

**GAMES:** God of War Ragnarok tells father-son tale **Page 19**

**MUSIC:** Reactions to Grammy noms **Page 28**

**SPORTS:** Ohio State ready to avenge loss to Michigan **Back page**

EUROPE  
& PACIFIC

WEEKEND  
EDITION

**MOVIES**  
New doc looks at Afghan collapse  
**Page 18**

# STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 81 Edition 160 ©SS 2022

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2022

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)  
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥100

\$1.00

## US Army tests using drones for blood delivery

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

Army drones are dropping packages of simulated blood over the Mojave Desert in an effort to find better ways to rush medical supplies to wounded troops as quickly as possible.

In recent months, soldiers at Fort Irwin, Calif., have practiced gathering the drone cargo after the supplies drift to the ground, attached to small, orange-and-white parachutes.

Lessons from two decades of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, scenes from Ukraine and fears of future conflicts with countries such as China are driving the efforts, researchers told Stars and Stripes.

"The need is pretty clear: making sure that whole blood is accessible to forward medics," said Nathan Fisher, chief of medical robots and autonomous systems at the Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center, at Fort Detrick, Md.

Fisher's medical supply drone, known as Project Crimson, was what flew overhead and dropped off the fake blood at Fort Irwin during a training scenario for a mass-casualty situation.

The exercise ran from late September into November and in-

SEE DRONES ON PAGE 3



THIEM HUYNH/U.S. Army

**A U.S. Army aerial drone delivers a payload of medical supplies during the exercise Project Convergence 22 at Fort Irwin, Calif., on Oct. 28.**



BERNAT ARMANGUE/AP

Ukrainian servicemen fire toward Russian positions in the front line near Kherson, southern Ukraine, on Wednesday.

## Moving with momentum

### After Russian retreat, Ukrainian military looks to what's next

By SAM MEDNICK  
*Associated Press*

KHERSON, Ukraine—The Ukrainian sniper adjusted his scope and fired a 50-caliber bullet at a Russian soldier across the Dnieper River. Earlier, another Ukrainian used a drone to scan for Russian troops.

Two weeks after retreating from the southern city of Kherson, Russia is pounding the town with artillery as it digs in across the Dnieper River.

Ukraine is striking back at Rus-

### EUROPE

Bombed not beaten: Ukraine's capital flips to survival mode  
**Page 4**

sian troops with its own long-distance weapons, and Ukrainian officers say they want to capitalize on their momentum.

The Russian withdrawal from

the only provincial capital it gained in nine months of war was one of Moscow's most significant battlefield losses. Now that its troops hold a new front line, the army is planning its next move, the Ukrainian military said through a spokesman.

Ukrainian forces can now strike deeper into the Russian-controlled territories and possibly push their counteroffensive closer to Crimea, which Russia illegally captured in 2014.

Russian troops continue to es-

tablish fortifications, including trench systems near the Crimean border and some areas between the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the east.

In some locations, new fortifications are up to 37 miles behind the current front lines, suggesting that Russia is preparing for more Ukrainian breakthroughs, according to the British Ministry of Defense.

"The armed forces of Ukraine

SEE MOMENTUM ON PAGE 4

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$4.030	\$4.549	\$4.889	\$5.615
Change in price	..	..	..	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.379	\$4.639	\$4.639
Change in price	..	..	..	..
U.K.	..	\$4.485	\$4.825	\$5.551
Change in price	..	..	..	..

Azores	..	..	\$4.768	..
Change in price	..	..	..	..
Turkey	..	..	\$4.964	\$5.293*
Change in price	..	..	..	..

Fuel prices are updated daily.  
These prices are effective Nov. 25.

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	..	\$4.559	..	\$5.279
Change in price	..	-10.0 cents	..	-8.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.699	..	..	\$5.279
Change in price	-11.0 cents	..	..	-8.0 cents

South Korea	\$3.719	..	\$4.579	\$5.309
Change in price	-12.0 cents	..	-11.0 cents	-8.0 cents
Guam	\$3.709	\$4.229	\$4.569	..
Change in price	-11.0 cents	-10.0 cents	-10.0 cents	..

\*DieselEFD \*\*Midgrade  
Pacific prices for the week of Nov. 25 - Dec. 1

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Nov. 25)	\$1.01
Dollar buys (Nov. 25)	0.9440
British pound (Nov. 25)	\$1.17
Japanese yen (Nov. 25)	137.00
South Korean won (Nov. 25)	1316.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770
Britain (Pound)	1.2146
Canada (Dollar)	1.3328
China (Yuan)	7.1507
Denmark (Krone)	7.1350
Egypt (Pound)	24.5453
Euro	0.9594
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8105
Hungary (Forint)	395.73
Israel (Shekel)	3.4210
Japan (Yen)	138.14
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3072
Norway (Krone)	9.9078
Philippines (Peso)	56.66
Poland (Zloty)	4.51
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7579
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3743

South Korea (Won)	1328.02
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9422
Thailand (Baht)	35.73
Turkey (NewLira)	18.6225

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

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	7.00
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	3.83
3-month bill	4.31
30-year bond	3.73

## 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.

## TODAY IN STRIPES

- Classified ..... 36
- Comics ..... 34,38,39
- Crossword ..... 34,38,39
- Opinion ..... 40
- Sports ..... 41-48

## STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

### EUROPE

**ADVERTISING**  
CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
DSN: 314.583.9111

### MIDDLE EAST

**ADVERTISING**  
CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
DSN: 314.583.9111

### PACIFIC

**ADVERTISING**  
PacificAdvertising@stripes.com | +81 (42) 552.2511  
DSN: 315.227.7310

# Round-the-world news for America's military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.

**STARS AND STRIPES**  
Mobile • Online • Print

## MILITARY

# Austin: Rules-based order will give security

BY DOUG WARE  
Stars and Stripes

On the final step of his six-day, three-nation foreign trip, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said Wednesday that the world must have rules-based order if it wants international security during a time of heightened conflict.

Austin made the remarks while he was on his way back to the United States after the conclusion of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations defense ministers meeting in Cambodia.

Cambodia was the Pentagon chief's third and final stop on a trip that also took him to Canada and

Indonesia and included meetings with his counterparts about security strategies in Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

Austin noted that Russia's war in Ukraine has only underscored the importance of rules-based order — and shown just “how much countries around the world value and respect” it.

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February, most nations pledged support for Kyiv and condemned Moscow. Some countries punished Russia and its President Vladimir Putin with crippling economic sanctions — even famously neutral Switzerland.

“It is a risk that they accept,” Austin said in his remarks Wednesday. “That’s how much they believe in the rules-based international order.”

Austin's remarks came just hours before the U.S. pledged another \$400 million aid package for Ukraine, the third round in that amount this month. The package includes weapons, equipment and hundreds of power generators to help Ukrainian forces through the cold winter, especially since Russia's been targeting electrical infrastructure across the former Soviet republic.

The United States has autho-

rized more than \$19 billion in aid to Ukraine since the Russian invasion began Feb. 24.

Austin's trip to Nova Scotia in Canada, Jakarta in Indonesia and Seam Reap in Cambodia was part of an effort by President Joe Biden's administration to reinforce key alliances during a time of conflict in Eastern Europe. The stops in Indonesia and Cambodia were geared toward mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific, which is a region of increasing importance to the United States, particularly where Taiwan is involved.

In its National Defense Strategy last month, which laid out security

goals and priorities of Biden's administration, the Pentagon identified China as the top U.S. competitor and noted a number of concerns and potential threats in the Indo-Pacific, such as Beijing's rising influence and its possible designs on Taiwan, which it considers a breakaway territory.

On Tuesday, Austin met with Chinese defense minister Wei Fenghe at the ASEAN summit and expressed concerns about “increasingly dangerous” Chinese military behavior in the Indo-Pacific.

ware.doug@stripes.com

## Philippines demands reason for China's latest sea dispute

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has sought an explanation from China after a Filipino military commander reported that the Chinese coast guard forcibly seized Chinese rocket debris in the possession of Filipino navy personnel in the disputed South China Sea, officials said Thursday.

Sunday's incident off Philippine-occupied Thitu island is the latest flareup in the long-seething territorial disputes involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan. China has denied its coast guard forcibly seized the debris from the Filipino sailors.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson in Manila, Maria Theresa Daza, said without elaborating that a diplomatic note was relayed to China for “clarification from the Chinese side over the incident.”

Vice Adm. Alberto Carlos, who heads the military's Western Command, said the Filipino sailors, using a long-range camera, spotted the debris drifting in

strong waves near a sandbar about 800 yards offshore. They set out on a boat and retrieved the floating object and started to tow it back to Thitu Island.

As they were traveling back to the island, “they noticed that a China coast guard vessel with bow number 5203 was approaching their location and subsequently blocked their pre-plotted course twice,” Carlos said in a statement.

The Chinese coast guard vessel then deployed an inflatable boat with personnel who “forcefully retrieved said floating object by cutting the towing line” attached to the Filipino sailors' rubber boat. The sailors decided to return to their island, Carlos said, without detailing what happened.

Chinese coast guard ships have blocked Philippine supply boats delivering supplies to Filipino forces in the disputed waters in the past but seizing objects in the possession of another nation's military constitutes a more brazen act.

China's Foreign Ministry in Beijing has denied that the debris



PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD/AP

**A Chinese Coast Guard ship sails near a Philippine Coast Guard vessel during its patrol at Bajo de Masinloc, 124 nautical miles west of Zambales province, northwestern Philippines on March 2.**

was seized forcibly.

“The Philippine side salvaged and towed the object first. After friendly consultation at the site, the Philippine side returned the object to China, and China expressed appreciation for that,” ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said Monday. “There was no such thing as interception or forcible seizure at the scene.”

Responding to China's denial, top Philippine defense official Jose Faustino Jr. stood by the accounts of the Filipino navy personnel and said the debris was “rude-

ly” taken from them by the Chinese coast guard.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said he would also seek clarification when he visits Beijing in January to meet China's leader Xi Jinping.

Faustino said a separate Philippine investigation was underway after Filipino villagers on Thitu reported hearing unexplained explosions on Sunday.

It was not clear where the thunder-like blasts, which caused slight tremors on the ground, came from and what were their

nature. Villagers on the island were alarmed, officials said, adding they prepared an evacuation plan in case there would be a need for it.

Thitu, which Filipinos call Pagasa, or hope, hosts a fishing community and Filipino forces and lies near Subi, one of seven disputed reefs that China has turned into missile-protected islands in the disputed waters. U.S. security officials say that the developed islands, including three with military-grade runways, now resemble forward military bases.

## Drones: Military sees safer, quicker benefit in unmanned aircraft use

FROM PAGE 1

cluded medical personnel from the U.S. and Australian armies.

The FVR-90 drone used by the Army can take off and land vertically, and carry up to 22 pounds of temperature-controlled whole blood to troops up to 250 miles away, a TATRC statement last year said.

“This drone supports medical field care when casualty evacuation isn't an option,” Fisher said in the statement. “It can keep whole blood and other crucial items refrigerated in the autonomous portable refriger-

ation unit and take it to medics in the field with wounded warriors.”

One of the bitterest lessons learned from 20 years of American wars is the necessity of preventing blood loss on the battlefield quickly, said Air Force Col. Stacy Shackelford, a doctor and chief of the San Antonio-based Joint Trauma System.

The Afghanistan War and the Russia-Ukraine war in particular were on the minds of military medical officials this summer when they developed seven recommendations for improving the Defense Department's blood supply program, Shackelford

told Stars and Stripes.

One recommendation was research into blood delivery by drone, she said.

The U.S. had complete air superiority in Iraq and Afghanistan, and troops relied on the ability to quickly and safely fly the wounded to field hospitals for emergency care. But that might not be possible in future wars with countries that have anti-air missiles and fighter jets, Shackelford said.

“I think it's going to come down to drone delivery of blood by some type of unmanned vehicle that can fly in and drop off more blood or more bullets, whatever is needed,

Shackelford said, in a statement.

Besides speedier delivery, supplying blood to the battlefield by drone has a cost advantage in comparison to using helicopters or training more medics to conduct transfusions under fire, officials said.

The time frame for turning UAVs into flying military blood banks is not all that distant, in the Army's estimation.

It's “really just around the corner,” researcher Adam Meledeo said.

lawrence.jp@stripes.com  
Twitter: @jplawrence3

## EUROPE

# Ukraine's capital flips to survival mode

BY JOHN LEICESTER  
AND HANNA ARHIROVA  
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Residents of Ukraine's bombed but undaunted capital clutched empty bottles in search of water and crowded into cafés for power and warmth Thursday, switching defiantly into survival mode after new Russian missile strikes a day earlier plunged the city and much of the country into the dark.

In scenes hard to believe in a sophisticated city of 3 million, some Kyiv residents resorted to collecting rainwater from drainpipes, as repair teams labored to reconnect supplies.

Friends and family members exchanged messages to find out who had electricity and water back. Some had one but not the other. The previous day's aerial onslaught on Ukraine's power grid left many with neither.

Cafés in Kyiv that by some small miracle had both quickly became oases of comfort on Thursday.

Oleksiy Rashchupkin, a 39-year-old investment banker, awoke to find that water had been reconnected to his third-floor flat but power had not. His freezer thawed in the blackout, leaving a puddle on his floor.

So he hopped in a cab and crossed the Dnieper River from left bank to right, to a café that he'd noticed had stayed open after previous Russian strikes. Sure enough, it was open, serving hot drinks, hot food and with the music and WiFi on.

"I'm here because there is heating, coffee and light," he said. "Here is life."

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said about 70% of the Ukrainian capital was still without power on Thursday morning.

With cold rain falling and the



EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

People collect water in Kyiv, Ukraine, Thursday. Running water has become a rarity amid Russian attacks.

remnants of a previous snowfall still on the streets, the mood was grim but steely. The winter promises to be a long one. But Ukrainians say that if Russian President Vladimir Putin's intention is to break them, then he should think again.

"Nobody will compromise their will and principles just for electricity," said Alina Dubeiko, 34. She, too, sought out the comfort of another, equally crowded, warm and lit café. Without electricity, heating and water at home, she was determined to keep up her work routine. Adapting to life shorn of its usual comforts, Dubeiko said she uses two glasses of water to wash, then ties her hair in a ponytail and is ready for her working day.

She said she'd rather live without power than live with the Rus-

sian invasion, which crossed the nine-month mark on Thursday.

"Without light or you? Without you," she said, echoing remarks President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made when Russia on Oct. 10 unleashed the first of what has now become a series of aerial attacks on key Ukrainian infrastructure.

Western leaders denounced the bombing campaign. "Strikes against civilian infrastructures are war crimes," French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted.

On Wednesday, the European Parliament overwhelmingly backed a resolution labeling Russia a state sponsor of terrorism for its invasion of and actions in Ukraine. The nonbinding but symbolically significant resolution passed in a 494-58 vote.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday Ukraine's

government "has every opportunity to resolve the situation in such a way as to meet the demands of the Russian side."

In Kyiv, people lined up at public water points to fill plastic bottles. In a strange new war-time first for her, 31-year-old Health Department employee Kateryna Luchkina resorted to collecting rainwater from a drainpipe, so she could at least wash her hands at work, which had no water. She filled two plastic bottles, waiting patiently in the rain until they had water to the brim. A colleague followed behind her, doing the same.

"We Ukrainians are so resourceful, we will think of something. We do not lose our spirit," Luchkina said. "We work, live in the rhythm of survival or something, as much as possible. We do not lose hope that everything will be

fine."

The mayor said on Telegram that power engineers "are doing their best" to restore electricity. Water repair teams were making progress, too.

In the early afternoon, Klitschko announced that water supplies had been restored across the capital, with the caveat that "some consumers may still experience low water pressure."

Power, heat and water were gradually coming back elsewhere, too. In Ukraine's southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region, the governor announced that 3,000 miners who were trapped underground because of power blackouts had been rescued. Regional authorities posted messages on social media updating people on the progress of repairs but also saying they needed time.

Mindful of the hardships — both now and ahead, as winter progresses — authorities are opening thousands of so-called "points of invincibility" — heated and powered spaces offering hot meals, electricity and internet connections. More than 3,700 were open across the country of Thursday morning, said a senior official in the presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko.

In the southern city of Kherson, recaptured two weeks ago by Ukrainian forces, hospitals' struggle with the loss of power and water is compounded by stepped up Russian strikes.

Olena Zhura was carrying bread to her neighbors Thursday when a strike that destroyed half of her house in Kherson wounded her husband Victor. Paramedics whisked Victor away as he writhed in pain.

"I was shocked," she said, welling with tears. "Then I heard (him) shouting: 'Save me, save me,'"

## Momentum: Experts say Ukraine forces may use winter to their advantage

FROM PAGE 1

seized the initiative in this war some time ago," said Mick Ryan, military strategist and retired Australian army major general. "They have momentum. There is no way that they will want to waste that."

Crossing the river and pushing the Russian forces further back would require complicated logistical planning. Both sides have blown up bridges across the Dnieper.

"This is what cut Russians' supply lines and this is also what will make any further Ukrainian advance beyond the left bank of the river more difficult," said Mario Bikarski, an analyst with the

Economist Intelligence Unit.

In a key battlefield development this week, Kyiv's forces attacked Russian positions on the Kinburn Spit, a gateway to the Black Sea basin, as well as parts of the southern Kherson region still under Russian control. Recapturing the area could help Ukrainian forces push into Russian-held territory in the Kherson region "under significantly less Russian artillery fire" than if they directly crossed the Dnieper River, said the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank. Control of the area would help Kyiv alleviate Russian strikes on Ukraine's southern seaports and allow it to increase its naval activity in the Black Sea, the think tank

added.

Some military experts say there's a possibility the weather might disproportionately harm poorly-equipped Russian military members and allow Ukraine to take advantage of frozen terrain and move more easily than during the muddy autumn months, ISW said.

Russia's main task, meanwhile, is to prevent any further retreats from the broader Kherson region and to strengthen its defense systems over Crimea, said Bikarski, the analyst. Ryan, the military strategist, said Russia will use the winter to plan its 2023 offensives, stockpile ammunition and continue its campaign targeting critical infrastructure including power

and water plants.

Russia's daily attacks are already intensifying. Last week a fuel depot was struck in Kherson, the first time since Russia withdrew. This week at least one person was killed and three wounded by Russian shelling, according to the Ukrainian president's office. Russian airstrikes damaged key infrastructure before Russia left, creating a dire humanitarian crisis. Coupled with the threat of attack, that is adding a layer of stress, say many who weathered Russia's occupation and are leaving, or considering it.

Ukrainian authorities this week began evacuating civilians from recently liberated parts of Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, fearing

lack of heat, power and water due to Russian shelling will make winter unlivable.

Boarding a train on Monday, Tetyana Stadnik has decided to go after waiting for the liberation of Kherson.

"We are leaving now because it's scary to sleep at night. Shells are flying over our heads and exploding. It's too much," she said. "We will wait until the situation gets better. And then we will come back home."

Others in the Kherson region have decided to stay despite living in fear.

"I'm scared," said Ludmilla Bonder a resident of the small village of Kyselivka. "I still sleep fully clothed in the basement."

## EUROPE

## Some clergy suspected of backing Russians

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — An investigation of a centuries-old monastic complex in Ukraine's capital and other religious sites has underscored Ukrainian authorities' suspicions about some Orthodox Christian clergymen they see as loyal to Russia despite Moscow's 9-month-old war on the country.

The search by security service and police personnel at the Pechersk Lavra monastery, one of the most revered Orthodox sites in Kyiv, was unusual but did not happen in isolation.

The Ukrainian counterintelligence and counterterrorism service reported Wednesday that its agents searched more than 350 church buildings in all — also including sites at another monastery and a diocese in the Rivne region, 150 miles west of Kyiv.

And the service, known by its Ukrainian initials SBU, accused the bishop of yet another diocese of pro-Moscow activity last week



EFREM LUKATSKY/AP

**Ukraine's secret service examine belonging of a parishioner at the entrance to the Pechersk Lavra monastic complex in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday.**

after searching church premises and finding materials that allegedly justified the Russian invasion.

The SBU said the effort is part of its "systematic work to counter the subversive activities of the Russian special services in Ukraine."

Orthodox Christians are the largest religious population in Ukraine. But they have been fractured along lines that echo political tensions over Ukraine's defense of its independence and its Western orientation amid Russia's continued claim to political and spiritual hegemony in the region — a concept sometimes called the "Russian world."

## Offered German defenses, Poland argues Ukraine should get them

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poland's government says an anti-missile system which Germany offered to send to Poland should instead go to Ukraine, a proposal that is a likely non-starter for Berlin because it would significantly ratchet up NATO involvement in Ukraine.

Poland's surprising response to Berlin's offer was welcomed by Ukraine, which is desperate to protect its airspace as barrage upon barrage of Russian missiles have knocked out power across the country.

But Germany's Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht stressed that use of NATO defense systems outside its territory needs to be agreed by all member states.

"It is important to us that Poland can rely on allies to stand by each other, even in difficult times, and especially Poland in its exposed position," Lambrecht told reporters in Berlin.

"That's why we have offered to support air policing and Patriots,

but these Patriots are part of an integrated air defense of NATO, that is, they are intended for NATO territory," the minister said. "If they are used outside the NATO area, then it has to be agreed with NATO and with the allies beforehand."

In Poland, critics of the populist ruling party accused it of sacrificing the country's security with a war next door in Ukraine for the sake of a domestic political struggle which exploits anti-German sentiment for short-term gain.

The Rzeczpospolita daily called the new proposal by Poland's leaders "shocking," arguing that it would require sending German soldiers operating the system to Ukraine, and "that, in turn, would involve NATO in a direct clash with Russia, something the alliance has been trying to avoid from the beginning."

Poland's populist ruling party, facing elections next fall with its popularity dented by 18% inflation, has been ratcheting up its anti-German messaging, long a

staple of the party's campaign rhetoric. Party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski has also been trying to link his domestic opponents, particularly Donald Tusk, a former European Union leader, to Germany, saying Sunday that if Tusk's party wins next year, Poland would find itself "under the German boot."

When Germany recently offered Warsaw Eurofighter planes and Patriot air defense missile batteries, Poland's Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak initially said it was an offer he would accept with "satisfaction." The offer came after two men were killed when an apparently stray Ukrainian defense projectile fell in Poland near the border with Ukraine on Nov. 15.

But Poland's tune changed after Kaczynski gave an interview to the state news agency PAP on Wednesday, saying that the offer is "interesting," but that "it would be best for Poland's security if Germany handed the equipment to the Ukrainians."

## Car Buying, Fully Loaded

- Get a decision in seconds on low-rate auto loans<sup>1</sup>
- Shop, compare and get up-front pricing through our Car Buying Service, powered by TrueCar<sup>®</sup>
- Learn more about your vehicle's history with CARFAX<sup>®2</sup>
- See if you could save on auto insurance from Liberty Mutual<sup>®</sup>, made available through TruStage<sup>®3</sup>
- Explore **FREE** trial subscriptions to SiriusXM's Platinum Plan

Terms and conditions apply. **Learn more at** [navyfederal.org/carbuying](https://navyfederal.org/carbuying).<sup>4</sup>

**NAVY FEDERAL**  
Credit Union<sup>®</sup>  
Our Members Are the Mission



Navy Federal Credit Union is federally insured by NCUA. <sup>1</sup>Credit and collateral subject to approval. <sup>2</sup>CARFAX is a registered trademark of CARFAX, Inc. <sup>3</sup>TruStage<sup>®</sup> Auto & Home Insurance Program is made available through TruStage Insurance Agency, LLC and issued by leading insurance companies. The insurance offered is not a deposit, and is not federally insured, sold or guaranteed by Navy Federal. Product and features may vary and not be available in all states. Discounts are not available in all states, and discounts vary by state. Certain discounts apply to specific coverages only. To the extent permitted by law, applicants are individually underwritten; not all applicants may qualify. Navy Federal Credit Union is in no way responsible for any products or services provided by or through TruStage, Liberty Mutual or their affiliates, subsidiaries and insurance company partners. AUT-4210544.1-0122-0224 <sup>4</sup>Navy Federal Credit Union is in no way responsible for any product, service, purchase or lease provided by or through CARFAX, TruStage, Liberty Mutual, SiriusXM or the Navy Federal Car Buying Service operated by TrueCar. © 2022 Navy Federal NFCU 14083 (3-22)

## NATION

# Alaska reports election finals

Murkowski, Peltola defeat Trump-backed opponents

BY NATHANIEL HERZ  
The Washington Post

Democratic Rep. Mary Peltola on Wednesday became the first Alaska Native to win a full term in Congress, securing reelection along with Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski, who both defeated challengers endorsed by former President Donald Trump after state officials finished a final round of vote-counting.

Peltola, who made history with her August special election win, and Murkowski, a senator for two decades, led after earlier vote counts. But the centrist lawmakers' victories were not clinched until Wednesday, when the Alaska Division of Elections redistributed votes under the state's new ranked-choice voting system.

At a victory party at a downtown Anchorage brewery Wednesday night, Peltola told reporters that Alaskans have given her a "a two-year contract."

"And I will be happy to work for Alaskans again, as long as they'll have me," she said. Her win, she added, shows that Alaskans "wholeheartedly embrace nonpartisanship and working together."

In the race for governor, Republican Mike Dunleavy won reelection with over 50% of the votes, avoiding the ranked-choice process.

Peltola and Murkowski had crossed party lines to endorse each other ahead of the election, forming an alliance rooted in the similar space they occupy on the political spectrum. Their wins cap an election season in which voters across the country tended to show a preference for incumbents in battleground races.

"I am honored that Alaskans — of all regions, backgrounds and party affiliations — have once again granted me their confidence to continue working with them and on their behalf in the U.S. Senate," Murkowski said in a statement



Murkowski



LOREN HOLMES, ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS/AP

**U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola, right, celebrates with her family and supporters as ranked-choice tabulations were announced Wednesday at 49th State Brewing Co. in Anchorage, Alaska. Peltola has been elected to a full term in the House, months after the Alaska Democrat won a special election to the seat.**

**"We all have these opinions we've earned by looking someone in the eye. Donald Trump's not going to tell me anything about Sarah Palin that I don't already know."**

Jim Lottsfeldt  
political consultant

Wednesday night. "I look forward to continuing the important work ahead of us."

The outcome marked another blow to Trump in this year's midterm elections. Many candidates affiliated with the former president and his polarizing positions fell in defeat in battleground contests, and his overall record was mixed in competitive races where he endorsed. That list includes former Republican governor Sarah Palin, who challenged Peltola with Trump's backing, and Republican Kelly Tshibaka, a former state and federal official who ran against Murkowski with the former president's support.

After the final round of ranked-choice voting, Murkowski had 53.7% of the vote to 46.3% for Tshibaka. In the House race, Peltola had 55% of the vote to Palin's 45%.

Peltola ran a locally focused campaign with both traditional and unconventional Democratic platform planks — she touted her support for abortion rights and "pro-fish" views, along with her endorsement of a new Alaska oil project and the large gun collection that she and her family maintains.

Peltola's win secures her first full two-year term on Capitol Hill and follows her victory in August to temporarily fill her state's only seat in the U.S. House — one that

was vacated after the sudden death of longtime Republican Rep. Don Young. Peltola beat Palin in that race, too, becoming the first Alaska Native member of Congress and her state's first woman to fill the seat.

Peltola is the first Democrat elected to Congress in Alaska since 2008, when Mark Begich unseated Republican Sen. Ted Stevens just a few months after Stevens was indicted for allegedly making false statements related to his financial disclosures.

Murkowski, meanwhile, will soon begin serving her fourth six-year term in the Senate, following her 2002 appointment to the chamber by her father, then newly elected Gov. Frank Murkowski. Her campaign highlighted her work to bring infrastructure money to Alaska, her support for the state's oil and fishing industries, and her close relationships with Alaska Native constituencies.

Trump had long vowed to unseat the senator, predicting in 2018 that she "will never recover" politically for voting against one of his Supreme Court nominees, Brett Kavanaugh. Tshibaka joined Trump at a rally held in an Anchorage arena in July.

Palin, the 2008 Republican vice-presidential nominee, also appeared with Trump in July. She lost both the special and general

elections after splitting the conservative vote with Nick Begich III, a Republican from a prominent Alaska Democratic family. (Begich is a nephew of Mark Begich and a grandson of Nick Begich Sr., who held Alaska's U.S. House seat before a plane carrying him across the state disappeared in 1972.)

Jim Lottsfeldt, a centrist political consultant who worked with pro-Murkowski and pro-Peltola super PACs, said he's not sure that Trump's endorsements offered Palin and Tshibaka much help. Alaska, he said, is small enough that many people who follow politics judge candidates on personal interactions.

"We all have these opinions we've earned by looking someone in the eye," Lottsfeldt said in a phone interview Tuesday. "Donald Trump's not going to tell me anything about Sarah Palin that I don't already know."

This year's elections were Alaska's first under the state's new voting framework, which residents narrowly approved in a 2020 citizens' initiative that was partially funded and run by Murkowski allies. The system overhauled primary elections by eliminating partisan races and advancing the top four vote-getters from a single open ballot to the general election.

In the general election, voters are allowed to rank candidates based on their preferences. If no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate with the lowest vote totals is eliminated, and that candidate's supporters' votes are reassigned to their next choices. The process repeats until there are two candidates left and a winner can be declared.

## Court fight hinders NY pot crops

AP/Report for America

ALBANY, N.Y. — A court fight that has prevented New York from awarding marijuana dispensary licenses in some parts of the state could wind up hurting small farms that just harvested their first cannabis crop, officials warned a judge Tuesday.

New York on Monday issued its first 36 licenses for dispensaries, which will become the only places in the state where recreational marijuana is sold legally.

The state, though, has had to delay plans to authorize scores more dispensaries because of a legal battle over its licensing criteria.

U.S. District Court Judge Gary Sharpe in Albany blocked the state from issuing licenses in Brooklyn and swaths of upstate New York after a company owned by a Michigan resident challenged a requirement that applicants demonstrate "a significant presence in New York state."

In a court filing Tuesday, the state asked the judge to loosen that injunction to prevent jeopardizing a marijuana harvest worth an estimated \$1.5 billion, now waiting to be distributed to retailers.

"If the farmers, who were already issued cultivating licenses, have nowhere to sell their crop, they will lose the millions of dollars that have been collectively invested in their businesses, some may lose their businesses, and they will otherwise be forced into the predicament of either watching their crops rot and expire or selling them on the illicit market," Assistant Attorney General Amanda Kuryluk wrote.

The court filing, made on behalf of the state's Office of Cannabis Management, suggested that the company challenging its exclusion from the applicant pool, Variscite NY One, would most likely only be considered for a dispensary in the Finger Lakes region in the state's center.

Blocking the state from approving licenses in four other regions including central and western New York, the mid-Hudson and Brooklyn, would cause "significantly more harm than necessary," the state argued.

It was unclear when Sharpe might rule on the request.

Christian Kernkamp, a lawyer representing Variscite, said in an email that the company had hoped to resolve the case before it wound up hindering marijuana sales, but the state refused to settle.

"The injunction could be over tomorrow, but the State prefers instead to litigate even though the court has already found a 'clear likelihood' that the State violated Variscite's constitutional rights," he said.

## NATION

# Suspect in Colo. nightclub attack held without bail

Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The alleged shooter facing possible hate crime charges in the fatal shooting of five people at a Colorado Springs gay nightclub was ordered held without bail in an initial court appearance Wednesday as the suspect sat slumped over in a chair.

Anderson Lee Aldrich, 22, could be seen with injuries visible on their face and head in a brief video appearance from jail. Aldrich appeared to need prompting by defense attorneys and offered a slurred response when asked to state their name by El Paso County Court Judge Charlotte Ankeny.

The suspect was beaten into submission by patrons during Saturday night's shooting at Club Q and released from the hospital Tuesday. The motive in the shooting was still under investigation, but authorities said Aldrich faces possible murder and hate crime charges.

Hate crime charges would require proving that the shooter was motivated by bias, such as against the victims' actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The charges against Aldrich are preliminary, and prosecutors have not yet filed formal charges.

Defense attorneys said late Tuesday that the suspect is nonbinary and in court filings referred to the suspect as "Mx. Aldrich." The attorneys' footnotes assert that Aldrich is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns.

Prosecutor Michael Allen repeatedly referred to the suspect as



Anderson Lee Aldrich

"he" during a press briefing after the hearing and said the suspect's gender status would not change anything about the case in his opinion. Allen said Aldrich was "physically competent" to stand charges.

Ankeny set the next hearing for Dec. 6.

Of 17 people injured by gunshots in the attack, 11 remained hospitalized late Wednesday, officials said.

Local and federal authorities have declined to say why hate crime charges were being considered. District Attorney Michael Allen noted that the murder charges would carry the harshest penalty — life in prison — whereas bias crimes are eligible for probation. He also said it was important to show the community that bias motivated crimes are not tolerated.



SARAH A. MILLER, IDAHO STATESMAN/AP

Boise State University students, along with people who knew the four University of Idaho students who were found killed in Moscow, Idaho, days earlier, pay their respects at a vigil held in front of a statue on the Boise State campus, Nov. 17, in Boise, Idaho.

## No suspect, no weapon named in slaying of Idaho students

Associated Press

MOSCOW, Idaho — Ten days after four University of Idaho students were stabbed to death in their rooms, police said Wednesday they still have not identified a suspect or found a murder weapon, and they continued asking for tips and surveillance video.

Moscow Police Capt. Roger Larnier told a news conference his department is putting all of its resources into solving the case and that investigators are prepared to work through the Thanksgiving holiday.

Authorities gave no indication that they're any closer to making an arrest, but they did stress that they continue processing forensic evidence gathered from the home where the students were killed. Additional surveillance video could be just as helpful for what it

doesn't show as what it does, said Police Chief James Fry.

"We continue moving forward to understand why this occurred in our community," Fry said.

The killings stunned bucolic Moscow, a college town and agricultural center that got its first Target store last year. The city, population of 26,000, is surrounded by rolling wheat and bean fields and had not seen a homicide since 2015.

The victims were housemates Madison Mogen, 21, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Xana Kernodle, 20, of Post Falls, Idaho; Kaylee Goncalves, 21, of Rathdrum, Idaho; and Kernodle's boyfriend, Ethan Chapin, 20, of Mount Vernon, Wash.

