

MOVIES: 'Candyman' remake has a new hook [Pages 15-16](#)

MUSIC: Lorde's low-key look into fame [Page 28](#)

GAMES: Twelve Minutes is time well spent [Page 18](#)

EUROPE
& PACIFIC

WEEKEND
EDITION



COLLEGE FOOTBALL
This season promises a return to normalcy wrapped in change [Page 48](#)

STARS AND STRIPES®

[stripes.com](#)

Volume 80 Edition 95 ©SS 2021

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 2021

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

\$1.00

AFGHANISTAN



WAKIL KOHSAR, AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Medical and hospital staff bring an injured man on a stretcher for treatment after two blasts outside Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday.

US troops killed in Kabul

12 American service members dead, 15 others wounded in two attacks at airport

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Twelve U.S. service members were killed and 15 others were wounded Thursday in a terrorist attack at the airport in Kabul, where U.S. and coalition forces have been evacuating tens of thousands of Americans and Afghans from the country since the Taliban took control of

the country nearly two weeks ago, said Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the top U.S. commander in the Middle East.

Chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby called it a "complex attack at Kabul airport" that included two explosions.

The Associated Press reported the 12 service members killed included 11 Marines and one Navy medic.

The service members killed were the first combat-related deaths to happen in Afghanistan since Feb. 8, 2020, when Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Rodriguez was killed in Nangarhar province, according to the Army.

The first explosion happened near the airport's Abbey gate and caused "a number of U.S. and civilian casualties," Kirby tweeted earlier Thursday.

The explosion was followed by reports of gunfire, the State Department said in a security alert. The gate is one of three entrances to the airport where crowds of people had been gathered since last week to vie for evacuation flights.

The number of injuries and deaths

SEE KABUL ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	Change in price	..	..	\$4.028	..
Germany	\$3.405	\$3.866	\$4.113	\$3.584	Change in price	..	..	-2.9 cents	..	..
Change in price	-2.9 cents	-2.3 cents	-2.9 cents	-3.2 cents	Change in price	..	..	-2.9 cents	..	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.287	\$4.580	\$4.149	Belgium	..	\$3.288	\$3.576	\$3.376	..
Change in price	..	-5.1 cents	-5.3 cents	-5.1 cents	Change in price	..	No change	No change	No change	..
U.K.	..	\$3.780	\$4.027	\$2.498	Turkey	..	..	\$3.913	\$4.316*	..
Change in price	..	-2.3 cents	-2.9 cents	-3.2 cents	Change in price	..	..	-2.9 cents	No change	..

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	Change in price	\$3.219	..	\$3.929	\$3.399
Japan	..	\$3.919	..	\$3.389	Change in price	-3.0 cents	..	-3.0 cents	-4.0 cents	..
Change in price	..	-3.0 cents	..	-3.0 cents	Guam	\$3.219	\$3.679	\$3.929	..	..
Okinawa	\$3.209	..	..	\$3.389	Change in price	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	..	..
Change in price	-3.0 cents	..	..	-3.0 cents	Change in price	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	-3.0 cents	..	..

*Diesel EFD **Midgrade
For the week of Aug. 27 - Sept. 2

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		South Korea (Won)	1170.96
Euro costs (Aug. 27)	\$1.15	Switzerland (Franc)	.9186
Dollar buys (Aug. 27)	0.8281	Thailand (Baht)	32.79
British pound (Aug. 27)	\$1.34	Turkey (NewLira)	8.3961
Japanese yen (Aug. 27)	107.00		
South Korean won (Aug. 27)	1137.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770		
Britain (Pound)	1.3716		
Canada (Dollar)	1.2622		
China (Yuan)	6.4837		
Denmark (Krone)	6.3271		
Egypt (Pound)	15.7347		
Euro	.8509		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7879		
Hungary (Forint)	296.60		
Israel (Shekel)	3.2233		
Japan (Yen)	110.17		
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3011		
Norway (Krone)	8.8142		
Philippines (Peso)	49.98		
Poland (Zloty)	3.89		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7503		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3537		

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

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.06
30-year bond	1.96

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

TODAY
IN STRIPES

STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us,
wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

EUROPE

CustomerService@stripes.com

ADVERTISING

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

MIDDLE EAST

CustomerService@stripes.com

ADVERTISING

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

PACIFIC

PacificAdvertising@stripes.com

ADVERTISING

+81 (42) 552.2511
DSN: 315.227.7310

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

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

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.

STARS AND STRIPES®
Mobile • Online • Print

MILITARY



ZACHARY BODNER/U.S. Marine Corps

A U.S. Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter prepares to launch from the HMS Queen Elizabeth on the Pacific Ocean on Aug. 20.

UK aircraft carrier swaps F-35B stealth fighters with US ship in Pacific exercise

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The HMS Queen Elizabeth recently traded F-35B Lightning II stealth fighters with a U.S. amphibious assault ship at sea, another first for the U.K. aircraft carrier on its first operational deployment, according to the U.S. Marine Corps.

The USS America and the Queen Elizabeth held a cross-deck training exercise Friday near the Hawaiian Islands, the first time the two flagships and their groups have worked together.

The America, homeported at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, its amphibious ready group and elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit have been at sea since June, according to the Navy.

The Queen Elizabeth, carrying 18 F-35Bs — 10 of which are from a U.S. Marine Corps squadron — is making its way to Japan for scheduled port calls in September. Its first patrol is expected to cover 26,000 nautical miles over 7½ months and 40 nations.

As part of the Navy's Large-Scale Exercise 2021, the Queen Elizabeth launched F-35Bs, built for short take-offs and vertical landings, that the America recovered, reloaded, refueled and relaunched, according to a Marine Corps press release.

Tuesday.

The operation highlighted a change in modern warfare, said Marine Corps Col. Simon Doran, U.S. senior national representative to the U.K. strike group.

"The [exercise] underscored our continued effort to shift away from static, built-up airfields toward distributed maritime operations," he said in the news release.

The two groups trained through several other scenarios, including anti-submarine and surface warfare, large-formation maneuvers and aviation drills, according to a Sunday news release from the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet.

"These events allow us to work with an unmatched network of partners and allies in a complex environment, supporting the common goal of a free and open Indo-Pacific," Rear Adm. Chris Engdahl, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 7, said in the release.

The blended air wing aboard the Queen Elizabeth includes F-35Bs from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211 and the Royal Air Force's No. 617 Squadron.

"The U.K. Carrier Strike Group offers the largest fifth-generation air wing afloat today, and working with our close allies to develop operating procedures and capabilities while concur-

rently showcasing the agility of land and carrier-based aviation in the Indo-Pacific demonstrates our commitment to the region," said Commodore Steve Moorhouse, the strike group commander, said in the Sunday news release.

During a Tuesday night news conference, Moorhouse said Indo-Pacific exercises differ from those in the North Atlantic or Mediterranean because they focus primarily on multiple-threat scenarios.

That presents a chance to learn to balance traditional surface and underwater threats with space and cyber elements.

The ability of the two nations' F-35Bs to communicate seamlessly highlighted the advantage of allied forces integrating their technology and communications, Moorhouse said.

Failure to do so would be like "fighting with one hand behind your back," he said.

The Queen Elizabeth in the Indo-Pacific marks the United Kingdom's first military presence in the region in 25 years. The ship has completed several firsts since its departure from the U.K. in May, including an exercise with the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan in July.

wilson.alex@stripes.com
Twitter: @AlexMNWilson

Okinawa governor condemns Marines for tainted water

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER — The governor of Okinawa prefecture demanded the Marine Corps stop releasing potentially contaminated water into the public wastewater system, soon after the Marines started releasing it Thursday.

At a news conference in Naha, Gov. Denny Tamaki said he learned the Marines were releasing the water at about the time it was being done. He said the Marines notified the prefecture and Okinawa Defense Bureau by email at 9 a.m. that the water, which contains low levels of toxic organic compounds, was about to be released.

"It must have come as a shock for all stakeholders," Tamaki said, adding that disposal methods were supposed to be discussed that day. "This is totally unacceptable."

Representatives of the defense ministry and the U.S. military were scheduled to meet later Thursday to discuss results of July wastewater tests and disposal methods.

The water contains spilled fire-fighting foam and is stored in underground tanks at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The Marine Corps treated the water prior to releasing it, but it still contains low levels of toxic PFOS and PFOA.

Once in the wastewater system, the water eventually reaches the ocean, according to a spokesman from the Okinawa Prefectural Enterprise Bureau, the agency responsible for the island's water quality.

A defense bureau spokesman said the bureau was informed just prior to the water's release. He declined further comment Thursday.

Government officials in Japan customarily speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokesman Lt. Col. Matthew Hilton announced the water release in a statement Thursday. He said it was treated by a PFAS Effluent Treatment System, an activated carbon/ion exchange system technology, "to all but eliminate PFAS contamination in water."

The PFAS residue removed by the system will be incinerated elsewhere in Japan at a facility approved by the Japanese government, the statement said.

Hilton in his statement said the installations command would con-

tinue to focus on "maintaining high standards of responsible environmental stewardship."

He declined to say if the command had received permission from Japanese authorities to release the water.

The Marine Corps has been "fully open and transparent" with stakeholders about its plan to treat the contaminated water, Hilton said in a subsequent email Thursday to Stars and Stripes.

"We are not going to release the communication exchange between the Marine Corps and local government," he wrote.

PFOS and PFOA are synthetic compounds found in aqueous fire-fighting foam, aircraft grease, water-repellant materials and fluorine chemicals. They have been known to cause increases in body and organ weight, death in animals and tumors.

In July, public broadcaster NHK reported that the U.S. military wanted to release harmful contaminants into a river on Okinawa. The Marines responded by saying it had asked to release the treated water into the wastewater system.

Okinawa prefecture asked the U.S. military to thermally dispose of the contaminants rather than release them into the environment.

The Marine Corps in a July 8 statement dismissed that idea and pledged to fully coordinate its plans with Okinawan officials prior to releasing any treated water.

Japan has a combined safety threshold of 0.05 micrograms per liter for PFOS and PFOA for its drinking water. The threshold is not law, but a quality standard guideline. The United States' threshold is 0.07 micrograms per liter.

Samples taken at MCAS Futenma by the prefecture in July registered 0.0025 micrograms per liter, Tamaki said at the news conference. He said the situation was handled poorly by the U.S. military and "not about whether a smaller number is good or bad."

No samples taken from the water on July 19 exceeded 0.0027 micrograms per liter, the Marine statement said.

"This makes a safer and cleaner environment for all," the statement said.

Tamaki called on the Japanese government to strongly protest the release of the water.

burke.matt@stripes.com
Twitter: @MatthewMBurke1
higa.mari@stripes.com
Twitter: @MariHiga21

MILITARY

Vets with PTSD could get service dogs from VA



JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Veteran David Crenshaw and his service dog, Doc, appear at a Capitol Hill news conference to promote House bill, H.R. 1022, the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers Act, or PAWS Act, on March 3.

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Wednesday signed a bill into law that will allow some veterans with mental health conditions to receive service dogs.

The new law orders the Department of Veterans Affairs secretary to develop and launch a five-year pilot program that provides service dog training to benefit veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. Previously, the VA only covered some costs of service dogs for veterans with certain physical disabilities, such as blindness, hearing impairment and mobility issues — but not mental health conditions.

Biden signed the bill in the Oval Office. Rep. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., who led the legislation through Congress, attended the ceremony.

"I've had the chance to visit with veterans and their service dogs in my district, and it couldn't be clearer how service dogs make life better for our veterans," Slotkin said in a statement Wednesday. "From waking them from PTSD-related nightmares, helping them open doors, or finding an exit in a crowded space, it can be transformational."

The Puppies Assisting Wounded Service-members for Veterans Therapy Act, or PAWS Act, requires the VA to start the pilot program in early 2022, and it must be carried out by at least five VA medical centers. The facilities will partner with accredited service dog organizations to perform the training.

There's a chance the program could extend beyond five years. When the five years are up, the VA must report back to Congress about whether it should be extended or made permanent. If it does continue, lawmakers will consider expanding the program to include veterans with mental health conditions other than PTSD.

Mental health service dogs are task-trained to assist people with PTSD, panic disorders, anxiety disorders, depression and other conditions. They can retrieve medication, bring their partner an emergency phone, call 911 or a suicide hotline with a K9 rescue phone, turn on lights and help with emotional overload, among other things.

Some lawmakers and advocates have pushed the VA for years to help veterans with PTSD cover the costs of training ser-

vice dogs. The department maintained there wasn't enough scientific evidence showing dogs helped treat PTSD and its symptoms.

Congress directed the VA to conduct a study on the issue in 2010. The initial results were published in March. The study found veterans paired with service dogs experienced a reduction in the severity of their PTSD symptoms, and they exhibited fewer suicidal behaviors and ideations.

More results of the study, including its cost-effectiveness as a treatment for PTSD, are expected to be published in September.

"The research is clear on the range of benefits a service dog can provide for veterans experiencing those kinds of symptoms, which is why we're thrilled to see this pilot program become law," Christine Myran, executive director of the nonprofit Blue Star Service Dogs, said in a statement. "Providing support to our veterans is essential for helping with their transition back to civilian life, and this law will make a real difference for those making that journey."

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling

Army athlete earns swimming medal at Tokyo Paralympics

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO AQUATICS CENTRE — An Army noncommissioned officer won Team USA its first swimming medal of the Paralympics, taking silver in the 50-meter freestyle race on Wednesday night.

Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Marks, 31, of Colorado Springs, Colo., went into the final as the top seed after setting a Paralympic record of 33.16 seconds earlier in the day.

She beat that time by 0.01 seconds in the medal race but lost out to Ukraine's Yelyzaveta Mereshko, who took gold with a new record time of 33.11 seconds.

At the 2016 Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, Marks won gold in the 100-meter backstroke and bronze in the 4x100-meter medley relay.

A combat medic and member of the Army's World Class Athlete Program, Marks enlisted in 2008 and severely injured both of her hips in Iraq in 2010, according to her biography on the program website. She spent much of her rehabilitation in the pool at Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"No one expects to be injured. It is one of those things that no one thinks will happen to them," she said in a March 17 article posted on the Army's website. Marks declined to discuss how she was injured in an interview with ESPN

for a March 25, 2016, story.

She underwent multiple surgeries. In 2017, her left leg was amputated below the knee, according to Team USA's official website.

"Mentors coached and inspired her to become an elite swimmer, and in 2012 she was both accepted into WCAP and found fit for duty for continued Army service," her biography said.

The daughter of a Marine who served in Vietnam, Marks fell in love with the military as a teen after attending an at-risk youth academy run by service members, according to the Army profile.

She wanted to be an infantryman like her father but that was not an option for women when she enlisted, according to the Army.

"I told the recruiter, 'OK, what is the closest to that,' and they told me about combat medics," she said. Her father had talked highly of Navy corpsmen, who perform a similar mission as combat medics, she said, "so I went for it."

On Thursday, Marks was back in the pool competing in the women's 200-meter individual medley, in which athletes swim lengths of butterfly, breaststroke, backstroke and freestyle.

She competes in the S6 class, which includes people with several disability types, including cerebral palsy, short stature and amputations.

Among the swimmers racing



Army Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Marks prepares to compete in the 200-meter individual medley during the Paralympics at Tokyo Aquatics Centre on Thursday.

that day were athletes with a range of disabilities, including those without arms who propelled themselves through the water using only their legs. Those whose legs are immobile used only their arms in the water.

Marks led her heat going into the final lap but was overtaken by Mereshko, who won by half a second. The pair were the top qualifiers going into the evening's final.

Marks had the second-fastest qualifying time going into the evening's final but faded in the second half of the race to place fourth. Great Britain's Masie Summers-Newton claimed gold with a world record time of 2:56.68.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1



Marks competes in the 200-meter individual medley during the Paralympics at Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

AFGHANISTAN

Kabul: Scores of Afghans killed, wounded by attacks

FROM PAGE 1

caused by the explosions has been reported by various agencies to be as many as 60 wounded and 13 killed.

The second explosion happened shortly after the first one "at or near the Baron Hotel, a short distance from Abbey Gate," Kirby said.

Images of bloodied Afghan men walking or being carted in wheelbarrows away from the scene of the blast have been circulating on Twitter. President Joe Biden has been briefed on the explosion, a White House official told CNN.

The bombing is believed to have been a suicide mission, Reuters reported. Several nations had warned Thursday of a possible attack on the Kabul airport and urged people to avoid the airport.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid condemned the attacks in a tweet Thursday afternoon. Officials have not said who carried



out the attacks, but Pentagon officials this week have been warning of possible threats by ISIS-K, an Afghanistan-based branch of the Islamic State terrorist group.

"The Islamic Emirate strongly condemns the bombing of civilians at Kabul airport, which took place in an area where U.S. forces are responsible for security," Mujahid wrote in a tweet translated from Arabic. "The Islamic Emirate is paying close attention to the

security and protection of its people, and evil circles will be strictly stopped."

Since Aug. 14, the U.S. has evacuated approximately 95,700 Americans and Afghans who helped the U.S. during its nearly two decades in Afghanistan. The U.S. sent thousands of troops to Kabul to assist with the evacuations and provide security at the airport. There were 5,800 U.S. troops at the airport, though 400

were transported out of Kabul on Wednesday.

The attacks come after U.S. evacuation numbers slowed down after three consecutive days of exceeding its goal of moving 5,000-9,000 people per day from Kabul. Military aircraft lifted 5,100 people out of the country on Thursday, the White House said, compared to 11,200 people Tuesday, 12,700 on Monday, and 11,000 on Sunday.

The U.S. has said it will leave the country by Tuesday, a deadline that the Taliban has said must be met.

Kirby on Wednesday said the U.S. will continue evacuation operations until that date, but the military will need to start prioritizing troops and equipment.

As the deadline draws near, hopeful evacuees on the ground in Kabul have reported rumors of the U.S. ending evacuations by Saturday, but Kirby on Thursday denied the reports.

"Evacuation operations in Kabul will not be wrapping up in 36 hours," Kirby tweeted. "We will continue to evacuate as many people as we can until the end of the mission."

Kirby's tweet was sent before the reports of the explosions. It was not clear Thursday whether the explosions would affect evacuation efforts.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg condemned "the horrific terrorist attack" Thursday, tweeting "our priority remains to evacuate as many people to safety as quickly as possible."

NATO forces have been assisting the U.S. with the operations, flying thousands of evacuees out of the country each day. On Thursday, 74 coalition aircraft moved 8,300 people from Kabul — besting the U.S.'s daily total, the White House said.

doornbos.caitlin@stripes.com
Twitter: @CaitlinDoornbos

Bases in Germany strain to take 10,000 more evacuees overnight

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The U.S. military was struggling to support a surge of evacuees in Europe on Thursday as Afghans fled Kabul in what little time remained to escape Taliban rule.

More than 10,000 evacuees were destined for Ramstein on Thursday afternoon and overnight, the largest influx since the air base became the primary evacuation hub in Europe.

"Our main challenge right now is flow," said Brig. Gen. Josh Olson, the 86th Airlift Wing commander. "We're continuing to struggle to have that outflow back into the U.S."

It was uncertain Thursday how many more Afghans would be able to fly from Kabul following bombings outside the airport that resulted in deaths and scores of injuries. But flights to Ramstein have continued to bring evacuees in from elsewhere, including Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

In less than a week, Ramstein has transformed from an air base supporting European and African military operations into an international airport and city, Olson said.

More than 350 tents fill ramp space along the flight line, and all flight operations are part of the evacuation mission, with commercial carriers flying from Ramstein, base officials said.

Ramstein has capacity for about 12,000 evacuees, while Rhine Ordnance Barracks, a neighboring Army post, has space for about 5,000, Olson said. The two installations expect to reach that capacity by Friday, he said.

"You're about to see the busiest next couple of hours," Olson said. "Tonight, we'll be maxed out."

The pace of flights from Ramstein to the United States has more than doubled in the past 24 hours, base officials said. More than 3,500 people had departed as of Thursday afternoon.

About 275 people were crowded into a hangar turned into a temporary passenger terminal Thursday afternoon waiting to board a flight to Dulles International Airport near Washington, D.C. An additional 200 had just boarded a commercial Boeing 767 destined for Dulles.

"I'm traveling to America," said an excited Rasool Ahmad Qaderi, who fled Kabul with most of his family.

Qaderi, 27, said he had high hopes for the future and wants to live in New York City.

About five planes were scheduled to depart Ramstein on Thursday and six on Friday, transporting a total of more than 3,000 passengers, said Maj. Dustin Dere, director of operations for the 721st Air Mobility Operations Group.

But the pace needs to pick up, Dere said.

"Just with the inbound passengers and the lodging facilities filling up, we need to get more aircraft filled and out of here," he said. "The problem is the aircraft just aren't here yet."

Besides carriers United and Delta, Air Force KC-10 tankers based in the United Kingdom have flown evacuation missions across the Atlantic. But they're playing a bigger role in ferrying evacuees from interim staging bases between Afghanistan and the U.S., Dere said,

since the tankers have room for fewer passengers.

Olson said he didn't know why there were so many evacuees coming in at one time. Aircraft arriving from both Qatar and Kuwait are often filled to "emergency capacity," he said, with more passengers than

there are seats.

Other evacuees are being flown to U.S. bases in Sigonella, Italy, and Rota, Spain, Olson said.

Evacuees are staying an average of four days at Ramstein, Olson said. While at Ramstein, they receive health and background

checks, and their identification is vetted.

The State Department is focused on identifying American citizens, their families, legal permanent residents and those who fall under Special Immigrant Visa categories, a department spokesman said.

HAVE YOU BEEN INJURED?

Defense Base Act Legal Representation

Know and Protect your Legal Rights

Including Both US and Non-US Citizens

If you work for a company under contract with the United States Government outside the U.S. and fall ill or are injured at work, you may have the right to pursue a claim in the U.S. for benefits under the Defense Base Act. This law protects and applies to all injured employees, regardless of their citizenship or nationality. Under the law, you may be entitled to select a doctor and to payment of wages if restricted from working.

Hire Us Online Now!
www.barnettandlerner.com

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

For a **FREE** consultation **888.732.7425**

AFGHANISTAN

'As long as they need us'

US military communities in Europe step up to help Afghan evacuees

BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — Sewing machines whirred in a chapel annex on Ramstein Air Base Thursday as a dozen volunteers stitched together prayer garments for Afghan women.

"They weren't able to bring more than what they're wearing when they fled Kabul," said Elizabeth Chambers, who launched the sewing group days earlier after seeing a request on social media for someone to turn donated bed sheets into clothing the evacuees wear to pray.

"We watched a couple of videos and tutorials online, and I made a pattern to turn a queen-size sheet into a matching skirt and khimar," a garment that covers the head and arm, Chambers said.

Three days after launching the group, the women had sewn 102 khimars, 76 other head coverings, 20 full-length prayer skirts, nine dresses and 13 prayer mats, give or take a few, she said.

All have been distributed to the evacuees by the base's imam and his wife, who have reported back that the Afghan women are "grateful to have something" after wearing old T-shirts as head coverings and praying on dirty cardboard, she said.

"I'm just helping in a way that I could ... sewing is something I'm good at, I'm fast at and I could start right away," Chambers said.

Nearby, in what used to be the base movie theater, Master Sgt. Mitch Meis checked box after box of items that had been dropped off Thursday, making sure that the items inside were needed, clean and in good shape. There was clothing, baby items, toys, and lots of blankets, much-needed to help the thousands of evacuees who have arrived at Ramstein since Saturday deal with the cool German weather after Afghanistan's searing heat.

Volunteers took the donations to the large room that used to house cinema seating and a movie screen, where dozens more people sorted and placed them in plastic bags according to size, gender and what the items were.

"This is a centralized hub that agencies like the USO and others can come to and get what they need to help the evacuees," said Heather Mecska, who has been assisting with logistics at the intake site since Saturday, when she came to drop off some items for the evacuees herself.

Back then, less than a week ago, donations for the evacuees were being accepted, sorted and distributed at a more artisanal level by Ramstein first sergeants, in a much smaller building, where volunteers would show up

after hearing of the effort by word of mouth.

"The guy taking the donations was wiped out and I thought we needed to do something," Mecska said.

A few phone calls later, the alliesrefuge.org website had been set up, where people can see what the evacuees need and where volunteers are required. From there, the operation mushroomed into the effort it is now, with 200 people volunteering at the intake site every day, sorting through truckloads of donations, which are distributed at other sites around Ramstein.

Smaller-scale operations have been stood up at other U.S. installations in Europe, including Naval Support Activity Sigonella in Sicily, which has taken in 662 evacuees since Sunday. While that's a small fraction of the 14,500 who have arrived at Ramstein since last weekend, the effort at Sigonella and other installations has been as energetic as at the Air Force base in Germany.

NSA Naples has gathered enough diapers, wipes, toothpaste, shampoo, crayons, coloring books, clothing and other items to fill six pallets to send to Sigonella.

On Thursday, around a dozen volunteers were working at the chapel on NSA Naples' Gricignano di Aversa site to sort and pack donations. Shoes were in high demand as many Afghan children have arrived in Europe barefoot, said Cmdr. Gary Foshee, NSA Naples' command chaplain.

In Ramstein, a call went out one morning this week for stuffed animals to give to the children before they left to fly to their new homes in the U.S. Within an hour, so many teddy bears and other cuddly toys had been donated that a second call was posted on social media to say they weren't accepting any more for the time being.

But the effort for the evacuees continued unabated, with more and more people chipping in — like the woman at Ramstein's commissary who brought lunch to the volunteers at the old movie theater, or "people who are about to PCS out that are spending their last few hours here, doing what they can to help," Mecska said.

