Soldiers, families in S. Korea enjoy bountiful feast

By David Choi
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The “Super Bowl” of Thanksgiving meals for U.S. troops, which included 3,097 pounds of turkey, was served by a bipartisan U.S. congressional delegation in South Korea on Thursday.

In addition to the turkey, the lavish meal throughout U.S. bases in South Korea included 2,088 pounds of roast beef, 1,251 pounds of steamship beef, 654 pounds of rib-eye steak and 2,449 pounds of ham, according to the 2nd Infantry Division fact sheet.

Sixty Army culinary specialists and 298 contractors prepared the meal for the roughly 28,500 troops, civilian employees and their families with U.S. Forces Korea.

Ice sculptures and cakes greeted the line of U.S. and South Korean troops at the Spartan Warrior Restaurant, a dining facility at Camp Humphreys.

Culinary specialists went through extra lengths to decorate the dining facility because the “soldiers are away from their families,” according to Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hanspard, culinary specialist and restaurant manager.

“This is a culinary specialist’s Super Bowl every year.”

Sgt. Michael Hanspard culinary specialist and restaurant manager

SEE FEAST ON PAGE 4

Soldiers from the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division’s Quarantine Support Cell deliver Thanksgiving meals featuring a wide variety of dishes, from turkeys and grilled beef to salads, pies and fruits to soldiers and families in quarantine on Camp Humphreys.

Kate Bowers/U.S. Army

No station transfers for unvaccinated airmen

Air Force coronavirus vaccination rate nearly 97% ahead of Dec. 2 deadline for National Guard and Reserve members

By Wyatt Olsson
Stars and Stripes

Airmen who have not been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus will not be allowed to proceed to their next permanent duty station beginning Monday, according to a memo issued by the Air Force.

Compliance with the guidance, which was issued Tuesday by Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, the Air Force’s deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, is mandatory.

“Airmen who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including those awaiting final decision on a medical exemption or religious accommodation, are restricted from proceeding on existing [permanent change of station] orders, or selection for future PCS,” Kelly wrote in the memo, which was first reported by the Facebook page Air Force amn/nco/snco.

Phone calls from Stars and Stripes on Wednesday to the Department of the Air Force went unanswered.

In August, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered that all service members be vaccinated against the coronavirus but left the timeframe up to individual services.

The Air Force set a deadline of Nov. 2 for all active-duty airmen and Airmen who have not been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus will not be allowed to proceed to their next permanent duty station beginning Monday, according to a memo issued by the Air Force.

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SEE AIMEN ON PAGE 4
Europe gas prices were not available before press time.

**EUROPE GAS PRICES**

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*DieselEFD **Midgrade*

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**EXCHANGE RATES**

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**INTEREST RATES**

| Prime rate | 3.25 |
| Interest Rates Discount rate | 0.75 |
| Federal funds market rate | 0.09 |
| 3-month bill | 0.05 |
| 30-year bond | 1.95 |

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**WEATHER OUTLOOK**

**FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

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<tr>
<td>Doha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kandahar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kabul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
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**FRIDAY IN EUROPE**

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<tr>
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<td>Tokyo</td>
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<td>Seoul</td>
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<td>Osan</td>
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<td>Busan</td>
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</table>

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

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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.
Hawaii groups want military fuel tanks shut down

By Audrey McAvoy
Stars and Stripes
HONOLULU — Citing threats to Honolulu’s drinking water, the Sierra Club of Hawaii and other groups Wednesday called on President Joe Biden and military leaders to shut down fuel tanks storing fuel on Pearl Harbor.

“Enough is enough. We’ve lost all faith in the local Navy command,” said Wayne Tanaka, director of the Sierra Club of Hawaii, at a news conference and rally in Honolulu on Wednesday.

Sierra Club of Hawaii Director Wayne Tanaka speaks at a news conference and rally in Honolulu on Wednesday.

The military built 20 fuel tanks, each equivalent to 25 stories tall, during World War II near Pearl Harbor on top of an aquifer that supplies drinking water to one-quarter of Honolulu.

“The call to shut them down comes after a series of recent revelations about fuel leaks associated with the Red Hill fuel tanks or Pearl Harbor,” Tanaka said.

The call to shut them down comes after a series of recent revelations about fuel leaks associated with the Red Hill fuel tanks or Pearl Harbor.

Tanaka called the tanks “an unacceptable threat to the drinking water supply for 400,000 Oahu residents.”

Navy Region Hawaii said in a statement that it is committed to safeguarding the environment and drinking water while protecting national security.

“We will closely monitor all aspects of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility to ensure the safety of our operations,” it said.

On Monday, the Navy said 14,000 gallons of a water and fuel mixture leaked into the Red Hill facility’s lower tunnel from a fire suppression system drain line. No fuel leaked into the environment.

Last month, Honolulu Civil Beat reported that officials waited months to report a January leak at Pearl Harbor to the state Department of Health “amid concerns it would dampen its ability to secure a state permit” for the Red Hill tanks.

Hawaii’s four-member congressional delegation has asked the Department of Defense’s inspector general to investigate the January leak, saying they want to know whether the Navy properly investigated and notified state authorities.

The state health department last month fined the Navy more than $325,000 for Red Hill operations and maintenance violations.

A 2014 fuel leak prompted the Navy to sign an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state Health Department to upgrade the tanks and better prevent and detect leaks.

Ex-Army officer who advocated for Iraqi, Afghan detainees dies

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes
Ian Fishback, a former Army officer who in 2005 raised concerns about the treatment of detainees in the Global War on Terror, died Nov. 19 at an adult treatment facility in Michigan. He was 42 years old.

In a statement posted with Fishback’s obituary, the veteran’s family thanked his hometown community in Newberry, Mich., for the support provided Fishback in “recent difficult times.”

“I face many challenges and many of us felt helpless. We tried to get him the help he needed. It appears the system failed him utterly,” the statement said.

After being wounded in Iraq, Fishback became a vocal advocate for the treatment of detainees in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He wrote that he sought answers for 17 months, but found none.

“Instead of resolving my concerns, the approach for clarification process leaves me deeply troubled,” Fishback wrote. “I am certain that this confusion contributed to a wide range of abuses including death threats, beatings, broken bones, murder, exposure to elements, extreme forced physical exertion, hostage-taking, stripping, sleep deprivation and degrading treatment. I and troops under my command witnessed some of these abuses in both Afghanistan and Iraq.”

Later that year, the Senate passed legislation from McCain to prohibit inhuman treatment and Time magazine named Fishback one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

Fishback went on to serve with the Green Berets and later taught at his alma mater, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He left the Army as a major and often spoke on panels about his decision to call attention to detainee treatment in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“He wanted to support his soldiers, he wanted to support the United States government and he wanted to call us to our better angels — both the U.S. government and the people that were leading that the soldiers,” Ford said.

Fishback is survived by his mother and father, his sister, his ex-wife and his daughter, he said.

The veteran’s family will hold a memorial service for Fishback.

“The family has asked that those looking to honor Fishback’s life donate to the nonprofits, Human Rights Watch or Women for Women International,” Ford said.

The U.S. government has acknowledged that detainees have been subject to harsh treatment in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and has said it is ensuring that detainees are treated humanely.

Review: Federal sailors academy at fault for range of problems found

By Ian Duncan
The Washington Post
A congressionally-ordered review of the federal sailors academy concluded the school was beset with problems ranging from aging facilities, a striking lack of diversity, and a curriculum that was failing to keep up with the needs of an evolving shipping industry.

The National Academy of Public Administration said widespread problems at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy had fostered for years, with school leaders lacking the wherewithal to solve them. The school, the group said, had “lost its way.”

“The findings and recommendations of this report address long-standing issues that put the safety and health of the midshipmen and the entire USMMA community in peril,” wrote Teresa Gerton, the public administration academy’s chief executive.

Unlike the nation’s service academies that train military officers and are part of the Defense Department, the Merchant Marine school is part of the Department of Transportation. The review’s authors issued 67 recommendations and said it was up to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg to launch a task force and overhaul the King’s Point, N.Y., school.

The findings are likely to only intensify scrutiny of the academy, which has been embroiled in a reckoning over sexual assault after a midshipman came forward in the fall and described being raped while training on a commercial ship. The new report, based on an investigation carried out between May 2020 and October 2021, says the school is doing too little to protect students from assaults and stamp out sexual harassment on campus and at sea, but makes clear its problems are far more widespread and affect almost every aspect of life there.

The Transportation Department said it has already taken steps to start modernizing facilities at the academy and to ramp up sexual assault protections.

The department said it was establishing the task force recommended by the reviewers.

“USMMA students are remarkable leaders committed to serving the nation and supporting positive change,” said Lucinda Lesley, the acting maritime administrator.

“They deserve a modern, safe, and inclusive learning environment where they have the training and resources that will prepare them to succeed in the U.S. merchant marine and in our armed forces.”

Associated Press
For those who knew Fishback, his friend said that his actions regarding the inhumane treatment of detainees came as no surprise.

He always had a strong moral and ethical compass and held tightly to those principles, Ford said.

“Standing up for what you believe in is never easy. And it wasn’t easy on him,” he said. “He paid a price.”

In 2005, while a captain in the 82nd Airborne Division, Fishback wrote to Sen. John McCain about his concerns over the treatment of detainees and whether the Geneva Convention applied to Iraq and Afghanistan.

He wrote that he sought answers for 17 months, but found none.

“Instead of resolving my concerns, the approach for clarification process leaves me deeply troubled,” Fishback wrote. “I am certain that this confusion contributed to a wide range of abuses including death threats, beatings, broken bones, murder, exposure to elements, extreme forced physical exertion, hostage-taking, stripping, sleep deprivation and degrading treatment. I and troops under my command witnessed some of these abuses in both Afghanistan and Iraq.”

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Thayer.reesa@stripes.com
Twitter: @Reesa_i_Luth
USS The Sullivans comes home for Thanksgiving Day

By Dan Scanlan
The Florida Times-Union
Jacksonville, Fla. — Travis Hensley gave a final salute, then became the first to bound down the gangway of the USS The Sullivans on its homecoming, his seabag with him as he hit the pier at Naval Station Mayport.

Within seconds, the bag was re- placed in his arms with 3-month-old Alexander, 1-year-old son and wife Bryanna, greeting them with hugs after returning from a 7-month world cruise with Britain’s Royal Navy.

“I am elated to see my new son and the rest of my family,” the chief petty officer said Wednesday just in time for Thanksgiving. “Alex is great and I missed him so much. He looks so cute in his sailor’s suit. It is perfect timing and I am grateful for the holidays.”

“We are just overwhelmed, so excited and feeling so blessed that he’s coming home,” his wife said.

“She’s meeting his new baby too, so we are just so excited to have him home and get back to life. We are going to celebrate Thanksgiving and just spend time as a family.”

Further down the pier, Jessica Nelson and her children, 9-month-old daughter Charlotte and 3-month-old son Blake, gave an emotional welcome to husband/father Anthony Nelson on an upper deck. Minutes later, it was a hug-fest after a 7-month absence at sea.

“I am pretty happy to see everybody and glad to be home, especially this little one,” said Nelson, a logistics specialist, as he gazed at 9-month-old daughter Brynlee. “I am super happy for that and glad to be home for the holidays, be with the kids and eat lots of food, right guys?”

“Her second word was Dadda,” added Jessica, joined by their other children Blake and Bryce. “I am so excited for him to hear say Dadda in person. She absolutely knows her daddy, doesn’t she?”

The 505-foot-long ship’s name honors the memories of the five Sullivan brothers who died when a Japanese torpedo sank their light cruiser 79 years ago.

The guided-missile destroyer is the second U.S. Navy vessel to honor George, Francis, Madison, Joseph and Albert Sullivan, all killed on Nov. 13, 1942, as the USS Juneau sank during the battle for Guadalcanal. The brothers served on the same ship despite a Navy wartime policy to separate family members.

“To honor them, the current ship flies a red-bordered white flag with five gold stars on it, flapping stiffly in the wind under the American flag on its main mast as it came in Wednesday.

This means everything to the crew to get home in time for Thanksgiving, the commander said.

“Seeing the skyline of Jacksonville as we were coming in was a little surreal, like ‘Oh yeah, this is the end and we’ve finished the deployment and coming home safe,’” he said. “Then seeing all the families on the pier, there were a lot of not-dry eyes on board as they started to cheer for us. I appreciate all the families coming out.”

Awaiting the arrival along with hundreds of family members on the sunny, chilly day was Garry Cohn, the Navy League of the United States liaison with this destroyer. He also served on the first USS The Sullivans just before it was decommissioned in 1965. So he is happy that the latest ship and its crew just had a historic deployment and made it home for Thanksgiving.

“I wish I could have been aboard that ship. It’s an opportunity of a lifetime: a world cruise,” he said. “I never had the opportunity. I am so proud of the men and women who serve aboard the ship.”

As the ship move into view in the channel, family members cheered and waved as the crew lined every deck. One boy carried a sign with a list for his returning father: “Hug and kiss me, play with me, read to me, but first, kiss Mommy!”

Feast: US lawmakers travel to South Korea to serve troops meals

FROM PAGE 1

spard, a culinary specialist and restaurant manager.

“This is a culinary specialist’s Super Bowl every year,” Hanspurd told Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

“This is what we want to throw down on. We really take pride in what we do, in terms of presentation and the taste of the food.”

A delegation of five House representatives — Democratic Reps. Mark Takano of California, Elissa Slotkin of Michigan, Colin Allred of Texas, Sara Jacobs of California and Republican Nancy Mace of South Carolina — also helped serve meals to the troops.

“Come get your vegetables,” Slotkin, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and a former CIA analyst, shouted as she served mixed vegetables to a line of service members.

“It was great to meet some of our service members,” Takano, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said to Stars and Stripes. “It’s always a great pleasure to take the Thanksgiving holiday with members of Congress, who give up time with their families, to come and be with our troops, who are giving up time with their families this year. It’s such a good opportunity.”

Mace, a member of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee and a graduate of The Citadel Military College of South Carolina, toured the facility and stopped to chat with fellow South Carolinians.

U.S. Forces Korea senior leaders serve Thanksgiving meals for Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army trainees at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Thursday.

“It’s just an honor to spend time with our soldiers who are stationed overseas, many of them don’t get to go home that frequently,” Mace said. “It’s an honor to be out here with our men and women in uniform who do so much for us.”

The delegation visited Japan earlier in the week and met with U.S. troops stationed on Okinawa. There, they warned about China’s rising regional influence.

“There’s a growing sense of a new reality with China, a stronger China, a more equipped China, a China that is taking on a bigger role in the international innovation gap,” Takano told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

Airmen: Troops to remain restricted until vaccinated

FROM PAGE 1

and U.S. Space Force guardians to be fully vaccinated.

The deadline for full vaccination for Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members is Dec. 2.

The Air Force’s PCS restriction will remain in force for any airman until that person either becomes fully vaccinated against COVID-19, which is the disease caused by the coronavirus, or receives an approved medical exemption or religious accommodation, Kelly wrote.

As of Tuesday, 96.6% of active-duty airmen had been fully vaccinated, leaving 7,874 airmen unvaccinated, according to the service’s statistics.

The Air Force has granted 1,254 medical exemptions for vaccination and none for religious reasons. The Air Force is currently processing 4,756 requests for religious exemption, according to the statistics.

Airmen not fully vaccinated and those awaiting exemption approval will be flagged in their personnel file to prevent them from being selected for future assignments, Kelly wrote.

“Airmen currently on assignment are not authorized to out-process and depart on PCS, with the exception of those who have out-processed and/or shipped household goods/vehicles on or prior to 29 November, who are permitted to proceed to their new duty location,” Kelly wrote.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Travelers emerge again in time for Thanksgiving

BY DAVID KOENIG
Associated Press

DALLAS — Determined to reclaim Thanksgiving traditions that were put on pause last year by the pandemic, millions of Americans will be loading up their cars or piling onto planes to gather again with friends and family.

The number of air travelers this week is expected to approach or even exceed pre-pandemic levels, and auto club AAA predicts that 48.3 million people will travel at least 50 miles from home over the holiday period, an increase of nearly 4 million over last year despite sharply higher gasoline prices.

Many feel emboldened by the fact that nearly 200 million Americans are now fully vaccinated. But it also means brushing aside concerns about a resurgent virus at a time when the United States is now averaging nearly 100,000 new infections a day and hospitals in Michigan, Minnesota, Colorado and Arizona are seeing alarming increases in patients.

The seven-day daily average of new reported cases is up nearly 30% in the last two weeks through Tuesday, according to figures from Johns Hopkins University. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said unvaccinated people should not travel, although it is unclear whether that recommendation is having any effect.

More than 2.2 million travelers streamed through airport checkpoints last Friday, the busiest day since the pandemic devastated travel early last year. From Friday through Tuesday, the number of people flying in the U.S. was more than double the same days last year and less than 9% lower than the same days in 2019.

For their part, airlines are hoping to avoid a repeat of the massive flight cancellations — more than 2,300 apiece — that dogged Southwest and American Airlines at different times last month.

The breakdowns started with bad weather in one part of the country and spun out of control. In the past, airlines had enough pilots, flight attendants and other workers to recover from many disruptions within a day or two. They are finding it harder to bounce back now, however, because they are stretched thin after pushing thousands of employees to quit when travel collapsed last year.

American, Southwest, Delta and United have all been hiring lately, which gives the airlines and industry observers hope that flights will stay on track this week.

“The airlines are prepared for the holidays,” said Helane Becker, an airlines analyst for financial-services firm Cowen. “They cut back the number of flights, the industry has enough pilots, they are putting more flight attendants through their (training) academies, and they are paying flight attendants a premium — what I’m going to call hazardous-duty pay — to encourage people not to blow off work.”

The airlines have little margin for error right now. American expected to fill more than 90% of its seats with paying customers on Tuesday. “There is not a lot of room to put people on another flight if something goes wrong,” said Dennis Tajer, a pilot for the airline and a spokesman for the American pilots’ union.
**VIRUS OUTBREAK**

**EU authorizes Pfizer’s vaccine for kids 5-11**

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The European Union’s drug regulator on Thursday authorized Pfizer’s coronavirus vaccine for use on children from 5 to 11 years old, clearing the way for shots to be administered to millions of elementary school pupils amid a new wave of infections sweeping across the Continent.

It is the first time the European Medicines Agency has cleared a vaccine developed by Pfizer and German company BioNTech for use in children.

The agency said it “recommend[ed] granting an extension of indication for the COVID-19 vaccine Comirnaty to include use in children aged 5 to 11.”

After evaluating a study of the vaccine in more than 2,000 children, the EMA estimated that the vaccine was about 90% effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19 in young children and said the most common side effects were pain at the injection site, headaches, muscle pain and chills.

The agency said the two-dose regimen should be given to children three weeks apart.

At least one country facing spiking infections didn’t wait for the EMA approval. Authorities in the Austrian capital, Vienna, already have begun vaccinating the 5 to 11 age group. Europe is currently at the epicenter of the pandemic and the World Health Organization has warned the continent could see deaths top 2 million by the spring unless urgent measures are taken.

The EMA green light for the vaccine developed by Pfizer and German company BioNTech has to be rubber-stamped by the EU’s executive branch, the European Commission, before health authorities in member states can begin administering shots.

Earlier this week, Germany’s health minister Jens Spahn said shipping of vaccines for younger children in the EU would begin on Dec. 20.

The United States signed off on Pfizer’s kids-sized shots earlier this month, followed by other countries including Canada.

Pfizer tested a dose that is a third of the amount given to adults for elementary school-age children. Even with the smaller shot, children who are 5 to 11 years old developed coronavirus-fighting antibody levels just as strong as teenagers and young adults getting the regular-strength shots, Dr. Bill Gruber, a Pfizer senior vice president, told The Associated Press in September.

But the studies done on Pfizer’s vaccine in children haven’t been big enough to detect any rare side effects from the second dose, like the chest and heart inflammation that has been seen in mostly male older teens and young adults.

American officials noted that COVID-19 has caused more deaths in children in the 5 to 11 age group than some other diseases, such as chickenpox, did before children were routinely vaccinated.

**Europe’s Christmas markets warily open as COVID cases rise**

Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany — The holiday tree is towering over the main square in this central German city, the chestnuts and sugared almonds are roasted, and the merry-go-round just like they did before the pandemic.

But a surge in coronavirus infections has left an uneasy feeling hanging over Frankfurt’s Christmas market.

To savour a mug of mulled wine — an uncomplicated rite of winter in pre-pandemic times — masked customers must pass through a one-way entrance to a fenced-off wine hut, stopping at the hand sanitizer station.

Elsewhere, security officers check vaccination certificates before letting customers head for the sleighing snowflakes and kebabs.

Despite the pandemic inconveniences, stall owners selling ornaments, roasted chestnuts and other holiday-themed items in Frankfurt and other European cities are relieved to be open at all for their first Christmas market in two years, especially with new restrictions taking effect in Germany, Austria and other countries as COVID-19 infections hit record highs.

Merchants who have opened are hoping for at least a fraction of the pre-pandemic holiday sales that can make or break their businesses.

Others aren’t so lucky. Many of the famous holiday events have been canceled in Germany and Austria. With the market closures go the money that tourists would spend in restaurants, hotels and other businesses.

Jens Knauer, who crafts intricate, lighted Christmas-themed silhouettes that people can hang in windows, said his hope was simply that the Frankfurt market “stays open as long as possible.”

While Christmas is 40% of annual revenue for many retailers and restaurateurs, “with me, it’s 100%,” Knauer said. “If I can stay open for three weeks, I can make it through the year.”

Purveyors are on edge after other Christmas markets were abruptly shut down in Germany’s Bavaria region, which includes Nuremberg, home of one of the biggest and best-known markets. Stunned exhibitors in Dresden were routinely vaccinated.

But if people have a little discipline and observe the health measures, “I think we’ll manage it,” he said.

Next door, Bettina Roie’s guests are greeted with a sign asking them to show their vaccination certificates at her stand serving Swiss raclette, a popular melted cheese dish.