Police said Tuesday they had pursued tips that Goncalves had a stalker, but they hadn't been able

to identify one. They also have knocked down rumors about other incidents — including a car break-in and a dog's slaying — being potentially related to the case, as well as a rumor that the victims had been tied up or gagged.

Police initially called the killings "targeted" and said there was no general threat to the public, but they later walked that back, conceding they could not say there wasn't a threat. Many of the university's 11,000 students fled the campus in advance of the Thanksgiving break.

"Even with these extra resources, it is unclear how long this investigation will take," Green said in a video message Wednesday. "That is deeply frustrating for all of us."

A candlelight vigil is set for Nov. 30 on campus.

## Gunman in Va. Walmart shoot ID'd as overnight team leader

Associated Press

CHESAPEAKE, Va. — The Walmart employee who pulled out a handgun before a routine meeting and killed six co-workers Tuesday was identified as an overnight team leader.

The gunman was identified as Andre Bing, 31, an overnight team leader who had been a Walmart employee since 2010. Police said he had one handgun and several magazines of ammunition.

Tyler said the overnight stocking team of 15 to 20 people had just gathered in the break room to go over the morning plan. She said the meeting was about to start, and one team leader said: "All right guys, we have a light

night ahead of us." Then Bing turned around and opened fire on the staff.



Bing

way," Briana Tyler, a Walmart employee, said Wednesday.

The gunman was dead when officers arrived late Tuesday at the store in Chesapeake, Virginia's second-largest city. Authorities said he apparently shot himself.

Police were trying to determine a motive. One employee described watching "bodies drop" as the assailant fired haphazardly, without saying a word.

In addition to those who were killed, six people were wounded in the shooting, which happened just after 10 p.m. as shoppers were stocking up ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. Police said they believe about 50 people were in the store at the time.

Police said three of the dead, including Bing, were found in the break room. One of the slain victims was found near the front of the store. Three others were taken to hospitals where they died.

Police said the dead included a

16-year-old boy whose name was being withheld because of his age. The other victims were identified as Brian Pendleton, 38; Kellie Pyle, 52; Lorenzo Gamble, 43; and Randy Blevins, 70, who were all

from Chesapeake; and Tyneka Johnson, 22, of nearby Portsmouth.

It was not immediately clear whether they were workers or shoppers.

### HAVE YOU BEEN INJURED?

- Representing All Injured Contractors
- Know And Protect Your Legal Rights
- Defense Base Act Attorneys

FREE  
CONSULTATION

888.732.3991  
injuredoverseas.com  
mail@barnettandlerner.com



Barnett, Lerner, Karsen,  
Frankel & Castro  
Professional Association  
Attorneys and Counselors at Law

## NATION

# Record 40M children miss measles dose

Associated Press

LONDON — The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say measles immunization has dropped significantly since the coronavirus pandemic began, resulting in a record high of nearly 40 million children missing a vaccine dose last year.

In a report issued Wednesday, the WHO and the CDC said millions of children were now susceptible to measles, among the world's

most contagious diseases. In 2021, officials said there were about 9 million measles infections and 128,000 deaths worldwide.

The WHO and CDC said continued drops in vaccination, weak disease surveillance and delayed response plans due to COVID-19, in addition to ongoing outbreaks in more than 20 countries, mean that "measles is an imminent threat in every region of the world."

Scientists estimate that at least 95% of a population needs to be im-

munized to protect against epidemics; the WHO and the CDC reported that only about 81% of children receive their first dose of measles vaccine while 71% get their second dose, marking the lowest global coverage rates of the first measles dose since 2008.

"The record number of children under-immunized and susceptible to measles shows the profound damage immunization systems have sustained during the COVID-19 pandemic," CDC director

Dr. Rochelle Walensky said in a statement.

Measles is mostly spread through direct contact or in the air and causes symptoms including fever, muscle pain and a skin rash on the face and upper neck. Most measles-related deaths are caused by complications including swelling of the brain and dehydration. The WHO says complications are most serious in children under 5 and adults over 30.

More than 95% of measles

deaths occur in developing countries, mostly in Africa and Asia. There is no specific treatment for measles, but the two-dose vaccine against it is about 97% effective in preventing severe illness and death.

In July, the U.N. said 25 million children have missed out on routine immunizations against diseases including diphtheria, largely because the coronavirus disrupted routine health services or triggered vaccine misinformation.

## Lawsuit looms over tiny rare fish in West

Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — Conservationists have notified U.S. wildlife officials that they will sue over delinquent decisions related to protections for two rare fish species that are threatened by groundwater pumping in the drought-stricken West.

The Center for Biological Diversity sent a formal notice of intent to sue the Fish and Wildlife Service last week over the Fish Lake Valley tui chub near the California-Nevada line and the least chub in southwest Utah.

Utah and Nevada are the driest states in the country, and the planned lawsuits are among the many fronts on which conservationists are battling water districts and the users they cater to over plans to siphon water to either maintain or expand consumption.

The outcome of the court fights will likely have major implications for states' parched valleys and the people and species that inhabit them. The group seeking federal listings under the Endangered Species Act says the high-desert springs where the minnows live are threatened by water allocations for traditional agricultural use as well as urban development plans.

The Fish and Wildlife Service belatedly concluded in August there was enough evidence the tui chub in Nevada was at risk of ex-

tingtion — primarily due to over-pumping of water for farms and ranches — to warrant a yearlong review to determine if it should be listed. The so-called 90-day finding had been due in June 2021, three months after the center petitioned for the listing.

"The Fish Lake Valley tui chub is staring extinction in the face because of the catastrophic overuse of groundwater in its native range," said Patrick Donnelly, Great Basin director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

The only place in the world that the 5-inch-long, olive-colored tui chub still exists is in a basin in Esmeralda County between Reno and Las Vegas.

Lake Valley's groundwater levels have declined as much as 2.5 feet per year over the past half-century, causing a cumulative drawdown of more than 75 feet since 1973, the listing petition said.

In Utah, more than half the remaining wild populations of least chub are jeopardized by proposed groundwater pumping to support growth in Cedar City, about 170 miles northeast of Las Vegas.

The group petitioned to list that 2-inch-long, gold-colored minnow in September 2021, citing threats posed by the Pine Valley Water Supply Project. An initial finding and 12-month review for that species also are past due, the group said.



SPENSER HEAPS, THE DAILY HERALD/AP

A bucket of the tiny fish known as the least chub are released into a stream in Fairfield, Utah.



JULIA NIKHINSON/AP

The Pillsbury Doughboy floats down Central Park Avenue West on Thursday during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York.

## Balloon characters star in Macy's Thanksgiving parade

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Throngs of spectators lined the streets of New York on Thursday as colorful, high-flying balloons helped usher in the holiday season during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

The annual tradition, which dates back nearly a century, packed streets as a procession of giant inflatables and floats streamed for more than 40 blocks from Central Park to Herald Square.

Children balanced atop metal barricades and hung from scaffolding to watch the balloons amid mostly sunny skies and a slight breeze.

"Blue, Blue. There's Blue," yelled Divyam Kumar, 6, as his father helped balance him and his 4-year-old brother Aanu Aryan on a metal rail.

The youngster was referring to

the star of the animated show "Blue's Clues" — not to be confused with the international cartoon sensation Bluey, an Australian cattle pup making her parade debut.

Bluey's balloon towered as tall as a four-story building and stretched as wide as seven taxi cabs.

Stuart, the one-eyed Minion, was also there to thrill the crowd.

Snoopy, dressed as an astronaut, again made an appearance, as did Papa Smurf, Ronald McDonald and SpongeBob.

This year's parade, by the numbers: 16 giant balloons, 28 floats, 40 novelty and heritage inflatables, 12 marching bands, 10 performance groups, 700 clowns and one Santa Claus.

The procession of characters were joined by singer Paula Abdul, in her first parade appearance; indie pop band Fitz and the

Tantrums; boy band Big Time Rush; "Blue's Clues & You!" host Josh Dela Cruz; singer Gloria Estefan; gospel singer Kirk Franklin; actor Mario Lopez; reggae star Ziggy Marley; and Miss America 2022 Emma Broyles.

Singers Joss Stone, Jordin Sparks and Betty Who were also part of the festivities, as well as the stars of Peacock's "Pitch Perfect: Bumper in Berlin" — Adam Devine, Sarah Hyland and Flula Borg. Jimmy Fallon & The Roots were on a float celebrating Central Park.

President Biden and Jill Biden called into the parade, as he did last year. Biden thanked firefighters, police officers and first responders, saying, "They never take a break."

They thanked the troops and Biden said he would be reaching out to speak to some today.

## NATION

# Small business owners return to holiday markets

By MAE ANDERSON  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — On a recent evening in early November, shoppers at the Bryant Park holiday market in New York City were in the holiday spirit well before Black Friday. The scent of pine wafted from candle sellers' booths, people snapped up gingerbread cookies and hot apple cider and ice skaters swirled figure eights around the rink in the center of the market.

After two years of pandemic holidays when people spent more dollars online, shoppers are back in force in stores and at holiday markets. Small businesses say it is beginning to feel a lot like Christmas, both emotionally and financially.

"It's definitely been busier than last year," said Sallie Austin Gonzales, CEO of soap company SallyeAnder based in Beacon, N.Y. This is her second year at the Bryant Park market — officially called the Holiday Shops by Urbanspace at Bank of America Winter Village at Bryant Park.

"People are taking advantage of being a part of society again and walking around."

Christmas markets have been popular in Germany and Austria, where they're called Christkindl-markets, and other parts of Europe for centuries. They've be-

come more popular in the U.S. over the past few decades, springing up in Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco, and many other cities. In New York, the Grand Central holiday market and the Union Square holiday market started in 1993.

Urbanspace now operates three holiday markets in New York: Bryant Park, Union Square and Columbus Circle. The pandemic put a damper on festivities in 2020, when only a scaled-back Bryant Park opened.

Last year, Bryant Park was open at full capacity, but Union Square was at 80% capacity and Columbus Circle at 50%. This year, not only are all three markets at full capacity, Urbanspace is adding another one in Brooklyn that opens Nov. 28.

"We've received more applications than ever before, that tells us vendors are excited to be back in the pop-up game," said Evan Shelton, Director of Pop-Up Markets at Urbanspace. "I'm very optimistic."

So far, foot traffic is up slightly from last year as tourism continues to improve, Shelton said. While the number of tourists remains below 2019 levels, the tourism trade group NYC & Company expects 56.4 million domestic and international visitors by



JULIA NIKHINSON/AP

A person shops in Bryant Park's Winter Village, on Nov. 15, in New York.

the end of 2022, up 30% from a year ago. That bodes well for small businesses as the holiday shopping season can account for 20% of annual sales.

For Austin Gonzales, the Bryant Park market is a way to meet new customers and see what resonates with them. So far this year, her lemongrass and charcoal detoxifying soap and a tub of natural insect repellent are popular items. Like most businesses, she's facing higher costs for everything from olive oil to paper bags. She's raised the price of her soaps from \$8 to \$9.25.

"Holiday shops do a great job for us," she said. "We see thou-

sands and thousands of customers, and get tons of new advice, ideas, suggestions and testimonials."

For some small businesses, the markets are a welcome respite after a punishing couple of years. Elizabeth Ryan, who owns and operates Breezy Hill Orchard in Staatsburg, N.Y., said the initial onset of COVID-19 caused her revenue to plunge 80% in 2020.

Ryan is a founding member of the Union Square Greenmarket and a longtime staple at the Manhattan holiday markets, where she sells cider, cider doughnuts and gingerbread cookies. She said her orchard has mainly recovered,

with the help of a good apple crop this year. But holiday markets give her a much-needed revenue boost.

Preparing for holiday markets is labor intensive, because many small businesses have to schlep their goods from miles away and spend long hours staffing their booths. Ryan's farm is 100 miles north of the city and Ryan drives in almost every day. But being at the market and watching New York City recover from the pandemic are worth the hassle.

"Reopening of the shops and the return of Christmas last year was very exuberant and joyful. I hope this year is the same," she said.

## Trump's long-teased White House bid is low key in 1st week

By JILL COLVIN  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — From the moment he left the White House in defeat last year, Donald Trump has teased the prospect of a third presidential campaign. But in the week since he officially declared his candidacy, the former president has been uncharacteristically low key.

There has been no massive stadium kickoff rally, notable for someone who has turned such events into a signature of his public life. His newly reinstated Twitter account, which helped fuel his political rise nearly a decade ago, sits silent with its more than 87 million followers.

He hasn't announced plans to visit the key early voting states that will shape the contest for the Republican nomination, nor has he sat for a round of high-profile interviews. Indeed, since his announcement speech, Trump hasn't held a public event.

"His lack of a schedule makes you wonder if he's really running or if this is just a business development opportunity or a diversion from the DOJ activity," said veteran GOP strategist Scott Reed, referring to



REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP

Former President Donald Trump speaks at Mar-a-Lago on Nov. 18 in Palm Beach, Fla.

Department of Justice probes into Trump's handling of classified documents and his efforts to overturn the 2020 election, which are expected to intensify in the coming

weeks.

Trump, who never held public office before winning the presidency in 2016, has never valued the cadence and organization associated with traditional campaigns. And several aides noted that Trump, who made his announcement unusually early and a week before the Thanksgiving holidays, is wary to draw attention away from the Dec. 6 Senate runoff in Georgia, which will close out this year's midterm elections. The aides, who insisted on anonymity to discuss campaign strategy, said Trump will ramp up his schedule soon.

But the light-touch start to the campaign reflects the rushed and chaotic nature of his announcement, which came as midterm election votes were still being counted and even as some of his closest aides and allies had urged him to postpone until after the Georgia runoff. It also comes at a moment of unique political vulnerability for Trump.

The former president, who has spent his post-White House years positioning himself as the undisputed leader of the GOP, is now facing heated criticism inside the party for contributing to a disappointing showing in

this month's midterms. And other Republicans are openly teasing presidential runs of their own, making clear they won't stand aside for Trump's nomination.

Meanwhile, the legal pressure on Trump is intensifying. Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed a special counsel last week to oversee the Justice Department's investigation into classified documents recovered from the former president's Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach, Fla., as well as key aspects of a separate probe involving the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and efforts to undo the 2020 election. And on Tuesday, the Supreme Court cleared the way for the imminent handover of Trump's tax returns to a congressional committee after a three-year legal fight.

Still, Trump begins the race with an obvious head start. The former president had been acting like a de facto candidate for months and had long had a political operation in place. After two presidential campaigns and four years in office, he also has longstanding relationships with state and local party leaders, including many who remain loyal to him.

## NATION

# Researchers: AI in connected cars eased congestion

By TRAVIS LOLLER  
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — As millions of people travel the interstates this Thanksgiving, many will encounter patches of traffic at a standstill for no apparent reason — no construction or accident. Researchers say the problem is you.

Human drivers just don't do a good job of navigating dense traffic conditions, but an experiment using artificial intelligence in Nashville last week means help could be on the way. In the experiment, specially equipped cars were able to ease rush hour congestion on Interstate-24, researcher Daniel Work said on Tuesday. In addition to lessening driver frustration, Work said less stop-and-go driving means fuel savings and, by extension, less pollution.

The professor of civil and environmental engineering at Vanderbilt University is one of a group of engineers and mathematicians from universities around the U.S. who have been studying the problem of phantom traffic jams after a simple experiment in Japan a dozen years ago showed how they develop. Researchers there put about 20 human drivers on a circular track and asked them to drive at a constant speed. Before long, traffic went from a smooth

flow to a series of stops and starts. "Phantom traffic jams are created by drivers like you and me," Work explained.

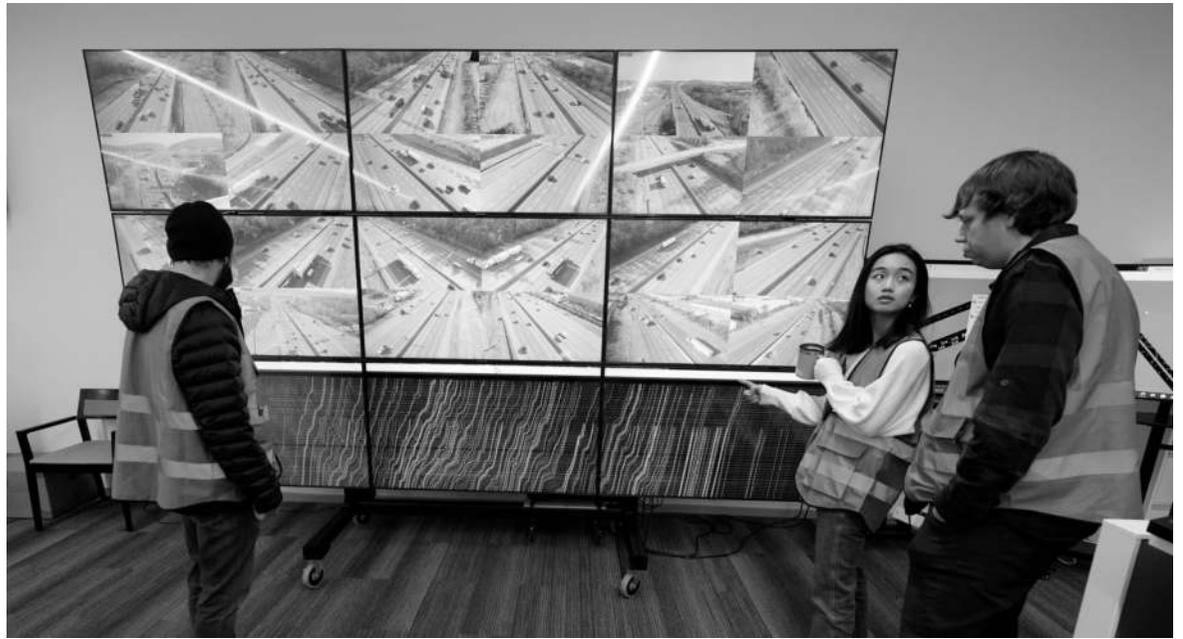
One person taps the brakes for whatever reason. The person behind them takes a second to respond and has to brake even harder. The next person has to brake even harder. The wave of braking continues until many cars are at a standstill. Then, as traffic clears, the drivers accelerate too quickly, causing more braking and yet another jam.

"We know that one car braking suddenly can have a huge impact," Work said.

Last week's experiment showed that a few cars driving slowly and steadily could have an impact as well, for the better.

The experiment utilized 100 cars that travelled in loops on a 15-mile section of I-24 from about 6 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. each morning. Working on the premise that if 5% of the cars on the road were acting together, they could lessen the prevalence of phantom traffic jams, the researchers equipped those 100 cars to communicate wirelessly, sending traffic information back and forth.

They also took advantage of the adaptive cruise control that is already an option on many new vehicles. This technology lets the



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

**Researchers look at live interstate traffic images and data screens in Nashville, Tenn. Researchers say they have successfully used artificial intelligence in a group of wirelessly connected cars to help ease rush hour traffic on an interstate in Nashville.**

driver set a car to cruise at a certain speed, but the car automatically slows down and speeds up as needed to keep a safe distance from the car in front.

In the experiment, the adaptive cruise control was modified to react to the overall traffic flow — including what was happening far ahead — using artificial intelligence.

The cars' decision-making occurred on two levels, Work said. At the cloud level, information about traffic conditions was used to create an overall speed plan. That plan was then broadcast to the cars, which used artificial intelligence algorithms to determine the best action to take.

The researchers were able to evaluate the effect the connected cars had on morning traffic flow using a special 4-mile stretch of I-24 outfitted with 300 pole-

mounted sensors. The experiment is a project of the CIRCLES consortium, a group that includes several automakers and the U.S. Energy and Transportation departments. Other lead researchers are based at the University of California, Berkeley; Temple University; and Rutgers University-Camden.

Liam Pedersen is deputy general manager for research at Nissan, a CIRCLES consortium partner who was in Nashville last week for the experiment. He said one of the exciting things about it is that it builds on technology that is already in many new cars.

"This is not autonomous driving," he said. "This is something we could realize very soon."

Asked if automakers will be willing to cooperate to ease traffic, Pedersen said, "I certainly hope so, because the system works best

when lots and lots of cars participate."

Last week's experiment built off one Work and his colleagues conducted in 2017 at the University of Arizona. That repeated the Japanese experiment, this time with a single self-driving car thrown into the mix. The self-driving car smoothed the flow of traffic so that there was 98% less braking. That led to a 40% increase in fuel efficiency and a 14% increase in distance driven.

Researchers are still crunching the numbers on last week's experiment, but Work said it "demonstrated that these jams can be reduced through the novel automated vehicle technologies we developed. It's unquestionable that enhanced automotive technology can significantly reduce phantom traffic jams when implemented at scale."

## Bison spread as Native American tribes reclaim stewardship

By MATTHEW BROWN  
Associated Press

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK, S.D. — Perched atop a fence at Badlands National Park, Troy Heinert peered from beneath his wide-brimmed hat into a corral where 100 wild bison awaited transfer to the Rosebud Indian Reservation.

Descendants of bison that once roamed North America's Great Plains by the tens of millions, the animals would soon thunder up a chute, take a truck ride across South Dakota and join one of many burgeoning herds Heinert has helped reestablish on Native American lands.

Heinert nodded in satisfaction to a park service employee as the animals stomped their hooves and kicked up dust in the cold wind. He took a brief call from Iowa about another herd being transferred to tribes in Minnesota and Oklahoma, then spoke with a fellow trucker about yet more bison



TOBY BRUSSEAU/AP

**T.J. Heinert, assistant range manager of Wolakota Buffalo Range near Spring Creek, S.D., picks out a bull buffalo to harvest for a community gathering on Oct. 14.**

destined for Wisconsin.

By nightfall, the last of the American buffalo shipped from Badlands were being unloaded at the Rosebud reservation, where Heinert lives.

The next day, he was on the road back to Badlands to load 200 bison

for another tribe, the Cheyenne River Sioux.

Most bison in North America are in commercial herds, treated no differently than cattle.

"Buffalo, they walk in two worlds," Heinert said. "Are they commercial or are they wildlife?"

From the tribal perspective, we've always deemed them as wildlife, or to take it a step further, as a relative."

Some 82 tribes across the U.S. — from New York to Alaska — now have more than 20,000 bison in 65 herds — and that's been growing in recent years along with the desire among Native Americans to reclaim stewardship of an animal their ancestors lived alongside and depended upon for millennia.

European settlers destroyed that balance when they slaughtered the great herds. Bison almost went extinct until conservationists including Teddy Roosevelt intervened to reestablish a small number of herds largely on federal lands. Native Americans were sometimes excluded from those early efforts carried out by conservation groups.

Such groups more recently partnered with tribes, and some are now stepping aside. The long-

term dream for some Native Americans: return bison on a scale rivaling herds that roamed the continent in numbers that shaped the landscape itself.

Heinert, 50, a South Dakota state senator and director of the InterTribal Buffalo Council, views his job in practical terms: Get bison to tribes that want them, whether two animals or 200. He helps them rekindle long-neglected cultural connections, increase food security, reclaim sovereignty and improve land management. This fall, Heinert's group has moved 2,041 bison to 22 tribes in 10 states.

"All of these tribes relied on them at some point, whether that was for food or shelter or ceremonies. The stories that come from those tribes are unique to those tribes," he said. "Those tribes are trying to go back to that, reestablishing that connection that was once there and was once very strong."

WORLD

# Erdogan vows Syria invasion, Kurds prepare response

Associated Press

QAMISHLI, Syria — Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed Wednesday to order a land invasion of northern Syria targeting Kurdish groups, amid years-long border violence and repeated Turkish incursions.

Turkey has launched a barrage of airstrikes on suspected militant targets in northern Syria and Iraq in recent days, in retaliation for a deadly Nov. 13 bombing in Istanbul that Ankara blames on the Kurdish groups. The groups have

denied involvement in the bombing, and say Turkish strikes have killed civilians and threatened the fight against Islamic State.

Ankara's allies, particularly Russia, have attempted to avert a ground incursion, but Erdogan said Wednesday in a speech to his ruling party's legislators in Ankara that the air operations are "just the beginning" and that Turkey is determined to "close down all of our southern borders ... with a security strip that will prevent the possibility of attacks on our coun-

try."

Turkey has carried out a series of incursions into Syria since 2016 and already controls parts of northern Syria.

Erdogan said the new military offensive, planned to take place "at the most convenient time for us" would target the regions of Tel Rifaat, Manbij and Kobani, which is also known by its Arabic name Ayn Al Arab.

"The day is near when those concrete tunnels which the terrorists use for safety will become

their graves," he said.

The commander of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in northeast Syria, meanwhile, said his group is prepared to repel a ground invasion by Turkey.

SDF head Mazloum Abdi told The Associated Press that his group has been preparing for another such attack since Turkey launched a ground offensive in the area in 2019 and "we believe that we have reached a level where we can foil any new attack. At least the Turks will not be able to occu-

py more of our areas and there will be a great battle."

He added, "If Turkey attacks any region, the war will spread to all regions ... and everyone will be hurt by that."

Following the weekend's airstrikes, Turkish officials said that suspected Kurdish militants fired rockets Monday across the Syrian border into Turkey, killing at least two people and wounding 10 others.

Abdi denied that SDF had struck inside Turkish territory.

## Russian Duma gives LGBTQ 'propaganda' bill final approval

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian lawmakers on Thursday gave their final approval to a bill that significantly expands restrictions on activities seen as promoting gay rights in the country, another step in a yearslong crackdown on the country's embattled LGBTQ community.

The new bill expands a ban on what authorities call "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" to minors, established by legislation dubbed the "gay propaganda" law. It was adopted by the Kremlin in 2013 in an effort to promote "traditional values" in Russia.

This year, lawmakers moved to

ban spreading such information to people aged 18 and older.

The bill was approved in the third and final reading on Thursday by the State Duma, the lower house of parliament. It will go next to the upper house, the Federation Council, and then to President Vladimir Putin, whose signature will give it legal force.

The new bill outlaws all advertising, media and online resources books, films and theater productions deemed to contain such "propaganda," a concept loosely defined in the bill. The 2013 ban was often enacted against any depictions of same-sex unions and used as a tool to crack down on LGBTQ rights groups.

## Official: Kosovo, Serbia reach vehicle plates deal

Associated Press

PRISTINA, Kosovo — The European Union's top diplomat on Wednesday said Kosovo and Serbia have reached a deal on a dispute over vehicle number plates, defusing rising tensions between the two Western Balkan neighbors.

EU high representative Josep Borrell posted in his social media page that Kosovo's and Serbia's negotiators "have agreed to avoid further escalation and to fully concentrate on the proposal on normalization of their relations." Ser-

bia will stop issuing license plates with Kosovo cities' denominations and Kosovo would cease further actions on the re-registration of vehicles.

Talks will continue on the subsequent steps.

Earlier this week Borrell had failed to convince Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti to reach a deal, further raising concerns about the escalating tensions between the former war foes.

Kurti blamed Borrell for focus-

ing solely on the license plates instead of the full normalization of ties between the neighbors.

Vucic said Kurti was responsible for the failure of the meeting.

The EU-backed Belgrade-Prishtina Dialogue, which is aimed at normalizing relations between the neighbors and former foes in the Western Balkans, has been at a virtual standstill for years. The EU warned Serbia and Kosovo last week that they are on the edge of a precipice and must resolve their dispute or face the prospect of a return to their violent past.



**Ecker**

**HONDA & ACURA**

[www.honda-ecker.de](http://www.honda-ecker.de)  
hauptstuhl@honda-ecker.de  
Mon-Fri 0800 - 1700 • Sat 0900-1300

06372-4607 • Kaiserstr. 79, 66851 Hauptstuhl

- Accident Repairs
- Body Work
- Maintenance
- Warranty - Work
- Damage Estimates
- Tax Free

# Cajun-style Turkey

## Heat, serve & enjoy!





POPEYES

TM & © 2020 Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, Inc.

Limited time only at participating AAFES locations.

# SEEKING A CAREER?

HR Block is looking for full or part-time Tax Preparers for Naples and Sigonella military communities.



No previous experience required. We offer a comprehensive training program. For those with previous experience we offer refresher training.



Competitive compensation,  
Call Roy McGilvray at 334-998-5159 or email at  
[Roy.mcgilvray@hrblock.com](mailto:Roy.mcgilvray@hrblock.com) | [mcgilvrayroy@gmail.com](mailto:mcgilvrayroy@gmail.com)

WORLD



JORGE SILVA / AP

Kim Yo Jong, sister of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un.

# Kim's sister makes insulting threats to Seoul

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attacked South Korea with a string of insults on Thursday for considering new unilateral sanctions against the North, calling its president and his government “idiots” and “a running wild dog gnawing on a bone given by the U.S.”

Kim Yo Jong's diatribe came two days after South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it was considering additional sanctions on North Korea over its recent barrage of missile tests. The ministry said it would also consider taking action against alleged cyberattacks by North Korea — believed to be a key new source of funding for its weapons program — if the North conducts a major provocation like a nuclear test.

“I wonder what ‘sanctions’ the South Korean group, no more than a running wild dog gnawing on a bone given by the U.S., impudently will impose on North Korea,” Kim Yo Jong said in a statement carried by state media. “What a spectacle sight!”

She called South Korea's conservative President Yoon Suk Yeol and his administration “idiots who continue creating the dangerous situation.”

She added that South Korea “had not been our target” when Moon Jae-in — Yoon's liberal predecessor who sought reconciliation with North Korea — was in power. The comment could be seen as an attempt to foster anti-Yoon sentiment in South Korea.

“We warn the impudent and stupid once again that the desperate sanctions and pressure of the U.S. and its South Korean stooges against (North Korea) will add fuel to the latter's hostility and anger and they will serve as a noose for them,” Kim Yo Jong said.

South Korea quickly shot back, saying it's “very deplorable for her

**“I wonder what ‘sanctions’ the South Korean group, no more than a running wild dog gnawing on a bone given by the U.S., impudently will impose on North Korea. What a spectacle sight!”**

Kim Yo Jong

to denounce our head of state with rough, substandard words and show no basic forms of etiquette.” Seoul's Unification Ministry said in a statement that it strongly condemns what it called “her impure attempt to incite antigovernment struggles and shake our system” in South Korea.

While it's not the first time Kim Yo Jong has used crude invectives toward South Korea, North Korea is expected to further escalate military tensions on the Korean Peninsula given that she's in charge of relations with South Korea and wields some influences on the North's military, said analyst Cheong Seong-Chang at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea.

North Korea is notorious for colorful, crude personal attacks on South Korean and U.S. leaders. It called previous South Korean Presidents Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye “a rat” and “a prostitute” respectively, while describing former U.S. President Donald Trump as “a mentally deranged U.S. dotard.” In March 2021 when Moon was still in office, Kim Yo Jong called him “a parrot raised by America.”

# China expands lockdowns as COVID-19 cases hit daily record

Associated Press

BEIJING — Pandemic lockdowns are expanding across China, including in a city where factory workers clashed this week with police, as the number of COVID-19 cases hits a daily record.

Residents of eight districts of Zhengzhou, home to 6.6 million people, were told to stay home for five days beginning Thursday except to buy food or get medical treatment. Daily mass testing was ordered in what the city government called a “war of annihilation” against the virus.

During clashes Tuesday and Wednesday, Zhengzhou police

beat workers protesting over a pay dispute at the biggest factory for Apple's iPhone, located in an industrial zone near the city. Foxconn, the Taiwan-based owner of the factory, apologized Thursday for what it called “an input error in the computer system” and said it would guarantee that the pay is the same as agreed to and in official recruitment posters.

In the previous 24 hours, the number of new COVID cases rose by 31,444, the National Health Commission said Thursday. That's the highest daily figure since the coronavirus was first detected in the central Chinese city of

Wuhan in late 2019.

The daily caseload has been steadily increasing. This week, authorities reported China's first COVID-19 deaths in six months, bringing the total to 5,232.

While the number of cases and deaths is relatively low compared to the U.S. and other countries, China's ruling Communist Party remains committed to a “zero-COVID” strategy that aims to isolate every case and eliminate the virus entirely. Most other governments have ended anti-virus controls and now rely on vaccinations and immunity from past infections to help prevent deaths and serious illness.

- Protect my country
- Learn history
- Register for classes
- Earn my degree
- Build a new future

**Succeed Again.**

**125+ programs & specializations designed to help you achieve whatever you dream of next**

- Online, on-site, and virtual courses available
- Financial assistance and scholarships
- No-cost digital materials
- Lifetime career services

**CLASSES START SOON:  
14 DECEMBER & 11 JANUARY**  
[europe.umgc.edu/stripes](http://europe.umgc.edu/stripes)



# WEEKEND



God of War Ragnarok advances father-son tale

Video games, Page 19



# A personal fable

'The Fabelmans' sheds a beautiful light on the childhood of filmmaker Steven Spielberg

Movies, Pages 15-16

Universal Pictures/Amblin Entertainment

## WEEKEND: GADGETS &amp; TECHNOLOGY

# Growing a fresh following



iStock

## Produce farmers using social media to engage with their customers

BY ELIZABETH ELKIN  
AND DIEGO LASARTE  
*Bloomberg*

Produce growers are bringing their fruits and vegetables to their consumers, not at a farmers market but on TikTok.

It started with a baked feta pasta recipe that made its way onto TikTok in January 2021 and went viral on the social media platform. In the videos, home chefs roast cherry tomatoes, olive oil and feta and add herbs and cooked pasta; the recipe went viral online and in grocery stores. Cherry tomato sales went up about 19% that week, according to the International Fresh Produce Association's data. News organizations also widely reported that feta cheese was difficult to come by. Today, the tag #bakedfeta has 127.7 million views.

With younger generations buying a lot of products online through social media, including food, produce farmers see an opportunity to get their goods directly into the hands of millennials and Gen Z. They're using social content and influencers to try to keep people buying fresh food.

"We need to meet consumers where they are," said Cathy Burns, chief executive of the International Fresh Produce Association. "Millennials are a very big purchaser now, and they continue to impact the economy, and Gen Z is right behind them. Social media has continued untapped potential for our industry."

There's growing evidence that, with the right push, humble harvest items can capture the

spotlight. This summer, corn also had a moment in the sun thanks to a child who has been fondly nicknamed "the Corn Kid" by his internet fans.