"We're motivated by the Afghan children and their families," she said. "They didn't ask for this but they're stuck in the middle of something that shouldn't have happened, and we want to help them the best we can."

"And we'll be here for as long as they need us."

Stars and Stripes reporter Alison Bath contributed to this report.
zeitvogel.karin@stripes.com
Twitter: @StripesZeit



EDGAR GRIMALDO/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force Airman Andrew Markos hands a teddy bear to an Afghan evacuee at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Tuesday.



PHOTOS BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN/Stars and Stripes

Top left:
Volunteers try on a prayer garment they made for Afghan refugees at Ramstein Air Base on Thursday.

Above: A military volunteer signs up to help with relief efforts for Afghan refugees at Ramstein Air Base.

Left: Volunteers help sort donations for Afghan refugees at Ramstein Air Base.

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban pushes for political deal with rivals

BY SUSANNAH GEORGE

The Washington Post

KABUL — The Taliban is scrambling to reach a deal with former Afghan officials to establish a government that could gain international recognition, keep aid money flowing into the country and restore access to billions of dollars in international reserves.

Taliban leaders have shuttled between more than a dozen meetings over the past week with the few former Afghan officials who remain in Kabul, including former president Hamid Karzai, former leader of national reconciliation council Abdullah Abdullah and former warlord-turned-politician Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The meetings have been held in the presidential palace, former government offices and private compounds.

For the Taliban, a political agreement could help the group avoid again becoming an international pariah, which would push one of the world's poorest countries even further into poverty. For the former Afghan leaders, a deal would give them a share of power in Afghanistan's new government.

At a news conference inside the former Afghan government's media center, now adorned with white Taliban flags, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said meetings with former Afghan officials are an effort to seek "their advice about the future government," so Afghanistan can "build a government that is accountable, serves the country and brings everyone together."

A former senior Afghan official



ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/AP

Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, center, introduces the Taliban delegation to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, left, ahead of their meeting in Moscow, Russia, on May 28, 2019.

present at several of the meetings said Taliban leaders conveyed that they "want to have a shared government."

"They say, 'We can't control the country without your help,'" said the former official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

"But yes, the main point is money," the official said. "The Taliban are scared of two things: pressure from the international community," he said, referring to sanctions, cuts to international aid and the inability to trade, "and resistance."

Most countries say they want to see a formal political transfer of power before recognizing a new government in Afghanistan; others, like Russia and China, suggest

their decision could be based more on maintaining regional stability.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has described the Taliban's military takeover as a "reality" that should be acted upon to prevent the breakup of the country. G-7 leaders—including President Joe Biden—said the Taliban's approach to human rights will be taken into account when deciding on formal recognition.

"We will judge the Afghan parties by their actions, not words," said a joint statement from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, France, Germany and Italy.

Recognition by the international community could lead to the release of billions of dollars in re-

serves that are now inaccessible to the Taliban. The Biden administration froze Afghan government reserves two days after the Taliban's sudden takeover of Kabul, a move that was followed by the International Monetary Fund.

While pursuing talks with former foes, the Taliban appears to be urging a return to normal in Kabul. Traffic has returned to the city's streets and many shops are open, but banks remain largely closed as a result of the frozen U.S. reserves. The closures have nearly ground the country's economy to a halt and, combined with cuts to international aid, risk plunging nearly 4 million more Afghans below the poverty line in just three months, according to an assessment by the World Bank seen by

The Washington Post.

At Tuesday's news conference, Mujahid asked foreign embassies to resume their work in the country, emphasized the need for continued international aid and called for a halt to the mass evacuations being carried out by the U.S.

The U.S. "should not encourage the Afghan people to leave the country, our skilled people, our engineers, our doctors and specialists and those who were educated here, our country needs them. They should not be taken to foreign countries," he said.

"Those who are taken out of Afghanistan are treated like ordinary workers instead of working in their specialties," he warned.

U.S. evacuations hit their highest daily total Tuesday since the operation began, with 21,600 people flown out of the country.

The former senior Afghan official meeting with Taliban leadership said he believes the group's appeals to share power are genuine but that the movement is grappling with the same problem that has plagued it for months: deciding what kinds of concessions it is willing to make—if any—for the sake of international legitimacy.

"We are waiting for them to share their plan for the new government with us. We don't want to lose all of our achievements of the last 20 years," he said, referring to advances in the rights of women and minorities and on civil liberties.

But regardless of what the group pledges to uphold now, he said, many fear that once a deal is reached, the Taliban could go back on its word.

Taliban: 'No proof' bin Laden was involved in 9/11 attacks

The Washington Post

A Taliban spokesman said there was "no proof" that Osama bin Laden was involved in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Bin Laden's well-documented role as the plotter of the attacks made him the most wanted fugitive in the world until he was killed by U.S. Navy SEALs in 2011.

Zabihullah Mujahid made the remark after the Islamist militant group pledged not to allow Afghanistan to be used once again as a base for al-Qaida.

"When Osama bin Laden became an issue for the Americans, he was in Afghanistan. Although there was no proof he was involved" in 9/11, Mujahid told NBC News in an interview broadcast Wednesday. "Now, we have given promises that Afghan soil won't be used against anyone."

When it was last in power, the Taliban provided a safe harbor in



Get excited.

FOREIGN SERVICE BENEFIT PLAN

Enjoy comprehensive health insurance and prescription coverage, as well as generous alternative benefits.

Our plan covers:*

50 massages 50 chiropractic 50 acupuncture

FEHB High Option Plan open to eligible Federal Civilian employees.

afspa.org/fsbp

*Up to \$60 per visit; 50 visits per year for each type of service.
All benefits are subject to the definitions, limitations, and exclusions set forth in the Foreign Service Benefit Plan's Federal brochure (RI 72-001).

afspa
FOREIGN SERVICE BENEFIT PLAN
Caring For Your Health Worldwide*

AFGHANISTAN

Remembrance run

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — A brigade that lost 82 paratroopers in combat over its four Afghanistan deployments held a memorial ceremony Wednesday for one of them, nearly 16 years after his death.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade paid homage to 1st Lt. Derek Hines, who was 25 when he was shot on a Sept. 1, 2005, mission near Baylough in the country's southeastern Zabul province.

For the third year in a row, the brigade honored the West Point graduate and hockey star with a 5K memorial run.

In speeches before the run, no mention was made of the abrupt end of the 20-year war, in which 775,000 service members deployed, or of the scramble to rescue tens of thousands of vulnerable Afghans and the U.S. citizens who are still in the country.

But Col. Michael Kloepper, the brigade's new commander, who deployed seven times to Afghanistan, shared memories from his time as Company B commander of the brigade's 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, where



Hines

Hines served as a fire support officer.

It was Kloepper who held Hines in his arms when he died.

The first thing Kloepper said he wanted his soldiers to know was that "Derek was a total badass."

He told a couple of illustrative war stories. There was the time that the lead truck was hit by an RPG and Hines ran up, pulled out the terrified gunner, got up behind the .50-caliber machine gun "and started shooting at the Tallywackers ... hammering them, hammering them!" Kloepper said.

"It was the sort of thing that, like, 'who is that guy?' And that's why the guys love him. I mean, they loved your brother," he said to Trevor Hines, who had traveled from his home in New England to Italy for the event.

And there was the day his paratroopers and a cell of insurgents had been shooting at each other for hours when Kloepper noticed Hines crouched among some rocks.

"I can see it like it was yesterday. I said, 'Derek, what are you doing?'" Kloepper said.

"And he just looked up and said, 'Sir, you've got to check this (stuff) out. It's about to be really amazing.'

"And within like five minutes,



Paratroopers in the 173rd Airborne Brigade race to the finish line in a 5K memorial run Wednesday at Del Din in Vicenza, Italy.



PHOTOS BY NANCY MONTGOMERY/Stars and Stripes

Col. Michael Kloepper, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, foreground, told Afghanistan war stories Wednesday to honor 1st Lt. Derek Hines, who was killed in action in 2005.

we had a low pass of a B-1," Kloepper said, imitating the whizzing sound of the Air Force heavy bomber.

"And then like 10 minutes later, that B-1 dropped a (bomb) and those guys were no more. And it was, 'All right, thank you, good job, Lt. Hines.'"

That was the 173rd's first Afghanistan deployment, to an area that the Naval Postgraduate School described as the main gateway for insurgent fighters between southern and eastern Afghanistan. The 173rd returned to the east in 2007, losing more than 40 men that year and the next.

In 2009, 173rd paratroopers deployed to an area south of Kabul, followed by a final deployment in 2012 to Logar and Wardak provinces.

In addition to numerous Silver Stars and other high honors, the deployments led to three brigade soldiers, all of whom survived,

173rd Airborne honors soldier killed in first of brigade's four Afghanistan deployments

earning the Medal of Honor.

The 5K run honoring Hines came as a collaboration between brigade officers and the Hines family, which set up a foundation after Derek's death to aid troops and veterans.

They have hosted a fundraising memorial run and party in their Massachusetts hometown for a decade.

Trevor Hines declined to comment Wednesday on the war's end. But in an undated interview on the website Hope Unseen, he described his loss, grief and bitterness.

"I also wish people knew how hard it is to think about all that Derek could have accomplished in his life," he said. "I often struggle with the fact that Derek was killed in a land so crooked and evil, so different."

The last story Kloepper told about Hines — about the day he died — began with a prelude two

weeks earlier.

On Aug. 21, 2005, a bomb detonated beneath a wooden bridge as a convoy passed over, killing four brigade soldiers: Spc. Blake Hall; Sgt. Michael Lehmler; Pvt. Christopher Palmer; and 1st Lt. Joshua Hyland, who was studying for his master's degree when on Sept. 12, 2001, he joined ROTC, according to The Associated Press.

The mission was to find the leader of the cell that had planted the bomb, Kloepper said. A local man approached the patrol, which in itself was unusual, and said he knew where the cell leader was.

"We sort of huddled and said, 'What should we do? What should we do?'" Kloepper said.

"Well, it's pretty simple, sir. We got to go get him," Hines replied. "Not for us, but for the guys killed before."

montgomery.nancy@stripes.com
Twitter: @montgomerynance

US military helps get Afghanistan evacuees on South Korean aircraft

BY DAVID CHOI
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — South Korean military forces received "much help" from U.S. troops to get nearly 400 Afghans out of Kabul as nearby Taliban forces tightened their control of Afghanistan, government officials told Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

Nearly 380 Afghan evacuees arrived on a South Korean military aircraft at an airport outside Seoul on Thursday after-

noon.

Thirteen others are expected to arrive on another aircraft at a later date, a defense ministry official said on a customary condition of anonymity.

Following the Taliban's rapid advance into Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, South Korea's government moved to evacuate Afghans who worked at its embassy, hospitals, vocational training centers and provincial reconstruction teams.

The evacuees included over 70 families with more than 100

infants and 80 children between ages 5 and 10, according to South Korea's Ministry of Defense.

Park Min Ho, the director of the ministry's Multilateral Security Policy Division, said the Afghans were told to meet at a predetermined location, and six buses carried them to Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul.

Meanwhile, Taliban forces were "inspecting people on the way" to the airport, Park said Thursday, adding that U.S. forces deployed to Afghanistan

"persuaded the Taliban through negotiations ... so we could pass through [their] security inspection" at the airport.

"We got much help from U.S. troops and realized the importance of the [South Korea]-U.S. alliance this time," Park told Stars and Stripes.

The first group of Afghan evacuees arrived at Incheon International Airport at around 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

They immediately received health checks and were tested for COVID-19.

The South Korean-led mission was dubbed Operation Miracle because "we need to give hope to our facilitators in a crisis called 'escape from Afghanistan,'" Park said.

Over 3,900 South Korean troops had served in Afghanistan since 2002, a Defense Ministry official said Wednesday.

One South Korean soldier died after a bomb attack in 2007.

choi.david@stripes.com
Twitter: @choibboy
chang.kyong@stripes.com

VIRUS OUTBREAK

US bases ready to vaccinate in Japan, S. Korea

By JOSEPH DITZLER

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The U.S. military in Japan and South Korea is ready to carry out Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's order to inoculate all active-duty military members with the coronavirus vaccine, spokesmen for those commands said Thursday.

The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine, given full approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Monday, is in good supply at bases in South Korea and Japan, and both commands expect resupply.

"Yes, there are enough doses and incoming doses [are] on the way," Air Force Maj. Tom Barger of U.S. Forces Japan, headquartered at Yokota Air Base, said in an email to Stars and Stripes.

U.S. Forces Korea has "enough on-hand supplies of Pfizer to meet an initial demand until we are provided more vaccines" by the Defense Department, said Col. Lee Peters by email from Camp Humphreys. USFK "also possess an adequate supply of Moderna if service members choose that vaccine over Pfizer."

Meanwhile, one U.S. base in Japan reported a new case of COVID-19 on Thursday. Sasebo Naval Base, on Kyushu Island, said the person tested positive Wednesday following close contact with another infected individual.

Tokyo continued to see a comparative decline in new coronavi-

rus cases on Thursday. The metropolitan government reported another 4,704 newly infected people, still high but 830 fewer than a week prior, according to public broadcaster NHK and metro government data.

The coronavirus' fifth wave in Japan continues relatively unabated, however, as the central government prepares to add on Friday another eight prefectures to a state of emergency that already covers 13 prefectures.

Japan reported another 24,317 new coronavirus cases Wednesday, and 45 people died of COVID-19 complications, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. Nearly 43% of Japan's population, or 54.1 million people, are fully vaccinated.

About 70% of USFJ's uniformed personnel are fully vaccinated, according to Barger. He said many unvaccinated service members are rolling up their sleeves now that the shot is mandated by DOD.

"Yes, an increase was noted in anticipation of the recent memorandum" from Austin, he wrote.

USFK has not seen the same increase, according to Peters. But more than 80% of USFK service members and the "affiliated population" are vaccinated, he wrote, and "the number of shots we administer to our service members should push us well over 90% vaccination rate" as vaccines continue to arrive.



TETSUYA MORITA/U.S. Navy

Medical workers prepare syringes with doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine this spring at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

Austin on Tuesday directed the military to "impose ambitious timelines" for implementing plans to fully vaccinate U.S. forces. Barger said a timeline has yet to be established for USFJ.

"We will vaccinate the force as rapidly as we have the Pfizer vaccine available," he said.

He said USFJ anticipates many unvaccinated service members will comply with the mandate, which effectively rolls COVID-19 vaccines into the same system that keeps thousands of service members up to date on a battery of already required shots.

Holdouts will have time to

make up their minds, but apparently not an unlimited amount of time.

"Our medical team will ensure every effort is made to explain and educate anyone who has questions about the vaccine prior to receiving it," Barger said. "There is currently no timeline for when administrative action may need to be taken, but each service is developing their own processes in accordance with standing practices for any other vaccine."

ditzler.joseph@stripes.com
Twitter: @JosephDitzler

New NY governor adds 12K deaths to tally

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — Delivering another blow to what's left of former Gov. Andrew Cuomo's legacy, New York's new governor acknowledged on her first day in office that the state has had nearly 12,000 more deaths from COVID-19 than Cuomo told the public.

"The public deserves a clear, honest picture of what's happening. And that's whether it's good or bad, they need to know the truth. And that's how we restore confidence," Gov. Kathy Hochul said on NPR.

In its first daily update on the outbreak Tuesday evening, Hochul's office reported that nearly 55,400 people have died of the coronavirus in New York — based on

death certificate data submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That's up from about 43,400 that Cuomo reported to the public as of Monday, his last day in office. The Democrat who was once widely acclaimed for his leadership during the COVID-19 outbreak resigned in the face of an impeachment drive after being accused of sexually harassing at least 11 women, allegations he disputed.

The higher number is not entirely new. Federal health officials and some academic institutions tracking COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. have been using the higher tally for many months because of known gaps in the data Cuomo had been choosing to publicize.

But Hochul, who was lieutenant

governor before being propelled to the state's highest office, said it is vital to be fully transparent about the numbers.

"There's a lot of things that weren't happening, and I'm going to make them happen," Hochul said Wednesday on MSNBC. "Transparency will be the hallmark of my administration."

The Associated Press first reported in July on the large discrepancy between the figures publicized by the Cuomo administration and numbers the state was reporting to the CDC.

The count used by Cuomo in his news media briefings and on the state's COVID-19 fatality tracker included only laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 deaths reported through a state system that col-

lects data from hospitals, nursing homes and adult care facilities.

That meant the tally excluded people who died at home, in hospice, in prisons or at state-run homes for people with disabilities. It also excluded people who doctors believed died of COVID-19 but never got a positive test to confirm the diagnosis. Such tests were scarce in the initial months of the pandemic, when hundreds of New Yorkers were dying each day.

"There are presumed and confirmed deaths. People should know both," Hochul said.

Cuomo's spokesperson, Rich Azzopardi, said the former administration had only been reporting "clearly labeled confirmed COVID deaths" to ensure accuracy.

US jobless claims up by 4,000 to 353,000

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits rose for the first time in five weeks even though the economy and job market have been recovering briskly from the coronavirus pandemic.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that jobless claims edged up to 353,000 from 349,000 a week earlier. The weekly count has fallen more or less steadily since topping 900,000 in early January as the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines has helped the economy — encouraging businesses to reopen or expand hours and luring consumers out of their homes to restaurants, bars and shops.

But a resurgence of cases linked to the highly contagious delta variant has clouded the economic outlook. And claims already remain high by historic standards: Before the pandemic tore through the economy in March 2020, the weekly pace amounted to around 220,000 a week.

Filings for unemployment benefits have traditionally been seen as a real-time measure of the job market's health. But their reliability has deteriorated during the pandemic. In many states, the weekly figures have been inflated by fraud and by multiple filings from unemployed Americans as they navigate bureaucratic hurdles to try to obtain benefits. Those complications help explain why the pace of applications remains comparatively high.

The job market has been rebounding with vigor since the pandemic paralyzed economic activity last year and employers slashed more than 22 million jobs in March and April 2020. The United States has since recovered 16.7 million jobs. And employers have added a rising number of jobs for three straight months, including a robust 943,000 in July. They have been posting job openings faster than applicants are lining up to fill them.

Some employers blame their labor shortages on supplemental unemployment benefits from the federal government for discouraging some of the jobless from seeking work. In response, many states have withdrawn from the federal programs, which expire nationwide next month anyway.

Economists point to other factors that have kept out of the job market — difficulty finding or affording child care, fear about becoming infected by the virus at work and the hope of some people to find better jobs than they had before the pandemic.

NATION

Migrant kids spend weeks in US shelters

Associated Press

Five months after the Biden administration declared an emergency and raced to set up shelters to house a record number of children crossing the U.S.-Mexico border alone, kids continue to languish at the sites, while more keep coming, child welfare advocates say.

More than 700 children spent three weeks or longer at the government's unlicensed sites in mid-July, according to declarations filed with a federal court overseeing custody conditions for immigrant youth. Advocates have said that children should be released quickly to their relatives in the United States or sent to a licensed facility.

In one of the filings, a 16-year-old Salvadoran boy said children were served raw meat. It took more than a month for the boy, who said he speaks with both his parents each week, to be released to his father in Georgia.

"When I wake up every day, I feel really frustrated. Of the youth that I arrived with, I am the last one here," the boy said in his declaration. "I would like to be home with my dad right now."

When the Biden administration erected the emergency sites in March to ease dangerous overcrowding at border stations, they were meant to be a temporary fix. But months later, some wonder whether that's still the case.

Border crossings by children without an adult in July neared the same levels they did in March despite the summer heat.

"If you have a dinner party that you plan to have for three people, and 30,000 people show up, you're going to have a problem," U.S. District Judge Dolly M. Gee, who oversees the decades-old settle-

ment agreement that governs custody conditions for the children, said at a recent hearing.

"The infrastructure is not set up for tens of thousands of people coming in at one time, and somehow the paradigm has to shift to figure out how to deal with these types of numbers," Gee said.

U.S. border authorities reported more than 18,000 encounters with unaccompanied immigrant children in July, up 24% from a month earlier. The rise comes in the busiest month yet for the Biden administration on the border with a total of nearly 200,000 encounters, even though crossings are typically expected to slow during the summer.

According to a government report in early August, the Department of Health and Human Services had nearly 15,000 children in its care, but only 11,000 licensed shelter beds for the immigrant children. Using large-scale facilities can fill this gap, though advocates said the government would do better by expanding licensed shelters where children are given case workers, recreation and six hours of education on each weekday.

The Department of Health and Human Services is tasked with caring for the children until they can be sent to live with relatives or other sponsors in the U.S. while they wait for an immigration judge to decide whether they can stay in the country legally. While the agency has a broad network of state-licensed shelters that could be expanded, ample space in foster care programs and large, so-called influx care facilities that adhere to specific standards for staffing and conditions, it continues to turn to these emergency sites.



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

A couple has a meal along the shore of Lake Tahoe in South Lake Tahoe, Calif., on Tuesday.

Calif. wildfire dangers may be spreading to the south

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A wildfire that burned several homes near Los Angeles may signal that the region is facing the same dangers that have scorched Northern California this summer.

The fire in San Bernardino County erupted Wednesday afternoon, quickly burned several hundred acres and damaged or destroyed at least a dozen homes and outbuildings in the foothills northeast of Los Angeles, fire officials said. Crews used shovels and bulldozers and mounted an air attack to keep the South Fire from the tiny communities of Lytle Creek and Scotland.

About 600 homes and other buildings were threatened by the blaze along with power transmission lines, and 1,000 residents were under evacuation orders.

By nightfall, firefighters appeared to have gained the upper hand and few flames were seen. But the blaze was worrying be-

cause Southern California's high fire season typically comes later in the year when strong, dry Santa Ana winds blast out of the interior and flow toward the coast.

After a few cooler days, California's southern region was expected to experience a return of hot weather into the weekend that could boost wildfire risks. In addition to dangerously dry conditions, the region faces firefighting staffing that is increasingly stretched thin, said Lyn Sieliet, spokeswoman for the San Bernardino National Forest.

"Some of our firefighters that we normally have on our forests are working on fires in Northern California, or Idaho and Washington," she told KTLA-TV. "We don't have the full staff that we normally do."

The largest fires in the state and in the nation were in Northern California, where they have burned down small mountain towns and destroyed huge swaths

of tinder-dry forest.

The Caldor Fire has destroyed 500 homes since Aug. 14 in the Sierra Nevada southwest of Lake Tahoe, including much of the tiny hamlet of Grizzly Flats. It was 12% contained and threatened more than 17,000 structures.

Buck Minitch, a firefighter with the Pioneer Fire Protection District, was called to the fire lines last week while his wife fled their Grizzly Flats home with their two daughters, three dogs, a kitten and duffel bag of clothes, the San Jose Mercury News reported.

Hannah Minitch evacuated to her parents' property and received a text from her husband the next morning showing only a chimney where their house once stood. The two wept briefly during a telephone call before he got back to work.

"We've got nothing left here," she recalled him saying. "I've got to go protect what's left for other people."

Evidence of extensive corrosion in collapsed Fla. condo reportedly found

Associated Press

MIAMI — Video released by a team of federal investigators shows more evidence of extensive corrosion and overcrowded concrete reinforcement in a Miami-area condominium that collapsed in June, killing 98 people.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology also announced Wednesday that it will conduct a five-pronged investigation into the Champlain Towers South collapse, which will be led

by Judith Mitrani-Reiser. She is a Cuban-born engineer who grew up in Miami.

"We are going into this with an open mind and will examine all hypotheses that might explain what caused this collapse," Mitrani-Reiser said. "Having a team with experience across a variety of disciplines, including structural and geotechnical engineering, materials, evidence collection, modeling and more, will ensure a thorough investigation."

The video shows densely packed steel reinforcement in various sections of the building, along with extensive corrosion where one column met the building's foundation.

"The corrosion on the bottom of that column is astronomical," Dawn Lehman, a professor of structural engineering at the University of Washington, told the Miami Herald. She said that amount of corrosion should have been obvious and documented as

part of the 40-year inspection that was ongoing when the building in Surfside, Fla., collapsed June 24.

"If there's that amount of corrosion, this should have been fixed," she said.

The images show beams, walls and columns that appear to be overcrowded with steel reinforcement, which suggests potential weaknesses, she explained.

"There is no reason there should be that kind of bar congestion," Lehman said.

The risk posed by "congested" vertical rebar in columns would have been even worse in spots where the rebar overlapped, which is known as "lap splice" regions, Abeyuwa Aghayere, a Drexel University engineering researcher who also reviewed the video, told the newspaper.

While it's already congested with rebar, at the splice regions, it would have been "even further congested," Aghayere told the Herald.

NATION

Lawyers penalized over suit against Mich. election

Associated Press

DETROIT — Nine lawyers allied with former President Donald Trump face financial penalties and other sanctions after a judge Wednesday said they had abused the court system with a lawsuit that challenged Michigan's election results in favor of Joe Biden.

U.S. District Judge Linda Parker said the lawsuit last fall was a sham intended to deceive the court and the public, just a few days after Biden's 154,000-vote victory in the state was certified.

"Despite the haze of confusion, commotion and chaos counsel intentionally attempted to create by

filing this lawsuit, one thing is perfectly clear: Plaintiffs' attorneys have scorned their oath, flouted the rules, and attempted to undermine the integrity of the judiciary along the way," Parker said in the opening of a scathing 110-page opinion.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of six Republican voters who wanted Parker to decertify Michigan's results and impound voting machines. The judge declined in December, calling the request "stunning in its scope and breathtaking in its reach."

The state and Detroit subsequently asked Parker to order sanctions against Sidney Powell, L.