The market “has a good concept because what we need is space, room, to keep some distance from each other,” she said. “In contrast to a bricks-and-mortar restaurant, they have their building and their walls, but we can adjust ourselves to the circumstances.”

The extended Roie family is a fifth-generation exhibitor business that also operates the merry-go-round on Frankfurt’s central Roemerberg square, where the market opened Monday.

Roie said it was important to reopen “so that we can bring the people even during the pandemic a little joy — that’s what we do, we bring back joy.”

The latest spike in COVID-19 cases has unsettled prospects for Europe’s economic recovery, leading some economists to hedge their expectations for growth in the final months of the year.

Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg Bank in London, has cut his forecast for the last three months of the year in the 19 countries that use the euro from 0.7% to 0.5%.

But he noted that the wave of infections is having less impact across the broad economy because vaccinations have reduced serious illnesses and many companies have learned to adjust.

That is cold comfort to Germany’s DEHOGA restaurant and hotel association, which warned of a “hail of cancellations” and said members were reporting every second Christmas party or other special event was being called off.

Other European countries where the pandemic isn’t hitting as hard are returning to old ways. The traditional Christmas market in Madrid’s Plaza Mayor, in the heart of the Spanish capital, was slated to open Friday at the size it was before the pandemic.
DOJ to prioritize prosecuting violence on flights

Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Attorney General Merrick Garland directed U.S. attorneys across the country to swiftly prioritize prosecution of federal crimes that happen on commercial flights as federal officials face a historic number of investigations into passenger behavior.

Garland’s memo, issued Wednesday, emphasizes that the Justice Department is committed to aggressively prosecuting violent passengers who assault crew members or endanger the safety of other passengers. Federal law prohibits interfering with a flight crew, including assaulting, intimidating or threatening crew members.

In a statement, Garland said such passengers do more than harm employees. “They prevent the performance of critical duties that help ensure safe air travel. Similarly, when passengers commit violent acts against other passengers in the close confines of a commercial aircraft, the conduct endangers everyone aboard,” he said.

The memo also notes that dozens of incidents have been reported to the FBI by the Federal Aviation Administration — it investigates some flight disturbances and can issue civil fines to disrupt passenger behavior.

A plane prepares for a flight at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport on Tuesday.

CIA director: ‘Consequences’ if Russia behind ‘Havana Syndrome’

The Washington Post
WASHINGTON — CIA Director William Burns delivered a confidential warning to Russia’s top intelligence services that they will face “consequences” if they are behind the string of mysterious health incidents known as “Havana Syndrome” afflicting U.S. diplomats and intelligence officers first reported un¬usual and varied symptoms — from headaches and vision problems to dizziness and brain injuries — that started in 2016.

The warning did not assign blame for what U.S. officials are calling “anomalous health incidents,” or AHIs. The fact that Burns formulated the warning by saying “if” suggests that after four years of investigations across multiple administrations, the U.S. government remains unable to determine a cause of the unusual incidents. Nevertheless, the director’s decision to raise the possibility of Russian involvement directly to his counterparts in Moscow underscores the deep suspicion the CIA has of Kremlin culpability.

The CIA declined to comment on Burns’ warning to the Russians, which has not been previously reported. The Russian Embassy in Washington did not respond to requests for comment.

Moscow has previously denied any involvement in the Havana Syndrome incidents, a phenomenon named after the Cuban capital where U.S. diplomats and intelligence officers first reported unusual and varied symptoms — from headaches and vision problems to dizziness and brain injuries — that started in 2016.

The main purpose of Burns’ trip to Moscow was to put the Kremlin on notice that Washington was watching its troop buildup on the border of Ukraine and would not tolerate a military attack on the country, officials said.

Interior Department approves 2nd large offshore wind farm

Associated Press
The Biden administration approved an offshore wind farm off the coasts of Rhode Island and New York on Wednesday as part of a plan to deploy 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030.

The U.S. Department of the Interior announced it approved the construction and operations of the South Fork Wind project, the department’s second approval of a commercial-scale, offshore wind energy project in the United States. Last week, the department marked the groundbreaking off the coast of Massachusetts for the first commercial-scale offshore wind project.

Seven major offshore wind farms would be developed on the east and west coasts of the U.S. and in the Gulf of Mexico under a plan announced last month by the Biden administration to build infrastructure, create jobs and address global warming. Deploying 30 gigawatts of offshore wind energy would generate enough electricity to power more than 10 million homes.

The South Fork Wind project will be located about 19 miles southeast of Block Island, R.I., and 35 miles east of Montauk Point, N.Y. It’s expected to provide roughly 130 megawatts, enough power for about 70,000 homes. Its transmission system will connect to the electric grid on Long Island, New York, making it the state’s first offshore wind farm and jump-starting the offshore wind industry there.
Inflation lurks as consumer spending rises

By Martin Crutsinger
Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Americans are doing the main thing that drives the U.S. economy — spend- ing — but accelerating inflation is casting a pall.

A raft of economic data issued Wednesday showed the economy on solid footing, with Americans’ incomes rising and jobless claims falling to a level not seen since the Beatles were still together.

The spike in prices for everything from gas to rent, however, will likely be the chief economic indicator Americans discuss over Thanksgiving Day dinner.

The Commerce Department reported that U.S. consumer spending rebounded by 1.3% in October. That was despite inflation that over the past year has accelerated faster than it has at any point in more than three decades. The jump in consumer spending last month was double the 0.6% gain in September.

At the same time, consumer prices rose 5% compared with the same period last year, the fastest 12-month gain since the same stretch ending in November 1990.

“Although consumer confidence has declined in the fall because of high inflation, house- holds continue to spend,” said Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial.

Personal incomes, which pro- vide the fuel for future spending increases, rose 0.5% in October after having fallen 1% in September, which reflected a drop in gov- ernment support payments.

Pay for Americans has been on the rise with companies desper- ate for workers, and government stimulus checks earlier this year further padded their bank ac- counts. That bodes well for a strong holiday season and major U.S. retailers say they’re ready af- ter some companies, like Wal- mart and Target, went to extreme lengths to make sure that their shelves are full despite wide- spread shortages.

Analysts said the solid increase in spending in October, the first month in the new quarter, was en- couraging evidence that overall economic growth, which slowed to a modest annual rate of 2.1% in the July-September quarter, will post a sizable rebound in the cur- rent quarter. That is expected as long as the recent rise in COVID cases and concerns about infla- tion don’t dampen holiday shop- ping.

“After experiencing one of the most severe economic shocks of the past century in 2020, the U.S. economy has displayed one of the most rapid recoveries in modern history in 2021,” Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist for Oxford Economics, wrote in a note to cli- ents. Daco predicts GDP in the current October-December peri- od would rebound to a growth rate of 3.6%.

The number of Americans ap- plying for unemployment bene- fits, meanwhile, dropped last week by 71,000 to 199,000, the low- est since mid-November 1969. But seasonal adjustments around the Thanksgiving holiday contribut- ed significantly to the bigger-than-expected drop. Unadjusted, claims actually ticked up by more than 18,000 to nearly 259,000.

In a cautionary note Wednes- day, the University of Michigan reported that its consumer senti- ment index fell 4.3 percentage points to a reading of 67.4 this month, its lowest level since No- vember 2011, weighed down by in- flation concerns.

Holiday season moves into high gear but challenges remain

By Anne D’Innocenzo
Associated Press
NEW YORK — Buoyed by solid hiring, healthy pay gains and sub- stantial savings, shoppers are re- turning to stores and splurging on all types of items.

But the big question is: How much will supply shortages, higher prices and staffing issues dampen their mood this holiday season?

Americans, already fatigued with pandemic-induced social distancing policies, may get grumpy if they can’t check off items on their holiday wish lists, or they may feel disappointed by the skimpy holiday discounts.

Accelerating their foul moods is the fact that many frustrated workers called it quits ahead of the holi- days, leaving businesses short- handed during their busiest time of the year.

Shoppers are expected to pay on average of between 5% to 17% more for toys, clothing, ap- pliances, TVs and other purchases on Black Friday this year compared with last year, according to Aure- lien Douthit, senior sector adviser at Allianz Research. TVs will see the highest price spikes on aver- age, up 17% from a year ago, ac- cording to the research firm.

That’s because whatever dis- counts available will be applied to goods that are already expensive.

Such frustrations could mute sales for the holiday season that are supposed to break records. The National Retail Federation, the nation’s largest retail trade group, predicts holiday sales will increase between 8.5% and 10.5% compared with the 2020 holiday period when shoppers, locked down during the early part of the pandemic, spent their money on pajamas and home goods — most- ly online. Holiday sales increased 8.2% in 2020.

“I think it is going to be a messy holiday season,” said Neil Saum- ders, managing director at Glob- alData Retail. “It will be a bit frus- trating for retailers, consumers and the workers. We are going to see long lines. We are going to see messier stores. We are going to see delays as you collect online or- ders.”

Jill Renslow, executive vice president of business development and marketing for Mall of America, the nation’s largest mall, expects customer counts on Black Friday to be close to the 2019 levels and said its store ten- ants are seeing “power shopping” earlier in the season. But she ac- knowledged the mall’s tenants have struggled with staffing and, as a result, the center will open two hours later and close one hour earlier on Black Friday.

“They (retailers) are doing ev- erything they can to deliver a good guest experience,” Renslow said. “But consumers are going to need to be patient and know that the lines may be a little bit longer.”

Still, don’t discount the resil- ience of shoppers who have shown signs they want to cele- brate the holidays after muted celebrations last year.

Some of the changes that were introduced in 2020 out of necessi- ty appear to be here to stay, in- cluding offering big holiday dis- counts earlier in the season.

And while the pandemic-in- duced clogs in the supply network have reduced inventory needed to satisfy shopper demands, such shortfalls have also proven to be a silver lining. Leaner inventories have brought back some pricing power to retailers who’ve been locked in a vicious cycle of dis- counting for years. Such non-stop promotions have eaten away prof- its.

“Even with the increased labor costs and increased supply chain costs, retail earnings have been quite good,” said Ken Perkins, president of Retail Metrics LLC, noting that when the pandemic hit, it looked like the “sky was fall- ing and retailers would never see a profit again.”

And there are regions in the U.S. experiencing a surge in CO- VID-19 cases that could get worse as families travel the country for the Thanksgiving holiday.

President Joe Biden acted Tuesday to counter spiking gaso- line prices by ordering a release from the nation’s strategic petro- leum reserve, but economists ex- pect that move to have only a min- imal effect on the surge in gas prices.

The Fed seeks to conduct its in- terest-rate policies to achieve an- nual gains in its preferred price index of around 2%. However, over the past two decades, infla- tion has perennially failed to re- ach the Fed’s 2% inflation target.
Macy’s Thanksgiving parade makes full return

NEW YORK — Crimped by the coronavirus pandemic last year, the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade returned Thursday in full, though with precautions.

The Thanksgiving event also required for spectators, but Macy’s and the city encouraged them to cover their faces. A popular spectacle before the parade — the inflation of the giant balloons — was limited to vaccinated viewers. The Thanksgiving event also came days after an SUV driver plowed through a Christmas parade in suburban Milwaukee, killing six people and injuring over 60. Authorities said the driver, who has been charged with intentional homicide, was speeding away from police after a domestic dispute.

Thousands of police officers were assigned to the parade route, from streets to rooftops. Cars were blocked from the parade route with sand-filled garbage trucks, other heavy vehicles and approximately 360,000 pounds of concrete barriers.

Bomb-detecting dogs, bomb squad officers, heavy-weapons teams, radiation and chemical sensors and over 300 extra cameras also were dispatched to the parade route, NYPD Chief of Counterterrorism Martine Mate-rasso said.

Inside the barricades, the parade featured about 9,000 participants, four dozen balloons of varying sizes and two dozen floats.

New balloon giants joining the lineup include the title character from the Netflix series “Ada Twist, Scientist,” the Pokémon characters Pikachu and Eevee on a sled (Pikachu has appeared before, in different form), and Grogu, aka “Baby Yoda,” from the television show “The Mandalorian.” New floats are coming from entities ranging from condiment maker Heinz to NBCUniversal’s Peacock streaming service to the Louisiana Office of Tourism.

Native tribes mourn on Thanksgiving: ‘No reason to celebrate’

Members of Native American tribes from around New England are gathering in the seaside town where the Pilgrims settled to give thanks, but to mourn Indigenous people worldwide who’ve suffered centuries of racism and mistreatment.

Thursday’s solemn National Day of Mourning observance in downtown Plymouth, Mass., will recall the disease and oppression that European settlers brought to North America.

“We Native people have no reason to celebrate the arrival of the Pilgrims,” said Kisha Janes, a member of the Aquinnah Wampanoag and Oglala Lakota tribes and the granddaughter of Wamunata James, the event’s founder.

“We want to educate people so that they understand the stories we all learned in school about the first Thanksgiving are nothing but lies. Wampanoag and other Indigenous people have certainly not lived happily ever after since the arrival of the Pilgrims,” Janes said.

“To us, Thanksgiving is a day of mourning, because we remember the millions of our ancestors who were murdered by uninvited European colonizers such as the Pilgrims. Today, we and many Indigenous people around the country say, ‘No Thanks, No Giving.’”

It’s the 52nd year that the United American Indians of New England have organized the event on Thanksgiving Day. The tradition began in 1970.

Indigenous people and their supporters planned to gather at noon in person on Cole’s Hill, a wind-swept mound overlooking Plymouth Rock, a memorial to the colonists’ arrival. Participants will beat drums, offer prayers and condemn what organizers describe as “the unjust system based on racism, settler colonialism, sexism, homophobia and the profit-driven destruction of the Earth” before marching through Plymouth’s historical district.

This year, they’ll also highlight the troubled legacy of federal boarding schools that sought to assimilate Indigenous youth into white society in the United States as well as in Canada, where hundreds of bodies have been discovered on the grounds of former residential schools for Indigenous children.

Brian Moewkewat Weeden, chairman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council, said on Boston Public Radio earlier this week that Americans owe his tribe a debt of gratitude for helping the Pilgrims survive their first brutal winter.

“People need to understand that you need to be thankful each and every day — that was how our ancestors thought and navigated this world,” Weeden said. “Because we were thankful, we were willing to share ... and we had good intentions and a good heart.”

That wasn’t reciprocated over the long term, Weeden added.

“That’s why, 400 years later, we’re still sitting here fighting for what little bit of land that we still have, and trying to hold the commonwealth and the federal government accountable,” he said.
$4M grant helps preserve Civil War battlefield

VA WILLIAMSBURG — The National Park Service announced that it has awarded the largest single grant in the history of its American Battlefield Protection Program to help preserve one of the nation’s lesser-known Civil War battlefields.

The $4.6 million grant will be used to purchase and preserve 250 acres of the Williamsburg Battlefield in York County, Va., which has sat on private land outside the city and former colonial capital.

The battle was part of what’s known as the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, when Union forces tried to capture Richmond from the south.

Fighting began after enslaved Americans provided vital intelligence to the Union Army about unoccupied Confederate enclaves.

There were 72,000 troops engaged in the battle, which ended with 3,800 killed, wounded or captured, said Jim Campi, chief policy and communications officer with the American Battlefield Trust.

Landlord fined for ‘horrible’ rental conditions

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A Hennepin County district judge fined a north Minneapolis landlord $133,500 for what he called horrible conditions in his rental properties.

The Star Tribune reported that Judge Patrick Robben ruled that landlord Steven Meldahl operated in bad faith by telling tenants that they were not allowed to contact city inspectors, violating the rights of 267 families who rented his properties.

“Infestations suggestive of biblical plague proportions — squarrels, mice, rats, gnats,” the judge said.

Robben levied a fine of $500 per family. He also issued a permanent injunction preventing Meldahl from engaging in illegal and deceptive practices, and gave him until Dec. 15 to comply with all housing correction notices.

Dempsey Challenge reaches $1.5M goal

ME LEWISTON — The Dempsey Challenge has reached its $1.5 million fundraising goal, garnering $200,000 more than any previous year despite the coronavirus pandemic decreasing participation.

The bike-and-run fundraiser in September raised a record $1.3 million and additional fundraising from businesses and a virtual cycling event pushed the Dempsey Challenge past its fundraising goal, The Sun-Journal reported.

The challenge is the primary fundraiser for the Dempsey Center, a nonprofit organization founded by actor Patrick Dempsey that provides free services to cancer patients and their families. The Lewiston nonprofit had increased its fundraising goal in 2020 but the pandemic hit and the in-person Dempsey Challenge was canceled and replaced with a virtual event.

Former art dealer pleads guilty in fraud case

NY NEW YORK — A former London and Miami art dealer pleaded guilty to defrauding art buyers of over $86 million.

Inigo Philbrick, 34, a U.S. citizen who has also lived in London, entered the plea in Manhattan federal court.

He pleaded guilty to a single count of wire fraud after prosecutors said he conducted a scheme from 2016 through 2019 to defraud individuals and entities to finance his art business.

Prosecutors said he carried out the scheme by misrepresenting the ownership of certain artworks and by sometimes selling more than 100% ownership to multiple individuals and entities without their knowledge.

The chase reached speeds of more than 110 mph on U.S. Highway 17 and state Highway 162, deputies said.

When deputies checking a suspicious vehicle near the Saint Paul United Methodist Church Cemetery turned on their blue lights, the 31-year-old driver sped off through the graveyard, the Charleston County Sheriff’s Office told news outlets.

The Chase began after he drove over several gravestones. They scratched off the ticket home that once stood near the fishpond she remembers her grandparents’ family who lived on the land in the 1900s. Aileen Matsuyma Feldman said she remembers her grandparents’ home that once stood near the fishpond but doesn’t remember ever seeing the gravestone of a child who died 20 years before she was born.

The Missouri Lottery said the couple from Washington County, who asked not to be identified, purchased the winning ticket for the “Big Riches” scratcher game in Potosi while recently picking up groceries. They scratched off the ticket inside the store and celebrated with a hug.

Winning never gets old. The same couple won a $250,000 lottery prize a few years ago.
Associated Press

MOSCOW — A fire at a coal mine in Russia’s Siberia killed 11 people and injured more than 40 on Thursday, with dozens of others remaining trapped, authorities said.

Efforts to rescue those trapped in the mine were halted on Thursday afternoon because of an explosion threat, and rescuers were rushed out of the mine, administrators of the mine told the Interfax news agency.

The blaze broke out in the Kemerovo region in southwestern Siberia. Russia’s state Tass news agency reported citing an unnamed emergency official, that coal dust caught fire, and smoke quickly filled the Listvyazhnaya mine through the ventilation system.

A total of 285 people were in the mine at the time of the incident, Kemerovo Governor Sergei Tsivilyov said on his page on the messaging app Telegram. He said 35 miners remained trapped underground, and their exact location was unknown.

Tsivilyov said in another Telegram post that a total of 49 people with injuries have sought medical assistance, which rushed people to a hospital.

In 2016, 36 miners were killed in a series of methane explosions in a coal mine in Russia’s far north. In the wane of the incident, authorities analyzed the safety of the country’s 58 coal mines and declared 20 of them, or 34%, potentially unsafe.

There is a danger to the life of the rescuers... Let’s hope that (they) will manage to save as many people as possible,” Putin said.

Earlier Thursday, Russia’s acting president, Serbien counterpart Aleksandar Vucic in the Russian Black Sea region. The Russian leader on Thursday afternoon sat down for talks with his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic in the Russian Black Sea region.

Police spokesman Abdifatah and his colleagues being escorted the African Union peacekeeping convoy. But a witness, Hassan Ali, told the AP that a private security company was escorting the officials and said he saw four of the security personnel wounded.

The attack occurred as Somalia faces major questions about its political and security future. The AU peacekeeping force was meant to withdraw from the country, but its mission could be extended amid concerns that Somali forces are not ready to assume responsibility for security.

The Russian leader on Thursday afternoon sat down for talks with his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic in the Russian Black Sea region.

The latest inspection of the mine took place on Nov. 19. Interfax reported. The report didn’t offer any details on the results.

Al-Shabab attack outside school in Somali capital leaves at least 8 dead

The al-Qaida-linked group controls large parts of rural Somalia and continues to frustrate efforts at rebuilding the Horn of Africa nation after three decades of conflict.

The blaze separated part of the school, with emergency workers looking through the collapsed roof beams and wooden benches.
S. Korea to launch task force on potentially banning dog meat

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea said Thursday that it will launch a task force to consider outlawing dog meat consumption after the country’s president offered to look into ending the centuries-old practice.

Restaurants that serve dog meat are dwindling in South Korea as younger people find dog meat a less appetizing dining option and pets are growing in popularity. Recent surveys indicate more people oppose banning dog meat, even if many don’t eat it.

In a statement, seven government offices including the Agriculture Ministry said they decided to launch the group comprising of officials, civilian experts and people from related organizations to deliver recommendations on possibly outlawing dog meat consumption. It said authorities will gather information on dog farms, restaurants and other facilities while examining public opinion.

The statement noted that “public awareness of their basic rights and animal rights issues are tangled in a complicated manner” when it comes to dog meat consumption. Public opinion suggests “people have negative views both about eating dogs and legally banning it,” it added.

The government said the initiative, the first of its kind, doesn’t necessarily guarantee the banning of dog meat. The seemingly vague stance drew protests from both dog farmers and animal rights activists.

Farmers said the task force’s launch is nothing but a formality to shut down their farms and dog meat restaurants, while activists argued the government’s announcement lacks resolve to outlaw dog meat consumption.

Sweden’s 1st female PM resigns just hours after being sworn in

The Washington Post

Sweden on Wednesday confirmed Magdalena Andersson as its first female leader, nearly 100 years after the Scandinavian country extended women the right to vote.

Her tenure was fleeting. Hours after assuming office, Andersson resigned from the post when a member of the ruling coalition, the center-left Swedish Green party, quit the government in protest after lawmakers passed a budget bill backed by three right-wing parties. Andersson’s Social Democratic Party had put forward an alternative budget proposal that failed to pass.

Andersson had briefly joined the ranks of around two dozen current female heads of state and government, according to U.N. Women, the United Nations agency focused on gender equality. Around half of those women head European countries.