"Ever since I was told corn is real, it tasted good," the boy says in the video. "When I tried it with butter, everything changed."

Social media is a pretty inexpensive way to market, which is a real opportunity for the industry, Burns said.

"If you can hit it big like the corn kid, there's huge upside," she said.

One company taking note is Los Angeles-based The Wonderful Company, which has featured big-name celebrities like Stephen Colbert and Groot in its commercials for pistachios. The closely held company grows and sells a variety of food products, including fruits, nuts, flowers, water, wine and juices. Now, it's making a new and dedicated investment in TikTok across many of its brands, including Wonderful Halos, Wonderful Pistachios, POM Wonderful and Wonderful Seedless Lemons. The company's in-house advertising agency even has dedicated TikTok experts.

"The impact of TikTok is undeniable in reaching a younger audience," said Adam Cooper, senior vice president of marketing at the company. "Investing in TikTok allows us to connect with millennials and Gen Z in a fun and authentic way that we can't get from traditional TV or print advertising. It allows for engagement, interaction and a variety of content so that there's something for everyone in a very in-the-moment way that traditional advertising timelines don't allow for."

The Wonderful Company is working with influencers across its brands. It's looking for people who really love the products and healthy snacks, Cooper said.

"As a company, we pride ourselves on being innovative in the way we market our products, and TikTok is that next evolving space for brands," Cooper said.

One of the first partners for the company's Wonderful Halos brand, which sells mandarins, is with @greyandmama, an account run by Linda Meeker who gained popularity on social media by sharing videos of her son Grey learning to say "thank you." She wrote a book for young children on healthy eating.

"It's super sweet, and they're super yummy," the child says while peeling a mandarin in the paid partnership post.

TikTok can be especially helpful for local farms. At Lonely Pines Farm, a small-scale flower and garlic farm located on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington state, social media is an essential part of the business. Laura Schletzbaum and her husband, Jerry Bergstrom, have amassed over 3.5 million likes on TikTok and thousands of followers across Instagram and YouTube. TikTok has helped them reach a new customer: young gardeners.

"We're completely incorporated social media into our business plan," Schletzbaum said. "Instagram is the main source for our local customers, it allows them to buy flowers and garlic from us directly, whereas TikTok gives us exposure to a whole new generation of gardeners. There's literally no way anyone would have found us if they hadn't found us on social media."

## Halo's Versa 16 Pizza Oven pies praiseworthy

BY GREGG ELLMAN  
*Tribune News Service*

Halo's Versa 16 Outdoor Pizza Oven is a great backyard pizza oven for a few reasons. It doesn't take up a lot of space, it's easy to use and it runs off of propane. And it's fun to produce five-star results.

I'll take a line the Halo team put in the pizza oven's manual: "Nothing says cook, gather and create memories like Pizza!" It's a great social meal, with everyone putting their own touches on a pie with individual ingredients.

Choosing a pizza oven can be challenging: There are so many choices available. What size; where will you cook the pizza, indoors or outdoors; where will you store the oven and how do you want to fuel it (wood, propane, electric, etc.) are just some of the decisions to be made.

Once you have the answers, it's time to go shopping, except I'll make it easy. Get the Halo Versa 16 Outdoor Pizza Oven. The setup is easy. Unbox it carefully and follow the simple instructions to attach the legs, motor and other items. Connections for a standard 20-gallon tank and a 1-gallon tank are included, but the tanks and the gas are not.

The tabletop outdoor pizza oven (22.5-by-25.5-by-15 inches, 43 pounds) reaches 950 degrees Fahrenheit in 12 minutes. A 16-inch Cordierite Cooking pizza stone is included.

The propane tank hooks up to the side and a front dial sets the temperature, read on a top-sided heat indicator. The pizza stone sits on a motorized carousel inside the oven and is powered by two D batteries or the included alternating current (AC) adapter. Having the pizza turn 360 degrees gave it even cooking all the way around.

Inside is a patent-pending dual burner system, which, as mentioned, gets hot very fast. Caution has to be taken when using something this hot, and children should have adult supervision.

With the oven on and the lid closed, you can see the burner in the back and the heat it sends out. An opening in the front allows you to load your pizza in and out and watch it cook to perfection. According to Halo, the body is constructed with 201 inches of high-temperature powder-coated, cold-rolled steel and 430 stainless steel. If you have to open the lid during cooking, use the two silicone tabs on the sides with caution.

So how were the results? Five people made pizzas on three nights of testing, and all got the highest compliments. Each time we adjusted the ingredients, the size of the pizza and the cooking time. But the overall consensus of Halo's Versa 16 Outdoor Pizza Oven is five stars.

The oven is not limited to just pizza. Our 14-inch chocolate chip cookies were a prime example. While we were making the initial batch to season the cooking stone with fats and oils (as suggested in the instructions), the first one didn't come out as planned, but now with the stone in excellent cooking shape, we've made them regularly. Other choices include stuffed bell peppers, steaks, chicken, pizza and cinnamon rolls.

Cooking times vary depending on what you want; we went with 7-inch pizzas in the preheated oven, cooking for about 2.5 minutes. Some didn't want them as well done, so they were pulled out in a little less time, all with the heat set between medium and low. The times will vary based on the temperature and pizza sizes, so be ready for a round of experimenting.

Halo's Versa 16 Outdoor Pizza Oven provides a top-notch experience for both beginner and experienced chefs.

Pizza has always been my No. 1 food, and it just moved up even higher on my list, if that's possible.

Online: [halo-pg.com/outdoor-pizza-oven](http://halo-pg.com/outdoor-pizza-oven); \$499.99



HALO/TNS

The Halo Versa 16 Outdoor Pizza Oven is a space-saver. An opening in the front allows users to watch their pie as it cooks.

## WEEKEND: MOVIES



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

**Gabriel LaBelle, a cast member in the film “The Fabelmans,” poses for a portrait Sept. 11 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto during the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival.**

# Universal sign

Teen gets his big shot playing a fictionalized version of young Spielberg in ‘The Fabelmans’

By JAKE COYLE  
Associated Press

**T**he audition sheet that Gabriel LaBelle received was titled “Untitled Amblin Film.”

Director: “TBD.”

LaBelle, a 19-year-old actor from Vancouver, Canada, with a handful of credits in TV and film, taped his audition and sent it off, not thinking too much about it. A couple days later, he began to hear whispers. That movie? It’s a Steven Spielberg film. And the part? Playing Steven Spielberg.

LaBelle didn’t get a call back until three months later — and even then he didn’t really know what he was in for. It wasn’t until LaBelle was cast and received the full script that it dawned on him. He was the lead of Spielberg’s “The Fabelmans,” playing a fictionalized younger version of the legendary director.

“When I was auditioning, the character’s name was Teenage Sammy — I thought as opposed to Adult Sammy,” LaBelle said in an interview the day after “The Fabelmans” premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September. “I get the script and you’re reading it for 30 pages and he’s 6 and 8 years old. Page 35 or so, Teenage Sammy comes along. OK, good! Now this is my part. It’s going to be a three-act movie; it’s going to be a ‘Moonlight’ or something. I kept waiting for my exit, but it never came.”

Instead, LaBelle makes a very big entrance in “The Fabelmans” playing the legendary American film director in his most autobiographical film. As Spielberg’s fictionalized stand-in, Sammy Fabelman, he plays the 75-year-old through some of his most formative teenage years as an aspiring filmmaker. Much of the film belongs to Michelle Williams and Paul Dano, who play Sammy’s parents and turn in extraordinarily nuanced performances. But LaBelle’s Sammy is the throughline in “The Fabelmans,” a deeply felt portrait of an American movie icon as a young man.

For any young, little-known actor, just getting a role in a Spielberg film can launch a career. Christian Bale and Drew Barrymore are just a few of the actors who got their big break with the director. LaBelle’s challenge, though, added the considerable wrinkle of also playing Spielberg, himself.

“After I got cast, it was really like: Did I just bite off more than I can chew?” said LaBelle, who

goes by Gabe. “It was like the universe just dropped down. ‘Ah, you want to be an actor, do you? You want to be in the movies?’”

Before “The Fabelmans,” LaBelle’s most notable credit was probably a small part in the 2018 reboot “The Predator.” His father, Rob LaBelle, is a veteran actor with dozens of film and television credits. At the premiere, when the younger LaBelle saw “The Fabelmans” for the first time, he sat with his parents and brother, often clutching his mother’s hand. On stage after the film, LaBelle described the odd feeling of being on a film set “surrounded by masters.”

“Then there’s me, that kid with the good audition.”

But LaBelle quickly became part of the company, Spielberg said. In a talk with Cameron Bailey, TIFF director, at the festival, Spielberg said the role was especially difficult for him to cast.

“None of this is really easy because we don’t often see ourselves the way our friends and our family sees us,” Spielberg said. “As a kid growing up, I always had a lot of reasons why I was always in the corner, why I was always not the center of conversation. I needed someone who wasn’t going to bring too much self-awareness to Sammy.”

“The Fabelmans,” opening in theaters this weekend, tracks Sammy through his first exposure to cinema as a child (Mateo Zoryna Francis-Deford plays him as a boy) through his high school years. The film captures Spielberg’s growing wonder with the possibilities — and manipulative power — of filmmaking during a time of increasing marital toil for his parents. That meant that LaBelle would be acting out some seminal moments in Spielberg’s life: Making his first war movie; kissing his first girlfriend; stepping onto a studio lot for the first time.

LaBelle found Spielberg a ready resource, but their talks didn’t often stray outside of the work at hand.

“Our main focus was the movie,” LaBelle said. “Yes, I could talk to him and go off about his life, but I could tell he wasn’t going to unload it all to us. We had to ask. We had to go at it scene by scene. It was really just about what’s the purpose of each moment. How did you feel? What do you want out of me? Sometimes he’d tell me and sometimes he wouldn’t want me to know and he’d want me to just do what I thought Sammy should do.”

## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEW

## A personal best

Director Spielberg injects intimate details of his upbringing in luminous 'The Fabelmans'

By JUSTIN CHANG  
Los Angeles Times

More than any other director, Steven Spielberg con-founds the notion that the personal and the popular, or the technician and the artist, are fundamentally at odds. The intensity of feeling you experienced on your first (or third) close encounter with a Spielberg classic — maybe you levitated out of your seat at “Raiders of the Lost Ark” or had your nerves shredded by “Jaws” — was likely so pure that it felt like yours alone, never mind that millions of moviegoers around the world felt the same way.

And so it's worth considering exactly what it means to describe “The Fabelmans,” Spielberg's piercing, rollicking and altogether marvelous ramble through his early years, as his most personal work. That assessment may be correct, if we assume “personal” to be synonymous with “autobiographical,” and also if we overlook the snippets of family history that he's woven almost subliminally throughout his earlier films. Fire up “1941” and “Saving Private Ryan” and you'll catch stray glimpses of his father's World War II stories. “E.T.” and “Close Encounters of the Third Kind” endure not only as wondrous alien-visitation fantasies but as portraits of families in disarray, something that emerged directly from the pain of his parents' divorce.

But “The Fabelmans” — movingly dedicated to Spielberg's parents, Arnold and Leah — is his first picture to put that particular divorce front and center, along with various other intimate, semifictionalized details culled from his postwar upbringing. He's grafted those details onto a young alter ego named Sammy Fabelman, first seen as a young boy played by Mateo Zoryon Francis-DeFord. Spielberg, sharing a writing credit for the first time with his regular collaborator Tony Kushner (“West Side Story,” “Lincoln”), rummages through a treasure chest of old anecdotes and memories, stringing together road trips and sporting events, summer vacations and Hanukkah gatherings. There's a death in the family, a couple of bullies, a memorable first kiss and even a prom night.

And of course, there are movies, lots of movies, from Cecil B. DeMille's “The Greatest Show on Earth” to John Ford's “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance,” whose wryly memorable axiom

(“Print the legend”) provides a clue as to how to approach this alternately truthy and truthful cine-memoir. It's hardly accidental that Sammy's story begins with a life-changing trip to the pictures in the early 1950s and finds him wandering a Hollywood backlot more than a decade later. In between, the story zig-zags from New Jersey to Arizona to California, tracking the genesis of a young man's lifelong love affair with the movies — a romance that will prove mutually beneficial, even if Sammy's obsession comes at a price.

“Art is no game!” roars his great-uncle Boris (a wonderful Judd Hirsch) in a thesis-underlining gem of a monologue. “Art is as dangerous as a lion's mouth. It'll bite your head off.”

Boris, a former circus performer with the air of an ancient prophet, knows of what he speaks, just as he knows the reckless creative temperament that runs through his side of the family. Sammy's own mother, Mitzi (a breathtaking Michelle Williams), gave up a promising career as a concert pianist years ago to help her engineer husband, Burt (Paul Dano, beautifully restrained), raise Sammy and his three younger sisters. Burt, heavily in demand from the burgeoning computer industry, keeps his family on the move; Mitzi adapts as best she can, but she can't hide her resentment and regret over her dashed professional dreams. A similarly unsatisfying fate, Boris declares, might also befall Sammy, whose passion for moviemaking is destined to clash with, and even eclipse, his love for his family.

But “The Fabelmans,” perhaps buoyed by its own Spielbergian optimism, takes a gentler, more nuanced view of this conundrum. From the beginning, Sammy's family actively nurtures his movie love, and his parents' distinct perspectives can't help but shape his own way of seeing. Burt, an electrical engineer, explains movies primarily as a mechanical phenomenon, a science of reels and frame rates; though impressed by his son's talent, he wishes the boy would pursue something more practical. Mitzi, by contrast, describes movies as “dreams that you never forget” and urges her son to never stop pursuing his own. Sammy's sisters, for their part, are gleeful collaborators on his early masterworks of 8-millimeter horror cinema, donning toilet-paper mummy rags and squirting themselves with ketchup.



UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT/AP

Paul Dano and Michelle Williams encourage Mateo Zoryon Francis-DeFord's passion in “The Fabelmans.”

Before long, the Fabelmans move to Phoenix, providing a welcome change of scenery and an ideal desert backdrop for the ambitious westerns and war pictures that Sammy, now a teenager (an excellent Gabriel LaBelle), makes with his family, friends and neighbors. Filmmaking proves a bustling collaborative endeavor, and Sammy, already skilled at moving the camera and devising ingenious practical effects, is every inch the ringmaster a director needs to be. But filmmaking can also be an intensely solitary pursuit and, as Mitzi intuitively grasps, a therapeutic one: By bending fictional reality to his will, she realizes, her son is learning to make sense of — and exercise control over — unruly emotions.

There's a confessional aspect to this revelation, as if Spielberg were conceding some of the accusations — of being a consummate emotional manipulator, a purveyor of cheap sentimentality and forced uplift — that some of his critics have hurled in his direction.

But to use the exquisite craftsmanship of “The Fabelmans” as an argument against it is to cheat yourself of its pleasure, and to miss the point of a movie that functions as a playful, prismatic meditation on its own making. How to explain the strange meta-thrill of seeing Spielberg repurpose one of his recurring signature images — faces staring up in awe at an otherworldly spectacle — in a context where that spectacle is playing out on a cinema screen? How to quantify the magic of the moment when Sammy, running footage through his hand-cranked editing machine, is floored by what he sees in the interplay of shooting and cutting — in a wordless, lyrical sequence that is itself a master class on shooting and cutting?

For a filmmaker to use his command of the medium to dramatize his younger self's command of the medium might

have seemed, in other hands, hopelessly self-congratulatory. But there's also a humility at work here, as well as a deep understanding of human frailty that feels like the opposite of arrogance. The most powerful moments in “The Fabelmans” unfold sans self-consciousness or formal gimmickry, which is fitting, since the most important lesson that Sammy learns about the movies is that, while they can spin elaborate lies, they can also tell the truth. His camera can both distort and reveal reality, catching details that the human eye misses and bringing them, unsparingly, into the light.

The most wrenching of those details concern Mitzi's slide into depression and denial, and Williams' performance is an astonishing, almost unbearable reservoir of emotion. Burt's practical, sturdy resignation makes him no less poignant a figure, and Dano precisely conveys the struggle of a man whose gentleness complements, but cannot assuage, his wife's unquenchable lust for life.

And if “The Fabelmans” is a record of the end of a marriage, it's also an attempt at reconciliation — between a child and his loving, well-meaning, painfully human parents, and also between the twinned legacies that those parents bequeathed him.

Like all great storytellers, Spielberg knows the value — the beauty — of artifice and embellishment, as well as the permeability of truth and fiction. “The Fabelmans” is as slick, transporting and painstakingly orchestrated as anything in his filmography, and also as funny, stirring and implacably sad. What makes it personal isn't that you believe everything in it happened exactly as you see it. It's how vivid and enveloping it feels as it's happening in front of you, and how recognizable and bittersweet an ache it leaves behind.

“The Fabelmans” is rated PG-13 for some strong language, thematic elements, brief violence and drug use. Running time: 151 minutes.

## Film ‘a way of bringing my mom and dad back’

“The Fabelmans” is being billed as Steven Spielberg's most personal film, tracing his cinema-sotted youth. But just how personal is it?



Spielberg

At a Q&A at the Toronto International Film Festival in September, Spielberg shared some insight.

Is this autobiographical opus, one of his only feature screenwriting credits and his first screenplay credit since 1982's “Poltergeist,” intended to wrap up Spielberg's career?

Short answer: No.

“It's not because I've decided to retire and this is my swan song. Don't believe any of that. Don't believe that,” he said of choosing to create the cinematic equivalent of writing a memoir. “Tony (Kushner, his co-writer) and I started talking about this possibility when we were making ‘Lincoln’ (2012). ... But when COVID hit, we all had a lot of time and a lot of fear ... (and) as things got worse and worse, I just felt if I was going to leave anything behind, what are the things I really need to resolve about my mom and my dad and my sisters ... It wasn't now or never, but I almost felt that way.”

The film isn't an entirely rosy view of Spielberg's family; it depicts some pretty difficult times for his parents as a couple, and the family's struggle with them. Was it worth it?

“This film, for me, is a way of bringing my mom and dad back,” Spielberg said. “And it also brought my sisters, Annie and Susie and Nancy, closer to me than I ever thought possible. And that was worth making the film for.”

— Los Angeles Times

## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

# Passing on lessons and legacies

Animated 'Strange World' tackles father-son dynamic with an environmental twist

By TRACY BROWN  
*Los Angeles Times*

One of "Strange World's" triumphs is the vibrant, weird, visually stunning subterranean world that the film's heroes stumble upon during their quest to save their way of life. From its lush palette to its cute and deadly flora and fauna, this strange, mysterious world is very much deserving of its status as the film's title character.

Another, in true Disney fashion, is its thematic swings. Directed by Walt Disney Animation veteran Don Hall ("Big Hero 6," "Moana") and written/co-directed by Qui Nguyen — a duo that previously collaborated on "Raya and the Last Dragon" (2021) — "Strange World" tackles father-son relationships and the idea of legacy with an ecological, environmentalist twist.

The multigenerational family at the center of this animated adventure film is the Clades. Searcher Clade (voiced by Jake Gyllenhaal) is a humble farmer and town hero who has built his life around a childhood discovery: a plant called pando that powers everything from giant airships to household appliances. Searcher stumbled upon pando while on an expedition with his father, Jaeger Clade (Dennis Quaid), an explorer cut from a more traditional "adventure story" mold whose de-



DISNEY/AP

Left to right: Ethan Clade, voiced by Jaboukie Young-White, Meridian Clade, voiced by Gabrielle Union, and Searcher Clade, voiced by Jake Gyllenhaal, in "Strange World."

fining motivation is to be the first to see what lies beyond the giant mountains that surround Avalonia, their hometown.

Unlike his father, who sought grandeur outside of his home, Searcher is happier with his simpler life on the farm with his capable wife Meridian (Gabrielle Union) and 16-year-old son Ethan (Jaboukie Young-White). But as could be expected from this setup, one of the realizations Searcher has over the course of the movie is that he is a lot more like his father than he'd like to believe.

Yes, it's the fathers that learn the lessons in "Strange World." Jaeger and Searcher each have their own ideas for

what they want for their sons and legacies they hope to pass on, but neither account for the inevitability that at some point a child is going to figure out his own wants and dreams. Like father, like son.

The child at the center and the heart of "Strange World" is young Ethan. A dutiful son who clearly loves his parents (much more than he does walking in on their displays of affection), Ethan is curious, caring and longs for adventure beyond the fields of his family farm. So when Avalonia's leader Callisto Mal (Lucy Liu) recruits Searcher for a mission to figure out what is harming the world's supply of pando, Ethan joins as a stowaway, much to

his parents' displeasure.

For the most part, the story of "Strange World" is pretty straightforward and follows familiar beats, but the mysteries of pando and Avalonia's subterranean world are a creative standout — it's a place you can't help but want to know more about, danger be damned, because it's so different from the lands featured in other stories about journeys to the center of the world, from Jules Verne to "Godzilla vs. Kong."

One of "Strange World's" most ambitious swings is in the way its familial themes are paralleled in the movie's environmental message. Humankind's relationship to nature in most mainstream Western stories tends to involve conquest, as symbolized by Jaeger (an explorer), or control, as symbolized by Searcher (a farmer), but "Strange World" presents an alternative: coexistence, as exemplified by Ethan. And the way Ethan approaches and experiences the subterranean world turns out to be key.

It's not much of a spoiler to say that the planet is in peril in "Strange World," and it's up to the humans to figure out why. And in the same way that Searcher must learn to listen to Ethan in order to give him space to flourish and grow, Searcher also has to learn to listen to what the planet is telling him so it can flourish. It's a bit heavy-handed but the message is clear: Being self-absorbed is not good for your family or the planet, so you need to adjust for the sake of the future.

"Strange World" is rated PG for action/peril, some thematic elements. Running time: 102 minutes.

## 'Devotion' a spirited, true war story and salute to friendship

By KATIE WALSH  
*Tribune News Service*

J.D. Dillard's 2016 breakout feature film "Sleight" was a low-budget gem that showcased what this up-and-coming filmmaker could do. Applying an indie sensibility to a gritty, magic-inspired superhero origin story, his focus on character over spectacle made "Sleight" moving and memorable. In Dillard's follow-up film (he's spent a few years directing TV), the Korean War epic "Devotion," the budget may have gotten bigger, and the sumptuous, soaring visuals more spectacular, but the emphasis on character remains the same.

That makes "Devotion" an emotional and fitting tribute to the real men behind the incredible true story: Lt. Tom Hudner and Ensign Jesse Brown. Their experiences in the Korean War are detailed in Adam Makos' 2014 book, "Devotion: An Epic Story of Heroism, Friendship, and Sacrifice," adapted for the screen by Jake Crane and Jonathan A.H. Stewart. Glen Po-

well, who has cornered the market on playing wingmen this year with "Devotion" and "Top Gun: Maverick," plays Tom Hudner; the remarkable actor Jonathan Majors plays Jesse Brown.

Working with Academy Award-winning cinematographer Erik Messerschmidt, Dillard creates an aesthetic for "Devotion" that harks back to classic war films: The pilots' Brylcreemed coifs gleam against their leather bomber jackets; their shiny new Corsair planes sweep triumphantly through the clouds of coastal New England during their training flights. What they're training for remains to be seen, as this crop of aviators missed out on "the big show" of World War II. Tom, a Naval Academy graduate, is antsy to prove himself. Jesse, the Navy's first Black pilot, just wants to fly.

"Devotion," at 2 hours and 18 minutes, takes its time building the world and the characters within, which proves to be crucial motivation for the aerial

action that takes up the second half. In laying the groundwork, Crane and Stewart's script is refreshingly restrained: It shows us the characters in natural conversation as they work together and avoids telling us everything with clunky exposition.

We understand the racism that Jesse has experienced through tensions with the Marines aboard their aircraft carrier, and an anecdote he relates to Tom about the grueling, unfair swim test he was subjected to in the Navy. At the same time, Jesse has become an important symbol — for the Navy, for the nation and for the Black sailors who run to the deck to watch his every takeoff and landing.

Powell, with his sharp all-American profile, fits the bill of a clean-cut New England pilot from privilege, and the supporting cast, including Joe Jonas, Spencer Neville and Nick Hargrave as the other pilots, bring some personality to the posse. Thomas Sadoski is particularly great as their no-nonsense but



SONY PICTURES/TNS

Jonathan Majors, left, and Glen Powell star in "Devotion."

empathetic commander. But the performance of the film is Majors', who always makes the unexpected and interesting choice. It's in the way he hooks a thumb in his flight suit, or the cadence of his speech, or the long look he gives a sailor who can't believe that Elizabeth Taylor (Serinda Swan) has just invited this Black pilot to an exclusive Cannes casino.

It is fun to watch the boys flirt with French women during their shore leave, and while it may seem a dalliance before the ac-

tion, it's an important part of knowing Jesse and Tom, and their relationship, before we get to the high-flying heroism. Tonally, "Devotion" remains steady, never going for over-the-top emotion or sensation, simply seeking to express something authentically moving and human. It achieves that in spades, delivering a stirring story of friendship during war, and beyond, that is both rare and real.

"Devotion" is rated PG-13 for strong language, some war action/violence and smoking. Running time: 98 minutes.

## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEW



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW HEINEMAN/OTP

The documentary “Retrograde” follows Sami Sadat, an Afghan general fighting a losing battle with the Taliban after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in 2021.

# A country in ‘Retrograde’

National Geographic documentary offers an intimate look at Afghanistan’s collapse after the US withdrawal in ‘21

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

A new documentary about the last days of the Afghanistan war puts viewers on the ground for a real-time look at the nation’s impending collapse through the eyes of U.S. Green Berets and the doomed Afghan army.

“Retrograde” evokes dread with its scenes of U.S. and Afghan troops trying to fend off the inevitable Taliban victory.

The beautifully shot film captures the despair some Afghans felt after being left behind to fight the Taliban, when U.S. troops were pulled out of the country in 2021.

The first third of the film highlights the last remaining U.S. troops at a remote base in southern Afghanistan. Some of the younger Green Berets are almost the same age as the war, and many of the older ones have lost friends and years of their lives to Afghanistan.

The film turns on the announcement that all U.S. troops are to leave Afghanistan. Upon hearing the news, the Green Berets immediately begin destroying everything they cannot take back with them.

They take a sledgehammer to a stack of printers and throw care packages into an open fire. They fire mortar rounds into the empty desert.

Then they blow up their remaining ammunition, sending a shockwave across

the sand. The U.S. troops are told they cannot give any ammunition to their Afghan allies, presumably to prevent those supplies from ending up in Taliban hands through graft or surrender.

The Green Berets tell their mournful Afghan counterparts that they’re leaving, that the decision was out of their control. And then they leave.

The film shifts perspective to the Afghan troops left behind. Sami Sadat, an English-speaking general who had been working with the Green Berets, takes center stage.

Sadat proves to be an expressive figure. The film becomes a character portrait of him as he fights the Taliban in a losing battle over the summer of 2021.

But as the war continues without U.S. support, the Taliban begin overrunning Sadat’s positions. The losses mount. The wounded are shown screaming and cursing. Afghan troops regularly lack ammunition, which makes the scene in which the Green Berets are ordered to not give anything to the Afghan military harsher in hindsight.

As the film goes on, Sadat’s exhortations of hope grow thinner. His advisers cannot help but whisper about how hopeless everything is.

He seems to move through all five phases of grief as he watches everything crumble around him: Denial of reality, which he seems to view as a virtue, as he tells everyone that the Afghan army can still



The first third of the documentary focuses on the U.S. troops and how they prepare to leave the country by destroying things that they cannot take back home with them.

win. Anger as he lashes out at his government, which he sees as not supporting him. Bargaining as he searches for a solution as Taliban tracer rounds fly over his building. Sadness as he lies still on the ground after another failed mission. Acceptance when he comes to grips with the inevitability of losing.

Outside of the film, Sadat has argued that the war against the Taliban could have continued and possibly could have been won, had it not been for the betrayal of departing U.S. troops, which crushed the morale of their Afghan allies.

The film seems to support this idea, showing the immediate impact of the loss of U.S. support in the forlorn eyes of Afghan troops who grimly clap during a goodbye ceremony for the Green Berets.

But in other ways, not shown in the film, Sadat perhaps was himself responsible for the collapse of his army. One of the general’s helicopter pilots told a reporter that he was ordered to fire upon civilians in territories recently captured by the Taliban, as if in retribution, the writer Anand Gopal wrote in a story in the *New Yorker* last year.

Gopal, who was traveling through Taliban territory last summer, said villagers told him Sadat was someone who regularly ordered civilians killed, which led to anger against the Afghan army and support for the Taliban. If true, this description of Sadat, as simply a more articulate

iteration of other brutal warlords supported by the U.S. in Afghanistan, shows a side of him not explored within the documentary.

The film does not have a narrator but instead relies on its subjects to tell their side of the story, combined with clips from news pieces. Matthew Heineman, the director, told *Stars and Stripes* that he wanted viewers who never experienced war to feel what it was like on those battlefields and maybe see the world a different way.

The last part of the movie is the collapse of Afghanistan. It is the most chaotic part of the documentary, and a lot happens very quickly.

The most effective part of the last section of the movie is the footage from the teeming crowds surrounding Kabul’s airport. The film captures the soldiers shooting above the crowds to force them back. People brave the danger for a chance at getting a flight out of the country.

At one point, a red flare shoots into the sky, illuminating those stuck on the ground and the abject hopelessness on their faces.

“Retrograde” has a running time of 96 minutes and is available Dec. 8 on the National Geographic channel, Dec. 9 on Disney+ and Dec. 11 on Hulu.

lawrence.jp@stripes.com

## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Sony Active Entertainment

Kratos and Atreus must contend with a harsh winter environment and fend off attacks in *God of War: Ragnarok*. In this sequel, Atreus is now a teenager searching for his identity.

# Growing up and growing apart

*God of War Ragnarok* advances father-son tale told in 2018 title, uses gameplay, level design to elevate storytelling

BY GIESON CACHO  
Bay Area News Group

**T**he *God of War* franchise has never been afraid to take narrative chances. The series has been retconned here and there, and that hasn't stopped developers from telling compelling stories about Kratos and his complicated relationship with the gods.

With the second part of his saga, Sony's Santa Monica Studios essentially gave Kratos a fresh slate and a new mission. The god who slaughtered the entire Greek pantheon had to be a single dad for his son, Atreus. The boy's mother, Laufey, had recently died, and the first game of the new series focused on the journey to spread her ashes on the tallest peak of the Nine Realms.

*God of War* (2018) was a masterpiece because of its tight thematic storytelling and revamped gameplay. The sequel, *God of War Ragnarok*, takes place a few years later, and under new director Eric Williams, it's a project that's more sprawling as it juggles several motifs.

It follows the natural progression of a father-son relationship as Kratos is dealing with a teenager who's looking for his identity amid a fantasy Norse world where prophecy and fate weigh heavy on his mind. Atreus is mentioned in a few fore-

tellings. At the same time, Kratos has his own demons and fears as he worries about the path his son is taking and what the boy's life would be like if he were to die.

## A constrained beginning

Despite its chaotic first scene with a vengeful Freya, *Ragnarok* starts out slow and confined, as it follows a father being so overprotective of his son that the boy is struggling to grow.

That conflict is reflected in the level design and gameplay, which is both familiar and constrained. Kratos and Atreus follow a mostly linear path with hints of a bigger world waiting to be unlocked and explored. It's not until Atreus sneaks out for his own adventure and the narrative switches to his perspective that players experience more freedom.

It's one of the rare moments when the franchise doesn't follow Kratos, and that also happens to be when the campaign stretches out and truly begins.

## Exploring new characters

The controls for Atreus are similar to those for his father, but his specialization with the bow and arrow makes him feel fundamentally different. His combat is focused on ranged attacks, though he can still deal melee blows. In addition, his progression system is less developed com-

pared to the battle-hardened Kratos'. He doesn't have access to as many skills or mod tokens.

These details make *Ragnarok* cohesive despite Santa Monica Studios playing with so many themes and characters. Compared to that of the previous entry, this campaign has a bigger cast, including Odin (Richard Schiff), who's charismatically played like a caring mob boss with the Aesir run like the Mafia. The All-Father acts more like the Godfather rather than a demanding tyrant.

Christopher Judge puts in a noteworthy performance as Kratos. Santa Monica Studios' staff should also get praise for how it amplifies Judge's slightest expressions into scene-stealing moments. It's phenomenal work that elevates the storytelling as Kratos and Atreus learn to accept their changing dynamic amid the dire prophecy of an upcoming war.

## More complexity

As for Kratos' gameplay, *Ragnarok* builds on his intense and visceral combat in the 2018 title. Players now have more time to play with the Blades of Chaos, and the progression system rewards players with mod tokens that amplify new skills. This not only encourages more exploration of the combat system but is also gratifying.

Santa Monica Studios also introduces a new weapon, Draupnir, that adds another more range-focused layer to combat, but the big focus for *Ragnarok* is on the gear. The developers add even more pieces such as an amulet and relics. Relics add a perk-like element to combat, but they have to be recharged, and the amulet offers buffs and mods to Kratos' abilities.

Players can spend hours fine-tuning builds to craft the most effective Kratos, and they'll need to if they want to explore every inch of *Ragnarok*. Some of the optional fights and trials are tough, and players will need every advantage they can get by making sure that their gear complements their playstyle.

When it comes to the level design, *Ragnarok* introduces players to a confined world but lets them explore a wider realm later on. It's a template that echoes the relationship between Kratos and Atreus and the pair's relationship with other characters.

It's a brilliant way to weave game design and accentuate the story that *Ragnarok* is trying to tell. It's something that Santa Monica Studios nailed with a simpler, more personal story in 2018 and adapts well into this broader epic.

**Platforms:** PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4

**Online:** playstation.com/en-us/god-of-war

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Plitvice Lakes: Croatia's stunning secret

In Croatia's rugged interior, a stone's throw from the Bosnian border, hides one of Europe's most exotic hikes: through Plitvice Lakes National Park. There's nothing like this leafy valley of 16 terraced lakes, laced together by waterfalls and miles of pleasant lakeside walkways along wooden planks. That this park's unique and stunning beauty isn't universally known is yet another reminder that Europe offers endless thrills beyond its most famous sights.

