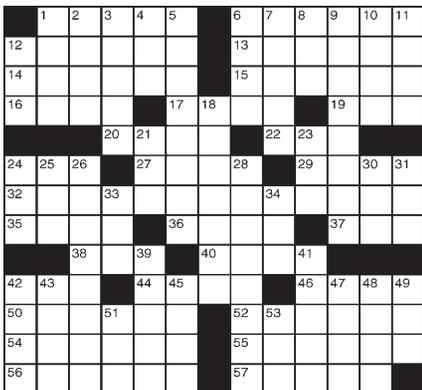
OJHF DCE ZUMH U LUX CB
 ACXREXCDV CBB CB ZJH
 BGCCX, OJUZ UXH DCE RCPFN?

LPAMPFN EL ZJH VGUAMV.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: PERSON ABLE TO PREDICT THE FUTURE CONDITION OF SOMEBODY'S CANINES AND MOLARS: A TOOTHSAVER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals F



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Column style
- 6 Raises a glass to composition
- 13 German vowel top
- 14 First female Fed chair Janet
- 15 Saskatchewan's capital
- 16 Actor Morales
- 17 Tart flavor
- 19 Trail the pack
- 20 Guitarist Atkins
- 22 Red — beet
- 24 "Not impressed"
- 27 Capri, e.g.
- 29 Clone
- 32 Body of water in Utah
- 35 Swedish auto
- 36 Cruising
- 37 Evergreen tree
- 38 Towboat
- 40 Beige
- 42 Dog's foot
- 44 Craving
- 46 Footproof
- 50 Ornamental beetle
- 52 Keep perusing
- 54 Overrun
- 55 Fort Knox bars
- 56 Folk singer Pete
- 57 Ethan and Joel of film

DOWN

- 1 Accomplishes
- 2 Earthen pot
- 3 Archaeologist's find
- 4 Rage
- 5 Italian noblewoman
- 6 Rotane
- 7 Alpha's opposite
- 8 H.S. math
- 9 Leave on a schooner
- 10 Sushi fish
- 11 Male deer
- 12 "See ya!"
- 18 Collections of maps
- 21 Chart-topping song
- 23 Cardinal cap letters
- 24 Brit. sports cars
- 25 Epoch
- 26 Sweltering spell
- 28 Type of guitar
- 30 Presidential nickname
- 31 Up-to-date
- 33 "Aladdin" monkey
- 34 Roofing goo
- 39 Forest clearing
- 41 Grammar topic
- 42 Greek letters
- 43 Skin breakout
- 45 Taxi alternative
- 47 Japanese noodle
- 48 Breaks down
- 49 Em halves
- 51 Joplin piece
- 53 Rock's Brian

Answer to Previous Puzzle



1-25

CRYPTOQUIP

K Z H B Z H D P N G O C A D N L M
 C O P H B P N T M A K S O M W
 U S M M A D - F L N Z A G H D F
 H D P A B N P L V P S M O N A M T
 L W S G A ? V A A V S U .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU TAKE A PAIR OF CORDUROY'S OFF THE FLOOR, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? PICKING UP THE SLACKS
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals H

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Deals

Wednesday's transactions
BASEBALL
American League
CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Assigned RHP Dylan Covey outright to Charlotte (CL).
DETROIT TIGERS — Agreed to terms with LHP Hector Santiago on a minor league contract.
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Designated RHP Heath Flanner for assignment. Signed OF Alex Gordon to a one-year contract.
MINNESOTA TWINS — Signed Josh Donaldson to a four-year contract.
ST. LOUIS BRUINS — Signed C Joe Hudson and INF Jose Marmolejos to minor league contracts.
TEXAS RANGERS — Assigned LHP Kyle Bird outright to Nashville (PCL). Signed RHP Juan Nicasio to a minor league contract. Promoted Sean Decker to executive vice president, scouting and entertainment; Starr Gulgulles to senior vice president, finance and Mike Healy senior vice president, venture operations and guest experience.
National League
ATLANTA BRAVES — Signed RHP Chris Nunn and C Brian Robinson and LHPs Orton Shane Robinson and INFs Charlie Culberson, Pete Kozma, Peter O'Brien and Yanivels Solarte to minor league contracts.
CHICAGO BREWERS — Named Ed Lucas minor league hitting coordinator; Bryan Leslie minor league assistant coordinator; Rob Huller minor league analyst-innovation/integrated sports manager; Ryan Sieber minor league assistant-performance/integrated sports performance; Jim Henderson minor league coach and hitting trainer of San Antonio (PCL); Chuckie Caulfield hitting coach; Fred Dalmey pitcher coach; Nestor Corredor coach, Paul Moeller pitching coach; Ryan Schimpf minor league strength and conditioning specialist of Biloxi (SL); Nick Childs pitching coach; Bobby Spain pitching coach; David Goff coach and Michael O'Neal development coach of Fort Collins (CFL); Carson Connor pitching coach of Wisconsin Rapids; Luis Rodriguez manager, Kevin Walsh pitching coach, Robert Riggs development coach and Andrew Steinhilber trainer of Rock Mountain (Pioneers); Brock Hammit development coach and Howie trained of the AZL Braves; Blue: Nick Stanley manager, Michael Salsedo pitching coach and Brandon Marks hitting coach of the AZL Braves; Gold: Mike Hayes hitting coach and Luis Rivera strength and conditioning coach of the DSL Brewers/Blue Jays; and Elias Figueira clubhouse attendant of the Dominican Republic base.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Signed LHP Francisco Lirio, INF Neil Walker and RHPs Bud Norris and Drew Storen to minor league contracts.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Agreed to terms with C Matt Wieters on a one-year contract.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
PHOENIX SUNS — Announced Larry Flynt Jr. has purchased a minority stake in the club.
FOOTBALL
National Football League
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Named Jay Gruden offensive coordinator.
NEW YORK GIANTS — Announced the retirement of QB Matt Ryan.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
DETROIT RED WINGS — Called D Dennis Choinskiwki from Grand Rapids (IHL).
NEW YORK RANGERS — Assigned G Igor Shesterkin and F Phillip D Giuseppe outright to AHL.
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
MINNESOTA UNITED — Signed G Fred Ebin to a one-year contract.
VANCOUVER WHITECAPS — Acquired D Eric Godoy on permanent transfer from Alajuelquense (CFL).
National Women's Soccer League
ATLANTA PRIDE — Signed defender Dani Weatherly to Reign FC for a 2021 season contract.
SKY BLUE — Agreed to terms with D Estelle Johnson on a one-year contract.

BIG 12 CONFERENCE — Suspended four players from Oklahoma State who already had been suspended indefinitely by the Jayhawks, was given a 12-game suspension. G Dan McCarney was suspended two games; Kansas State suspended F Antonio Gordon got three-game suspension.
ARMY — Named Cody Worley quarterback coach.
ARIZONA — Suspended men's basketball C Silvio de Sousa indefinitely for his part in a brawl during Tuesday's game.

College football

Bowl schedule
Friday, Dec. 20
Frisco (Texas) Bowl
 Kent State 51, Utah State 11
Bahamas Bowl
 Buffalo 31, Charlotte 12
Nassau Miami Gardens Fla.
Saturday, Dec. 21
Celebration Bowl
 At Atlanta
 NC A&T 64, Alcorn State 44
New Mexico Bowl
Albuquerque
 San Diego State 37, Michigan 11
Cure Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
 Liberty 23, Georgia Southern 16
Gasparilla Bowl
 FAU 52, SMU 28

Camellia Bowl
Montgomery, Ala.
 Arkansas State 34, FIU 26
New Orleans Bowl
 Appalachian State 31, UAB 17
Las Vegas Bowl
 Washington 38, Boise State 7
Monday, Dec. 23
Gasparilla Bowl
 At Tampa, Fla.
 UCF 48, Miami 30
Tuesday, Dec. 24
Hawaii Bowl
Honolulu
 Hawaii 38, BYU 30
Thursday, Dec. 26
Independence Bowl
Shreveport, La.
 Louisiana Tech 14, Miami 0
Quick Lane Bowl
Detroit
 Pittsburgh 34, Eastern Michigan 30
Friday, Dec. 27
Military Bowl
Jacksonville, Fla.
 North Carolina 55, Temple 13
Principles Bowl
New York
 Michigan State 27, Wake Forest 21
Houston
 Texas A&M 24, Oklahoma State 21
Holiday Bowl
Indianapolis
 Iowa 49, Southern Cal 24
Chee-It Bowl
Bozeman
 Air Force 31, Washington State 21
Saturday, Dec. 28
Camping World Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
 Notre Dame 33, Iowa State 9
Cotton Bowl Classic
Dallas
 Penn State 53, Memphis 39
Beach Bowl
Atlanta
 CFP Semifinal, Oklahoma 28, Florida 16
Giesta Bowl
Arizona
 CFP Semifinal, Clemson, Ohio State 23
Monday, Dec. 29
SVRPPV Responder Bowl
Dallas
 Western Kentucky 23, Western Michigan 20

Music City Bowl
Nashville, Tenn.
 Louisville 36, Mississippi State 28
Redbox Bowl
Santa Clara, Calif.
 California 35, Illinois 20
Orange Bowl
Miami Gardens Fla.
 Florida 36, Virginia 28
Tuesday, Dec. 31
Chick-fil-A Bowl
Charlotte, N.C.
 Kentucky 37, Virginia Tech 30
Juniper Bowl
El Paso, Texas
 Arizona State 36, Florida State 14
Liberty Bowl
Memphis, Tenn.
 Navy 20, Kansas State 17
Alamo Bowl
San Antonio
 Texas 38, Utah 20
Arizona Bowl
Tucson, Ariz.
 Wyoming 38, Georgia State 17
Wednesday, Jan. 1
Citrus Bowl
Orlando, Fla.
 Alabama 35, Michigan 16
Outback Bowl
Tampa, Fla.
 Minnesota 31, Auburn 24
Rose Bowl
Pasadena, Calif.
 Oregon 28, Wisconsin 27
Sugar Bowl
New Orleans
 Georgia 26, Baylor 14
Arms & Hurdley, Jan. 2
Birmingham (Ala.) Bowl
 Cincinnati 51, Michigan 19
Gator Bowl
Jacksonville, Fla.
 Tennessee 23, Indiana 13
Friday, Jan. 3
Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
Boise
 Ohio 30, Nevada 27
Armed Forces Bowl
Fort Worth, Texas
 Tulane 30, Southern Miss 13
Monday, Jan. 6
Lendinger Bowl
Mobile, Ala.
 Louisiana-Lafayette 27, Miami (Ohio) 17
New Year, Jan. 13
College Football Championship
Monday, Jan. 13
East-West Shrine Classic
At St. Petersburg, Fla.
 East 31, West 2
FRP Pala Paesada Bowl
California, Calif.
 National Football League
Saturday, Jan. 25
Senior Bowl
At Mobile, Ala.
 North vs. South
Hula Bowl
Honolulu
 East vs. West

Pro football

NFL playoffs
Wild-card playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 12
 Houston 22, Buffalo 10
 Tennessee 20, New England 13
Sunday, Jan. 13
 Minnesota 26, New Orleans 20, OT
 Seattle 17, Philadelphia 10
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 12
 San Francisco 28, Minnesota 10
 Tennessee 28, Baltimore 12
Sunday, Jan. 13
 Kansas City 51, Houston 31
 Green Bay 27, Pittsburgh 17
Conference Championships
Saturday, Jan. 12
 Kansas City 35, Tennessee 24
 San Francisco 37, Green Bay 26
Sunday, Jan. 26
AFC vs. NFC
Sunday, Feb. 2
AFC vs. NFC
Kansas City vs. San Francisco

AP football

Jan. 24
 1981 — Mike Bossy of the New York Islanders scores the goal in the 50th game of the season in a 7-3 victory over the Quebec Nordiques.
 1982 — Ray Wersching kicks a Super Bowl record-tying four field goals to help the San Francisco 49ers beat the Cincinnati Bengals 21-17.
 1986 — Mike Bossy of the New York Islanders scores the winning career point with an assist in a 7-5 victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs.
 1990 — The Denver Nuggets snap their record-tying, single-season losing streak (11) with a 107-97 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers 99-81.
 2010 — Peyton Manning throws three touchdown passes and the Indianapolis Colts record their first win since a 10-0 deficit to beat the New York Jets 30-17 in the AFC championship game.
 2016 — The New Orleans Saints make it to their first Super Bowl after battering the Seattle Seahawks and the Minnesota Vikings 31-28 in overtime on unheralded Garrett Hartley's 40-yard field goal.