Lin Wood and seven other attorneys who were part of the litigation. The judge agreed, telling the state and city to tally the costs of defending the lawsuit and submit the figures within 14 days.

Parker said lawyers for Trump supporters filed affidavits stuffed with sinister "speculation and conjecture" about the vote-counting process without checking for evidence to support the claims.

"Individuals may have a right — within certain bounds — to disseminate allegations of fraud unsupported by law or fact in the public sphere," the judge said. "But attorneys cannot exploit their privilege

and access to the judicial process to do the same."

Parker ordered 12 hours of legal education, including six hours in election law, for each attorney. Her decision will also be sent to the states where the lawyers are licensed for possible disciplinary action there.

It was one of the few efforts to wrench fines or other penalties from dubious post-election lawsuits across the U.S. There was no immediate response to messages seeking comment from attorneys for Wood and Powell.

"I appreciate the unmistakable message she sends with this ruling

— those who vow to uphold the Constitution must answer for abandoning that oath," said Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat.

There is no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election. Indeed, election officials from both political parties have stated publicly that the election went well, and international observers confirmed there were no serious irregularities.

In New York, Rudy Giuliani was suspended from practicing law because he made false statements while trying to get courts to overturn Trump's election loss.

Dozens of homes, outbuildings burned in Minnesota wildfire

Associated Press

ISABELLA, Minn. — Dozens of homes, cabins and outbuildings have been destroyed or damaged in northeastern Minnesota as the state's largest wildfire continues burning uncontained, according to Superior National Forest officials.

Authorities say 12 homes or cabins and 57 outbuildings have been lost in the Greenwood Lake fire that has consumed 34 square miles of forest land. An addi-

tional three homes or cabins were damaged in the fire, Minnesota Public Radio News reported Wednesday.

Forest officials decided to keep the popular Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness closed another week, until Sept. 3, dealing a blow to tourists who spent months planning their trips there and to the outfitters and other businesses serving the 1 million-acre wilderness.

Several fires caused by lightning have

burned in the wilderness during this summer's drought conditions, while the much bigger Greenwood Lake fire just to the south has forced the evacuation of about 280 homes and cabins since it was spotted Aug. 15 about 15 miles southwest of the town of Isabella.

Forest officials were also watching fires burning just across the Canadian border, in Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park, which led them to close some parts

of the Boundary Waters north of Ely earlier this summer.

But when the John Ek fire took off late last week, forest officials decided to close the entire wilderness area as a precaution. They said that fire and the Greenwood Lake fire had stretched their resources too thin to ensure the safety of paddlers and campers.

More than 400 crew members are fighting the forest fires.



**STAYING IN EUROPE
AFTER COMPLETING
MILITARY SERVICE?**

WE ARE LOOKING FOR DRIVERS WHO HAVE A
MILITARY TRUCK DRIVER'S LICENSE, CDL OR
EXPERIENCE AS A:

- **88M Motor Transport Operator**
- **94F Fueler**
- **14T Patriot Launching Station Operator**



Contact us today!

Richard Wagner GmbH & Co. KG Spedition
Heinrich-Hertz-Str. 8, 92224 Amberg |
Phone: 09621 77 20 0 |
e-Mail: r.wagner@wagner-spedition.de

[HTTPS://WAGNER-SPEDITION.DE/EN/](https://wagner-spedition.de/en/)



NATION

Israeli PM: Biden should drop push for Iran nuke pact

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett were to hold their first face-to-face meeting Thursday, and Israel's new leader said he planned to press Biden to give up his pursuit of reviving the Iran nuclear deal.

Before arriving in Washington, Bennett made clear the top priority of the visit to the White House was to persuade Biden not to return to the nuclear accord, arguing Iran has already advanced in its uranium enrichment, and that sanctions relief would give Iran more resources to back Israel's enemies in the region.

The meeting, scheduled to start late Thursday morning, was de-

layed as Biden met with national security aides following explosions near the Kabul airport, where the U.S. and its allies are in the waning days of a major airlift that has drawn thousands of people seeking to flee Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.

The Israeli leader met separately Wednesday with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to discuss Iran and other issues. The visit is his first to the U.S. as prime minister. Bennett told his Cabinet before the trip that he would tell the American president "that now is the time to halt the Iranians, to stop this thing" and not to reenter "a nuclear deal that has already expired and is not relevant, even



ABIR SULTAN/AP

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett is in Washington for his first state visit overseas since taking office.

to those who thought it was once relevant."

Biden has made clear his desire to find a path to salvage the 2015 landmark pact cultivated by Barack Obama's administration but scuttled in 2018 by Donald Trump's. But U.S. indirect talks with Iran have stalled and Wash-

ington continues to maintain crippling sanctions on the country as regional hostilities simmer.

Trump's decision to withdraw from Iran's nuclear deal led Tehran to abandon over time every limitation the accord imposed on its nuclear enrichment. The country now enriches a small amount

of uranium up to 63%, a short step from weapons-grade levels, compared with 3.67% under the deal. It also spins far more advanced centrifuges and more of them than were allowed under the accord, worrying nuclear nonproliferation experts even though Tehran insists its program is peaceful.

Court upholds death sentence for church shooter Dylann Roof

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — A federal appeals court Wednesday upheld Dylann Roof's conviction and death sentence for the 2015 racist slayings of nine members of a Black South Carolina congregation, saying the legal record cannot even capture the "full horror" of what he did.

A unanimous three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond rejected arguments that the young white man should have been ruled incompetent to stand trial in the shootings at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston.

In 2017, Roof became the first person in the U.S. sentenced to death for a federal hate crime. Authorities have said Roof opened fire during the closing prayer of a Bible study at the church, raining down dozens of bullets on those assembled. He was 21 at the time.

In his appeal, Roof's attorneys argued that he was wrongly allowed to represent himself during sentencing, a critical phase of his trial. Roof successfully prevented jurors from hearing evidence about his mental health, "under the delusion," his attorneys argued, that "he would be rescued from prison by white-nationalists — but only, bizarrely, if he kept his mental impairments out of the public record."

Roof's lawyers said his convictions and death sentence should be vacated or his case should be sent back to court for a "proper competency evaluation."

The 4th Circuit found that the trial judge did not commit an error when he found Roof was competent to stand trial and issued a scathing rebuke of Roof's crimes.

"Dylann Roof murdered African Americans at their church, during their Bible-study and worship. They had welcomed him. He slaughtered them. He did so with the express intent of terrorizing not just his immediate victims at the historically important Mother Emanuel Church, but as many similar people as would hear of the mass murder," the panel wrote in its ruling.

"No cold record or careful parsing of statutes and precedents can capture the full horror of what Roof did. His crimes qualify him for the harshest penalty that a just society can impose," the judges wrote.

One of Roof's attorneys, Margaret Alice-Anne Farrand, a deputy federal public defender, declined to comment on the ruling. Roof's other attorneys did not immediately respond to emailed requests seeking comment.

The Rev. Kylon Middleton, a close friend of Mother Emanuel Pastor Clementa Pinckney, a state



GRACE BEAHM, THE POST AND COURIER/AP
Dylann Roof enters the court room at the Charleston County Judicial Center in Charleston, S.C., in April 2017.

senator who was killed in the massacre, said Roof's appeal reopened some of the psychological wounds felt by loved ones of the victims and survivors. Middleton said he is personally opposed to the death penalty, but had accepted that as the sentence Roof received.

"We just want whatever the consequence or the justice that had been delivered based on the court's ruling to be final, period," Middleton said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathan Williams, one of the lead prosecutors on the case, said the mass shooting was one of the worst events in South Carolina's history.

"Our office is grateful for the decision of the court, a decision that ensures, as the Court stated, that 'the harshest penalty a just society can impose' is indeed imposed," Williams said in a statement.

Porn actor Jeremy indicted on over 30 sex assault counts

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A grand jury has indicted adult film actor Ron Jeremy on more than 30 counts of sexual assault involving 21 women and girls across more than two decades, authorities said.

Jeremy, 68, whose legal name is Ronald Jeremy Hyatt, pleaded not guilty in Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday to all of the allegations, which include 12 counts of rape.



Jeremy

The indictment, which was returned Aug. 19 and unsealed Wednesday, covers allegations dating from 1996 to 2019 with victims aged 15 to 51. The counts appear to be identical to charges filed against Jeremy last year, which he also denied.

In a tactical move also employed in their case against Harvey Weinstein, LA County prosecutors used secret grand jury proceedings to get an indictment that replaces the original charges, allowing them to skip a public preliminary hearing on the evidence and proceed to trial.

Defense attorney Stuart Goldfarb said in an email that Jeremy's "position is the same as when the

criminal complaint was filed. He is innocent of all the charges."

Jeremy has been held in jail on \$6.6 million bail since his arrest in June 2020.

The indictment includes allegations that Jeremy raped a 19-year-old woman during a photo shoot in 1996, raped a 26-year-old woman at a nightclub in 2003 and raped a 17-year-old girl at a home in 2008.

He is also charged with sexually assaulting a 15-year-old girl in 2004.

No trial date has been set.

Jeremy was told to return to court in October for a pretrial hearing.

Nicknamed "The Hedgehog," Jeremy has been among the best-known and most prolific performers in the porn industry for decades, appearing in hundreds of films since the 1970s. He has also made regular appearances in mainstream films and on reality TV shows.

Along with Weinstein, he is one of only a few men investigated and charged by a district attorney's task force formed to take on sexual misconduct in the entertainment industry as the #MeToo era gained momentum in late 2017.

Weinstein has pleaded not guilty to 10 counts of sexual assault and is also awaiting trial. A judge dismissed an 11th count.

WEEKEND



‘Solar Power’
from Lorde
Page 28



High-minded horror

Director Nia DaCosta gives this generation's 'Candyman' more bite by framing film through artsy, thought-provoking racial lens

Profile, Page 19
Review, Page 20



Michael Hargrove plays Sherman Fields in “Candyman.”

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND MGM PICTURES/AP

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



Persephone guides visitors inside Alistrati cave, about 84 miles northeast of Thessaloniki, Greece. Persephone, billed as the world's first robot used as a tour guide inside a cave, has been welcoming visitors to the Alistrati cave since mid-July.

Underworld guide

Persephone, a robot, leads visitors through a Greek cave

By COSTAS KANTOURIS
Associated Press

Persephone is a tour guide in Greece, but perhaps not the type people are used to. Billed as the world's first robot tour guide inside a cave, Persephone has been welcoming visitors since mid-July to the Alistrati Cave in northern Greece, 84 miles northeast of the city of Thessaloniki.

The multilingual robot covers the first 500 feet of the part of the cave that is open to the public. In the remaining 2,400 feet, a human guide takes over.

The robot was named Persephone because, according to one version of the ancient Greek myth, it was in a nearby plain that Pluto — the god of the underworld who was also known as Hades — abducted Persephone, with the consent of her father Zeus, to take her as his wife.

The robot can give its part of the tour in 33 languages and interact at a basic level with visitors in three languages. It can also answer 33 questions, but only in Greek.

Nikos Kartalis, the scientific director for the Alistrati site, had the idea of creating the robot when he saw one on TV guiding visitors at an art gallery. Seventeen years later, "we got our funds and the robot guide became a reality," Kartalis told The Associated Press.

The robot was built by the National Technology and Research Foundation and cost 118,000 euros (\$139,000).

"We already have a 70% increase in visitors compared to last year since we started using" the robot, says Kartalis. "People are enthusiastic, especially the children, and people who had visited in the past are coming back to see the robot guide."

"It is something unprecedented for them, to have the ability to interact with their robot by asking it questions and the robot answering them," he said. "Many foreign visitors couldn't believe Greece had the capacity to build a robot and use it as a guide in the cave."

Persephone, with a white body, black head and two luminous eyes, moves on wheels, guiding visitors to the first three of eight stops along the

walkway. She can do two more stops, but her low speed slows down the tour, which is conducted in three languages simultaneously. Persephone's creators are considering ways to speed her up.

The robot begins by saying: "My name is Persephone. I am the daughter of the goddess Demeter and the wife of Pluto, the god of the underworld. I welcome you to my under Earth kingdom, the Alistrati Cave."

Many visitors are intrigued by the robot guide. "It was surprising for me. I've never experienced such a thing. Actually, honestly, I prefer a live guide, but it's interesting doing it this way. And I like the pace of the robot. It goes slower, so I can look around," said Patrick Markes, a Czech visitor.

Markes listened to the first three stops from the robot in his native language and the rest in English from a human tour guide.

"I should thank Persephone, our robot; she said very fine things," said Christos Tenis, a Greek visitor. "I'm impressed by the cave. Of course, we had a flawless (human) guide. She explained many things. I'm very impressed."

Persephone is not the only technology used inside the cave. There's a cellphone app in which a visitor, scanning a QR code, can see the Alistrati Beroni. That's a microorganism that is only found in this cave, in the huge mounds of bat droppings left behind when the cave was opened and the bats migrated elsewhere.

Evdokia Karafera is one of the tour guides who partners with the robot.

"It is helpful, because it speaks many languages. There's just a little delay in the touring," she said. "Most find it fascinating, especially the children, and find it interesting that it speaks many languages."

Karafera insisted, however, that human tour guides cannot be completely replaced.

"Robots, at some point in the future, will take over many jobs. But I believe they cannot replace humans everywhere," she said. "(Visitors say) 'the robot is interesting, original, but can't substitute for the human contact with the guide and the conversation we can have on the way back.'"

GADGETS

iPhone accessory enhances hearing in noisy situations

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

While doing some advance reading about the Noopl, a hearing enhancement accessory for iPhone, I thought about finding a friend with hearing loss to put this through a proper test. I have good hearing, but after using the Noopl, I realized I didn't need a hearing test to see (or hear) what I've been missing.

The goal of the Noopl is for you to never miss a conversation and to provide clarity in noisy environments, such as crowded restaurants, airports, malls, stores or even your own home. It uses AI-based noise reduction technologies to improve the audio in your current noisy environment. Noopl's creators came up with the concept after they had challenges hearing each other in a noisy restaurant.

It's built with an iPhone Lightning port, attaches in a second, and is Apple-certified. It measures about 2-by-1.2-by-0.27 inches, and stores in the included carrying case.

The instructions and website video are very helpful to get you set up with a two-way communication link to AirPods Pro and other compatible headphones, including PowerBeats Pro and other Made for iPhone (MFi) hearing devices.

The setup emphasizes starting with the AirPods Pro in the case, not in your ears. After downloading the Noopl Listen app, there are a few short audio clips to show how well the Noopl works in manual or automatic mode. In automatic and with AirPods Pro, it tracks your head's movement. In manual and with other headphones, you choose which direction the audio needs to be captured.

The Noopl app gives examples in crowded restaurants and airports, which both displayed the advantages well. I took the Noopl out for a day that included grocery shopping, a veterinarian, a post office and a few other stops, which were busy with lots of background noise.

To amplify the sound, three microphones together create a steerable beamformer that improves the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) in acoustically challenging environments.

After just a few hours using the pocket-sized Noopl, it's easy to see the tremendous results. The app's dashboard is well designed creating a user-friendly experience to control the audio beam's direction and volume.

Online: noopl.com; \$199

The new Mophie Powerstation Go Rugged portable battery does it all. And when I say all, this battery has portable power for charging cellphones or jump-starting a car, boat or truck. It even has an air compressor for filling tires, which makes this one of the most versatile portable power devices available.

Inside is a 55,500mWh (megawatt-hours) internal battery, which holds its charge so it's ready for use.

Two USB-A ports are built into the battery under a flap, which can be used for charging just about any USB device. They can be used individually or simultaneously and have an 2.4A output.

The air compressor is what got my curiosity, and with bicycle tires needing air, it worked perfectly. A display on the side of the battery allows the required PSI to be dialed in to prevent overinflating. It also easily filled inflatable pool floats.

The sturdy powerstation can jump-start a full-sized truck in seconds. If a jump is needed, the mini jumper cables plug into a port, which is covered by a front side flap.

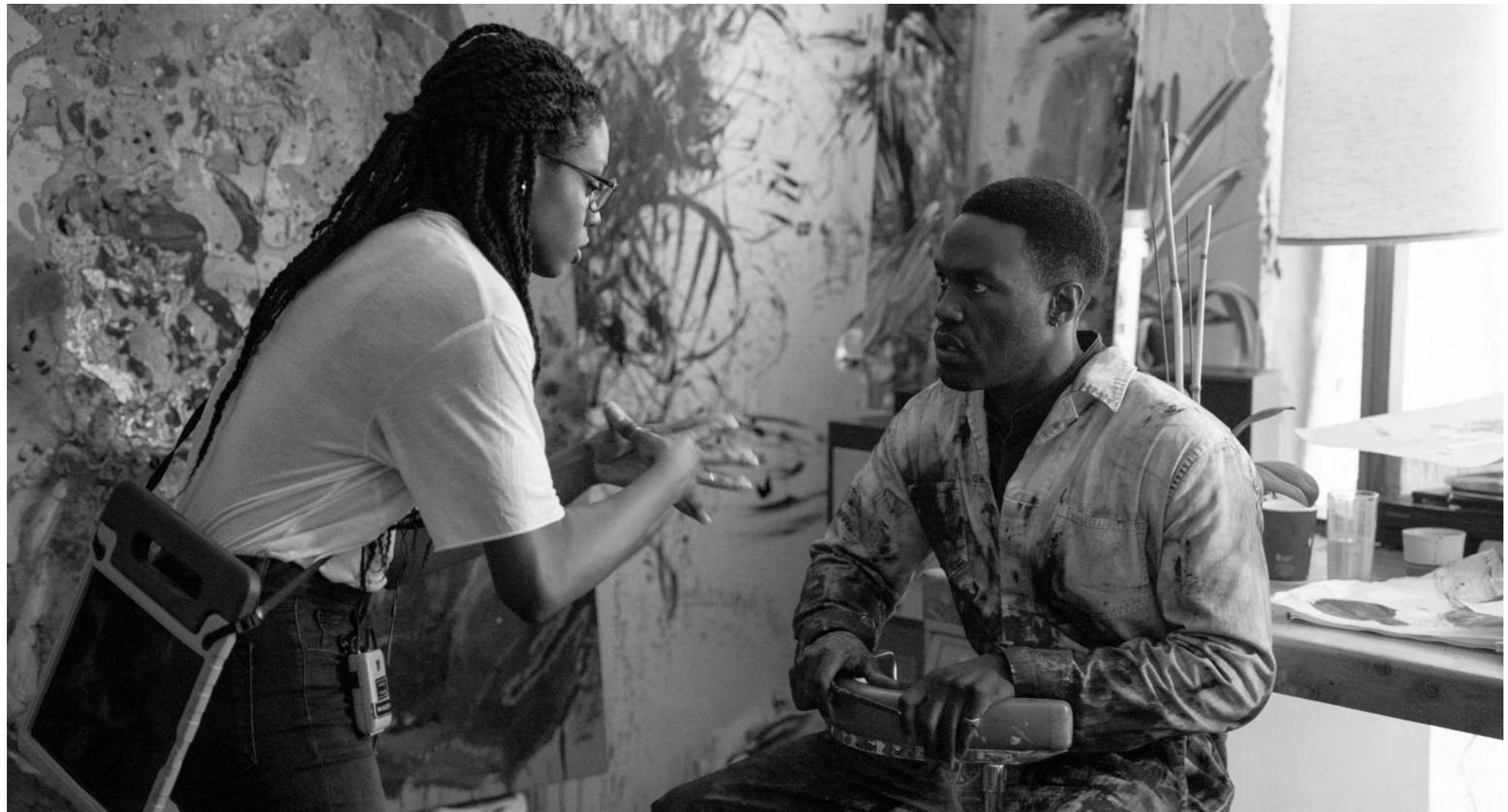
On the side of the Mophie Powerstation Go Rugged battery is a built-in LED floodlight, which also has an emergency alert red flashing light.

Online: zagg.com; \$159.95



The new Mophie Powerstation Go Rugged portable battery

WEEKEND: MOVIES



PHOTOS BY UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND MGM PICTURES/AP

Director Nia DaCosta, left, talks with actor Yahya Abdul-Mateen II on the set of "Candyman," an update of the 1992 film that re-centers the narrative around the Black experience.

'Candyman' through a different racial lens

Actor Abdul-Mateen II says the reframed film provides an opportunity to 'really talk about the state of the world'

BY LINDSEY BAHR

The Associated Press

Candyman" was always more than a surface-level horror film. The 1992 film dealt with class, race and trauma. But almost 30 years later, a new version in theaters Aug. 27 reclaims and re-centers the narrative around the Black experience.

The original film took the seeds of a Clive Barker short story set in a Liverpool slum and transported it to Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing projects, where the Boogeyman was Black and the lens to the world was a white female doctoral student studying urban myths. The film was both praised and the subject of pointed critiques from Black filmmakers who noted the regressive racial stereotypes.

"There's no question that this film plays on white middle-class fears of black people," actor-director Carl Franklin told the Chicago Tribune at the time. "It unabashedly uses racial stereotypes and destructive myths to create shock."

Franklin said it was "irresponsible and racist."

But it was also successful enough to spawn two sequels and proved to be a formative film for a young Jordan Peele, who saw it as a landmark for representation. Following the success of "Get Out," Peele and his Monkeypaw Productions set their sights on a "Candyman" film and signed up-and-coming filmmaker Nia DaCosta to direct.

DaCosta had just one indie under her belt, the well-received crime drama "Little Woods," when her agent got wind of a Jordan Peele "Candyman" project.

"I always told (my agent) what I wanted to do, and I made 'Little Woods,' which was a really great experience, but I also really wanted to do bigger films, genre films and horror and Marvel movies," DaCosta, 31, said. "He introduced them to my work and it just ended up working out ... I don't want to pitch for something if I don't really



Abdul-Mateen II hopes the film launches conversations.

have a clear idea and a passion for what it will be. I think they responded to that level of detail and the passion that I had."

Described as a "spiritual sequel" to the first film, "Candyman," which was co-written by Peele, put the subjects, a successful gallery director, Brianna (Teyonah Parris), and her visual artist boyfriend Anthony (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II), in modern-day Chicago. They live in a luxury apartment in a now gentrified Cabrini-Green. But the rot of the past lingers. A longtime resident played by Colman Domingo tells Anthony about the Candyman lore, and soon the haunting and the body horror begin anew.

"The art world is very glitzy, glamorous and Brianna is very wealthy and lives in this amazing apartment, and Chicago's a gorgeous city," DaCosta said. "I wanted to really juxtapose that beautiful, lush world with the horrors within."

Abdul-Mateen II predicts that "Candyman" will be a conversation-starter.

"Outside of the entertainment value, there is an opportunity to really talk about the state of the world," Abdul-Mateen II said. "There's a history of unwanted marks becoming celebrated for reasons that we don't want to be celebrated for. This movie deals with that and says what happens when you take our stories back."

The themes aren't just backdrops, either. The script has characters discussing gentrification and privilege. One character even says white people, "love what we make, but they don't love us." It was a line that DaCosta felt was especially important to have in the film.

"Sometimes you just have to make the subtext text," DaCosta said. "It really spoke to how, as long as we are behaving a certain way and as long as we're producing something that is being consumed or has a place either in a consumerist way or in a respectability way, we're fine. But once you step out of that, once ... someone dares to talk back to a police officer or whatever, then there is a problem."

Although it's a distinctly different film than "Get Out," with different sensibilities, "Candyman" is poised to inspire and provoke in similar ways.

"It's truly an examination of who we are right now in our culture and hopefully helping to move the needle and help it get better by going to these dark spaces and unpacking the terror within, the true terror," Domingo said. "Especially the terror that people with Black and brown skin live with every day."

The film was completed in late 2019 for a planned 2020 release but was delayed several times over the past year because of the pandemic. Domingo said after the last year of racial reckoning, it's the perfect time for the film to come out.

"I think that it's timely that it did not come out last year, that we needed to deal with what we were dealing with and be out on the street, raising our voices together to ... step back and examine again," Domingo said. "I think we're willing to do the work now."

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

The 'Candyman' has a new hook

'Spiritual sequel' to the 1992 film portrays Black killer as a victim of white oppression

By MARK KENNEDY

Associated Press

There's an urban legend that says if you repeat the name "Candyman" aloud five times in front of a mirror, you summon a hook-handed killer. After seeing Nia DaCosta's film of the same name, you'll never be tempted to do that. You might even not want anything sweet again. Heck, cancel Halloween.

Equal parts cerebral, political and gross-out, "Candyman" is a worthy addition to the library of top-notch social thrillers being built by Jordan Peele and it marks a stunning step forward for director DaCosta, who had just one indie under her belt, the well-received crime drama "Little Woods."

"Candyman" — uh, oh, how many times has his name been typed by now? — is an unusual horror movie set in the luxury lofts and haughty art world of Chicago. It's here that co-writers DaCosta, Peele and Win Rosenfeld can look at gentrification, police brutality, authenticity, myth and Black identity.

It stars Yahya Abdul-Mateen II as Anthony, a visual artist struggling to live up to his billing as "the great Black hope of the Chicago arts scene of tomorrow." He and his girlfriend, gallery owner Brianna (a wonderful Teyonah Parris) live a life of wealth and privilege, sipping moscato in their gleaming duplex.

Prodiced to create more gritty work, Anthony finds an odd kind of muse in the Candyman, who is said roamed Chicago's notoriously dangerous Cabrini-Green housing projects making poorly behaving children scared straight.

The myth goes that the Candyman was a Black artist who fell in love with a white woman he was hired to paint. Her prejudiced father hired hooligans to cut off his hand and smear his body with honey so he would be stung to death by bees. Then they burned him.