On my first visit, I began at a viewpoint for a panoramic orientation. Stretching before me was a European Niagara Falls, diced and sprinkled over a heavily forested Grand Canyon. Heading down a steep zigzag path, I left cars and concrete behind and entered a lush wonderland — a pristine world of waterfalls, lakes and trees, populated with Croatian families at play.

The boardwalk trail carries visitors across the middle of a lake for an up-close view of a row of gurgling waterfalls. I followed it past Šupljara Cave, the location of a German "Spaghetti Western" filmed here in the 1960s and still beloved by German tourists.

Continuing along a path leading to more picturesque cascades, I pondered the strange

juxtaposition of Plitvice's overwhelming natural beauty with its wartime misfortunes. On Easter Sunday in 1991, the first shots of Croatia's war of independence from Yugoslavia were fired in



Rick Steves

this park. The predominantly Serbian Yugoslav army occupied Plitvice and the surrounding region until 1995 — most of the Croatians you'll meet here were evacuated and lived

near the coast as refugees. Just a couple decades later, there's not a hint of the recent war and the park is again a popular tourist destination. On a busy day, the park welcomes 15,000 hikers — mostly Croatians and other Europeans, plus in-the-know Americans — seeking Plitvice's charms.

Silent electric boats shuttle hikers across the park's biggest lake. While waiting for the boat, I chatted with the industrious grandmas who sell strudel and wheels of homemade cheese along the lake. Watching these humble yet happy Croatians at work, I felt thankful that this century has brought peace, prosperity, freedom and stability to this corner of Europe.



CAMERON HEWITT/Rick Steves' Europe

Croatia's Plitvice National Park is a watery wonderland that few Americans find, but other visitors cherish.

At the far side of the lake, more boardwalks lead to the most spectacular stretch of the trail — a wonderland of sleepy trout, Monet greenery and frisky falls. The trout seem to understand that fishing is forbidden — they're huge, plentiful and oblivious to the many visitors. The park boasts of hosting deer, wolves, wildcats, lynx, wild boar,

otters and more than 160 species of birds — but on this visit, apart from the throngs of trout, I found only mice.

The park limits the number of daily visitors, and it's on most Croatia bus-tour itineraries — so it's wise to book tickets in advance.

It's possible to get there by bus (express buses take 2.5 hours

from Zagreb and depart several times each day in summer), but is easier by car. Because the park is so well-organized for an efficient visit, most visitors find that a few hours to hike the trails is plenty.

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

## Cherished traditions celebrate chocolate, candlelight and heroics

Planning a trip in the weeks to come? While visiting a Christmas market might be high on the to-do list, it need not be the only reason to plan one last road trip in 2022. A number of cities and towns host events that are closely intertwined with the festive season. Here are some places to join local residents in some of their most cherished holiday traditions.

**Nov. 29-Dec. 4: Chocolate festival in Tübingen, Germany**



Karen Bradbury

A charming town on the Neckar sets the scene for what's billed as Germany's largest chocolate festival, ChocoART. Producers from around the world present the popular treat in countless forms at around 100 market stands. Workshops, tastings and a chocolate trail round out the program. As night falls, lights will be projected on the facades of the half-timbered

houses. Entry is free. Online: [chocolart.de](http://chocolart.de)

**Dec. 3: Torchlight swim in Bernkastel-Kues, Germany**

As evening falls, spectators line the bridge over the Mosel River to catch sight of more than 100 swimmers crossing the river while holding their lit torches aloft. The swimmers set off from the harbor at Kuesen and cover a distance of over 1,000 meters before reaching their destination on the opposite bank. Among those monitoring the swimmers' progress is St. Nicholas, who watches the action from a barge. Online: [tinyurl.com/326j8jct](http://tinyurl.com/326j8jct)

**Dec. 3-4: St. Nicholas celebrations in Nancy, France**

St. Nicholas, a 4th-century bishop known for his miracles and kindness, is the patron saint of many places, including the French region of Lorraine. On the first weekend of December each year, the region's elegant capital of Nancy celebrates its beloved St. Nicholas in grand style. Festivities take place in and around the Place

Stanislas with its festively lit Christmas tree and include street artist performances, concerts, an ice rink, fun fair rides and plenty of market stalls. Saturday evening's grand parade features floats and characters tied to the legend of St. Nicholas. Online: [tinyurl.com/4xz83yu2](http://tinyurl.com/4xz83yu2)

**Dec. 9-11: Light show in Epernay, heart of the Champagne country**

Epernay, France, is home to some mighty impressive real estate, particularly its Avenue de Champagne, lined by the mansions of some of the world's foremost producers of the prestigious beverage. During the three days of Habits de Lumière, the swanky street becomes a convivial party zone where illuminations light up the facades of the elegant buildings, street artists perform and champagne bars serve countless flutes of bubbly. A vintage car parade takes place on Sunday. Online: [habitsdelumiere.epernay.fr](http://habitsdelumiere.epernay.fr)

**Dec. 11: Krampus visit Munich's Christmas market**

With their twisting horns, fierce masks and hairy costumes, the Krampus are a fearsome sight, particularly to children who have been naughty in the past year. Each year, around 400 of the beasts descend from their Alpine lair to scare young and old visitors to Munich's Christmas market. Find them at the Marienplatz between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Online: [tinyurl.com/5n7wd2jr](http://tinyurl.com/5n7wd2jr)

**Dec. 11-13: Celebrating St Lucia in Sweden**

Dec. 13 is celebrated as the feast day of St. Lucia, a young woman from Sicily who died a martyr at the age of 20. Lucia is particularly revered in Sweden, where shortly following her martyrdom in 304 A.D., she was said to have arrived by ship and distributed food to the needy during a famine. In churches and town halls throughout the land, processions are staged in which a girl clad in white and wearing a headdress of lit candles sings traditional hymns, accompanied by children dressed in white.

A popular place to see a procession is the Skansen open air museum in Stockholm. Online: [tinyurl.com/yp68pfrw](http://tinyurl.com/yp68pfrw)

Lucia is also celebrated in her native town. The Festa di Santa Lucia in Syracuse, Sicily, starts around 3:30 p.m., as a statue of the saint is carried from the cathedral on the island of Ortygia to the mainland, followed by a carriage and costumed characters holding candles. Exactly one week later, the procession retraces its steps back to the cathedral. Online: [tinyurl.com/mrykfemp](http://tinyurl.com/mrykfemp)

**Dec. 11-12: Recalling a victorious battle in Geneva, Switzerland**

On the night of Dec. 11-12, 1602, the Duke of Savoy's soldiers attempted to capture Geneva by scaling the city walls with long ladders. Following the fierce fighting in the battle that came to be known as the Escalade, the people of Geneva repelled the invaders. According to city lore, one Mère Royaume climbed onto the ramparts and poured hot soup over the head of one of the soldiers. The people of Geneva have celebrated their victory ever since. A procession of torchbearers dressed in period costume marches through the streets of the old city, stopping now and again to read a proclamation of victory before reaching St. Peter's Cathedral. Among the historical and legendary figures portrayed is Mère Royaume, armed with her famous pot. Online: [tinyurl.com/28eaubnj](http://tinyurl.com/28eaubnj)

**Dec. 16: Gouda, Netherlands by candlelight**

Gouda, the Dutch city known for its cheese, has a unique way of welcoming the Christmas tree gifted to it by its sister city in Norway. For one night in December, Gouda's electric lights are switched off and replaced by thousands of flickering candles, including those lighting up the spectacular Gothic Town Hall. Live music performed by bands and choruses helps build anticipation for the main event, the lighting of the Christmas tree at 7 p.m. Online: [goudabijkaarslicht.nl](http://goudabijkaarslicht.nl)

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Getting ready to set sail

Cruise newbie offers 5 tips for a great voyage

BY PATRICK CONNOLLY  
*Orlando Sentinel*

There are many methods for leisure travel, whether by plane, train, car, bike, scooter or on foot, but the fanciest might just be a cruise. I recently set off on my second cruise, and my first in more than a decade. As a relative newcomer to the sailing scene, I got onto the MSC Meraviglia with wide eyes and excitement. On the way, I learned more about the ins and outs of cruising that may not seem obvious at first. I quickly figured out that, at least on my voyage, the buffet is free and open to everyone and everyone has an assigned restaurant and seating time. My travel partner and I wasted no time figuring out what our drink package included, or what offerings were available at the spa. We wandered the ship counting hot tubs and picking out a perfect spot to relax by the pool. In the process, some logistical headaches also became clear such as getting on the ship, connecting payment methods and navigating excursions. For example, each passenger has an arrival time and while it's OK to show up early, it might be best to show up during your designated embarkation window. Here are some tips and insights I gleaned during a three-night trip as a cruising newbie:



PATRICK CONNOLLY, ORLANDO SENTINEL/TNS

**MSC Meraviglia guests gather by the pool as the sun sets and the ship prepares to sail from Port Canaveral on Oct. 13. Each passenger has an arrival time and while it's OK to show up early, it's best to show up during your designated embarkation window.**

## Pack smartly

Much like traveling on an airplane, it's possible to check a bag or two that can be dropped off at the terminal and delivered to your stateroom. However, it's wise not to overpack.

Staterooms, even with balcony upgrades, tend to be small and have limited closet space. Plan ahead to have casual outfits for wandering the ship, two or three pairs of shoes, at least two swimsuits and one or two formal outfits for dinner. It's likely that some days will require multiple changes of attire.

Don't forget essentials like sunscreen and a small bag to take off the ship for excursions. With that said, don't pack too many options or you'll be dealing with heavy bags and cramped quarters.

## Leave room in your schedule

Every cruise line should offer a daily planner delivered to staterooms daily. This is helpful for figuring out both port information, arrival and departure times

and daily activities on the ship. Is there a show you're eager to see? Perhaps an evening karaoke night worth checking out? Many cruise lines also offer apps where you can create a custom itinerary.

It's also worth looking ahead to learn more about ports and excursions, which can be booked through the cruise line for convenience and the reassurance that you'll get back to the ship in time.

Spa experiences and specialty dining should also be reserved ahead for the best chances of getting preferred times. But vacation shouldn't be stressful or overscheduled, so make sure to leave holes in the day for time by the pool or drinks while lounging in the sun. Perhaps the casino or arcade will call your name.

Ideally, the cruise line should make it easy to plan outings while leaving plenty of time to relax. Good service and amenities sure help with that.

## Upgrade with packages

Whether booking through a travel agent or direct with a cruise line, you can often bundle specialty dining experiences and drink packages so that many costs are factored in before the trip begins.

There may be a chance to spend money and support local tourism economies while in ports, but at sea, there are only so many options for getting a drink or a bite. Because of this, it makes sense to upgrade with a drink or dining bundle. It's also wise to be aware of exactly what's included in that package and take full advantage of it. After paying for something upfront, it's a shame to have it go to waste.

Five piña colodas in one afternoon? On a cruise ship, the world is your oyster.

## Be aware of extra costs

When browsing offers and advertisements from cruise lines, some numbers jump out, making an appeal to those looking for an affordable vacation. "7 nights from \$180" or "from \$199 per person" are some of the offers that pop up.

Those prices don't factor in government fees, taxes and port charges, which often total more than \$100. The incentives can be nice, such as kids sailing for free, free balcony upgrades or onboard credit. But going on vacation shouldn't require sacrificing luxuries, ideally, and the extras can add up. Be sure to factor in what the grand total might be before getting baited by advertisements that seem almost too good to be true.

Pack some cash for tips, though some cruise lines include a service charge on bar bills. It's generally a good idea to pre-pay for most packages and excursions ahead of time so that finances aren't a worry during the trip — your total cost is already mostly behind you.

## Take advantage of the amenities

On embarkation day, it's a good idea to walk around the ship and get a sense for the amenities. Until boarding one of these modern-day floating behemoths, it's hard to fathom that a ship can contain a roller coaster, waterslides, go-karts, wind tunnel sky diving, zip lines and a surf simulator (not necessarily all on one ship).

Those all exist but are potentially more extreme examples. Even without seeking the most extreme amenities, many ships have plenty of shops, shows, restaurants, casinos, arcades, pools and bars to explore.

Depending on the length of the cruise and the number of ports, you'll be spending a decent amount of time on the ship. Time spent relaxing in the stateroom or by the pool can be nice, but take advantage of everything these luxury liners have to offer.

When pulling into port at the end of your journey, it might also make sense to stay on the ship until others have disembarked.

If you're not in a hurry, soak up a little more time on one of these megaships and savor every minute of the experience.



**Kaito Teppanyaki & Sushi Bar is a specialty dining option aboard the MSC Meraviglia. Sometimes you can bundle specialty dining experiences and drink packages together when booking with a travel agent or direct through a cruise line.**

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

Rome's Palazzo Bonaparte is hosting an exhibition of 50 of Vincent Van Gogh's paintings. The troubled artist's work is on loan from the Kroeller Mueller Museum in Otterlo, Netherlands, through March 26.

# Gogh-ing to see some art

## 50 of artist's works on display at Palazzo Bonaparte in Rome

BY ALISON BATH  
Stars and Stripes

**D**utch post-Impressionist painter Vincent Van Gogh is best-known for works like "The Starry Night" or "Sunflowers," but those dramatic, colorful paintings are only part of the troubled artist's legacy.

A special exhibit at Rome's Palazzo Bonaparte completes the picture with 50 paintings that span the body of his work, from an early focus on the toil of the laborers and farmworkers of his native Netherlands to the gaiety of Paris, stays in a French psychiatric hospital and a lauded self-portrait.

One of the world's best-known artists, Van Gogh received little recognition for his work during his lifetime, ultimately selling only one painting during his short but prolific career.

Over about 10 years, he produced more than 850 paintings and nearly 1,300 works on paper until his death by suicide at 37 in 1890, according to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

A visit to the Bonaparte exhibition is an easy day trip by train from Naples' central or Afragola stations. You can see the exhibit in a couple of hours and have plenty of time for lunch, shopping or sights and an aperitivo.

After a major renovation, Bonaparte opened as a cultural hall in October hosting Van Gogh's works as its first exhibit, according to the palace's website.

Inside, visitors will find the exhibit divided into two galleries, the first detailing Van Gogh's early works from about 1881. It is in this portion that viewers learn about the artist's focus on the lives of working-class people, revealed in stark realism.

The paintings and drawings lack the bold use of bright color found in Van Gogh's later works. Instead, the artist uses darker tones to convey the hardship, worries and exhaustion of his subjects.

Among the more recognized paintings is "The Potato Eaters," which depicts a peasant family at dinner. Visitors also will see "Still Life with Straw Hat," "Weaver" and Van Gogh's self-portrait painted in 1887, according to the exhibit.

With the accompanying audio, timelines, video and other multimedia in Italian and English, this first portion of the exhibit tells the story of Van Gogh's decision to become an artist at age 27 and his early influences and focus.

One floor up, viewers can learn about Van Gogh's study of color, his trips to and life in France and his struggles with mental illness. The artist's focus on farmworkers and the land is evident in several works, including "The Sower." Climate activists staging a recent protest threw soup on the painting, but it was not damaged.

This portion of the exhibit also includes several works created while Van Gogh was hospitalized with mental health issues from 1889 to 1890. Among them are "The Ravine" and "Pine Trees at Sunset," which are striking in their use of color and hint at Van Gogh's melancholia. Aside from Van Gogh's honest, raw depictions of peasants, these are among some of the exhibit's most



Van Gogh's "The Sower" is also on display at Palazzo Bonaparte's exhibition of the artist's work in Rome. Protesters recently threw soup on it to protest climate change.

mesmerizing, revealing paintings.

The exhibit ends with "At Eternity's Gate," the artist's depiction of a sorrowful old man painted in 1890 when he was recovering from a deep depression.

Not long afterward, the painter, worried about his financial future and unable to overcome his mental illness, walked into a wheat field on the northwestern outskirts of Paris and shot himself in the chest, according to his biography at the Van Gogh Museum. He died two days later, on July 29, 1890.

With its comprehensiveness, the exhibit reveals the purpose and perspective of Van Gogh's work, broadening visitors' familiarity with his repertoire and the degree to which it serves as a visible representation of the



This early work of "At Eternity's Gate" is included in the exhibition. A later painting of the same subject is among the final paintings shown.

tormented mind hidden from view.

On loan from the Kroeller Mueller Museum in the Dutch city of Otterlo, the exhibit is showing through March 26.

bath.alison@stripes.com  
Twitter: @alisonbath\_



Among the early Van Gogh works showing at Palazzo Bonaparte in Rome is "Still Life with Straw Hat."

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

# Inexpensive Thai eatery hits or misses the spot

Variable food quality makes dining dicey, albeit cheap, in Gruenstadt

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Sometimes I like to get out of Kaiserslautern to try restaurants a bit farther afield. I pull up TripAdvisor and start searching for a culinary gem within short driving distance of the city.

That's how I found Thai Corner in Gruenstadt, a town of about 13,000 some 30 minutes by car northeast of Kaiserslautern. Just off the autobahn and near the German Wine Route, Gruenstadt links up with numerous hiking and biking trails through the picturesque Pfalz wine region.

I wouldn't call Thai Corner a culinary gem, but it's convenient before or after an outdoor excursion in Gruenstadt. The portions are plentiful and the prices are reasonable, especially the daily lunch special for under \$6.

But it isn't authentic-tasting Thai cuisine. On a recent lunch outing, I found the food hit-or-miss.

First the hits, starting with the tom yam gung, or shrimp soup with fresh lemongrass and mushrooms. The waitress warned me it was spicy, but I'd say the brownish-red broth was German "hot," hence something I could handle.

The appetizer plate, which included fried chicken pieces, vegetable tempura and spring rolls with a sweet chili dipping

sauce, didn't knock my socks off but was satisfactory.

I ordered the pad thai, since it was the daily special, and was excited to try one of my favorite Thai dishes. Now picture a bland pile of noodles with vegetables and a couple of peanuts.

It tasted fresh but flavorless, a frustrating combination. I also decided to try the green curry with coconut milk and tofu. This had flavor but not one I recognized or enjoyed.

The lackluster main courses surprised me, given some of Thai Corner's glowing ratings online. TripAdvisor ranked it No. 2 of 27 restaurants in Gruenstadt, with reviewers heaping such praise as "some of the best Thai food I have ever eaten in Europe."

I've had better Thai from an imbiss, which is a snack stand or restaurant for a quick meal. Khao Lak in Mehlingen is decent. The imbiss has a few tables and does takeout.

I will say the restaurant had better ambiance than an imbiss. It was cozy and you can watch the chef cooking in an open kitchen area, like you would in someone's home.

And the restaurant also has an extensive list of wine offerings, including local white and red wines, rose and secco. I was driving, so I enjoyed a warm pot of jasmine tea.

If I'm ever in Gruenstadt again and nothing else piques my in-



**AFTER  
HOURS  
GERMANY**

## Thai Corner

**Address:** Hauptstrasse 109, Gruenstadt, Germany

**Hours:** Monday to Thursday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Closed on Sundays and German holidays.

**Prices:** Variable lunch specials, 5.90 euros. Appetizers and soup start at 3.90 euros. Main courses range from about 7.90 euros to 17.90 euros.

**Information:** Phone: 063-59-923994  
**Online:** thaicorner-gruenstadt.de

Jennifer H. Svan

terest, I might consider going back to Thai Corner for some wine with appetizers, the shrimp soup and wasabi ice cream. The ice cream received a good review but I forgot to order it.

And it's possible that on another day, a different daily special might be tastier, such as Monday's chicken meatballs with sweet potatoes and red curry or Thursday's pork dish in spicy peanut sauce.

The restaurant also sells a variety of Thai spices and sauces, so you could stock up and try making a more flavorful pad thai at home.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com  
Twitter: @stripeskotown



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

An appetizer plate at Thai Corner in Gruenstadt, Germany, includes spring rolls, fried chicken pieces and vegetable tempura.



The shrimp soup has a medium-spicy broth and plenty of mushrooms.



The pad thai was a bargain for under \$6, but didn't have much flavor.

## Turkey stock an easy, economical way to use up the bird

BY KATIE WORKMAN  
*Associated Press*

Making turkey stock is a great way to use what you have on hand post-Thanksgiving. It's easy and economical: Almost all leftover parts of the bird can be put to use, including the bones, the skin and small bits of meat attached to the carcass.

Just place them into a large soup pot with a generous amount of water. Add some basic vegetables and simmer away for at least an hour. Skim, strain and you have stock.

The longer you simmer it, the more the stock reduces, becoming deeper and richer in flavor and slightly darker in color.

Anything but the giblets and the liver can be added to the pot. It's a less wasteful, more respectful way to enjoy meat. And these days, with inflation, we are all trying to stretch our food-buying dollars.

Homemade stock will improve any soup, sauce and dish you use it in.

The vegetables used in stock can be as simple as onions, carrots and celery,

maybe some fresh herbs. Or you can add a broader range of vegetables.

Steer away from distinctively flavored vegetables like broccoli, asparagus, Brussels sprouts or mushrooms, unless you are prepared for a potentially flavored broth.

### Turkey Stock

#### Ingredients

Bones, leftover bits of meat, scraps and skin from 1 roasted turkey

6 carrots, scrubbed and cut into 1-inch pieces

8 celery stalks, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 large onion, unpeeled and quartered

2 bay leaves

1 cup dry white wine (optional)

1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns

1 teaspoon kosher salt, or to taste

5 quarts cold water

#### Directions

Place the turkey bones and all scraps into a large stockpot, big enough to hold them with some room to spare. Add the carrots, celery, onion, bay leaves, white

wine (if using), peppercorns, salt and water into the pot. The water should cover the bones, or almost cover them, but it should be at least an inch below the top of the rim of the pot. Bring the water to a simmer over high heat, then reduce it immediately and keep the liquid gently simmering. Simmer for 1 to 2 hours, depending on how intense you want the stock to be. Press the bones down into the stock as it reduces, but it's OK if the liquid lowers below the top of the turkey bones. Use a spoon to skim off any foam that rises to the top as the stock simmers.

Strain the stock through a colander or fine mesh sieve and discard the solids. Cool the stock, then place it in the fridge, either in a large pot or in quart containers. When the stock is chilled, scrape most or all of the fat from the top. Use as desired in various recipes. Turkey stock can be refrigerated for up to four days, or frozen for up to four months.

Note: If your turkey was brined or heavily salted, you may need less salt.



KATIE WORKMAN/AP

Broth is strained from vegetables and turkey parts for turkey stock.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Tokyo Comic Con plots big return

## Major stars scheduled after 3-year disruption

BY KELLY AGEE  
Stars and Stripes

Get your cosplay costume, cameras and celebrity wish lists ready; Tokyo Comic Con is back after a three-year COVID-19 hiatus.

The convention is taking place Friday through Sunday at the Makuhari Messe convention center in Chiba, east of central Tokyo. An estimated 60,000 to 70,000 people are expected at this year's convention, Katsuya Ueyama, a Tokyo Comic Con spokesperson, said Nov. 15.

The list of celebrity guests this year includes Jeremy Renner, who plays Hawkeye in the Avengers movie franchise; Karen Gillan, Nebula in "Guardians of the Galaxy"; and Hayden Christensen, who starred as Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader in the "Star Wars" prequels. Tokyo Comic Con continues to announce celebrity guests on its Facebook page.

Staff Sgt. Yair Rubinov, 30, of Palm Coast, Fla., assigned to the 374th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Yokota Air Base, is gearing up for his first Tokyo Comic Con.

"I am going to Comic Con because I have always been into that type of stuff," he told Stars and Stripes on Oct. 25. "It's cool to see the characters come to life and to meet some of the voice actors."

Rubinov said he will be cosplaying as someone from either X-Men or Pokemon.

"I am looking forward to dressing up with my friends and finally getting a chance to attend a comic con," he said.

This year the event is more focused on TV stars than movie stars.

"I think this is going to be the trend," the president of Tokyo Comic Con, Mitsuaki Munegumi, told Stars and Stripes during a Zoom call Oct. 20. "I think TV stars will be drawing more and more people."



Frontier Enterprise

Celebrities appear during Tokyo Comic Con on Nov. 25, 2019. This year's guests include stars from Marvel and Star Wars franchises.

Joseph Quinn and Jamie Campbell Bower, who portrayed the characters Eddie Munson and Vecna, respectively, on the Netflix show "Stranger Things," are scheduled to attend this year, Munegumi said.

General admission tickets per day are 4,400 yen, or about \$32, for adults and 2,500 yen for high school students. Admission to celebrity panel discussions is free but there's a charge for autographs and photographs. Tickets are for sale on the official website.

Tokyo Comic Con this year will stretch across five halls inside the center, making it 1.5 times bigger than the last convention in 2019, Munegumi said.

For gearheads, 30 cars and motorcycles, including Batmobiles from different "Batman" movies, and motorcycles from "Terminator" films and from "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" will be on display, Munegumi said.

Comic Con started out in 1970 as the Golden State Comic Book Convention organized by comic book enthusiast Shel Dorf and a group of San Diegans, accord-

ing to the Tokyo Comic Con website.

Munegumi staged the progenitor of Tokyo Comic Con in 1998 when he brought David Prowse, who portrayed Darth Vader in costume in the original "Star Wars" trilogy, to the Hollywood Prop Museum in the Tokyo Tower. (James Earl Jones did the voice-over that audiences associate with Vader.)

Prior to Prowse's appearance, Munegumi had been putting on photo and autograph sessions with celebrities for decades, he said.

"As one of the fans of movie stars, that's why I wanted to do this," Munegumi said.

Starting in 2000, Munegumi booked small hotels, ballrooms and other small convention halls as demand grew for a bigger venue to hold celebrity signings and meet-and-greets.

In 2015, Munegumi said he met with Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple, and Stan Lee, comic book legend and publisher of Marvel Comics, at Silicon Valley Comic Con. Consequently, Munegumi said, they wondered whether they should stage a Tokyo Comic Con.

### On the QT

**Directions:** About a 12-minute walk from the east exit of Kaihimmakuhari Station.

**Times:** 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday.

**Costs:** General admission tickets per day are 4,400 yen, or about \$32, for adults and 2,500 yen for high school students. Admission to celebrity panel discussions is free but there's a charge for autographs and photographs.

**Food:** A food court will offer a variety of dishes, from sushi and ramen to gourmet hot dogs and steaks.

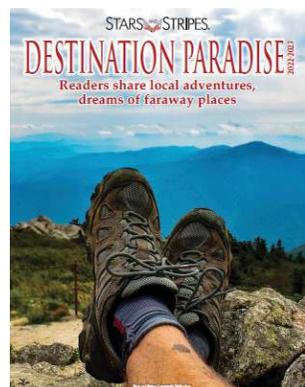
**Information:** Online: [tokyocomiccon.jp/en](http://tokyocomiccon.jp/en)

Kelly Agee

Because Wozniak wanted to make Comic Con a truly global festival, he decided to work with Munegumi to hold the convention in Tokyo. "If that is the case, Japan must be involved," Munegumi quoted Wozniak as saying.

The first Tokyo Comic Con opened its doors in December 2016 at the Makuhari Messe. And the rest is history.

agee.kelly@stripes.com  
Twitter: @KellyA\_Stripes



Take a trip across the Pacific and beyond with

# DESTINATION PARADISE

Pick up the magazine or get it online



STARS AND STRIPES

WE HAVE THE WINNERS! CHECK THEM OUT NOW!

STARS AND STRIPES BEST OF THE PACIFIC 2022-23

bestofpacific.stripes.com

Find out all about the best place to eat, shop, and explore in your area on Best of the Pacific 2022 website!

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Finding their niche

Some Japanese hotels catering to guests' special interests

*Japan News*

Hotels that cater to guests' preferences and interests, such as pets, cycling, movies or books, have been popping up one after another. Businesses are trying hard to set themselves apart from their rivals with original ideas, hoping to improve a declining occupancy rate amid the coronavirus pandemic.

A hotel called inumo Shibakoen that opened in February in Tokyo's Minato Ward has an 80-square-meter dog park in its basement, which is furnished with subtle-colored walls and a soft, comfortable floor. The hotel also has a trimming salon and a kennel.

Inumo has 70 guest rooms. The rate per night is about 50,000 yen, which includes an "accommodation fee" for the guest's dog. Up to two dogs can stay in a room.

Hotels with a large dog park in central Tokyo are rare, and an inumo spokesperson said the number of guests is growing by word of mouth.

"I enjoyed walking around Tokyo Tower in the morning," said a 59-year-old office worker from Hachioji, Tokyo, who stayed overnight at the hotel.

Hotel occupancy plummeted during the

pandemic. According to the Japan Tourism Agency, more than 317 million people stayed at hotels or inns in 2021, half the number in pre-pandemic 2019.

The rush to build hotels in anticipation of increasing numbers of foreign visitors to Japan also spurred price competition.

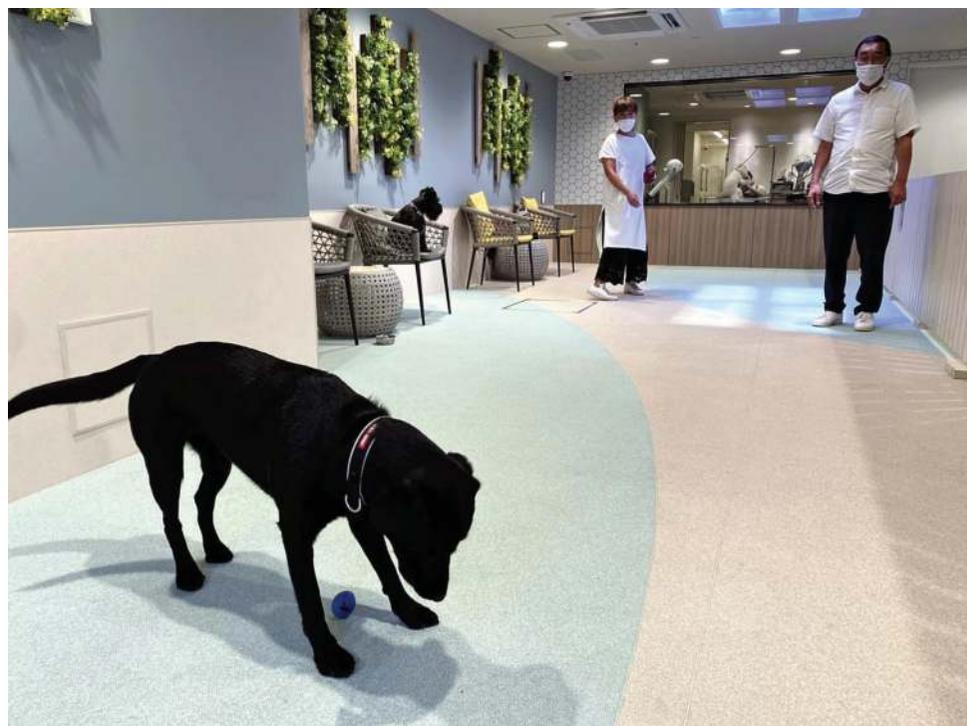
Hotels specializing in guests' interests cropped up amid these circumstances.

In 2020, Hoshino Resorts Inc. opened BEB5 Tsuchiura, a bicyclist-focused resort in Tsuchiura, Ibaraki Prefecture.

The resort is connected directly to JR Tsuchiura Station and boasts convenient access to nearby areas. BEB5 guests can enjoy popular cycling routes such as Mt. Tsukuba and Kasumigaura. They are also able to bring their bikes into their rooms. The rate for one room with two occupants starts at 13,000 yen per night.

Theater 1, located in the village of Hinohara, Tokyo, features a sort of home movie theater where guests can spend the night. Surrounded by scenic mountains, visitors can watch movies on a large 100-inch screen inside a well-furnished cabin. The facilities and their unique features are limited to one group per day.

In December last year, Tokyo-based business hotel chain Solare Hotels &



Japan News-Yomiuri

Guests play with their pet in the indoor dog park at a Tokyo hotel.

Resorts opened Lamp Light Books Hotel Fukuoka, a hotel that has its own 24-hour bookstore, in Fukuoka City.

Guests can check out or buy any book they like from about 4,000 books in the store and read them in their rooms. This is the third bookstore hotel run by the company, which has also opened facilities in Nagoya and Sapporo.

"Hotels that cater to guests' interests

and preferences are more likely to satisfy them," said Fumiko Watanabe, an associate senior researcher at NLI Research Institute who is well-versed in the hotel industry.

These types of hotels are expected to attract foreign visitors looking for a unique experience now that COVID-19 border control measures have significantly eased.

# How Many Candies Are in the Bomb?

**Best guesses win a gift card!**

# BOOM!

**Exact Guess: \$75**

**Closest Guesses: \$25**

Enter Nov. 24 to Dec. 6, 2022

Visit [Facebook.com/StripesPacific](https://www.facebook.com/StripesPacific) to enter

## WEEKEND: BOOKS

# ‘Determined to be part of the solution’

Pence recounts his experience of the Capitol riot, looks back on his life in politics in memoir

BY JILL COLVIN  
Associated Press

**F**ormer Vice President Mike Pence blames Donald Trump for endangering his family “and all those serving at the Capitol” on Jan. 6 in his new memoir released Nov. 15.

In “So Help Me God,” Pence recounts, for the first time in his own words, the Republican former president’s extraordinary effort to push him to overturn the results of the 2020 election and shares his account of the day thousands of rioters stormed the Capitol, with some chanting “Hang Mike Pence.”

“They had come to protest the result of the election and to prevent Congress from fulfilling its responsibility to open and count the Electoral College votes,” Pence writes. “And, as I later learned, many had come looking for me.”

The book, which traces Pence’s life in politics — from serving as youth coordinator for a local Democratic Party to watching then-Vice President Al Gore certify his election loss days after Pence had been sworn in as a member of Congress — largely defends Trump, glossing over and whitewashing many of his most contentious episodes.

“I had always been loyal to President Donald Trump,” the book begins. But Pence, who spent years refusing to publicly criticize his old boss, makes clear that Jan. 6, 2021, was a breaking point in which, he writes, Trump’s “reckless words had endangered my family and all those serving at the Capitol.”

“For four years, we had a close working relationship. It did not end well,” Pence writes, summing up their time in the White House. Still, he adds, “we parted amicably when our service to the nation drew to a close. In the months that followed, we spoke from time to time, but when the president returned to the rhetoric that he was using before that tragic day and began to publicly criticize those of us who defended the Constitution, I decided it would be best to go our separate ways.”