College basketball

Wednesday's men's scores
EAST
 Albany (NY) 101, Mass.-Lowell 75
 American U., St. Louis (Mo.) 91
 Army 84, Lafayette 78
 Baruch 74, Staten Island 58
 Philadelphia 83, Stony Brook 79
 Cincinnati 89, Temple 82
 Penn State 67, Mount St. Joseph (NY) 81
 Fordham 59, George Washington 54
 Holy Cross 96, Lehigh 95
 Vermont 85, Manhattan 72
 Navy 60, Boston U. 58
SOUTH
 Florida 87, Duquesne 55
 Seton Hall 73, Providence 64
 UMB 69, Hartford 60
 Vermont 59, Maine 57
 W. Kentucky 64, Marshall 60
 NY Marquette 50, Virginia 56

SOUTH
 Auburn 80, South Carolina 67
 Chattanooga 92, The Citadel 69
 Davidson 71, Saint Louis 59
 Furman 101, Samford 78
 George Mason 73, UMass 63
 Louisville 68, Georgetown 74
 McNeese 57, SE Louisiana 61
 Mercer 95, W. Carolina 79
 Mississippi St. 77, Arkansas 70
 Richmond 75, La Salle 57
 Virginia Tech 79, North Carolina 77
 Wake Forest 66, Virginia 57
MIDWEST
 Bradley 75, Illinois 63
 Dayton 86, St. Bonaventure 60
 Drake 73, Evansville 50
 Iowa 85, Thursday, Jan. 23
 Loyola of Chicago 75, Indiana St. 55
 Missouri 61, Wichita State 63
 S. Dakota St. 78, N. Dakota St. 73
 Syracuse 64, Notre Dame 62
 Xavier 66, Georgetown 57
SOUTHWEST
 SMU 84, East Carolina 74
 Texas A&M-CO 74, New Orleans 71
 Tulsa 69, Memphis 40
 UALR 81, Troy 63
FAR WEST
 CS Northridge 78, Santa Barbara 75
 Cal Baptist 88, Chicago 53
 Colorado State 78, UC Davis 74
 Colorado St. 86, Fresno 53
 Long Beach 52, UC Irvine 56
 Nevada 86, UNLV 72

AP Men's Top 25 schedule
Friday's games
 No. 13 Butler vs. Wake Forest
Saturday's games
 No. 1 Baylor vs. Florida
 No. 2 Gonzaga vs. Pacific
 No. 3 Kansas vs. Tennessee
 No. 4 Florida State vs. Notre Dame
 No. 6 Louisville vs. Clemson
 No. 7 Virginia vs. Richmond
 No. 9 Villanova at Providence
 No. 14 Auburn vs. Missouri
 No. 15 Kentucky at No. 18 Texas Tech
 No. 16 West Virginia vs. Iowa State
 No. 20 Memphis vs. SMU
 No. 21 Illinois at Michigan
 No. 22 Arizona at Arizona State
 No. 23 North Carolina vs. Washington
 No. 24 Rutgers vs. Nebraska
Sunday's games
 No. 4 San Diego State at UNLV
 No. 1 Michigan State at Minnesota
 No. 12 Oregon at No. 19 Texas Tech
 No. 17 Maryland at Indiana
 No. 25 Houston vs. South Florida

Wednesday's women's scores

EAST
 American U. (Md.) 44
 Bucknell 66, Colgate 43
 Duquesne 66, George Washington 59
 Duquesne 84, George Mason 63
 Geneva 86, Thiel 53
 Penn State 82, Lehigh 57
 Lafayette 57, Army 52
SOUTH
 Florida 85, N. Carolina 60
 Mass.-Lowell 53, Albany (NY) 51
 Navy 46, Boston U. 41
 Alabama 51, St. West Virginia 55
 Old Westbury 83, Sarah Lawrence 32
 St. Joseph 63, St. Bonaventure 60
 Stony Brook 74, Baruch 59
 State 87, Binghamton 60
 UMB 69, Hartford 64
SOUTH
 Columbus 87, Clayton 52, 66
 Davis & Elkins 46, Fairmont 52
 Emory & Henry 65, Guilford 50
 SE Louisiana 74, McNeese 57
 Tennessee 63, SE Louisiana 53
 Tulane 60, UCF 59
WEST
 Akron 70, Miami (Ohio) 62
 Ball St. 69, Buffalo 65
 Cleveland 67, W. Michigan 63
 Cal Baptist 80, Chicago 65
 Cent. Michigan 88, Indiana 82
 Eastern Michigan 80, Ohio State 65
 Iowa St. 73, Kansas St. 59
 North Carolina 82, Wake Forest 65
 Purdue 76, Nebraska 68
 South Carolina 85, Wichita St. 59
 Wisconsin 72, Minnesota 62
SOUTHWEST
 Florida 87, Lamar 58
 Baylor 66, TCU 57
 Texas Tech 85, W. Virginia 88
 Nicholls 84, Houston Baptist 74
 Stephen F. Austin 89, Northwestern 50
PACIFIC
 Columbus 87, Clayton 52, 66
 Davis & Elkins 46, Fairmont 52
 Emory & Henry 65, Guilford 50
 SE Louisiana 74, McNeese 57
 Tennessee 63, SE Louisiana 53
 Tulane 60, UCF 59
WEST
 Akron 70, Miami (Ohio) 62
 Ball St. 69, Buffalo 65
 Cleveland 67, W. Michigan 63
 Cal Baptist 80, Chicago 65
 Cent. Michigan 88, Indiana 82
 Eastern Michigan 80, Ohio State 65
 Iowa St. 73, Kansas St. 59
 North Carolina 82, Wake Forest 65
 Purdue 76, Nebraska 68
 South Carolina 85, Wichita St. 59
 Wisconsin 72, Minnesota 62
SOUTHWEST
 Florida 87, Lamar 58
 Baylor 66, TCU 57
 Texas Tech 85, W. Virginia 88
 Nicholls 84, Houston Baptist 74
 Stephen F. Austin 89, Northwestern 50
PACIFIC
 Columbus 87, Clayton 52, 66
 Davis & Elkins 46, Fairmont 52
 Emory & Henry 65, Guilford 50
 SE Louisiana 74, McNeese 57
 Tennessee 63, SE Louisiana 53
 Tulane 60, UCF 59

Pro basketball

NBA
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division
 Toronto 20, 14 682 1/2
 Boston 29, 14 656 1/2
 Philadelphia 17, 17 630 2
 Brooklyn 18, 24 429 1/2
 Washington 12, 28 287 189
Southeast Division
 Miami 7, 28 705 1/2
 Orlando 21, 24 467 1/2
 Charlotte 15, 20 333 16 1/2
 Washington 29, 23 266 19 1/2
 Atlanta 11, 34 244 20 1/2
Central Division
 Milwaukee 39, 6 867 1/2
 Indiana 19, 25 644 1/2
 Detroit 17, 28 378 22
 Chicago 17, 29 373 22 1/2
 Cleveland 12, 28 273 26 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Southwest Division
 Dallas 27, 16 638
 Houston 27, 22 628 1/2
 San Antonio 20, 26 616
 New Orleans 17, 28 378 11
Northwest Division
 Utah 31, 13 705 1/2
 Denver 28, 16 682
 Oklahoma City 26, 19 578 5 1/2
 Portland 19, 26 422 12 1/2
 Memphis 15, 29 342 17 1/2
Pacific Division
 L.A. Lakers 31, 7 795 1/2
 L.A. Clippers 31, 18 689 4 1/2
 Phoenix 25, 23 614
 Sacramento 15, 29 341 20
 Golden State 12, 21 267

Wednesday's games
 Oklahoma City 120, Orlando 114
 Atlanta 102, L.A. Clippers 97
 Detroit 127, Sacramento 106
 Indiana 127, New Orleans 117
 Utah 128, Golden State 96
Thursday's games
 Washington at Cleveland
 L.A. Lakers at Brooklyn
Friday's games
 Milwaukee at Detroit
 Boston at Orlando
 Memphis at Detroit
 Phoenix at Sacramento
 Atlanta at Oklahoma City
 Denver at New Orleans
 Houston at Minnesota
 Chicago at Golden State
 Sacramento at Chicago
 Phoenix at San Antonio
Saturday's games
 Dallas at Cleveland
 Brooklyn at Detroit
 Memphis at Atlanta
 Oklahoma City at Minnesota
 L.A. Lakers at Philadelphia

NBA calendar
Feb. 6 — Trade deadline (3 p.m. EST)
Feb. 14-16 — All-Star weekend, Chicago, Ill.
April 15 — Regular season ends.
April 18-19 — Playoffs begin.
May 19 — Draft lottery, Chicago, Ill.
June 4 — NBA Finals begin.
June 25 — NBA Draft.

Pro baseball

Feb. 4-21 — Owners meetings, Orlando, Fla.
Feb. 4-21 — Salary arbitration, Worcester, Mass.
Feb. 11 — Voluntary reporting date for pitchers, catchers and injured players.
Feb. 18 — Spring training reporting date for other players.
Feb. 21 — Mandatory reporting date.
March 26 — Opening day, active rosteres reduced to 26 players.
April 18-19 — San Diego vs. Arizona at Mexico City, Mexico.
April 28-29 — New York Mets vs. Miami at San Juan, Puerto Rico.
June 10-12 — Amateur draft, Omaha, Neb.
June 15 — International amateur signing period opens.
April 18-19 — San Diego vs. Arizona at Mexico City, Mexico.
April 28-29 — New York Mets vs. Miami at San Juan, Puerto Rico.
June 10-12 — Amateur draft, Omaha, Neb.
June 15 — International amateur signing period opens.
April 18-19 — San Diego vs. Arizona at Mexico City, Mexico.
April 28-29 — New York Mets vs. Miami at San Juan, Puerto Rico.
June 10-12 — Amateur draft, Omaha, Neb.
June 15 — International amateur signing period opens.

July 26 — Hall of Fame induction, Cooperstown, N.Y.
Aug. 13 — Last day during the season to trade players.
Aug. 23 — Boston vs. Baltimore at Williamsport, Pa.

AUTO RACING

Kyle Busch has eye on 5 more titles

Mercurial driver still riding high following 2nd NASCAR crown

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press

The way Kyle Busch sees it, there is a flaw in the championship ring NASCAR awarded him last month.

It lacks any indication that the 2019 title was actually his second championship. Busch wants it fixed so it displays exactly what he's earned. He has studied the issue and knows the New England Patriots created a ring that showcases their six Super Bowl victories.

When his career is over, Busch wants just one ring to encapsulate his accomplishments. He insists he will close his career alongside greats Richard Petty, Dale Earnhardt and Jimmie Johnson.

But he doesn't have seven Cup Series titles.

"Not yet I don't," Busch said with a wink.

Busch's bid for a third championship doesn't begin until Feb. 16 at the Daytona 500, a race he desperately wants to win. Busch is 0-for-14 in "The Great American Race" with a bitter runner-up finish to Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Denny Hamlin in last year's 2-3 Gibbs sweep.

He has won at every active NASCAR track except The Roval at Charlotte Motor Speedway yet his 56 career Cup victories do not include the Daytona 500. His warm-up begins this weekend at the Rolex 24 at Daytona, a twice-around-the-clock endurance race featuring champions from series all over the world.