Sweden was the last of its Nordic neighbors — Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland — to elect a woman to their highest offices. Scandinavian countries have a reputation for some of the world’s most progressive gender policies.

Andersson was Sweden’s finance minister before her brief foray as prime minister, which is also a rarity: Women ministers are most commonly assigned portfolios that concern issues such as family, children, social issues, employment and women’s affairs.
‘Encanto’ flips the typical script

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GIFTS FOR ALL

Still seeking inspiration for hard-to-please recipients? From tech to TikTok to books to music to one-of-a-kind personalized finds, here are suggestions for everyone on your list.

Pages 26-31
Grabbing the good gear

The early bird gets the best tech with these top picks from CNET editors

Before holiday shopping even gets into full swing, we’re already hearing rumblings about empty warehouse shelves for the hottest toys and gifts this year, thanks to everything from chip shortages, supply chain constraints and a shortage of workers at docks and ports. So for those of you who are on the hunt to stockpile some gifts, here’s a first pass at some of CNET’s favorite options.

The iPhone 13 family

The latest and greatest iPhones

CNET TAKE: Yes, some of the iPhone 13 improvements are subtler than others. But if you’re buying for anyone with an iPhone 11 or older, the 2021 models are an excellent upgrade, with improved cameras, more durable screens and far better battery life than their predecessors. Most people will find the baseline model ($829 unlocked) to be more than enough phone, especially now that they finally — finally! — start at 128GB of storage, which will be more than enough for the average user. But the pair of iPhone Pro upgrades offer better camera options and — with the $1,099 iPhone Pro Max — a jumbo 6.7-inch screen. A smaller iPhone remains in the line with the 5.4-inch iPhone 13 Mini, too. If that’s still too big of a plunge, the 2020 iPhone SE is available unlocked with 128GB of storage for a much more reasonable $399, and it’s got a good old-fashioned Touch ID fingerprint scanner, too.

Nintendo Switch OLED

Bigger screen, better kickstand

CNET TAKE: This update of the Nintendo Switch adds a bigger 7-inch OLED screen, a much better kickstand and ships with 64GB storage on board.

An air purifier for the work/home environment

By Gregg Ellman

Tribune News Service

The Proscenia A9 Air Purifier is one of those appliances you don’t think you need, but you do. Having clean, filtered and allergy-free air is nothing but a good thing. The A9 is built with multiple filtration systems and is perfect for home use, especially with home offices extending with the work-from-home movement.

An air quality smart sensor inspects the PM2.5 air index in real time. Not knowing what a PM2.5 air index is, a quick Google search told me “it refers to atmospheric particulate matter that has a diameter of fewer than 2.5 micrometers, which is about 3% the diameter of a human hair.”

A front side LCD panel displays the PM2.5 readings along with a reminder when the internal filter needs to be replaced and a Wi-Fi indicator. Small backlit buttons to control turning it on or off, speed, child locks and a timer are on the top.

And of course, there’s an app for full functionality, which includes the speed, times and sleep mode. It even reminds you via Alexa or Google Home when the filter needs to be changed.

It’s AC-powered and built to sit on the floor (10.23-by-10.23-by-20.4 inches, 14.11 pounds). Air is pulled in through small holes on the front and then filtered air is released through air vents on the top. A high-performance motor circulates and sends out the air to ceiling levels.

Setting it up takes seconds. Just pop in a filter, then plug in and power on. No cords or wires. It’s a piece of cake.

An air quality smart sensor inspects the PM2.5 air index in real time.

Yellow indicates moderate air, orange is unhealthy for sensitive groups and red is unhealthy.

Proscenia states that the A9 air purifier works in areas up to 592 square feet (circulating the indoor air five times per hour). The HDOF purifying technology has four filtration stages, which contains a primary filter, H13 HEPA, activated carbon and nano-silver ions, and absorbs 99.997% of fine particles and allergens and even larger pollutants such as dust, pet dander, smoke, mold and pollen.

Online: proscenia.com; $179.99

The Cyber Acoustics Essential Speakerphone SP-2000 is perfect for any work-from-home office to improve the audio for audio or video calls, compared to using a computer’s built-in microphone.

The desktop speakerphone is another underestimated gadget, but after using it once, it’s an obvious necessity. It connects in seconds with USB to computers or Bluetooth with smartphones. Inside is a built-in 360-degree noise-canceling microphone with a 3-meter range. The rechargeable (USB-C, cable included) battery provides up to 12 hours of talk time.

The Essential Speakerphone SP-2000 is built with smart voice enhancement technology and reduced ambient noise technology. All this adds up to crystal-clear audio, which was confirmed by several test callers in both audio calls and Zoom meetings.

Incoming audio was crystal clear as well. Tospide buttons control answering or ending calls, volume and the ever-important mute button.

Online: cyberacoustics.com; $69.99

The remote included with the Roku Streambar will control your TV’s power, too.

It’s not a must-have upgrade if you have the earlier Switch model, as the graphics and game catalog are identical. And you can still hook it up to the TV if you want to play on the big screen. But for anyone looking for the most family-friendly game system with a long list of exclusive games — the Zelda, Mario, Metroid and Pokemon franchises can only be found here — this is a great alternative to the PS5 and Xbox.

The Nintendo Switch OLED has a larger screen and better kickstand. For anyone looking for the most family-friendly game system with a long list of exclusive games — the Zelda, Mario, Metroid and Pokemon franchises can only be found here — this is a great alternative to the PS5 and Xbox.
Lin-Manuel Miranda draws from cross-cultural influences to become one of Disney’s go-to songwriters

*By Michael Cavna*

The Washington Post

Miranda, wearing his heart on his fall sweater sleeve, pauses to admit a musical fear. He had penned seven songs for his newest movie, Disney’s “Encanto,” but still needed to create that staple of so many films: the lead character introducing a driving desire through tune.

“The song I’m always going to write last is our hero’s ‘I Want’ song, just because it’s intimidating to write that for Disney,” Miranda says during a recent Zoom call, beaming in front of a blue screen. “You know it’s going out there on a playlist with ‘Out There’ from ‘Hunchback (of Notre Dame)’ and ‘Reflection’ from ‘Mulan.’ It’s just a scary place to be.”

Yet “Encanto” director Jared Bush knows that if there were an “I Want” song about Miranda himself, the lyrics would be reveal a central truth: “He wants to be challenged.”

How Miranda unlocked this lyrical puzzle for Mirabel, the lead teenager in the Colombian-set “Encanto” (in theaters now), involves cross-cultural perception and shared sense of invention — qualities that have made Miranda a continual go-to talent for Disney.

“He is hyper-collaborative — that is one of his greatest skill sets,” says Bush, a veteran of such Disney hits as “Zootopia.” “For someone as accomplished and acclaimed as Lin-Manuel is, he is a sponge for new ideas.”

These skills allow Miranda to take to Disney Animation characters and songcraft like, well, a Donald Duck to water. “Writing for animated films is like writing for the theater on steroids,” he says. “Your collaborators include hundreds of animators. That give-and-take between my music and their visuals is really thrilling.”

Miranda’s creativity also thrives on having multiple projects at once, including his new Netflix directorial debut, “Tick, Tick ... Boom!” But he’s been an especially big presence on Disney-baner titles in recent years, including performing in “Mary Poppins Returns” and contributing music for the Star Wars universe. Disney produced the 2020 film adaptation of his Broadway smash “Hamilton,” and Miranda is teaming with Disney legend Alan Menken for the live-action “The Little Mermaid” due out in 2023.

But it was while working together on Disney’s 2016 animated hit “Moana” — which yielded Miranda’s Oscar-nominated “How Far I’ll Go” — that the composer vocalized an “I Want” wish to screenwriter Bush, who recalls: “He told me he wanted to write the definitive Latin America Disney musical.”

Soon the two were talking with Bush’s “Zootopia” collaborator and fellow brass musician Byron Howard, who would also become a writer-director on “Encanto” (as would Charise Castro Smith). They shared the experience of coming from large extended families. Out of that grew an “Encanto” story that spotlights a dozen main characters — “unheard of in Disney animation,” says Bush. Miranda knew the deal with Disney: Putting forth such a sprawling familia put some of the characters in narrative peril. “The storytelling process isn’t kind to families,” Miranda once said with a laugh. Exhibit A: The title heroine in “Moana” originally had eight brothers — but as her narrative necessities streamlining, “those brothers went away.”

Early on during “Encanto,” the filmmakers internally screened some footage before it had music. The studio feedback came in: This could be tough to pull off. Were the filmmakers sure they didn’t want to trim the tale to, say, five main characters? Instead, “Lin said, ‘I think it’s 12, and here’s the opening song to prove how that’s possible,”’ Bush recalls.

Miranda notes that he wrote that opener, “The Family Madrigal,” even before “Encanto” had a second or third act. At the center of that song is Mirabel, a girl searching for her purpose in a home brimming with magical realism. Miranda, deeply steeped in the Disney songbook, looked to a musical of his youth: “I was really inspired by Belle from ‘Beauty and the Beast,’ with that opening number that just lays out the town.”

The upbeat number introduces each member of the Madrigals largely through Mirabel’s eyes, underscoring how family dynamics play out: “In so many ways, that’s really what the movie is about: being able to see your family more fully and allowing your family to grow and change — not freezing them in the roles you think they ought to play.”

The composer also drew inspiration from Team “Encanto’s” research trip to Colombia several years earlier — an early step that Bush calls “rare” for a Disney songwriter.

One day, Miranda, his father and his fellow filmmakers gathered in the Andes and reveled in the rhythms of a mini-concert. Colombian performers serenaded them with regional songs. The visitors’ enchantment — their sense of “encanto” — was complete.

About two years later, Miranda was trying to write that crucial tune for Mirabel, who is voiced by Stephanie Beatriz. Her “want” is to have a power like everyone else in her gifted familia. But how to underscore that message through melody?

The filmmakers reflected on how those musicians in the small mountain town of Barichara strummed guitars and the region’s 12-string tiple in a waltz time signature. What if Miranda wrote Mirabel’s big number, “Waiting on a Miracle,” in that same time — unlike his seven other “Encanto” songs?

“She’s in a different rhythmic universe than the rest of her family, and that was really from the Colombian music we were hearing,” Miranda says. “That let me go to a 3/4 space and then I wrote it very quickly — so honestly, the research specificity is what takes it to the next level.”

Other “Encanto” songs spotlight Mirabel’s siblings: “What Else Can I Do?” tells the story of sister Isabela (Diane Guerrero) and her power with blooming flora; “Surface Pressure” shows how for sister Luisa (Jessica Darrow), possessing immense strength can be a burden.

Miranda cannot help but infuse such numbers with personal connections. For the former, his wife reminded him that he had a resident expert in his life: a former neighbor who specializes in Latin American botany. For the latter, he acknowledges a sibling who is 6 years older: “She takes on way more responsibility than I do — I was very aware that I was the baby brother who got away with everything — so ‘Surface Pressure’ is very much a love letter to my sister.”

Miranda also picked up on the film’s motif of butterflies and transformation to create the folk-like “Dos Orugui­tas” (sung by Sebastián Yatra) — the first tune he has ever written beginning to end in Spanish. “The goal was: Write a song that feels like it’s always existed,” says Miranda. “Noting: ‘It’s my wife’s favorite song I’ve ever written.’”

Miranda says he revealed in his deep dive into Colomb­ian music, which “for someone who has roots in Puerto Rico and Mexico,” he says, “is like going to your cousin’s house.”

Bush appreciates why Disney continues to bring Miranda aboard its projects. “He writes songs that you just want to keep listening to,” says the director, adding: “He can create an earworm that somehow isn’t annoying.”

And the more you listen to lyrics, the more you appreciate their layered meanings.

How best to describe Miranda then? Bush considers it: “He’s a unicorn.”
By Lindsay Bahr
Associated Press

Everything in “House of Gucci” is over the top. The accents. The settings. The runtime. The performances. The fashion. This movie is over the top. The accents.

Rodolfo's son is Maurizio (Adam Driver), a fool with delusions of grandeur and little talent to back it up. Rodolfo's son is Maurizio (Adam Driver), who is smart but who would rather study law than join in the family business.

Our entry to this world, however, is an outsider: Patrizia Reggiani (Lady Gaga), a local bombshell and party girl who meets Maurizio by chance. Her eyes light up with manic purpose when she hears his last name is Gucci and she makes it her mission to become part of his life. This might sound sinister, especially if you know where it all ends up, but it's actually quite charming at first. The beginning of their odyssey plays like a breezy romantic comedy, with Patrizia as the gentle hunter of Driver's soft-spoken and bashful prey. Both are happy and in love and they stay together even after Rodolfo cuts his son off for choosing to marry someone beneath his station. And it's true, Patrizia might not have much in the way of education or culture, but she has a way with people too and, we'll come to find out, is a natural Machiavelli.

After a brief honeymoon period in which Maurizio gets to play poor and work at her family's truck company, an opportunity back in opens when Aldo invites the newlyweds to his birthday. Maurizio emerges from the opulent proceedings even more convinced that the simple life is for him, but Patrizia won't let this precious window evaporate. And soon they're both in deep.

But this isn't just about a reluctant heir and his ambitious wife pushing him toward his destiny. This film pokes a hole in the very concept of mass luxury and its central artifice. At the time, before “Dom and Tom” took over, Gucci was in a bit of a crisis, with Rodolfo being perhaps overly precious about expansion, Aldo a little too obsessed with profits and oversaturation. These cracks in the veneer help Patrizia and Maurizio wrestle power for themselves, until he decides he'd rather go at it on his own. At that point, it really is the beginning of the end.

‘House of Gucci’ is pure, unapologetic decadence.

By Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

Mirabel is extraordinary, in that when it comes to her family, she is totally normal.

That’s the setup for Disney’s absolutely charming new animated musical “Encanto,” which flips the typical children’s movie script. Instead of few magical people amid a sea of ordinary, here the ordinary is, well, weird.

“I will stand on the side / When you shine,” Mirabel sings to her special brothers and sisters, though she confesses, “I’m not fine.”

It’s only appropriate that “Encanto” — fueled by eight original songs by “Hamilton” creator Lin-Manuel Miranda — turns into that most special thing of all: A triumph in every category: art, songs and heart.

It starts with Mirabel Madrigal, a saucy-eyed, sweet-hearted youngster from a magical family in Colombia, where their vibrant house holds many generations. Every Madrigal at the age of 5 reveals an inner magic, say, shape-shifting, talking to animals, super strength or powerful hearing. They, in turn, help the surrounding community.

But magic has somehow skipped over Mirabel (voiced by Stephanie Beatriz), who, as she grows into a young girl, still tries to be useful among a household of Avenger-like siblings.

“Gift or no gift, I am just as special as the rest of my family,” she says.

But soon not all is well for this family whose magic was built on tragedy. Cracks — literal — appear in their home's foundations and their stern matriarch, Abuela Alma, worries quietly that their magic may be failing. It’s up to Mirabel to investigate what’s going on and save the family.

Directors Byron Howard, Jared Bush and Charise Castro Smith fill this tale with their own magic — expressive faces, acres of brilliant flowers, dancing rats, funny donkeys and a house that becomes a character itself, complete with waggling shutters for waves and tiles that move excitedly.

The only one in her family born without a special gift, Mirabel must find a way to save their broken home after the magic begins to fail.

“Encanto” is a film about the pressure of living up to high expectations and the fear of revealing imperfections. It’s about outcasts and misfits in plain sight.

“Sometimes family weirdos get a bad rap,” is one line. “You’re more than just your gift,” is another message.

Behind all that is also a cheer for immigration and how we need to lend our gifts to the community. It is the Thanksgiving movie we need in 2021.

“Encanto” is rated PG-13 for thematic elements and mild peril. Running time: 99 minutes.

Disney’s ‘Encanto’ highlights the power in being ordinary.

‘House of Gucci’ is rated R for some sexual content, language, brief nudity and violence. Running time: 117 minutes.

Mirabel, voiced by Stephanie Beatriz, tries to be useful among a family of super-siblings in “Encanto.”
Atmosphere, anticipation

Jane Campion’s Western thriller ‘Power of the Dog’ worth the wait

BY MOIRA MACDONALD

It’s been a long wait for a new Jane Campion film — her transcendent love story “Bright Star,” about the poet John Keats, came out in 2009 — but sometimes waiting makes a gift feel even more special. Nobody makes period films quite like Campion, a master of atmosphere and nuance, and “The Power of the Dog,” set in 1925 Montana, shimmers with anticipation in every frame. You have no idea where this story is going, but you’ll follow Campion’s vision anywhere.

Based on a 1967 novel by Thomas Savage (it’s been tossed around Hollywood for a while), “The Power of the Dog” is a Western thriller, with a strange triangle at its center. Phil (Benedict Cumberbatch) is a man of wealth and power who owns a ranch with his milder brother George (Jesús Puente), but at heart he’s a cowboy: speaking in a voice like cracked leather, walking as if he’s still on horseback, more comfortable riding the range than sitting at a table.

And he’s got a cruel streak, as sharp as the knife he carries, which he applies to the widow Rose (Kirsten Dunst) and her gentle teenage son Peter (Kodi Smit-McPhee). George comforts Rose and finds himself in love with her; soon, they are married and Rose arrives at the brothers’ longtime home, to Phil’s consternation. All of this happens in the movie’s early scenes: The table has been set, and a feast of cat-and-mouse tension can be served.

Majestically filmed by cinematographer Ari Wegner (“Lady Macbeth”), with New Zealand standing in for Montana, the film unfolds like the mountain views surrounding the ranch house: beautifully ominous and ever-changing, a story altered by a difference in the light. Cumberbatch, transforming himself into an American archetype, is mesmerizing — listen to the multiple shades of meaning he brings to a mocking-whistled tune, and watch as director and actor slowly reveal more colors in the character’s portrait. Dunst, as sweet, shy Rose, is all softness; though this single mother has an inner strength, Phil has a remarkable way of whittling that away, and Dunst lets us see Rose’s petals fading in the sharp mountain sunlight. Plemons, in a more reserved role, conveys awkward kindness, and Smit-McPhee, all spidery teenage arms and legs, shows us a quiet boy who loves his mother — and who wonders, in an opening voice-over, what kind of man he would be if he did not save her.

Things happen in “The Power of the Dog” that we don’t see, and what we do see carries extra meaning: the way a braided rope looks like a snake; the quiet rebuke of George’s empty, strapped-bare twin bed in the room he once shared with Phil; a spot of red blood on the endless yellow grasses. Jenny Greenwood’s plaintive score seems to be asking the questions the characters can’t. It’s a unique ride of a movie, beautiful and disturbing and haunting — in other words, it’s a Jane Campion film. Here’s hoping we don’t have to wait 11 years for the next one.


Halle Berry ‘Bruised’ inside and out in directorial debut

BY MICHAEL ORDOÑA

Los Angeles Times

Early in “Bruised,” down-and-out Jackie seems to intentionally provoke a raging reaction from her much-larger boyfriend. The confrontation turns into vigorous, consensual sex. Out of context, that could be problematic. In context, it’s part of a no-punches-pulled portrait of a person limping around with some deep damage.

In her directorial debut, Oscar-winning actress Halle Berry plays Jackie Justice, a one-time UFC (mixed martial arts) champ whose will was broken in a devastating title loss. Four years later, she’s cleaning houses, hiding from notoriety and boozing it up as secretively as she can in her manager/boyfriend’s apartment. An unexpected incident proves she still has some fight, and she ends up working with a new trainer to get back in the ring. Then her past catches up with her: The young son she abandoned years ago is essentially left on her doorstep.

From there, “Bruised” hits most of the expected back-from-Palookaville beats, down to the training montages, the uncaring promoter and the late-developing romance. The deep wrinkle is the presence of the boy (played guilelessly by Danny Boyd Jr.), who hasn’t spoken since the murder of his father. He’s a walking reminder of every bad decision Jackie has made, but his silent need and her wrenching guilt add dramatic dimension to an otherwise familiar story.

There are many indications from the first minutes of “Bruised” that this won’t be a vanity project, in the sense that the director-star is not concerned with her glamorous image. Berry is looking for the grit under the fingernails, the ache of the contusions inside that won’t heal. Jackie is not OK. Some moments land with full force — usually ones centering on Montana, shimmers with atmosphere and nuance, and “The Power of the Dog,” set in 1925 Montana, shimmers with anticipation in every frame. You have no idea where this story is going, but you’ll follow Campion’s vision anywhere.

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Tiny trains

Now a popular holiday tradition in many cities, model displays return

By Katharine Roth
Associated Press

Many holiday-season train shows were canceled or limited to fewer visitors last year because of the pandemic, but this year the popular attractions are back at botanical gardens, conservatories and elsewhere around the country.

The shows, now a tradition in many cities, feature a combination of model trains and painstakingly detailed models of landmark buildings made from leaves, twigs and other dried plant materials.

“It’s magical because people love to picture themselves in these small landscapes, with displays of greenery hiding whimsical elements surrounding the models of trains and ornate structures,” says Karen Daubmann, vice president for exhibitions and public engagement at the New York Botanical Garden, where the tradition started in 1992.

This year’s show features more than 175 models of New York landmarks and more than 25 different model trains wending their way past them.

Although model trains and holiday greenery have long been intertwined in the popular imagination, the history of this particular genre is as precise as it is surprising.

Almost 40 years ago, Ohio landscape architect Paul Busse took his quirky passion for trains, architecture and gardens public, setting up a garden railway exhibit at the 1982 Ohio State Fair. Throughout the 1980s, Busse developed his now-famous fanciful structures decorated with dried plant material. His “botanical architecture,” as he called it, along with his model train set-ups, were featured at prominent garden shows, primarily in the Midwest.

In 1992, the New York Botanical Garden, smitten by the concept and looking for a way to attract visitors in the winter, invited Busse and his team to create a “Holiday Train Show” there.

“That first year it only featured a couple train tracks and a handful of models of New York landmarks. But it was such a success that it became an annual tradition, with a few new models of landmarks added each year,” says Daubmann.

The idea soon spread.