The book comes as Pence appears increasingly likely to run for president in 2024, a move that would put him in direct conflict with Trump, who formally launched his own reelection campaign in Florida on Nov. 15.

Pence, who in the book never directly states that Democrat Joe Biden won fairly, writes that when Trump first suggested holding a rally in Washington on Jan. 6, the day Pence was set to preside over the election’s certification, he thought it was a good idea.

“My first thought was that a rally that day might be useful as a way to call even more attention to the proceedings on the floor of the House and Senate,” he writes.

Instead, Pence describes sitting in the Senate chamber and presiding over the certification when the Senate parliamentarian leaned over to inform him that rioters had breached the building and a member of his Secret Service detail rushed over to insist they leave. Pence refused to vacate the building and was instead ushered to a Senate loading dock, where he spent hours, surrounded by staff and family members, making calls to military and congressional leaders to coordinate the government’s response, as the president — who never bothered to check in on Pence’s safety — sat cloistered, watching TV.

“All around was a blur of motion and chaos: security and police officers directing people to safety, staffers shouting and running for shelter. I could see the intensity in the eyes of the Secret Service detail; it was audible, too, in the voices of the Capitol Police. I could hear the fall of footsteps and angry chanting,” Pence writes. Still, Pence insists he was “not afraid,” only angry at what was unfolding.

At 2:24 p.m., as Pence remained in hiding, Trump fired off that infamous tweet saying Pence “didn’t have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution.”

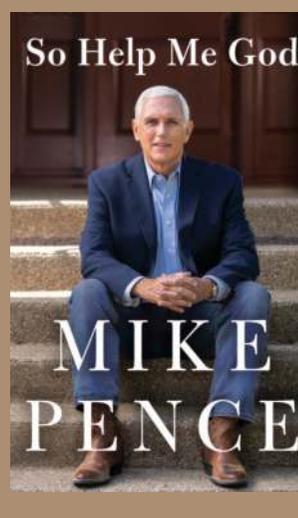
“I just shook my head,” Pence said he responded. “The truth



MEG KINNARD/AP

**Former Vice President Mike Pence gives a national security lecture Oct. 18 at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C. Pence blames former President Donald Trump for endangering his family “and all those serving at the Capitol” on Jan. 6 in his new memoir, released Nov. 15.**

**“I always knew that I did not possess the authority to overturn the election. I knew it would be hurtful to my friend for me to participate in the certification. But my duty was clear.”**



was, as reckless as the president’s tweet was, I really didn’t have time for it. Rioters were ransacking the Capitol. ... The president had decided to be part of the problem. I was determined to be part of the solution. I ignored the tweet and got back to work.”

Pence also describes Trump’s campaign to pressure him to reject the results of the election by rejecting Electoral College votes or sending them back to the states, even though the Constitution makes clear that the vice president’s role is purely ceremonial.

During one lunch on Nov. 16, 2020, Pence said he told Trump that “if the legal challenges came up short and if he was unwilling to concede, he could simply accept the results of the elections, move forward with the transition, and start a political comeback,

winning the Senate runoffs in Georgia, the governor’s race in Virginia in 2021, and the House and Senate in 2022.”

“That accomplished, I said, he could run for president in 2024 and win,” Pence writes. “He seemed unmoved, even weary, at the prospect.”

“I don’t know, 2024 is so far off,” Pence writes that Trump told him “before returning to the status of election challenges in various states.”

At another lunch, Pence said he encouraged Trump “not to look at the election ‘as a loss — just an intermission’” and said if he “still came up short” after exhausting every legal option, Trump should “take a bow” and later run again.

“He nodded, pointed at me as if to say, ‘That’s worth considering,’ and walked into the back hallway,” Pence writes. “I will

always wish he had.”

But as the lawsuits Trump’s legal team was pushing continued to fail, Pence writes that Trump’s mood darkened and he became increasingly irate. Pence says Trump berated him, telling him, “You’re too honest,” and predicting that “hundreds of thousands are gonna hate your guts” and “people are gonna think you’re stupid.”

“As the days wore on, it was becoming clear that there would be a real cost to me politically when I presided over the certification of the 2020 election,” Pence writes. “I always knew that I did not possess the authority to overturn the election. I knew it would be hurtful to my friend for me to participate in the certification. But my duty was clear.”

After the Capitol was cleared of the rioters, Congress reconvened and Pence presided over the certification of his and Trump’s loss. For several days the two men did not speak. But when they finally met, five days later, Pence said they spent more than 90 minutes together, alone.

“I told him that I had prayed for him for the past four-and-a-half years, and I encouraged him to pray,” Pence said he told Trump. “‘Jesus can help you through this,’ I said. ‘Call on Him.’ He didn’t say anything.”

“With genuine sadness in his voice, the president then mused, ‘What if we hadn’t had the rally? What if they hadn’t gone to the Capitol?’ Then he said, ‘It’s too terrible to end like this.’”

## WEEKEND: BOOKS



MATT LICARI, INVISION/AP

Harry Bliss, left, and Steve Martin pose for a portrait to promote their book, "Number One Is Walking," on Nov. 3 in New York.

# From the mind of Steve Martin

The performer teams up with cartoonist Bliss on another book, 'Number One Is Walking'

By HILLEL ITALIE  
Associated Press

Steve Martin has this funny theory about artists and careers, spelled out with comic timing.

"You kind of can always tell if someone hits a wall by their haircut," he says.

Pause.

"And I'll explain what I mean."

Pause.

"Like if someone was doing really, really well in the '70s, they keep their '70s haircut. If they did well in the '80s, if they keep their '80s haircut. If they're moving along, their haircut changes."

Pause.

"Now, I've had the same haircut forever."

And there goes the theory.

If Martin's parted white hair — its evolution more a matter of age than of style — reflected his creative choices, it would have been an ongoing fashion show. Few contemporary writer-performers have succeeded in so many art forms: stand-up comedy, movie acting, television acting, playwrighting, novel writing, with time made throughout for banjo playing.

His passions now include cartoon captions, honed through a collaboration with the New Yorker cartoonist Harry Bliss, brought together at the recommendation of mutual friend and New Yorker art editor Françoise Mouly.

"She calls me and says that she was having dinner with Steve Martin and he had some cartoon ideas and was I interested in drawing a couple of them up," Bliss said. "We started emailing back and forth and he sent me a couple of ideas — one I remember was about a dog panhandling. And we both kind of laughed. There was that initial spark. It was fun."

Martin and Bliss spoke recently during an afternoon interview in midtown Man-

hattan, across the street from the New York Public Library's main branch. Friendly for the past few years — "five years ago" was Martin's favorite response when asked for any kind of timeline — they have formed a professional kinship built upon Martin's words, Bliss' images and a shared love for the satire and well-populated illustrations of Mad magazine.

They first worked together on the best-selling "A Wealth of Pigeons," published in 2020, and now have completed "Number One Is Walking."

The title is the premise for the kind of Hollywood joke Martin has mastered. The words refer to a given actor's status on set (at least some sets): "Number one is walking," an assistant director might say to let others know of the lead actor's whereabouts. Martin was "Number One" in "The Jerk," "Bowfinger," "Bringing Down the House" and others, only to be knocked back when he co-starred with Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin in "It's Complicated."

"Number three is walking," he heard.

Bliss says his greatest challenge for the book was to "put the fan away, and just listen to Steve tell the story." The first half of "Number One Is Walking" is a meta-movie scrapbook, with Bliss' sketches accompanying Martin's memories of his film career and illustrating the making of the book.

A strip might begin with Bliss asking Martin about a specific project, such as "Roxanne," or making light of which of the two is more famous.

Martin shares memories of such late friends as Carl Reiner, Charles Grodin and Robin Williams. He offers a vivid account of meeting Mike Nichols, the original director for "The Jerk" (Reiner ended up with the job) and later his director when Martin and Williams starred in a 1988 stage production of "Waiting for

Godot." Nichols, Martin explained during the interview, was always the wittiest man in any gathering, "the Mike Nichols in the room, the number one wit."

The book's second half continues the kind of riffs Martin and Bliss created for "A Wealth of Pigeons." A given cartoon might begin with Martin emailing a funny caption — sometimes in the middle of the night — and Bliss devising the image to go with it.

For Bliss, the blessing and occasional burden of Martin's captions is that they originate from the mind of, well, Steve Martin: "Why Euclid had no friends," or "Various entrances to the gates of hell," or "The Evolved Bee."

"There was a time when I actually thought, 'Why can't Steve do a simple (caption)?" Bliss said.

"You didn't like when I sent you an idea for 10,000 penguins coming down the Arctic slope," Martin said, adding that even as he felt guilty for some of his ideas, he believed that suggesting the seemingly impossible brought out "Harry at his best."

"That's when you kill," Martin said.

The pair may well work together again, although neither is ready to announce future plans. Bliss has a day job at The New Yorker and is otherwise happy to remain a cartoonist, and only a cartoonist.

"I am not that ambitious," he said. "I really have no desire to do much else."

"I read a book in college called 'The Psychoanalytics of Art,'" Martin observed. "It talked Picasso, who was constantly changing, constantly developing a new thing, and Chagall, who painted essentially the same things his whole life. It's just a different style."

"I don't have this restless thing, (where I'm thinking) 'I've got to keep changing,'" he added. "I don't plan ahead. It just sort of happens."

## Meta-movie scrapbook funny, but lacks depth

By DOUGLASS K. DANIEL  
Associated Press

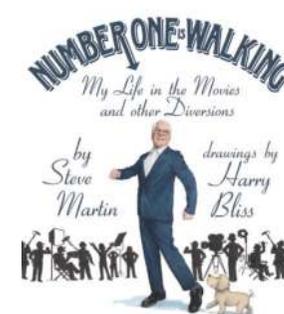
Between the covers of the surprisingly thin memoir "Number One Is Walking: My Life in the Movies and Other Diversions" are truffles of humor from comedian Steve Martin's movie career, illustrated by cartoonist Harry Bliss. The book is a sweet and smooth treat, but ultimately unsatisfying.

It is a tempting concept: Martin revisits his first starring role, in "The Jerk" (1979), and the more than 40 movies that followed. But his choice to offer anecdotes on only a dozen of them and skip the rest is disappointing.

Instead of providing a charming twist on the standard memoir, Bliss' drawings come off as padding. More than half the pages are his one-frame cartoons, the

"other diversions" promised in the title. At least they're amusing enough to accomplish their mission.

Indeed, some of the funnier moments in Mar-



tin's memoir come from other people. His mother once called to tell him: "Some friends of ours went to the movies last weekend and they couldn't get in anywhere, so they went to see yours, and they loved it!" The director Mike Nichols summed up Martin's movie career in saying, "You always aim high at something low." Actor Michael Caine learned early on who was making the real money in Hollywood: Actors decorated their homes with pictures of themselves; on producers' walls were Van Goghs and Monets.

That's right — "Number One Is Walking" doesn't lack humor, insight or Martin's ironic take on life, but it does lack depth. He comes closest when he writes: "I made more than 40 movies, barely pausing to breathe, and here's why: I believed I had to make 40 to get five good ones."

Revisiting, even briefly, a personal and popular triumph like "Roxanne" (1987) is welcome. So might have been Martin's thoughts on the risky musical "Pennies from Heaven" (1981). Fans might wonder why Martin made the bland "Pink Panther" and "Cheaper by the Dozen" films in the 2000s instead of writing more edgy original scripts like the one for the underrated comedy "Bowfinger" (1999). Easy to say, but hard to do? Tell us more.

If someone with a sense of the ironic set out to write a blurb, he might say: "Reading 'Number One Is Walking' was the funniest 35 minutes of my life this week. I wish it had been 45."

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

# 2023 Grammy nominations: Snubs, shocks

From Mary to Morgan, February's awards ceremony will bring its share of surprises

BY AUGUST BROWN,  
SUZY EXPOSITO  
AND KENAN DRAUGHORNE  
*Los Angeles Times*

At April's Grammy Awards in Las Vegas, the big winner was Jon Batiste, a jazz-funk bandleader with a plum TV gig and critical acclaim but almost zero chart presence prior to the ceremony.

On Feb. 5, 2023, it will be music's reigning A-listers vying for the top trophies.

Superstars Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar, Harry Styles, Adele and Lizzo were all nominated for album, song and record of the year for the 65th Grammy Awards, as announced Nov. 15 by the Recording Academy. Long-standing Grammy favorites Mary J. Blige (a nine-time winner and 37-time nominee) and Brandi Carlile (six wins, 24 nominations) were both nominated for record and album of the year, and 2022's top-selling artist, Bad Bunny, received an album of the year nomination. Even Taylor Swift, whose "Midnights" isn't eligible until next cycle, grabbed a song of the year nomination for her 10-minute rerecording of "All Too Well." Ratings for televised awards shows may be at an all-time low, but with a night filled by performances from some of pop music's biggest draws, executives at the Recording Academy and its network TV partner CBS have reason for optimism.

While Beyoncé and Adele were expected to lead the pack, there are a handful of notable surprises and a few pointed snubs. Here are some that caught our eye:

## 1. No more drama; many more nominations

R&B great Mary J. Blige has enjoyed a long and storied career, and the Grammys have rewarded her with nine trophies, from her first in 1996 to her most recent in 2009. But her six nominations this year will likely catch even hardcore Mary fans off-guard. Album of the year nominee "Good Morning Gorgeous" was an exemplary addition to her



EVAN AGOSTINI/AP

**Morgan Wallen, shown Nov. 9, is back on tour, but Grammy voters are less forgiving than fans.**

discography, but it peaked at No. 14 on the Billboard 200. The title track, up for record of the year, topped out at No. 83 on the Hot 100. But they clearly struck a nerve with Grammy voters, who perhaps rekindled their affection for the queen of hip-hop soul after her performance alongside Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem and Kendrick Lamar at the Super Bowl halftime show in February. Blige is also nominated in four R&B categories.

## 2. The "Only Thing That's Gone" is Morgan Wallen's shot at a Grammy

After a year in which more than one superstar torched their reputation with conspiracy theories and racist remarks, the Recording Academy is probably grateful they don't have a Morgan Wallen problem to deal with. The country star's "Dangerous: The Double Album" spent 10 weeks atop the Billboard 200, but Wallen was shut out this year at the Grammys, a likely byproduct of the viral video that caught Wallen using the N-word. He's back to selling out arenas on tour, but Grammy voters weren't as ready to welcome him back.

## 3. Bluegrass, jazz, Brazilian pop and a 35-year-old rap newbie

In recent years, the new artist category heralded the arrival of a new superstar: Olivia Rodrigo, Megan Thee Stallion, Billie Eilish and Dua Lipa were past winners. This year, however, the category



CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP

**Mary J. Blige, shown performing at the BET Awards on June 26 in Los Angeles, has six Grammy nominations this year, including record and album of the year. Blige is a nine-time winner and 37-time nominee.**



SAMANTHA MULJAT

**Molly Tuttle is in a diverse best new artist category.**

is all over the map and full of still-emerging acts. Bluegrass singer-songwriter Molly Tuttle, hipster jazz duo Domi and JD Beck and old-school jazz vocalist Samara Joy all revel in pyrotechnic musicality. The field is as eclectic as it is wide-open: There's Brazilian música urbana (Anitta); winsome Latin indie (Omar Apollo); Italian glam rock (Manskin); droll U.K. indie-rock (Wet Leg); sassy Atlanta rap (Latto); and arresting R&B (Muni Long). Meanwhile, 35-year-old Houston rapper and actor Tobe Nwigwe has already released 11 (!) albums prior to his new artist nod. No one stands out as the obvious frontrunner, which should make for a lively contest.



CHARLES SYKES/AP

**Nicki Minaj, shown Aug. 28, failed to get her songs nominated in her preferred categories.**

## 4. Cry havoc and let slip the Barbz of war

Nicki Minaj raps from start to finish on her No. 1 hit "Super Freaky Girl," but the Recording Academy decided its sample of Rick James' "Super Freak" made it bubbly enough to compete in the pop category instead. The news didn't sit well with Minaj, but she tweeted she would accept it on one condition: If Latto's smash single "Big Energy" was moved into pop as well. Minaj struck out on both fronts: She failed to garner a single nomination, and "Big Energy" received a nomination for melodic rap performance.



SCOTT GARFITT/AP

**Brendan Yates, shown Aug. 19, and his hardcore band Turnstile have three nominations.**

foray; and the singer-songwriter's 2021 rerecording of this critical chapter planted her firmly back into the country soil that raised her.

As a prelude to next year's expected dominance of the top categories, Swift received three nominations on Tuesday: Her 10-minute redo of 2012's "All Too Well" is up for song of the year; "Carolina," her rootsy number for the film "Where the Crawdads Sing" is nominated for song written for visual media; and her duet with Chris Stapleton, the once-vaulted ballad "I Bet You Think About Me," is in the running for country song.

## 6. The first Grammy circle pit?

It's not every year a hardcore band gets a shot at a Grammy, but thanks to the eccentric dazzle of their 2021 LP "Glow On," Baltimore's Turnstile get three: They are nominated for rock song, rock performance and metal performance. The five-piece will have to contend against industry vets like Ozzy Osbourne, the Black Keys and the Red Hot Chili Peppers — as well as some eyebrow-raising wild cards, like the Grammy-winning Americana star Brandi Carlile and Canadian power balladeer Bryan Adams.



MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

**Taylor Swift, shown Nov. 13, is not Grammy-eligible yet for her "Midnights" album, but she managed to snag other nominations.**

## 5. It's her, hi, she's the country nominee

In the 15 years that followed her country music debut, Swift has fully metamorphosed from Nashville darling into indubitable Queen of Pop. Although Swift never quite formalized a departure from country music, the electro-pop edges of her 2012 masterpiece, "Red," foreshadowed her eventual mainstream

## WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS



Warner Records

Neil Young returns to one of his favorite topics, environmentalism, on his latest album, "World Record."

## World Record

Neil Young (Reprise)

Neil Young and his longtime band Crazy Horse return to a favorite topic with "World Record," a double entendre title for an album that not-so-subtly focuses squarely on the fate of the environment.



This is 76-year-old Neil Young in full-on Earth/grandfather rocker mode. And while it could have easily turned into a crotchety rant, "World Record" is really more of an optimistic exhortation.

"Love Earth/we can bring the seasons back," Young sings on "Love Earth," a gentle romp that almost feels like it could be sung around a campfire. "Love Earth/can you imagine that?"

The centerpiece of the 10-track collection is the 15-minute "Chevrolet," a reflection by the noted gearhead Young about his changing relationship

with the automobile in the face of climate change.

"How will it comfort me/burnin' all that fuel again?" he wistfully sings over a heavily distorted lead guitar and signature Crazy Horse sound. "Gone is crowded highway/Lost are the roads we left behind."

Young has been singing about the fate of our world for more than half a century in the face of climate change, global economic forces and environmentalism. He sang about mother nature being on the run in 1970's "After the Gold Rush," and in more recent years his message has become more urgent, direct and sometimes clumsy — see 2014's "The Monsanto Years."

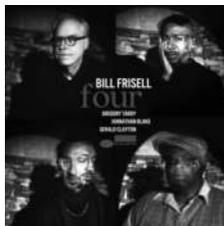
In an effort to keep things fresh, Young and Crazy Horse recorded "World Record" live in the studio without any instrumentation in mind. The end result, co-produced by Rick Rubin, is predictably esoteric for Young, an artist who revisits common themes but seemingly never in quite the same way each time — for better or for worse.

— Scott Bauer/AP

## Four

Bill Frisell (Blue Note)

Guitarist Bill Frisell's new jazz quartet album is like a stimulating conversation among friends who swap quick quips and insights, the shifts in mood frequent and unpredictable.



The ensemble effort emphasizes inventive interplay and the collective colors created, rather than solos or flashy riffs.

As longtime fans know, Frisell can play anything while sounding like no one else. On "Four," he often plays a supporting role, generously sharing the spotlight with Gerald Clayton on piano, Johnathan Blake on drums and Gregory Tardy on tenor sax, clarinet and bass clarinet.

There's no bass, and the album's foundation instead is simultaneous improvisation as the musicians build on Frisell's skeletal compositions and react to each other measure by measure.

A delightful variety results. Quirky rhythms and intervals make the happy "Holiday" jittery and skittery, and "Blues from Before" is equally funny and fun, while "Always" improbably bridges genres as a country fugue. "Claude Utley" and "Wise Woman" sound neoclassical, and sepia tones distinguish the lyrical "Dear Old Friend (For Alan Woodard)."

The closing "Dog on a Roof" unfolds slowly, free of a beat for the first 2½ minutes.

The band then settles into a blues and swirls around a four-note figure, immersed in one final collaborative triumph.

— Steven Wine/AP

## IOTA

Lous and the Yakuza (Columbia Records/Sony Music)

Lous and the Yakuza has peeled back the pain and drama of her debut autobiographical album, "Gore," to reveal a space of love and playfulness on her follow-up, "IOTA." The Congolese-Belgian singer and songwriter does not describe her music-making process as therapeutic as some may think; it is just her way of expressing herself. She shows how to do just that on her second album.



Her latest endeavor explores a fresh new tone as she delves into softer themes in her music.

The songstress known to effortlessly weave through trap, R&B and pop allows her romantic and whimsical side to shine through in "IOTA," giving us a richer picture of the artist set to skyrocket into international stardom.

Born Marie-Pierra Kakoma, the captivating performer behind Lous and the Yakuza has such a strong vision for herself and her music that she even has her own symbol: two hands being raised to the sky, which she paints on herself. She hints at the symbol in her opening song on the album, "Ciel" meaning sky, where she sings about spirituality with whispery vocals and soothing harmonies.

The album is driven by love. Kakoma longingly sings of her love as a treasure in the pop song "Trésor" and includes a cinematic ballad that could play during a montage of a love story in an indie French film.

Kakoma sets her ode to love in an anime dreamworld. Kakoma is a longtime anime and manga fan, and she happily talks about her collection on TikTok. For "IOTA," Kakoma drew inspiration from the works of anime greats like Studio Ghibli and "Paprika" director Satoshi Kon. The music video for "Monsters," a song about living with life's problems, is her take on "My Neighbour Totoro" and "Spirited Away."

Kakoma is not shy about sharing what she has overcome to get to where she is today.

Kakoma fled war in Congo at age 4 before moving to Belgium and later dealt with homelessness in her early days as an artist. Now, the Louis Vuitton muse's French songs have transcended language on the music charts with millions of streams.

Kakoma's love of Japanese culture reaches farther than anime and manga.

It's in her name. The name Lous is an anagram for "soul," and Yakuza comes — not for the Japan-based crime syndicate — from the word for "loser."

She has said she wanted Yakuza to be her group name to give credit to those working behind the scenes to support her.

One of her longtime friends, Congolese-Belgian Damso, is featured on the album. In the almost lullaby-like song, Kakoma sings "I want to tell you I love you" and Damso duets her. She also features French rapper Benjamin Epps in her song "Stop" that opens with a strong flow of French rap and a hard synth build.

The song is followed by "Interpol," where Kakoma sings that her "feelings are her instruments."

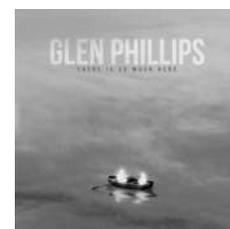
It's with those instruments that she draws us all the more into her Lous and the Yakuza universe.

— Beatrice Dupuy/AP

## There Is So Much Here

Glen Phillips (Compass Records)

The son of a physicist, Glen Phillips has always been a cerebral singer-songwriter, and his new solo album is a thoughtful, tuneful collection of contemplations on life's simple charms.



"There Is So Much Here" considers the pleasure derived from a glass of water, the value of being OK with being just OK, and the elusive sweet spot between the past and future. "Find the beauty in the things you see," Phillips sings on "Call the Moondust," a spiritual of sorts that says life is accompanied by the song of God.

The frontman for Toad the Wet Sprocket, Phillips shares his musings via piano ballads and bouncy, retro guitar pop. Highlights include "I Was a Riot," built on a hummable bass line, and "Big Changes," notable for a roller-coaster melody before Phillips extolls the value of taking a break, which playfully cues a wordless interlude. He's in fine voice throughout, and "The Bluest Eye" evokes the dramatic sonorities of Rufus Wainwright as the arrangement slowly blossoms.

While the album's title sounds like a celebration, Phillips acknowledges how elusive contentment can be. "A new day is here," he sings, somehow sounding wary. Smart guy.

— Steven Wine/AP

# WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

# ‘A tribute to probably the world’s greatest’

## Cartoonists honor ‘Peanuts’ creator Schulz, who would be celebrating his 100th birthday, in Saturday’s funny pages

By MARK KENNEDY  
Associated Press

Cartoonists across the nation are celebrating the 100th birthday of “Peanuts” creator Charles M. Schulz as only they can — with cartoons.

More than 75 syndicated cartoonists have tucked tributes, Easter eggs and references to “Peanuts” in Saturday’s funny papers to honor the creator of Charlie Brown, Snoopy and company.

“It’s a tribute to probably the world’s greatest cartoonist,” said cartoonist Patrick McDonnell, who creates the daily strip “Mutts” for 700 newspapers. “After ‘Peanuts,’ the cartoon world changed. I think most working cartoonists today would say he was the inspiration for them to become cartoonists.”

The list of participating strips ranges from “B.C.,” “Dennis the Menace” and “Rhymes With Orange” to “Zippy the Pinhead” and “Zits.” Each artist was encouraged to come up with their own way to honor Schulz, who was known as “Sparky.”

John Kovalski, who draws “Daddy Daze,” has drawn the strip’s father, Paul, and infant, Angus, discussing “Peanuts” on an opened newspaper. “Ba ba?” asks the baby. To which dad replies: “That’s ‘Peanuts’ by Charles M. Schulz. He revolutionized the comics page by adding depth and character and emotion.”

John Hambrock, creator of “The Brilliant Mind of Edison Lee,” drew a visit from World War I pilot Snoopy in his strip and Edison asking his dad for “extra aviation fuel.” The cartoonist has also decorated the family home

with framed images of Charlie Brown and Lucy.

“We left it all up to them. Cartoonists are creative people. When you have a daily deadline, you need to have ideas come to you,” McDonnell said. “I think people enjoyed the challenge of coming up with something to express their love and admiration for that guy.”

**“After ‘Peanuts,’ the cartoon world changed. I think most working cartoonists today would say he was the inspiration for them to become cartoonists.”**

Patrick McDonnell  
creator of daily strip “Mutts”

McDonnell, who is a member of the board of directors of the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center, dreamed up the tribute and he and “JumpStart” cartoonist Robb Armstrong contacted the various cartoon syndicates with their plan.

“I’m pretty confident that when you open the newspaper that morning, the whole comic page is going to be a tribute to Sparky,” McDonnell said. “I’m personally looking forward to the surprise that Saturday to see what people did.”

For his tribute, McDonnell repaid a kindness Schulz gave him. In a “Peanuts” strip from 1999, Schulz drew his cartoon boys and girls visiting a museum and Rerun off on the side looking up with respect at a painting of the dog Earl from “Mutts.”

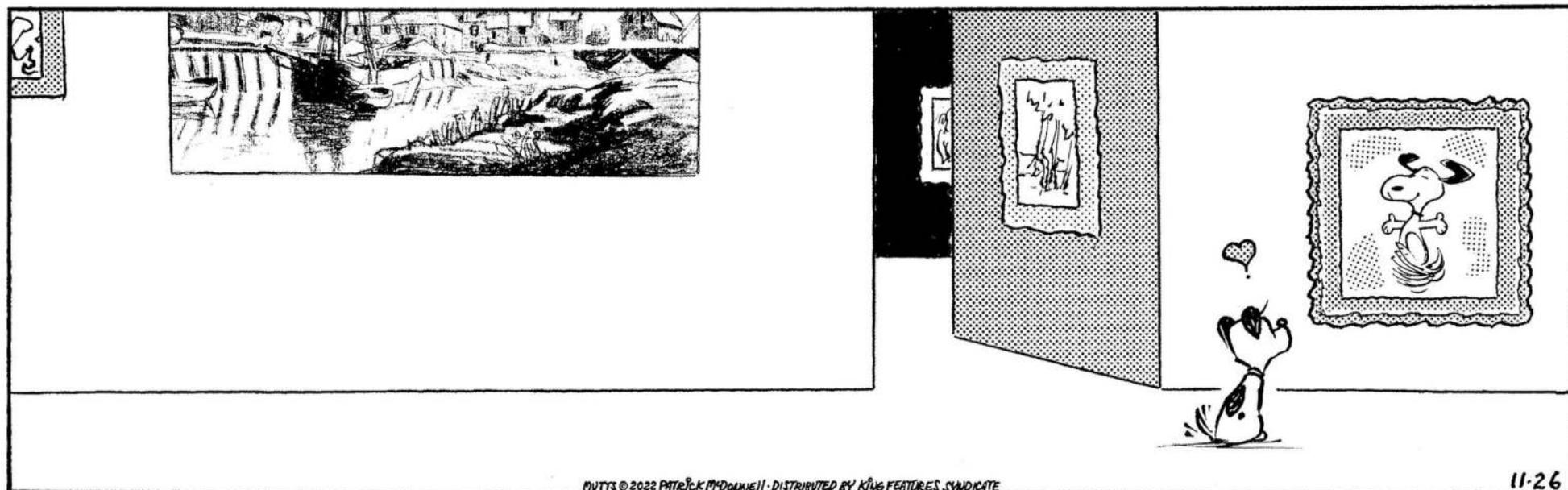
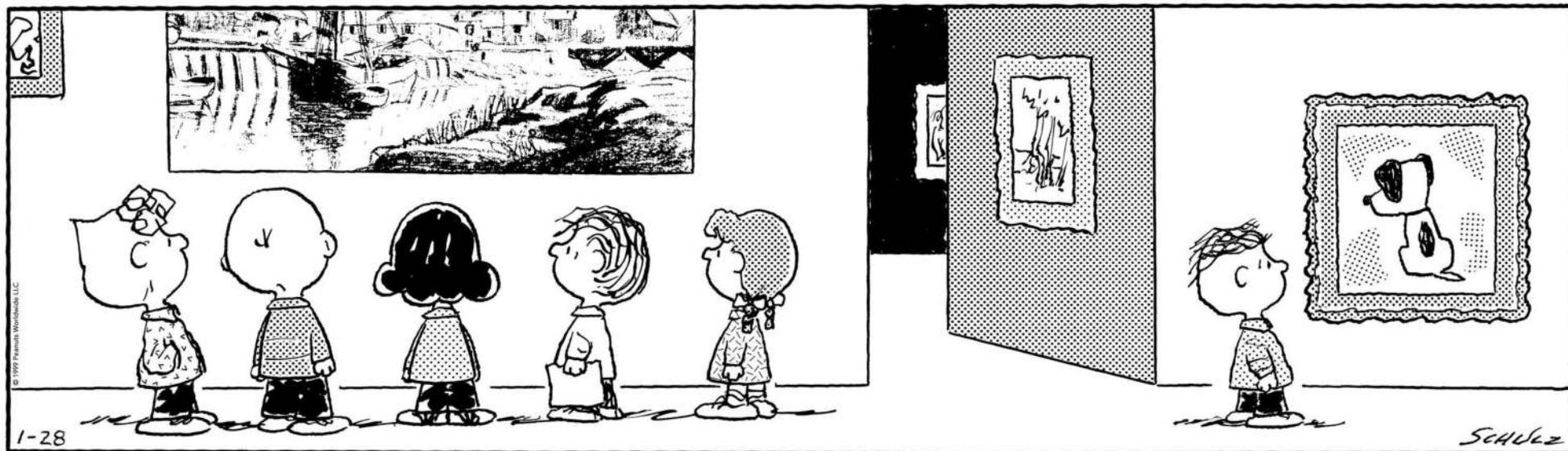
A framed copy of that strip hangs proudly over McDonnell’s drawing table: “I look at it every day and think of what a wonderful gesture that was and what a wonderful man and what a wonderful comic strip.”

So, in return, this Saturday, readers of “Mutts” will see Earl at a museum looking up fondly — his little tail wagging — at a framed image of Snoopy. “Mine’s pretty personal,” McDonnell said.

“Peanuts” made its debut Oct. 2, 1950. The travails of the “little round-headed kid” Charlie Brown and his pals eventually ran in more than 2,600 newspapers, reaching millions of readers in 75 countries.

The strip offered enduring images of kites in trees, Charlie Brown trying to kick a football, tart-tongued Lucy handing out advice for a nickel at what looked like a lemonade stand and Snoopy taking the occasional flight of fancy to the skies. Phrases such as “security blanket” and “good grief” are a part of the global vernacular. Schulz died in 2000.

“Peanuts’ was everything. I read ‘Peanuts’ books every night, and I wanted to be a cartoonist because of that since I was 4. To actually have my own little cartoon character in ‘Peanuts’ — it still boggles,” McDonnell said. “Every morning I look at it and I still can’t believe it happened.”



This combination photo shows a “Peanuts” cartoon by Charles M. Schulz in 1999 showing kids at a museum with one off on the side, gazing at a painting of the dog Earl from “Mutts,” top, and an upcoming “Mutts” cartoon by Patrick McDonnell showing Earl at the museum fondly looking at a framed image of Snoopy.

TOP: PEANUTS/AP; BOTTOM: KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/AP

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION

## REVIEW



Disney

Matilda Lawler, Elizabeth Allen-Dick, Austin Kane, Tim Allen and Elizabeth Mitchell star in “The Santa Clauses,” which finds Santa (Allen) looking to retire, his wife (Mitchell) going through an identity crisis and his children (Allen-Dick and Kane) curious about ordinary human life.

# Seeking the next wearer of the red suit

Disney+ series ‘The Santa Clauses’ pays tribute to, warmly critiques flaws in Christmas film franchise

BY ROBERT LLOYD  
*Los Angeles Times*

“The Santa Clause” has come to town for a fourth installment of the Tim Allen franchise, in the form of a six-episode television series, “The Santa Clauses,” on Disney+. Following the much-derided “The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause,” one could call it something of a recovery, and though it’s thin in characterization and obvious in the emotional beats — sort of the point in a work like this, anyway — it’s respectable, fairly amusing holiday entertainment for anyone who would like to start their Christmas now.