The event is packed with Indianapolis 500 winners, Le Mans winners and some of the most skilled drivers from global series. Busch is on hand to steal the show.

His longtime partnership with Toyota got him the gig to drive a Lexus for the AIM Vasser Sullivan team, and Busch is the star attraction. He loves it, too, and at a January team dinner he wore that ring. For one night, he seemed as if he was that once-upon-a-time fun Kyle Busch.

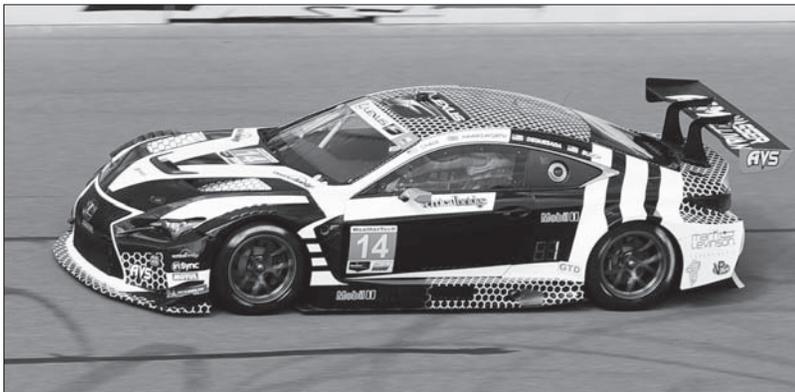
He was just 16 when he first came into NASCAR in 2001, right as the series was passing a rule that sidelined him until his 18th birthday. He was brash even then.

—It's some chip he and older brother Kurt have just always seemed to have, though he was tame compared with Kurt, the 2004 champion.

Kyle Busch has always done his best to speak the truth as he sees it, one sarcastic eye roll, thumbs-up or one-word answer at a time.

His opinions have not always been popular with NASCAR and it makes no difference whether he was right. The series "Car of Tomorrow" was terrible, he was just the first to say so and his outspokenness was often blamed for fans hating the car. Many fans found him arrogant, entitled or whiny or a mix of all three.

His career has been golden: high-profile rides first at Hendrick Motorsports, then JGR, where he has been since 2008. Busch has 208 victories across NASCAR's three national series, and some argue his tally equals Petty's record 200 Cup wins. He would undoubtedly have dozens more if NASCAR had no set limits on how much he can compete in the lower series.



PHOTOS BY JOHN RAOUX/AP

Above: Kyle Busch drives a Lexus RC-F GT3 through the front stretch during testing at Daytona International Speedway on Jan. 3. **Below:** Although his NASCAR season doesn't begin until the Daytona 500 on Feb. 16, Busch's racing season begins this weekend with a cameo appearance in the Rolex 24 at Daytona, a twice-around-the-clock endurance race featuring various series champions.



The dominating way he wins, his brash celebrations, his disregard for those who boo him and all those wins have made Busch something of a villain, and that doesn't always put him in the best of moods. Toss in a bad day at the track, plus idle time each weekend because NASCAR only allows him a maximum of five Truck Series races (he went 5-for-5 last season) and seven in the Xfinity Series (4-for-7), and Busch can be a real bear.

So it was a very long summer, and a 21-race losing streak didn't help. He lashed out in the opening race of the playoffs last September when he ran into the back of a lapped car and accused some in the field of not being qualified to race at NASCAR's top level.

Busch says that incident is one of the reasons he is running the Rolex this weekend. His Vasser Sullivan entry is in the GT Daytona class, where Busch will be mired in traffic with slower cars and inexperienced drivers with the faster classes closing in on him. It will be chaotic.

"Cody Ware says he can't drive and watch his mirrors," Busch said referring to the lapped-car flap in September.

"Watch this."

Busch then flipped his middle finger.

Although Busch ran into the lapped car of Garrett Smithley at Las Vegas, he was targeting Ware, who wasn't in that playoff race. The entire flap led to a heated discussion about on-track etiquette, talent discrepancies and drivers who purchase their seats in the big leagues. Ware was scheduled to compete in the Rolex 24 this weekend but his team pulled out late Monday.

In the Nov. 17 season finale, Busch beat Gibbs teammates Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr., as well as Kevin Harvick, to join Johnson as the only active drivers with multiple titles. Of course, Johnson is tied with Hall of Famers Petty and Earnhardt for the record, but Johnson is retiring at the end of the year. Busch turns just 35 and has twice proven he can rise through adversity to finish the job and doesn't appear to be going anywhere anytime soon.

He won his 2015 championship in a season where he missed 11 races because he broke both his legs in a crash the day before the Daytona 500. His 2019 season had its share of personal struggles as Busch and his wife, Samantha, have been very

public in their battles with infertility.

Their only child, son Brexton, was conceived through IVF treatments and their quest to give him a sister suffered a heart-breaking setback when Samantha miscarried the day of the 2018 awards ceremony in Las Vegas. The couple tried unsuccessfully again during last season, and Busch used a portion of his championship speech to address their struggles.

"I'm right here with you knowing how hard it's been to go through multiple, yes multiple, failed attempts of IVF this year, to walk around and try to face people week to week, always knowing in the back of my mind how helpless I feel in life knowing how much I wanted to answer your prayers in giving you the gift of our baby girl," Busch told her.

Busch is typically able to separate his personal and professional lives, but when things aren't going well in either area, his temper can be short and his sarcasm biting.

"Think about his whole life. He's got Sam and Brexton, but other than that, it's racing," said Joe Gibbs. "And when something goes bad in racing for him, think about how important that is, and it upsets him. Normally, the next day he's a lot better."

Busch has a legion of fan support from "Rowdy Nation," the group he bows to with the checkered flag after every victory. Busch appreciates their backing beyond words, especially when he gets exhausted by the politics of a new NASCAR rules package and the grind of the 38-race schedule. Busch has other things to worry about, too: He owns the best truck team in the sport, and this year he will launch "Rowdy Energy," an energy drink Busch says he helped develop.

"Mine's going to be better, better for you and better tasting," Busch insisted.

Busch has not been this outwardly happy in ages. Perhaps it comes with being the champion again, and the absolute belief that he can be the best NASCAR has ever seen.

The Daytona 500 is right around the corner, and a poor showing there could just as quickly send Busch scowling through the garage. He is always just one win away from feeling invincible.

HIGH SCHOOL

DODEA Europe weekend peek

Interesting matchups dot busy weekend

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

It's going to be a busy weekend across DODEA-Europe as teams in all three winter sports begin their final approach to the postseason.

Girls basketball

The Stuttgart Panthers have yet to be even remotely challenged this winter despite a relatively tough early season schedule. Not that they needed it, but the reigning Division I champions now enter a less arduous portion of their schedule, with a set against Division III Ansbach this weekend followed by February doubleheaders against struggling Division I rivals Lakenheath and Vilseck, a duo which will look to improve their own playoff seeding when they face off this weekend.

Division I schools SHAPE, Kaiserslautern and Wiesbaden are also playing out of their division this weekend, leaving the best intradivisional action for Division II, where Aviano travels to Bahrain and Naples and Vicenza continue their Italian rivalry.

Boys basketball

The centerpiece of this weekend's schedule is the meeting between DODEA-Europe's premier team, Division I dynasty Ramstein, and the organization's premier player, Chandler Pigge of Baumholder.

Pigge's all-around dominance in a loss to Ramstein last 2019 is the stuff of DODEA hoops lore, a performance that formally positioned the young Buc among the league's elite. He made good on the promise in the weeks that followed, leading Baumholder to a Division III championship and earning boys basketball Athlete of the Year honors from Stars and Stripes.

Pigge and Baumholder host a solid Kaiserslautern team on Friday night before the main event against Ramstein on Saturday afternoon.

Wrestling

Only two Saturdays, including this one, remain

BFA boys proving they belong

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

Black Forest Academy's basketball schedule isn't all that different from previous seasons. What has changed are the stakes.

In years prior, BFA was a Division II powerhouse that played a predominantly Division I schedule due to geographic proximity. Now, thanks to an off-season realignment, the Falcons are a Division I team themselves. Matchups with Wiesbaden, Kaiserslautern, Stuttgart and other big German schools are nothing new for the program. But those matchups are now played under a new paradigm.

"In the past, we could kind of use those Division I games as a benchmark of how good we were, or how weak," BFA boys coach David Kruse said. "We can no longer just be content to say, 'We lost, but we played them tough. Now let's win our Division II games and Division II tournament.'"

"We want to win games."

BFA, which lost all six of its games against Division I competition last season before winning the Division II European title, enters the final month of this regular season with a 5-1 record and a share of first place. While they're not the tournament favor-



BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

SHAPE's Gabi Shultz takes a shot during a game against Kaiserslautern in December. SHAPE won the game 45-40. Both teams are playing nondivisional games this weekend.

in the regular season. This weekend's major meet at Ramstein features the last meeting between the host Royals and reigning dynasty Stuttgart until at least the Feb. 8 sectionals, and perhaps the European championship meet set for Feb. 14-15.

Elsewhere, the Wiesbaden grapplers make the long trip to Rota to join the schools' basketball teams in international competition and Ankara makes its second appearance of the DODEA-Europe season at a five-school meet in Naples.

Marksmanship

Reigning champion Stuttgart enters the final weekend of regular-season shooting with a comfortable 112-point cumulative cushion ahead of second-place Kaiserslautern, with Vilseck, Wiesbaden and Ansbach trailing close behind.

That leaves Baumholder and Alconbury in play for the last of the six berths available in the Feb. 1 DODEA Europe championship meet. Baumholder holds a precarious nine-point lead for that spot as both teams visit Wiesbaden for a final weekend of the season meet that will extend one school's season at the expense of the other.

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ite they often were in Division II, the Falcons are also not a mere Division I participant. Wiesbaden coach David Brown called Black Forest a "legit contender" after watching the Falcons dispatch Lakenheath and SHAPE in Wiesbaden last weekend.

BFA's adjustment to the Division I level started in earnest with a pair of season-opening games against Stuttgart. The Falcons forced overtime on a last-second shot in a 69-65 win Dec. 6, then completed the sweep a day later with an equally competitive 55-53 victory.

"Those were two really important wins. We could just as easily have lost both," Kruse said, calling the narrow wins a "huge confidence boost."

As well as things have gone so far, the season's toughest tests remain ahead. BFA's remaining regular-season schedule includes doubleheaders with perennial power Wiesbaden and reigning dynasty Ramstein, the two teams with whom the Falcons are tied at one loss apiece. In late February, BFA takes its place in its first Division I tournament bracket.

Kruse hopes this season will create the foundation for a perennially successful Division I contender.

"That will be the goal — not just this year, but putting teams together every year that will compete," Kruse said. "It will be a challenge."

DODEA Pacific weekend peek

Events like a quiz for Far East finals

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

They finished fourth, losing four times in the Kanto Classic last January. But coach Daisy Whitaker-Hayes called the three-day tournament at American School in Japan a "pivotal point" in Zama's bid for its first DODEA Japan and Far East Division II Tournament titles.

"The girls realized what it meant to compete, give your all and leave it all on the court," said Whitaker-Hayes on Wednesday, a day before the start of the 4th Kanto Classic at ASJ's Chofu campus in Tokyo's western suburbs.

She cited Zama's two games against St. Paul Christian of Guam. In pool play, the Trojans took one on the chin 53-35, but came back strong two days later in elimination play, falling 43-41 after leading 14-1 at one point in the first quarter.

"They were extremely disappointed" with their first game against St. Paul, Whitaker-Hayes said. "The second time ... it was a completely different game. They learned what it meant to play good defense and what it means to be confident in themselves and their abilities."