The tale is told to Anthony by a Cabrini-Green laundromat owner (Colman Domingo, superb) and yet in this telling the Boogeyman isn't a vengeful demon



UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND MGM PICTURES/AP

Yahya Abdul-Mateen II stars in "Candyman" as an artist inspired by the legend of the hook-handed killer.

meant to keep kids in line, but a victim. Candyman is actually an innocent scapegoat, a way to process a system of white oppression.

Peele has described this new riff as a "spiritual sequel" to the original 1992 "Candyman," which was written and directed by Bernard Rose. In some nice touches, Virginia Madsen and Tony Todd, who were stars of the first film, have roles here, and Vanessa A. Williams appears in both films as the same character, Anne-Marie McCoy, Anthony's mom.

The filmmakers use fabulous paper puppets to tell aspects of the past and have a recurring motif of bees and mirrors. "Candyman" gets progressively more filthy as it unspools, going

from gleaming granite countertops in elegantly lit and airy kitchens to grimy, muddy abandoned and graffiti-scared projects.

There are more than a few stunning scenes, including the camera steadily pulling away from a well-appointed apartment at night while the woman in it grapples with the Candyman, and one in a girls' bathroom that is terrifying for the fragments that it doesn't show.

DaCosta can make a stroll down a well-lit, modern and clean hallway somehow creepy. This is confident, smart filmmaking.

There's a stunning scene in which the Candyman mirrors his prey's movements and one in an elevator where blood droplets

create their own horror-inside-horror.

Anthony's newly unlocked passion to use the Candyman as fuel for his paintings — "I feel really connected to this. I've never been this clear before," he says to his girlfriend — sends him spinning into madness and into his own past, unlocking secrets and fate.

There are parts of the plot that seem undeveloped or vestigial, like the girlfriend's personal history handling artists on the edge — but "Candyman" — oh, no, that's too many times, he'll be here soon — is a jolt of macabre adrenaline. Hopefully, it'll get a lot of buzz.

"Candyman" is rated R for bloody horror violence, and language including some sexual references. Running time: 91 minutes. Now playing in theaters and streaming on HBO Max.

'Together' a reminder of lockdown's relational challenges

By ANN HORNADAY

The Washington Post

Sharon Horgan and James McAvoy play mates in miserable captivity in "Together," a spiky, fitfully effective portrait of pandemic-era claustrophobia and undifferentiated angst.

As a screen title informs us, the film begins on March 24, 2020, the first day of national lockdown in Britain. The unnamed couple is just returning from a hoarding expedition at the local shops; while they chatter to the camera (another unidentified presence in the room), Horgan's character stashes roll upon roll of toilet paper wherever she can find a spare corner.

What quickly emerges in their brittle, tensely overlapping dialogue is that they detest each other.

"I actually think of him as a cancer," she says brightly. "I hate her face," he snaps.

Meanwhile the couple's 10-year-old son (Samuel Logan) eavesdrops from a discreet and mournful distance. The little boy actually has a name, but his parents can't even agree on that: Dad calls him Artie; Mom insists on Arthur.

Written by Dennis Kelly and directed by Stephen Daldry, "Together" unfolds in seven scenes over the course of a year, during which the deaths in Britain mount (each sequence begins with a date and the number of COVID-19 fatalities) along with free-floating anxiety, profound loss, unresolved guilt and unspoken neediness. Originally conceived as a stage play, "Together" often plays like a piece of theater captured on camera, with Horgan and McAvoy delivering their venomous, sometimes genuinely



Sharon Horgan and James McAvoy star as bitter spouses on the rocks in the pandemic flick "Together."

shattering soliloquies in long, uninterrupted takes. Daldry judiciously cuts away now and then, to capture Artie's sadness and isolation, or to observe this bickering couple from a more conventional distance; these offer graceful moments of respite from what would otherwise be a monotonous exercise in displaced anger and mutual contempt.

As their COVID-19 year wears on, we see the physical and psychological effects on the couple: McAvoy's char-

acter grows a beard and affects a dumb-looking man-bun. Horgan's sarcasm crumbles under the weight of wrenching, impenetrable loss. The text of "Together" is how these two political and temperamental opposites threaten to drive each other mad during lockdown. The subtext, unsurprisingly, is that their volatility might be the centrifugal force that keeps their bond strong.

As an artifact of the times in which it was made — in one location over the course of 10 days in a London house — "Together" isn't particularly weighty, but it possesses undeniable resonance. And there is real pleasure in watching McAvoy and Horgan thrust and parry their way through Kelly's serrated script, even if it invites invidious comparisons to Horgan's sitcom "Catastrophe," about a similarly prickly (but far more likable) couple.

In that scabrously funny show, hostility bubbled beneath the jokes, just as affection bubbled beneath the meanest digs. "Together," on the other hand, is too schematic and structurally confined to be able to go deep on the nuances. The characters experience deep things, but don't necessarily deepen themselves; they just get steadily more irritating, at least until an ending that feels rushed and unearned.

But even at its most glancing and superficial, "Together" offers a diverting attempt at capturing recent history, in all its maddening contradictions and compromises, recriminations and rages. It reflects a time when all we had was each other, for better or — way too often — for worse.

"Together" is rated R for crude language throughout. Running time: 92 minutes. Now playing in select theaters; available Sept. 14 on demand.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Maggie Q, Keaton save 'Protege' from itself

Stars' performances help redeem film's faulty internal logic

By JOSHUA AXELROD
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

OK, movie, if you say so. That thought might cross your mind more than once during "The Protege," a new action-thriller now playing in theaters. There are certain points in director Martin Campbell's revenge flick that may cause you to chuckle quietly as you attempt to wrap your head around how this latest plot contrivance could have occurred.

It wouldn't quite be fair to call it a "dumb" action romp, but you could poke enough holes in its internal logic to deflate the whole balloon, if you'd like.

Or you could just enjoy the ultraviolent action, intriguing mystery at the center of it all and performances from stars Michael Keaton and Maggie Q that save "The Protege" from going too far off the deep end.

Anna (Maggie Q) was rescued by Moody (Samuel L. Jackson) as a child and trained in the art of assassination. The two spend 30 years working together and develop a father-daughter bond along the way. They both have enough self-awareness to know that even though they primarily kill folks who most wouldn't have any qualms with labeling as bad



Lionsgate

Samuel L. Jackson, left, and Maggie Q develop a father-daughter bond in the action-thriller "The Protege."

people, that doesn't make them anything resembling heroes.

When Moody starts inquiring into the son of a man he once killed, he and a few of his associates almost immediately turn up dead. Anna becomes the next target and has to both evade whoever is after her while figuring out why they're so keen on making anyone who looks into that kid disappear. Along the way, she develops a strange relationship with Rembrandt (Keaton), whom she should despise but can't quite bring herself to hate.

"The Protege" does an admiring

job setting up the bond between Anna and Moody while still leaving room for audiences to ponder exactly how Anna ended up in the situation where Moody found her. Though there are plenty of story beats that don't hold up particularly well to even the slightest scrutiny, the relentless Anna displays in her quest to avenge Moody's death is completely justified.

Writer Richard Wenk is a veteran of the action genre after penning both "Equalizer" films and co-writing "The Expendables 2," "The Mechanic" and "Jack Reacher: Never Go Back,"

among others. With "The Protege," he came up with a solid framework for an intricate cat-and-mouse game that contains a few genuine laughs and enough rational decision-making to make for a mostly satisfying narrative.

But frankly, there's just a lot that doesn't make sense throughout "The Protege." Yes, trying to discern the plot of action movies is usually a fool's errand, yet the sheer number of moments that boil down to a defeated sigh and a "sure, why not" mentality detract from the whole experience.

Those fights sure are well choreographed and bloody, and

the scenery is fun to take in. The film was primarily shot in London, Bucharest, Romania; and Da Nang, Vietnam. It's an excellent travelogue of those locales, though a lot of pretty places do get desecrated or, in some cases, blown up.

This is one of those films where the leads' depth and charisma occasionally mask some of the story's structural issues. Maggie Q is generally all business, but she does display a range of emotions while getting to crack wise and kick butt in her search for answers. There's never a second of doubt that "The Protege" is her movie, and she commands the screen at all times.

Keaton is ever-dependable in a role that could have been just your average enforcer who stands between the protagonist and the main villain. Instead, his Rembrandt oozes confidence and turns out to be a formidable foil to Anna at every turn.

There are definitely worse ways to spend a Friday night than heading down to your local theater to check out "The Protege." It's too well-made and features too many fun performances to be dismissed outright. But it's also pretty mindless, which, while not necessarily being a deal-breaker, also isn't exactly a compliment.

"The Protege" is rated R for strong and bloody violence, language, some sexual references and brief nudity. Running time: 109 minutes. Now playing in select theaters.

'Flag Day' a dreamy take on a memoir about writer, her father

By CHRIS HEWITT
Star Tribune

Jennifer Vogel needs many things at various points in "Flag Day" — a home, money, love — but if you had to narrow it down to just one thing, that might be the truth.

"I need to know when you decided to do this," Vogel (Dylan Penn) says late in the movie, after her supposedly reformed father sneaked behind her back to rob a bank. Based on Minneapolis writer Vogel's memoir "Flim-Flam Man," "Flag Day" charts young Jennifer's search for the truth, culminating in her decision to become a journalist. As she shuttles between her unstable parents in the 1970s and '80s, the film seems to suggest that if a child survives being raised by screw-ups, it can give her a useful insight: Do exactly the opposite of what your parents did.

As in his previous movies, director Sean Penn indicates he's a fan of Terrence Malick. There are a few too many woozy visuals accompanied by yearning music, and there's not a ton of synchronized dialogue.

The story is told via copious narration, which can be annoying in a medium that's

at least as much about the image as the word. But it works here because Vogel is a writer and the movie preserves or approximates her generous, nonjudgmental prose ("When I was young, I thought all the exciting things he made happen, he made happen for me," Dylan Penn's Jennifer says in voice-over).

Sean Penn's dreamy movie is quite different from the more grounded book, but it finds a way to represent its kindness, its awareness that these people make a ton of mistakes, but they're doing the best they can. As impressionistic scenes of a traumatic childhood build to Jennifer's adult years, we see what she inherited from her dad (imagination) and her mom (resilience).

Odd casting choices make some moments stick out for the wrong reasons. When a celeb briefly pops in as Jennifer's uncle, it's hard to think anything other than, "Wow, when did Josh Brolin get so ripped?" But the acting of the Vogels/Penns is pure gold. Early scenes depict Jennifer's wide-open love for her dad, and there's a playful quality to it even when she's well into her teens. In one scene, Sean Penn's John, aping a traditional



Sean Penn stars as John Vogel and Dylan Penn as Jennifer Vogel in "Flag Day."

father as if he learned it from a manual, upbraids his daughter: "Jennifer, have you touched my stash?"

Movies don't give us many father/daughter relationships this complicated, which makes "Flag Day" even more chilling. The scene where John pops up at Jennifer's City Pages office, having been released from prison, is tough to watch. Dylan Penn's wounded wariness conveys that Jennifer knows she shouldn't trust her dad but she might do it, anyway.

"My abiding concern was who I would

become," Jennifer tells us, a quotation that reminded me of one from Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield" about "whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life."

There's a little bit of Copperfield in Vogel, in "Flim-Flam Man" and in "Flag Day." In all of them, someone navigates a rough childhood and becomes a writer so their story can remind us how we learn to survive.

"Flag Day" is rated R for language, violence and drug use. Running time: 107 minutes. Now playing in select theaters.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Photos by Annapurna Interactive

Twelve Minutes, which advertises itself as an “interactive thriller,” is actually a disguised point-and-click adventure game. Players repeat the same 12 minutes on a time loop to try to get to the bottom of a mystery. Every time the loop repeats, players can try different actions to affect the outcome.

Unravel a mystery 720 seconds at a time

Twelve Minutes is an interactive point-and-click adventure worth repeating

BY JHAAN ECKER

The Washington Post

Annapurna Interactive’s enduring success creating enjoyable, experimental storytelling games continues with *Twelve Minutes*. The game, now available on Xbox and PC, centers on a time loop scenario where the main character and his wife are brutally murdered by someone posing as a cop, forcing players to repeat the same 12 minutes of that night to discover the motive for the murder and the wife’s mysterious past.

Twelve Minutes, which advertises itself as an “interactive thriller,” is actually a disguised point-and-click adventure game, and it’s unlike any other I’ve played. While the game still falls victim to the shortcomings of the point-and-click genre — like repetition and frustrating guess-and-test gameplay — the spectacularly strange story more than makes up for it, leading to unexpected outcomes and plenty of “aha” moments that will motivate players to keep repeating the loop.

James McAvoy, Daisy Ridley and Willem Dafoe all lend their voice-acting talents in this star-studded cast. Unsurprisingly, Dafoe — doomed to be forever typecast as the bad guy — plays the bad guy. All three turn in great, credible performances, which is impressive considering the game’s limited graphics and the top-down view obscuring the characters’ facial expressions. Ridley in particular is impressive, sporting an American accent and an emotional range of which Rey from “Star Wars” could only dream.

The true appeal of the game, however, comes in its gameplay. During the first time loop of the story — a seemingly innocent date night ruined by Dafoe’s murderous rampage — you’ll discover details, branching dialogue choices and objects you can interact with in the household that’ll lead to different outcomes for the story.

In one loop, you might try to be the perfect date, setting



The overhead view in *Twelve Minutes* allows players to see and interact with the entire scene. Clicking on different objects can change the outcome of the game.

up the table, dancing with your wife and telling her how excited you are to have a baby with her. In another loop, you might brutally stab your wife right at the beginning just to see what happens.

The game never makes explicit how to stop the time loop (or even why it’s occurring in the first place). Therefore, every loop the player does encourages experimentation and information gathering, untying the knot of a story much more complex and sinister than it appears on the surface. By the time you discover the true story underlying the game, you’ll have a completely different outlook on the characters and your feelings toward them.

This emotional journey — and switch of the player’s perceptions of the characters — is the game’s greatest strength. However, “advancing the story” itself is the game’s biggest weakness.

Point-and-click adventure games, a genre whose gameplay is exactly as it sounds, were first popularized by Sierra Entertainment with games like *King’s Quest* and

Space Quest. The genre typically follows a format where “you must have this item and do this thing at this location to advance the story.”

Sometimes, that gameplay leads to highly illogical solutions to puzzle problems. In *King’s Quest V*, for example, you have to defeat a wild yeti charging at you by throwing a pie in its face — a pie that you can only purchase several hours earlier in the game.

Fortunately, there’s never anything as illogical as a yeti pie toss in *Twelve Minutes*. Every solution has a certain amount of sense to it and reveals more information about the overall story. Discovering these solutions can be incredibly cathartic, as they involve not only finding and using the right items at the right times, but also using your powers of intuition, observation and deduction.

Unfortunately, unraveling these puzzles can lead to tedium, as you die over and over again attempting to find the precise item that will advance the story. The game has a couple of mechanics to counter this — characters will spout new timesaving dialogue whenever you discover something big to progress the ultimate solution faster, and you can also simply leave your apartment to restart a time loop. But it still takes a few minutes on average to return to a point where you might’ve screwed up in a loop, which in my playthrough led to several frustrating moments where I was rendered immobile, unable to leave the apartment to reboot, and thinking “JUST MURDER ME ALREADY!” to get another shot at the puzzle.

But overall, this is the only really glaring negative with the game. *Twelve Minutes* is another example of Annapurna’s ability to tell stories in video games in unique ways. After the 10 or so hours required to beat this game, you’ll be craving more inspired storytelling like this in other games ... and maybe in one of them, Dafoe won’t be cast as the bad guy.

Platforms: PC, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S

Online: twelveminutesgame.com

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Mending bridges in a cultural crossroads

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

The Bosnian city of Mostar lies at a crossroads of cultures: just inland from the Adriatic coast, in the southern part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mostar's inhabitants are a mix of Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats and Muslim Bosniaks who lived in seeming harmony before the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, then suffered horribly when warring neighborhoods turned the city into a killing zone. The persistent reminders of the war make my visit emotionally draining, but I'm hopeful that connecting with the people here will also make it rewarding.

Before the war, Mostar was famous for its 400-year-old, Turkish-style stone bridge. Its elegant, single-pointed arch was a symbol of Muslim society here and the town's status as the place where East met West in Europe. Then, during the 1990s, Mostar became a poster child for the war. First, the Croats and Bosniaks forced out the Serbs. Then they turned their guns on each other, staring each other down across a front line that ran through the middle of the city.

Sparkling locales enhance enjoyment of bubbly beverage

When it comes to celebrating momentous occasions, Champagne immediately comes to mind. While Champagne refers exclusively to the famous sparkling wine produced in France's region of the same name, sparkling wines are produced and consumed widely across Europe. The grapes that make sparkling wines are grown in spectacular locales, and they're well worth a visit. Here are some experiences that promise to make time spent in the wine country all the more memorable:

Sip Champagne in a treehouse: The Perching Bar nestles high in the trees of a national park. Wooden suspension bridges lead the way to a cozy hideaway that feels sealed off from the rest of the world. Its blonde wood interior manages to be at once elegant and rustic. Visitors particularly enjoy sitting in their swinging seats and gently rocking as they imbibe their flutes of bubbly. The bar is open Wednesdays through Sundays through December, and booking in advance is essential. Children under 12 are not allowed. The 21-euro fee includes entry and a glass of champagne. The Perching Bar is situated in Verzy, some 12 miles southeast of Reims. Online: perchinglife.com/bar-a-champagne-reims

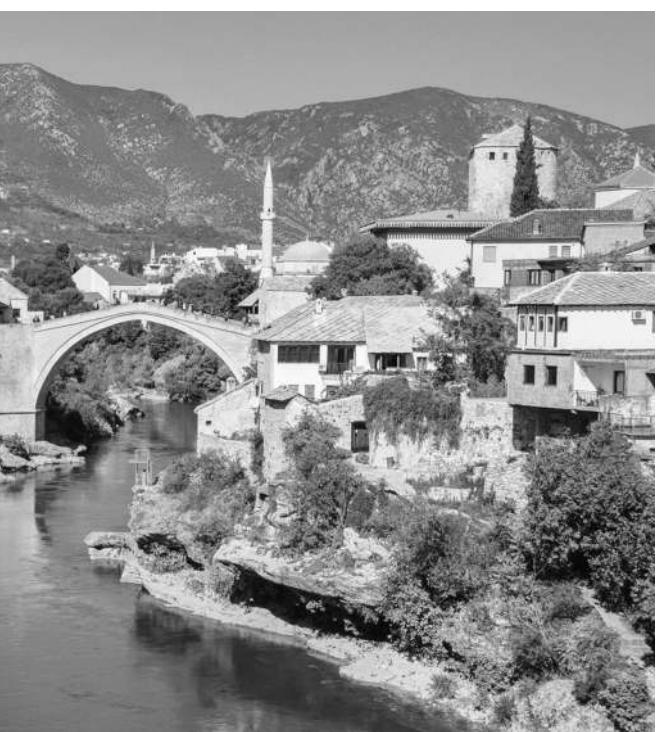
Experience Espumante in Bairrada: Portugal's version of bubbles is made in the DOC Bairrada, south of Vinho Verde. Forming the western part of this wine region is Beira Atlântico, which produces much of the country's Espumantes. A handful of the region's wineries offer guided tours, including the Caves do Solar de São Domingos, whose cellar lodges more than two million bottles of sparkling wine. A variety of tours are offered through its spaces, from galleries hewn into the rock to a museum with a tasting room. The winery's "Rare Moments" experience consists of a guided visit through the cellars, tast-



Sparkling wines taste even better when the sipper is surrounded by the beauty of France's Alsace region.

ing of two types of sparkling wines, a white wine, a red wine, a charcuterie board of cheeses and sausages, breads and a regional sweet. The tour is available daily except for Sundays and goes for 22.50 euros. The winery is located in Anadia. Online: cavesaodomingos.com/enu-turismo/en

Pedal through Prosecco's homeland: In the foothills of the Alps, north of Venice, lies this corner of the Veneto famous for the production of Italy's favorite fizz. The ancient terraced vineyards between Valdobbiadene and Conegliano lend themselves well to exploration by bicycle. A 20-mile, self-guided tour suggested by Conegliano's official tourism website takes riders past some of the UNESCO-listed area's best sights. Amongst medieval castles, stately villas and ancient churches is found Carpenè Malvolti, Italy's oldest family-run sparkling wine house and the hamlet of Rolle, in which ancient vineyards preserve Prosecco's original genetic lines. As the area is



CAMERON HEWITT/Rick Steves' Europe

Mostar, in the southern part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, has a famous bridge, which was rebuilt after the war.

proud exclamation points. Across the river, twice as tall as the tallest minaret, stands the Croats' new Catholic church spire.

The next morning, before I leave Mostar, I stop at a tiny grocery store to order a sandwich from a woman I befriended the day before. She's a gorgeous person, sad to be living in a frustrating economy and unable to

bend down because of a piece of shrapnel in her back that doctors decided was safer left in. As she slices the sandwich meat, I bend down to gather carrots and cherries to add to what will be a fine picnic meal on wheels.

On my way out of town, I drive over patched bomb craters in the pavement. In the capital city of Sarajevo, the craters have been

filled with red resin — which looks like splattered blood — to commemorate those who died. Here, the craters are patched in black to match the street ... but because I know what they are, they appear red in my mind.

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

hilly, exertion can be eased by renting an E-Bike. The company Vibe offers rentals of these pedal-assisted bikes and organizes a variety of themed tours. Online: vibemotion.it/en/e-bike-rental

Crack open the Cava: Spain's sparkler known as Cava is made by traditional methods in several locations including the Penedès wine-making region outside of Barcelona. Those on a city break can switch urban hip for rolling hills by signing up for a bus tour offered by the local tourism board. Barcelona Turisme's Wine and Cava Tour takes guests to three of the area's best-known wineries: Freixenet, Bodegas Torres and Bodegas Jean-Leon. The itinerary includes tours of the premises and sampling pairings with local delicacies including cheese and Catalan produce. While this tour isn't offered at the moment, a tour of Freixenet only includes a visit to the premises, a ride through the caves on a miniature train and a glass of Cava. This tour costs 15 euros, plus the cost of train fare to reach Sant Sadurní, a 40-minute ride from Barcelona. Online: bcnshop.barcelonaturisme.com

Quaff Alsatian Cremant at a fest: The word Cremant refers to a sparkling wine made according to the traditional "Méthode Champenoise" but produced outside France's Champagne region. The sparkling wines of Alsace, made of Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc or Gewürztraminer grapes, are considered to offer high quality at a reasonable cost.

Those missing wine fests might wish to check out the "Fascinant Week-end Vignobles & Découvertes" scheduled for Oct. 14-17 along the Alsace Wine Route. Some 70 activities will be on offer by the winemakers, restaurants and others catering to tourists. Things to enjoy include blind tastings, exploring food and wine pairings, geocaching, games for families, vineyard tours by moped and more. As many activities require preregistration, advance planning is advisable. Online: wineroute.alsace



Karen Bradbury

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

We interrupt this vacation ...

Leave despair at the gate with these tips for dealing with a canceled flight

BY NATALIE B. COMPTON*The Washington Post*

It was the best of times and the worst of times — meaning you were planning on getting on an airplane to head off on vacation or reunite with loved ones you hadn't seen in months, but instead you're standing in an airport wondering why your flight has been canceled.

Pray tell, what do you do next?

The obvious choice would be to wallow in despair, but no: It's time to jump into action. With every moment that passes, you're burning precious opportunities to fix your cursed situation. You will have plenty of time for weeping, screaming or pouting later, but the show must go on.

How exactly? I'll tell you how, because I was in this very position a week ago.

Figure out how the canceled flight will impact your itinerary

Once you discover your day will be miserable, whatever you do, do not go to the airport sports bar. Do not order a Moscow mule and a mediocre burger, and do not end up eavesdropping on the conversations around you. These are going to distract you from the task at hand. Yes, it's very interesting to hear two strangers bonding over the fact that they've both lived in San Antonio. Yes, you want to see if they'll keep taking shots. No, it's not worth it. Get to your mission: resuscitating your travel plan.

Start by finding out why your flight plans were obliterated. See if you can get an airline employee to tell you the reason; the answer will impact your next moves.

If the flight was significantly delayed or canceled because of something the airline was responsible for (e.g., mechanical issues), you should qualify for complimentary overnight accommodations, a taxi or meal vouchers, should you need or want them. If the problem was because of weather, no dice.

No matter why it happened, a significant delay or cancellation will entitle you to a refund (if you ask for one), per Department of Transportation regulations. But each airline has a different definition of "significantly" delayed, so check with your carrier to find out if you are eligible.

Next, you need to figure out how to get to your destination. Are there alternative flights later that day? Would booking a flight with another airline be easier? Do you need to cancel your trip completely? Having a game plan is a better move than waiting to see what the airline's computer system does to reaccommodate you.

Stand in line with other disgruntled passengers

Don't fester at the gate; get in line to talk to someone at the customer service desk (if it's staffed). Hopefully you're wearing comfortable shoes, because these lines do not move quickly.

While you're standing in line, eavesdrop on the action up front. No, not the stranded family of four sitting on the ground while the youngest keeps standing up to practice karate kicks. The people who are being



iStock

Your flight has been canceled. Now what? While wallowing in deep despair may seem like a viable option, there are several avenues you can take to resolve the problem. And since you're waiting, you can try them all at once.

helped. Are they getting vouchers for things you might like, too? Are they getting put on a flight that would also make sense for your needs? You may be able to glean some useful information.

Call customer service and get in the hourslong callback queue

Hedge your bets! It can't hurt to get more irons in the fire, so look for help in multiple ways. While you're physically standing in line, you need to virtually get in line for a callback from a customer service agent.