Similar holiday-themed train shows featuring the work of the Busse family and their team popped up at botanical gardens and other spots around the country, including the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, in Columbus, Ohio; the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C.; the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Mich.; the Krohn Conservatory in Cincinnati; the Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens in Rockford, Ill.; and the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis.

Busse’s company, Applied Imagination, Ltd. — launched in 1991 in a tiny basement in Cincinnati — soon ran out of space and moved to Alexandria, Ky., where it is now based. It has a dozen or so full-time employees who build models in a studio stocked with plant materials.

“We’ve got everything from sticks of different colors and textures, to shelf fungus, to a huge array of pinecones. You can’t imagine how many types of pinecones there are out there,” says Busse’s daughter Laura Busse Dolan, who took the helm of the company five years ago.

To install all the shows, Applied Imagination’s teams — some tasked with creating model buildings and others working on tiny bridges and tunnels — pack their suitcases in October and travel “straight on until Thanksgiving,” she says. This year, they are putting together nine holiday shows, most at botanical gardens.

“It takes every individual in this company to pull this thing off,” says Dolan.

Over the years, the company has learned a thing or two.

“We now avoid using dried berries or acorns in our structures because they’re far too edible. Little creatures nibble on them while the pieces are in storage,” Dolan says. “One year, the squirrels ate one of our lampposts, so we learned the hard way.”

Standout models at The New York Botanical Garden’s show include One World Trade Center (made using an upward branching pattern to symbolize the spirit of rebirth after 9/11); the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (made largely of shelf fungus); the Statue of Liberty; the Apollo Theater; Coney Island; numerous brownstones, and some of the botanical garden’s distinctive buildings.

“On average, we create about 50 structures a year for various locations,” says Dolan. “I would say we’ve made 2,000 to 3,000 total over the course of our existence.”

“The smaller ones take around 250 hours. Our biggest one, an 11-foot replica of the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, took nearly 3,000 hours. It is on display at the Biltmore Estate through the holidays this year,” Dolan says.
Living history can enliven your travels

In Northern Ireland, my guide Stephen made his country’s struggles come alive for me when he took me to Belfast’s “Felons Club.” Stepping through a black metal security cage to reach the door, he whispered, “Members here have spent at least a year and a day in a British prison for political crimes — we want you in.” Once inside, I was spellbound, listening to heroic stories of Irish resistance while sharing a Guinness with a celebrity felon. His gift of gab gave me a deeper understanding of their struggles. The next day I walked along the green-trimmed gravesites of his prison-mates. Because of my time at the Felons Club, I better understood what these people sacrificed — why theystarved themselves to death for the cause of a united Ireland.

My uncle Thor lived through the Nazi occupation of Norway. He took me into Oslo’s grand City Hall to show me the huge “Mural of the Occupation” and share his story of those dark days with the visual support of powerful art. Walking slowly, with a soft voice, he narrated the story scene by scene in the present tense — as if the mural told his personal experience as it was happening: “The German blitzkrieg overruns our country. Men head for the mountains to organize a resistance movement. Women huddle around the neighborhood well, traditionally where news is passed, while traitors listen in. While Germans bomb and occupy Norway, a family gathers in their living room. As a boy clenches his fist and a child holds our Norwegian flag — we love it so much the Gestapo storms in. Columns lie on the ground, symbolizing how, by closing newspapers and the university, Germans did what they could to shut down our culture. Finally, years later, the war is over, prisoners are freed and Norway celebrates its happiest day: May 17, 1945.” Thor’s voice cracked as he added, “Our first Constitution Day after five years under Nazi control.” He finished by waving his arm wide and saying, “And today, each December, the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in this grand hall.”

As a boy (right), Rick met an eyewitness (left) to the start of World War I.
The ferry ride from Rotterdam to Dordrecht is only an hour long, but it seems to take you centuries away. Boat seems the most appropriate way to travel to the oldest city in Holland, which thrived for centuries thanks to its location at the intersection of three rivers. Wood, grains and genever — a traditional Dutch spirit flavored with juniper — were among the goods local merchants shipped out to the rest of the world. In the 1870s, some of the genever was made by Simon Rutte, whose distillery still stands, seven generations later, in a square about a 15-minute walk from the harbor along winding cobblestone streets.

From the outside of this modest three-story building, you’d never imagine the extent of what goes on in what you might call the flavor factory inside. In the tasting room, adorned with vintage family photos, there are about two dozen dark-glass spritz bottles, each labeled hazelnoot, Kaffir lime, oranje-bloesem and an assortment of other fruits, nuts, herbs, flowers and spices. They’re the aromas of the individual distillates that are blended to craft various genevers, such as Old Simon, the founder’s recipe involving roasted hazelnuts and almonds, cinnamon, mace and celery.

“It’s the broadest category in the world,” said Myriam Hendrickx, master distiller and former food scientist, of genever. “You have all elements from gin in terms of having flavors from so many botanicals, and all the variables in whiskey, grain-wise and aging-wise. Plus you can age it or not.”

Downstairs in the vintage-style store, the shelves are lined with hundreds of bottles, a kaleidoscopic assortment of liqueurs, gins and all kinds of genevers: wood-aged varieties, single oat, single malt. Genever is often explained as the predecessor of gin, and it is, but to describe it as such is to undervalue it, as I found out on visits to distilleries and bars throughout the Netherlands this past summer. (Though the Dutch traditionally write “jenever,” “genever” is typically the U.S. spelling.)

I had gone there on a quest to learn about the spirit, which played a huge role at the dawn of cocktail culture in the United States in the latter half of the 19th century. In fact, it was the original spirit in many classic cocktails we know today as gin-based, such as the Collins. Genever is traditionally distilled from grains, like whiskey, to make a malt wine, which is then redistilled with botanicals, including jeneverbes, or juniper berries. It’s distinguished by a maltiness that calls to mind a gentle Irish whiskey. In the first half of the 17th century, the Dutch East India Company was thriving, establishing the Netherlands as an influential commercial force. Genever production grew around England — sort of. Local distillers stripped down the process, infusing the botanicals into less costly neutral spirit. Gone was the maltiness; here to stay was juniper flavor in high definition.

It was hardly only America that clamored for the stuff. Experts estimate that, at points between 1850 and 1880, 1 million liters of genever were exported from the Netherlands each week. Around 1880, it went into free fall with the widespread use of the column still, a more efficient piece of equipment that allowed for cheaper production and much lighter flavors than spirit made in a pot still.

By the late 1800s, Schiedam had multiple windmills dedicated to milling grains for the city’s many distilleries. There are seven mills in Schiedam today.

Discover a Dutch spirit soaked in history

BY LIZA WEISSTUCH
Special to The Washington Post

The ferry ride from Rotterdam to Dordrecht is only an hour long, but it seems to take you centuries away. Boat seems the most appropriate way to travel to the oldest city in Holland, which thrived for centuries thanks to its location at the intersection of three rivers. Wood, grains and genever — a traditional Dutch spirit flavored with juniper — were among the goods local merchants shipped out to the rest of the world. In the 1870s, some of the genever was made by Simon Rutte, whose distillery still stands, seven generations later, in a square about a 15-minute walk from the harbor along winding cobblestone streets.

From the outside of this modest three-story building, you’d never imagine the extent of what goes on in what you might call the flavor factory inside. In the tasting room, adorned with vintage family photos, there are about two dozen dark-glass spritz bottles, each labeled hazelnoot, Kaffir lime, oranje-bloesem and an assortment of other fruits, nuts, herbs, flowers and spices. They’re the aromas of the individual distillates that are blended to craft various genevers, such as Old Simon, the founder’s recipe involving roasted hazelnuts and almonds, cinnamon, mace and celery.

“It’s the broadest category in the world,” said Myriam Hendrickx, master distiller and former food scientist, of genever. “You have all elements from gin in terms of having flavors from so many botanicals, and all the variables in whiskey, grain-wise and aging-wise. Plus you can age it or not.”

Downstairs in the vintage-style store, the shelves are lined with hundreds of bottles, a kaleidoscopic assortment of liqueurs, gins and all kinds of genevers: wood-aged varieties, single oat, single malt. Genever is often explained as the predecessor of gin, and it is, but to describe it as such is to undervalue it, as I found out on visits to distilleries and bars throughout the Netherlands this past summer. (Though the Dutch traditionally write “jenever,” “genever” is typically the U.S. spelling.)

I had gone there on a quest to learn about the spirit, which played a huge role at the dawn of cocktail culture in the United States in the latter half of the 19th century. In fact, it was the original spirit in many classic cocktails we know today as gin-based, such as the Collins. Genever is traditionally distilled from grains, like whiskey, to make a malt wine, which is then redistilled with botanicals, including jeneverbes, or juniper berries. It’s distinguished by a maltiness that calls to mind a gentle Irish whiskey. In the first half of the 17th century, the Dutch East India Company was thriving, establishing the Netherlands as an influential commercial force. Genever production grew around England — sort of. Local distillers stripped down the process, infusing the botanicals into less costly neutral spirit. Gone was the maltiness; here to stay was juniper flavor in high definition.

It was hardly only America that clamored for the stuff. Experts estimate that, at points between 1850 and 1880, 1 million liters of genever were exported from the Netherlands each week. Around 1880, it went into free fall with the widespread use of the column still, a more efficient piece of equipment that allowed for cheaper production and much lighter flavors than spirit made in a pot still.

SEE GENEVER ON PAGE 21
Spirit played a key role in cocktail culture in America. In the mid-1800s, the drink was used in a variety of mixed drinks, often as a base for other spirits. As the popularity of cocktails grew, so did the use of genever, which was known for its smooth and flavorful profile.

Modern cocktail bars often feature genever as a key ingredient, often in unique and creative ways. For example, at the Jopen distillery in Haarlem, head distiller Marnix ten Kortenaar redistills malt wine to create a more flavorful and complex spirit that is used in cocktails.

The Jopen distillery is just one example of how genever is being reintroduced into modern cocktail culture. Many bar owners and mixologists are rediscovering the spirit and incorporating it into their drinks.

In conclusion, genever is a versatile and underappreciated spirit that has the potential to become a staple in modern cocktail culture. With its unique flavor profile and history, genever is a drink that should be explored by anyone interested in the world of cocktails.
Statistics are hard to come by, but it seems unlikely that any big German city drinks more wine per person than Stuttgart.

In a country renowned for its beer, Stuttgart, with its own municipal winery and surrounded by vineyards, is all about the grape.

But if some outsiders turn up their noses at the local trollinger or lemberger wines consumed in the region — and not many other places — Stuttgarters can't seem to get enough of the stuff.

To better appreciate the overlooked history of winemaking in Stuttgart, the place to go is the museum dedicated to celebrating it. In nearby Uhlbach, which is at the heart of area grape-growing, the Stuttgart Museum of Viniculture puts you in touch with tradition.

The museum is quite small, and there isn't a ton to see. But for just 3 euros, it's worthwhile for wine buffs and can be navigated in under an hour.

Luckily, there are English explanations at exhibits to provide details. Wooden winemaking tools of generations past, such as grape pressers, are among the items displayed.

There also are interesting informational tidbits. Apparently, some historians believe that wine production, and the profits that came from it, was a reason Stuttgart became a home for medieval royalty.

It was possibly even more of a reason than the wealth brought by horse breeding and the stud farms from which Stuttgart got its name, according to the museum. The winemaking tradition in Stuttgart is believed to go back some 2,000 years, thanks to the Romans.

Massive wine barrels from more than 100 years ago, including one with a carving of Stuttgart's old city hall, also are showcased. There are explanations about soils in the area and how they contribute to the character of various vintages and the unique aspects of local wine.

Best of all, visitors can sample local offerings at the wine cafe on site.

While I'm no expert, I would say that the wine that most comes to mind when thinking of Stuttgart is the red known as trollinger. It is Germany's fourth-most-planted red wine vine. Virtually all trollinger production is in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, notes the Oxford Companion to Wine. Stuttgart is the state capital.

"An astonishing statistic when one considers that virtually all of the resultant pale red is drunk by Wuerttembergers," the book says.

It was all the more reason on my recent visit to the wine museum to try the maligned yet locally cherished trollinger. My review: light and easy to drink and not a thing wrong with it if appreciated on its own terms.

But while bottles of local wine can be purchased for takeaway, I decided to leave empty-handed.
Rheinland-Pfalz eatery elevates burgers

Cure meaty cravings with a trip to Bruno’s Burger & Lieblingsgerichte

BY ALEXANDER RIEDEL
Stars and Stripes

D uring a recent cold night exploring the nearby Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, I was overcome with a craving for the comforting, warm bite of a good ol’ juicy burger.

A quick internet search led my wife and me to Bruno’s Burger & Lieblingsgerichte (favorite dishes), a small restaurant in Neustadt’s old city center.

On our way inside, we admired the historic building’s beautifully restored trusswork. Bruno’s is located along what was once a creek used for washing off by-products from the tanneries shops upstream.

Because of this, the area was considered an industrial and less desirable part of town. Today, though, the alley leading to the restaurant is lined by swanky wine bars, cafes and a plethora of sit-down restaurants. Bruno’s is a relatively new addition to this old city core, having opened in 2017. Its namesake is the dog of one of the co-owners, and Bruno the beagle’s picture symbolically guards the front door.

We walked into the small space, where the open kitchen welcomes customers. A friendly waitress was more than polite and said she could squeeze us in between reservations at one of the two-seater tables.

The interior blends the historic with a modern touch. Most of the furniture is utilitarian and consists mainly of benches or spartan stools with cushions held in place by industrial tie-down straps.

The “German High Roller” burger at Bruno’s Burger & Lieblingsgerichte restaurant in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse.

Large lamps and electronic candlelight provide a warm glow, resulting in a casual yet stylish vibe.

A burger joint may have once been the antithesis not only of fine dining but also of a healthy or vegetarian diet, but Bruno’s is inclusive in its burger culture, offering both gluten-free and vegetarian options.

And for those looking for something else entirely, there are such favorites as grilled salmon with caramelized ginger or chicken salad.

Although Bruno’s unashamedly focuses on the ground round, vegetarians have the option of the Veggie-Magic, which surprisingly consists not of a veggie burger or mock-meat patty but of a decidedly delicious and hearty cut of grilled halloumi cheese accompanied by a mango-lemongrass chutney.

Although this is my absolute favorite, the adorably named Alligator Burger is also a must-try. It’s a burger with its skin on and smothered in melted cheese.

The burger was well-paired with a side of homemade potato wedges baked to a delicious golden-brown with the skin on and smothered in melted cheese.

Bruno’s in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse is named after Bruno the Beagle, the owner’s dog.

Bruno’s Burger & Lieblingsgerichte

Address: Zwerchgasse 17, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse
Hours: Tuesday, 12-5 p.m.; Wednesday-Friday 12-5 p.m. and 5-9 p.m.; Saturday 2-9 p.m.
Prices: Burgers range from 6.90 euros to 12.50 euros. Sides dishes from 3.50 euros to 6 euros. Favorites plates are offered from 9.90 euros to 11.80 euros. Dessert options, including creme brulee, are 3.50 euros to 4.50 euros. Drinks, depending on size, range from 2 euros for bottled soft drinks to 3 euros for iced tea and from 2.40 euros for beer to 3.20 euros for some wine selections. English menu: No, but most staffers speak English and are happy to assist.

Contact Information: Phone: +49 (0)6321-3554426; email: info@brunos-lieblingsgerichte.de; online: brunos-lieblingsgerichte.de; Facebook: /BrunosBurgerundLieblingsgerichte

Alexander Riedel

We rounded out the meal with a chocolate tart topped with a raspberry drizzle, one of two items on the admirably limited dessert menu. But after the delicious burgers, we didn’t have much room to spare anyway.

The traditional hamburger has come quite a ways from its industrial image of a loveless ground beef patty between two bread rolls. In Neustadt, though, Bruno’s stands alone.
For an authentic experience, take a tasting tour of the Japanese spirit distilleries in Miyazaki prefecture.

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

Many who’ve spent time in South Korea have enjoyed soju, a liquor mostly made from ethanol that’s fueled more than its share of big weekends on the peninsula.

Japan has its own version, known as shochu, that’s been distilled in small, family-owned operations for generations.

Miyazaki prefecture, on Japan’s southern island of Kyushu, is the perfect place to enjoy locally made shochu. A recent press tour stopped at four distilleries to see how the beverage is made.

The first stop was the Yanagita Distillery in Miyakonojo City, where we met Tadashi Yanagita, the fifth generation to run the family business.

The distillery has a small lounge where Yanagita poured samples of a few of his products. Each has a distinctive taste with some providing a stronger alcoholic kick and others tickling the mouth like whiskey.

Shochu typically has between 25% and 35% alcohol content. Distilleries sell 1.8-liter bottles for the equivalent of about $20.

Yanagita uses spring water from the Kirishima Mountains and local rice, barley and sweet potatoes in his products. The region’s high temperatures and high humidity are ideal for fermentation, he said.

Also in Miyakonojo, the Watanabe Distillery prides itself on growing its own potatoes, according to chief executive Koichiro Watanabe.

The young shochu maker showed off his factory and spoke about the importance of local microbes in the process of making the alcohol.

Watanabe leaves the windows of his distillery open to allow local flavors to waft in on the wind and proudly shows off the sweet potatoes he grows nearby.

The potatoes are mashed and mixed with yeast before being left to ferment. The mixture is stirred regularly and cooled to stop it overheating before it’s fed into a still where alcohol condenses to produce shochu.

In Nichinan City, the Furusawa distillery is operating in ancient buildings that include a bunker built to protect the shochu from Allied bombing during World War II.

From the street you can watch locals sort potatoes in a shed and see very old ceramic pots used for shochu fermentation.

A drinking area includes a view of a small garden. We tasted four types of shochu there, along with the sort of local fish snacks a Japanese worker might eat with a tipple after work.

The Inoue Shuzo Co. is also in Nichinan. This large shochu factory employs uniformed staff to produce copious quantities of alcohol that’s sold all over Japan.

The operation includes a fish farm where sturgeon imported from Russia are raised to produce caviar. If you’re willing to splash out about $80 for a small jar, it goes nicely with crackers and a glass of shochu.

You can find plenty of shochu on Japanese supermarket shelves and a mass-produced variety, akin to the Korean soju, is mixed with carbonated fruit juice to make Chu Hai, sold in cans at convenience stories.

But if you want an authentic Japanese shochu experience, it’s worth visiting a distillery, and Miyazaki is the perfect place to do that.
Freshness guaranteed
Taste pole-fished bonito at Hotel Maruman on Kyushu island in Miyazaki prefecture

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

Meitsu Port in Japan’s Miyazaki prefecture is home of pole-fished bonito, known locally as katsuo. Early each weekday morning, local restaurants and hotels send staff to bid on freshly caught fish at a dockside market. Seabirds flutter about the boats as they unload their bounty pierside before an auctioneer starts the bidding on the day’s catch.

The market has everything from snapper to lobster, but the port’s most famous fish is bonito, also known as skipjack tuna. A dockside museum is devoted to the bonito fishery and includes old navigation equipment and bamboo fishing poles that were used before fiberglass and carbon poles were introduced a few decades ago. Visitors can put on a pair of virtual reality goggles and see what it’s like for fishermen catching bonito from boats that follow the fish north to Hokkaido along Japan’s east coast.

Bonito fishing boats typically have a crew of 20 to 25. When the bonito are close, the fishermen can haul them in on hooks decorated with rooster feathers. The hooks don’t have barbs on them, which allows the fishermen to flick fish into the boat and snap the line back into the water in a matter of seconds.

Visiting the fish market and museum requires approval from local officials, but anyone can taste bonito sashimi, along with other locally caught seafood, at Hotel Maruman, a short walk from the pier.

During my recent visit to the port, I ordered a 1,100-yen (about $9.65) meal that included bonito. The reddish fish tastes a little like fatty tuna. The fish is usually caught in Miyazaki only from February to early May. Bonito travel north along the Japanese east coast following the Kuroshio current during the season.

Meitsu Port in Japan’s Miyazaki prefecture is the home of pole-fished bonito, known locally as katsuo.

A Parmesan crust adds texture, flavor to this cheesy salmon dish

By Linda Gassenheimer
Tribune News Service

Here’s a new way to serve salmon. It’s baked with a crisp, crunchy Parmesan crust that adds texture and flavor to this meaty fish. Good-quality Parmesan cheese makes a difference. Look for Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese or the best quality you can find.

**Parmesan Crusted Salmon**

**Ingredients**

- Olive oil spray
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons panko breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup whole wheat spaghetti
- 4 cups fresh spinach

**Directions**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking tray with foil and spray with olive oil spray. Mix the Parmesan cheese, breadcrumbs, garlic and cayenne pepper together in a bowl.
2. Add the olive oil and mix well until the mixture is moist. Place salmon fillets skin side down on the foil-lined sheet. Spray salmon with olive oil spray. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Press Parmesan mixture onto the salmon covering the fillets. Place the tray in the oven for 15 minutes. If crust starts to burn, cover the salmon with foil. A meat thermometer should read 125 degrees. Divide between two dinner plates.

**Spaghetti and Spinach**

**Ingredients**

- ¼ pound whole wheat spaghetti
- 4 cups fresh spinach
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

**Directions**

1. Bring a large saucepan three quarters filled with water to a boil. Add the spaghetti and boil 9 minutes or according to package instructions. Add the spinach. Remove 2 tablespoons of the water and place in a bowl. Drain the spaghetti and spinach and place in the bowl with the reserved water. Add the olive oil and salt and pepper to taste. Divide between two dinner plates with the salmon.

Serves 2.
Some gifts, such as a candle or a bottle of wine, are great in the moment or for the short term. Others make memorable keepsakes or are so personal they can’t be re-gifted.

Here are some gifts that, besides amusing and delighting the receiver now, are meant to be cherished for years.