Now, with seven wins this season, Zama enters the Classic as one of the favorites among girls teams, strong in the backcourt with sophomore Chloe Sterling and senior Kirari Smith and in the paint with senior Jessica Atkinson. And they're hoping to better their 2019 finish.

"We are simply hoping to redeem ourselves and display the hard work that has gone into the season," Whitaker-Hayes said. "This is the primary reason for entering into the tournament this year, redemption."

They get their chance starting Thursday, when a tournament-record 27-team field gets down to business on ASJ's high school, middle school and elementary school courts. Humphreys is the defending boys champion, while Academy of Our Lady of Guam will defend its girls title.

Thirteen girls and 14 boys teams are entered in the com-

bined partial round-robin the first two days and single-elimination bracket play on Saturday.

"All teams enter Saturday with a chance to win the title," tournament director and outgoing ASJ athletics director Brian Kelley said.

"We get to see new teams and the opportunity to play several games in three days will prepare us for Far East," Kinnick boys coach Robert Stovall said, adding that the Kanto Classic is "very similar to what Far East used to be" back in the days they had 16 teams.

Whether one's foes are familiar or comes in ice cold, one thing's certain, one coach said: Play well and you'll do well.

"I haven't seen anybody outside of Korea," Humphreys girls coach Steve Boyd said. "I just want to play well and see what we can do. If we play like we're capable, we'll be OK. But my girls have to be fundamentally sound. We can't make mistakes. We have to see improvement."

While the basketball action heats up at ASJ, the wrestling mats at Kinnick on Saturday see the 26th iteration of the "Beast of the Far East" invitational tournament, featuring 12 teams, 10 from around Japan and two from Okinawa.

Shonan Military Academy, near Yokosuka, will defend its team championship at "Beast."

In addition to returning "Beast" champions Rin Zoot of ASJ, Haydn Peterson of Kubasaki and Marshall China of Perry, the tournament also features returning Far East champions Eiji Kasahara of St. Mary's and Alexei Mutoh of Kinnick.

Kubasaki, which finished third last year, will have in tow Colin Nation, a state champion from Florida last year who is unbeaten so far this season.

Like the other teams and wrestlers, "we're hoping to gain insight on the competition there," Dragons coach Brent Cook said. "We're trying to see where we fit and what adjustments we need to make before Far East."

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Kinnick Invitational "Beast of the Far East" Wrestling Tournament

When: 9 a.m. Saturday.
Where: Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.
What: Single-elimination wrestling tournament. A platform for teams participating in the Far East Tournament at Osan to judge where they stand and what they need to work on.

Who's coming: Shonan Military Academy (defending team champion), host Kinnick, Yokota, Zama, Edgren, Perry, E.J. King, Christian Academy Japan, American School in Japan and St. Mary's, Kubasaki, Kadena and Keatena.

Format: Single-elimination with consolation bouts in all 13 weight classes, with consolation determining a "true" runner-up finisher if the wrestler placing third loses to the weight-class champion.

ASJ Kanto Classic Basketball Tournament

When: Thursday-Saturday, Tokyo.
Where: Largest gathering of teams in the four-year history of the tournament is 27 from ASJ, including eight DODEA schools from Japan, Korea, Okinawa and Guam in the first time, Guam Yigita's boys team.

Who's coming: Boys — Hokota, Zama, Kinnick, Edgren, host ASJ, Christian Academy Japan, St. Mary's, Kubasaki, King, Edgren, Perry, E.J. King, Seisen, Kubasaki, Okido, St. Paul Christian, Father Duenas, Girls — Hokota, Zama, Kinnick, Edgren, Perry, E.J. King, Seisen, Kubasaki, Kadena, Humphreys, Okido, St. Paul Christian, Academy of Our Lady (defending champion).

Format: Round-robin play first two days, single-elimination bracket play with consolation on third day. Each team is guaranteed six games and each team awakens Saturday with a chance to win the tournament.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL/MLB



ROD AYLDETTE, WACO TRIBUNE HERALD/AP

Oklahoma quarterback Jalen Hurts, the Heisman Trophy runner-up who once starred for Alabama, is hoping to improve his NFL Draft stock at the Senior Bowl.

Hurts' message for NFL is simple: 'I win'

BY JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

Jalen Hurts was presented a helmet at the Senior Bowl providing a snapshot of his college career, an OL on the right side and his old Alabama No. 2 on the left.

Now, the quarterback who led two elite programs to the College Football Playoffs is trying to prove himself again, as an NFL prospect, back in the state where he began his college career.

Hurts, who wore an Oklahoma-only helmet in practice Tuesday, officially began his audition for NFL teams this week with practices and meetings ahead of Saturday's Senior Bowl. His biggest selling point: "I win."

Indeed, last season's Heisman Trophy runner-up did a lot of winning for both Oklahoma and the Crimson Tide, putting up big numbers both passing and rushing. But questions remain about his passing accuracy and consistency, leading to an uncertain draft status.

LSU Heisman winner Joe Burrow is the likely No. 1 overall pick by the Cincinnati Bengals, whose staff is coaching Hurts and the South team. Tua Tagovailoa, who replaced Hurts as Alabama's starter, is also regarded as a likely first-round draft pick despite recovering from hip surgery.

Hurts' Senior Bowl teammate Justin Herbert of Oregon is projected as a high first-rounder.

Then there's the 6-foot-1, 218-pound Hurts, who has a stellar résumé but still some questions.

"I don't want to get into comparisons," he said Tuesday before the team's first practices. "That's kind of like the kiss of death. I try to be the best version of myself. Go out there and try to win, try to lead my guys, build relationships with my guys. Win ballgames."

Hurts went 26-2 as a starter for the Tide and was Southeastern Conference player of the year as a freshman. Then he was benched at halftime of the national championship game against Georgia, with Tagovailoa leading the comeback victory and

ultimately winning the starting job for the 2018 season.

Hurts stuck it out instead of leaving to preserve a second year of eligibility and ultimately departed for Oklahoma while ranking in the top three among Alabama quarterbacks for career rushing yards, touchdowns, total offense and passing TDs.

He led a comeback of his own for the Crimson Tide after Tagovailoa was injured in the SEC championship game, also against Georgia. Then he transferred to play for Lincoln Riley and the Sooners and delivered easily his best season.

Hurts got off to a blazing start and passed for 3,851 yards and 32 touchdowns while rushing for 1,298 yards and 20 scores.

"He's been successful everywhere he's been," Bengals coach Zac Taylor said. "He really is a little bit like an NFL quarterback in the sense that he had to go quickly and pick up an offense and really prove himself as a leader in a new program in a short period of time, which he did. He had a great year."

"Those are things that we get a chance now to see in person. Get to know the kid a little bit more. ... He certainly had a great college career. He put himself in a good position."

But also an uncertain one. Senior Bowl executive director Jim Nagy was initially skeptical about Hurts' ability to play quarterback in the NFL.

"Jalen's come a long, long way. He really has," the former scout said. "People asked me about Jalen when I took the job and I said maybe if he comes to the Senior Bowl in a couple of years it might be as another position player. He's blown that out. He's come so far."

Hurts, meanwhile, still conveys the same unflappable confidence as always. Determined to prove critics wrong, he's sporting more than a chip on his shoulder. It is, he said, "a boulder."

"I don't think there's any experience that I'd go back and exchange or change," Hurts said. "I think everything's happened for a reason. It's all happened how it's supposed to. I think I'm stronger, wiser, better man, better player, leader, better everything."

Mets pick Rojas as Beltran's replacement

BY MIKE FITZPATRICK
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Caught off guard in a quick split with Carlos Beltran, the New York Mets want some continuity for a change.

So with spring training only three weeks away, they picked his replacement from their very own bench.

The club was working Wednesday to complete a multiyear agreement with quality-control coach Luis Rojas that would make him New York's fourth manager in the past 2½ years — and third in four months.

"He has a good finger on the pulse of this particular team. He was part of it last year," general manager Brodie Van Wagonen said. "He knows these guys, and he knows how to communicate to them. Every returning player on the roster has a relationship with him, and that's valuable to us at this time."

Rojas would take over for Beltran, let go by the Mets last week before managing a single game as part of the fallout from the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scandal.

The 38-year-old Rojas is the son of former Montreal Expos and San Francisco Giants manager Felipe Alou and the brother of ex-big league outfielder Moises Alou. A minor league manager for eight years, Rojas has worked in the organization since 2007 but had never coached in the majors before joining Mickey

Callaway's staff last season.

"Luis earned this job. He has literally trained his whole life to be a manager," Van Wagonen said. "He is considered one of the better in-game decision makers simply that we have in the organization."

Rojas' duties in the dugout as quality control coach included serving as "a conduit between the front office and coaching staff on all issues including game prepara-

tion, strategy and analytics," according to the team's media coach. He also was New York's outfield guide in 2019 and led the effort in preparing hitters for opposing pitchers, Van Wagonen said.

Callaway was fired after the season, and Rojas interviewed for the vacancy before New York hired Beltran on Nov. 1. Van Wagonen said Rojas knew he was "a serious candidate" back in October.

"It's always helpful to have familiarity," Van Wagonen said. "The fact that he was so actively involved with the coaches this fall in preparation for spring training, in preparation for the season — he was already asserting himself more in a leadership role with this new coaching staff and helping Carlos learn some of the managerial things that he hadn't been exposed to before."

That played "a significant role" in the Mets choosing Rojas, according to Van Wagonen. The team decided against external options such as ESPN analyst Eduardo Perez, who interviewed for the job last fall.

"I think it's the fit, it's where the team is, it's what culture we're trying to create," Van Wagonen said, pointing out that most of New York's homegrown talent played for Rojas in the minors. "He's respected by the players, he's trusted by the players and he's someone that we have great confidence in."

Beltran's tenure lasted just 2½ months and ended after Commissioner Rob Manfred singled him out last week in a report on a cheating scheme used by the Astros during their World Series championship season in 2017, when Beltran played for them.

No players were disciplined by Major League Baseball, but three days later the Mets announced Beltran was out as manager. The sides said it was a mutual decision.

Less than a week afterward, they transitioned to Rojas.

"When it came to this unfortunate circumstance, we didn't want to change the values that we outlined for ourselves in the initial process," Van Wagonen said. "We wanted to consider the momentum that we have with the work that's been done in preparation for spring training, and we felt like Luis was in a position to be a leader of that group."

Computer umps to be tested, not used, at spring training

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball will test computer plate umpires during spring training but will not use them for decisions in any exhibition games.

MLB experimented with the automated balls and strikes system during the second half of last season in the independent Atlantic League, and the Arizona Fall League used it for a few dozen games at Salt River Fields. The Major League Baseball Umpires Association agreed last month to cooperate and assist if Commissioner Rob Manfred decides to utilize the system at the major league level.

"We will be running the automated balls and strikes system only in test mode but will not actually use it to call balls and

strikes in spring training games," the commissioner's office said in a statement. "It will be available in nine spring training facilities for later use during the Florida State League season."

Plate umpires hear the computerized ball/strike calls via earpieces. The human umpire decide on checked swings and other plays.

Manfred spoke about the system in an interview with Fox at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"We believe over the long haul it's going to be more accurate. It will reduce controversy in the game and be good for the game," he said. "The current strike zone design is actually three-dimensional, and a camera is better at calling a three-dimensional strike zone than the human eye."

OLYMPICS

Swifter, higher, stronger and more docile?

IOC's policy on protests draws ire

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
Associated Press

More than a half-century later, Tommie Smith and John Carlos are cemented into Olympic lore — their names enshrined in the Olympic Hall of Fame in the United States, their portrait an indelible fixture on the universal sports landscape.

As for that raised-fist salute that transformed them into Olympic icons, while also symbolizing the power athletes possess for the short time they're on their biggest stage — it's still forbidden.

Such was the warning this month in the announcement by the IOC, whose athletes' commission banned kneeling and hand gestures during medals ceremonies and competition. It's all part of an attempt to tamp down political demonstrations at this summer's Tokyo Games.