Calling your airline's customer service may not yield results faster. Lately, even if you're a high-status, loyal frequent flier with the airline, you can expect a long wait.

To improve your odds of getting help on the horn, read this. You've got time.

Pull up your airline's app and start chatting with a robot

The line's moving — albeit slowly — at the airport. You are scheduled for a callback from the airline customer service in 673 minutes. You're still looking to untangle your disaster as fast as possible, so your next move is to open up the airline's mobile app — you know, the fun stuff.

But this is not the fun stuff. This is every traveler's dread. Nonetheless, open up the app, locate whatever "contact us" portal is

available and then the "chat with us" option.

"Hello, my flight AA1114 was delayed and I am going to miss my connection to Las Vegas," you can message the "us," meaning the customer service robot behind the chat function. Because this is a robot, keep the language you use clear. "I need help" and "change my flight" will work more efficiently than "YOU CANCELED MY FLIGHT TO DENVER AND NOW I'M GOING TO MISS MY AUNT AND UNCLE RENEW THEIR VOWS."

Once the robot figures out what you need, it can offer to connect you to a human agent to assist you further. Get your ticket number or record locator ready while you wait.

Plead your case to the agent when it's finally your turn

The moment of truth. If you haven't already figured out your new plan via phone, app or social media, now you can hash it out with a human face to face.

Don't lay into this person. It's not their fault. Imagine being in their position, dealing with a long line of (justifiably) angry travelers. Take a deep breath, calm down, and be nice.

Tell them if there's a particular flight that would work for you or if you would like help figuring out a new plan. If there's no suitable alternative with their airline, ask if they can rebook you on another

airline. Maybe they get you to your destination without much more hassle. Maybe they get you a hotel voucher. Or maybe they can't do anything to save the day and you go home in tears. It's impossible to predict, so good luck.

Leave the line feeling smug about being the bigger person no matter the outcome. You weren't one of those people screaming at the innocent. Pat yourself on the back for being decent.

Email customer service at the airline because you're still upset

Sure, you've rearranged your travel schedule and figured out how to get where you need to go — but at what cost? You've wasted your time and presumably some money, and while the gate agent may have been kind to you, you may still be flustered by the whole rigmarole.

Should that be the case, draft a professional but firm email detailing your experience and ask the airline to make amends. Do not expect a quick reply, and do not expect much in general. If your case is compelling and you're lucky, you may end up with a response, an apology or trip credit as a sign of goodwill.

Wallow

Now, now!, you can wallow. Remember that forbidden airport sports bar? This is a perfect place to fester, and that mediocre burger is still waiting for you.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

A meal with flower power

Finish lunch at Weinstube-Killesberg in Stuttgart with a walk in the garden

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

For a relaxing place to kick back and have a meal or a drink, Weinstube-Killesberg is hard to beat.

Located near the northern entry point to the Stuttgart park of the same name, it looks out on some of the most beautiful flower gardens in the city.

I've walked by the restaurant countless times over the years during visits to Killesberg Park but never stopped to eat there. One reason: it kept unpredictable hours and often seemed closed when it should be open.

But when a flyer highlighting what appeared to be new management recently arrived in the mailbox, it seemed the time had come for a visit.

On a recent weekday, we stopped by for lunch, only to see a sign that the eatery was closed for the day for family reasons. I gave the proprietors the benefit of the doubt and came back the following day to try again. Overall, I wasn't disappointed.

The restaurant has cozy indoor seating, outdoor beer garden picnic-style tables and benches as well as smaller tables. We opted for outdoor dining, given the warm weather and the nice view.

The menu is a mix of typical regional specialties, such as



AFTER HOURS GERMANY

Weinstube-Killesberg

Location: 15 Beim Hoehenbad, in Killesberg Park

Hours: 11 a.m.-10 p.m., Tuesday-Sunday

Prices: Most menu items range between \$15 and \$20.

Information: Online: weinstube-killesberg.de; Phone: 0176 40795429

John Vandiver

maultaschen and spaetzle. There are various salads and also more exotic, heartier offerings, including steaks.

The seasonal menu looked especially appealing, boasting whatever the restaurant's local hunters have killed during hunting season. I figured that could be something to try during the fall. There also is a selection of regional wines.

I was tempted to order the Gaisburger Marsch, a classic Swabian beef stew dish named after a district of Stuttgart that incorporates spaetzle, meat and potatoes in a rich beef broth. But it felt like the wrong choice for a hot summer afternoon.

For our lunch, one member of our party went with the reliable schnitzel, cooked to crispy per-



PHOTOS BY JOHN VANDIVER/Stars and Stripes

At Weinstube-Killesberg in Stuttgart, a wide range of regional specialties is served, as well as national classics like schnitzel. The schnitzel was cooked to perfection with a crispy outer crust that didn't fall off.

fection. I've always found the humble schnitzel to be hit or miss. Often, the crusty outer layer just slides off the thinly pounded cutlet of veal or pork, resulting in mushy breadcrumbs on one side and a naked slab of meat on the other. But this dish held together.

Spaetzle with sauce, a grilled chicken salad and a fried fish fillet were other orders at our table. Everyone was quite pleased except for the salad eater, who complained that there was not enough chicken and that the dressing tasted off.

But all in all, it was a pleasant outing, which was capped off with a stroll through the magnificent botanical gardens of Killesberg Park to walk off our meal.

vandiver.john@stripes.com



The lunch menu at Weinstube-Killesberg also sometimes offers specials not on the regular menu, such as this fried fish dish served with potato salad. A seasonal menu is offered in the fall that boasts dishes created from whatever local hunters have brought in.

Mini pavlovas are great for your next summer party

BY HELEN FREUND

Tampa Bay Times

Wandering Whisk Bakeshop owner Jennifer Jacobs is known for her decadent and colorful buttercream cakes, French macarons, cream puffs and cookie sandwiches. But did you know that the self-taught cake designer and pastry pro also makes a mean pavlova?

These miniature pineapple curd-filled pavlovas, a meringue-based dessert with a crunchy exterior and soft and airy interior, are flavored with coconut and naturally gluten-free.

Mini Piña Colada Pavlovas

Ingredients

For the pavlovas:

4 egg whites, at room temperature (save the egg yolks for curd)

3/4 cup granulated sugar

2 teaspoons coconut extract
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Directions

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the egg whites on high until foamy, about 1 minute. Gradually add the sugar, one spoonful at a time. Continue to beat until the meringue reaches stiff peaks, about 5 to 6 minutes.

Remove the bowl from the mixer. Using a rubber spatula, fold in coconut extract, cornstarch and lemon juice. Take care not to deflate the meringue.

Using an ice cream or cookie scoop, scoop out the meringue into 12 equal dollops onto a baking sheet. Use the back of a spoon to create a little nest in the middle.

Bake at 250 degrees for approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave meringues in for another 30 minutes.

Remove from the oven and let cool. For the pineapple curd:

4 egg yolks
1/4 cup pineapple juice
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cold and cubed

Toasted coconut, for garnish
Pineapple slices, for garnish

Combine egg yolks, pineapple juice and sugar in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a whisk until the mixture is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon and registers 160 degrees on a candy thermometer, about 4 to 6 minutes.

Remove from heat and add salt and butter, one piece at a time, stirring until smooth. Strain through a fine sieve into a bowl.



Ivy CEBALLO/TNS

Mini Piña Colada Pavlovas are delightful.

Cover the curd with plastic wrap, pressing it directly onto the surface of the curd. Refrigerate until chilled and set, at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.

To assemble the pavlovas, top each one with a hearty scoop of curd. Add toasted coconut and a slice of pineapple. Feel free to add fresh berries or any other fruit desired.

Makes approximately one dozen.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL/Stars and Stripes

A statue of Elvis Presley, paid for by fans, stands on a bridge in a park in Bad Nauheim, Germany, where the American singer lived from 1958-1960 when he served in the Army. The spa town holds a festival honoring the King of Rock 'n' Roll every August near the anniversary of his death on Aug. 16, 1977.

Long live the King

Bad Nauheim pays tribute to former resident, US Army Pvt. Elvis Presley

BY KARIN ZEITVOGEL

Stars and Stripes

Two years after Bad Nauheim last rocked to the strains of Elvis Presley soundalikes with slight German accents, it again welcomed thousands of visitors to its mid-August celebration of the King of Rock 'n' Roll.

Women in swing dresses walked through the spa town's parks, and couples danced in the street on Aug. 15, the last day of the European Elvis Festival.

Next to the Hotel Villa Grunewald, where Elvis briefly stayed in 1958 when he arrived in Germany to serve as a U.S. Army private, people laid flowers and left candles and pictures at a stone memorial to the star. Nearby, Germans had their picture taken next to shiny Chevrolets and Cadillacs.

The 19th edition of the Elvis festival also brought a new attraction to Bad Nauheim: a bronze statue of the American icon on a bridge spanning the aptly named Usa River.

To comply with social distancing rules, crowd control officials allowed only small groups of people onto the bridge to take pictures by the statue, which replicates a pose Presley struck on the same spot in a photo shoot in March 1959.

Once on the bridge, people ignored coronavirus rules and stood close to one another before handing their phones to strangers to take snaps of them close to what some said wasn't the best likeness of Elvis.

Coronavirus-wary Elvis fans can take photos by the statue after the festival is over; it's staying put on the bridge.

The three-day tribute to the King has been held every year since 2002 except for last year, when it was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. It always takes place over the weekend in August that falls closest to the anniversary of Presley's death on Aug. 16, 1977.

Presley was already a star when he shipped out to Ger-

many in early 1958 to serve in Company D, 32nd Tank Battalion, 3rd Armor Division, based in Friedberg, about 4½ miles south of Bad Nauheim, where he first lived in the Hotel Villa Grunewald on what is now Elvis-Presley-Platz.

Soon after arriving, he and his entourage, including his father, grandmother and some friends from Tennessee, had to move to a house on Goethestrasse to make way for King Saud of Saudi Arabia, who had booked the entire hotel for one of his regular visits for spa treatments in the town.

For those who have never heard of Presley, aren't huge fans of his or visit the town outside of the festival dates, Bad Nauheim has plenty of other attractions, many within walking distance of one another.

At the art nouveau Sprudelhof, visitors can sip the waters that bubble up from springs under Bad Nauheim and are said to treat heart conditions and backache.

They can stroll through the Kurpark, go paddleboating on its lake, tour a duck habitat or breathe in air laced with sea salt at any of the five giant "gradierbauten" around town.

Near the bridge and statue, bronze plaques lining the "walk of fame" show that other notable Americans — including a young Franklin D. Roosevelt, media magnate William Hearst and his wife, actress Marion Davies, Albert Einstein, Mark Twain, actress Lilian Gish and Gen. George Patton — also spent time in Bad Nauheim.

Hearst reportedly met Italian dictator Benito Mussolini in the town and is said to have described him afterward as "a marvelous man."

But no one was bending over any of their commemorative plaques snapping photos in mid-August. At that time of year, Bad Nauheim and its visitors move to the beat of Elvis Presley, probably the coolest resident the town has ever had.

zeitvogel.karin@stripes.com
Twitter: @ZeitStripes

On the QT

Directions: Bad Nauheim is about one hour from Wiesbaden, two hours from Kaiserslautern, 2½ hours from Spangdahlem and three hours from Stuttgart.

Cost: The large outdoor parking lot on Frankfurterstrasse costs 2.50 euros for four hours or 3.50 for 24 hours. Coins only. Walk from there through the Kurpark into the center of town. The Elvis statue on the bridge over the Usa River is a few hundred yards away.

Food: The many dining options include Fellini Cafe Vinoteca at Kurstrasse 3, where a salad and cappuccino run around \$13, with U.S. credit cards accepted.

Information: Online: bad-nauheim.de/en

Karin Zeitvogel



Flowers, candles and photos of Presley stand at Elvis-Presley-Platz on Aug. 15 in Bad Nauheim, Germany.



A statue and cutout of Presley are visible in the tourist office Aug. 15 in Bad Nauheim, Germany.



Hotel Villa Grunewald overlooks Elvis-Presley-Platz. Presley stayed briefly in the hotel when he arrived in Germany in 1958 to do 18 months of military service.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Paddling through the past

Kayaking a unique way to take in the history of Dubrovnik, Croatia

BY HUGH BIGGAR
The Washington Post

Just off the Dalmatian coast, I stop paddling for a moment in the heat and reach for my water bottle. Up ahead, my guide, Matej, a good-humored young Croatian with an enthusiasm for local history, waves me forward. We have left behind the usual tourist spots and cafes of the UNESCO World Heritage city of Dubrovnik and instead are heading — for me, at least — into uncharted waters.

As Matej glides ahead, I let my kayak drift in the clear, calm sea and look across the water toward the ancient defensive walls, towers and turrets of Dubrovnik.

The day before, I had walked more than a mile atop those stone ramparts, built between the 12th and 17th centuries and encircling the Old City. As I wound my way around and up and down stairways and across battlements, I could see up close contemporary residential life. Just over the city walls, I spotted schoolyards, laundry hanging on the line and balconies with flowerpots, and I heard the sounds of dogs barking and people chatting in the shade. Farther out, the bright blue Adriatic Sea stretched beyond the rows of red-tile roofs and baroque buildings. The glittering water looked particularly inviting on this steamy afternoon and provided a ready reminder that Dubrovnik has been a maritime town since its founding in the 7th century.

Given the hot weather, and mindful that, across the centuries, most visitors to Dubrovnik had come by boat — not by bus from Split, as I did — I decided to explore this beautiful, historical place from a new and possibly cooler vantage point.

So it is that, on the following evening, I find myself in a kayak in 95-degree heat at dusk when I hear Matej say something about Napoleon.

“Napoleon,” Matej says again, pointing to the small island of Lokrum just ahead as I paddle closer. I see only a masted, pirate-like wooden ship playing party music and a few smaller sailing boats. Then he explains: “Napoleon is one of the reasons Lokrum is cursed.”

Matej, a history student in Britain during the academic year who returns each summer, explains that monks lived on the island until the early 1800s. In 1806, Napoleon’s army stopped in Dubrovnik in need of provisions and ended up staying for nearly a decade. Dubrovnik lost its freedom after more than 500 years as a neutral republic, and the monks lost their island home of some 800 years. In response, Matej says, the monks placed a curse on the island, forever condemning those who tried to claim it. To this day, there are no overnight accommodations.

By now, we have swung around the far end of Lokrum, and, ready for a break in the heat, we stop in a cove once allegedly used by smugglers. We hop out to cool off in the sea, and I suddenly notice two nude sunbathers on the rocks above us.

“Oh, they are probably from the nearby naturist beach,” Matej says, himself wearing a Speedo with “DANCE” across the back. I eventually realize this is the name of a local beach and not an invitation to groove.

Not sure what’s next, I pull my phone from its waterproof case and learn that English King Richard the Lionheart is said to have shipwrecked on Lokrum while re-



Kayakers paddle through the crystal-clear blue water below the walls surrounding Dubrovnik, Croatia.

turning from the Crusades in 1192. Six centuries later, the Hapsburg monarchs followed, having bought Lokrum after the French departed. The Hapsburgs used the island as a vacation getaway between family tragedies, such as one archduke’s ill-fated reign as emperor of Mexico and Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s plans to summer here in 1914, only to be assassinated in Sarajevo, sparking the First World War. Bad luck and curses seem to be a thing on Lokrum.

Now feeling refreshed, I am ready to leave these ghosts (and nudists) behind. Enthusiastic as always, Matej suggests a return trip.

“You should come back during the day. There is a botanical garden, an old fort and the beaches are great,” he says as we climb back into the kayaks. “Just make sure you leave before dark, of course.”

For us, darkness is still an hour or so away, though the sun has by now slid low in the sky. A languorous orange glow colors the Old City and hills as we paddle toward them and away from the island.

The limestone streets and the cliff-top city walls of Dubrovnik typically have a crush of tourists in summer. Since the city’s time as a powerful republic and a trading crossroads, the channel has been busy with ships. The activity helped transform Dubrovnik into a wealthy, cosmopolitan place known for its progressive policies (banning slavery in 1416, for example), hospitality and diplomacy.

More recently, Dubrovnik’s steady flow of visitors has come from cruise ships and “Game of Thrones” fans visiting filming sites scattered around town.

But on this June evening, the pandemic and related travel restrictions have stilled the channel leading to the harbor.

The channel is mostly empty as we enter. I am also the lone participant of a kayaking tour that, in summers past, had about 10 people taking part. Instead of cruise ships, there are only a handful of luxury yachts and a ferry heading away from Lokrum before dark, like us.

Facing the shore, Matej and I can see rocky, green hills overlooking the Old City, and closer to the water, grand villas and hotels popular with celebrities, emirs and oligarchs.

To our right, Matej points out an abandoned resort marked by graffiti and broken windows. Once home to the 200-room Hotel Belvedere, the resort now resembles the lair of a James Bond villain as it collapses into the sea. Built in the 1980s when Croatia was part of Yugoslavia, the resort closed when Yugoslavia fractured during the 1990s. The final blow came during the Croatian war of

independence in 1991. (For more on the Balkan wars in the 1990s, visit the excellent War Photo Limited museum just off the Stradun, Dubrovnik’s main street.)

“Tourists stayed away because of the fighting,” Matej says. “Here, let me show you something else.”

He turns his kayak around and points to the largest hill above us, one with a cable car leading to it and marked by a cross and a television tower.

“That’s Mount Srd. During the war, the Yugoslav People’s Army tried to take it. If it hadn’t been for the guys defending the hill, Dubrovnik wouldn’t be here; the city would have been destroyed. All those red roofs you see in town, those are new and on buildings and houses repaired after the war.”

“Were you here, then?” I ask as we paddle slowly toward Dubrovnik’s harbor.

“I wasn’t born yet, but my mom and dad were here,” Matej says. “My dad fought in the hills [for Croatia], and my mom, like everyone else, went without electricity and heat for seven months during the siege. She used to work as an administrator right there where the Lazareti used to be.”

He points to a complex of low buildings just outside the main harbor. I had learned earlier while walking through town that Dubrovnik had built the Lazareti in the 1600s as a plague hospital and quarantine site for visitors from places with epidemics — all of us these days. In more recent times, the city converted the complex into an arts-and-entertainment zone.

The revitalized Lazareti and the restored jewel of the Old City, so far having survived a recent war, a devastating earthquake and fires and now facing rising seas, remind me that history is not always set in stone, even among the old walls of Dubrovnik.

By now, I have inadvertently paddled past the half-moon-shaped Fort St. John, which had once guarded the small harbor and is now home to an aquarium. Long ago, vigilant harbor masters dragged chains across the entrance to keep out invaders. I am not supposed to be here, either, as a lowly kayaker, but on this quiet evening, the port is clear of ship traffic. Matej joins me briefly as we rest before completing our roughly six-mile loop back to our starting point next to Fort Lovrijenac, just outside the main city gate.

My kayak catches the tide, and I slowly turn counter-clockwise, back in the direction we need to go, moving away from the Lazareti on the shore, past the old port and toward Fort St. John at the harbor entrance. As I finish this paddle through the past, the current carries me forward.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Splash, play, camp, barbecue

Soleil Hill Park near Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan has something for everyone

BY DANIEL BETANCOURT

Stars and Stripes

Families living on and around Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan have an all-in-one, kid-friendly getaway at a park just a half-hour drive away.

Soleil Hill Park delivers a considerable number of activities, both for a fee and for free. And with parking for 1,500 vehicles and affordable parking (1,000 yen, or about \$9, for the day), staying as long as you please is a no-brainer.

Two huge, free playgrounds incorporate swings, Tarzan ropes, slides and climbing nets. There are also a couple of food and craft workshops accessible for kids that require only signing in at the location unless the class is booked. Workshop reservations are not an option.

A number of park activities require a ticket, which can be bought at the park entrance or by any of the activities that require one. Solo ticket purchases are 320 yen, or about \$3, per ticket; a 12 pack goes for 3,200 yen. Some of the ticketed activities include go-karts, a mini-excavator, archery, pedal boats, grass sledding, a merry-go-round and the petting zoo.

Dining possibilities include an all-you-can-eat-for-70-minutes seafood buffet on weekends and holidays only.

The park has everything you need to barbecue, including the food, which you must purchase there. Bringing your own is not allowed. The grill food set will cost you about 2,600 yen.

You'll also find a few small eateries scattered through the park serving burgers, fries, cold drinks and soft-serve ice cream for prices ranging from 250 yen to 650 yen.

If camping is your thing, Soleil Hill offers bungalows and free camping sites from March to November. Campsites available to rent will cost 3,500 yen to 13,000 yen. The drawback here is that the booking website is only available in Japanese.

Being outside in Japan's humid summers can be grueling, so if



PHOTOS BY DANIEL BETANCOURT/Stars and Stripes

Soleil Hill Park near Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, offers a considerable number of activities, from playgrounds to go-karts.

On the QT

Directions: 4 Chome Nagai, Yokosuka, Kanagawa 238-0316; a 30-minute drive from Yokosuka Naval Base

Times: Open daily 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Costs: Tickets are 320 yen each; a

12-pack costs 3,200 yen. Food and drink prices range from 250 yen to 2,600 yen.

Food: A buffet-style restaurant and DIY barbecue grills

Information: seibu-la.co.jp/soleil/english

Daniel Betancourt

you come outfitted with a bathing suit, you can enjoy one of the various water fountain areas where kids and adults alike dip their feet or splash around to cool off.

There are some factors to be

mindful of while visiting Soleil Hill. The only animals allowed in the park are service dogs. You cannot bring bicycles, skateboards or any self-propelled vehicles. Smoking is allowed only in designated areas.

Only pop-up tents are permitted in the camping area. Plucking flowers or capturing animals is not permissible. There are no ATMs in the park, so be sure to bring all the cash you will need with you.

Soleil Hill has an English-friendly website that clarifies all its functions and prices. It has seasonal activities and hours, so always check to see what those may be. Special events take place year-round, particularly on holidays.

betancourt.daniel@stripes.com
Twitter: @Beta_Stripes



At Soleil Hill Park near Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, you can enjoy one of the various water areas where kids and adults alike dip their feet or splash around to cool off.

NEW TO THE PACIFIC?

Contact CustomerHelp@stripes.com to get your free copy of

Welcome to the Pacific magazine!

STARS AND STRIPES

Digital edition also available. Download online.



WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY JUAN KING/Stars and Stripes

The hamburger-and-lamb set from **Sherlock Holmes**, a hamburger and steak restaurant near Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo, is served with vegetables and a baked potato. The meat was tender and well-seasoned, but not too salty.

Sherlock Holmes Hamburg & Steak

Location: 2 Chome-6 2-1 Tachikawa, Nishisunacho, Tokyo, 190-0034

Directions: A short drive from Yokota Air Base's east gate. Google Plus Code: P9J7+3P Tachikawa, Tokyo.

Hours: Open 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays for lunch; 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. for dinner; open 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Takeout available.

Prices: Lunch menu ranges from 1,500 yen to about 2,300 yen. Dinner can range to more than 3,500 yen on select sets.

Dress: Casual

Information: 042-531-7856

Juan King



Beautifully plated slices of cool, fresh fruit, a wedge of chocolate cake, a dish of Japanese fruit jelly and a scoop of green tea ice cream cap off a delicious meal at **Sherlock Holmes**.

No mystery here

Sherlock Holmes serves up sizzling meals in Tokyo

BY JUAN KING
Stars and Stripes

During a recent ride home to Yokota Air Base, I stumbled on a not-so-hidden spot in Tachikawa, the **Sherlock Holmes** Hamburg and Steak Restaurant, and decided to visit for lunch.

Finding the restaurant is simple—it's only a short drive from the base's east gate. From the street, it does not look very big, but inside I found plenty of seating with 22 tables available. A few more than a handful of customers were inside.

Greeted at the door with "Irasshaimase!", Japanese for "welcome," I was promptly seated and given a menu in Japanese and English. An English-speaking



**AFTER
HOURS
JAPAN**

waitress took my order, although I try to challenge myself to use Japanese while out in town. It is a work in progress.

From the main dishes to the drinks, the **Sherlock Holmes** menu has a good selection. I ordered the charcoal-grilled hamburger-and-lamb set with vegetables and a baked potato for 2,080 yen, about \$19.

I opted for the smaller, 100-gram (about 3½ ounces) portion of meat. The 170-gram portion (nearly 6 ounces) costs 2,280 yen,

about \$21. Grilled pork sausage or chicken are also options. With my set was salad and corn soup as an appetizer, a choice of rice or bread, a drink and dessert.

From the first bite, I knew I would visit again. The salad, topped with a ginger dressing, was a good start to the meal. The corn soup, cooled for the summer-time, was a little different for me since I have only eaten it hot. It was still a good addition.

After a short wait, the main dish arrived, steaming and sizzling on a hot skillet plate. The waitress placed it carefully on the table and asked if I would like it cooked more. I did, so she sliced and grilled the meat a bit more while adding my selection of ginger-soy sauce to dress it up. Other sauces,

Chilled corn soup and salad start a meal off right at **Sherlock Holmes**.

like garlic brown, pepper and tomato, are on the menu.

Both the hamburger and the lamb were extremely tender and well-seasoned, but not too salty. I savored every bite. The side dishes, including a plate of perfectly cooked rice, enhanced the meal.

After finishing my entrée, I received an artistically decorated plate of dessert suitable for the summer heat. Several slices of cool, fresh fruit, a wedge of choc-

late cake and a small dish of Japanese fruit jelly arrived with a scoop of green tea ice cream that melted in my mouth and capped off a delicious meal.