For those fresh to this epic, which first came down the cultural chimney in 1994 with “The Santa Clause” — the contractual “clause” being the pun the whole series is built on — Allen plays Scott Calvin, a distracted, divorced dad who startles Santa on his roof one Christmas Eve. Santa slips, falls and dissolves, leaving only the suit and a card instructing the finder to put it on; this turns him into the actual new Santa: fat, bearded, jolly, etc. (“The Santa Clause” begins with the death of Santa, an oddity the new series — which, incidentally, has a quite frightening credit sequence — finds an opportunity to address.)

In the second film, Scott acquires a wife, Carol (Elizabeth Mitchell), another legal obligation. As the Disney+ series begins, they’ve got a couple of teenage kids (Elizabeth Allen-Dick as Sandra, Austin Kane as Cal), and Scott/Santa, who is as old as Tim Allen, is slowing down. He’s losing weight no matter how much junk he eats, his magic has become unreliable and, realizing that the past 28 years have been more about him than his family, he’s considering retirement.

Carol, who can barely remember her own name, is in the grip of a long-delayed identity crisis, having “left a great job to be the nameless, faceless woman behind a larger-than-life man,” stuck for years playing a character “devoid of all personality and appeal and somehow humorless while still providing comic relief.” The kids,

meanwhile, have grown curious about ordinary human life. (The program on Cal’s virtual reality headset is modeled on Topeka, Kan.)

Like old ornaments hung on a new tree, the TV series echoes and calls back to the movies (including a couple of clips). Eric Lloyd makes an appearance as Scott’s son Charlie, from his first marriage, whom Scott tries to interest in the job; David Krumholtz, absent from “The Santa Clause 3,” returns as now-former head elf Bernard. New Santa candidate Simon Choksi (Kal Penn), is, like Scott in his previous life, a single father in the toy business — he’s expanding clumsily into e-commerce, the enemy of the Santa system — who’s too busy for the child (Rupali Redd as Grace) he obviously loves. (They also share initials.)

As in the second and third films, the North Pole will be taken over by a figure who doesn’t have its best interests at heart, and, as in those and countless other Santa-themed films, Christmas itself will be threatened. Really, if we’re to go by the movies, it’s an amazingly fragile holiday, always about not to happen: No Santa, no toys for the children; no toys, no elves. A North Poleageddon.

As always, elves matter. (That they are played by children — who are not playing children — takes some getting used to.) Prime among them are all-business elf-in-charge Betty (Matilda Lawler, so great in “Station Eleven” and invaluable here), who declares, “I don’t make the rules. I just enforce them with steadfast intensity.” She’s married to the antic Noel (Devin Bright), insanely, unhealthily devoted to Santa, with whom he rides shotgun on Christmas Eve.

Created by Jack Burditt, who created the Allen sitcom “Last Man Standing,” “The Santa Clauses” functions as both a tribute to and an affectionate critique of the franchise, retconning its weird premise, commenting on the male-dominated milieu of its predecessors. (Laura San Giacomo, in an enjoyable, Chico-Marxish turn as La Befana, the Christmas Witch, relates how she had to ride a broom because “back then, a witch couldn’t get a sleigh

loan without a warlock to co-sign.”) The jokes range from low to ... less low, from obvious to obscure.

Because Scott and Bernard are older (there is an explanation for Bernard aging), there are humorous references to acid reflux and a hiatal hernia. Scott steps in reindeer poo, an elf vomits glitter (“Throw some hay on that,” Santa says), Santa’s name is misspelled as “Satan.” There is the usual confection-ication of swearing (“Son of a biscotti!” “For the love of Mike & Ike!”). Betty remarks that Santa is into NFTs — “nutty fudge cakes.” There is an angel dust joke, of all things, and a dig at the “Star Wars” Christmas special. There are many jokes built on elves being centuries old, including a reference to “the thousand-year itch.” Peyton Manning makes a cameo.

With Penn taking on the series’ more manic attitudes, Allen gets to be nicely relaxed here, and I found it a relief to see him in his own skin during the family’s sketchy sojourn in Chicago. There and elsewhere, the kids’ characters could be better developed, especially since their needs and desires are supposedly central to the story; even Grace is just a foil for her father. (As Cal — originally called Buddy, but Will Ferrell owns that elf name now — Kane is nevertheless a consistently engaging doofus.) At the same time, character development matters less than plot here, even as the big question — “Will Christmas happen?” — isn’t really a question at all.

As to who will be the next Santa, it’s not hard to see where the show is going — some big clues are planted early on, and one never really expects Simon to work out. He thinks in terms of “corporate synergy,” refers to Christmas lists as “orders” and responds to an elf asking “What’s a union?” by exclaiming, “Oh, man, I love this place!” Of course, he will have a lesson to learn, because learning lessons is a Christmas-movie tradition. The conclusion of the series sort of buries everyone’s concerns except Scott’s, but homilies about magic and believing trump domestic issues, and there is nothing a group hug can’t make moot. And the elves will be happy.

“The Santa Clauses” is now streaming on Disney+.

## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# 5 tips for veterans coping with addiction

Having self-compassion, embracing a new normal among the ways to strengthen the recovery process

By **KERRY BROCKBERG**  
AND **DUSTIN BROCKBERG**  
*Special to The Washington Post*

**M**any veterans struggle with addiction and other physical and mental health concerns. Asking for help is often a daunting task for veterans, but many do. They seek individual or group therapy, engage in 12-step programs, use medications and join veteran-specific support groups. Recovery then becomes their new reality.

As psychologists who treat veterans, we think that the road to recovery comes with a better understanding of addiction. Veterans, like many other people, tend to use substances for a variety of reasons — as a way to cope, push down, celebrate, or “heal” wounds. Substance use can ebb and flow between use, misuse and abuse.

Addiction often results when a person cannot refrain from using substances or when substance use causes functional impairment (an inability to complete daily tasks). A 2017 study found that of the veterans who initially sought help at the Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 11% met the criteria for a substance use disorder, which include impaired control and risky use.

Experts in medicine and psychology have come to better understand and treat addiction as a disease that affects both body and mind. Addiction can be described as a dysfunction of certain parts of the brain. Some people also may have a genetic predisposition to it.

While dealing with addiction, some veterans may have other mental health problems such as anxiety, mood-related disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder, trauma-related disorders such as PTSD, and issues with self-harm or suicidality. For some, symptoms of these problems are present only when using substances. A veteran may get sad or reminisce about painful memories only when drinking heavily. For others, situations can trigger symptoms when they are sober. A veteran can get anxious when they are around a lot of other people and use substances to feel better in these moments.

The more aware veterans are about co-occurring issues, and when and how symptoms present themselves, the more likely they would be to find a way to better manage addiction. Recovery is a physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and cultural experience. We want to celebrate and help support ongoing recovery, and here are five ways to strengthen and work within and toward the recovery process:

## Have self-compassion

We often say things to ourselves that we would never say to others, such as “I’m an idiot, why did I relapse?” and “You’re never going to be able to do this.” Ask

yourself, how do these statements help with recovery? They don’t. We will have better results for our ongoing recovery when we treat ourselves with respect, love and care. We also have to meet ourselves where we are at. It helps with reducing feelings of self-judgment or shame, and increases a sense or feeling of safety and security.

## Embrace the new ‘normal’

What does “normal” mean? When we have an idea about what our experience needs to look like, we’re probably trying to recapture a specific feeling, memory, or thought. You may know someone who focuses on the past and says things such as, “I wish it was like it was before all this.” Perhaps that person is you. It is natural to want to relive a previously enjoyed feeling or memory. But how much energy are you putting into trying to restore a past that is just that — the past?

Create a new normal that reflects and embraces who you are now, especially during your recovery journey. If you drew a picture of what your new normal looks and feels like, what would it show? Be realistic. Your recalibrated self may include your current pain, but also the many good things in your life. Recognize the tools, relationships and attitudes that have become part of your new normal.

## Let go of stigma

Many veterans worry that having problems with substance use, or having mental health issues means they’ve done something wrong, or they are a bad or worthless person. They know that people with such problems continue to be stigmatized, so they fear what others will think of them. But play it out in your mind the other way. What happens after we ask for help or express how we feel? What happens when a person listens to us, supports us and acknowledges our pain? Does that stigma go away? The answer is simple: It does if we let it.

For many in the addiction recovery community, the moment they realize they are powerless over their drug of choice, they experience a sense of overwhelming relief. There is power in telling the truth and acknowledging a problem exists. There is power in admitting we were wrong or made a mistake. There is power in asking for help. Once we identify and admit we have a problem, we can do something to solve it.

## Talk!

Trust that your voice is worth listening to. What you have to say is important. When you open your mouth, you’re also opening up a new kind of future. Whenever you share your recovery with others, you open yourself to the possibility of learning from their experience and perspective. Sharing in this way can help you



**A 2017 study found that of the veterans who initially sought help at the Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 11% percent met the criteria for a substance use disorder, which include impaired control and risky use.**

iStock

feel more connected and better respected. It can help make your addiction burden feel less heavy and more bearable because now you’re no longer carrying it alone.

## Use your voice to help others

This willingness to offer support and assistance to fellow veterans in recovery is a wonderful characteristic of the veteran community. Your voice as a veteran is important. We want you to be part of the

movement that helps veterans end the silent suffering of addiction and join the mission in which sharing experiences and finding relief is a normal part of life. You can start by exploring your own story and sharing it with someone else.

Dustin Brockberg, PhD, is a psychologist and adjunct faculty member at Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. He served in the U.S. Army from 2004 to 2008, including a deployment to Iraq. Kerry Brockberg, PhD, is a psychologist working at the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute (Allina Health). The Brockbergs are authors of “End Your Covert Mission: A Veteran’s Guide to Fighting Pain and Addiction.”

## WEEKEND: FAMILY



TYGER WILLIAMS, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

Tonya Walker and Tyler Johnson wait for their children to receive their COVID-19 vaccines at Lankenau Medical Center in Wynnewood, Pa., in June.

# A 'triple-demic' tsunami

Officials worried about rise in pediatric cases of flu, RSV and COVID

By WENDY RUDERMAN  
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Carla Mitchell's 6-year-old daughter was recently home sick from school — again.

The first-grader attends Gladwyne Elementary in Pennsylvania's Lower Merion School District (LMSD), which has seen an unusually high numbers of kids out sick with a potpourri of nasty viruses: flu, common colds, COVID-19 and upper respiratory viruses, like respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV.

School administrators contacted local health officials for advice after noticing "a high number" of students out sick at Black Rock Middle School in Villanova, according to LMSD spokesperson Amy Buckman.

With viral illness spiking across Greater Philadelphia and beyond, the Main Line community's chief public health officer, Richard Lorraine, said he's increasingly worried about what he and other doctors nationwide are calling a "triple-demic," with cases of flu, RSV and COVID-19 creating a tsunami of sickness.

"Right now, we are seeing the flu numbers explode," Lorraine, medical director of the Montgomery County Office of Public Health, said Nov. 15.

More kids home sick also means more parents have had to take off from work. More than 100,000 Americans missed work last month because of a lack of child care — an all-time high, according to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For many parents and kids, this is the first full year of school since the pandemic began in which children are in school without mandatory masking, desks spaced 6 feet apart and scattered lunch areas. And after-school activities, including fall plays and crowded football games, are in full tilt. In other words, a normal school year.

And yet, this school year is proving anything but normal. The virus season came earlier than expected and hit more kids much harder.

Mitchell's daughter, Sophia, has missed a total of seven school days since September, Mitchell said.

"Ever since she's been back in school, she's been nothing but sick," said the 43-year-old mom from Villanova, who had home-schooled her daughter during the first half of kindergarten last year because she was worried about COVID-19.

When COVID-19 protective measures were in full swing, families who stayed healthy realized a side benefit: Cases of strep throat, respiratory viruses, flu and ear infections decreased among children, likely due to social distancing and masking.

Katie Lockwood, a pediatrician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, said parents got used to a new normal in which kids were not experiencing the typical "eight to 10 colds a year."

"We just had a little break," she said.

That's no longer the case. On Nov. 15, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Children's Hospital Association (CHA) asked the Biden Administration to declare a national emergency. The groups cited an "alarming surge" in pediatric RSV and flu cases, and an ongoing mental health crisis among kids — all of which is overwhelming children's hospitals.

"Our system is stretched to its limit and without immediate attention, the crisis will only worsen," said Mark Wietecha, CEO of the Children's Hospital Association.

In Villanova, Mitchell wants to see schools taking protective measures. She has launched a petition, "Cleaner Air at LMSD Schools," urging her Lower Merion district to place carbon dioxide (CO2) monitors and HEPA filters, or "high efficiency particulate air [filter]," in every classroom. As of Nov. 15, the petition had 254 signatures.

She explained the motivation isn't just about keeping kids from getting sick. She worries about the economic impact on working parents, especially ones with hourly paying jobs, and that kids will continue to fall behind academically.

Her daughter spent a week in bed with fever, vomiting and lack of appetite. Back in September, she was out of school with a cold-like bug for three days. Mitchell said she's convinced that her daughter's school and others in LMSD are not sufficiently ventilated to reduce the risk of virus spread.

"Kids come home sick. They get us sick. We miss work. And it's just a vicious circle," Mitchell said.

Mitchell said she offered to donate a HEPA air filter to her daughter's classroom. Other parents are willing to do the same. "It's something so easy," Mitchell said.

The district, however, turned down her offer, citing a policy surrounding energy efficiency.

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## Another day of leftovers becomes a tipping point

I never buy a Thanksgiving turkey that feeds my family. I buy one so big, it could feed the entire neighborhood. When a 10-pounder will do, I buy 20. When 20 pounds is enough for Thanksgiving dinner, sandwiches and a casserole or two, I select a gargantuan bird that barely fits in the oven.

My motivation is not gluttony, but rather, a need to be resourceful. As a military spouse, I've always enjoyed the challenge of making my family happy within our limited military budget. Other than one awful mud-splattered camping trip, a few bizarre pre-PCS meals and the time my daughter broke her arm on a questionable playset I procured for free from our neighbors, my efforts to creatively satisfy my family inside the bounds of our modest resources have generally been a smashing success.

However, there was one Thanksgiving several years ago when leftover turkey became hazardous to my health.

It was Monday morning after Thanksgiving, and I'd just dropped my husband, Francis, at the airport for a temporary duty assignment to Bahrain. I wondered what to make the kids for dinner. In the four days since Thanksgiving, I'd already cooked leftover turkey tetrazzini, turkey pot pie and turkey enchiladas. They'd begun to complain, but I still had turkey bones and meat in our fridge.

Waste not, want not.

However, it was a busy Monday. I had to walk the dog, get a mammogram, swing by the commissary, do laundry, iron dress shirts, start my column, return emails, balance the checkbook, take a shower and try to look human — all before my 3 p.m. school pickup. I decided I had less than five minutes to throw a pot of turkey soup together before heading out to my 9:30 a.m. mammogram appointment.

I chopped onions and carrots in flash, sautéing them in a pan alongside the pot of simmering turkey bones. Next, I plopped four celery ribs down and began slicing. I was coming to the end of the bunch when, shshshwing!

The very tip of my thumb lay neatly on the cutting board.

Slow-motion, controlled panic ensued. My uncut hand grabbed the severed cap of flesh and placed it back on the tip of my thumb, albeit crooked, and unraveled paper towels to wrap my bleeding appendage. I flicked the stove off, grabbed my purse and jumped into my minivan, mumbling, "it's gonna be fine, it's gonna be fine, it's gonna be fine."

"Hi, I'm here for a mammogram [nervous laughter] ... you're never going to believe this [nervous laughter] ... I just cut the tip of my thumb clean off," I jabbered to the lady at the check-in desk. She looked unconcerned and told me a doctor would check out my thumb after my mammogram.

As the adage goes, you learn something new every day. On this particular day, I learned that it's nearly impossible to unhook your own bra strap with one hand. I managed the task just before the technician came in to squash my bits and pieces between two glass plates.

Afterward, with only one of the three hooks of my bra strap precariously fastened, I thanked the doctor for seeing me on the fly, then waited at immunizations for a tetanus shot. Four hours after entering the clinic doors, I left with an injection Band-Aid, wilted mammaries, a cartoonishly banded thumb and a completely neglected to-do list.

Despite the chaos, I finished preparing the soup back at home. At dinnertime, I ladled the hot elixir into bowls, careful not to slosh broth onto my bandages, and placed them on our table with oyster crackers. The kids and I inhaled the salty steam in silence, blowing gently on spoonfuls.

"I can't believe you made soup from the rest of the turkey with all that craziness going on today, Mom," my compassionate child said with a slurp. "Mmmm," she murmured, "not bad, Mom."

In the grand scheme of things, she was right; it was not bad at all.

Read more at [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com) and in Lisa's book, "The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com." Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com)

# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

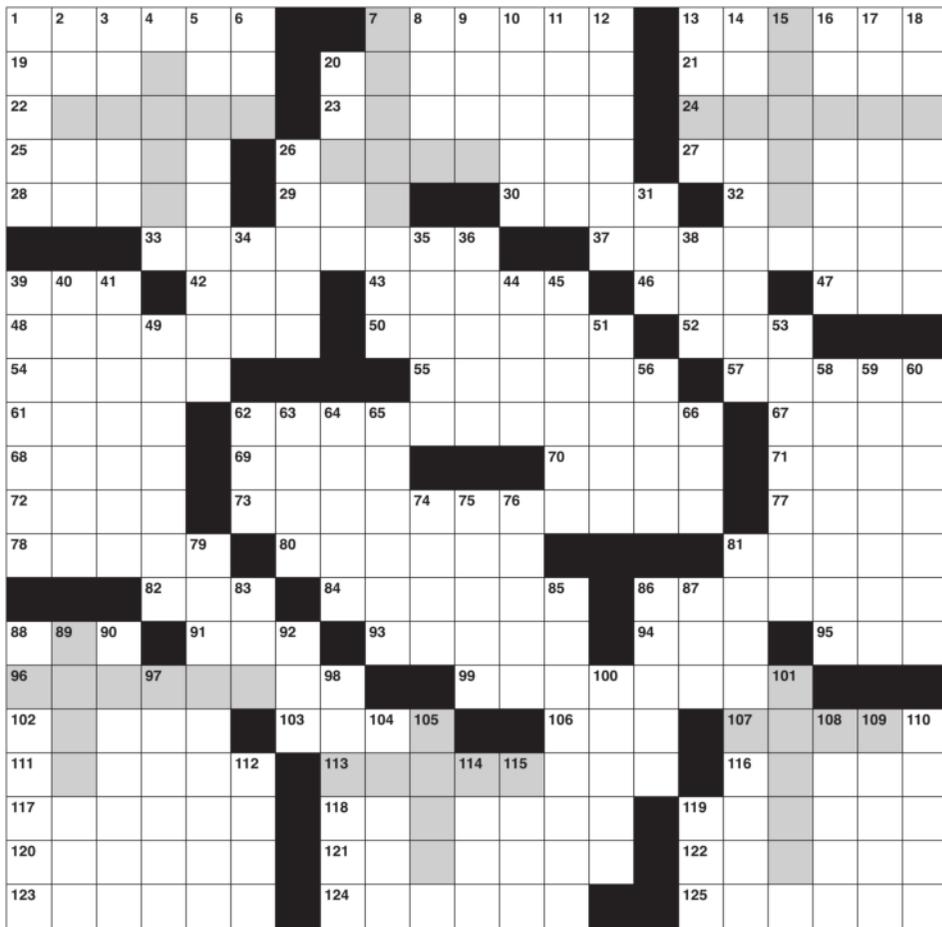
### COLLISION COURSES

BY SAMUEL A DONALDSON / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Sam Donaldson is a law professor at Georgia State University, teaching property to first-year students and federal income tax and trusts and estates to upper-division ones. He's been making crosswords for The Times since 2008. Typically his grids have lots of lively vocabulary. Sam writes, "This is one of those puzzles where solvers might not realize the theme until after they're done, so I wanted the process of getting to the finish line to be as enjoyable as possible." — W.S.

#### ACROSS

- 1 Sell, as bicycles?
- 7 Coups in journalism
- 13 What might prompt a run for Congress?
- 19 Arctic jacket
- 20 Hairspray brand since the 1950s
- 21 Big name in pain relief
- 22 Band whose final album, "Synchronicity," was their most popular, with "the"
- 23 More in need of practice
- 24 24 horas from now
- 25 Big name in pain relief
- 26 Disembark
- 27 Used an unspoken language
- 28 One not getting in too deep
- 29 Chinese zodiac animal
- 30 Tiny amount of time: Abbr.
- 32 Hella
- 33 Game typically played in the dark
- 37 Become established
- 39 Calf site
- 42 Common concert merch
- 43 Pronoun for Frenchwomen
- 46 Like diamonds
- 47 It shares a key with "!"
- 48 It might be stuck on the chopping block
- 50 Rise, as a steed might
- 52 Politico Cheney
- 54 Color-wheel options
- 55 Old yellers?
- 57 Animal with a prominent proboscis
- 61 Trifling, informally
- 62 Lab-engineered fare, facetiously . . . or a hint to the six crossings of shaded squares
- 67 Totenberg of NPR
- 68 "\_\_\_ at 11" (local news promo)
- 69 Prefix with biology
- 70 Thing moving through a tube, maybe
- 71 Qom home
- 72 Lenovo competitor
- 73 Bountiful harvests for farmers . . . or another hint to the crossings of shaded squares
- 77 Grub
- 78 What gorillas have that giraffes lack?
- 80 Spot for a tattoo
- 81 Prefix with biology
- 82 Peter Pan alternative
- 84 Achieved a flight training milestone
- 86 Hiking group?
- 88 Email symbols, informally
- 91 Target of an annual shot
- 93 Worker who makes a ton of dough
- 94 Terse affirmation
- 95 Producers of multiple outs, for short
- 96 Like a very heavy sleeper
- 99 Precisely
- 102 It's "rarely pure and never simple," per Oscar Wilde
- 103 Bit of hairstyling
- 106 Mop's partner, in a brand name
- 107 Measures up to
- 111 Tight (with)
- 113 Pipes up
- 116 Pinkerton who founded the Pinkerton detective agency
- 117 Unpredictable change
- 118 Is delighted by the invitation
- 119 "Brille Brille Petite \_\_\_" (children's song abroad)
- 120 Mesopotamian metropolis
- 121 Thinks up
- 122 Experience sharer
- 123 Got in order
- 124 Fast-sounding freshwater fish
- 125 Eye-grabbing email subject line
- 9 Swear word
- 10 Garnish for a Gibson cocktail
- 11 Jurors, to a defendant
- 12 Word with food, clothes or entertainment
- 13 Quick escapes
- 14 Cry of perfection from a carpenter?
- 15 City NW of Bar Harbor
- 16 Retort to "No, you're not able"
- 17 Has for supper socially
- 20 Loud, as a crowd
- 26 "For \_\_\_, all nature is too little": Seneca
- 31 Tesla but not Edison
- 34 Vast quantity
- 35 Smart \_\_\_
- 36 Bad look
- 38 Kenan's comedy partner
- 39 Queen commemorated on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
- 40 Objects from faraway lands
- 41 Not so harsh
- 44 Land of leprechauns
- 45 Seek, as punitive payment
- 49 1993 R.&B. hit with the lyric "Keep playin' that song all night"
- 51 Seat of Utah County
- 53 Most off the wall
- 56 Alphabet \_\_\_
- 58 Illegal, as a download
- 59 Ensnared
- 60 Return payments?
- 62 Totally terrific
- 63 Go back for more
- 64 "Knives Out" actress Ana de \_\_\_
- 65 "Happy to!"
- 66 Contacts via Instagram, informally
- 74 Singer/songwriter \_\_\_ Mai
- 75 They start in the corners
- 76 Bygone magazine for rock music enthusiasts
- 79 Beast with a mouth best left unexamined
- 81 Where you went
- 83 Longtime Progressive spokeswoman
- 85 Vehicle that might have parachute brakes
- 86 Brand name-checked in Paul Simon's "Kodachrome"
- 87 It's hot right now
- 88 Some skin care ingredients, informally
- 89 Relative of a waterspout
- 90 More cocksure
- 92 Sch. for which John Wayne played tackle
- 97 Wedding proposal?
- 98 So-called "father of geometry"
- 100 Honors in the ad biz
- 101 Fit in
- 104 "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" spinoff
- 105 Unpopular food that's rich in minerals
- 108 A-listers
- 109 Claw
- 110 Hägar the Horrible's hound
- 112 Twosome
- 114 105-Down, e.g.
- 115 Spanish dirección
- 119 Source of big green eggs



#### DOWN

- 1 Tree of the custard apple family
- 2 "The \_\_\_ Holmes Mysteries" (young adult series)
- 3 Gave (out)
- 4 Claptrap
- 5 Makes some deep cuts in
- 6 Barely squeeze (by)
- 7 Unlawful occupant
- 8 Swear word

## GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

## RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



The story of the U.S. military's role in Afghanistan, as seen through the eyes of Stars and Stripes journalists covering America's longest war.

Over 100 pages of stunning images and stories from the front lines.

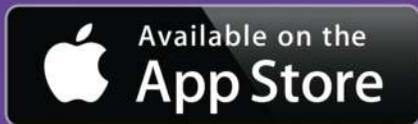
Only **\$14.99** with Free Shipping

**ORDER NOW** at [www.stripesstore.com](http://www.stripesstore.com)

# Ready, Set,



**LISTEN NOW**



*afngo.net*

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

## SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market



Transportation

944

### VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service
- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

For Further Information Please Contact

<b>Phone:</b>	GERMANY +49-(0)6134-2592730	UNITED KINGDOM +44-(0)1638-515714	U.S.A +1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701
<b>Toll-free:</b>	0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)		+1-800-264-8167 (US only)
<b>E-Mail:</b>	info@transglobal-logistics.de	enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk	info@tgal.us
<b>WEB:</b>	www.transglobal-logistics.de	www.carshipuk.co.uk	www.tgal.us

For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations



Are you in the picture?



Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

*No one covers the bases the way we do.*

STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

Transportation

944

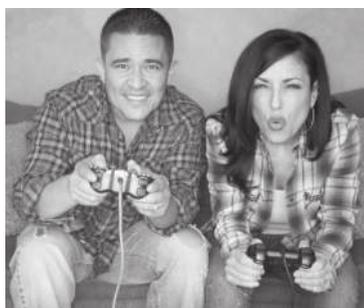
Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA



**OPENING HOURS:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri  
0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: [info@worldwide-ship.de](mailto:info@worldwide-ship.de)  
Visit our Website: [www.worldwide-ship.de](http://www.worldwide-ship.de)

Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!



Concert, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...

STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

# CLASSIFIED

	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST	PACIFIC
Advertising	<b>Doug Dougherty</b> <a href="mailto:dougherty.doug@stripes.com">dougherty.doug@stripes.com</a> +49(0) 631.3615.9000 DSN 314.583.9000	<b>Doug Dougherty</b> <a href="mailto:dougherty.doug@stripes.com">dougherty.doug@stripes.com</a> +49(0) 631.3615.9000 DSN 314.583.9000	<b>Ichiro Katayanagi</b> <a href="mailto:PacificAdvertising@stripes.com">PacificAdvertising@stripes.com</a> DSN 227-7313, CML +81 (42) 552-2511 ext. 77313.
Circulation	<b>Kevin Miller</b> <a href="mailto:miller.kevin@stripes.com">miller.kevin@stripes.com</a> +49(0)631.3615.9136 DSN: 314.583.9136	<b>Kevin Miller</b> <a href="mailto:miller.kevin@stripes.com">miller.kevin@stripes.com</a> +49(0)631.3615.9136 DSN: 314.583.9136	<b>Mari Mori</b> <a href="mailto:CustomerHelp@stripes.com">CustomerHelp@stripes.com</a> +81(3) 6385.7333 DSN 315.227.7333
Reader Letters	<a href="mailto:letters@stripes.com">letters@stripes.com</a>	<a href="mailto:letters@stripes.com">letters@stripes.com</a>	<a href="mailto:letters@stripes.com">letters@stripes.com</a>

## Classifieds EUROPE

For information on Commercial Rates: CIV: 0631-3615-9012 or DSN: 583-9012

Announcements 040

Automotive 140

### SCAM FADS

Classifieds scams can target both sellers and buyers with classified advertisements.

Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam fads are:

- Vehicle buyers wanting to buy sight unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.

- People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

### SELLER BEWARE

Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property. Not all potential buyers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale. Stars and Stripes is not liable for the contractual relationship between sellers and buyers of merchandise advertised in the newspaper or on the web site.



Want a better picture?

You'll get one – just by reading Stars and Stripes military news coverage.

*In print • Online at [stripes.com](http://stripes.com) • Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad*

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>  
However you read us, wherever you need us.

Read STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup> online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com)

STARS AND STRIPES®

# Letters to Santa

## STARS AND STRIPES IS HELPING TO SEND YOUR WISH LIST TO SANTA!

### Step One

Write your letter



Don't forget to decorate it!

### Step Two

Address it to

Santa Claus  
c/o Stars and Stripes  
North Pole  
Unit 29480  
APO, AE 09211-9480



### Step Three



Drop it in any US or APO mailbox\*

For more info, visit

# letterstosanta.stripes.com

\*Postmark by Dec. 20, 2022 and Santa may have time to send a note in return!



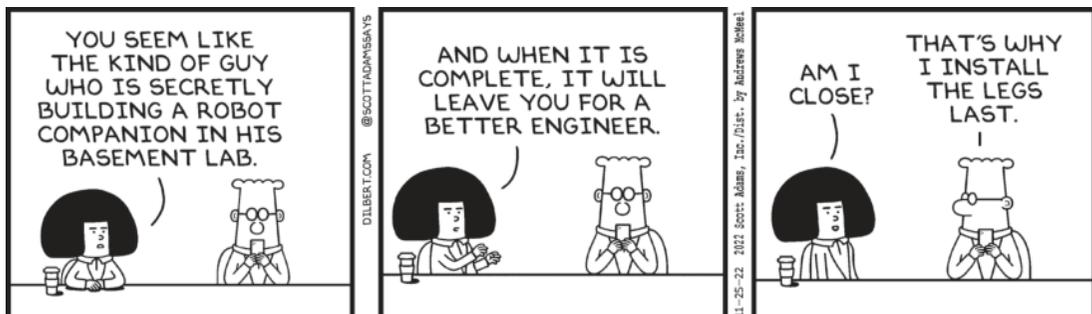
SPONSORED BY  
**Andrews**  
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



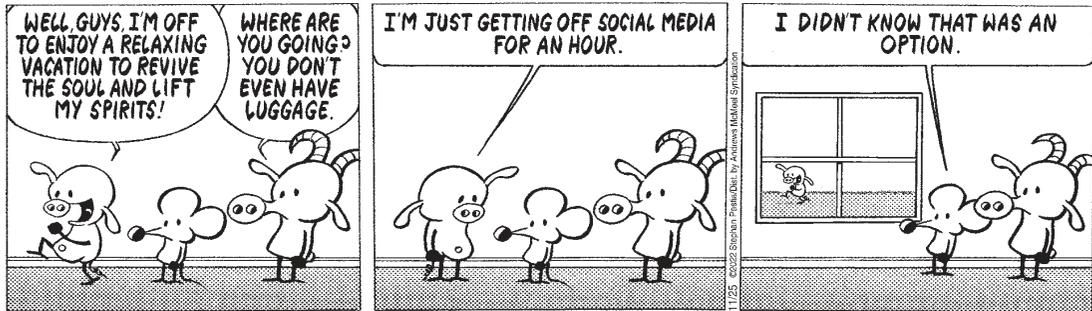
Frazz



Dilbert



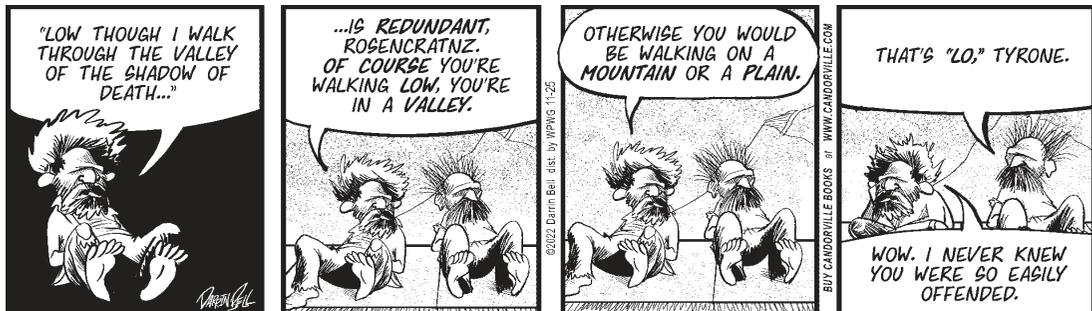
Pearls Before Swine



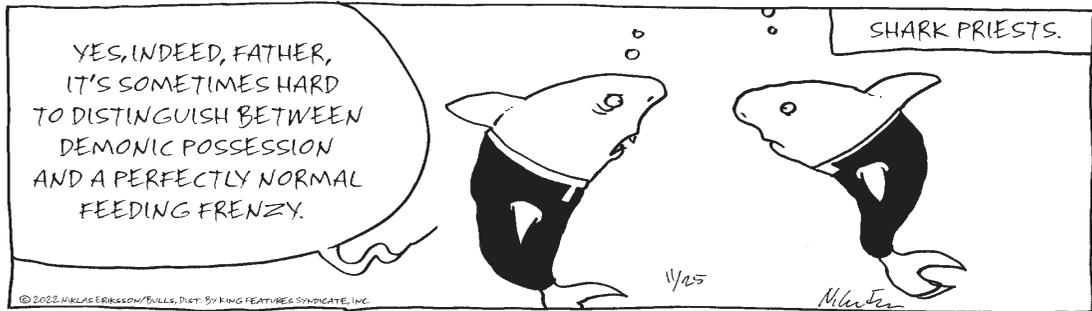
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



### Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
18							19	20				
			21				22			23	24	25
26	27	28				29				30		
31					32				33			
34				35				36				
37			38				39					
			40				41			42	43	44
45	46	47				48	49					
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

#### ACROSS

- 1 Hoosier St.
- 4 Crooned
- 8 Buddies
- 12 Formerly known as
- 13 Missing GI
- 14 Wheeling's river
- 15 Marshmallow toaster
- 17 Indolent
- 18 Comes up
- 19 Clean air org.
- 21 Bat wood
- 22 Excite
- 26 Letter-shaped hardware
- 29 Wine vessel
- 30 Ginger —
- 31 Steerer's place
- 32 Singer Lana — Rey
- 33 Gratis
- 34 Mound stat
- 35 Wager
- 36 Jacket flap
- 37 Burning
- 39 Scale note
- 40 Knock amount
- 45 Out of control
- 48 Flame-colored gem
- 50 Morse —
- 51 Winnebago owner, briefly
- 52 Greek vowel

#### DOWN

- 1 Bygone Peruvian
- 2 Close
- 3 Actress Moore
- 4 Least risky
- 5 "Make —!" (birthday cry)
- 6 Neither mate
- 7 Joyous
- 8 Of the Arctic
- 9 "Caught ya!"
- 10 "30 Rock" role
- 11 Tofu source
- 16 Song of praise
- 20 Babe, for example
- 23 Tombstone lawman
- 24 Peter Fonda role
- 25 Rind
- 26 Lt. Kojak
- 27 Swiss capital
- 28 Norwegian saint
- 29 Lustrous black
- 32 Cook, as donuts
- 33 Edie of "The Sopranos"
- 35 Bikini half
- 36 Hermits
- 38 Ticked off
- 39 Ambulance sound
- 42 Oil cartel
- 43 — Hari
- 44 Flair
- 45 Essen exclamation
- 46 Curly's brother
- 47 Poetic tribute
- 49 "— been had!"

#### Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	C	A	T	S	H	O	E	T	A	D	
S	O	M	A	H	A	R	P	R	D	A	
T	R	I	M	M	I	N	G	S	I	A	N
S	P	R	A	I	N	O	B	A	M	A	
			L	A	D	A	M	O	N		
B	I	T	E	S	O	S	T	G	I	F	
I	S	R	A	N	A	L	S	D			
C	H	I	A	G	O	P	S	E	E	R	
			U	D	D	E	R	B	O		
C	O	M	M	A	G	O	U	R	D	S	
U	M	P	T	R	I	L	O	G	I	E	S
B	A	H	E	T	T	A	H	O	E	R	
A	N	S	S	E	E	D	T	S	P	S	

11-25

#### CRYPTOQUIP

RDCZDQS VT K THWDUVWGR

LHRBPKX SOKS BPKXR UDHWL

SWHYGR VQ RBDYSKSVWR

DXDR: SOD CWKQL THQKCPD.

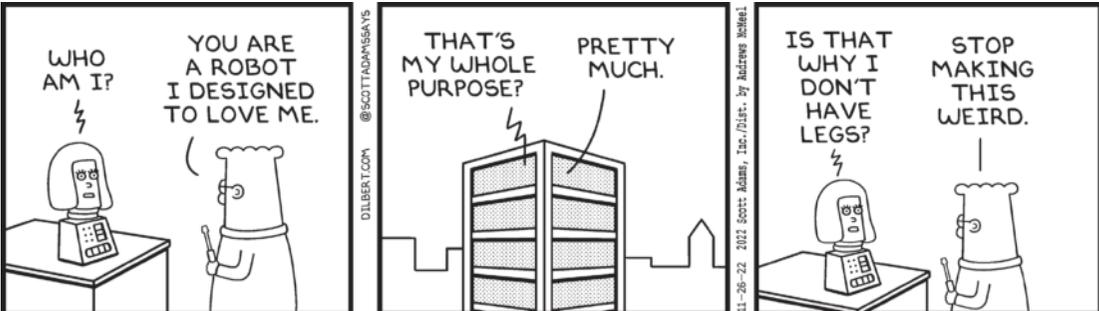
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ASSUMING KING HENRY VIII HAD PRIVATELY TAUGHT SOME PUPILS, THAT'D MAKE HIM A TUDOR TUTOR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals E

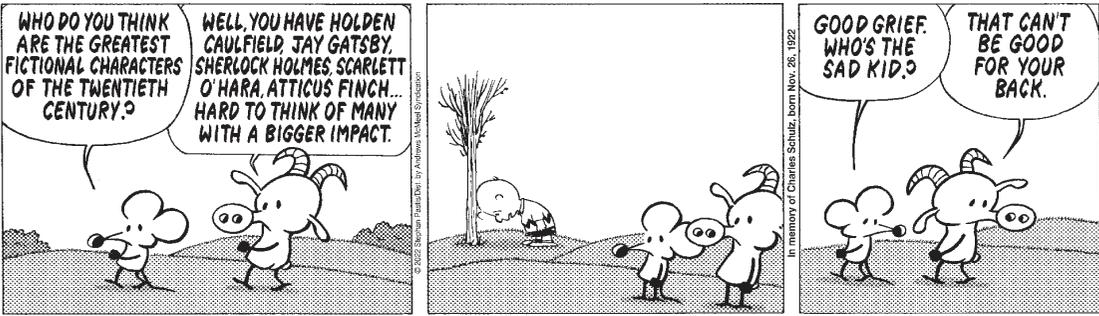
Frazz



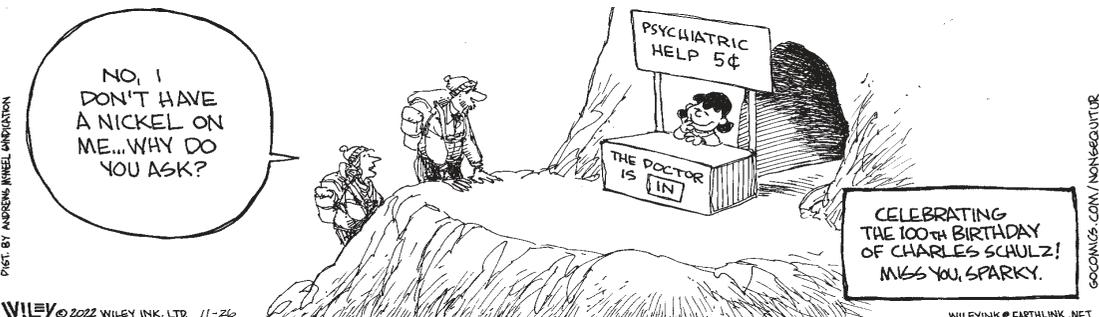
Dilbert



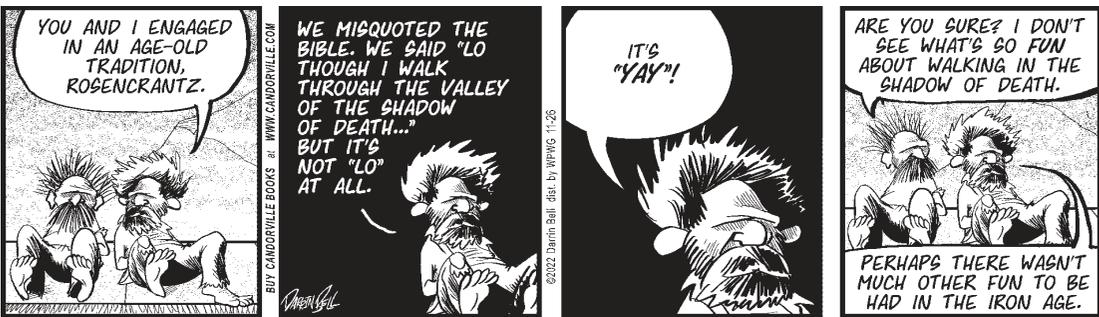
Pearls Before Swine



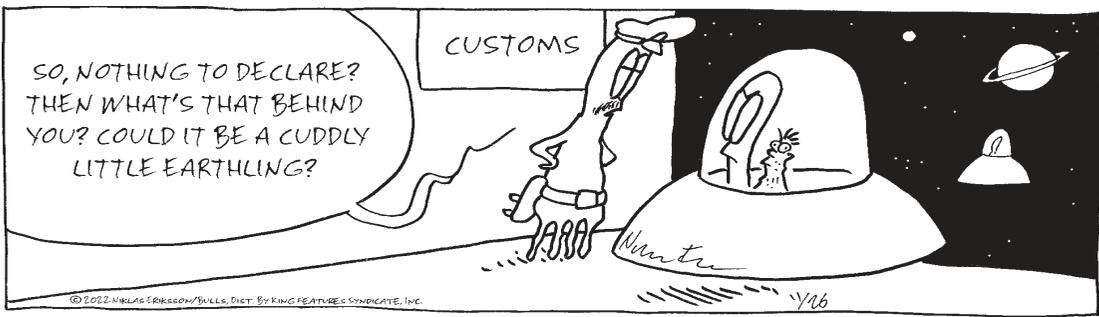
Non Sequitur



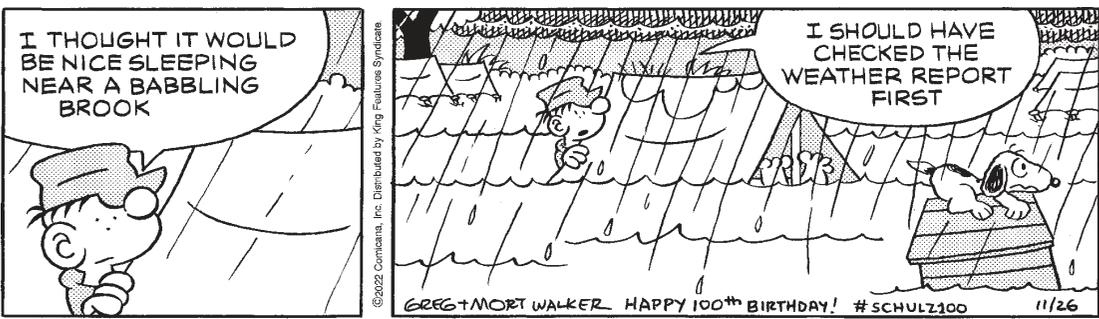
Candorville



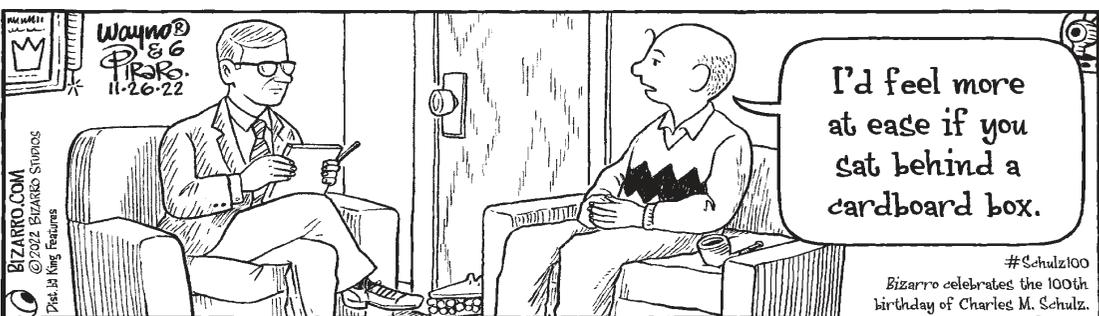
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11
12							13					
14							15					
16					17	18				19		
			20	21			22	23				
24	25	26		27			28		29		30	31
32			33				34					
35					36					37		
		38		39		40			41			
42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50			51				52	53				
54							55					
56							57					

ACROSS

- 1 Potential tulips
- 6 Mass leader
- 12 Len of "Blue Bloods"
- 13 Surgeon's stitch
- 14 Renounce
- 15 Conforms
- 16 Baseball's Musial
- 17 Social appointment
- 19 Stetson, e.g.
- 20 Go to sea
- 22 Pi follower
- 24 Spa sounds
- 27 Dealer's foe
- 29 Scraps
- 32 "Things couldn't be better!"
- 35 NYC gallery
- 36 Epidermis
- 37 Chowd down
- 38 Telly network
- 40 Isaac's eldest
- 42 Vacuum's lack
- 44 Doctor Zhivago
- 46 Unfavorable votes
- 50 Yarn bundles
- 52 One baring all
- 54 Raging rant
- 55 Dodged
- 56 Handsome guy
- 57 Take the wheel

DOWN

- 1 Lure
- 2 — Major
- 3 They have their pride
- 4 Gift topper
- 5 Old timers?
- 6 Jr.-year exam
- 7 Less polite
- 8 "Give — whirl!"
- 9 Bliss
- 10 Madrid miss (Abbr.)
- 11 Try out
- 12 LPs' successors
- 18 "Today" weathercaster
- 21 Mandela's org.
- 23 Sweetie
- 24 Goal

- 25 Med. plan option
- 26 Tijuana hat
- 28 Cooking styles
- 30 Blasting stick
- 31 Observe
- 33 Catch red-handed
- 34 "CSI" evidence
- 39 "True Colors" singer Lauper
- 41 Ill-deserved
- 42 Hammett pooch
- 43 "— you not!"
- 45 Applications
- 47 Staffer
- 48 Belgian river
- 49 Norm, for short
- 51 Author Fleming
- 53 Last (Abbr.)

Answer to Previous Puzzle

I	N	D		S	A	N	G		P	A	L	S
N	E	E		A	W	O	L		O	H	I	O
C	A	M	P	F	I	R	E		L	A	Z	Y
A	R	I	S	E	S		E	P	A			
			A	S	H		F	I	R	E	U	P
T	B	O	L	T		J	U	G		A	L	E
H	E	L	M		D	E	L		F	R	E	E
E	R	A		B	E	T		L	A	P	E	L
O	N	F	I	R	E		S	O	L			
			R	A	P		I	N	C	O	M	E
A	M	O	K		F	I	R	E	O	P	A	L
C	O	D	E		R	V	E	R		E	T	A
H	E	E	D		Y	E	N	S		C	A	N

11-26

CRYPTOQUIP

MUT YXKUF ZCYOSCGT UEIO  
 FC VZO E NOKVQEN WCVW EZ  
 EW EBFXCW MCNG? RCN  
 IONSXRXBFXCW AVNACZOZ.  
**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** SEGMENT OF A FIREWORKS DISPLAY THAT PLAYS WEIRD TRICKS ON SPECTATORS' EYES: THE GRAND FINAGLE.  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals N

## STARS AND STRIPES

## OPINION

## Maybe Gen Z's politics can end polarization

BY SAMUEL J. ABRAMS  
*Los Angeles Times*

Gen Z voters have been credited with halting the predicted “red wave” in the 2022 midterm elections. These young voters turned out en masse for Democrats Nov. 8; CNN House exit polls show that 63% of Gen Zers voted for Democrats, which was a much higher percentage than for older generations. Just 43% of those over 65 voted for Democrats while 55% cast ballots for Republicans.

But this midterm outcome does not mean that voters in this new generation are dedicated Democrats. In fact, they would be better described as pragmatists and issue-oriented voters.

Gen Zers showed up at the polls in large numbers and voted in 2020 to push out Donald Trump. They engaged again this year because they wanted to take a stand against extreme positions promoted by many on the right. They turned to Democratic candidates who supported abortion rights and opposed the Trumpian movement to deny election results, and they rejected a host of extreme candidates in places like Arizona and Pennsylvania.

At the same time, this generation largely lacks strong party attachments if we look at their political and ideological attitudes. This is made quite clear by College Pulse's Future of Politics survey, which queried 1,552 undergraduate students at 91 colleges and universities at the start of the school year.

When asked about how they see the major political parties, today's college students are anything but enthusiastic. Less than a quarter of all students (21%) — Democrats and Republicans included — believe that the Democratic Party is acting in the best interests of democracy and just 25% feel the same way about the GOP.

And when asked whether the parties are moving in the right or wrong direction, just 18% of all college students think that the Democratic Party is moving in the right direction; the number is a bit higher for the Republican Party. Cynicism about the parties' future is the norm, with roughly half of all students being pessimistic about both parties.

Interestingly, a poll released in late October by Harvard University's Institute of Politics found that 57% of young voters ages 18-29 preferred Democratic control of Congress while 31% preferred GOP control; 12% were undecided. Yet only 32% of college-age voters identify as liberal, with another 19% claiming to be conservative. The plurality of students — 48% — call themselves moderates.

The Future of Politics survey uncovers a similar breakdown with young voter party affiliation — 31% report that they are Republican and another 33% Democrat. The remaining 37% are either unaffiliated or independent. Gen Z looks very different from those in the Silent Generation — President Joe Biden's and Nancy Pelosi's generation, which has seen a decline in independent voters and a rise in Republican identification in 2022.

Gallup corroborates these trends and found that younger generational groups are more likely than their older counterparts to be centrist and less partisan. Millennials appear to be fairly stable centrists, unlike earlier generations, which have become more partisan over time.

Gen Z's lack of a strong partisan orientation, however, should not be taken as a final judgment of either party. Rather, it represents an opportunity for both parties.

America's youngest politically active cohort is upset with the status quo. But it votes for whichever party adopts moderate positions, and whichever party adopts a pluralist path forward has a chance to win Gen Z's support.

The Democrats did that in 2022 on a host of salient political positions, but Democrats cannot afford to move too far from the center and adopt ultra-progressive positions that will prevent coalition building with many Americans. Republicans need to move on from Trump's big lie about the 2020 election, defense of the Jan. 6 insurrection and other fringe positions.

While it remains a question how the parties will shake out and what positions they will take going into the 2024 presidential election, what is clear is that Gen Z is shaping up to be a practical swing generation that engages politically. This tendency may help diminish the our polarization and extremism as the parties respond to this growing political power.

Samuel J. Abrams is a professor of politics at Sarah Lawrence College and a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute

## EDITORIAL

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher  
Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer  
Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Europe commander  
John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff  
Lt. Col. Michael Kerschbaum, Pacific commander  
Michael Ryan, Pacific chief of staff

## EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor  
leonard.terry@stripes.com

Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor  
reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation  
moores.sean@stripes.com

Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor  
pinson.ann@stripes.com

## BUREAU STAFF

## Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief  
slavin.erik@stripes.com  
+49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

## Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief  
kidd.aaron@stripes.com  
+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

## Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief  
cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com  
(+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News  
bowers.brian@stripes.com

## CIRCULATION

## Mideast

Kevin R. Miller, Circulation Manager  
miller.kevin@stripes.com  
xsscirculation@stripes.com  
+49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583-9136

## Europe

Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager  
lewis.karen@stripes.com  
memberservices@stripes.com  
+49(0)631.3615.9090; DSN (314)583.9090

## Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com  
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

## CONTACT US

## Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003  
633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

## Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

## Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

## OMBUDSMAN

Ernie Gates

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at [ombudsman@stripes.com](mailto:ombudsman@stripes.com), or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 25 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. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2022

**stripes.com**

## California's jaywalking law is step in right direction

BY BRUCE FEIRSTEIN  
*Special to The Washington Post*

LOS ANGELES

California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom recently signed into law the Freedom to Walk Act, which, for those of you living on the East Coast, does not involve the right of disgruntled Californians to leave for Texas, or unhappy Silicon Valley tech workers to exit Twitter or the metaverse.

Rather, after almost 90 years, the state has finally decided to legalize jaywalking. No more tickets that, with various surcharges, could run to almost \$200.

Which means that as of Jan. 1, we Californians will be able to jaywalk to a film audition, jaywalk to buy pot, jaywalk to meet an angel investor for a start-up, jaywalk for hot baby yoga classes, jaywalk for the benefit of paparazzi alerted earlier about where and when the jaywalking will occur, and jaywalk to any of the countless California-centric pastimes that the rest of the country finds so amusing. Or we might jaywalk across the street just to get to the other side.

In the grand scheme of things, all this might seem rather pedestrian. Especially when you consider how much of what passes for everyday behavior in California probably should be outlawed, such as spending tens of millions of dollars on tear-down homes, hundreds of millions on reality-TV production and billions on the LA-to-San Francisco high-speed rail slo-mo disaster.

And if grand theft government-style doesn't bug you, there's also the fact that an enterprising individual can shoplift goods worth up to \$950 without worrying about be-

ing tagged with a felony.

On a more serious note, the Freedom to Walk Act is a social-justice victory. As the bill's author, state Assemblyman Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, told CBS Bay Area news, jaywalking laws “are arbitrarily enforced and tickets are disproportionately given to people of color and in low-income communities.” Writing for Southern California Public Radio's LAist.com, Ryan Fonseca reported that Los Angeles police cite Black pedestrians for jaywalking at a rate “over three times their population share in the city,” according to his analysis of LAPD data.

The bill has one loophole that is probably sensible but unfortunately vulnerable to exploitation by law enforcement: You can cross against a traffic light, or outside crosswalks, but police still have discretion to issue a citation for crossing in the face of an immediate danger or hazard.

Still, the new law is a big step in the right direction. And in that regard, California doesn't walk alone. Virginia decriminalized jaywalking in March 2021, followed soon after by Kansas City, Mo., and Nevada.

I bring my own strictly anecdotal man-on-the-street perspective to this matter, having lived in several cities. In Boston, jaywalking never seemed much of an issue, perhaps because pedestrians recognized that the traffic contract there means cars are bigger than you, a green light means “go,” yellow means “go faster” and red means “pump the brakes for a second and pray you don't get caught.”

Jaywalking was similarly uncommon in Beijing and Shanghai, but for an unsimilar reason: All it took was a look at the literally dozens of security cameras arrayed like pi-

geons across the mast arm of a typical traffic light, and you think: “No, I'm good. I'll wait for the light to change.”

New York, of course, is the jaywalking capital of the world and the inspiration for the greatest jaywalking movie dialogue of all time: In “Midnight Cowboy,” when Dustin Hoffman, walking into traffic, bangs on a taxi's hood and yells, “Hey! I'm walking here!”

Rudy Giuliani was a crime-fighting marvel as mayor — murder dropped dramatically under his watch, but even he was defeated by New Yorkers' insistence on their inalienable right to roam among heavy, fast-moving machinery.

With much fanfare, Giuliani declared in 1998 that the city would begin rigorously enforcing anti-jaywalking laws, and fines would increase from \$2 (yes, two bucks) to \$50. “Police Balk At Crackdown On Jaywalking By Giuliani,” a New York Times headline reported. “This is just taking hard-earned money from people who can't afford it,” a police officer told the Times. “And I'm not going to prostitute myself for the Mayor or anybody else.”

New Yorkers who are new to LA are invariably surprised first by the scarcity of pedestrians in this car-centric city. And then they're surprised to see the few people on the streets waiting obediently for traffic lights to change. As of Jan. 1, when Freedom to Walk kicks in, transplanted and forever impatient New Yorkers might need to show them how it's done.

Bruce Feirstein is a writer at large for Air Mail and a screenwriter who lives in Los Angeles.



# WORLD CUP



AJAZ RAHI/AP

**Christian Pulisic of the United States is one of the American Premier League players with whom England is familiar. He will be a point of focus for England's defense.**

## England wary of underdog US coming 'full throttle'

By JAMES ROBSON  
Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — England scored six goals in its opening World Cup game against Iran, but it was the two it conceded that concern coach Gareth Southgate and provide hope for the United States.

“By the end we looked sloppy,” said Southgate of the 6-2 win over Iran on Monday. He also warned the U.S. would be coming “full-throttle” in Friday’s Group B match.

The tournament has already produced some shocking results, including Saudi Arabia’s win against Argentina and Japan’s upset of Germany.

A win for the U.S. over England would not be on the scale of Saudi Arabia’s win — but Gregg Berhalter’s team is undoubtedly the underdog against one of the tournament favorites.

The two goals conceded against Iran gave Southgate something to focus on in an otherwise encouraging performance.

His message to the players has been clear: They will need to be better against the U.S. team that tied 1-1 with Wales in its opening group game.

“They’re a top nation with a lot of top players who have played in the Premier League and who we’ve come up against,” said England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. “But it’s about us as a squad being 100%. It’s about us taking the result from Iran and going into the U.S. game positive.”

One of those Premier League players is Chelsea winger Chris-



ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/AP

**Bukayo Saka celebrates one of his two goals in the opener against Iran. The United States will have to contain an England attack that was ruthless in that match before it turned sloppy.**

**Group B  
United States vs. England**  
AFN-Sports  
7:45 p.m. Friday CET  
3:45 a.m. Saturday JKT

tian Pulisic, a point of focus for England’s defense.

“He’s good with both feet, very clinical,” Pickford said. “We’ve got to be wary of him.”

A win for England would see it qualify for the round of 16 with a game still to play — but the fate of Lionel Messi and Argentina is proof nothing can be taken for granted.

“It’s what World Cup football is all about,” said Pickford. “There are going to be surprises.”

U.S. goalkeeper Matt Turner is predicting more of them at the World Cup.

“You see that the world of football is levelling out in a lot of ways,” he said. “Teams have

game plans. Teams have been investing in their youth academies over a number of years.”

“I think the message is when you have one team that’s bought into the same message, you can beat anyone on any given day.”

The U.S. famously beat England 1-0 in the 1950 World Cup and the teams tied 1-1 in 2010.

If the U.S. is to produce the latest surprise of this year’s tournament, it will have to contain an England attack that was ruthless in the match against Iran, which featured two goals by Bukayo Saka.

“I think it’s pretty clear he’s one of the young stars of world football,” said his Arsenal teammate Turner. “He’s a top, top player and you don’t need me to tell anybody on our team how much of a threat that he poses in the game. He’s scoring goals in a variety of ways. He’s really developed, matured.”

## Scoreboard

World Cup FIRST ROUND GROUP A						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Ecuador	1	0	0	2	0	3
Netherlands	1	0	0	2	0	3
Senegal	0	1	0	0	2	0
Qatar	0	1	0	0	2	0

GROUP B						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
England	1	0	0	6	2	3
United States	0	0	1	1	1	1
Wales	0	0	1	1	1	1
Iran	0	1	0	2	6	0

GROUP C						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Saudi Arabia	1	0	0	2	1	3
Mexico	0	0	1	0	0	1
Poland	0	0	1	0	0	1
Argentina	0	1	0	1	2	0

GROUP D						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
France	1	0	0	4	1	3
Tunisia	0	0	1	0	0	1
Denmark	0	0	1	0	0	1
Australia	0	1	0	1	4	0

GROUP E						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Spain	1	0	0	7	0	3
Japan	1	0	0	2	1	3
Germany	0	1	0	1	2	0
Costa Rica	0	1	0	0	7	0

GROUP F						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Belgium	1	0	0	1	0	3
Croatia	0	0	1	0	0	1
Morocco	0	0	1	0	0	1
Canada	1	0	0	0	1	0

GROUP G						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Switzerland	1	0	0	1	0	3
Brazil	0	0	0	0	0	0
Serbia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cameroon	0	1	0	0	1	0

GROUP H						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Portugal	1	0	0	3	2	3
Uruguay	0	0	1	0	0	1
South Korea	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ghana	0	1	0	2	3	0

GROUP I						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Japan 2, Germany 1						
Spain 7, Costa Rica 0						
Japan vs. Costa Rica						
Spain vs. Germany						
Japan vs. Spain						
Costa Rica vs. Germany						

GROUP J						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Morocco 0, Croatia 0						
Belgium 1, Canada 0						
Belgium vs. Morocco						
Croatia vs. Canada						
Croatia vs. Belgium						
Canada vs. Morocco						

GROUP K						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Uruguay 0, South Korea 0						
Portugal 3, Ghana 2						
South Korea vs. Ghana						
Portugal vs. Uruguay						
South Korea vs. Portugal						
Ghana vs. Uruguay						

GROUP L						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Denmark 0, Tunisia 0						
France 4, Australia 1						
Tunisia vs. Australia						
France vs. Denmark						
Tunisia vs. France						
Australia vs. Denmark						

GROUP M						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
France 2, Argentina 1						
Mexico 0, Poland 0						
Poland vs. Saudi Arabia						
Argentina vs. Mexico						
Poland vs. Argentina						
Saudi Arabia vs. Mexico						

GROUP N						
	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
France 2, Argentina 1						
Mexico 0, Poland 0						
Poland vs. Saudi Arabia						
Argentina vs. Mexico						
Poland vs. Argentina						
Saudi Arabia vs. Mexico						

## Dutch not expected to make protest gesture

Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — The Netherlands is not expected to emulate Germany by making a gesture to protest host nation Qatar’s human rights record before Friday’s World Cup game against Ecuador.

Germany’s players covered their mouths for the team photo ahead of their match against Japan on Wednesday to protest against FIFA for its clampdown on the “One Love” armbands. Seven European teams, including the Netherlands and Germany, had planned to wear the item in a move seen as a rebuke to Qatar.

Qatar has been criticized for its laws against homosexuality as well as its treatment of migrant workers, who were needed to build stadiums, metro lines, roads and hotels.

Netherlands defender Denzel Dumfries said the players won’t do anything on the field Friday because they feel they have done

enough after meeting some migrant workers directly.

The exact number of migrant workers who have died or were injured working in often extreme heat on projects since FIFA picked Qatar as World Cup host in December 2010 is unclear.

Netherlands coach Louis van Gaal said the Dutch team will take no further action.

“Because we put a full stop behind all the political issues (last) Thursday when we invited the migrants and we have this purpose,” Van Gaal said through an interpreter.

Van Gaal was asked if he thought the German team would be affected on the field by their political gesture. The four-time World Cup champions lost to Japan 2-1 in their opening match.

“That is the question. That is the question,” Van Gaal said. “I don’t want to take that risk. We’re here to become world champions.”

WORLD CUP/NHL

# Mexico G Ochoa says he wants more in 5th Cup

BY ANNE M. PETERSON  
Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — With a post-game hug, Robert Lewandowski paid respect where it was due. Guillermo Ochoa had done it again at the World Cup.

Mexico's stalwart goalkeeper stopped Lewandowski, one of the game's best strikers, on a second-half penalty kick that preserved a scoreless draw between El Tri and Poland.

A loss in the match would have dealt a blow to Mexico's bid for an eighth straight trip to the World Cup's knockout rounds. Ochoa, 37, is making his fifth consecutive appearance in soccer's biggest tournament, joining an exclusive club that includes Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.

But it wasn't the first time the seemingly ageless goalkeeper with unruly hair had come up big in the World Cup.

Back in 2014, the player widely known by his nickname Memo made six saves in the scoreless draw with Brazil, which was among the favorites as the tournament's host.

He denied Brazilian stars Neymar and Thiago Silva on close-in headers and afterward called it the "game of a lifetime."

In Russia four years ago, he had nine saves in Mexico's 1-0 victory over defending champion Germany in the group opener.

"When we need Memo, he always shows up," defender Jorge Sanchez said.

Qatar could be Ochoa's final World Cup and he desperately wants to advance past the round of

**Group C**  
**Argentina vs. Mexico**  
AFN-Sports  
8 p.m. Saturday CET  
4 a.m. Sunday JKT

16 and play in an elusive "quinto partido" — a fifth game. It's something that has eluded El Tri since Mexico hosted the 1986 tournament.

"There have been great players in history who never had a chance to play at a World Cup, so for me to have the chance to play five is wonderful, amazing," Ochoa said. "But, of course, I want this World Cup to be very different and to be the best of all time for Mexico."

Within moments after Tuesday's draw, memes spread on social media depicting Ochoa as a brick wall, Superman, Neo in the Matrix movies and even Jesus.

But Ochoa, who plays for Club América in Mexico's Liga MX, pointed afterward to preparation, not heroics.

"We work on that these two weeks, or maybe a month, with goalkeeper coach Gustavo Pinero. But it's always difficult when you watch the video of Lewandowski's penalties, it's complicated because you watch more than 15 to 20 penalties, so you never know which side to choose," Ochoa said. "At the end I'm happy to save the penalty. He's a great striker."

Ochoa started his career with Club América at 18 and played there for seven years before bouncing around Europe with teams in France, Spain and Belgium. He wound up back with Club América in 2019.



THEMBA MADEBE/AP

Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa blocks a penalty kick by Poland's Robert Lewandowski during their Group C match Tuesday at the World Cup in Doha, Qatar. The game ended in a scoreless draw.

## NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	20	17	3	0	34	82	45
Toronto	21	11	5	5	27	61	55
Detroit	19	10	5	4	24	62	58
Tampa Bay	19	11	7	1	23	64	61
Florida	20	10	8	2	22	69	66
Montreal	20	10	9	1	21	62	71
Buffalo	20	9	11	0	18	75	70
Ottawa	19	6	12	1	13	58	68
Metropolitan Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	20	16	4	0	32	74	46
N.Y. Islanders	21	13	8	0	26	69	55
Carolina	20	10	6	4	24	56	56
N.Y. Rangers	21	10	7	4	24	63	58
Pittsburgh	20	10	7	3	23	72	65
Philadelphia	20	7	8	5	19	50	65
Washington	21	8	10	3	19	58	69
Columbus	19	7	11	1	15	56	81
Western Conference							
Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	20	12	5	3	27	79	56
Colorado	18	11	6	1	23	64	46
Winnipeg	18	11	6	1	23	51	47
St. Louis	19	10	9	0	20	55	65
Minnesota	19	9	8	2	20	55	55
Nashville	20	9	9	2	20	53	65
Arizona	18	7	9	2	16	48	62
Chicago	19	6	10	3	15	48	68
Pacific Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	21	16	4	1	33	77	52
Seattle	19	11	5	3	25	66	54
Los Angeles	22	11	9	2	24	70	76
Calgary	19	9	7	3	21	59	62
Edmonton	20	10	10	0	20	66	72
Vancouver	20	7	10	3	17	70	79
San Jose	22	7	12	3	17	67	80
Anaheim	20	6	13	1	13	53	84

**Note:** Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

**Wednesday's games**  
 Detroit 3, Nashville 0  
 Buffalo 6, St. Louis 2  
 Arizona 4, Carolina 0  
 Montreal 3, Columbus 1  
 Florida 5, Boston 2  
 Minnesota 6, Winnipeg 1  
 Toronto 2, New Jersey 1  
 Pittsburgh 2, Calgary 1, SO  
 Washington 3, Philadelphia 2, OT  
 N.Y. Islanders 3, Edmonton 0  
 Dallas 6, Chicago 4  
 Anaheim 3, N.Y. Rangers 2  
 Seattle 8, San Jose 5  
 Vancouver 4, Colorado 3  
 Vegas 4, Ottawa 1

**Thursday's games**  
 No games scheduled

**Friday's games**  
 Carolina at Boston  
 Calgary at Washington  
 Colorado at Nashville  
 Montreal at Chicago  
 Toronto at Minnesota  
 Ottawa at Anaheim  
 Pittsburgh at Philadelphia  
 Arizona at Detroit  
 N.Y. Islanders at Columbus  
 New Jersey at Buffalo  
 Seattle at Vegas  
 St. Louis at Tampa Bay  
 Winnipeg at Dallas  
 Los Angeles at San Jose

**Saturday's games**  
 Edmonton at N.Y. Rangers  
 Calgary at Carolina  
 St. Louis at Florida  
 Toronto at Pittsburgh  
 Washington at New Jersey  
 Philadelphia at N.Y. Islanders  
 Columbus at Nashville  
 Dallas at Colorado  
 Vancouver at Vegas

**Sunday's games**  
 Arizona at Minnesota  
 Winnipeg at Chicago  
 Seattle at Anaheim  
 Vancouver at San Jose  
 Ottawa at Los Angeles

**Monday's games**  
 New Jersey at N.Y. Rangers  
 Tampa Bay at Buffalo  
 Toronto at Detroit  
 Vegas at Columbus  
 Dallas at St. Louis  
 Florida at Edmonton

**Tuesday's games**  
 Carolina at Pittsburgh  
 San Jose at Montreal  
 Tampa Bay at Boston  
 N.Y. Islanders at Philadelphia  
 Anaheim at Nashville  
 Colorado at Winnipeg  
 Florida at Calgary  
 Washington at Vancouver  
 Seattle at Los Angeles



ADAM HUNGER/AP

Toronto Maple Leafs goaltender Matt Murray made 34 saves during Wednesday's 2-1 victory over the New Jersey Devils in Newark, N.J.