"The eyes of the world will be on the athletes and the Olympic Games," IOC President Thomas Bach said, in delivering an impassioned defense of the rules.

IOC athlete's rep Kirsty Coventry portrayed the guidance as a way to provide some clarity

on an issue that has confounded both athletes and authorities for decades.

The issue, always bubbling, surfaced last year when two U.S. athletes — Gwen Berry and Race Imboden — used medal ceremonies to make political statements at the Pan American Games. Those gestures brought a strong rebuke from the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic committees, but the groups still appear confused and conflicted about the entire matter. (The USOPC didn't welcome Smith and Carlos to an officially sanctioned event until 2016).

The IOC got its athletes' commission, which has often contradicted key athlete movements in other Olympic areas, to get out front on the issue and offer its advice. It was essentially no different from what the IOC itself has been touting for years. Not surprisingly, some view it as an out-of-touch, retrograde attempt to stifle an increasingly outspoken generation of athletes.

The mushrooming of live TV, say nothing of the outlets now available on social media, has empowered athletes — the best examples from recent years



FRANCISCO SECO/AP

United States women's soccer star Megan Rapinoe, known for her political statements, said she will not be silenced at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

would be Colin Kaepernick and Megan Rapinoe, but there are dozens more — to use sports to send a message.

Rapinoe's reaction to the IOC announcement: "We will not be silenced." As much as her play, Rapinoe's outspoken fight for equal pay for the U.S. women's soccer team underscored the American victory in the World Cup last year and made her, in the minds of many, the most influential athlete of 2019.

"So much being done about the protests," Rapinoe wrote on Instagram last weekend. "So little being done about what we are protesting about."

The athletes' commission said disciplinary action would be taken "on a case-by-case basis as necessary" and listed the IOC, the sports federations and the athletes' national governing bodies as those who will have authority to make the call. It made no mention of what the sanctions could be. In that respect, it added confusion, and might have served to emphasize the power disparity between the athletes, who are the show, and the agencies who run this multibillion-dollar enterprise and, for all intents and purposes, control the invitation list.

Among the other questions not answered in the guidance document:

Who, exactly, will adjudicate the individual cases and how will cases be adjudicated?

Who, exactly, will have ultimate responsibility for implementing sanctions?

While those questions went unanswered, the document included the reminder that "it is a fundamental principle that sport is neutral and must be separate from political, religious or any other type of interference."

That concept, however, runs counter to a long thread of Olympics-as-politics storylines that have dominated the movement.

A truncated list includes: ■ Hitler's hosting of the 1936 Games (winter and summer) in Nazi Germany.

Podium protests

1968

At the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, US runners Tommie Smith and John Carlos did a black power salute on the podium after finishing first and third, respectively, in the 200.

1906

Irishman Peter O'Conner, who won gold in the hop, skip and jump and silver in the long jump, scaled a flagpole and waved an Irish flag in the 1906 Athens Olympics to protest having to compete for Britain.

SOURCE: Associated Press

■ IOC President Avery Brundage's ham-handed handling of South Africa's status in the Olympics during apartheid.

■ The 1972 massacre of Israeli athletes during the Munich Games.

■ The U.S. boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, followed by the Soviet Union's boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

■ The IOC's awarding of the 2008 Olympics to Beijing, in part compelled by promises to shine a light on the country's attempt to improve human rights.

More recently, Bach has found the committee a permanent place at the United Nations, used the Pyeongchang Games in South Korea to strive for better relations between the Koreans and

spent ample time negotiating deals with leaders who have been kind enough to spend billions to stage the Olympics.

Though the IOC would argue that there are still places to make political statements in the Olympic space — news conferences and social media among them — it does not condone them on the field of play or the medals stand. It made all the more striking the picture the IOC tweeted out last Monday: Bach posing on a mountain with athletes in uniform from the United States and Iran at the Youth Olympic Games — a political statement during a time of strife that is designed to forward the long-held IOC-driven credo that the Olympics promote peace.

Peace itself is dependent on politics, and the people who run the Olympics are well connected to that world. No fewer than nine members of IOC itself are princes, princesses, dukes or sheiks — and that list doesn't include the multitude of government officials involved in organizations that branch out of the IOC. For instance, half the World Anti-Doping Agency's board comes from governments across the globe.

Bach has singled out political concerns as a major divider in the Russian doping scandal that has embroiled the Olympics the past five years — implying it's as much an East vs. West issue as one based on decisions that stem from painstakingly accumulated evidence.

The latest move comes in the run-up to what figures to be a divisive election year in the United States, the country that sends the largest contingent to the Olympics, wins the most medals and often lands some of the most outspoken athletes on the podium.

Smith and Carlos were booted from Mexico City after their protest. If history — to say nothing of Rapinoe's reaction — is any guide, the IOC could be placed in the position to decide whether to make that same sort of statement again.



FILE PHOTO/AP

U.S. athletes Tommie Smith, center, and John Carlos, right, raise their gloved fists after Smith received the gold and Carlos the bronze for the 200-meter run at the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City in 1968.

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA	
Boston	49	30	10	2	70	169/133
Tampa Bay	48	29	15	4	62	175/137
Florida	49	25	17	5	61	169/160
Toronto	49	25	17	7	57	176/165
Buffalo	49	23	20	5	51	145/150
Montreal	50	22	21	7	51	155/157
Ottawa	48	17	23	8	42	130/163
Nashville	51	12	35	5	28	109/159

Metropolitan Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA	
Washington	49	33	11	5	71	177/144
Pittsburgh	50	31	14	5	67	168/136
N.Y. Islanders	49	29	15	6	63	143/132
Columbus	51	27	16	6	62	138/130
Carolina	50	29	18	3	61	159/132
Philadelphia	50	27	17	3	60	158/150
N.Y. Rangers	48	23	21	4	50	158/159
New Jersey	48	17	24	7	41	126/173

Western Conference

Central Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA	
St. Louis	49	30	11	8	68	158/134
Colorado	49	26	15	6	62	179/143
Dallas	48	27	15	4	58	125/120
Chicago	51	24	21	6	54	155/161
Winnipeg	51	25	19	4	54	152/160
Minnesota	50	23	21	6	52	156/166
Nashville	47	22	18	7	51	156/154

Pacific Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA	
Vancouver	49	26	18	5	58	162/149
Edmonton	49	26	18	5	57	155/153
Calgary	50	26	19	5	57	135/147
Arizona	51	26	20	5	57	146/164
Vegas	52	25	20	7	57	161/159
San Jose	50	25	20	5	46	130/127
Anaheim	48	19	24	3	43	122/150
Los Angeles	47	18	25	4	42	125/158

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and the wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's games

Boston 3, Vegas 2
Carolina 4, Winnipeg 1
N.Y. Islanders 4, N.Y. Rangers 2
Philadelphia 3, Pittsburgh 0
Florida 4, Chicago 3

Wednesday's games

Columbus 4, Winnipeg 3
Minnesota 4, Detroit 2

Thursday's games

No games scheduled

Friday's games

No games scheduled

Saturday's games

All-Star Game: Metropolitan vs. Atlantic at Enterprise Center
All-Star Game: Pacific vs. Central at Enterprise Center

Sunday's games

All-Star Game: Metropolitan-Atlantic winners vs. Pacific-Central winners at Enterprise Center

Leaders

Through Wednesday

Goal scoring

Name, Team	GP	G
David Pastrnak, Boston	51	27
Antoni Miettinen, Toronto	49	34
Artemi Panarin, Toronto	49	34
Nathan MacKinnon, Colorado	49	30
Chris Egelund, Buffalo	49	27
Leon Draisaitl, Edmonton	49	27
Connor McDavid, Edmonton	49	27
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	51	25
Kyle Kane, Chicago	51	25
Elias Lindholm, Carolina	50	24
Patrick Kane, Winnipeg	50	24
Egorii Dadonov, Florida	49	23
Mark Scheffele, Winnipeg	50	23
Nikita Kucherov, Tampa Bay	47	22
William Nylander, Toronto	49	22
Jakub Vrana, Washington	49	22
David Pastrnak, Boston	49	22
Dominik Kubalik, Chicago	49	21
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	48	21
Max Pacioretty, Vegas	52	21

Game-winning goals

Name, Team	GP	GW
David Perron, St. Louis	49	8
Artemi Panarin, Edmonton	49	8
John Carlson, Washington	49	6
Jeff Carter, Los Angeles	48	28
Kyle Connor, Winnipeg	50	6
Jack Eichel, Buffalo	48	6
Elias Lindholm, Calgary	49	6
David Pastrnak, Boston	51	6
Noel Acciari, Florida	56	6
Ryan Getzlaf, Anaheim	46	5
Alex Killorn, Tampa Bay	49	5
Anders Lee, N.Y. Islanders	49	5
Brock Nelson, N.Y. Islanders	49	5
Elias Pettersson, Vancouver	49	5
Mark Scheffele, Winnipeg	50	5
Eric Staal, Minnesota	49	5
Jake Virtanen, Vancouver	49	5
Jakub Vrana, Washington	49	5
Brycen Walker, Pittsburgh	47	4
Tom Wilson, Washington	48	4

Plus/Minus

Name, Team	GP	+/-
Ryan Graves, Colorado	48	4
Dougie Hamilton, Carolina	47	30
Jacob Slavin, Carolina	50	27
Neil Cude, Colorado	44	24
Roman Josi, Nashville	47	23
Jedko Gudas, Washington	49	22
Artemi Panarin, N.Y. Rangers	47	22
Kevin Shattenkirk, Tampa Bay	48	21
Brad Marchand, Boston	51	20
Valeri Nichushkin, Colorado	44	19
Andrei Palat, Tampa Bay	47	19
Zdeno Chara, Boston	49	18
David Krejci, Boston	42	18
Chandler Stephenson, Washington	47	18
Devo Teravainen, Carolina	40	18
John Carlson, Washington	49	17
Brian Dumoulin, Pittsburgh	23	17
Clayton Kershner, Philadelphia	32	16
Phillipe Myers, Philadelphia	32	16
Carson Soucy, Minnesota	46	16

Around the league

It's good to have a backup plan

Teams realizing how important a 2nd goalie is

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

The Boston Bruins had it all set up to honor backup goalie Jaroslav Halak on Tuesday night for becoming the 74th goalie in NHL history to play in 500 games.

Then something went wrong: Starter Tuukka Rask was injured. Halak became the No. 1 guy and the Bruins decided to postpone the ceremony until a night Halak would be off.

"A lot of times, they're in a zone before the game. We want them to enjoy that ceremony," coach Bruce Cassidy said. "With Tuukka's injury, we were forced to change it."

There are a lot of NHL teams making a lot of changes because of injuries to their starting goalies this season — and not just to the ceremonies to honor muddling milestones. Four goalies selected for the All-Star Game are injured, with Rask joining Columbus' Joonas Korpisalo, Arizona's Darcy Kuemper and Vegas' Marc-Andre Fleury. (Rask had already bugged out of the game before he was injured.)

For NHL teams, the days of riding one goalie as much as possible have long since passed. Now, general managers know they need a strong No. 2 to get the team through the back-to-backs and the injuries that can pop up at any time.

"Some of that's obviously the ability of the second goaltenders. Some teams just don't have that," Cassidy said. "We've got two guys we feel comfortable with it."



Alex Stalock picked up six wins when starter Devan Dubnyk was out 15 games. Minnesota went 9-3-3 during that stretch.



MARY SCHWALM/AP

The Bruins had to put off a ceremony honoring goaltender Jaroslav Halak, above, after he reached his milestone 500th game in the NHL. When starter Tuukka Rask went down, the Bruins needed Halak.

makes for a good combination. Jaro, he's hurt, he'd be off before. If it was Jaro hurt, Tuukka could have handled it."

Last week, the Panthers said Chris Driedger will miss several weeks with what's believed to be a groin injury. Starter Sergei Bobrovsky has already missed much of January with an unspecified injury.