The portions I received there were more than enough for lunch-time. I left satisfied and even purchased bento meals to go. Yes, they do have a takeout menu. Children are also welcome.

king.juan@stripes.com

Your votes. Your favorites. Your Best of the Pacific.



**ANNOUNCING THE
BEST OF 2021**

Pick up the magazine or get it online



STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Do 'green' cleaning products really work?

Make your search for the safest and most effective eco-friendly brands less confusing with these helpful tips

By LAURA DAILY

Special to The Washington Post

Now that store shelves are fully stocked with cleaning supplies again and you no longer have to settle for what you can get, it may be a good time to think about greening up your cleaning routine. I don't mean dumping every store-bought product for do-it-yourself formulations, although that's certainly one option; I'm talking about switching to cleaners formulated with fewer harsh chemicals and additives that can harm the environment.

The disinfectants, bleaches and sanitizers we've relied on during the pandemic can irritate our eyes, skin and throat, not to mention ruin some of our favorite clothing (bye-bye, bleach-stained workout pants). And, of course, they can be hard on the planet. Many consumers are eager for anything that purports to be "free of" those things. But how can you tell which green cleaners are actually better for the environment and which ones work as well as their tried-and-true, chemical-laden counterparts?

"The promise of green cleaners is not necessarily a better clean, but that you can use them more often with fewer precautions," says Taryn Williford, lifestyle director at Apartment Therapy, a home and lifestyle website.

The problem with the term "green" cleaning is that green doesn't mean the same thing to everyone, Williford says. "Are you more concerned that a product is safe and gentle for humans, if it was sustainably sourced and/or is it harming the environment?"

Similarly, "clean" is subject to interpretation. For some people, it means getting the toothpaste off the bathroom mirror. For others, it's deeply disinfecting every touchable surface.

Further complicating matters: Certain words — natural, plant-based, nontoxic, organic — regularly used on cleaning products are unregulated, making their appearance on labels meaningless. Even the word "green" could mean that one or two ingredients are less harmful to the environment but are not necessarily non-toxic or safe for humans, says Tonya Harris, an environmental toxin expert and author of "The Slightly Greener Method."

Here are a few ways to navigate the growing bounty of eco-friendly brands in the cleaning aisle:

Learn (some of) the lingo

You don't need a chemistry degree to add a few key words to your green-cleaning dictionary.

Some ingredients — lemon oil, vinegar, thymol — sound more like the makings of salad dressing with a few extras tossed in. But certain natural, biodegradable ingredients that won't harm you or the planet can signal that a product is probably up for the task at hand.

For instance, sodium bicarbonate is baking soda, which cuts through grease. Sodium percarbonate (usually referred to as "oxy" something) is a combination of baking soda and hydrogen peroxide that helps whiten and brighten. Hydrogen peroxide works as a disinfectant. Citric acid is a plant-based degreaser, stain remover and disinfectant.

Do a bit of online research. What do acids (such as vinegar) do? What do bases (such as baking soda) do? What chemical reactions occur when you put them together or add a surfactant, such as C12-16 pentyl or alkylbenzene sulfonate?

Watch for red-flag words

Key ingredients to avoid when looking for more environmentally-friendly cleaning products include chlorine bleach, fragrance and ammonia, says Mélanie Berliet, senior vice president and general manager of home and gardening website the Spruce.

"Also, avoid labels that have words like flammable, poison, danger and corrosive," she adds.

The nonprofit Environmental Working Group has a label decoder (ewg.org) that explains technical terms and cleaning ingredients.

Look for guidance

Although government agencies may not regulate household cleaners, the Environmental Protection Agency does certify products through its Safer Choice program. Manufacturers apply for certification, and to receive the label means EPA scientists have evaluated the product's ingredients to ensure that it's safe for people and the environment and that it works. You can search through more than 2,000 Safer Choice-certified products at epa.gov/saferchoice/products.

Also, refer to guides from reputable sources.

Berliet says the Environmental Working Group's Guide to Healthy Cleaning is an

eco-minded shopper's best friend (ewg.org/guides/cleaners). The searchable database profiles more than 2,000 cleaning products, rating them from A to F, and details and rates each ingredient. And sustainability website Treehugger partnered with the Spruce for its 2021 "Best of Green Awards," naming cleaning products that are both effective and eco-friendly.

Try and maybe try again

"I'm brand loyal. If a company's shower cleaner works, maybe I'll try its dish soap," Berliet says. "If it works, great. If not, don't buy it again."

Before you decide something doesn't work, be sure you followed the directions, Williford says.

Ask yourself: Did I use it properly, leave it on long enough and have the right cleaning tool? Was it the right product for the job?

"A green cleaner will clean, but if you have 10 years of grime baked into your oven, it may require you to don rubber gloves and employ a less eco-friendly workhorse," she says.

Think all-in-one

Finding a single cleaner that does it all reduces waste and is healthier for your pocketbook.

Williford, who hosts the Instagram show "Taryn Cleans It All," uses dish soap as her go-to cleaner in both the kitchen and bath.

Harris swears by Force of Nature electrolyzed water, which uses electricity to convert salt, water and vinegar into a non-toxic multipurpose cleaner and EPA-registered disinfectant that can be used on floors, bathtubs, glass, countertops, toilets and kitchen appliances. Though the up-front cost isn't cheap (from \$65 for a starter kit to \$94 for a year's supply), Harris says she has replaced 99% of her cleaners and all of her disinfectants with the electrolyzed water.

Make your own

To guarantee a cleaner is as pure as possible, create your own. You'll find numerous DIY cleaning recipes online. Key ingredients typically include baking soda, hydrogen peroxide, rubbing alcohol, vinegar and/or lemon juice.

For instance, a 50/50 blend of distilled white vinegar and water in a spray bottle makes window cleaner.

And if you want the thrill of that fifth-grade erupting volcano science experiment, sprinkle a thin layer of baking soda over a grimy stovetop, spray vinegar on top of it and watch the grease bubble off the surface. Then, simply wipe it away.

You can find similar tricks for drain cleaner, stain remover and more.

Don't drive yourself crazy

Eco-friendly cleaning products wouldn't be on store shelves if they weren't effective to some degree, but know that there are times when heavy-duty messes will force you into attack mode.

"If you can go green 80% of the time, don't worry about the 20% of the time when you have no control," Harris says.

"The promise of green cleaners is not necessarily a better clean, but that you can use them more often with fewer precautions."

Taryn Williford

lifestyle director, Apartment Therapy



WEEKEND: BOOKS

By HILLEL ITALIE

Associated Press

Near the end of 2020, the pandemic had lasted long enough for author Jodi Picoult to try something that seemed unthinkable for novelists in its early stages — turn it into fiction.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, I couldn't even read, much less write. I didn't have the focus," says Picoult, who last November began the novel "Wish You Were Here." The fall release is set in New York and the Galapagos during the first two months of the pandemic, March-May of last year.

"I couldn't find myself in my own life; writing the book was therapeutic," she added. "I finished a draft in February, very quickly. And the whole time it was going on, I was talking to friends of mine, telling them, 'I don't know if this is going to work.' But I had very positive responses and feel that, unlike almost any other topic, I have written a book about this one experience that everyone on the planet has lived through."

From wars to plagues to the Sept. 11 attacks, the literary response to historic tragedies has been a process of absorbing trauma — often beginning with poetry and nonfiction and, after months or years, expanding to narrative fiction. The pandemic has now lasted into a second fall season for publishing, and a growing number of authors, among them Picoult, Louise Erdrich, Gary Shteyngart and Hilma Wolitzer, have worked it into their latest books.

Shteyngart's "Our Country Friends" features eight friends who gather in a remote house as the virus spreads, a storyline for which he drew upon Chekhov and other Russian writers, and upon Boccaccio's 14th century classic "The Decameron."

Amitava Kumar's "A Time Outside This Time" tells of an Indian-American author working at an artists retreat and trying to make sense of President Donald Trump, 24-hour media and an equally relentless virus. Kumar began the book before the pandemic, but found it fit well — too well — into an existing wave of misinformation, "fake news," reaching from the U.S. to his native India.

"The Indian Prime Minister was asking people to bang their plates and pots at a certain hour; people in his conservative party were touting the powers of cow dung and cow urine," he says. "A minister of health said that the rays of the sun would build immunity. So, I was thinking, what exactly is the work a novel can do in the time of the novel coronavirus? I'm telling you all this because I wasn't at all in doubt about mentioning the pandemic — I didn't think it could be avoided."

Erdrich's "The Sentence," her first since the Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Night Watchman," centers on a Minneapolis bookstore in 2020 and the city's multiple crises, from the pandemic to the murder of George Floyd.

Like Kumar, Erdrich had the original idea — a haunted bookstore — well before the virus spread.

"By the end, I realized that although we might want to forget parts of 2020, we should not forget," she wrote in a recent email. "Obviously, we can't forget. We have to use what we learned."

Wolitzer's "The Great Escape" is a new story in her collection "Today a Woman



Pandemic prose

Fall book releases include stories about the COVID-19 virus, former President Donald Trump and the founding of the US

Went Mad in the Supermarket," which includes a foreword by "Olive Kitteridge" author Elizabeth Strout. "The Great Escape" is the first work of short fiction in years by Wolitzer, known for such novels as "The Doctor's Daughter" and "An Available Man." The 91-year-old author lost her husband to the virus, and drew upon her grief as she updated characters from previous stories, the married couple Howard and Paulette.

"I found it cathartic," Wolitzer says. "I wrote it in a week and I couldn't stop writing about it. The images about what had happened to us kept coming up and I felt like I had to use them."

More new fiction

Fiction this fall will also include works from Jonathan Franzen, Sally Rooney, Lauren Groff, Colm Toibin and Strout, and from four of the past six winners of the fiction Pulitzer Prize: Erdrich, Richard Powers, Colson Whitehead and Anthony Doerr.

"Silverview" is a posthumous release from John le Carré, who died last year. Gayl Jones' "Palmares" is her first novel in more than 20 years, and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka's "Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth" is the Nigerian playwright's first novel in nearly 50 years.

Fiction also is expected from Percival Everett, Anita Kopacz, Atticus Lish and Amor Towles, and debut novelists ranging from Honoree Fanonne Jeffers and Wanda M. Morris to the already famous Hillary Clinton, who has teamed with Louise Penny on the thriller "State of Terror."

"There's a very full list of books coming up. We've had a very good year in sales so

ert Costa ("Peril"), and from ABC News correspondent Jon Karl ("Betrayal").

Former national security official Fiona Hill, a key witness during Trump's first impeachment trial, for pressuring Ukraine leaders to investigate then-candidate Joe Biden, tells her story in "There Is Nothing for You Here." Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's "Republican Rescue" is an attack on his party's conspiracy theories, including that the election was stolen from Trump. Mollie Hemingway's "Rigged" contends that "the Democrats, Big Tech, and the media built a machine to ensure that a Trump victory was impossible," according to Regnery Publishing.

One political genre is largely absent: Books by the opposition to a sitting president, a lucrative business during several previous administrations. Conservative books have a large audience; right-wing commentator Mark R. Levin's "American Marxism" has sold hundreds of thousands of copies this summer. But publishers and booksellers struggled to name any upcoming works centered on criticism of President Biden.

"The focus continues to be on Trump," says Mark Laframboise, a buyer for the Politics & Prose bookstore in Washington, D.C.

Thomas Spence, publisher of the conservative Regnery Publishing, said his company had profited well from books about President Bill Clinton and President Barack Obama but was not even seeing proposals about Biden.

"Conservatives don't worry about him personally. They're worried about the policies he's pursuing," Spence says. "And that is so different from the Clinton and Obama years when Regnery sold mountains of books criticizing both of those presidents."

History

Debate over the meaning of the country's founding continues with works by Pulitzer winners Gordon Wood and Joseph Ellis, along with Woody Holton's 700-page "Liberty Is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution," endorsed by Wood and by an author he has otherwise disagreed with, "1619 Project" creator Nikole Hannah-Jones.

A book-length edition of the "1619 Project" expands upon the Pulitzer-winning New York Times report that, by placing slavery at the center of the American narrative, has been either celebrated as a needed corrective to traditional history or condemned as unpatriotic, to the point of being banned from some schools.

Hannah-Jones quotes from Holton in the "1619 Project" book, which includes essays, poems and fiction, with Jesmyn Ward, Terry McMillan, Terrance Hayes and Jason Reynolds among the contributors. In a note to readers, publisher Chris Jackson of One World calls the book an exploration of the "twinned lineage" of slavery and resistance, a conflict echoed in the subtitle of Ellis' work, "The Cause: The American Revolution and Its Discontents."

"The 1619 Project was never meant to be a simple academic or, worse, partisan political argument," Jackson writes, "but a story about what's really at stake in how we envision our history and identity as a nation: our lives and our future. This is a clarifying and often inspiring epic of struggle, one whose ending we can all have a hand in writing."

WEEKEND: MUSIC

REVIEW



LORDE/YouTube

Lorde released her third album, "Solar Power," on Aug. 20. The New Zealander joins other pop stars singing about escaping from online ubiquity.

Lorde's musings on the burden of fame don't sound like hits. That'll suit her fine.

BY MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

Lorde's songwriting stands up to digital fact-checking. When the 24-year-old pop singer from New Zealand sings on her new album of having "an arm in a cast at the museum gala," it takes only a few clicks to find a photo (dozens, actually) of her plaster-accented look at the Met Gala in 2016. Ditto her memory of the time "in Hollywood when Carole called my name" — Carole King, that is, who presented Lorde with a Grammy Award for song of the year at Staples Center in 2014.

As a child of the internet, Lorde knows that her life over the past decade — since her smash "Royals" made her a teenage superstar despite (or perhaps because of) the song's suspicions about celebrity — has been documented in obsessive detail; she also understands that fans crave the feeling of being let behind the curtain of what they already know.

That doesn't mean she likes it.

"If you're looking for a savior / Well, that's not me," Lorde declares just minutes into "Solar Power," her third LP. "You need someone to take your pain for you? / Well, that's not me." Even before these pronouncements, the first thing she tells us in the album's opening track, "The Path," is that she was "born in the year of OxyContin"

— certainly one way to describe 1996 (when the notoriously addictive painkiller was introduced) that leaves little doubt as to her thoughts on the dangers of fame-as-religion.

Elsewhere on this curiously low-key album, Lorde deplores getting on airplanes all the time and admits to "having nightmares from the camera flash";



Lorde

Solar Power (EMI/Republic)

on "Dominoes," she sounds utterly exhausted by having dated an unnamed guy who went on to do "yoga with Uma Thurman's mother." (Your Googling awaits.)

Doesn't anyone want to be a pop star anymore? "Solar Power" is just the latest in a series of high-profile releases about seeking an escape from online ubiquity, after Lana Del Rey's "Chemtrails Over the Country Club" and Billie Eilish's "Happier Than Ever"; even 2021's breakout debut, "Sour" by Olivia Rodrigo, starts with a song in which Rodrigo threatens to quit the job she just got and start a new life, far from the soul-crushing experience that is being a young woman reading about herself on social media.

Lorde makes similar promises on "Solar Power," which

she recorded primarily with producer Jack Antonoff, pop's premiere facilitator of VIP ambivalence: "Goodbye to all the bottles, all the models / Bye to the kids in the lines for the new Supreme," she sings on "California," while "Stoned at the Nail Salon" counsels listeners to "spend all the evenings you can with the people who raised you."

In "The Path," Lorde brags that she "won't take the call if it's the label or the radio"; in the title track she exults in having thrown her "cellular device in the water" so that nobody at all can reach her.

What distinguishes "Solar Power" from those other records is that Lorde truly sounds like she's OK with not having hits. These are weird, spare, twisty-turny psych-folk tunes, many of them without the propulsive beats that used to drive Lorde's music; most of the time, she's simply layering her fluttering, slightly raspy vocals over Antonoff's noodly electric guitar in a way that recalls Nico's 1967 cult classic "Chelsea Girl," of all things.

Although the results are uniformly gorgeous, not-hits are indeed what Lorde has so far reaped: Ahead of the album's release, none of its advance singles were on Billboard's Hot 100 or the Spotify U.S. Top 50 —

a startling turnaround for an artist who spent nine weeks at No. 1 with "Royals."

Lorde doesn't use all of "Solar Power" to chew over her disinterest in fame. "Fallen Fruit" addresses climate change, criticizing the singer's parents' generation for not working to solve a problem that may now be too late to fix. And "The Man with the Axe" tenderly recounts a relationship with someone who "felled me clean as a pine." (There's a vivid metaphor to show for all the wandering in nature Lorde says she did during COVID quarantine.)

In the twinkling "Mood Ring," she satirizes the modern wellness industry with the sharp sense of humor that keeps the rest of "Solar Power" from feeling like a privileged person's lament. Lorde closes with "Oceanic Feeling," in which she turns her focus from the disappointments of getting what she thought she wanted to the comforting thrill of the yet-to-be-known.

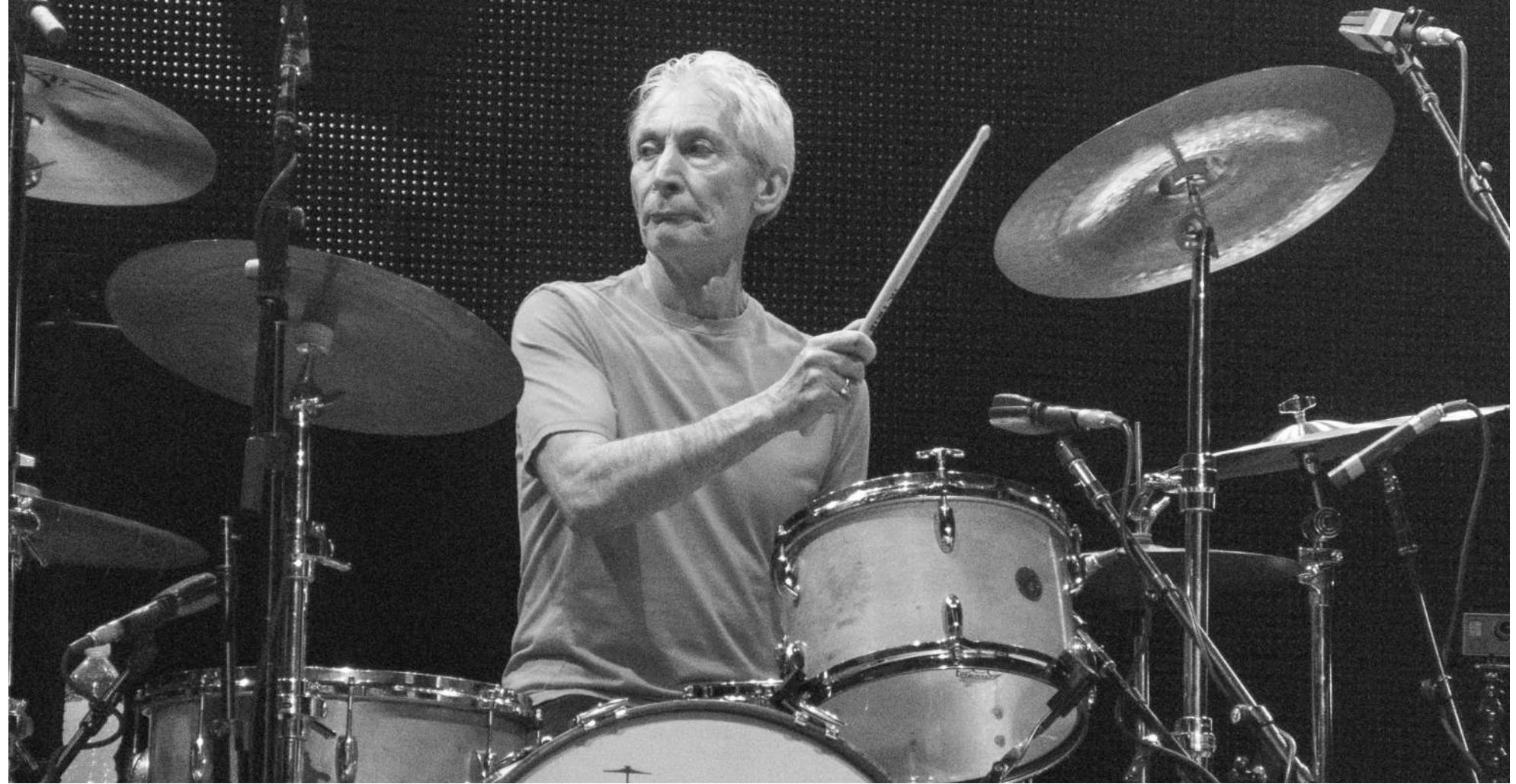
"In the future, if I have a daughter / Will she have my waist or my widow's peak?" she sings over a gently trippy gospel-soul groove, "My dreamer's disposition or my wicked streak?"

That nobody can pull up any pictures of the hypothetical child clearly delights her.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

APPRECIATION

Singular Stone



AMY HARRIS/AP

Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts performs at TD Garden in Boston on June 14, 2013. Watts, who had anchored the band's sound since 1964, died Tuesday at age 80.

The steadfast genius of Charlie Watts was always just enough and never too much

By MIKAEL WOOD

Los Angeles Times

If the other guys were rolling, somebody had to be the stone. That was the job Charlie Watts saw for himself — and then carried off with incomparable style for more than half a century — as the steadfast drummer of the Rolling Stones, the world-famous (and maybe world's greatest) rock 'n' roll band in which he kept deeply reliable time behind his flamboyant bad-boy bandmates.

Onstage, Mick Jagger would wag his bum as he sneered about his wealth and taste; Keith Richards would roam around caressing his guitar in a way that felt vaguely indecent. And then there was Watts, never less than crisply dressed, a ramrod presence at his stripped-down kit.

He'd come up as a jazz drummer but put aside any tendency toward flash when he joined the Stones in the early 1960s. "Mick and Keith write the songs; the music is theirs," he said decades later in an interview. "So the bottom line is, if they want me just to go wham-wham-wham,

then that's what I'll do.

"I think it should be whammy-whammy-bam, but I'll do wham-wham-wham."

Yet to suggest that Watts, who died Tuesday at age 80 — having never missed a Stones gig, it should be said — played simply or minus appreciable flair is way off the mark. Watts provided a groove and swing that distinguished the Stones from the get-go; his propulsive beat in their youthful covers of "Not Fade Away" and "It's All Over Now" made the music jump in a sexy, slightly dangerous way that transcended the record-nerd scholarship the songs actually represented.

And when Jagger and Richards began writing their own songs, Watts figured out how to turn their meanings into rhythm. Listen to his work in "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," a relentless forward thrust so evocative of Jagger's longed-for you-know-what that the rest of the band quits playing around the two-minute mark just so we can revel in it.

The Stones' catalog is filled with countless examples of Watts' clever scene-setting: the beat hammering away like a migraine in "Paint It Black," the almost satirically louche funk groove in "Honky Tonk Women," the snare that keeps crack-

ing like a gunshot in the death-obsessed "Gimme Shelter." He could play fast, as in "Rocks Off" and "Mixed Emotions" and "Bitch," and he could play slow, as in "Tumbling Dice" and "Beast of Burden" and "Wild Horses," the last of which he barely keeps from sliding into the ditch it seems destined for.

Whatever he was doing, though, it was always just enough and never too much — an economy that suited a drummer who said he learned to play on an instrument he made himself out of a banjo. (It probably also helped, once he could afford to buy any drum he wanted, that he maintained a number of showoff-ier jazz-combo side projects.)

The essential tastiness of Watts' playing — and his eagerness to let others in the band do the peacock — allowed the Stones to adapt their approach to whatever was happening in pop. He knew how to push the music toward disco, as he did in the late '70s with "Miss You," without making the band sound desperate, and he knew how to push it just as believably toward punk during the same era with "When the Whip Comes Down." Jagger and Richards could go all-out on vocals and guitar; Watts kept the Stones sounding

like the Stones.

Looking like them, too: Watts, who'd worked as a graphic artist before joining the band, helped shape the Stones' visual imagery in merchandise and stage sets; he co-designed album covers and even appeared on the cover of a couple of them — including the 1970 live album "Get Your Ya-Ya's Out!" — despite his avowed disinterest in the spotlight. In concert, his frowning expression and rigid posture behind the drums called to mind Sam the Eagle from the Muppets — a welcome comic counterpoint to all the rock-star preening going on around him.

His deadpan attitude was another valuable antidote to his bandmates' hucksterism. On the one occasion I spoke with Watts, ahead of a 50th-anniversary tour the group mounted in 2012, he scoffed when I told him guitarist Ronnie Wood had hyped the group's five-hour rehearsals and promised that the band was "up to a point we've never been before."

"I don't know what he's talking about," Watts said in his clipped English accent. "We have a lot of songs. You start off playing a hundred, then get it down to 25."

As usual, he was forgoing the whammy-whammy-bam.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

It's her world

'Centaurworld' showrunner drew on her own teenage emotional experiences in show choir when creating the quirky new Netflix cartoon

BY TRACY BROWN
Los Angeles Times

Horse only knows a life of war. But during a mission with her Rider to collect a mysterious artifact that's supposed to help their side to victory, she finds herself suddenly transported into a colorful, magical world inhabited by singing and dancing centaurs.

Lost in a weird, unfamiliar place, the battle-hardened warhorse soon discovers she now has the ability to speak. Understandably, she freaks out a little.

"I wanted it to genuinely feel like you took someone from a different series and put them into Centaurworld," says Megan Nicole Dong, the showrunner and executive producer of "Centaurworld," a new musical animated fantasy series now streaming on Netflix. "The world is really like a snapshot into my brain. A lot of the way it looks and the way the characters move is based on my sketchbook drawings. We tried to make it look like it was almost like marker on paper, to contrast the way Horse looks and the way that her world looks."