CUSTOM CLUTCH: Newport, Calif., designer and boutique owner Talia Hancock sells hand-beaded clutch handbags that can be customized with letters and colors. If there’s a bride-to-be on your list who is changing her name, she might love a clutch with her maiden name on one side and her married name on the other. A new sorority pledge might impress her sisters with a clutch made with her school’s colors and the Greek letters. Or how about a clutch adorned with your kids’ names? “The sky’s the limit,” Hancock said. Jackets come in blue or black denim and start at $198 (some designs might cost extra.).

PRETV SAVED TEXTS: Do you have a funny text conversation with friends that you’d love to save? Or a loved one whose texts you never want to delete? Keep them forever in a book of text messages called Keepster. The company can take the text from various apps and compile them into the format of your choice.

PERSONALIZED PODCAST: If you’d like to have an oral history from a loved one, check out Artifact. The company enlists professional interviewers — many say they are “moonlighting journalists” — to conduct an interview with your subject. An interview focuses on a “chapter” of a person’s life, such as childhood and the teen years. The audio is then edited into a 20-minute, studio-quality episode. The cost is $119 per episode or $99 per episode for three. A finished product is delivered within five days of the recording.

PET PORTRAITS: The pandemic has seen a surge in pet ownership, and Sam and Jack is one of the companies offering a way to celebrate or remember these beloved family members. They’ll take a photo of your pet and turn it into everything from a framed, illustrated portrait to a personalized throw pillow like the one above.

CustomDenimJacket: Also from Hancock’s store TALIA, a customized denim jacket. The back of the jacket is hand-painted. You can request a name, date, initials, phrase or image that will guarantee you get noticed. If you don’t want the back painted, consider customizing the collar instead, so when you pop it, it makes a statement. “I never wear my clutch or wear my jackets without getting stopped and asked where I got them,” Hancock said. Jackets come in blue or black denim and start at $198.

mensagem: Preserve your text messages in a book called Keepster. The company can take messages from apps including iMessage, WhatsApp and Hike, and compile them into the format of your choice.

VIDEO MESSAGE: For the person who has everything, an original gift might be a group video message or tribute by Tribute.co. They can send out the invites and compile the videos. There’s no maximum length, so messages can be hours long. The company’s founder, Andrew Horn, says he’s even had customers rent out theaters to play their tributes. Prices vary depending on the package: If you edit the videos yourself using Tribute.co’s editing platform, the cost is $29. If you use their concierge service, they’ll take care of the outreach coordination and get the video edited for $99. They can present it via a link that can also be downloaded, or if you prefer to present a physical gift, for $174 the company will give you a greeting card that has a video screen with audio inside to play your message.
Learn something new with nonfiction reads

**FOR THE BOOK LOVER**

**By Leanne Italie**

Associated Press

In this world, there’s a book for everybody. Take advantage of that sentiment during the holiday shopping season. Book sales have thrived during the pandemic after initial concerns that it might hurt the publishing business. Come the holidays, some new nonfiction might hit your gift-giving sweet spots.

A sampling:

“Dressing the Resistance: The Visual Language of Protest through History,” by Camille Benda: From ancient Roman rebellions to the Black Lives Matter movement, dress has empowered the powerless to express dissent. Benda, a costume designer and dress historian, tells the story in more than 150 images, photos and paintings with loads of context in text. Take the simple top hat, a khadi cloth envelope-style popular during India’s fight for self-rule. The British authorities banned it, throwing fuel on the fire. $27.50.

“The Christmas Owl,” by Ellen Kalish and Gideon Sterer, with illustrations by Ramona Kaulitzki: This delightful Christmas tale is the true story of a little owl dubbed Rockefeller. The young, Saw-whet owl was sent to therapy to fix his effeminate appearance. Gaunt, and out of sorts, she spent a brief stint in a Sauget Gerties rehabilitation center before she was set free. Kalish is executive director of the Sauget Wildlife Center in Sauget, Illinois, andSterer was the zoo’s director who first discovered the little owl. $21.98.

“Patient Zero: A Curious History of the World’s Worst Diseases,” by Lydia Kang and Nate Pedersen: Disease outbreaks. How do they start? How do they spread? How do we overcome? Those are questions for the times, but certainly nothing new. This book explores all that came before COVID-19: plague, yellow fever, mad cow disease, typhoid and more. Who was Typhoid Mary? She was an asymptomatic, transient home cook who infected hundreds, if not thousands. Where did the N95 respirator mask begin? With Sara Little Turnbull and the fibrous molded padding for brass she came up with for 3M. $24.95.

“In the Weeds: Around the World and Behind the Scenes with Anthony Bourdain,” by Tom Vitale: Bourdain’s longtime director and producer shares stories and secrets from more than a decade of globetrotting with the beloved and complicated foodie/adventurer. There was the time Bourdain raved about a Hong Kong restaurant’s Peking Duck, only to be told he was devouring sucking pig. And a stop in Namibia, where the warthog anus he ate hit his stomach hard. Bourdain killed himself in a French hotel room in 2018. $30.

“Sharings, Twitter, and Time,” by Pope Francis and friends: Soon to be a four-part documentary series on Netflix, this book is a collection of personal stories of grandparents and elders around the world, including filmmaker Martin Scorsese. There’s a survivor of Auschwitz, a blind basket weaver in Kenya and a centenarian midwife in Guatemala. The pope said in a statement: “Our society has grown more fragmented. Therefore, we need to foster the culture of encounter, the culture of sharing. In this sense, the day of sharing is unique.” $19.69.

“Fantastic Fungi Community Cookbook,” edited and with essays by Eugenia Bone, recipes by the Fantastic Fungi Community: With plant-based lifestyles growing bigger and stronger the world over, there’s a survivor of Auschwitz, a blind basket weaver in Kenya and a centenarian midwife in Guatemala. The pope said in a statement: “Our society has grown more fragmented. Therefore, we need to foster the culture of encounter, the culture of sharing. In this sense, the day of sharing is unique.” $19.69.

“Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls: 100 Real-Life Tales of Black Girl Magic,” edited by Lilly Workneh with a foreword by CaShawn Thompson, who originated the #BlackGirlMagic hashtag in 2013: The latest in a series for children ages 6-up, this book highlights the contributions of 100 barrier-breaking Black women and girls through generations. Amanda Gorman, Naomi Osaka and Ava DuVernay are included. So is Sanité Bélair, who at 15 fought in the Haitian Revolution and paid with her life in front of a firing squad. $35.

“Best Wishes, Warmest Regards: The Story of Schitt’s Creek,” by Daniel Levy and Eugene Levy: You’re welcome. Fans. Your favorite father and son have put together “behind the episode” insights, Q&A conversations with cast members and definitive guides to Moira’s emotional support wigs and David’s many knits. $31.99.

“The Highlights Book of Things to Draw,” by Highlights: The folks that bring you Highlights magazine have provided a fun artist’s primer for kids ages 7-up. The journal-style book has 175 how-to creative projects and activities, from learning how to incorporate texture to drawing shadow art. Similarly, there’s “The Highlights Book of Things to Write.” $14.99 each.

“Spike,” by Spike Lee: Fun fact: Lee’s thesis film at New York University, “Joe’s Red Stuy Barbershop,” won a student Academy Award. Not-so-fun fact: Lee was the only person of color at the award ceremony. In scrapbook style, with loads of behind-the-scenes photos, Lee tells his story in a career-spanning monograph — his first — using material from his archives. Photos, featuring the work of Spike’s brother, David Lee, are beautifully reproduced. Text is impactful but kept to a minimum. $50. Edited by Steve Crist.

“Keep Moving: The Journal,” by Maggie Smith: The author and poet’s bestseller, “Keep Moving: Notes on Loss, Creativity and Change,” was a title for the moment in 2020. Now, she has completed a journal intended to inspire the world to persevere. It has 52 exercises with writing prompts divided into the same three sections as the book: revision, resilience and transformation. Says Smith: “I know now that hope is a muscle — it grows bigger and stronger the more I use it.” $16.

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Gifts that run the gamut from van adventures to James Bond

Sometimes, gifting is a crap shoot. You dig around and hope for the best, and you just might come up with gold.

Here’s some serendipitous inspiration for those in need:

**VAN LIFE:** Whether in vans, campers or school buses, the pandemic grew a new crop of folks who took off on wheels after tricking out their rides. Why not gift a van-life adventure? A company outside Boston, Walden Campervans, has nicely done rentals with solar and hot water systems — and plenty of add-ons, including toilets. One of their rides is pet-friendly with a cozy crate. Gift cards can be had and never expire. A three-night minimum rental is required. The maximum is 30 days. No one-way trips. Prices are generally in the $300-a-night range, depending on van, season and extras. Waldencampervans.com.

**ANIMATRONIC PETS:** Isolation, loneliness, cognitive decline. The pandemic hasn’t been easy on anybody, including dementia patients. Why not give a gift of companionship with an animatronic dog or cat? Research is encouraging that such toys can do a world of good without the responsibility of a real pet. One brand, Ageless Innovation, offers several with built-in sensors that respond to motion and touch. The heartbeat can be felt and their coats are lifelike. The cats purr and the dogs can bark back in response to a voice. Dogs are $139.99 and cats $124.99. Kids might like them, too. Joyforall.com.

**CARGO BIKES** (above): They’re the rage among climate lovers the world over, or parents looking for a new way to haul both groceries and kids. Amsterdam-based Urban Arrow has a nice selection of electric cargo bikes, from the huge, three-wheeled Tender (can carry a boatload) to the compact yet still useful Shorty. Add-on accessories include rain covers, a poncho that connects to the rain covers, and a baby seat adapter with suspension to smooth out bumps. Sold through a network of dealers. These things are heavy and pricey — $6,000 to $7,000 for the Family model, depending on the motor — but may please just the right giftee. Urbanarrow.com.

**BLACK HAIR:** “There is something radical about loving your hair in a world that tells you not to; it shows an incredible amount of strength and self-love.” So wrote St. Clair Detrick-Jules in the introduction to her book, “My Beautiful Black Hair.” The film-maker and photographer turned to friends and strangers for 101 natural hair journeys. The book is part love letter to her younger sister, Khloe, who struggled after white classmates called her hair ugly. Detrick-Jules combines the candid portraits she took and narratives she collected with letters of inspiration to her sibling written by some of the women. Chronical Books. $24.95.
Gamut: Consider hot sauce and self-heating coffee cans

FROM PAGE 28

HOT SAUCE: Alice Cooper and hot sauce is a pairing that doesn’t roll off the tongue, but in the world of celebrity deals in the food and beverage industry, why not the 73-year-old rocker? Turns out, the OG has always been something of a hot sauce fan and was hands-on in developing three of his own named for some of his hits: Welcome to My Nightmare (mild), Poison (reaper hot) and No More Mr. Nice Guy (medium). Cooper’s favorite part of the process? “Tasting the sauces as we went along to get them right,” he said via email. Made from reaper peppers, one of the hottest around. $29.95 for all three. Also sold separately. UnitedSauces.com, TheChivery.com and other top retailers.

HUES & CUES: This vibrant, color-guessing game took flight on TikTok and has made its way into the hearts of families. It’s also a great party game. A cue master pulls a card and lends clues on one of 480 hues displayed on the board without using the actual names of primary colors. So no red, blue, yellow, etc. Play takes about 30 minutes for three to 10 people. It looks complicated but is amazingly simple — for folks with vocabularies that differentiate hues, anyway. Guessing “grape” or “apple” won’t get the job done. $24.99 from The Op. Widely available.


HYDROW ROWER: The company that makes this high-end home rowing machine calls it the Peloton of rowers. It’s sleek, quiet and — for $38 a month — comes with a Peloton-like membership full of pre-loaded watery workouts and live events displayed on a 22-inch touchscreen. It’s heavy at 145 pounds but folds upright for storage with the help of a kit, sold separately. It uses an electromagnetic fabric strip as the drag mechanism to simulate the pull of water. The drag is screen controlled. It requires Wi-Fi but is not enabled for third-party apps like Netflix or Spotify. $2,295 with free standard delivery included. Hydrow.com.

HIGH BREW: You may have heard of this Austin, Texas-based company selling cold brew coffee in cans, but you might not be familiar with its self-heating version. The can uses a solid-state chemical reaction to warm the liquid. Simply twist the bottom of the can, wait two minutes and shake gently three times to distribute the heat. Pull the tab on the lid, which looks like a regular go cup top, and enjoy. $20 for a four-pack. Six packs are $30. Highbrew.com.

FOR THE MUSIC LOVER

**Piano Man:** Billy Joel is celebrating 50 years of making music this year and he’s reminding us all how it started. “Billy Joel — The Vinyl Collection, Vol. 1” contains nine LPs: His first six solo studio albums ("Cold Spring Harbor," "Piano Man," "Street-life Serenade," "Turnstiles," "The Stranger," "52nd Street") with his first live album ("Songs in the Attic") and "Live at The Great American Music Hall — 1975," a previously unreleased concert recording available for the first time in the box set as a double-vinyl album. The box also includes a 50-page booklet highlighting Joel’s early career through archival photos, his insights on his songs and tributes from fellow musicians, artists and celebrities. Price: $250.

**Heavy Box:** Metallica’s 1991 self-titled LP, generally known as the “Black Album," is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, and one way to join in is by listening to a whole lot of people who aren’t in Metallica. “The Metallica Blacklist” is a four-hour, 53-track behemoth of covers by artists including Phoebe Bridgers, Miley Cyrus, St. Vincent, Weezer and Elton John. They tackle legendary tracks from the album, including “Enter Sandman,” “The Unforgiven,” “Nothing Else Matters,” “Wherever I May Roam” and “Sad But True.” The seven-LP vinyl box set retails for $150, a 4-CD version is $30 and the digital download costs $50. All profits go to the charities of each contributing artist’s choice along with Metallica’s own foundation, All Within My Hands. 

**Rap This Up:** Lil Wayne has dropped the vinyl box set “Tha Carter Singles Collection,” which features 19 of the rapper’s hit 45 rpm records, including “A Milli," "Hustler Musik," "How to Love" and the unreleased until now “Carter III”-era song "Ya Dig." Two liner lithographs and a booklet filled with never-before-seen photos are included in the box, which is decorated with Lil Wayne’s tattoos. “Tha Carter" peaked at No. 5 in 2004 on the Billboard 200, “Tha Carter II” reached No. 2 a year later, and “Tha Carter III” “Tha Carter IV” and “Tha Carter V” all reached top spots in 2008, 2011 and 2018, respectively. Cost: $300.

**The Gift of Billie:** How did Billie Eilish become Billie Eilish? You can learn in her songs or the Apple+ doc “Billie Eilish: The World’s a Little Blurry.” But there’s also the hundreds of photos of her growing up in Grand Central Publishing’s “Billie Eilish.” There’s one of her as an infant in a sling worn by her father as he plays the piano, and another of her and her brother, Finneas, looking mischief as small children. “I just want you to see me and see my life, with your own eyes,” she writes in the introduction. “I want to give you a big pile of pictures that speak for themselves.” They are at the same time deeply intimate snaps of a future Grammy-winning artist and yet often just ordinary shots of a child growing up in what seems like a loving home. Cost: $35.

**Do Good, Look Great:** The nonprofit Sweet Relief Musicians Fund provides assistance to all types of career musicians who are struggling to make ends meet while facing illness, disability or age-related problems. One way to help Sweet Relief help others is to help yourself or your loved ones to some cool music-themed merch, from totes, T-shirts, tank tops, caps, mugs, bags, sweat-shirts and more. Check out their “Music Heals” and “Music Is Love” lines. Proceeds from each purchase go to help those in need. 

**Candid Camera:** Singer-songwriter Graham Nash has been taking photographs longer than he’s been making music. His collection of images over the years — “A Life in Focus: The Photography of Graham Nash,” out Nov. 30 — captures unguarded many fellow celebrities like Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Mama Cass Elliot, Twiggy and, of course, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. “I’ve been a very lucky man in some very strange places,” Nash writes in the introduction. Many of the images have a surreal flavor, some have a political vibe and some are just random subjects he encountered on a street. Cost: $60.
Unique ideas to help you stay trendy

BY LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

Look no further than TikTok and its pandemic-expanded ranks for unique holiday gifts, from the hot Halara athleisure dress to a miracle cleaning paste called The Pink Stuff, worthy of any neat freak’s Christmas stocking. The short-form video platform was a hit for millions during quarantine times, and the hashtag #TikTok-MadeMeBuyIt endures. The hashtag has been viewed more than 5.6 billion times, driving TikTok to boost its direct shopping tools. There’s something for everybody down that yellow brick road for the holidays. Try one of these:

THE HALARA: Nothing says viral quite like the sporty, ultra-popular Halara dress, specifically the tank-top version that comes in a range of colors and sizes up to 3X. It’s called the In My Feels EveryDay Dress-Wannabe, and it includes attached shorts and handy pockets. It’s super soft and stretchy. The band followed up with the In My Feels Everyday Chill Dress-La La Land, a version with a midi slit skirt. The tennis-looking original sells for $49.95. The newer one goes for $74.95. The Pink Stuff all-purpose cleaning paste
has been praised for its power on grease. It makes comely sense. It’s a belt-ed women’s robe that looks like a Zoom-worthy top in three styles: button-down collared, cross- over blouse and cowl neck. It even has cuffs. There are black, white and grey options. The robe sells for $70. Shop at Myworkrobe.com

THE ALMOND COW: Plant-based everything is the rage, and that’s ever-present when it comes to milk. This carafe requires nuts to be thrown into the base, water to be added, a button to be pressed and voila, 5 to 6 cups of frothy almond milk. It automatically separates the milk from the pulp. Users can add coconut, dates or whatever extra ingredients they like. It takes just a minute with no mess and easy cleanup. The milk lasts three to five days in the fridge. The magic extends to cocktails, creamers, dressings, soups and more. It goes for $249. Available on Almondcow.co

THE CIRKUL: Created by two former football players at Dartmouth who wanted to improve their hydration, the Cirkul water bottles and their flavor cartridges allow users to ramp up or tone down the taste with the turn of a dial. Cartridges come in more than 40 no-sugar, no-calorie, all-natural flavors, including ice coffees and teas. The bottles are customizable in a range of sizes in BPA-free plastic and stainless steel. $30 for a 22-ounce plastic bottle and four cartridges. On drinkcircul.com

THE MOBOT: Speaking of drinking, another water bottle called the Mobot doubles as a BPA-free massage foam roller for aching muscles. They’re constructed from recycled stainless steel in sizes with catchy names: Big Bertha at 40 ounces, Grace at 27 ounces and the Firecracker at 18 ounces. There are some fun patterns and colors, including the fruity style called Juicybot. Actress Lucy Hale never leaves home without one. Prices range from $39.99 to $59.99. Buy at Mobot.com. Also available on Amazon and Nordstrom.com.

THE MIZZEN + MAIN: This company did it the TikTok way: It harnessed interest in its men’s shirts through hilarious videos mocking work life, both in the office and fresh out of bed at home. Sell me a shirt without telling me you’re selling me a shirt. The thing is, the shirts are quality in no-tuck gingham, city flannel and moisture-wicking dress. They come fitted and relaxed, in polos and vests, stretchy and not so much. There’s a color or print for just about everyone no matter how good or bad at his job he may be. Prices from $78 to $125. Head to Mizzenandmain.com

THE FANCY COTTON: Le Coton at Chanel.com to be exact. There’s a bounty of videos on TikTok and elsewhere with creators hunting down the cheapest items on various luxury sites. They came up with the bougliest cotton squares ever. The fun is in the unboxing. The signature white Chanel packaging is elegant, and complete with sealed tissue paper and a couple of sample products thrown in. One gets 100 squares of cotton embossed with the brand’s double C monogram. Gifters report glee from giftees, though some of the latter anticipated far pricier treasure. $20. Chanel.com.

THE PHONE CASE: Who doesn’t love a new, fun phone case one doesn’t have to purchase for oneself? The buzzy Casetify has a huge selection of uber compostable cases for Apple and Samsung devices made of a proprietary blend of biopolymers, starch and bamboo grain. The company promises the cases are 100% compostable — 90% in 180 days. There’s something for dog people, cat people, flower people, art lovers, pop art lovers and this in black, based on a Picasso quote: Everything You Can Imagine is Real, with topsy-turvy letters. Good for a drop of 6.6 feet. The hashtag #caseify has more than 755 million views on TikTok. $55. For an extra cost, they can be customized using imprinting or soybean ink.

THE POP ITs: TikTok drove hordes to scoop up silicone toys with bubbles that make a popping sound. While not as satisfying as bubble wrap itself, people went crazy for them as the fidget toy trend spread last summer. Warning: The noise may be annoying in class now that schools are back in session. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and from numerous companies. Some experts believe kids with ADHD, anxiety, autism and other disorders can benefit from these and other fidgets. The company that makes the Pop It! brand is coming out with Star Wars, Marvel and Disney characters in time for the holidays at $9.99 each. Look for them at Target, Walmart and Amazon.

THE WORK ROBE: With so many people still working from home, top-only dressing remains a thing. The WorkRobe, as thousands of TikTokers have noted, just works! The WorkRobe, available in three styles and colors, grew in popularity with top-only dressing teleworkers.

THE MOBOT: Water bottle doubles as a foam roller for sore muscles.
Santa’s wish list for safety

Wary of COVID, many mall Kriss Kringles will still be masked, distanced this year

By Leanne Italie
Associated Press

Santa is back this year, but he pleads caution as he continues to tiptoe through the pandemic.

“Be smart. Be caring. If you have the tiniest tickle in your throat, the tiniest feeling, worry about yourself and worry about everybody else, and know Santa will always be there next year,” said 57-year-old Kevin Chesney, who’s been donning the big red suit since he was a kid. Amid a downturn in jolly old elves — about 15% fewer in one large database — Chesney is busier than ever from his Santa’s workshop at Cabela’s, benches will be housed in a log cabin behind a window with guests seated on benches in Minnesota’s Mall of America, the big man will be on ice, skating the indoor rink with visitors, and also tooling around in hot pink golf carts.

“Santa will always be there next year,” said Kathleen Wright, senior manager at Macy’s Branded Entertainment. “Santa has been a part of the Macy’s tradition since 1862, so we’re overjoyed that we can safely continue the tradition this year.”