Minnesota's Devan Dubnyk was out for 15 games because his wife had a serious medical situation, and the Wild went 9-3-3, with six of those wins credited to Alex Stalock, their primary backup in

his third season with the team.

The Coyotes thought they had their No. 1 goalie for the future when they got Antti Raanta from the Rangers in 2017. But he played just 59 games his first two seasons in Arizona. Darcy Kuemper took over and earned a spot in last year's All-Star game, finishing fifth in the Vezina Trophy Award voting.

When Raanta returned, the Coyotes went with co-No. 1's, and hovered near the top of the Pacific Division. Then Kuemper, who was 15-7-2 and second in the league with a 1.97 goals-against average, was injured on Dec. 20 and hasn't played since.

Coyotes coach Rick Tocchet said there was interest in Raanta earlier in the season, and he's glad that general manager John Chayka didn't bite on trade offers.

"I remember him saying to the staff, 'A lot of teams are calling about Rants.' We all looked at each other and said, 'Rants and (Kuemper) are the identity of our team. They give us a chance to win.'"

Tocchet said "I mean, we try to play good defense and do a lot of other things. But they give us this identity and this confidence. Why would we want to put a crack in the armor?"

Raanta went 9-9-2 before he was injured early this month. Adin Hill, who played 17 combined NHL games the previous two seasons, has gone 2-2-1 with a 2.40 goals-against average with Kuemper and Raanta out.

Bobrovsky won two Vezina Tro-

phies in Columbus before departing for Florida as a free agent, and Korpisalo inherited the No. 1 job. A five-game winning streak in December landed him an All-Star selection.

But Korpisalo injured his knee trying to block a shot in a shootout on Dec. 29; rookie Elias Merzlikins, a 25-year-old Latvian who had never won an NHL game when he took over, is 8-2-0 with a .955 save percentage, 1.55 goals-against average and three shutouts in his last four games.

"There's certain teams in the league, they rely on one guy," Cassidy said. "Some of that may be that their salary cap just played out that way. They didn't have the luxury. The cap probably precludes you from going to fix an area that maybe you didn't see coming, or you did see coming but, hey, you went and spent it somewhere else."

"I just know as a coach, whoever's number is on the board to go into the nets, we feel good about our chances."

Game of the week

The All-Star Game in St. Louis on Saturday will again feature a three-game, three-on-three tournament. The captains will be Boston's David Pastrnak, Pittsburgh's Kris Letang, Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon and Edmonton's Connor McDavid.

AP sports writers John Marshall in Phoenix, Mitch Stacy in Columbus, Ohio, and Dave Campbell in Minneapolis contributed to this story.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Kyrgios performs well through to third round

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Love him or hate him — and make no mistake, there are plenty in each camp — Nick Kyrgios never allows for a dull moment when he's on a tennis court, whether it's shot selection, showmanship, momentum swings, barking at his entourage or mocking another player not even involved in the match at hand.



LEE JIN-MAN/AP

Australia's Nick Kyrgios celebrates after defeating Gilles Simon in their second-round match at Thursday at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia. Kyrgios won 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5.

Australian Open

Thursday
At Melbourne Park
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: AUD71,000,000
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Men's Singles
Second Round
Danil Medvedev (4), Russia, def. Pedro Martinez, Spain, 7-5, 6-1, 6-3.
Ernesto Gulbis, Latvia, def. Aljaz Bedene, Slovenia, 7-5, 6-3, 6-2.
Dominic Thiem (5), Austria, def. Alex Bolt, Australia, 6-2, 5-7, 6-7 (5), 6-1, 6-2.
Alexander Zverev (7), Germany, def. Egor Gerasimov, Belarus, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 7-5.
Alexei Popyrin, Australia, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 6-2, 7-6 (5), 6-2.
Andrey Rublev (17), Russia, def. Yuchi Sugita, Japan, 6-2, 6-5, 7-6 (5).
John Isner (10), France, def. Iv Karlovic, Croatia, 4-6, 7-6 (8), 6-4, 7-5.
John Lester (19), United States, def. Alejandro Tabilo, Chile, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.
Fernando Verdasola, def. Nikoloz Basilashvili (26), Georgia, 4-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4, 6-4.
Pablo Carreno Busta (27), Spain, def. Peter Gogojan, Germany, 6-4, 6-1, 1-6.
David Goffin (11), Belgium, def. Pierre-Hugues Herbert, France, 6-1, 6-4, 4-6, 1-6, 6-3.
Nick Kyrgios (23), Australia, def. Gilles Simon, France, 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5.
Taylor Fritz (29), United States, def. Kevin Anderson, South Africa, 4-6, 6-7 (5), 7-6 (4), 6-2, 6-2.
Stan Wawrinka (15), Switzerland, def. Andrea Seppi, Italy, 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4.
Karen Khachanov (16), Russia, def. Mikael Ymer, Sweden, 6-2, 6-2, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (9).
Rafael Nadal (1), Spain, def. Federico Delbonis, Argentina, 6-1, 7-6 (4), 6-1.
Women's Singles
Second Round
Donna Vekic (19), Croatia, def. Alize Cornet, France, 6-4, 6-2.
Belinda Bencic (6), Switzerland, def. Jelena Ostapenko, Latvia, 7-5, 7-5.
Garbine Muguruza, Spain, def. Ajla

All of the above happened during his ever-eventful 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 victory over Gilles Simon in the Australian Open's second round Thursday night.
That included a moment when Kyrgios — currently on six months' probation from the ATP for verbally abusing tennis officials — poked fun at the man he might meet in the fourth round, Rafael Nadal. After being warned for taking more than the allotted 25 seconds between serves, Kyrgios mimicked how Nadal fidgets before a point, as if to remind the chair umpire that there are folks who more egregiously waste time.

When a reporter asked Nadal about Kyrgios' imitation of the 19-time major champion, the Spaniard replied: "I really don't care. I'm here to play tennis."

About the only boring segment of the proceedings came during the in-stadium interview, when an allusion was made to later rounds and Kyrgios, an Australian seeded 23rd, told the Melbourne Arena crowd, "I'm not thinking ahead. ... I'm just taking it one match at a time at the moment."

Among the noteworthy winners were U.S. Open runner-up Danil Medvedev, who took a medical timeout because of a nosebleed late in the second set of his 7-5, 6-1, 6-3 victory over Spanish qualifier Pedro Martinez, along with two-time French Open finalist Dominic Thiem, No. 7 Alexander Zverev, No. 10 Gael Monfils and a trio of women who have been ranked No. 1 and won Grand Slam titles: Simona Halep; Angelique Kerber; and Garbine Muguruza.

Those results were the most intriguing of Day 4 at the year's first Grand Slam tournament, especially given the distaste Kyrgios and Nadal have for each other in a raucous rivalry that provided one of the highlights of Wimbledon in 2019.

Among the noteworthy winners were U.S. Open runner-up Danil Medvedev, who took a medical timeout because of a nosebleed late in the second set of his 7-5, 6-1, 6-3 victory over Spanish qualifier Pedro Martinez, along with two-time French Open finalist Dominic Thiem, No. 7 Alexander Zverev, No. 10 Gael Monfils and a trio of women who have been ranked No. 1 and won Grand Slam titles: Simona Halep; Angelique Kerber; and Garbine Muguruza.

Tomljanovic, Australia, 6-2, 3-6, 3-6, 3.
Karolina Pliskova (2), Czech Republic, def. Laura Siegemund, Germany, 6-3, 6-3.
Zarina Diyas, Kazakhstan, def. Anne Blinkovka, Russia, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.
Cici Bellis, United States, def. Karolina Muchova (20), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-4.
Angelique Kerber (17), Germany, def. Heather Watson, Britain, 6-3, 6-4.
Elsie Mertens (16), Belgium, def. Kiki Bertens (9), Netherlands, def. Arina Rodionova, Australia, 6-3, 6-2.
Anett Kontaveit (28), Estonia, def. Sara Sorribes Tormo, Spain, 6-2, 4-6, 1-6.
Iga Swiatek, Poland, def. Carla Suarez Navarro, Spain, 6-3, 7-5.
Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (30), Russia, def. Taylor Townsend, United States, 7-5, 7-6 (1).
Camilla Giorgi, Italy, def. Svetlana Kuznetsov, Russia, 6-3, 6-1.
Simona Halep (6), Romania, def. Harriet Dart, Britain, 6-2, 6-4.
Fernanda Pettenkofer, Kazakhstan, def. Danielle Collins (26), United States, 6-4, 2-6, 1-5.
Erina Solovitsina (5), Ukraine, def. Lauren Davis, United States, 6-2, 7-6 (3).

Men's Doubles
Sam Querrey and Steve Johnson, United States, def. Yen-Hun Lu and Cheng-Peng Hsu, Taiwan, 6-7 (9), 6-3.
Ugo Sobrang, Brazil, and Mate Pavic (10), Croatia, def. Luke Bambridge, Britain, and Ben McLachlan, Japan, 5-6 (4), 6-3.
Pablo Carreno Busta, Uruguay, and Guido Pella, Argentina, def. Robert Lindstedt, Sweden, and Jeremy Chardy, France, 7-5, 9-7 (6).
Adrian Mannarino and Gregoire Barrere, France, def. Frank Tomasic, United States, and Ugo Humbert, France, 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.
Rajeev Ran, United States, and Joe Salisbury (11), Britain, def. Daniel Evans, Britain, and John-Patrick Smith, Australia, 6-1, 7-6 (3).
Jurgen Melzer, Austria, and Edouard Roger-Vasselin (12), France, def. Ricardas Berankis, Lithuania, and Sander Ar-



EMMA PRAVECKE, UNIVERSITY DAILY KANSAN/AP

Kansas forward Silvio De Sousa holds a stool while taking part in a brawl at the end of Tuesday's game against Kansas State in Lawrence, Kan. Kansas coach Bill Self suspended De Sousa indefinitely on Wednesday before the Big 12 Conference hand down a 12-game suspension.

Big 12 suspends four after brawl

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Big 12 suspended four players from Kansas and Kansas State a combined 25 games Wednesday for their roles in a melee that spilled off the court and into a section of disabled seating in Allen Fieldhouse near the end of the third-ranked Jayhawks' win over the Wildcats.
Kansas forward Silvio De Sousa, who already was suspended indefinitely by Jayhawks coach Bill Self, was given a 12-game suspension by the league office. His teammate, David McCormack, was suspended two games while Kansas State forward James Love received an eight-game suspension and Antonio Gordon got a three-game suspension.

The incident on the league's weekly conference call with reporters. "As I said last night, we are disappointed in his actions and there is no place in the game for that behavior."

Kansas' (15-3) has played six conference games, which means De Sousa's suspension from the Big 12 would last through the end of the regular season. The Jayhawks are a half-game back of top-ranked Baylor in the league standings, and they have a team that is capable of making a deep run in the NCAA Tournament.

Both schools also were reprimanded by the Big 12 for violations of its sportsmanship policy. "This kind of behavior cannot be tolerated and these suspensions reflect the severity of last night's events," Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlsby said. "I am appreciative of the cooperation of both institutions in resolving this matter."

"Obviously an unfortunate situation," said Dan Gavitt, the NCAA vice president for men's basketball. "It's a conference game, so it will be up to the Big 12 to determine what actions need to be taken. Other than that, it's too early to say how it might affect them (in the NCAA Tournament)."

De Sousa was the main instigator on the Kansas side Tuesday night, getting stripped of the ball as he was dribbling out the final seconds of an 81-60 win. He recovered to block a layup attempt by the Wildcats' DaJuan Gordon, then stood over the freshman in a taunting manner, triggering both benches to empty in a scrum that spilled into fans.

Self said she spoke with a fan who was caught up in the melee, and that she was banded around "to the point where I'm sure we'll correspond with her today to see how she's feeling."
"Obviously it's embarrassing," Self said. "It's not something to be proud of."