The 10-episode first season follows Horse (voiced by Kimiko Glenn) and her new centaur friends — Wammawink (Megan Hilty), Durpleton (Josh Radnor), Glendale (Dong), Zulius (Pavesh Cheena) and Ched (Chris Diamantopoulos) — as they travel across Centaurworld to collect the items she needs in order to get home.

In contrast to Horse's world, Centaurworld is vibrant and whimsical. In addition to traditional human-horse hybrids, the world is inhabited with "half-animal, half-man things" of all kinds, including beartaur, moletaur, cattaur and whaletaur. Even the mountains, trees and weather phenomena in Centaurworld look like quadrupeds with hooves.

"Biology was always something that I was really interested in, so I wanted to have as many different kinds of creatures be the centaurs," Dong says. "I wanted it to also be a place that, because we have so many different kinds of creatures of all different sorts of shapes and sizes and colors, naturally felt inclusive."

Much of the magic initially introduced in "Centaurworld" seems silly and frivolous — from blinking sparkles and turning handsome for a few seconds to

shooting miniature versions of oneself from a hoof. But the magic of "Centaurworld" is anything but.

The show is delightfully fun and strange, and the soundtrack slaps. It's also a sincere story about embracing change and how you can learn about yourself when life throws you a surprise challenge.

"I tried to draw from my own emotional experiences," says Dong, an Asian American born and raised in Southern California. "Growing up, I always felt a lot of pressure to perform academically and keep up with my peers. The whole [story] is based on me going into high school, getting ready to take all these [Advanced Placement] classes and then ending up in a show choir because the only available extracurricular was show choir."

It was this chance scheduling snafu that set Dong on a course toward her future creative endeavors. The unexpected experience not only helped her see performing in a new light, it also helped convince her to pursue the arts as a career.

"I ended up falling in love with the whole thing, even though, initially, I felt completely out of my element," Dong says. "That



Netflix photos

Horse (Kimiko Glenn) is surprised to meet magical centaurs like Wammawink (Megan Hilty) in "Centaurworld," the new musical animated series now streaming on Netflix.

animation in both styles — it's the music that first gives viewers a hint that there's more to the series than the "Wizard of Oz"-like journey that initially meets the eye.

The songwriting "was super integrated into the scripts and into the writing process, which was a lot of fun," says Dong, who along with co-executive producer Dominic Bisignano wrote all of "Centaurworld's" songs. "We wanted to make sure that the songs weren't just songs happening for the sake of having them. They had to be actual musical moments that progress the story or informed the audience of where a character was emotionally."



The "Centaurworld" universe features "half-animal, half-man things" of all kinds, including beartaur, moletaur, cattaur and whaletaur (below). Even the mountains, trees and weather phenomena in "Centaurworld" look like quadrupeds with hooves.

class on how you draw horses, how they move and all of that, with some of our artists."

The herd Horse encounters upon arriving in Centaurworld seems to be — at least initially — the opposite of realistic: For instance, Dong's own character, Glendale, has the constant urge to steal things — which she hides in a magic portal located in her stomach. But appearances can be deceiving.

"I tried to figure out the herd all at the same time," Dong says. "I wanted them to feel like their own distinct characters whose personalities and quirks all come from a place of trauma."

Over the course of the season, the audience gets a closer glimpse into that trauma, and it's always clear that the characters are neither defined nor judged by their quirks or flaws.

"No one is actually judging Glendale for her stealing, you know," Dong says. "Everyone is just accepted for who they are."

As wonderfully whimsical and

"Animation is one of those things where you can kind of visually show anything. The fun of it is being able to portray relatable themes in the most unexpected ways possible. I've always loved taking advantage of the freedom you have in animation to do that."

Megan Nicole Dong
showrunner, executive producer

was the basis for Horse's story. Being from one world, thinking that there was one way to do things, and then ending up in this really musical, silly place and having that really change her as a character."

While "Centaurworld" is remarkable for its aesthetic ambition — in addition to having distinct styles that visually emphasize how different its two worlds are, the show has two studios, Mercury Filmworks and Red Dog Culture House, handling its

All of these elements are on top of Dong's decision to center a realistic horse in a show set in a world of quadrupeds.

"Horses are notoriously hard to draw," says Dong, who always knew she specifically wanted a warhorse as the main character of the show. "We were really lucky that James Baxter, who animated 'Spirit' and Belle from 'Beauty and the Beast' and so many other amazing Disney characters, joined the studio. In the beginning, he did a master-



weird the show's world may be, Horse and her story — as well as the magical centaurs — remain very much grounded.

"Animation is one of those things where you can kind of visually show anything," Dong says. "The fun of it is being able to portray relatable themes in the most unexpected ways possible. I've always loved taking advantage of the freedom you have in animation to do that."

WEEKEND: TELEVISION



Apple TV+

Left to right: Brendan Hunt, Jason Sudeikis, Brett Goldstein and Nick Mohammed appear in a scene from "Ted Lasso," which returned for its second season July 23.

A team effort, both on and off camera

'Ted Lasso' star Jason Sudeikis says arrogance is absent from the intent, creation and realization of the show

By GLENN WHIPP
Los Angeles Times

“It's tough to hug someone when you've got your arms crossed."

This sounds like one of those earnest nuggets of wisdom that Ted Lasso might say, kind of like, oh, I don't know, "takin' on a challenge is a lot like ridin' a horse ... if you're comfortable while you're doin' it, you're probably doin' it wrong" or maybe "I believe in hope. I believe in Believe."

Only Ted Lasso hasn't said this line — yet. Jason Sudeikis, the man who created and plays the folksy, optimistic soccer coach on the hit Apple TV+ series, reserves the right to impart that piece of wisdom at some point in the show's third season, which he and the show's writers are beginning to map out now. He has been keeping it in his back pocket, waiting for the perfect moment.

"Ted Lasso," beloved as it may be at this moment in time, wasn't universally embraced when its first season premiered last August: "The dad pants of sitcoms," one critic wrote.

"And I imagine if that person could string together 10 of those lines, they'd work as a writer and not as a critic," Sudeikis says, fixing a smile during a video interview a few weeks ago.

Heeeeey. Easy on the critic-bashing, I reply. Criticism is its own creative art, and a valuable one. A few minutes later, Sudeikis circles back, saying he appreciated me saying that.

"I'm not railing on that line. It is a good line," he said. "But I gotta bring my man in the arena, my point guard energy to it too."

The sports analogy is crucial to under-

standing Sudeikis and what makes "Ted Lasso" work as a show both on and off camera. Sudeikis started playing basketball in fourth grade, continued through high school and was good enough to earn a scholarship to Fort Scott Community College in Kansas. A community college, yes. But a community college in Kansas, where they take basketball seriously. But he never played and wound up doing a play instead, building on the improv performing he'd done in high school, and the rest is history.

But whether it was team sports or comedy groups, Sudeikis craved company. He

"It's a company of players," says Waddingham, one of seven cast members to earn an Emmy nomination. (The show itself picked up 20 nods, a record for a first-year comedy.) "No one thinks they're more important than anyone else. People could easily think we're being cheesy, but the fact is we really bloody dig each other. And it has to be honest. Otherwise everyone would smell a rat."

Waddingham isn't joking. And, yes, people could easily think that the love fest among the show's ensemble and creative team is too good to be true, that the vibe (everyone talks about the "Ted Lasso")

movies, "We're the Millers" and more, noting that if, in fact, "Ted Lasso" is the apex of his career (it is), it is probably because it is "the most from his heart and full of his DNA."

"So he's offering more," Hunt says. "He's always had this much to offer. He just hasn't been afforded the chance to do so, at least not in this fashion."

Sudeikis will cop to that, saying that he feels proud of the show, that he aimed at a target, hit it and that process is the "culmination of a lot of people's hard work and effort and giving a damn."

But don't ask him about the show's popularity, the reasons behind it or if it has changed his life, because he can't (won't) speak to the show's reception ("that's nothing I have any control over") and, as for his life, what life? The last couple of years — and the year ahead — have been devoted to writing, filming and editing "Ted Lasso." ("No rest for the wicked," Hunt puts it.)

"You want to love the art in yourself, not yourself in the art," Sudeikis says, repeating a quote from the revered Russian actor and teacher Konstantin Stanislavski. "That speaks to me toward how ego can get in the way and how power can corrupt, especially in this business." That's why he loves team sports, he adds, because "that would be beaten out of you."

"Ensemble art is all I've ever really gravitated toward, because you're competing against yourself and you're competing with things that are in you — ego, apathy and cynicism," Sudeikis continues, riffing on the "vibe" of "Ted Lasso." "Know that you as an individual can beat those three away and then with like-minded people filled with an intentional desire, you can destroy them; you can obliterate them."

"It's a company of players. No one thinks they're more important than anyone else."

Hannah Waddingham

actress who plays Rebecca, the team owner on "Ted Lasso"

could never bring himself to do stand-up: "Too scared," he says.

Succeed or fail, he wanted someone next to him.

"That way, if we get stuck on an island, I can eat them or they can eat me or use me as a floating device or vice versa, you know, for a chance of some sort of survival," Sudeikis, 45, says, chuckling.

So even though "Ted Lasso" is named after the gentle, pun-loving coach Sudeikis plays, it's very much a team effort, more so as the show has established its characters — the English players Lasso leads, the assistants who keep him honest, the team owner, Rebecca (Hannah Waddingham) ... and, well, it's a deep bench. The second season, currently airing, gives the entire cast even more opportunities to shine.

vibe) of optimism that courses through the series can't possibly exist in a business famous for displays of ego and selfishness.

Sudeikis counters, saying arrogance is absent from the intent of the show, the creation of the show, the realization of the show. Talking about "Ted Lasso" feels weird to him; wrong, even. He uses a PG-rated form of a crude term for self-pleasuring to describe his resistance to talking about himself because it is not in harmony with what "Ted Lasso" is about.

"Jason has done a lot of good stuff," says longtime friend Brendan Hunt, who co-created "Ted Lasso" and plays an assistant coach on the show, "and this is probably the best thing he's done."

Hunt mentions Sudeikis' work on "Saturday Night Live," the "Horrible Bosses"

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS



'One piece of the puzzle'

Experts say health is about more than just heart rate, advise against obsessing over it with wearable devices

By ALLYSON CHIU

The Washington Post

Before the rise in popularity of fitness trackers and smart-watches, cardiologist Sadiya Khan said patients rarely came in with questions about why their heart rates seemed high or low. But the growing interest in wearable devices, which some early research suggests can even detect coronavirus symptoms, means many people have a trove of real-time health information at their fingertips.

"I see a lot more people asking about heart rate because you can track it, you can monitor it, you can make pretty graphs on your Apple Watch," said Khan, an assistant professor of medicine at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine.

But while your heart rate can be a key indicator of your health, Khan and other experts emphasized that it is just "one piece of the puzzle."

"It's a place to start," said Seth Martin, a cardiologist and associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins. "If that's your entry into thinking about one's health, then that's great." But your heart rate can't tell you everything you need to know about your health, he added, and it is important not to fixate on that one measure.

What your heart rate can signal

During cardiac assessments, experts often take into account resting heart rate, how quickly it increases during physical activity, heart rate recovery and heart rate variability, said Daniel Cantillon, the associate section head of cardiac electrophysiology and pacing at the Cleveland Clinic.

For most people, it is considered normal to have a resting heart rate — when the heart is pumping the lowest amount of blood you need — between 60 and 100 beats per minute, according to the American Heart Association. Generally, a lower resting heart rate is associated with higher cardiovascular fitness. Some athletes, for instance, have resting heart rates well below 60.

"A low resting heart rate can indicate

a heart that's physically fit," Martin said. "If your heart's in good shape, with each beat of the heart then you're pumping blood efficiently to the rest of your body."

If, on the other hand, a person at rest has a high heart rate, "that indicates that the heart's working harder than we would expect it to have to work at that state," he said.

How fast your heart rate starts to climb while you are exercising and how long it takes to return to baseline once you are at rest also can be signs of physical fitness, Cantillon said.

People who are very fit will have heart rates that accelerate more slowly, whereas sedentary individuals may see their heart rates go up faster and feel out of breath even with lower levels of exertion. Additionally, if you're less fit, it may take longer for your heart to slow down after exercise, Cantillon said.

Another marker that can be tracked with technology is heart rate variability, or a measure of the variation in time between each heartbeat. A fair amount of heart rate variability, Cantillon noted, can indicate a healthy autonomic nervous system.

"What it means is that in response to things that you're doing in your everyday life, getting up, taking a shower, brushing your teeth, going to work, doing some exercise, going to bed at night, your body's nervous system is able to appropriately accelerate and decelerate your heart rate so that it's situationally matched to what you're doing," he said.

How to monitor your heart rate

Outside of directions from a physician, how often you want to check your heart rate is an individual choice that largely depends on how useful the information is to you, experts said.

Rather than focusing on the fixed heart rate number at a specific moment, it may be better to keep track of trends and observe how your heart rate is changing, said Thomas Allison, director of the Sports Cardiology Clinic at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

"If you see rather persistent trends in your heart rate up or down, or you see

sudden change, that might be of concern," he said, "particularly if you're not feeling well."

It may also be helpful to monitor your heart rate if you're starting a new fitness program to gauge improvement and make sure you aren't overdoing it, Allison said.

"We know that with training, with cardiovascular conditioning, your heart rate gets slower, and so you can track your improvement there," he said. "If you're over training and working too hard and not getting enough rest, you might see the heart rate drift back up again."

During exercise, Khan said she encourages people to get their heart rate up to at least 50% of their estimated maximum heart rate, which is 220 minus your age.

But don't obsess over your heart rate, Allison said. "It may give you a false degree of concern or a false sense of security," he said.

Cantillon added that he has had patients who get access to wearable technology and "unfortunately, they kind of go off the deep end." They tend to over-interpret data, which triggers anxiety about what they think is happening to them, he said. "We do a fair amount of reassurance."

If you're monitoring your heart rate, consistency is key and experts widely recommend taking your resting heart rate in the morning shortly after waking up. Recording your heart rate at the same time of day allows for more precise day-to-day comparisons.

You can accurately check your pulse without technology using the traditional two-finger approach and counting your heartbeats. The advantage of wearable devices is that they can record and store information so that it is easily accessible, Cantillon said, noting that you need to make sure you're wearing them according to the manufacturer's instructions.

But although most wearables reliably collect accurate data at rest, the quality can become variable during physical activity, said Martin, who suggested using a chest strap device for workouts if you really want a more precise reading. A paper published online in 2016 in JA-

MA Cardiology found that wrist-worn technology wasn't as accurate as a chest strap-based monitor.

"In general, accuracy of wrist-worn monitors was best at rest and diminished with exercise," the researchers wrote.

How to think about heart rate

"Heart rate's not useless as a measure of health, but it's not a very precise measure of health," Allison said. Your heart rate can be affected by many factors, including age, medication, stress levels, sleep, physical activity, diet and hydration.

Consider this example: "A heart rate less than 60 is great if it's achieved by being fit," Allison said. But it would be a problem if you have an underlying medical condition that's causing your heart to beat more slowly.

Similarly, he said, an elevated heart rate could be triggered by something benign, such as excitement, or it could be your body signaling that you might be coming down with an illness, such as COVID-19.

The experts advise talking to your primary care provider if your heart rate is consistently higher or lower than expected. But if dramatic changes in your heart rate are accompanied by symptoms such as palpitations, chest pain, fatigue, lightheadedness, dizziness or shortness of breath, you should seek medical care.

"The more persistent the symptoms are, the faster you need attention," Allison said.

One thing you shouldn't do: measure your heart rate against others.

"If you're comparing, 'Oh, my heart rate's two beats lower than yours, so I'm healthier. I'm going to live longer' — well, no," Allison said.

Instead of specifically trying to improve your heart rate, experts suggested taking a more holistic approach to health.

"The focus needs to go back to all of the things that we know are good for cardiovascular and overall health," such as regular exercise and a heart healthy diet, Khan said.

Allison agreed. "We have to remember that maintaining good health is about behaviors," he said, "not taking tests."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



iStock

This school year will be uniquely challenging for kids carrying the baggage from last year's online learning.

New semester, same struggles

Help empower kids as they transition back to school with these 4 tips

BY PHYLLIS FAGELL

Special to The Washington Post

When pediatrician Patricia Kapunan met with her seventh-grade patient, she asked her if she had discovered anything about herself last year, when she was learning remotely, that might help her learn or cope better this year.

Kapunan, an adolescent medicine specialist at Children's National Hospital, has been doing this kind of processing with kids "because it helps them realize they have agency, and it helps families recognize the resilience they showed in solving problems last year."

Children are going to need that kind of empowerment this year. They not only are dealing with the anticipatory anxiety of starting a new grade, but they are also carrying over baggage and frustrations from last year's struggles with the pandemic and online learning, including "adverse effects on their developing brains and bodies," said Lori Desautels, an assistant professor at Butler University's College of Education and author of the book "Connections Over Compliance: Rewiring our Perceptions of Discipline." "What we see are the behaviors, but it's the residue of emotional fatigue, isolation and chronic unpredictability."

Whether children lack confidence because their grades took a hit during the pandemic, they're worried about reestablishing friendships or they're coping with stressors at home, they could struggle with academic engagement this year. Here are four ways caregivers can tamp down the pressure, boost kids' motivation and help them take a more active, joyful role in their own learning.

Create a manageable routine

As children adjust to the demands of in-person school, they'll need more energy, so Kapunan recommends helping them "move back to a more typical sleep schedule and practice eating at scheduled times — including breakfast — rather than snacking whenever they want."

Whatever schedule you create, do it with your child's input: "Ask questions that help them figure out what they need," such as: "What time do you want to do your homework? Are you a morning person or a night owl?" suggests Jeannine Jannot, author of "The Disintegrating Student: Struggling But Smart, Falling Apart, and How to Turn It Around."

Practice cognitive offloading

Children may not study because they don't know

how, or they might be disorganized because they overestimate their ability to hold information in their head.

"They all say, 'I'll remember,' but that takes a little bit of your brain's ability to focus on the next thing, and writing it down gives you more learning capacity," Jannot said.

To decrease stress, Jannot recommends that kids put their responsibilities, appointments, homework, extracurricular activities and social commitments in a monthly calendar, and that they maintain a separate system for daily reminders. On the left side of a piece of paper, she said, kids can write down the stuff they need to do that day. On the right side, they can add new tasks as they come up throughout the day.

Avoid making assumptions

If children need repeated reassurance to get their homework done, "that's a sign that we need to be intentional about checking in," Desautels said. You might say, "Let's agree to get two sentences written, and I'll check in every 10 minutes. What do you think about that?"

Keep in mind that what looks like laziness is often paralysis that stems from fear of failure, burnout, perfectionism or low confidence, Jannot said. "If you care about the things you're doing, then you're not lazy — and students do care." They want to get good grades, earn the respect of their teachers and peers, and make their parents proud.

Jannot tells parents to be equally wary of the word "best." "If you tell a perfectionist kid to do their best, you've given them an impossible task," she said. "They never feel like they're enough, and their motivation tanks." Instead, help them set realistic expectations.

Turn grind into play

If a child says homework is boring, turn it into play, said Martin Reeves, the co-author of "The Imagination Machine: How to Spark New Ideas and Create Your Company's Future" and chairman of the BCG Henderson Institute. "People are more self-driven when they play, and it's more self-sustaining. You won't hear anyone say, 'I just played with my Lego and it was a real grind.'"

If a question is rote, prompt your child to ask and answer it faster and faster until everyone laughs, Reeves suggested. Or turn it into a guessing game. If a child is instructed to add the numbers 17 and 13, for instance, you might ask: "What do you think I think you're going to say?" Then follow up with: "What else could you say?" "Even if your child knows the answer, you get to discuss why it's the answer," Reeves said.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Return to school gives rise to fashion fears

Unfortunately, I recall many excruciating details from my adolescent years, from the Smurfs puffy stickers I stuck inside my locker to that humiliating day I threw up in the cafeteria in front of my entire seventh grade class, and every awkwardly self-conscious moment in between.

During this gawky stage, I hovered in a nervous state of adolescent limbo between my carefree primary years and the uneasy self-awareness of my late teens. At night, I'd lie awake, wondering, "Who the heck am I, anyway?" Although nothing seemed certain, I thought having trendy clothes would go a long way in attracting a halfway decent friend group ... and maybe someday, a boyfriend.

My parents aimed to clothe me in polyester dresses and knee socks for the rest of my life. That worked until middle school, when my best friend showed up on the first day wearing a blue satin jacket, rainbow suspenders, a Coneheads T-shirt and Sasson jeans with a clear plastic back pocket that showed off her Bonnie Bell Lip Smacker. Seeing that my friend's cool outfit earned her social status, I was desperate to create my own style.

My older brother had abandoned the color-coordinated Garanimals outfits my mother bought him at J.C. Penney, and replaced them with a decent pair of jeans, concert T-shirts and turf shoes. He parted his hair straight down the middle, and voilà! His entrance into the cool crowd was instantaneous, too.

For me, however, fashion was bewildering, with an intimidating array of trends from which to choose. Just buying a new pair of jeans was overwhelming. Pleated or plain front? Acid or stone washed? Tapered or flared? Jordache or Lee?

Would I wear a madras shirt, a cut-up sweatshirt, a Members Only jacket, a cowl neck, a Forenza sweater, an oversized blouse with a brooch at the neck, a popped collar polo shirt, a turtleneck or a blazer with shoulder pads? How could I choose between painter's pants, Hammertime pants, parachute pants, stirrup pants and overalls? Jellies, Converse Chucks, Tretorns, Reebok high tops, Vans, penny loafers, Capezios, Docksiders and Candies. Not to mention the accessories: fingerless gloves, leg warmers, Vuarnet sunglasses, Swatch watches, stick pins, braided headbands, mood rings, fanny packs and banana clips.

Even after choosing an outfit, I still had to decide whether rooster bangs or a bi-level would go better with my frosted purple eye shadow. Oh the agony!

Unfortunately, I never developed a sense of fashion and eventually gave in to my mother's influence, wearing brown leather loafers, blouses that tied at the neck à la Colonel Sanders, and my hair long with a slab of bangs that made my face look like it was framed with a ring of Polska kielbasa.

Even when I managed to convince my mother to buy me something trendy from the juniors rack, I could never quite pull it off. When she bought me Lee overalls, I accidentally dipped the strap into the girls' restroom toilet before history class. When I wore a cool pair of boots I got for Christmas, I wiped out on a patch of ice stepping off the bus.

At some point, I gave up on acquiring fashion sense and honed my sense of humor. I didn't get a good date to the prom, but I was voted "Class Clown" and later became a humor writer. Now, as I watch military families go shopping for back-to-school clothes, I hope that less fashion-savvy kids are not stressing about what to wear to school like I did.

It's OK if fashion isn't your thing. Your best accessories are your personality, your intellect, your talent, your sense of humor, your kindness, your generosity, your determination, your compassion and your resilience. Wear whatever makes you comfortable and confident, then let YOU shine through.

Fashion trends change, but character is forever. And that's totally cool.

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com, and in Lisa's book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

THINK TWICE

BY AIMEE LUCIDO AND ELLA DERSHOWITZ / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Aimee Lucido, of Berkeley, Calif., is a full-time crossword constructor and an author of children's books. Ella Dershowitz, of New York City, is an actor. A mutual friend introduced them, and Ella says, "We bonded immediately through being artsy puzzle people." When Ella moved to San Francisco they became close. Now that she's back in New York, the two stay in touch by making puzzles together. — W.S.

ACROSS

1 Confound
6 Sarcastic internet laughter
10 Most Times Square signage
13 Performance check
17 Dark hair and a warm smile, for two
19 Samoan capital
20 To's opposite
21 Full-length
23 Something that bugs criminals?
25 Blabberer
27 Duplicitous
28 Musicianship
30 ____ dress
31 Pasture
32 Signed off on
33 Ukr. or Lith., formerly
34 Places for development
36 Corn kernel, e.g.
38 Actress Merrill
40 Genre for BTS or Blackpink
43 Added to the staff?
45 Alerts
48 ____ of lies
49 Aquafina : PepsiCo :: ____ : Coca-Cola
52 #%% and @%!
55 Practice whose name means, literally, "union"
57 Words before "before"
58 "Deck the Halls" contraction

59 Symbol on the Connecticut state quarter
60 Stop along the highway
61 Quite
64 Finished brushing one's teeth, say
66 Racial-justice movement since 2013, in brief
67 "Really, though?"
68 Word in many font names
69 Betray . . . or a hint to four answers in this puzzle
73 ____ the Cat (fictional feline of children's books)
74 Thin incision
75 Some \$200 Monopoly properties, in brief
76 Set of 50 on the Argo, in myth
77 Coaxed (out of)
79 Insurance giant bailed out in 2008
80 Word before cap or pop
81 Awesomest bud
82 Spirit in Arabian myth
83 Arizona county or its seat
85 Pushing up daisies
90 Neighbor of Mozambique
92 Nonwriting credentials for Conan Doyle and Chekhov, informally
93 Seller's need
95 Artificial habitat
97 Abolitionist Lucretia
98 The avant-garde "artists" Congo and Pierre Brassau

DOWN

1 Novelist Margaret
2 Absorb the beauty of, as a scene
3 Lacked the gumption to
4 Gladly, old-style
5 Jazzy James and Jones
6 First law-enforcement org. in the U.S. to hire a female officer (1910)
7 Nail-polish brand
8 List of performers

44 Wednesday, but not Friday
46 Accelerator particles
47 Overwhelm
48 Some tax breaks
50 Boos and cheers
51 Light
53 Latin list ender
54 Some Hershey candies
56 Bought in
61 Time-consuming assignment to grade
62 Xanax alternative

9 Star man?

10 Half of a '55 union merger

11 "That's enough arguing out of you!"