At Oakbrook Center, a mall in suburban Chicago owned by Brookfield Properties, Santa’s spot is a tricked-out motor home with his fans allowed inside. Santa will be at 117 of 132 malls Brookfield owns in 43 states. The company is following local mandates on safety protocols but will distance anyone who asks. The same goes for CBL Properties, which owns 63 malls in 24 states and offered Santa visits from a safe distance last year.

“We’re bringing back a more traditional Santa experience this year,” said CBL spokeswoman Stacey Keating. “Visitors who wish to do so will be able to sit on Santa’s lap or on Santa’s bench. Masks will not be required at the set or during photos unless there’s a local mandate in place.”

And, bonus: “We’re also bringing back pet photo nights with Santa,” she said, “as well as Santa Cares, a reservation-only experience may be too overwhelming.”

The pandemic has taken its toll on Santa in other ways. Stephen Arnold, the 71-year-old head of IBRBS (formerly the International Brotherhood of Real Bearded Santas) said his organization of about 2,000 Santas and Mrs. Clauses has lost 57 Santas to COVID-19.

“Most of us are overweight, diabetic, with heart conditions,” said Arnold, a long-time Santa working this year both virtually and in person in Memphis, Tenn. “I mean, we’re prime targets for a disease like COVID.”
When bedfellows are furry

Experts explain the pros, cons of letting your pet sleep with you

By Angela Haupt

Special to The Washington Post

mama Farrauto’s nightly spooning partner is as long, soft and cuddly as the most deluxe body pillow: Riley, her 9-year-old golden retriever, who weighs a snuggly 67 pounds. “I get to wrap my arms around her furry neck, and she pushes her full body weight into mine,” says Farrauto, 31, a home-stager who lives in Hamilton, Ontario. Sometimes, as the duo settles into their shared pillow, they even start breathing in sync. “It’s glorious,” she says — to everyone except her human partner, who would prefer that Riley not hog so much of the queen-size bed.

Sleeping with a dog or cat is, to many pet owners — and parents, as we might prefer to describe ourselves — a no-brainer. To other people, it’s a clear violation of boundaries, not to mention one of the most divisive bedroom arguments some couples face.

In some cases, the co-sleeping decision is clear. It’s never a good idea, for example, to share a bed with a dog who is potty-trained, knows basic commands, and will never sniff out your bed if you’re concerned.

The pros

There are, of course, some downsides to sharing your bed with another creature, whether it’s a human or animal. The most obvious is that your sleep could be disturbed. Cats are nocturnal, and dogs are polyphasic sleepers, which means they have about three sleep/wake cycles per hour at night, says Jerry Klein, the American Kennel Club’s chief veterinary officer. Plus, he points out, a natural guard-dog tendency means your pooch will stay alert for sounds and abnormal movement. And, as with any human bedmate, he or she might also snore or hog your part of the bed.

What about germs? Though animals can transmit diseases to humans, or spread such parasites as fleas and ticks, ringworm or mites, that’s unlikely to happen if you’re taking care of your pet and staying up to date on preventive medication and vet checkups. “The hygiene germ issue is really more of a theoretical risk,” says veterinarian Curt Gross, who owns Feline Behavior House Calls and suggests wiping your pet’s paws with a towel before allowing him or her into your bed if you’re concerned.

Dander is more difficult to eliminate, however, and if you’re allergic to animals, sleeping with your cat or dog can irritate allergies that you otherwise manage with medication.

The cons

Research shows that animals can improve our mental health; for example, studies suggest that human-animal interactions lessen depression while lowering levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Raj Dasgupta, an assistant professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California who specializes in pulmonology and sleep medicine, believes those interactions can also help overnight. Slumbering with a pet “may help out with anxiety and depression, because a dog is like a weighted blanket — it gives you that snuggling and cuddling effect,” he said.

According to a small study published in the journal Social Sciences, people who suffered from long-term chronic pain (and as a result, sleep problems) found that snoozing with their pooches was overwhelmingly positive. The companionship and cuddles “were a distraction, so they weren’t lying there worrying about what was going to happen,” says study author Cary Brown, a professor of rehabilitation medicine at the University of Alberta. Sleeping with their pets helped participants feel relaxed and increased their well-being, while countering the loneliness that often accompanies chronic diseases.

According to a Mayo Clinic study, humans were able to get good sleep when they had a dog in their room, but their sleep was slightly better if the dog wasn’t on the bed. So, sleeping with your dog nearby — perhaps in a crate — is a good way to maintain restful sleep while still benefiting from a canine’s presence.

Surviving the holidays with elderly relatives

By Lisa Smith Molinari

The meat and potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com.

Being stationed overseas in the military has its perks. No, I’m not talking about sightseeing and travel. I’m not referring to history and culture. I’m not discussing foreign language immersion. What I’m talking about is this: When you PCS overseas, you won’t have to endure as many visits from relatives.

There, I said it. Unless you’ve been stationed in Hawaii — in which case your home has probably become a revolving door for free-loading family and friends — living overseas affords you a layer of protection against unwanted company, and gives you an excuse to enjoy the holidays however you wish. As in, “The airline tickets cost $700 a person. ... Looks like we’ll be Zooming you on Thanksgiving again this year, Aunt Millie.”

When our family was stationed overseas, we couldn’t afford to fly home for the holidays, and our relatives couldn’t afford to visit us often either. At first, it seemed strange celebrating Thanksgiving and Christmas without visits to and from extended family members. But ultimately, we enjoyed some of our most memorable holidays skiing in the Alps, renting a cottage in France, pubbing in Ireland, visiting German Christmas markets, touring Prague, hiking in Switzerland, roaming around Italy. Left to our own devices, we managed to create grand family adventures.

Enjoy the freedom living overseas affords while you can, because as one day, one month, one year, one move, one station, one country draws to a close, you may be unable to sustain the luxury of隔离 (and even then, the prices for tickets to and from the continental U.S. And as they say, “Payback’s a ...” Well, you know. Your other relatives have been covering for you during your overseas tours. While you gallivant around in lederhosen, they ordered each other Grants. While you wolfed down Christmas KFC and strawberry shortcake in Japan, they dealt with Gramma Jean’s incontinence. While you ordered another round of tapas in Barcelona, they overheard sis-in-law Peggy complaining about the canned cranberries.

And guess what? Now it’s your turn.

After returning from our last overseas tour in 2011, I thought it would be easy hosting parents and in-laws who had aged significantly while we were overseas. I mean, how hard could it be? Change some sheets, scramble a few eggs, make a dinner or two, do a little sightseeing, right? Thought it would be easy hosting parents and in-laws who had aged significantly while we were overseas. I mean, how hard could it be? Change some sheets, scramble a few eggs, make a dinner or two, do a little sightseeing, right?

But I soon discovered that roasting the perfect prime rib for Christmas supper is the easy part. It’s learning to keep my cool when my mother-in-law looks at me and says, “Your pants are so tight, if you break wind you’ll blow your shoes off.” It’s taking deep cleansing breaths when my sister-in-law shakes her head at my home decor and declares, “It’s so ... so you.” It’s not reacting when Pap blurts that his granddaughter “dresses like a streetwalker.” It’s feigning concern when Grams tells us she’s worried Father Benedict has the hots for her. It’s playing along when Uncle Ron claims he’s a direct descendant of the Vanderbilts. It’s taking it on the chin when Aunt Marjorie accuses me of stealing the silver tea set she gave to charity five years ago. It’s trying not to burst out laughing when Grammy points to the flowering vine growing on my porch rail and says, “I see you have chlamydia.”

In addition to mental preparations, I also prepare my home for our special visitors by cranking up the heat, turning on our television’s closed captioning and purchasing lots of puppy training pads, Tylenol, extra blankets, snacks, tissues, Febreze, coffee (which they drink with everything), books, and an elevated toilet seat unless I want my toilet racks torn out of the wall.

Most of all, I try to convince myself that my old relatives are just like cute little babies: They have no filter, they’re fussy, they get hungry every two hours, they don’t sleep through the night, they get confused and they wet their pants. This realization fills me with the nurturing compassion I need to survive our family’s holiday visitors without hoppin’ the next flight back overseas.
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

HEADS OF STATE
BY AIMEE LUCIDO AND ELLA DERSHOWITZ / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

ACROSS
1 Miss
5 Fairy-tale monster
9 Meat in ragú al
sugo
13 “Everyone knows the
secret now”
19 Lincoln or Ford
20 Purchase in the
board game Catan
worth one wood and
one brick
21 Singer Guthrie
23 Forgetfulness
26 Final innings, usually
27 Heinie
29 “Afternoon, pardner!”
30 Universal donor’s
blood type, informally
32 “Dancing With...”
33 What well-connected
people may have
34 Award hopeful
35 Juice cleanse, essentially
37 Narrow valleys
39 Get on the same page,
maybe
40 “What well...”
42 Alternative to fiber or
chicken
43 “Weirdos from...”
44 Leave off
45 Early PC software
47 Bit of fiction
48 “You...” (internet
meme with rapper
Xzibit)
49 Deg. for a creative
type
50 Booting
52 “Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

53 Juice cleanse, essentially
55 Cocktail made from
gin, vermouth and Campari
56 Little letters in home
cookery
59 In Latin, it’s
“vaccum”
60 Pound part
61 Church council
62 Succeed in life
64 Portfolio listings
65 Common sense
66 The “gone girl” in
“Gone Girl”
67 A negative one might
be positive
71 Used colored pencils,
say
74 “...be a real shame”
75 Jovian planets, by
another name
78 Changes back to
factory defaults, say
80 Way too loud
81 Figure in the iconic
“When Do Ba Do the
Poster?”
85 Quite enough
86 Bit of fiction
87 Suffix with quack and
mock
90 National law
92 Single flotation
device
95 Arranges in random
order
96 URL ending
97 TV display option
101 ____, tai
102 Picked up
104 ____, me
105 Like the bread ideal
for bread pudding
106 Theoretical
primordial substance
107 Word on an Irish
plate
109 Oscar-winning
director Lee
111 Obama’s birthplace
112 Playing to the
crowd
113 Japanese condiment
spinkled on rice
114 “What well...”
120 Gaelic tongue
121 Sorority letter
122 Norwegian a
123 Children’s author
with two.
124 Slogan about
willpower... or a hint to
four pairs of answers in
this puzzle
125 Catering vessels

DOWN
1 Nordic native
2 Invisible energy field
3 Postreader’s directive
4 Words moated while
eating a cheeseburger,
maybe
5 Give one’s address
6 Get ready to sleep,
cursedly
7 Candido’s focus
8 Ice cream surname
9 British nobleman
10 Like some traditions
11 Et ... (and others)
12 Sonata movement
13 The uninformative
masses, colloquially
14 The Jonas Brothers,
e.g.
15 Dish named for a day
of the week
16 Tomorrows prov.
17 “What well...”
18 Year: Fr.
24 Bar
25 Queen’s “We Will
Rock You,” e.g.
29 3K, for one
31 She ep.
34 “Award hopeful
35 Passed along to, in
a way
36 Like the winner of a
handwriting contest
37 Narrow valleys
38 Very affectionate
39 Get on the same page,
in corporate speak
41 URL ending
42 Alternative to filter or
sandstone
43 Leave off
45 Early PC software
46 Plotting more than
one kind of seed in a
field, per Deuteronomy
48 Pollution stat
51 Historical subject of
Hilary Mantel’s 2009
novel “Wolf Hall”
52 Action item
54 Brings back to use
56 Home of the National
Voting Rights
Museum
57 “...” (internet
meme with rapper
Xzibit)

58 Prioritization process
53 It added “essential
worker” in March
54 Author Rand
55 Quaint contraction
56 Title that comes from
“Casino”
57 Facilities
58 “Star Wars” fans
71 Curtains
72 Interior design job
73 Support, as a belief
76 Fellow
77 Like bacon and
lother, in Jewish
law
79 Prime-time slot
80 Home of the National
Voting Rights
Museum
81 Perfect
82 Home of the National
Voting Rights
Museum
83 Nasi-polish brand
86 Like some nachos and
questions
87 “Real” ones were first
issued in the 2010s
88 Muppet who hosts the
“Not-Too-Late
Show”
89 Fifth-century invader
90 National law
91 Fifth-century invader
92 Suffix with Euclid
93 Poisonous shrub
94 Suffix with Rudolph
95 Metric for online
traffic, in brief
96 Get ready for action
97 The “C” of D.R.C.
100 World of Warcraft,
e.g., for short
101 One who’s at home
on the job?
103 Branch of Islam
104 Thai taxi with a
repertory name
105 Send, as payment
106 Thai taxi with a
repertory name
110 “...” (internet
meme with rapper
Xzibit)
111 Obama’s birthplace
112 Mail, e.g.
114 Actress Taylor-Joy
of “The Queen’s
Gambling
115 Costa...
116 Mother of Don Juan
117 Cheese on a mezze
plate
118 Glycine race
119 Daily Planet reporter
120 Garlic tongue
121 Sorority letter
122 “Yaks”...
123 Pile of cash
125 TV button. Abbr.
126 “On Your Marks, Get
Set, Go!”

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE

“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.
Despite having no part in the movie series, Helen Mirren hosts the quiz show "Harry Potter: Hogwarts Tournament of Houses." The four-part series debuts Sunday statewide on TBS and Cartoon Network.

Mirren makes regal bow as Potter quiz show host

By Lynn Elber
Associated Press

Helen Mirren is oddly absent from the Harry Potter film franchise that proved close to a full-employment act for Britain's acting greats. But she's found her own path into its magical world.

Dame Helen, as the Oscar, Emmy and Tony-winning actor is properly addressed, makes her debut as a quiz host with “Harry Potter: Hogwarts Tournament of Houses.” The weekly, four-part series begins Sunday statewide on TBS and Cartoon Network.

In episode one, contestants representing the Gryffindor and Hufflepuff houses field trivia questions about J.K. Rowling’s novels-turned-films in a bid to claim a championship trophy and prizes.

Mirren left the cramming to the players and is untroubled about being a novice game show emcee.

“I can certainly play a strict host,” she said, drily.

Mirren’s willingness to take on something different shouldn’t surprise. She’s celebrated for her regal roles — including “The Queen,” “Elizabeth I” and “Catherine the Great” — but also counts the Fast & the Furious movie franchise among her credits.

Her return to a comic book-based project is upcoming: She plays a mythological goddess in “Shazam!” Fury of the Gods.” Mirren’s baptism in the genre came with the film “Red” and its sequel.

In an interview with The Associated Press, she discussed her admiration of the Potter canon, making a TV fashion statement, and female bonding on the set of the DC Comics-based film. Remarks have been edited for length and clarity.

AP: You’ve had an eclectic acting career, and now you’re adding your first game show to the résumé.

Mirren: Absolutely, which is why I signed up for it. I’m always up for a bit of an adventure. Also, of course, it’s a wonderful subject and at a great moment, the 20th anniversary of “The Sorcerer’s Stone,” the first Potter film. And the very fact I was never in any Harry Potter movies — much to my chagrin, I might add. It was a great way to be able to participate in the whole extraordinary phenomena that is Harry Potter.

Are you a fan of the stories?

What I remember very clearly was when the whole world of Harry Potter started rising. The most magical thing is the way the books were passed from hand to hand amongst kids, and adults sort of didn’t know anything about it. It wasn’t like it was published with great fanfare. A lot of the people who’ll be competing (on the show), they will be in their 20s, 30s, 40s, but they will have past experience with Harry Potter as a kid.

Have you watched any TV competition shows for tips or sought advice on hosting?

I thought I’d just play it by ear and be as natural as I could. I’m personally very excited about it, so hopefully I’ll communicate that. I’ll be probably as nervous as the contestants themselves, and I’ll try to hide that.

You aren’t playing a role with the costume dictated by your character, but was there a certain look you wanted as a host?

That’s an interesting question. The set, as you will see, is so extraordinary, it’s a beautiful, beautiful Harry Potter world that they’ve constructed. So I did want what I wore to reflect a slight costume feeling. And in a way, I’m playing a kind of a character. So, yes, I wanted it to be a sense of costume and presentation. It’s got a slight sense of vintage about it, and a sense of belonging in that world.

In the sequel to "Shazam!" you play Hespera, daughter of Atlas. Is she a hero or villain?

I’m not going to tell you the answer to that. You’re going to have to ascertain for yourself. I’m a member of three goddesses: Lucy Liu as Kalypso and the third goddess played by Rachel Zegler, who will be a huge star in a very short space of time. So there are three of us together, and that was really a great experience because it’s so infrequent that you get to spend a whole of a movie with two other women. So often you’re the only woman in the cast. Here we were a trio, and that was great. I loved it.

Batiste: From bandleader to Grammy nominations

By August Brown
Los Angeles Times

Best known as the bandleader and music director for “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert,” 35-year-old jazz-R&B composer Jon Batiste would have never been predicted to earn the most Grammy nominations of any act this year.

He set a record on his own with 11 nominations across seven categories that span genre, composition and medium, the Jan. 31 ceremony could end up being Batiste’s very own variety show.

The pianist and singer scored nominations for album and record of the year, for his “We Are” LP and its brassy, exultant single “Freedom,” both of which will compete against splashy, big-budget releases from the likes of Olivia Rodrigo, Justin Bieber and Lil Nas X. (“We Are” spent just one week on the Billboard 200 upon its April release, peaking at No. 86.)

“We Are” is also nominated for R&B album, and three more songs from “We Are” have nominations in different genre categories: “I Need You” for traditional R&B performance; “Movement 11” for contemporary classical composition; and “Cry” for American roots performance and American roots song.

After two years of protests and deep introspection about the sanctity of Black life and art in America, “Cry” hit a plaintive note about upheaval: “Who do you love when push comes to shove?” he sings. “How does it feel when it’s getting too real?”

Meanwhile, Batiste’s music for the animated Pixar film “Soul” earned nominations for improved jazz solo, jazz instrumental album and score soundtrack for visual medium.

“Freedom” was also nominated for music video.

Batiste has already enjoyed a fruitful year at awards shows, pulling down a Golden Globe and an Oscar for “Soul,” which he shared with Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross. His work on the film, which follows a Black jazz pianist through the afterlife and reincarnation, made him the second Black composer to win the Academy Award for original score, after jazz legend Herbie Hancock.

Like Hancock, who won album of the year in the 2008, or Esperanza Spalding, the jazz bassist who beat out Justin Bieber for new artist in 2011, Batiste is the kind of consummate instrumentalist that Recording Academy voters have reward ed in the past, sometimes to the bewilderment of popular music fans and TV viewers.

The scion of a legendary New Orleans jazz family, Batiste has released eight studio albums and five live albums, and collaborated with acts ranging from Stevie Wonder to Willie Nelson to Ed Sheeran. He joined “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” as bandleader and music director in 2012.

“You know what’s deep is God gave us 12 notes, it’s the same 12 notes that Duke Ellington had, that Bach had, Nina Simone,” he said after winning his Oscar. “I’m thankful to God for those 12 notes.”

The 64th Grammy Awards will take place on Jan. 31 in Los Angeles.

‘General Hospital’ actor Burton quits rather than get vaccine

New York Daily News

“General Hospital” star Steve Burton is the second actor to walk off the long-running soap set over the vaccine mandate.

“I know there’s been a lot of rumoring and speculation about me and General Hospital. I wanted you to hear it from me personally,” the 51-year-old actor, who plays Jason Morgan on the ABC soap, said in an Instagram video late Tuesday.

“Unfortunately, ‘General Hospital’ has let me go because of the vaccine mandate. I didn’t apply for my medical and religious exemptions, and both of those were denied, which, you know, hurts.”

Representatives for the ABC soap opera did not immediately return a request Wednesday to confirm that Burton had applied for exemptions.

Burton has played Jason Morgan on and off since 1991. On the most recent episode, his character was buried in a collapsed tunnel after a shootout in Greece, drawing suspicion from fans that he was being written off the show. It’s also possible that Burton will simply be replaced by another actor, as has been done previously.

In mid-August, he tested positive for COVID-19, saying he’d been “exposed at work,” but never specified that it was at “General Hospital.”

“Maybe one day if these mandates are lifted, I can return and finish my career as Jason Morgan. That would be an honor,” Burton said Tuesday.

Burton’s co-star Ingo Rademacher, who frequently posts anti-vax sentiments online, also recently quit the show over the mandate.
Expensive enthusiasm will cost Dems at polls

BY GEORGE F. WILL
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden has been ever a skillful, newsworthy, even under- progressive winds. Now, however, congressional Democrats should consider tempering their enthusiasm with humility. That is, their enthusiasm about their many expensive enthusiasms, with lucidity about the electorate.

This is likely their only way to avoid a disaster that will leave party leaders and other congressional chamber would extinguish Biden’s legislative agenda. So, as the Democrats’ kamikaze cacophony constitutes a (properly scored) $4 trillion-plus Buff Buck Better gusher to punctuate a year that has seen the highest inflation in 31 years, this cacophony should ponder some data:

Biden’s agenda for swollen government resembles Franklin D. Roosevelt’s in 1933 and Lyndon B. Johnson’s in 1965. The stark differences are the popular-vote margins that put the three into the presidency: FDR, 17 percentage points; LBJ, 23 points; Biden, 4.5 points. So, in 1933, there were 59 Democratic senators (out of 96) and 313 Democratic representatives. In 1965, there were 68 Democratic senators and 295 Democratic representatives, for 59% and 221. Attorney Charlie Cook says of 2020:

“The presidential race came down to 125,000 votes spread across Georgia, Arizona, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. A flip of just 62,543 votes and Donald Trump would now be [will] into a second term. In the Senate, the state that put Democrats over the top was a matter of Jon Ossoff winning just 59,944 more votes than David Perdue. The margin in the House was 31,751 votes across five districts.”

In 2020, five states — Georgia, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania — were won by margins of 1.5 percentage points or less. Biden won all but North Carolina. If Trump had won the three that Biden carried by less than 1 point — Georgia, Wisconsin, Arizona — he would be president.