At one point, De Sousa was preparing to swing a stool when it was plucked from his hands, and several players from both teams threw wild punches while a sell-out crowd in Allen Fieldhouse watched in shock.

The fracas continued a particularly difficult 12 months for Self and the Jayhawks, and De Sousa has played a big part in most of it. His name surfaced as part of the FBI probe into college basketball in October 2018, and that in part led to an NCAA investigation that resulted in a notice of allegations last September outlining major violations tied to recruiting in men's basketball. Those violations are being appealed and a decision is not expected until later this year.

"I have suspended Silvio De Sousa indefinitely pending the final outcome of the review by KU and the Big 12 Conference," Self said shortly after discussing

De Sousa was initially suspended for two seasons for his role in the case — last season and this season — and the school spent significant resources appealing the punishment. It eventually was reduced, allowing the junior forward to play this season.

NBA/GOLF

Hope: Williamson wasted no time making impact for Pelicans

FROM BACK PAGE

high school days in Spartanburg, South Carolina. It only increased during his one stellar season at Duke, making him the consensus No. 1 overall NBA draft pick well before the Pelicans won the draft lottery and the right to select him.

Pro basketball fans had to wait an extra three months to see how Williamson's rare combination of size and skill would translate in a meaningful NBA game because of the cautious and comprehensive approach the Pelicans took to their prized rookie's rehabilitation from arthroscopic surgery on his right knee.

But it took only one game for Williamson to do something extraordinary.

He made all four threes he attempted in the fourth quarter Wednesday, stirring the Smoothie King Center crowd into a jubilant frenzy. In between, he laid in an alley-oop lob and put back an offensive rebound with a reverse layup.

"It was nice to experience those emotions," Williamson said. "I was happy to be out there and be able to run out there again, but what was going through my mind was just, 'Be calm.'"

Williamson's final statistical line was 22 points on 8-for-11 shooting to go with seven rebounds and three assists in 18:08 on the court.

"The way he plays, that's something he can do every day," Holiday said. "Adding Zion is a big part to what we want to do here and our success."

Fans wanted to see more, but coach Alvin Gentry said he couldn't heed their chants of "We want Zion!" during the final five minutes of a 121-117 loss.

"The medical people said that was it," Gentry said, alluding to precautionary restrictions placed on Williamson's playing time in the early days of his return to action.

"Me, personally, I don't want any restrictions," Williamson said. "But I'm not a doctor or a trainer, so I've just got to listen to them."

The Pelicans are back in action twice in four days, hosting Denver on Friday and Boston on Sunday. If Williamson's 19-year-old body responds well to his early action, his playing time is expected to lengthen.

"What you saw there is a taste of once we really get settled in and he gets settled in, you can see that there's a lot of things we can do with him," Gentry said. "There's a lot of potential there. It was good to see him do that, but you know I think there's a really, really high ceiling that he can reach."

Everything about Williamson's debut exuded a big-event vibe. The game was sold out and hundreds of fans were waiting to pour into the arena when the gates opened about an hour before tip-off.

"The energy was there from warm-ups," Pelicans guard Lonzo Ball said. "That is the most people I have seen coming out before the game even started."

Tip-off was pushed back 90 minutes to accommodate national TV and Pelicans media relations staff said they'd issued about 165 credentials, more than five times the typical number for a mid-week game in January.

For a little more than three quarters, when Williamson had five points and four turnovers, it looked like his first game would disappoint the lively, capacity crowd that came to see him. Then, suddenly, Williamson had the place on its feet and in a state of near delirium.

Holiday noted that Williamson had been rocking arenas since high school, adding rhetorically, "As exciting as it was, is it really that much of a surprise?"

Perhaps not. But it was memorable.



GERALD HERBERT/AP

New Orleans forward Zion Williamson pulls in a rebound against the San Antonio Spurs on Wednesday. Williamson had 22 points, seven rebounds and three assists over 18:08 of play in his season debut.



PHOTOS BY DENIS PORO/AP

Tiger Woods talks with Los Angeles Rams football player Eric Weddle, left, during the pro-am round.

Stars align, give Torrey Pines the feel of a season-opener

Woods, McIlroy draw crowds to Farmers Insurance Open

BY DOUG FERGUSON

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A small crowd that gathered in the morning chill made its way to the first tee to watch Tiger Woods start his pro-am round Wednesday at Torrey Pines.

The first starting time is ideal because the front nine is open.

Rory McIlroy was in the second group. As the FedEx Cup champion and PGA Tour player of the year, wouldn't he have the option of going first? McIlroy laughed and said, "I'm not Tiger Woods."

No one is. Woods has built his unrivaled status through 82 victories on the PGA Tour, 15 major championships, some 10 years at No. 1 in the world and transcendent star power that still shines bright.

McIlroy will have to settle for being the second biggest star during a week when he can return to No. 1 in the world.

They will be a group apart when the Farmers Insurance Open begins Thursday, creating a must-see atmosphere.

Never mind this is the fourth tournament of the new year. Woods and McIlroy make it feel like a season opener, especially because of the first network TV coverage of the year during an open week of NFL ahead of the Super Bowl. Throw in the likes of Phil Mickelson and Xander Schauffele, Jon Rahm and defending champion Justin Rose, and it's a big show on a big course.

Woods, who will set the PGA Tour record for career titles with his next win, has eight victories at Torrey Pines. His last win at the Farmers Insurance Open was in 2013. Injuries came along, and



Rory McIlroy hits his tee shot on the fifth hole during the pro-am round of the Farmers Insurance Open on Wednesday.

even when healthy, he has been slow out of the gates the last few years.

He last played Dec. 15 at the Presidents Cup, and aside from spending his 44th birthday playing golf with his son, Woods didn't do much until getting back to practice a few weeks ago.

"I think for me, managing adrenaline takes a little bit of time," Woods said. "I'm so amped up to play that I really have to dumb myself down, to calm myself down to play. ... I just want to get out there and compete."

McIlroy also is coming off a long break. He chose to spend Christmas and New Year's Eve in Northern Ireland, so he passed on a trip across two oceans to Hawaii for the Tournament of Champions.

He was in no rush to get started on what should be a long year, including his first Olympics in the summer. He also was in no rush to return to No. 1 in the world for the first time since 2015.

It was only last summer, after he missed the cut in the British Open, that returning to No. 1 seemed a long way off.

Since then, McIlroy won the Tour Championship and another World Golf Championship, among eight top-10 finishes in his last 10 tournaments. Top-ranked Brooks Koepka played three rounds over the last four months of the year because of a knee injury.

"I learned a lot of things at Portrush that I've put into my game, into my preparation, into my thought process going into other tournaments," McIlroy said. "And yeah, I've had a pretty good run since then. But no, it wasn't on the radar when I was flying back from Northern Ireland in July."

And it's not at the forefront of his mind now.

McIlroy would have to win this week, and he has never won his first tournament of the year since he turned pro in 2007.

"I don't want to say it feels like it's just a matter of time, but if I just keep doing what I'm doing, if it isn't this week, then hopefully it's a couple weeks down the line and I'll have my chances," McIlroy said. "So I'm not putting myself under any pressure this week to get it done."

NFL

Pro Bowl provides players a chance of a role reversal

BY MARK LONG
Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Pittsburgh's Cameron Heyward jogged through the end zone, stretched out his right arm and made a one-handed catch to start Pro Bowl practice Wednesday.

Not bad for a defensive lineman.

And no one should be surprised to see Heyward do it again in the NFL's all-star game Sunday.

The annual event looked a lot like a backyard pickup game last year, with trick plays and position swaps being more prevalent than deep balls and defensive indifference.

"It's definitely more than just a game," Tennessee defensive tackle Jurrell Casey said. "We work hard all year long, beating each other down, so to come out and switch positions for one or two plays, I don't think it hurts nobody."

"A lot of guys, they played a different position back in the day, so let them come out and mess around with that a little bit."

Casey already put in his request, asking Baltimore coach John Harbaugh if he can get a goal-line carry.

"I used to play a little running back," said the 6-foot-1, 305-pound Casey. "He said he's going to try, but he doesn't want to mess up the system too much. I'm going to keep on trying to feed him all week. They've got to let me touch the ball at least once."

It wouldn't be a shock considering what happened last year in Orlando.

Jacksonville cornerback Jalen Ramsey caught a touchdown pass in the closing seconds of the AFC's 26-7 victory. Tampa Bay receiver Mike Evans had a pass breakup and an interception on consecutive defensive snaps.

Minnesota receiver Adam Thielen threw an interception on a trick play. A trio of running backs — New York's Saquon Bar-

keley, Dallas' Ezekiel Elliott and New Orleans' Alvin Kamara — rushed the passer on third-down plays.

Elliott also lined up as an up-back in punt formation on a fourth-and-13 play and gained 22, his longest run of the game.

"It was just spur of the moment," Elliott said. "It makes it more fun. Fun for the players, fun for the fans. It's nice to be a little different."

It might just be the evolution — some might call it devolution — of the exhibition game that's become less and less intense over the years. There's little, if any, tackling and barely any contact along the lines of scrimmage. It often looks more like a walk-through than a workout — two-hand touch at the most.

"It's supposed to be about fun," Atlanta tight end Austin Hooper said. "That's the whole reason the NFL says do this — for it to be fun. So why not switch up positions a little bit, give the fans something to be excited about and shake things up?"

"At the end of the day, this is all a celebration. If you're Mike (Evans), who played DB in high school, and you want to play a little bit in the NFL all-star game, go for it. If you're Jalen Ramsey and you played receiver in high school and you want to play a little in the all-star game, have at it."

"There are a lot of cool, fun wrinkles in this game and that's what makes it special."

Not everyone is down to clown around, especially since players on the winning team get double the payout — \$70,000 instead of \$35,000.

"Everybody has dreams of playing another position," Jacksonville defensive end Calais Campbell said. "When you have those dreams, you have to really pull on the coach's shoulder. But when the game's on the line, though, we want to win. No playing around if you can't deliver."



PHOTOS BY BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Above: Preparations are underway during a tour of the Hard Rock Stadium on Tuesday ahead of the Super Bowl in Miami Gardens, Fla. Below: Logos are painted on the field for the Super Bowl.

Super Bowl notebook

Miami makeover: Workers hurry to prepare stadium

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The pounding of a single hammer echoed through the stands Tuesday in the Miami Dolphins' stadium, the reverberations from the Super Bowl's return to South Florida just beginning.

Painters sprayed a logo on the newly laid grass while two men in hard hats dangled from a scaffold under a video board. Workers on the sprawling grounds outside the stadium also busily prepared the complex for the NFL title game on Feb. 2 between the Kansas City Chiefs and San Francisco 49ers.

"We have upwards of 6,000 people working behind the scenes to get everything set up," said Eric Finkelstein, NFL senior director of event operations. "You can hear it around us. And there's a lot more work to go. But we feel really good about where we are in getting everything prepared."

The league offered a sneak peek at the stadium as Miami prepares to host the Super Bowl for the 11th time, the most of any city. It has been 10 years since the last title game in South Florida, however, and the Dolphins' home has since undergone a \$550 million renovation.

The NFL said the upgrades were needed for Miami to remain competitive in bidding to host Super Bowls.

"People who haven't been here since the last Super Bowl will feel like they're in a totally different stadium," said Tom Garfinkel, the Dolphins' president and CEO.

Changes include four large video boards and a canopy to protect fans from rain, while



the stands and suites have been reconfigured. A plaza outside the main entrance now provides an inviting setting for pregame entertainment.

Favre sees some of his own traits in Mahomes

Brett Favre sees some of his own traits as a football player in Patrick Mahomes.

The mobility and passing outside the pocket, usually on the run. The willingness to stick with a play and see if it can develop into something grand. The howitzer of an arm.