# Leafs halt Devils' win streak at 13

BY TOM CANAVAN  
Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — The New Jersey Devils' franchise record-tying 13-game winning streak came to an ugly end.

Real ugly.

Matt Murray made 34 saves and the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Devils 2-1 Wednesday night in a game in which New Jersey had three goals disallowed. The final disallowed goal resulted in fans pelting the ice with debris, causing play to be stopped for more than five minutes.

"Nobody feels good. I don't feel good," said Devils coach Lindy Ruff, whose team also hit two goalposts. "I don't like the feeling. I don't like the losing; I know it's been a while, but you don't want that feeling. Now you gotta get over that and get ready for your next game."

While the Maple Leafs enjoyed their seventh win in 11 games (7-1-3) and the goals by John Tavares and Pontus Holmberg, they were miffed about the debris, including cans of beer, that whizzed by their heads.

"You take cover," said Toronto coach Sheldon Keefe, whose team briefly went to the locker room. "It's all you can do. I've been through that experience a few other times ... but I felt like it could get dangerous."

The three overturned goals riled the sellout crowd at the Prudential Center, but the calls appeared correct.

Goals by Nate Bastian and Damon Severson waved off in the first and second periods, respectively, for goaltender interference. A short-handed tally by Erik Haula was overruled by officials because he kicked the puck into the net. The fact the puck hit off the skate of a Leafs player didn't alter the ruling. Haula skated onto the ice to try to get the fans to stop tossing debris.

"I don't care if I get a beer spilt

on me but I got gear on. There's other people there and you'd hate to see somebody get knocked with something in the head," said Haula, who added he was hit by a chicken finger.

Toronto became the first team to beat the Devils (16-4) since Washington on Oct. 24.

"We needed to get a win here today, no matter who we're playing," Keefe said. "I mean, that's a tremendous hockey team over there. And they deserve everything that they've gotten here to date. ... This is a character win for our team."

Dougie Hamilton scored on a tip-in with 5:08 to play, bringing the Prudential Center crowd into the game.

Murray made a half-dozen saves in the final minutes, stopping Jesper Bratt, Jack Hughes and Nico Hischier twice on good chances.

"At the end of the game, it was gritty," Murray said.

The Devils' winning streak tied for the fifth-longest in NHL history and was four games shy of the record set by Mario Lemieux and the Pittsburgh Penguins in 1993. New Jersey's other 13-game run was in 2001.

"It's definitely frustrating, 100%, but nothing we can do," Hischier said. "Refs make the call and there's nothing that's going to change it, so we got to stick with it ..."

Murray was outstanding, particularly in the final 40 minutes, stopping 29 of 30 shots.

Mitch Marner set up Tavares' 12th goal of the season, outworking Hamilton and Jonas Siegenthaler along the boards and behind the net and finding the Leafs captain in front, where he beat Vitek Vanecek at 11:41.

Less than three minutes later, Leafs defenseman Rasmus Sandin closed from the point to keep the puck in the Devils zone. It slid to Holmberg, who scored his first NHL goal at 14:03.

# NBA/NFL

## AROUND THE NBA

# As first quarter ends, the contenders emerge

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
Associated Press

Miami Heat President Pat Riley has a longstanding belief: After 20 games, a team knows its identity.

He's right. And after 20 games, title contenders are usually known as well.

Think of this as the end of the season's first quarter. That's basically where the NBA is right now, with teams starting to approach the 20-game mark. There's much basketball left to be played, but 20 games has proven — almost without fail — to be more than enough of a sample size when determining which teams have a legitimate shot at a championship.

The numbers show it. The teams know it, too.

"We look at 20 games," Phoenix coach Monty Williams said. "It can get stretched out a bit if you have injuries, but for the most part, your identity and who you are is pretty much set. You've gone through the league to a degree. ... You kind of have an idea of who you are, where you need to improve, your strengths from a numbers standpoint, and then the players pretty much have an idea of what kind of team you're going to be."

In 2005-06, Miami had the league's 13th-best record through 20 games; the Heat were just 10-10, though few knew at the time Riley was about to return as coach. In 1997-98, Chicago — then winners of five of the league's last seven titles — was 11th-best in the NBA through 20 games; the Bulls looked bored and were 12-8.

Those are the only two instances of an eventual NBA champion not being in the top 10 in terms of record that deep into a season. (In fairness, there were a few seasons without 10 teams back in the early days, but play along.)

That's bad news for a lot of teams right now.

Each of the last 16 champions have had no worse than the fifth-best record through 20 games.

Golden State last season, best record through 20 games. The 2018-19 Toronto Raptors and 2019-20 Los Angeles Lakers, best record through 20 games. The 2014-15 and 2016-17 Warriors, best record through 20 games.

They all won titles.

That's good news for the Boston Celtics, who are well on their way to having the best record in the NBA at the 20-game mark this season. That's not great news for the Warriors, who are 9-10 and 11th in



MARY SCHWALM/AP

**Celtics forward Jayson Tatum reacts on Wednesday against the Dallas Mavericks. Tatum had 37 points and 13 rebounds in Boston's victory.**

the West — but are still well within striking distance of everyone. That's also not great news for the Heat, who finished with the best regular-season record in the Eastern Conference last season and are 8-11 now with a slew of key players hurt.

"We need to figure out what it's going to take to win and figure out what everybody needs to do differently, more consistently," Golden State guard Stephen Curry said. "Forget the road record, you can't even find a sustainable period of success when habits start to form and we're in a position where we're feeling good about ourselves. We're still searching and chasing a little bit."

The Celtics aren't chasing. They're among those being chased. The team with the best record through 20 games has won the title 34 times in the league's first 76 seasons.

"You have to be able to make each other better whether you have the ball or not," said Celtics interim coach Joe Mazzulla, who in the span of less than two months has gone from being an assistant coach, to the person in charge after the Ime Udoka suspension, to the coach of a team that's a popular pick to win the NBA title. "And our guys are bought into making each other better if they have the ball or not. It's cool to watch."

The Celtics should be the first team not to write off anyone. They were 10-10 through 20 games last season and wound up in the NBA

Finals, where they fell to Golden State in six games.

Besides, rallies from near the middle to the top have happened before.

The 2002-03 San Antonio Spurs were ninth-best after 20 games; the 1998-99 Spurs were eighth-best, and both those clubs went on to win titles. During Michael Jordan's first championship season, 1990-91, the Bulls were 10th in the league after 20 games.

And in the NBA's initial two seasons, the first two champions got off to slow starts. The 1946-47 Philadelphia Warriors were fifth-best out of 11 teams through 20 games; a year later, the Baltimore Bulls were fourth-best out of eight teams.

And this year, let's face it, mediocrity reigns. It's still early. Not enough time has passed for anyone to truly separate themselves. A five-game winning streak could send some clubs vaulting up the standings. A five-game slide could send some teams into a freefall.

So, maybe this will be the season when a team can buck the trend, shake off a slower-than-anticipated start and become a contender after all.

But in games, the team that leads after the first quarter usually wins.

In seasons, it tends to go the same way. And the first quarter is about to end. If a team is going to get into the race, this would be a good time to get into gear.

## NBA scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

#### Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	14	4	.778	—
New York	9	9	.500	5
Philadelphia	9	9	.500	5
Toronto	9	9	.500	5
Brooklyn	9	10	.474	5½

#### Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	11	7	.611	—
Washington	10	8	.556	1
Miami	8	11	.421	3½
Orlando	5	13	.278	6
Charlotte	5	14	.263	6½

#### Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	12	5	.706	—
Cleveland	12	6	.667	½
Indiana	10	7	.588	2
Chicago	8	10	.444	4½
Detroit	5	15	.250	8½

### Western Conference

#### Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Orleans	11	7	.611	—
Memphis	10	8	.556	1
Dallas	9	8	.529	1½
San Antonio	6	13	.316	5½
Houston	3	14	.176	7½

#### Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	11	7	.611	—
Utah	12	8	.600	—
Minnesota	10	8	.556	1
Portland	10	8	.556	1
Oklahoma City	7	11	.389	4

#### Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	11	6	.647	—
Sacramento	10	7	.588	1
L.A. Clippers	11	8	.579	1
Golden State	9	10	.474	3
L.A. Lakers	5	11	.313	5½

#### Tuesday's games

Philadelphia 115, Brooklyn 106  
Sacramento 113, Memphis 109  
Detroit 110, Denver 108  
Phoenix 115, L.A. Lakers 105

#### Wednesday's games

Cleveland 114, Portland 96  
Charlotte 107, Philadelphia 101  
Minnesota 115, Indiana 101  
Brooklyn 112, Toronto 98  
Atlanta 115, Sacramento 106  
Boston 125, Dallas 112  
Miami 113, Washington 105  
New Orleans 129, San Antonio 110  
Chicago 118, Milwaukee 113  
Denver 131, Oklahoma City 126, OT  
Detroit 125, Utah 116  
Golden State 124, L.A. Clippers 107

#### Thursday's games

No games scheduled

#### Friday's games

Minnesota at Charlotte  
Philadelphia at Orlando  
Portland at New York  
Atlanta at Houston  
Brooklyn at Indiana  
Chicago at Oklahoma City  
Cleveland at Milwaukee  
L.A. Lakers at San Antonio  
New Orleans at Memphis  
Sacramento at Boston  
Washington at Miami  
Detroit at Phoenix  
Utah at Golden State  
Denver at L.A. Clippers

#### Saturday's games

Dallas at Toronto  
L.A. Lakers at San Antonio  
Oklahoma City at Houston  
Utah at Phoenix

#### Sunday's games

Portland at Brooklyn  
Golden State at Minnesota  
Indiana at L.A. Clippers  
Miami at Atlanta  
Washington at Boston  
Cleveland at Detroit  
Memphis at New York Knicks  
Philadelphia at Orlando  
Dallas at Milwaukee

### Rebounding leaders

#### Through Wednesday

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Davis, LAL	15	51	138	189	12.6
Gobert, MIN	16	63	138	201	12.6
Capela, ATL	18	76	138	214	11.9
Antetokmpo, MIL	14	25	137	162	11.6
Vucevic, CHI	18	44	161	205	11.4



NICK WASS/AP

**Carson Wentz is back practicing with the Commanders only without his old role as starting quarterback.**

# QB Wentz practices, just not as the starter

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**  
Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — Carson Wentz is back practicing with the Washington Commanders.

Just not as their starting quarterback.

Wentz returned to the practice field Wednesday and was designated to return from injured reserve, but he's set to watch Sunday as Taylor Heinicke makes a sixth consecutive start when the Commanders host the Atlanta Falcons.

Coach Ron Rivera selected Heinicke as the starter even pending Wentz's return because Washington is 4-1 since the QB change.

"We had a pretty brief conversation, pretty to the point," Wentz said of Rivera delivering the news. "And it was fine. I get it. I get it. It's part of the business and I totally understand where we're at as a team and everything else. Obviously as a competitor you want to be out there."

Wentz isn't even expected to be in uniform as Heinicke's backup this weekend. That job remains with rookie Sam Howell, according to Rivera, who would not commit to Wentz's role moving forward.

"We'll take it one game at a time," Rivera said. "Right now it's to see how he looks back in team settings. We have him doing some stuff off to the side, then we bring him in and get him involved in some of the other stuff that we're doing."

Wentz broke the ring finger on his right, throwing hand Oct. 13 in a victory at Chicago and underwent surgery to repair it the following week. The 29-year-old said physically he feels good, and his passes in practice had some zip on them.

## NFL

# 49ers defense back to dominant ways

By JOSH DUBOW

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers defense got humbled a bit by Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs last month.

Since then, it has been back to the unit's usual dominance — especially in the second half.

The Niners have put together three straight defensive masterpieces to move into a tie for first place in the NFC West, pitching second-half shutouts against the Rams, Chargers and Cardinals.

"Guys have done a great job in the second half of being where they're supposed to be, making the plays that they're supposed to make," defensive coordinator DeMeco Ryans said Wednesday. "They're doing an outstanding job. I can't give those guys enough credit. If you want to win games, you have to close it out in the second half. They've done that for three weeks."

It's a far cry from what happened back in Week 7 against Kansas City, when the Chiefs scored TDs on the first four drives of the second half in a 44-23 win at Levi's Stadium.

But San Francisco (6-4) has gotten healthier since then and taken advantage of an easier slate of opponents.

The Niners surrendered a few big plays in the first halves of



FERNANDO LLANO/AP

**49ers defensive end Nick Bosa, left, sacks Cardinals quarterback Colt McCoy during the first half on Monday. San Francisco has not allowed a point in the second half in three straight games.**

those three wins, but Ryans' unit has made the necessary changes to make sure that doesn't happen in the second half.

"He's amazing," defensive end Nick Bosa said about Ryans. "He knows when to make the right calls. I don't think he'll be here

much longer, unfortunately, if he wants a head job somewhere. But three second-half shutouts in a row is winning football, and if we can keep that up, then with our offense we're going to be a tough team to beat."

This marks just the third time

since at least 1991 that the Niners have shut out three straight opponents in the second half, doing it on the way to the Super Bowl in 2019 and 1991.

They have allowed just 242 yards after halftime in those games for an average of only 3.1

**New Orleans Saints (4-7)  
at San Francisco 49ers (6-4)**

AFN-Sports

10:25 p.m. Sunday CET

6:25 a.m. Monday JKT

yards per play.

"That's just a product of execution," linebacker Fred Warner said. "The more energy being brought because you're making more plays and the whole team feeds off of that. So we just got to continue to be hard on ourselves."

The 49ers defense has playmakers on all three levels with Bosa spearheading the pass rush with 10½ sacks, Warner and Dre Greenlaw patrolling the middle of the field at linebacker and a much-improved secondary with cornerback Charvarius Ward, emerging big-play safety Talanoa Hufanga and the return of the reliable Jimmie Ward from injury.

Now Ryans wants to see his defense put it all together for a full game and avoid the breakdowns that have led to a few big plays in the first half the last three games.

"We're thinking about just playing clean football," he said. "Really the emphasis is how do we do this in the first half. Can we not give up the bonehead play in the first half to even allow teams to be in position to have to shut them out in the second half? The mindset is can we go out and play our best for the entire game?"

## Milestone highlights Andrews' return for Ravens

By NOAH TRISTER

Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — Mark Andrews surpassed 4,000 yards receiving for his career last weekend. He downplayed the accomplishment — but Baltimore Ravens teammate Calais Campbell was happy to reflect on it.

"I think that was pretty cool. He's going to hit a lot more milestones, though," said Campbell, a defensive lineman. "He's a great player, and as long as he stays healthy, he's on his way to getting a gold jacket."

Lately, health has in fact been an issue for Andrews, but he played almost every offensive snap in the Ravens' 13-3 win over Carolina. He finished with six catches for 63 yards, not a spectacular game but a sign he has a chance to give Baltimore his usual level of production down the stretch.

Andrews is coming off the best season of his career in 2021 — 107 catches for 1,361 yards and an All-Pro nod. If anything, he might be even more important to the Baltimore offense this year.

After trading receiver Marquise Brown in the offseason, the Ravens have lost Rashod Bateman to a foot injury. Running backs J.K. Dobbins and Gus Edwards have also missed time. Aside from Andrews, there's a lack of elite, healthy talent for quarterback Lamar Jackson to give the ball to, and it's starting to show. Baltimore hasn't scored more than 27 points since Week 3, and the



Nick Wass/AP

**Ravens tight end Mark Andrews surpassed 4,000 yards receiving for his career. He had his best season last year but might be more important to the offense this season.**

Ravens were held to a season low in scoring by the Panthers.

Andrews was held without a catch in an Oct. 23 win over Cleveland and managed only three receptions the following week at Tampa Bay. Then he was inactive when the Ravens beat New Orleans.

Baltimore's open date gave him some more time to recover from the knee and shoulder issues he's dealt with, and he was a key target for Jackson last weekend. He said he was feeling "great" when he talked to reporters Wednesday.

"I think every phase has helped us win a

game at some point," he said. "Special teams (and) defense are absolutely balling out, and offensively, we've had some really good games. So, I just think we need to bring it together, all play together, and the sky is the limit."

Drafted in the third round in 2018 — the same year the Ravens took Jackson in the first — Andrews has 4,017 yards in his career, good for third on the team's receiving list behind Derrick Mason (5,777) and Todd Heap (5,492). He made it clear he has bigger concerns than his most recent milestone.

"It's cool," Andrews said. "It's a cool recognition, but I'm just worried about winning (and) this team, and it's a long road ahead."

Campbell, on the other hand, can absolutely appreciate it. He's closing in on his own mark — he's two sacks shy of 100 — and it's a treat when a teammate accomplishes something special.

"He doesn't care that much. It's just, 'Keep playing football, let's have some fun, let's win some ballgames,'" Campbell said. "So, I think it's good for the rest of us to kind of like take a moment and be like, 'You're a beast. Much respect.'"

**Notes:** Jackson did not practice Wednesday because of a hip issue, but coach John Harbaugh said he'll play this weekend at Jacksonville. ... Edwards (hamstring/knee) was limited, and S Kyle Hamilton (knee) and T Ronnie Stanley (ankle) did not participate.

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Transfer portal puts more value on early tourneys

By AARON BEARD  
Associated Press

PARADISE ISLAND, Bahamas — North Carolina State coach Kevin Keatts knows he needs to work fast to bring along a team that added four transfers this season in key roles.

For coaches across college basketball in the transfer-portal era, playing in an early season tournament offers a boost in finding the right rotations, establishing roles and forging a team's identity. Those chances have come this week with holiday events like the Maui Invitational and the Phil Knight tournaments in Oregon.

For Keatts, it's the Battle 4 Atlantis in the Bahamas, which opened Wednesday with No. 3 Kansas, No. 22 Tennessee, Wisconsin, Southern California, Dayton, BYU and Butler.

"For us, it's trying to figure out, 'All right, where do we go from here? What steps?'" Keatts said Tuesday. "Obviously with transfers, you're trying to get as much chemistry as you can. And it's really hard to do it in practice situations. So you're kind of thrown into the fire of the game."

It's a challenge facing coaches across the sport, first in the offseason with issues of roster management as players come and go while putting their names in the portal.

From there, it's about fully integrating those players and building cohesion.

"That's the world of transfers," Massachusetts coach Frank Martin said last week before winning the Myrtle Beach Invitational. "That's the hardest thing we as coaches deal with. Everyone's brand new. The beginning of the season, it's a get-to-know ceremony for lack of a better word."

Kansas coach Bill Self sees it, too. His reigning national champions brought in 6-foot-6 wing Kevin McCullar from Texas Tech, and McCullar has started all five games for the Jayhawks, including Wednesday's Atlantis opener against N.C. State.

"Whether it be transfers or incoming freshmen, I think that a lot of people get a false sense that you can actually become a team a heck of a lot earlier in the season than you actually can," said Self, who made his season debut on the bench Wednesday after serving a four-game suspension tied to an NCAA infractions case.

"There's not one team here yet. Everybody will become a team at some point in time this season, but it usually doesn't happen in early November. We didn't become a team last year until February."

That's why Dayton coach An-



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

**Kansas guard Kevin McCullar has started all five games for the Jayhawks in his first year after coming over from Texas Tech.**

## "The beginning of the season, it's a get-to-know ceremony for lack of a better word."

Frank Martin  
Massachusetts coach

thony Grant, who brought in forward Tyrone Baker from Georgia, says teams are "still in that discovery stage."

These tournaments have long been part of the early stages of forging a team's identity, though it was typically with new recruits joining returning veterans. Now, though, there's far more roster turnover and upheaval with players able to move freely from school to school. And that means even experienced players are still learning their way at new programs.

It takes months of pickup games for new players to understand how their teammates play, down to precisely where they want the ball thrown for a catch-and-shoot call. Or a long series of practice reps to better understand new systems and terminologies.

But ultimately, nothing pushes that forward more than playing in full arenas with national TV broadcasts. And at the Atlantis resort, that means three games in three potentially revealing days.

"They're necessary because there's a really important set of data points that you need," BYU coach Mark Pope said. "So many

more programs are dealing with new rosters and new kinds of fits. So kind of this race towards understanding your team is even bigger."

Rudi Williams played last season at Coastal Carolina and also had stops at Kansas State and Northeastern Oklahoma A&M dating to the 2018-19 season. Now he's starting for Pope's Cougars.

"It takes time, and you have to understand that," he said. "So far, I've been understanding that really well because I'm an older guy and this is not my first time moving around. So I understand there's going to be some rough patches with a new team, new setting, new style, new pace — all that stuff."

Eric Hunter Jr. has seen those challenges now that he's moved to Butler, which is in the first season of a second stint under veteran coach Thad Matta. The Purdue graduate transfer joins former N.C. State big man Manny Bates and Georgia State transfer Jalen Thomas — who has yet to play while being treated for a pulmonary embolism — as new additions.

"I think a big part of this move, this transfer for me, was being able to have patience," Hunter said. "Because you kind of make a decision like that to go get results. It's just the natural human aspect of that. Just know it's just like everything else — you've got to have patience."

That applies for coaches and fans alike.

"I would say this tournament is a big deal because it helps you grow as a team with the transfers," Williams said, adding: "When we come back from this trip, we'll know if we got better or we'll know what we have to work on."



DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

**Running back Audric Estime leads a Notre Dame ground game that has rushed for more than 200 yards in six games this season.**

## Surging USC, Irish have a lot at stake

By GREG BEACHAM  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — No. 5 Southern California's swift transformation from a program in disarray to a revitalized powerhouse in its first season under Lincoln Riley has been one of the most impressive developments of the college football season.

Although No. 13 Notre Dame took slightly longer to get rolling under fellow first-year head coach Marcus Freeman, the Fighting Irish are back in their usual formidable form and even picking up speed.

But a big season is not complete at either school without a memorable edition of these teams' famed intersectional rivalry.

They'll get their moment Saturday night amid all the other important trappings that frequently make this matchup so special: national title implications, upset potential and elite players on both sidelines at the venerable Coliseum.

"I think you have to embrace and enjoy being in this moment, enjoy competing at this level," Riley said. "Our team gets excited to play teams like Notre Dame. There's no question about it. It's fun playing really good competition in cool venues with a lot of things on the line. That's so much fun. Let's embrace it and make sure we keep getting better."

USC (10-1) has clinched a spot in the Pac-12 title game Dec. 2 after going 8-1 in conference play, but its chances of breaking into the College Football Playoff from its current No. 6 spot in the playoff rankings hinge on beating the Irish (8-3).

Notre Dame won't be in the four-team tournament this year, but a win over the Trojans would be nearly an ideal punctuation on a regular season of remarkable growth under Freeman. After an 0-2 start, the Irish are rolling toward bowl season with five consecutive victories, nine of 10 overall

No. 13 Notre Dame (8-3)  
at No. 5 USC (10-1)

AFN-Sports  
1:30 a.m. Sunday CET  
9:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

and a surging sense of their worthiness to be on college football's biggest stages.

"There's a different feeling about this one, and I can feel it amongst our program and our players," Freeman said. "I knew it last year, but this year, being at the end of the year, at USC, you can really feel it."

### Caleb vs. Irish

USC quarterback Caleb Williams has leaped into the Heisman Trophy race with a spectacular series of performances down the stretch, highlighted by 503 total yards and three touchdowns in the victory at UCLA last week.

USC has relied on Williams' high-powered offense to cover for its less-dominant defense, but Notre Dame's defense has yet to allow an opponent 400 total yards this season, and only four opponents have topped 200 yards passing. The stage is set for a showdown.

The Irish's 400-yard streak "is hard to do in college football," Riley said. "They've got good players at all levels. You can tell they've recruited there for many years, and they've built a talent base, and that shows up."

### Ground game

Notre Dame's rushing offense is formidable, with sophomores Logan Diggs and Audric Estime leading a group that has topped 200 yards on the ground in six games this season. UCLA is the only opponent in the Trojans' last eight games to get more than 200 yards rushing.

If the Irish can't run the ball or fall behind, Drew Pyne will have to throw against a Trojans defense with an FBS-leading 18 interceptions.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## WHAT TO WATCH

# Rivalry games in the spotlight

BY HANK KURZ JR.  
Associated Press

Rivalries are the soup of the day as college football heads into its final weekend of the regular season, and spots in the College Football Playoff are likely there for the taking.

The marquee matchups with playoff implications include No. 3 Michigan at No. 2 Ohio State and No. 13 Notre Dame at No. 5 Southern California, but there are others, which began on Thanksgiving night.

That's when No. 20 Mississippi (8-3) played at Mississippi State (7-4) in the 95th "Battle for the Golden Egg." The Bulldogs were looking to snap a two-game skid in the series.

Friday's games include No. 16 Florida State at Florida, No. 17 UCLA at California and No. 18 North Carolina at North Carolina State.

Ohio State had won eight straight and 15 of 16 matchups with the Wolverines before Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh got his first win in six tries in the series last year. The game marks the 12th time the programs have met with both ranked in the AP Top 25's top five.

USC's first season under Lin-

coln Riley finds the Trojans in the top five for the first time in five years, and earned them a berth in the Pac-12 championship game. The Fighting Irish have lost three, but they've also beaten the Atlantic Coast Conference standard-bearers for this season, Clemson and the Tar Heels, who will play for the ACC title.

## Best game

**Ohio State at Michigan:** The Buckeyes' dominance in the series notwithstanding, Michigan can likely lock up a second consecutive berth in the CFP with a victory. The Wolverines lead the series 59-52-6, but they've lost their last nine visits to Ohio Stadium.

Michigan RB Blake Corum took himself out of last weekend's victory against Illinois, but said he'll be ready to go. He's third nationally with 1,457 yards and tied for the lead with 19 touchdowns. Buckeyes QB C.J. Stroud shares the national lead with 35 touchdown passes, including 11 to Marvin Harrison Jr., and eight to Emeka Egbuka.

## Heisman watch

Tennessee QB Hendon Hooker will no longer be in the discussion after a bad loss at South Carolina and a torn ACL that ended his sea-



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

**Southern California quarterback Caleb Williams scores during the first half of last weekend's game against UCLA in Pasadena, Calif. The fifth-ranked Trojans host No. 13 Notre Dame this week.**

son, putting the spotlight squarely on what happens in Columbus, Ohio. Stroud or Corum could burnish their credentials with a win Saturday. Then there's late comer Caleb Williams: The QB accounted for 503 yards of offense and three touchdowns in USC's 48-45 victory against UCLA. He's thrown for 33 touchdowns with just three interceptions.

## Numbers to know

Michigan has won 23 games over the last two seasons, more than in any two-year stretch in program history. ... No. 4 TCU (11-0) has beaten four teams it lost to by at least two scores last season. The Horned Frogs also are the first Big 12 team to be 11-0

since Texas in 2009. ... Ole Miss is the only FBS team with more than 5,000 yards of offense and at least 2,500 on the ground. ... The Notre Dame-USC matchup marks the first time both teams were ranked going into the game since 2017. ... North Carolina is the first two-time winner of the ACC's Coastal Division; all seven programs won one of the first seven.

## Hot seat

Things were looking great for Syracuse and coach Dino Babers when the Orange started 6-0 and climbed to No. 14 in the Top 25, but when they face Boston College on Saturday, they'll be trying to avoid becoming the third team to start 6-0 and finish 6-6 before a bowl

game. Babers' team has sustained significant injuries on defense and with QB Garrett Schrader, but joining Illinois (2011) and Baylor (2016) as teams that went from 6-0 to 6-6 might not bode well for his future, especially with a career mark at Syracuse of 35-48.

## Under the radar

South Carolina has another chance to disrupt the CFP this weekend when the Gamecocks visit No. 7 Clemson. Coach Shane Beamer's team (7-4) last week eliminated No. 9 Tennessee from contention with a 63-38 victory, enhancing their bowl prospects. The Tigers have an outside chance to enter the CFP conversation with some help.

# Revenge: Loser could have a tough time getting in the playoff

## FROM PAGE 48

been saying," said C.J. Stroud, Ohio State's quarterback and a Heisman Trophy contender. "So man, we're very excited."

The chance for payback comes Saturday at Ohio Stadium.

The stakes could hardly be higher.

A win for No. 2 Ohio State (11-0, 8-0 Big Ten, CFP No. 2) or No. 3 Michigan (11-0, 8-0, CFP No. 3) will mean a trip to Indianapolis for the Big Ten Championship

and keeping their national championship dreams alive.

While a scenario may exist that the loser of Saturday's game could still backdoor its way into College Football Playoff, the more likely result is a consolation bowl game and 365 days of pain.

"When you lose this game, it's a tough year," said Ohio State coach

**Michigan (11-0, 8-0 Big Ten)  
at Ohio State (11-0, 8-0)**

AFN-Sports2

6 p.m. Saturday CET

2 a.m. Sunday CET

Ryan Day. "There's no hiding from that."

Both teams come into the game unbeaten for the first time since 2006. This will be the 13th time since 1942 they'll clash as top-5 teams in the AP Top 25. Arguably, it's the biggest game in the series since 2016, when second-ranked Ohio State beat third-ranked Michigan 30-27 in double overtime.

"It's like two superheroes going at each other," Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh said.

Understand that most Ohio State fans, given the choice, would rather beat Michigan than win a national championship, an ethos ingrained by coach Woody Hayes during his romanticized "Ten Year War" with Bo Schembechler and the Wolverines in the late

1960s and '70s.

But even players who didn't grow up with the rivalry — a majority on both rosters are from somewhere other than Ohio or Michigan — can appreciate everything that's at stake.

Ryan Day, whose only conference loss in his first three seasons was dealt by Harbaugh and the Wolverines last year, said the team talks and thinks about The Game constantly. Players have been saying since training camp that avenging last year's loss is at top of their list of goals.

"We have scars," Day said.

Michigan players say they're looking forward to taking two straight from the Buckeyes — and winning at the Horseshoe — for the first time in more than two decades.

"Nobody wants to lose this game," Wolverines tackle Ryan Hayes said. "We're going to have all the motivation that we need."

Harbaugh last year earned his first victory in the series in six

tries. He's every bit as confident this time. He called his players "happy warriors on a happy mission."

"I think you're going to find we're made of the right stuff," he said.

## Banged up

Michigan running back Blake Corum, who was injured last week, said his left knee is fine and he expects to play. The Wolverines are also hoping his backup, Donovan Edwards, as well as tight end Luke Schoonmaker and defensive end Mike Morris will play after missing last week's game with undisclosed injuries.

"We're not spending any time investigating whether (Corum is) playing or not," Ohio State defensive coordinator Jim Knowles said. "Just assuming he's going to play. He's an exceptional back."

## Next back up

Ohio State's star running backs TreVeyon Henderson and Miyan

Williams have battled various injuries all season. Henderson had to leave last week's game against Maryland and finished it on the sideline wearing a walking boot. Williams didn't even dress for the game. Their status for Saturday is unknown.

A pleasant surprise for the Buckeyes has been the emergence of true freshman Dallon Hayden, who turned in his second 100-yard rushing game in a row. Hayden carried 27 times for 146 yards and three touchdowns in the Buckeyes' 43-30 win over the Terps.

## It's been a while

The Wolverines have not played at Ohio Stadium since 2018.

"Most of the players on this team haven't been there, obviously last time was COVID and we weren't able to go," Hayes said. "I've heard stories. I'm expecting a loud, crazy environment. We've played in those games before. I think we'll be prepared."



Harbaugh

# SPORTS

## Devils' streak halted

Toronto hands New Jersey first loss in 14 games » **NHL, 43**



### COLLEGE FOOTBALL



Tony Ding/AP

Ohio State Quarterback C.J. Stroud and the Buckeyes were roughed up by archrival Michigan last year in Ann Arbor and are looking for revenge this year in Columbus.

# It's all about revenge

## Ohio State tired of living with bitter Michigan loss



By MITCH STACY  
*Associated Press*

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State has been counting the days until it could get a shot at revenge.

Not like the Buckeyes are ever able to forget. An electronic display in the football practice facility counts down the days, hours and minutes left before kickoff of the next game against Michigan.

But the feelings are rawer this time, the No. 2 Buckeyes edgier in the buildup to Saturday's game because of how things went down last year in Ann Arbor.

"Every single day we think about it," defensive end Zach Harrison said of that humiliating 42-27 loss to Michigan, an opponent that generations of Ohio State players and fans have been trained to hate with a passion.



Day

"It's the one game that we've had in the back of our minds all year, and now it's time," safety Lathan Ransom said. "I'm pretty sure you can imagine how we're feeling without me saying too much."

That loss a year ago snapped Ohio State's eight-game winning streak in the series as well as its run of 26 straight wins over Big Ten opponents. It denied the Buckeyes a Big Ten championship for the first time in five seasons and ended its chances to get into the College Football Playoff.

"Of course, we've been licking our wounds for 365 days, hearing all the laughing and everything that everybody's

**SEE REVENGE ON PAGE 47**

Ohio State defensive back Lathan Ransom says the Michigan game has been in the back of their minds all year.

Jay LaPrete/AP

## 20 games in, NBA's title contenders emerge » Page 44