The 2012 presidential election was the most recent one in which the Democratic margin was barely 40% of whites with- out college educations. Today, according to David Shor, a Democratic consultant, “If you look inside the Democratic Party, there are three times more moderate or conserva- tive nonwhite people than very liberal white people, but very liberal white people are in- nitely more represented” (emphasis added). And between 2016 and 2020, Trump in- creased his success with non-white work- ing-class voters. Biden won a smaller share of both the white and non-white working class vote than Barack Obama received in 2012.

This is one reason Trump is the first in- cumbent president to increase his vote total — he did by 10 million — while failing to win reelection. Another reason is that just 10% of those who voted for Obama in 2012 and Trump in 2016 voted for Biden in 2020.

Ticket-splitting has declined: In 2020, only 16 of 435 congressional districts were won by a presidential candidate of one party and a House candidate of the other. In 2008, about 71% of Senate elections were won by the party whose presidential candidate car- ried the state. In 2020, the figure was 95.5%, the same as with House districts. But the three states Biden carried by the largest margins (Maryland, 33.2 points; Massachus- setts, 33.5; Vermont, 35.4) have Republican governors.

In the 2021-22 post-congress redrawing of congressional districts, Republicans control legislatures in states with 187 districts, and Democrats have complete control in states with just 75. Furthermore, House races are susceptible to national waves, and since World War II, average midterm House loss- es for the president’s party are slightly worse in presidents’ first terms (23) than on average (22). Also, the most recent president to escape a first-term contraction of his par- ty’s Senate caucus in midterm elections was John F. Kennedy in 1962.

So, Biden could become the fifth consecu- tive president to see his party lose control of both the House and the Senate during his tenure. He could even lose both in the first midterms of his tenure. This most recently happened not recently — in 1944 and 1954, during Bill Clinton’s and Dwight D. Eisenhower’s first terms, respectively.

Today’s polarization is not unprecedented. When a 1936 Gallup poll asked, “Do you believe the acts and policies of the Roosevelt Administration may lead to a dictatorship?” 9% of Democrats and 75% of Republi- can said yes. Today, however, there is broad agreement among Americans about something. Last week’s Post-ABC News poll revealed that a landslide 59% are concerned that Biden would “do too much to increase the size and role of government.”

Now, about that Build Back Better gusher …

No asylum seekers should have to wait years in limbo

BY ANDREA BARRON
Special to The Washington Post

WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden promised a “fair, or- derly and humane immigration system.” But Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has continued the same unfair, inefficient and inhumane system of prioritizing inter- views as the Trump administration. Torture survivors are sent to the back of the line in the interview queue; USCIS considers them “low priority.”

On Sept. 9, 40 House members recognized their plight in a letter to Mayorkas and USCIS Director Ur M. Jaddou. Their letter urges US- CIS to address the affirmative asylum backlog by assigning a portion of asylum officers to in- terview asylum applicants who have been waiting five or more years. This would not re- quire any legislation or cost additional funds. Unfortunately, two months have passed and Mayorkas still has not responded.

Biden faces enormous challenges on the southern border. If he does not manage the many asylum officers have been assigned to interview migrants there. But his administra- tion should not forget about the claims of torture survivors who believed in America, and the promise of a fair and humane system leads the de- partment in charge of their fate.

Andrea Barron is the advocacy program manager at the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, based in Washington.
All honorably discharged Veterans are eligible to shop their military exchanges online, tax-free for life.

The Department of Defense expanded in-store military exchange and commissary shopping privileges as well as MWR resale facility use to all Veterans with service connected disabilities.

Learn more about veteran shopping benefits at ShopMyExchange.com/vets.
**Eugene Sheffer Crossword**

1 Blond shade
4 Rocky outcrop
8 Gunk
12 — Beta Kappa
13 Seized wheels
14 Leak slowly
15 Zero refinement
17 Stir up
18 Veer
19 Droop
21 Granola grain
22 Wedding parties?
26 Influence
29 Tibetan bovine
30 Conceit
31 Intimate
32 Garden area
33 Wound cover
34 Soul, to Sartre
35 Napkin’s place
36 Short jackets
37 Act charitably
39 Sheep call
40 Train alternative
41 Cornell’s home
45 South Pacific
48 Remorseful
50 Nantes notion
51 Weeps
52 401(k) alternative
53 Oodles
54 Inquisitive
55 Quarterback Brady

**ACROSS**

26 Ballot dangler
27 Prom rental
28 Blood type, for short
29 “Uh-huh”
32 Troubling omen
33 Lesley of “60 Minutes”
35 Brock of baseball
36 Bistro, for one
37 Act charitably
42 Slightly
43 Italian “dear”
44 Leading man?
45 In shape
46 Wedding words
47 Actress Aniston, to friends
49 To and —

**DOWN**

1 LAPD alerts
2 “Pygmalion” writer
3 Conceal
4 Necktie
5 Bowling-lane button
6 Suitable
7 Spoils
8 Welsh pooch
9 Kanga’s kid
10 Submachine gun — Rey
11 Singer Lana
16 Lake denizen
20 Noah’s vessel
23 1920s art style
24 “Manhattan Beach” author Jennifer
25 Weeps
26 Ballot dangler
27 Prom rental
28 Blood type, for short
29 “Uh-huh”
32 Troubling omen
33 Lesley of “60 Minutes”
35 Brock of baseball
36 Bistro, for one
37 Act charitably
42 Slightly
43 Italian “dear”
44 Leading man?
45 In shape
46 Wedding words
47 Actress Aniston, to friends
49 To and —

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

**CRYPTOQUIP**


Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: REMARKABLE BASEBALL TEAM WHOSE PLAYERS HAVE AMAZING HIGH OPERATIC VOICES: THE NEW YORK MEZZOS.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: L equals N
Friday, November 26, 2021

Stars and Stripes

Eugene Sheffer Crossword

ACROSS
1 Confronted
6 Pester
12 Teeny
13 Heeded
14 For now
15 Heated (up)
16 Hereditary unit
17 Morays
18 Graceful
20 Authentic
22 Mound stat
24 Physique
27 Recognized
29 Jazz singer James
32 Alvin Ailey, for one
35 Designer Chanel
36 Bar
37 NFL measures
38 Half a ton
40 Fed. accident investigator
42 TV’s Romano
43 Region
44 Against
46 Bern's river
50 Delphi figure
51 “Homeland” org.
52 Type of acid
53 Hot tempers
54 High nests
55 Cave
56 Speed checkers
57 Feel

DOWN
1 Blaze
2 Shortly
3 More darling
4 Summer in Arles
5 Carrie
6 Wolf’s cry
7 Humiliate
8 Sun. talk hit song
9 Tea’s companion
10 Sediment
11 Icelandic saga
12 Fuel stat
18 Graceful
21 Scratch (out)
22 Mound stat
23 Workout unit
24 Abbr. in an email
25 “So that’s it!”
26 Ship-repair site
28 Compositions
29 Rocker Nugent
31 MGM motto start
33 King, in Cannes
34 Gore and Green
39 Not as ruddy
41 Relay stick
42 Katy Perry
hit song
45 Lawman Eliot
47 — and crafts
48 Ceremony
49 Green prefix
51 “Homeland” org.
52 Type of acid
53 Hot tempers

Answer to Previous Puzzle

11-27 CRYPTOQUIP

“BDRTI QZ EC IQGB” MGZK RDIUIEIR VE ECI FDTTVP’M

SVQEGKQVWCQ: “YVWYVHIQ, YVWYVHIQ.”

Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: A NOVICE GUITAR STUDENT SENT A MESSAGE TO A PROFESSIONAL PLAYER SAYING “I NEED STRUM ADVICE.”

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals M
**Football Scores**

- **SCOREBOARD**

  - St. (9-2)
  - Fayette (10-1)
  - Troy (5-6) at Georgia St. (6-5)
  - Ohio (3-8) at Bowling Green (3-8)
  - Iowa (9-2) at Nebraska (3-8)
  - UTEP (7-4) at UAB (7-4)
  - Utah St. (8-3) at New Mexico (3-8)
  - Boise St. (7-4) at San Diego St. (10-1)
  - Kansas St. (7-4) at Texas (4-7)
  - Saint John's (Minn.) vs. Linfield
  - N. Iowa at E. Washington
  - UT-Martin at Missouri St.
  - Oregon St. (7-4) at Oregon (9-2)
  - West Virginia (5-6) at Kansas (2-9)
  - Indiana (2-9) at Purdue (7-4)
  - Ohio St. (10-1) at Michigan (10-1)
  - Penn St. (7-4) at Michigan St. (9-2)
  - Angelo St. vs. Nebraska-Kearney
  - Notre Dame vs. Wake Forest
  - Georgetown vs. Providence

**College Football**

- **NAIA playoffs**

  - **Schedule**
    - **Saturday, Nov. 27**
      - **Far West**
        - Buffalo 64, Washington (Md.) 54
        - ECU 65, Fordham 31
      - **Midwest**
        - Michigan 65, Tarleton St. 54
        - Iowa St. 82, Xavier 70
      - **South**
        - Vanderbilt 72, Austin Peay 14
        - Florida St. 81, Boston U. 80, OT
      - **FAR WEST**
        - UTEP 67, Florida A&M 53
        - Milwaukee 79, Wisconsin 67
        - Loyola Chicago 96, St. Francis (IL) 61
      - **MIDWEST**
        - Penn St. 67, Michigan St. 59
        - Army 73, Air Force 62
      - **EAST**
        - UNLV 101, Whittier 45
        - Long Beach St. 85, Wright St. 76
    - **Sunday, Nov. 28**
      - **Far West**
        - Pepperdine 66, UAB 50
        - Oregon State vs. New Hampshire
        - BYU vs. South Carolina
      - **Midwest**
        - BYU 81, Texas Southern 64
        - Alabama 55, Mercer 48
      - **South**
        - Clemson 84, North Florida 72
        - Alabama 55, Mercer 48
    - **Monday, Nov. 29**
      - **Far West**
        - Texas A&M 73, Notre Dame 67
        - S. Utah 87, Bowling Green 73
        - S. Dakota St. 80, George Mason 76
      - **Midwest**
        - Michigan 65, Tarleton St. 54
        - Iowa St. 82, Xavier 70
      - **South**
        - Vanderbilt 72, Austin Peay 14
        - Florida St. 81, Boston U. 80, OT

**College Basketball**

- **Scoreboard**

  - New Orleans 56, Morgan State 50
  - St. Francis (Ny.) 64, Howard 63
  - Tuskegee 66, Alabama A&M 65
  - Norfolk St. 72, Coppin St. 56

**Injury Report**

- **Thursday, Jan. 14**
  - **East**
    - Army 77, Navy 65
    - Air Force 85, Colorado St. 60
    - Rutgers 70, Temple 54
    - Temple 73, Connecticut 63
    - South Florida 85, UCF 70
    - UCF 90, South Carolina 66
  - **West**
    - Arizona 94, Cal Poly 76
    - Oregon St. 85, Washington St. 67
    - Washington St. 89, Oregon 76
    - Washington 63, Arizona St. 48
    - Utah 72, Colorado 70

**Other Sports**

- **Hockey**
  - **National Hockey League**
    - **MONDAY**
      - ***NEW YORK ISLANDERS***
        - Recalled D Scott Mayfield from Bridgeport (AHL).
      - ***HOUSTON TEXANS***
        - Signed WR Jerard Carter from the practice squad to the active roster.
      - ***TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING***
        - Recalled D Calle Rosen from Springfield (AHL) to the active roster.
      - ***WASHINGTON CAPITALS***
        - Recalled D Madison Bowey from South Carolina (ECHL) to the active roster.
No Thanksgiving benchmark

Injuries, COVID-19 throw wrench into usual comparison

By Stephen Whyno
Associated Press

Bruce Boudreau does not believe in the NHL’s Thanksgiving rule. Which teams occupied playoff spots on the annual U.S. holiday had long been a strong indicator of who makes and misses the postseason. Recent 82-game seasons have put cracks in that theory, and a number of high-profile injuries and COVID-19 protocol absences make it even less of a factor this year.

“It’s an inordinate amount of injuries that seems to (happen) every day and with the COVID and everything else, the deadline seems a little premature, I would think,” Boudreau said. “But you’re asking the wrong guy. I’ve always believed you could make the playoffs.”

Boudreau coached the Anaheim Ducks to the Pacific Division title in 2015-16 after sitting four points out of a playoff spot on Thanksgiving. He also took over the Washington Capitals when they were last in the league on Thanksgiving in 2007 and won the Jack Adams Award as coach of the year for guiding them to the Southeast Division championship.

Is there a team that could pull off a similar worst-to-first run this season? Maybe the New York Islanders from last place in the Metropolitan Division — considering they opened with a 13-game road trip and have been without captain Anders Lee, forwards Josh Bailey, Kieffer Bellows and Ross Johnson and defencemen Adam Pelech and Andy Greene (all COVID-19 protocol), and defense Ryan Pulock because of injury.

The Islanders have lost 10 of their first 15 games.

“Obviously this isn’t what we envisioned coming into this season with our record where it’s at and the things that have been thrown at us as of late,” veteran forward Matt Martin said. “I wouldn’t say there’s a sense of panic. But there should be a sense of urgency. We know we’re a good hockey club.”

Ray Ferraro is more worried about the Islanders than, say, the Pittsburgh Penguins, who also lost 10 of their first 15 games without center Evgeni Malkin and were missing captain Sidney Crosby for long stretches before a winning streak boosted their chances. The former player-turned-ESPN analyst thinks the offseason attrition shows.” Troy Terry’s not going to give the Islanders an opportunity, he’s going to need offense past that top line. Boudreau-esque leap from 10 to 82-game season, 12 teams in playoff position on Thanksgiving actually made the postseason in 2019-19 and 11 in 2017-18, including the Vegas Golden Knights in their inaugural year. The expansion Seattle Kraken would need a Boudreau-esque leap from 10 points out to do the same thing. That’s unlikely but not impossible given all the uncertainty and the extra variable of the Olympic break in February.

“Think there’s an unpredictability to the season,” Ferraro said. “I think there’s some wild swings that could happen to teams, more so this year than would have been in the past.”

Ovi 31-for-31

Alex Ovechkin’s goal against the Kraken on Sunday completed his sweep of scoring against each of the NHL’s other 31 teams. The Washington Capitals captain has his most against the Tampa Bay Lightning: 49 in 74 regular-season games.

Game of the week

The Rangers visit Boston for the NHL’s annual “Thanksgiving Showdown” matinee on Friday.
Philbin's season is still rising. Booker scored 35 points, Paul had 12 assists and made four free throws in the final 8.8 seconds, and the Suns extended their winning streak to 14 games by holding off the Cleveland Cavaliers 120-115 on Wednesday night.

Philbin's streak started with a win at home over Cleveland on Oct. 30, which came after a 1-3 to start out 1-3. We've got a streak to 14 games by holding off the Cleveland Cavaliers 120-115 on Wednesday night.

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That's just coincidence,” Paul said of the timing. “Our plan wasn’t to start out 1-3. We've got a great group, a great locker room. I've never seen anything like it.”

For nearly a month, the Suns have won in a variety of ways and Wednesday they improved the NBA's best road record to 7-1.

The young Cavs gave the Suns everything they could handle, and if not for Paul, a couple of calls that could have gone either way and Cleveland's Ricky Rubio missing three free throws in the final seconds, the streak might have ended.

The win was also the 100th with the Suns for coach Monty Willams, who is in his third season this season this past offseason. He was simply looking for a place to, in his words, “start a new chapter.”

“Just 100,” Williams said. “We know we can win ugly games,” Williams said. “We know we can win ugly games,” Williams said. “We know we can win ugly games,” Williams said. “We know we can win ugly games,” Williams said.

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Hurler brothers get a chance to connect at Battle 4 Atlantis

By Aaron Beard
Associated Press

PARADISE ISLAND, Bahamas — For once, Dan and Bobby Hurley are together for Thanksgiving — sort of.

The brothers are coaching in the Battle 4 Atlantis this week. Dan’s No. 22 UConn has advanced into the winners’ bracket while Bobby’s Arizona State team is playing in the consolation rounds.

That’s what they dream about as a kid, is getting to play the Pac-12 at Lambeau Field in the snow.

I’m thankful that I’m going to see him and that he’s here and usually we’re always playing somewhere generally over Thanksgiving and we don’t get to see each other,” Bobby said in an interview with The Associated Press. “So it’s just a blessing to see him, I think more so than (having a Thanksgiving) meal and things."

They hadn’t won the Hurley-vs-Hurley match up before in this eight-team tournament, and instead can now try to square up in a few conversations or maybe a brief get-together while bouncing between the locker room, arena and hotel towers around the Atlantis resort.

“We’ve got to get off to better starts on early downs and be efficient,” O’Connell said. “I think we can kind of, as a group, coaches included, we can all get into a rhythm early and figure out how we want to attack opponents.”

2-game skid has Stafford, Rams adjusting again

By Greg Beacham
Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — At least until the past two games, Matthew Stafford had smoothly handled just about every aspect of the enormous adjustment in moving from the Detroit Lions to the Los Angeles Rams.

This week, he faces another new challenge: A Thanksgiving without a football game to play.

“I loved playing on Thanksgiving,” Stafford said after practice on a 77-degree Wednesday with the Rams (7-3), who travel to Green Bay on Sunday. “For the tradition, for the game, for all of that, but also ... because I was back in my house at 5, 5:30. Could have a normal Thanksgiving meal, watch some football with your family. Almost felt like a fan for a little while. And then it was fun having the next couple of days off so you could eat leftovers.”

Stafford grew to enjoy the Lions’ annual fixture of a holiday game on a short week, but he’s got plenty of work to do this week with the Rams, who are on the first losing streak of his tenure.

Back-to-back defeats heading into their bye week have forced the Rams to take stock of themselves after an eight-game start in which Stafford appeared to be capable of leading this team to the Super Bowl with a supporting cast and a coaching staff to maximize his talents.

Stafford passed for 306.6 yards per game with 22 touchdowns, four interceptions and a 118.0 rating the past two games, most he has thrown against any opponent — and 20 interceptions.

It’s always better if we can do it before we start playing because then if things don’t go well for either one of us, then you really go into hiding a little bit more and you’re not as accessible for each other. That’s usually how it works for us: one guy loses and then the other needs a little time to decompress.”

A day later, Dan’s Huskies survived a wild double-overtime win against No. 19 Auburn to earn a Thanksgiving Day matchup with Michigan State. Those extra sessions pushed back the rest of the first-round schedule, meaning Bob’s Sun Devils ultimately ended up meeting sixth-ranked and reigning national champion Baylor in Wednesday’s final game about 45 minutes later than scheduled.

Arizona State lost that one, sending it into Thursday’s final matchup against Syracuse in the consolation bracket.

That meant the sons of legendary New Jersey high school coach Bob Hurley Sr. would continue to avoid having to coach against each other a little longer. Their only time competing in college basketball came in a 1992 matchup as players in the NCAA Tournament’s Sweet 16. Bobby with Duke on its way to a repeat championship, Dan with Seton Hall.

Bobby got his coaching start as an assistant under Dan, first at Wagner and then at Rhode Island before becoming head coach at Buffalo. He’s now in his seventh season with the Sun Devils, while Dan is in his fourth with the Rams.

“I just think a lot of times as you get older, you give yourself maybe a couple of minutes a day when you do appreciate our journey and how this all began for us,” Dan said, “as like little kids growing up in Jersey City and playing basketball in the park. Now we both end up here at big-time programs, having a lot of success. Sometimes you mind drifts to, like, it’s been a hell of a journey.”

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Stafford grew to enjoy the Lions’ annual fixture of a holiday game on a short week, but he’s got plenty of work to do this week with the Rams, who are on the first losing streak of his tenure.

Back-to-back defeats heading into their bye week have forced the Rams to take stock of themselves after an eight-game start in which Stafford appeared to be capable of leading this team to the Super Bowl with a supporting cast and a coaching staff to maximize his talents.

Stafford passed for 306.6 yards per game with 22 touchdowns, four interceptions and a 118.0 rating the past two games, most he has thrown against any opponent — and 20 interceptions.

It’s always better if we can do it before we start playing because then if things don’t go well for either one of us, then you really go into hiding a little bit more and you’re not as accessible for each other. That’s usually how it works for us: one guy loses and then the other needs a little time to decompress.”

A day later, Dan’s Huskies survived a wild double-overtime win against No. 19 Auburn to earn a Thanksgiving Day matchup with Michigan State. Those extra sessions pushed back the rest of the first-round schedule, meaning Bob’s Sun Devils ultimately ended up meeting sixth-ranked and reigning national champion Baylor in Wednesday’s final game about 45 minutes later than scheduled.

Arizona State lost that one, sending it into Thursday’s final matchup against Syracuse in the consolation bracket.

That meant the sons of legendary New Jersey high school coach Bob Hurley Sr. would continue to avoid having to coach against each other a little longer. Their only time competing in college basketball came in a 1992 matchup as players in the NCAA Tournament’s Sweet 16. Bobby with Duke on its way to a repeat championship, Dan with Seton Hall.

Bobby got his coaching start as an assistant under Dan, first at Wagner and then at Rhode Island before becoming head coach at Buffalo. He’s now in his seventh season with the Sun Devils, while Dan is in his fourth with the Rams.

“I just think a lot of times as you get older, you give yourself maybe a couple of minutes a day when you do appreciate our journey and how this all began for us,” Dan said, “as like little kids growing up in Jersey City and playing basketball in the park. Now we both end up here at big-time programs, having a lot of success. Sometimes you mind drifts to, like, it’s been a hell of a journey.”
Defense brought Cowboys to first Big 12 title game

By Stephen Hawkins
Associated Press
LUBBOCK, Texas — Mike Gundy was an Oklahoma State quarterwback who handed the ball off to Barry Sanders and Thurman Thomas. As the Big 12’s longest-tenured coach, he has overseen many big-play and high-scoring offenses led by other All-Americans.

Now Gundy is just trying to stay out of the way with the seventh-ranked Cowboys being defensive-minded and headed to their first Big 12 championship game.

“It’s just important that we stay the course,” Gundy said. “I just let everybody do their job, not mess with them.”