The Hall of Fame quarterback, who is appearing weekly on SiriusXM NFL Radio for a third NFL season, isn't exactly looking into a mirror when he watched Mahomes. But it isn't far off.

"I see the comparison," Favre said of the Kansas City star. "He may not admit this but he probably feels there is no throw he can't make or no angle he can't make it from. Whether he's flushed left or to the right, his vision always is down the field. I was always look-

ing for the big play first and knew I could always react underneath if I needed to.

"You have to have a certain confidence or air about you that you can make any throw, and it has been proven he can make any throw. I always felt like, yeah."

With one major alteration that Mahomes and San Francisco's Jimmy Garoppolo probably benefit from.

"The one big difference with me and present-day quarterbacks, when I came into the league I was very unprepared from a passing standpoint," Favre said. "I could throw it a mile, make any throw, but in college we ran an option offense and when we threw it was off a sprint out. I didn't know anything about protections in general, throwing hot. Never had to worry about anything in college, played free-spirit football, and if there's a busted play, make something happen with my arm."

"I didn't know if I could adapt enough to the offense Mike Holmgren or future coaches would want to run before they run me off. I had to make plays outside the pocket."



JOHN RAOUK/AP

AFC wide receiver Jarvis Landry of the Cleveland Browns shows his throwing motion. Players frequently play different positions in the Pro Bowl.

NFL

Giants' Manning retiring after 16 seasons

Two-time Super Bowl winner to make it official on Friday

By TOM CANAVAN
Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Eli Manning is ending a 16-year NFL career that saw him recognized as a great quarterback, a leader, a solid citizen and the man who led the New York Giants back into prominence with two Super Bowl titles.

Manning, who set almost every Giants passing record in a career solely based in New Jersey's Meadowlands, has retired, the Giants said Wednesday. He will formally announce his retirement on Friday and there is little doubt the team will retire his No. 10 jersey.

"For 16 seasons, Eli Manning defined what it is to be a New York Giant both on and off the field," John Mara, the Giants' president and chief executive officer said in a statement.

"Eli is our only two-time Super Bowl MVP and one of the very



PATRICK SEMANSKY (ABOVE) AND CHARLIE RIEDEL (BELOW)/AP

Above: Eli Manning has retired. The New York Giants said Wednesday. Below, left: Manning won two Super Bowls with the team in his 16-year career.

best players in our franchise's history. He represented our franchise as a consummate professional with dignity and accountability. It meant something to Eli to be the Giants quarterback, and it meant even more to us. We are beyond grateful for his contributions to our organization and look forward to celebrating his induction into the Giants Ring of Honor in the near future."

The recently turned 39-year-old's future had been in doubt since the end of the season. Manning's contract with the Giants expired after the 4-12 season and there was little chance he would be returning after losing his long-time starting job to rookie Daniel

Jones.

Manning said he wanted to think about his future after the season and roughly three weeks after the season ended, he decided his career was over.

He leaves the NFL with as many Super Bowl titles as his brother, Peyton, who retired after leading the Denver Broncos to a title after the 2015 season.

The Giants accepted Manning from San Diego on draft day in 2004 after the Ole Miss quarterback told the Chargers he did not want to play for them and forced the deal that general manager Ernie Accorsi gladly accepted.

It started a major turnaround for a team that was 4-12 the pre-

vious season.

Manning replaced Hall of Famer Kurt Warner as the starter for then-new coach Tom Coughlin after nine games. They won the NFC East the following season.

Within three seasons, the Giants won their first NFL championship since the 1990 season and Manning got his first Super Bowl MVP award, knocking off the previously unbeaten New England Patriots. The second came after the 2011 season when Manning and company again beat Tom Brady, Bill Belichick and the Pats.

In both games, Manning hit a clutch late pass on game-winning drives. He and David Tyree

By the numbers

210

Consecutive regular-season starts by Eli Manning from 2004 to 2017, the second-longest streak by an NFL quarterback.

60.29

Eli Manning's career completion rate, the highest in team history for the New York Giants.

SOURCE: Associated Press

hooked up on the helmet catch in the first one and he found Mario Manningham on a sideline go pattern in the second, igniting an 88-yard drive.

"Eli Manning not only is the quarterback on those great teams, but he is the MVP of the Super Bowls," Coughlin said. "He's an incredible big-game performer. You talk about a guy that's great to coach, focused every day, took tremendous pride in preparing, practice, had a great sense of humor, was a cynic in the locker room. But the guys loved him and they loved him for it, and they played for him. The guys that had the opportunity to play with him know what it's like to be with a guy who has as much talent, as much grit, as much determination."

Antonio Brown faces charges of battery, burglary

Associated Press

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. — A warrant has been issued for the arrest of NFL wide receiver Antonio Brown following accusations that he and his trainer attacked another man near Brown's Florida home.

Hollywood police spokesman Christian Latta said in a Wednesday news release that Brown faces charges of burglary with battery, burglary of an unoccupied conveyance and criminal mischief.

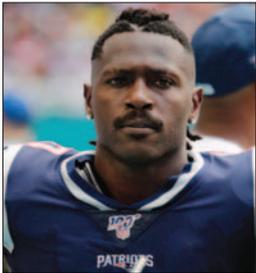
Officers responded Tuesday afternoon to a disturbance call, where the alleged victim said Brown and his trainer, Glen Holt, hit him, police said.

Holt was arrested a short time later and charged with one count of burglary with battery.

Officers attempted to make contact with Brown but were unsuccessful, Latta said.

Police didn't immediately identify the alleged victim or what prompted the confrontation.

Jail records didn't list an attorney for Holt, and it wasn't clear if Brown had a lawyer.



LYNN SLADKY/AP

Authorities say NFL wide receiver Antonio Brown's is facing a warrant after authorities say he and his trainer attacked another man near Brown's Florida home.

Brown, who is a free agent, played nine seasons with the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was traded to the Oakland Raiders last year but released before ever playing a regular-season game following several off-the-field incidents. He was then signed by the New England Patriots, who released Brown in September after a second woman in 10 days accused him of sexual misconduct.

Briefs

Packers stay with Pettine

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Packers coach Matt LaFleur has decided to stick with Mike Pettine as his defensive coordinator.

In LaFleur's first season, the Packers went from 6-9-1 in 2018 to 13-3 and the NFC championship game this season as second-year coordinator Pettine improved the defense. ESPN first reported the decision this week to stick with him.

While the Packers were no better in total defense, ranking 18th in yards allowed in both 2018 and 2019, they were ninth-best in scoring (allowing 19.6 points per game) a year after giving up 25 to rank just No. 25.

Panthers' McCaffrey gives Marine tickets to Super Bowl

Carolina Panthers All-Pro running back Christian McCaffrey is teaming up with USAA, the NFL's Salute to Service partner, and the Marine Corps Association & Foundation to send Sgt. Maj. Luis "Chino" Leiva to Super Bowl on Feb. 2 in Miami.

McCaffrey this season became the third player in NFL history with at least 1,000 yards rushing and receiving in the same season. He will meet with Leiva and other military members at USAA's Salute to Service Lounge during Super Bowl weekend. Leiva joined the Marine Corps in 1990. He has been deployed to Iraq (2006-07), Afghanistan (2009-10), South Korea and Japan. Since August 2019, Leiva has been stationed at the School of Infantry East/Camp Geiger in Jacksonville, N.C.

Browns' GM search continues

CLEVELAND — Looking for a general manager to pair with new coach Kevin Stefanski, the Cleveland Browns interviewed Vikings assistant general manager George Paton for the second time Wednesday for the job opening. Paton and Stefanski worked together for 13 seasons in Minnesota and could be reunited in another NFL city.

Paton spent most of the day at the team's headquarters in Berea, Ohio.

SPORTS



Bye-bye, Eli

Giants' two-time Super Bowl-winning QB retiring after 16 seasons » **Page 63**

NBA

Adding Zion

Williamson's extraordinary debut gives Pelicans hope for future – and present

By **BRETT MARTEL**
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS

Zion Williamson's sublime 17-point surge in a span of barely more than three minutes could very well become part of New Orleans' pro sports lore — even if the final score won't.

For the Pelicans, a narrow loss to a well-coached, savvy San Antonio Spurs team carried far less weight than the burgeoning form of a young superstar in the making.

'I think there's a really, really high ceiling that (Zion) can reach.'

Alvin Gentry
Pelicans coach

"The way he came out was very poised," veteran Pelicans guard Jrue Holiday said of Williamson. "The way he played ... bringing energy, especially down the stretch, was something that I guess you don't really see from somebody so young.

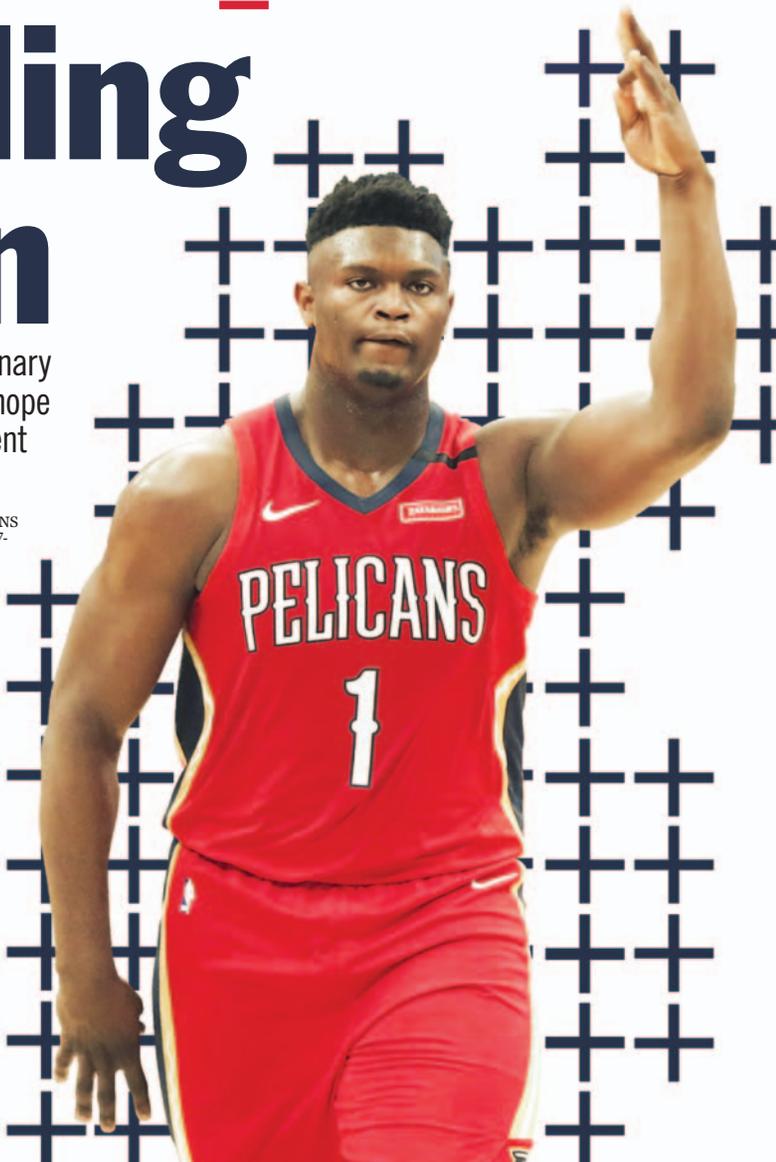
But even on top of that, we are almost in February and he hadn't played a game yet, so for him to be able to come out here and do that his first game is pretty elite."

Extraordinary hype, fueled by social media, has followed the affable, 6-foot-6, 285-pound Williamson since his

SEE HOPE ON PAGE 61

Pelicans forward Zion Williamson reacts after making a three-pointer during his season debut against the San Antonio Spurs in New Orleans on Wednesday.

GERALD HERBERT/AP



Four players suspended after brawl » College basketball, Page 60