The Cowboys (10-1, 7-1 Big 12) have a suffocating defense that is demonizing opposing teams and their quarterbacks, allowing 164.3 yards per game and only one offensive touchdown over their past four games. The latest was a 23-0 win over a Texas Tech team that hadn’t been shut out at home since 1987—when Gundy, now the 17th-year coach, was still quarterback for the Cowboys playing in a different league.

Asked if he could sense on the sideline how much the defense wanted a shutout Saturday night, when the Cowboys locked up their title game spot, Gundy responded, “I stay as far away as I can, so I don’t mess them up.”

Before playing in the Big 12 championship game, Oklahoma State hosts Bedlam at home on what could be the first of two games in two weeks against 10th-ranked Oklahoma (10-1, 7-1). The six-time defending Big 12 champion Sooners get into the Dec. 4 title game with a win over the Cowboys on Saturday night, or a loss by ninth-ranked Baylor (9-2, 6-2) earlier that day to Texas Tech.

“This is why I came back ... to get a Big 12 championship, and honestly beat OU,” said linebacker Devin Harper, one of Oklahoma State’s super seniors.

For these Cowboys, who haven’t beaten Oklahoma since 2014 or won a conference title since 2011 when there wasn’t a Big 12 championship game, there could be even bigger things this season.

Oklahoma State moved up from ninth to seventh in the latest College Football Playoff rankings this week after lopsided losses Saturday by Oregon and Michigan State. Passing offenses led by other All-Americans the conference schedule, the Cowboys have the opportunity to get two victories over 10-win teams, whether twice over Oklahoma or once each over the Sooners and Baylor, which would have to get its 10th win to play in the Big 12 title game.

“We take it game by game. We’ve been in the water forever, we see land and we’ve just got to keep pushing,” Harper said. “We’ve got to beat OU, and whoever we play in the Big 12 beat them, and talk about the playoff then.”

Texas Tech, which had scored in 302 consecutive games since a shutout loss at Nebraska in 1997, a decade after last being held scoreless at home, didn’t even reach 100 yards in total offense until a 25-yard pass on the final drive.

Parity comes at a price: no CFP appearance for ACC

By Will Graves
Associated Press
PITTSBURGH — Pat Narduzzi still can’t make up his mind.

Back in July, the longtime Pittsburgh coach thought the College Football Playoff should stand pat at four teams. Now, with the 20th-ranked Panthers assurred of a spot in the ACC title game after wrapping up the Coastal Division title, he’s not so sure.

“I’ve gone back and forth,” Narduzzi said.

With good reason. For the first time since the College Football Playoff was introduced in 2014, the ACC will be on the outside looking in after a conference title game with implications for the CFP.

“Obviously, I think people will expect to have their issues weaponized in either the midst of a “down” year or simply not that good in general, something that’s dogged the wildly uneven Pac-12 for much of the CFP’s existence.

Expanding the playoff to at least eight teams, with the winners of each of the Power Five’s conference championships receiving an automatic bid regardless of their record, would make the handicapping over the ACC’s status moot.

“I think (expansion) opens things up for other teams to have an opportunity to be in that (playoff) conversation for sure,” he said.

A conversation that — for this year at least — has largely gone on with the ACC failing to get a word in edgeways.

Clemson’s early season struggles knocked it all the way out of the Top 25 for the first time in seven years. Wake Forest’s flirtation with a perfect season has come crashing back to earth following losses to North Carolina and North Carolina State.

AP Sports Writers Aaron Beaul, Hakk Kurz Jr., Charles Osburn, John Kekis and Pete Iacobelli contributed to this report.
**Game:** Harbaugh winless against Ohio State as Wolverines’ coach

**FROM PAGE 48**

“We’ve just been preparing for that team all winter, all summer,” Ohio State senior defensive end Tyreke Smith said. “Got that game always on our minds.”

For the 24th time, The Game will be a top-10 matchup.

The Buckeyes (10-1, 8-0 Big Ten, No. 4 CFP) have dominated the series of late, winning the last eight matchups and 15 of the last 16.

Ohio State also has won the last four Big Ten championship games. The Wolverines (10-1, 7-1, No. 6 CFP) are looking for their first-ever appearance in the Big Ten championship game less than three years after Jim Harbaugh has never beaten Ohio State in five tries as the Wolverine’s coach.

A glaring subplot in all this is that Harbaugh has never beaten Ohio State in five tries as the Michigan coach, a continuous source of frustration among Wolverines fans and gleeful schadenfreude in Columbus.

This may be Harbaugh’s best team and best chance yet. The Michigan defense is among the top 10 in the FBS and might have a chance to slow down the Buckeyes and the nation’s most prolific offense (560 yards, 47.2 points per game).

Redshirt freshman quarterback C.J. Stroud was 32-for-35 for 432 yards and a school record-tying six touchdowns — all in the first half — in last Saturday’s 56-7 rout of Michigan State, a week after he threw for five TDs in a blowout of Purdue.

The Ohio State defense had one of its best games of the season, neutralizing Michigan State’s Heisman hopeful running back Kenneth Walker III, who gained just 26 yards.

The Buckeyes’ loss to Oregon in Week 2 is a distant memory.

“Then this season,” Buckeyes defensive tackle Haskell Garrett said. “Each week we’ve gotten better.”

Michigan also enters the game on a high note. Cade McNamara threw for two touchdowns and Hassan Haskins ran for two in the Wolverines’ 59-18 win over Maryland last Saturday.

“We’re a confident team. We know what we’re capable of,” McNamara said. “We’re fired up and we’re ready. This is the week.”

The only blemish on the Michigan record is a 37-33 loss to Michigan State on Oct. 30.

“We’re a confident team. We know what we’re capable of,” McNamara said. “We’re fired up and we’re ready. This is the week.”

Maryland running back Tayon Fleet-Davis, center, is tackled by Michigan defensive lineman Donovan Jeter (95) and linebacker Michael Barrett during the Wolverines’ 59-18 win on Saturday in College Park, Md.

**Michigan defense braces for high-octane Buckeyes**

**BY MITCH STACY**

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State’s dazzling offensive stars are about to run into one of the best defenses they’ve seen this season.

This year’s edition of The Game could come down to how well the revamped defense of No. 6 Michigan can slow down the prolific scoring march of quarterback C.J. Stroud and the No. 2 Buckeyes.

The Wolverines have held opponents this season to an average of 16.3 points per game. Ohio State scored 49 last week — in the first half.

Something’s got to give Saturday in the Big House.

“I think that’s something that all the coaches and players on both teams are trying to figure out right now,” said Jim Harbaugh, who is 0-5 against Ohio State as the Michigan head coach. “Been spending weeks, spending every minute they can to answer that same question.”

There are huge implications. The winner moves on to the Big Ten championship game on Dec. 4 and stays in contention for the College Football Playoff. The loser drops out of the spotlight.

Stroud, a Heisman Trophy hopeful, has the Buckeyes (10-1, 8-0 Big Ten) roaring. They’re averaging an FBS-leading 560 yards and 47.2 points per game.

The redshirt freshman, who threw his first pass in a college football game less than three months ago, tied a school record with six touchdowns — all in the first half — as Ohio State rolled up a season-high 655 yards in last week’s blowout of then-No. 7 Michigan State. He’s averaging 345.8 passing yards.

receivers Chris Olave, Garrett Wilson and Jaxon Smith-Njigba have combined for nearly 3,000 yards and 30 touchdowns.

“Their route-running ability, their catching ability, their speed to all parts of the field — really outstanding,” Harbaugh said.

True freshman running back TreVeyon Henderson’s average carry of 7.32 yards is second-best in the nation.

“We’ve been confident the whole year, but being able to click on all cylinders these past few weeks has boosted our confidence a lot more,” Olave said. “I feel like we’re having a lot more fun, spreading the ball around.”

Said Buckeyes tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere: “The only thing that can stop us is ourselves.”

Michigan made changes at the top after last season’s pandemic-shortened 2-4 season, replacing defensive coordinator Don Brown with Mike Macdonald, the 34-year-old former Baltimore Ravens linebackers coach.

Macdonald has leaned on a pair of top-notch edge rushers, Aidan Hutchinson and David Ojabo, and linebacker Josh Ross to help contain the run and Daxton Hill to lead the secondary.

The Buckeyes have not faced a better pass defense this season. The Wolverines (9-1, 7-1) have limited eight of their 11 opponents to fewer than 200 passing yards. After allowing a season-high 293 to Washington in Week 2, Michigan’s opponents have managed an average of just 164 through the air.

“It’s going to be a big challenge for our guys in protection and for (Stroud) and everybody,” Ohio State coach Ryan Day said. “But it’s also going to be the receivers, to make sure they’re getting open with separation. It’s everybody across the board. It’s the running backs picking up things. Very, very talented (defense). Very powerful on the edge. They mix up their rushes — big challenge.”


By Ralph D. Russo  
Associated Press

No rivalry has produced more big games than Michigan-Ohio State. The Wolverines and Buckeyes get together Saturday for their annual Big Ten grudge match and it will be the 24th time both are ranked in the top 10 of the AP poll at kickoff.

That’s seven more than the next-closest rivalries (Notre Dame-USC and Nebraska-Oklahoma). Among the rivalry games in the spotlight over Thanksgiving weekend, Alabama-Auburn has eight top-10 matchups in its history and Oklahoma-Oklahoma State has just two. The 10th-ranked Sooners and No. 7 Cowboys will make it three Saturday in Stillwater.

Of all the rivalry games being played this weekend, the one with the second-most top-10 matchups is Florida-Florida State with 14. The Gators and Seminoles are decidedly unranked this weekend, the one rivalry that has consistently produced more big games than any other.

Still, it’s a rivalry so interest abounds, as it will across the country over three days when you can gorge on college football.

The Wolverines and Buckeyes are the one-two punch. In the country this season, with 26.5 tackles for loss, including 13.5 sacks. The NCAA record for tackles for loss in a season is 32 by Georgia’s Melvin Vontagh in 1983.

Hassan Haskins (1,063 yards rushing and 13 touchdowns) and Blake Corum (5.96 yards per carry) are the one-two punch.

The winner takes the Big Ten East, a spot in the conference title game and will be a step away from the College Football Playoff.

**Heisman watch**

William Anderson Jr., OLB, Alabama: The Heisman race clarified last week with Stroud and No. 3 Alabama’s Bryce Young taking the role of favorites, but Young’s teammate deserves attention.

Anderson has been the most consistently dominant player in the country this season, with 26.5 tackles for loss, including 13.5 sacks. The NCAA record for tackles for loss in a season is 32 by Georgia’s Melvin Vontagh in 1983.

**Numbers to know**

2-14 — Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy’s record against Oklahoma. Among high-profile rivalries, Bedlam is one of the most historically lopsided (90-18-7) because Oklahoma State spent much of its existence closer to Kansas than the superpower with which it shares a state. The Cowboys have closed the gap under Mike Gundy but still rarely beat the Sooners. This year, they are the favorites.

4 — Cincinnati’s ranking in the College Football Playoff Top 25. The Bearcats are positioned to become the first team from outside the Power Five conferences to reach the playoff, if they can win out. They play at East Carolina on Friday.

6 — Number of consecutive years Clemson has played in (and won) the Atlantic Coast Conference title game. That streak is not quite dead yet for a Tigers team that had three losses before November. Clemson plays in-state SEC rival South Carolina on Saturday, but if No. 21 Wake Forest loses at Boston College and No. 23 North Carolina State loses to Georgia Tech, Clemson wins the ACC Atlantic.

2014 — The last time Rutgers played in a bowl game. The Scarlet Knights play at Maryland on Saturday and the winner gets bowl eligible. The Terps last reached the postseason in 2016.

**Hot seat**

David Cutcliffe, Duke: It is doubtful any coach is going to save or lose his job based on this weekend’s results, but it certainly looks as if the end of an era is coming at Duke.

The 67-year-old Cutcliffe has had remarkable success (six bowl games and an ACC championship game appearance) in 14 seasons at a program that has rarely climbed out of the bottom of the ACC over the last 50 years. But the Blue Devils are 3-8 heading into their game against Miami and the slippage over the past three seasons suggests it is time for a change in Durham.

By John Zenor  
Associated Press

This Alabama team is still winning football games but that aura of seemingly invincibility that normally looms over the Crimson Tide is long gone.

Last year Alabama made it look so easy in its season-long romp to the national championship, being truly challenged only once. That was in the Southeastern Conference championship game against Florida.

The third-ranked Crimson Tide have been beaten once this season — three-point loss at No. 14 Texas A&M — and three of Alabama’s 10 wins have come by a touchdown or less entering Saturday’s visit to rival Auburn.

Alabama coach Nick Saban has insisted the issues preventing the Tide from putting teams away so easily are fixable, though they’re still surfacing deep into the season.

“Every day we have to make adjustments,” Saban said Monday. “So these experiences are always beneficial. I think, and certainly, we’ve had our share of them this year.”

The Tide (10-1, 6-1 SEC, No. 2 College Football Playoff) dropped a spot in the rankings with a nip-and-tuck win over No. 25 Arkansas, jumped by Ohio State following the Buckeyes’ 56-7 rout of then-No. 7 Michigan State. Alabama still has clinched a spot in the SEC title game against No. 1 Georgia before its game against Auburn (6-5, 3-4-1). The Tide’s playoff hopes are still very much intact, but the road to a repeat national title is hardly paved with any level of certainty.

The offensive line hasn’t dominated consistently. The running game isn’t as potent without Najee Harris. The execution not so flawless.

Alabama has squeaked past Florida, which subsequently went into a free fall, and had to hold off a sub-.500 LSU team along with the Razorbacks.

Alabama allowed most of a 21-3 lead before stopping a botched two-point conversion to hold on for a 31-29 win over then-No. 11 Florida. It looks even less impressive considering what happened to the Gators since, culminating with coach Dan Mullen’s firing on Sunday.

Saban praised the offense for responding but said the team needed to maintain its intensity for 60 minutes, which would become a familiar theme.

Alabama rushed for just 6 yards and missed an extra point in a 20-14 win over LSU, a 29.5-point underdog according to FanDuel Sportsbook. The game wasn’t decided until the Tigers’ Hail Mary failed incomplete, and the Tide had to turn away three fourth-quarter trips across midfield by LSU.

Said Saban afterward: “Sometimes we have an expectation that we’re going to win easy, but sometimes it’s not so easy.”

The Tide held on to beat Kansas 42-35 despite losing a fumble at the goal line and giving up a sack to move out of field-goal range late, among other issues. It took Bryce Young’s Alabama record 599 passing yards and five touchdowns.

Then there was the one that got away, a 41-38 loss to unranked Texas A&M after allowing two scores in the final three minutes. It snapped the Tide’s 100-game winning streak over unranked teams.
Iron Bowl grades out as top rivalry

Writers pick Alabama-Auburn ahead of Ohio State-Michigan

By Ralph D. Russo
Associated Press

The best college football rivalries can change over time depending on the state of the programs involved.

Go back 25 or 30 years and Miami-Florida probably would have been near the top of most lists. Nowadays, while still heated and entertaining, 'Canes-'Noles just doesn't capture the attention of the nation the way it did when at least one those two was at the top of the sport.

Of course, some rivalries have just gone away altogether. For decades, Nebraska-Oklahoma was a lock to be one of the biggest games of the season. Texas-Texas A&M, too. Conference realignment has relegated those to the history books.

The Associated Press asked 42 sports writers and broadcasters to rank the five best rivalries in college football, with points given on a sliding scale (five for a first-place vote, four points for second, etc.).

Four longstanding series separated themselves from the rest according to the results released Tuesday. The top two, as it happens, will be renewed this weekend, with high stakes on the line for three of the four teams involved.

**Alabama-Auburn**

**165 points, 18 first-place votes**

Nickname: Iron Bowl

Trophy: Gay-Oak Sporstmanship Trophy, named after James E. Foy, a former dean at the University of Alabama.

Meetings: 85, Alabama leads 47-37-1.

Signature moment: No. 1 Ohio State and No. 4 Michigan played to a 10—10 tie in Ann Arbor in 1973, creating a deadlock atop the Big Ten standings. The Treasured Rose Bowl bid came down to a vote of conference athletic directors, won by Ohio State. Michigan coach Bo Schembechler never got over it.

Biggest upset: In 1969, the Buckeyes entered the season finale No. 1 in the country and unbeaten, with eyes on a national title. They were knocked off by a Michigan team that came in 7-2. This game kicked off what is known as the Ten Year War in the rivalry between Schembechler and Ohio State coach Woody Hayes.

**Army-Navy**

**125 points, 12 first-place votes**

Nickname: None needed.

Reward: Commander-in-Chief's Trophy, through Air Force also gets a say in where that resides.

Meetings: 121, Navy leads 61-53-7.

Signature moment: Less than a month after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Army-Navy played what turned out to be one of their most memorable games. Trying to upset Heisman winner Roger Staubach and the second-ranked Midshipmen, Army reached Navy's 2-yard line, trailing 21-15 in the closing seconds, but time ran out.

Biggest upset: No. 2 Army was unbeaten under Hall of Fame coach Red Blaik entering the 1950 game with 2-6 Navy and carrying a 28-game winning streak. The Midshipmen won 14-2 and the rivalry began to shift in Navy's favor after a string of six years when Army didn't lose.

**Oklahoma-Texas**

**88 points, 2 first-place votes**

Nickname: Red River Rivalry.

Reward: Golden Hat.

Meetings: 117, Texas leads 62-50-5.

Signature moment: Texas coach Darrell Royal accused Oklahoma and coach Barry Switzer of spying on his practices leading up to the 1976 game, which ended in a 6-6 tie and wound up being Royal's last in the rivalry. Years later, Switzer conceded in his autobiography, that, yes, there was some spying going on for OU. The 1984 game was a memorable 1-2 matchup that ended 15-15. This year's wild Sooners' win deserves an honorable mention.

**Florida-Georgia**

**19 points**


Reward: Orangeolekeecey Oar.

Meetings: 99 at 100, depending on which school you ask. Georgia leads either 53-44-2 or 54-44-2.

Signature moment: The Gator Stomp. After scoring a touchdown early in the 2007 matchup, Georgia players participated in a full-team, end-zone celebration, inciting a 15-yard penalty that didn't bother Bulldogs coach Mark Richt one bit. The next season, Florida coach Urban Meyer used two late timeouts with his team up 49-10.

Biggest upset: In 2004, Florida was ranked No. 1 for the first time in school history when No. 17 Georgia beat the Gators 24-3 in 1985.

**Ole Miss-Mississippi St.**

**18 points**

Nickname: Egg Bowl.

Reward: Golden Egg Trophy.

Meetings: 117, Ole Miss leads 63-48-6.

Signature moment: In 2019, after scoring a potential game-tying touchdown for Ole Miss, receiver Elijah Moore celebrated by mimicking a dog lifting his leg to urinate in the end zone. The move drew a 15-yard penalty, pushing back the extra point try — which was missed to give Mississippi State a 21-20 victory. Ole Miss fired coach Matt Luke within days, but the victory helped Mississippi State coach Joe Moorhead keep his job — for about a month. He was fired after team's bowl game.

Biggest upset: In 1970, Ole Miss was 7-1, No. 10 in the country, bowl-bound and trying to finish the season strong despite having lost star quarterback Archie Manning earlier in the season to a broken arm. The Bulldogs won 19-14 in Oxford to snap a three-game losing streak.

**Notre Dame-USC**

**14 points**

Nickname: None, though it is often called college football’s most storied international rivalry.

Reward: Jeweled Shillelagh.

Meetings: 92, Notre Dame leads 50-37-5.

Signature moment: The Bush Push in 2005. Defending national champion USC had won 27 straight games, but the Fighting Irish had the Trojans in trouble in South Bend. Quarterback Matt Leinart sneaked in from the 1-yard line with a big push — against the rules at the time — from star tailback Reggie Bush for the winning TD.

Biggest upset: In 1964, Notre Dame was unbeaten, No. 1 and lined up to win a national championship when unranked USC rallied from 17-0 down and scored the winning touchdown with 1:35 left in the game on a fourth-and-8.

**Florida State-Miami**

**13 points**

Nickname: Sunshine Showdown.

Reward: Used to be a chance to play for a national title. Now, the winning head coach gets to keep his job.

Meetings: 66, Miami leads 35-31.

Signature moment: Wide right. In consecutive seasons (1991-92), the game was a matchup of top-three teams. The Seminoles missed crucial field goals in the winning seconds in both — wide right each time — to give Miami victories that propelled the Hurricanes to a chance to play in a bowl game with a national championship on the line.

Biggest upset: Florida State was No. 1 in the country when it opened its season against No. 6 Miami in 1986. The upset itself wasn’t so stunning as much as how it went down. The ‘Canes dominated 31-0 and went on to finish No. 2 in the country. The ‘Nos didn’t lose again and finished No. 3.

**Notre Dame-USC**

**Honororable mention**

High-stakes Game

More than bragging rights on the line between rivals No. 2 Ohio State and No. 6 Michigan

By Mitch Stacy
Associated Press
COLUMBUS, Ohio — This year’s version of The Game could hardly be bigger.
The annual clash between Ohio State and Michigan, held this year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, is already juiced by a century of tradition, mutual hatred and fanaticism.
A lot more than bragging rights are at stake this year in Ann Arbor for the No. 2 Buckeyes and No. 6 Wolverines.
The winner clinches the Big Ten East and advances to the conference championship game Dec. 4 — and stays alive for the College Football Playoff.
The loser picks up a second loss and will consider the season ruined.

SEE GAME ON PAGE 45

INSIDE
Wolverines’ defense will be tested by Buckeyes, Heisman-contending QB Stroud

Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud was 32 of 35 for 432 yards and school-record-tying six touchdowns — all in the first half — in last Saturday’s 56-7 rout of Michigan State, a week after he threw for five TDs in a blowout of Purdue.

Defensive end Aidan Hutchinson and the rest of the Michigan defense, rated among the top 10 in the FBS, match up against Ohio State, the nation’s most prolific offense at 560 yards and 47.2 points per game, on Saturday.

removed