12 Lip-puckering

13 Things that may be rubbed after din-din

14 Playwright Will who was a 2005 Pulitzer finalist

15 Crew implement

16 One getting special instruction

18 Ink holders in pens and squid

22 "Just like ____!"

24 Like morning people vis-à-vis night owls, around dawn

26 Response to "How bad was it?"

29 Extends, in a way

35 Lead-in to call

37 Cause for an onslaught of yearly txts

39 "If the pessimists are right . . ."

41 Stroke

42 East: Ger.

44 Wednesday, but not Friday

46 Accelerator particles

47 Overwhelm

48 Some tax breaks

50 Boos and cheers

51 Light

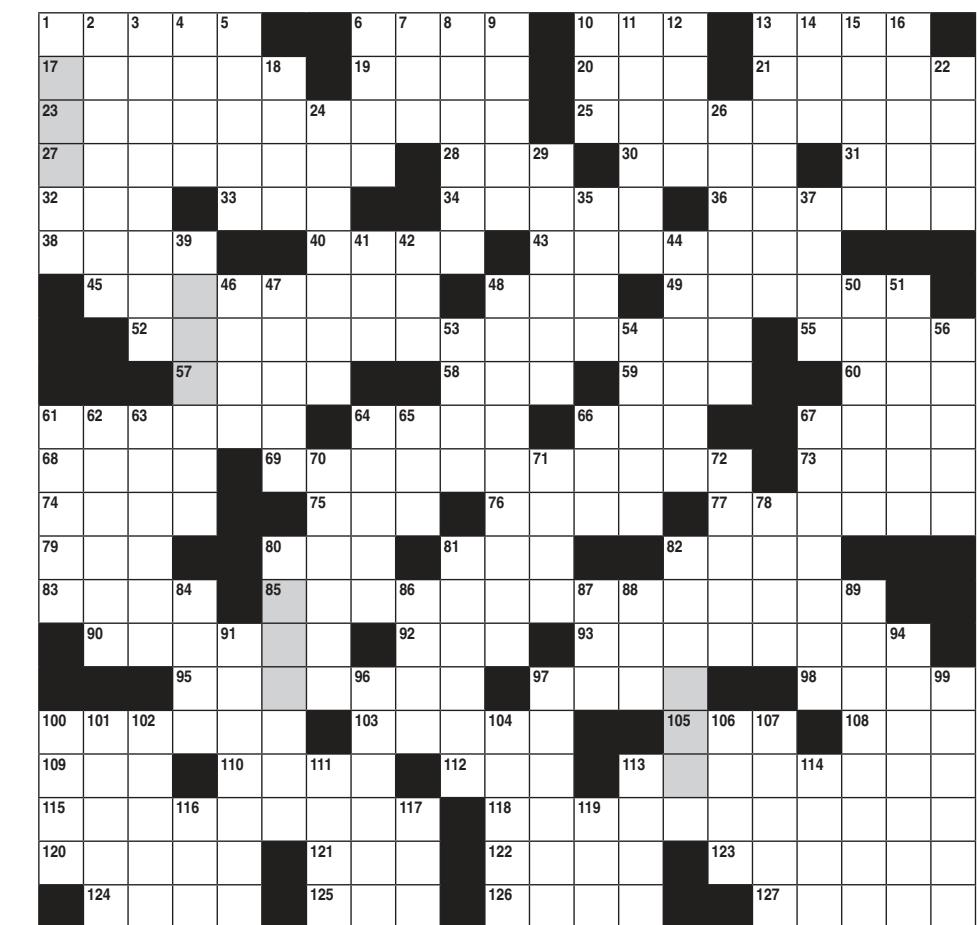
53 Latin list ender

54 Some Hershey candies

56 Bought in

61 Time-consuming assignment to grade

62 Xanax alternative



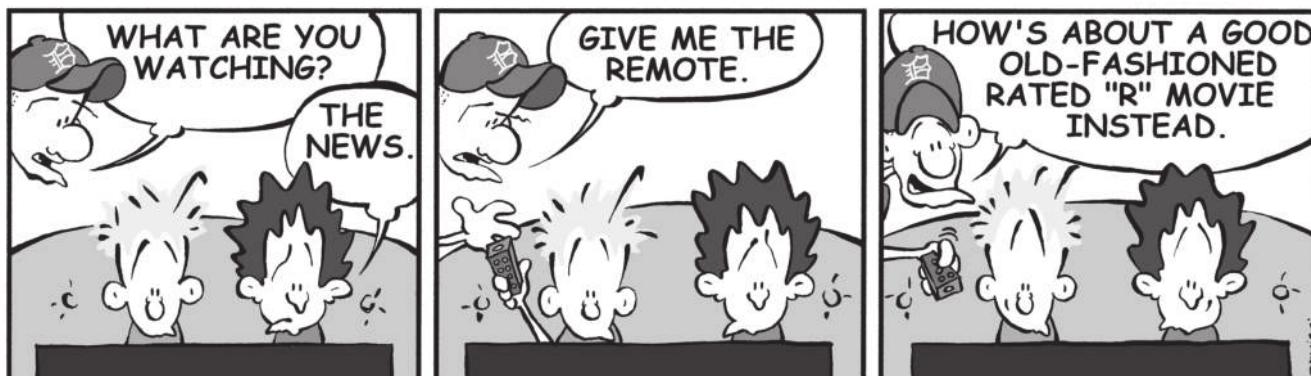
63 Monthly publication of the National Puzzlers' League, with "The"
64 More convinced
65 "The Magic School Bus" was its first fully animated series
66 Sound at the end of December, appropriately?
67 Beach with a girl who "swings so cool"
70 Part of many a corsage
71 Bite site

72 Job to do
78 High-quality cannabis, in slang
80 "Success!"
81 Decorate
82 "I. Can't. Even."
84 Spain's Duchess of
86 Classic novel with the line "You must be the best judge of your own happiness"
87 Environmental opening

88 When repeated, a reproof
89 Overturned
91 Most chiffonlike
94 Figure out
96 Not thinking
97 The Supremes' record label
99 Bad temper
100 Makeup target
101 Where a "Married at First Sight" contestant meets his or her mate

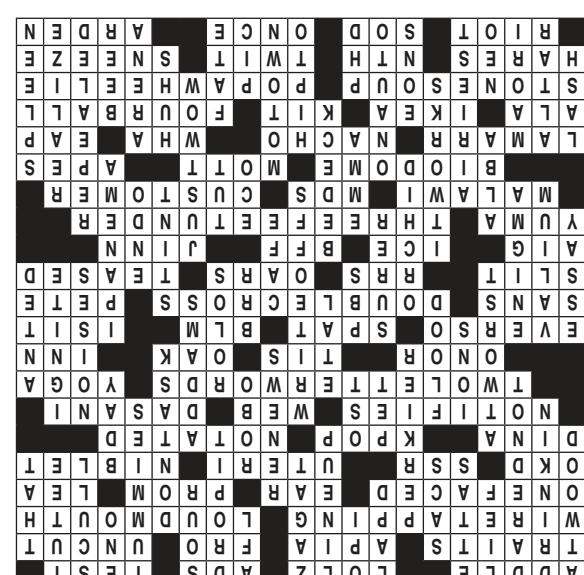
102 Language in which "kia ora" is a greeting
104 Up on
106 Confused responses
107 Fight site
111 Long runs?
113 "A man's character is his ____": Heraclitus
114 "Suds"
116 Prefix with classical
117 Prof's degree
119 Post on Insta

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



STARS AND STRIPES. 15 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN



The story of the U.S. military's role in Afghanistan, as seen through the eyes of Stars and Stripes journalists covering America's longest war.



Over 100 pages of stunning images and stories from the front lines.

15 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN

Only \$14.99 with Free Shipping

ORDER NOW at www.stripesstore.com

FACES

Show me the money

Baby from iconic Nirvana album cover is all grown up and suing the band

By MICHAEL ORDOÑA
Los Angeles Times

The naked baby chasing the dollar bill bait on the cover of Nirvana's iconic "Nevermind" album wants more than a buck from the band, and he's suing them on the grounds of child pornography to get it.

Spencer Elden, 30, filed suit in the U.S. District Court's central district of California seeking at least \$150,000 in damages from each of about 10 defendants. Attorney Robert Lewis claims in the suit that by using the photo of then-baby Elden with his genitalia exposed, the defendants sexualized the child. The lawsuit further claims that by altering the image to include the dollar bill on a fish hook, they made him look "like a sex worker."

"Defendants intentionally commercially marketed Spencer's child pornography and leveraged the shocking nature of his image to promote themselves and their music at his expense," the lawsuit reads, in part.

Defendants used child pornography depicting Spencer as an essential element of a record promotion scheme commonly utilized in the music industry to get attention, wherein album covers posed children in a sexually provocative manner to gain notoriety, drive sales, and garner media attention, and critical reviews."

Nude but nonsexualized images of children are not necessarily considered child pornography under the law: The Department of Justice defines child pornography as "any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor." A common interpretation of the cover image concerns the band's critique of capitalism.

Defendants include surviving members of the band Dave Grohl (now of Foo Fighters) and Kurt Novoselic, as well as Courtney Love (Kurt Cobain's widow and executor of his estate) and a number of record companies connected to the album, some of which are now defunct. The suit also names former Nirvana drummer Chad Channing, who was re-

placed by Grohl before the album was recorded or the cover was shot.

In a 2015 interview with the Guardian, Elden said, "I might have one of the most famous penises in the music industry, but no one would ever know that to look at me. Sooner or later, I want to create a print of a real-deal reenactment shot, completely naked. Why not? I think it would be fun."

Elden has repeatedly re-created the image over the years (albeit in swim trunks), posing for shoots commemorating the album's various anniversaries. In a New York Post piece coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the album, he is quoted as saying, "I said to the photographer, 'Let's do it naked.' But he thought that would be weird, so I wore my swim shorts ... The anniversary means something to me. It's strange that I did this for five minutes when I was 4 months old and it became this really iconic image ... It's cool but weird to be part of something so important that I don't even remember."

The suit says, in part, "The permanent harm [Elden] has proximately suffered includes but is not limited to extreme and permanent emotional distress with physical manifestations, interference with his normal development and educational progress, lifelong loss of income earning capacity, loss of past and future wages, past and future expenses for medical and psychological treatment, loss of enjoyment of life, and other losses to be described and proven at trial of this matter."

In that Guardian interview, Elden had a more positive take on the experience: "I am glad they chose me. And I am also glad it wasn't for something like a Backstreet Boys album ... It's always been a positive thing and opened doors for me. I'm 23 now and an artist and this story gave me an opportunity to work with Shepard Fairey for five years, which was an awesome experience. He is a huge music connoisseur: When he heard I was the Nirvana baby, he thought that was really cool."



UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Cover art from Nirvana's 1991 album, "Nevermind."
Spencer Elden, a 30-year-old man who appeared nude at 4 months old in 1991 on the cover of the album, is suing Nirvana and others, alleging the image is child pornography they have profited from.

The filing also claims no release was signed granting permission for the image's use, though Elden's father, Rick Elden, has said the family received \$200 at the time of the shoot.

Rick Elden, a friend and sometime assistant of photographer Kirk Weddle (one of the named defendants), told NPR that Weddle "calls us up and was like, 'Hey Rick, wanna make 200 bucks and throw your kid in the drink?'" I was like, 'What's up?' And he's like, 'Well, I'm shooting kids all this week, why don't you meet me at the Rose Bowl, throw your kid in the drink?' And we just had a big party at the pool, and no one had any idea what was going on!"

Apart from the \$200, the family later received a platinum album award (one sold at auction in 2015 for about \$4,500) and a teddy bear.

The album itself turns 30 on Sept. 24.

Letitia Wright injured filming 'Black Panther 2'

"Black Panther" star Letitia Wright is being treated in a hospital after sustaining minor injuries on the Boston set of "Wakanda Forever."

A Marvel spokesperson said in a statement Wednesday that the incident happened while filming a stunt for the sequel. Wright is expected to be released from the hospital soon.

Wright is reprising her role as Shuri in "Wakanda Forever," which is being directed by Ryan Coogler. The 27-year-old British actor was a breakout in the first film as the science-minded sister of the late Chadwick Boseman's T'Challa.

Her injuries are not expected to delay production on the sequel, which is slated to be released in July 2022.

Fire damages 'birthplace' of Harry Potter

A cafe in Scotland's capital where author J.K. Rowling wrote some of the Harry Potter books has been damaged in a fire.

The Elephant House in Edinburgh suffered smoke and water damage after a blaze broke out at the patisserie next door on Tuesday.



DISNEY-MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

Letitia Wright as Shuri in a scene from "Black Panther." Wright is being treated in a hospital after sustaining minor injuries on the set of "Wakanda Forever."

More than 60 firefighters and 12 fire engines were deployed to tackle the blaze.

Owner David Taylor told the BBC he was "devastated" by the extensive damage to his business. He said the cafe would likely be closed for months for repairs.

The Elephant House is a regular stop for Harry Potter fans and long bore a sign declaring itself as the "birthplace" of the fictional young wizard.

From The Associated Press

Just call him 'Ye': Kanye West asks court to legally change his name

Associated Press

Kanye just wants to be Ye.

Kanye West filed court documents Tuesday to legally change his name.

The Los Angeles Superior Court filing says the 44-year-old wants to get rid of his full name — Kanye Omari West — in favor of just his longtime two-letter nickname, Ye, with no middle name or last name.

The documents, dated Aug. 11 but not sent into the court system until Tuesday, cite "personal reasons" for the change. An email seeking comment from the attorney who filed the documents was not immediately returned.

A judge must approve of the change before it becomes official.

West, who has called himself Ye on his social media pages for years, tweeted that he wanted the change in 2018, saying, "the being formally known as Kanye West. I am YE."

The moniker was also the title of his 2018 album. He has said in interviews that, along with being a shortening of his first name he likes, that it's a word used throughout the Bible.

Kanye West, shown in 2020, filed court documents Tuesday to legally change his name to Ye.



AP

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Illegal street racing shuts interstate on bridge

OR PORTLAND — The Fremont Bridge in Portland was closed for at least an hour as more than 100 people arrived at southbound Interstate 405 to watch what appeared to be a planned car stunt.

Hundreds of cars and trucks were at a standstill around 10:30 p.m. Sunday while other cars raced along the shoulder of southbound I-405 to gather in the center of the bridge, The Oregonian/Oregon-Live reported.

A group of cars blocked traffic, performed stunts and lit fireworks.

Last week, Portland City Council passed an emergency ordinance to revise city code to make "street racing" or "sliding" misdemeanor offenses — labeling them, "Unlawful Street Takeover" and "Unlawful Staging of a Street Takeover Event."

2 charged with copper thefts that killed power

IA ONAWA — Two people are jailed after they allegedly stole copper from electrical substations in northwest Iowa, causing power outages and thousands of dollars in damage, authorities said.

Monona County Sheriff Jeff Pratt said in a news release that Craig Keller, 40, of Onawa, and Whitney Reynek, 30, of Tekamah, Neb., were arrested Monday.

Workers with Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative discovered someone had removed copper from grounding rods in the substations, Pratt said. Sheriff's deputies recovered items from the substations and other burglaries on Sunday at a rural Whiting, Iowa, home.

Pratt estimated it will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to repair the damage.

Man survives grizzly attack in national park

AK ANCHORAGE — A 55-year-old Indiana man is recuperating in stable condition Tuesday at a Fairbanks hospital after being mauled by a bear in Denali National Park and Preserve.

The man, who has not been identified, was hiking alone Monday evening in Thoroughfare Pass south of the park road when a grizzly with two 1- or 2-year-old cubs attacked him, the park said in a statement Tuesday. There was dense fog in the area, and the bear attacked from about 100 feet away.

The man was able to use his bear spray, but only after he was knocked to the ground. The man suffered puncture wounds to his calf, left ribs and left shoulder, the statement said.

The bear left quickly after the attack, the park said, and the man was able to walk 1.5 miles to the Eielson Visitor Center, which is 66 miles from the park entrance.

He was taken by a park bus to an ambulance at the park entrance,



EMILY MATTHEWS, PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE/AP

A kiss for good luck

Mackenzie Komar, 6, of Latrobe, Pa., gives her calf Nora a kiss as she practices walking her on Tuesday, at the Westmoreland Fair in Westmoreland County, Pa. This was Mackenzie's first year showing cattle with her family.

and medical professionals on board the bus administered first aid. He was later transferred to medics, who delivered him to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital about 120 miles away.

Walmart worker in pleads guilty in gift card thefts

WV WHEELING — A Walmart worker in West Virginia has admitted to a federal charge related to the theft of \$124,000 in gift cards over a five-month period.

Kenneth Werkau of Clarington, Ohio, pleaded guilty Tuesday in federal court in Wheeling to a wire fraud charge.

Prosecutors said Werkau, 63, stole and activated the gift cards from September 2019 through January 2020 while employed as an associate at a Walmart in Moundsville.

Authorities warn against flying drones over lab

NM LOS ALAMOS — Drone pilots beware.

Authorities at one of the nation's top nuclear weapons laboratories issued a warning Monday that airspace over Los Alamos National Laboratory is off limits.

The birthplace of the atomic bomb, Los Alamos lab reported that recent unauthorized drone flights have been detected in restricted airspace in the area.

THE CENSUS

130 The approximate amount, in tons, of chemicals a collection program in North Dakota has taken in this year. The Project Safe Sent Program gives farmers, ranchers, pesticide handlers, government agencies and homeowners a way to dispose of herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides and fungicides they can't use for free, the Bismarck Tribune reported. Last year the program collected about 57 tons. The record is nearly 261 tons, set in 2019. The chemicals are shipped out of state for incineration. Pesticide manufacturers pay for the program through fees to register their products.

Officials said if you fly a drone over the lab, you likely will lose it.

"We can detect and track a UAS (unmanned aircraft system), and if it poses a threat, we have the ability to disrupt control of the system, seize or exercise control, confiscate or use reasonable force to disable, damage or destroy the UAS," said Unica Viramontes, senior director of lab security.

Roller coaster dropped plate, injuring woman

OH TOLEDO — A piece of metal that flew off the world's second-tallest roller coaster and hit a woman in the head while she stood in line came from the back of the ride's train and was about the size of a fist, an amusement ride safety official said Monday.

It's not known yet what caused the accident this month on the 420-foot tall Top Thrill Dragster roller coaster at Cedar Point, said David Miran, head of Ohio's amusement ride safety division.

Authorities and amusement

park officials have not released the condition of the victim, who is a 44-year-old woman from Swartz Creek, Mich., according to an accident report released by the state.

The metal L-shaped bracket that hit the woman on Aug. 15 was attached to the back of the train and hovers above the track, Miran said. It's part of the sensor system that tells the coaster's computer where the train is on the track, he said.

Man wearing fake Border Patrol uniform arrested

AZ TUCSON — A man wearing a fake U.S. Border Patrol uniform and driving a bogus patrol vehicle was arrested in southern Arizona after attempting to smuggle migrants into the country, authorities said.

Homeland Security Investigations and Border Patrol agents arrested the driver and 10 migrants near Tucson.

John R. Modlin, interim Chief Patrol Agent of the Border Patrol's Tucson Sector, said the bogus car was a cloned vehicle similar to ones

used by the Border Patrol.

Modlin also said the driver was wearing a fake Border Patrol uniform when arrested.

Student's homemade lightsaber wins medal

WI MADISON — A Madison high schooler has won an award for building his own lightsaber.

Wisconsin Public Radio reported that Madison Country Day School senior Kaebren Walker's creation earned him a gold medal at the NAACP's Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics. The 43rd annual event involved about 500 students competing in categories including science, engineering and the humanities. The winners were announced during the NAACP convention in July.

Jedi Knights in the "Star Wars" movie saga use lightsabers, described by Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi as "an elegant weapon for a more civilized age." Walker said he got the idea to build a lightsaber while watching "Return of the Jedi."

It took him 18 months to build the lightsaber and used approaches detailed on YouTube. His creation ignites acetone and methanol, which evaporates in a 3-foot span that becomes the blade. He said it looks like a thin flamethrower.

From wire reports



SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market



Transportation

944

VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service

- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

For Further Information Please Contact

Phone: GERMANY +49-(0)6134-2592730
Toll-free: 0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)
E-Mail: info@transglobal-logistics.de
WEB: www.transglobal-logistics.de

UNITED KINGDOM +44-(0)1638-515714
enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk
www.carshipuk.co.uk

U.S.A +1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701
+1-800-264-8167 (US only)
info@tgal.us
www.tgal.us

For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations



Are you in the picture?



Transportation

944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA



OPENING HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri
0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de
Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!



Concert, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...

STARS AND STRIPES.

Reading
Stars and Stripes
gives you a better
handle on issues
that affect you most.

*No one covers the
bases the way we do.*

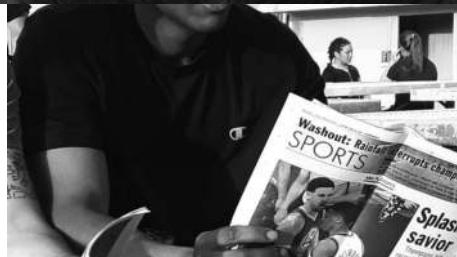
STARS AND STRIPES.

Mobile



Mobile apps with constantly updating news, featuring breaking news and stories from reporters at overseas bases. Unique galleries of images available nowhere else presented in an uncluttered interface and a responsive, intuitive design. One iOS app serves both phone and tablet devices.

In print, we serve military stationed overseas in contingency areas, Europe and Pacific. Daily editions focus on military news and include sports, comics and opinion. Available by mail delivery to any U.S. address.



Newspaper

Web



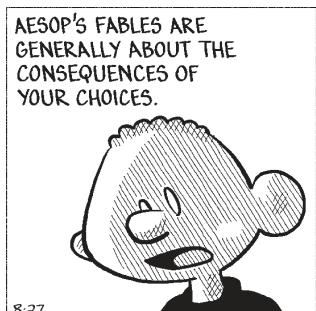
Discover unique stories from reporters at bases around the world and embedded with downrange forces at Stripes.com, along with military news from every part of the country and photo galleries you'll see nowhere else. DoDDs sports also gets good coverage online. If it concerns our U.S. forces, you'll find it on our website.



STARS AND STRIPES.

UNBIASED NEWS WHATEVER WAY YOU WANT IT.

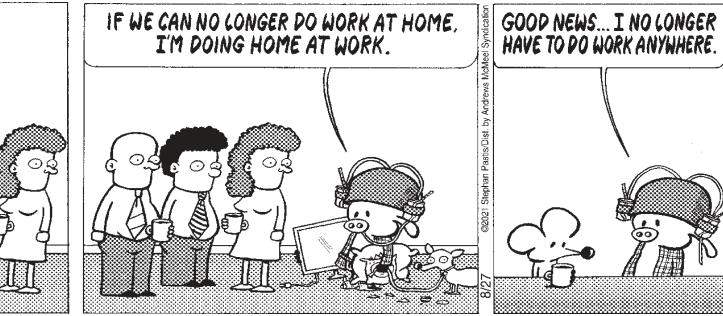
Frazz



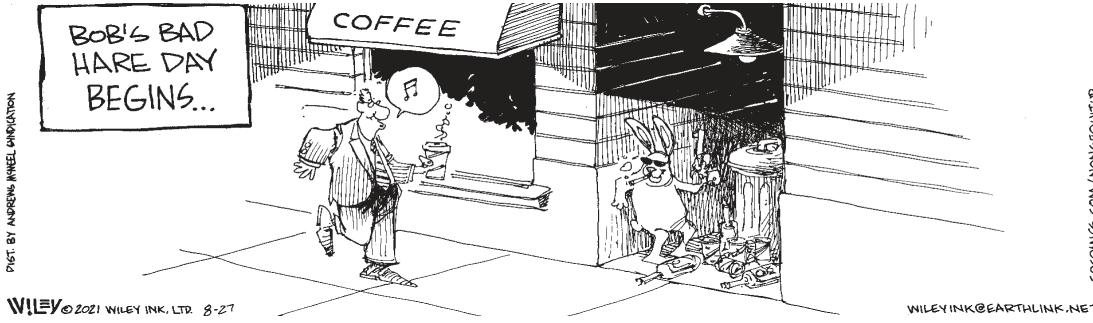
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine

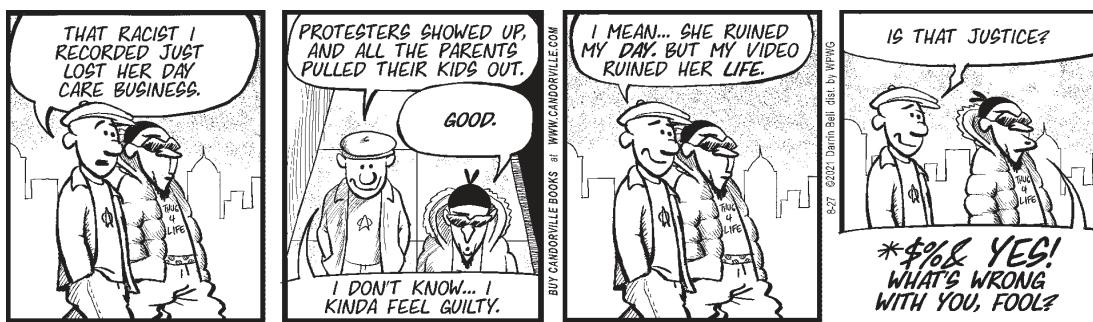


Non Sequitur



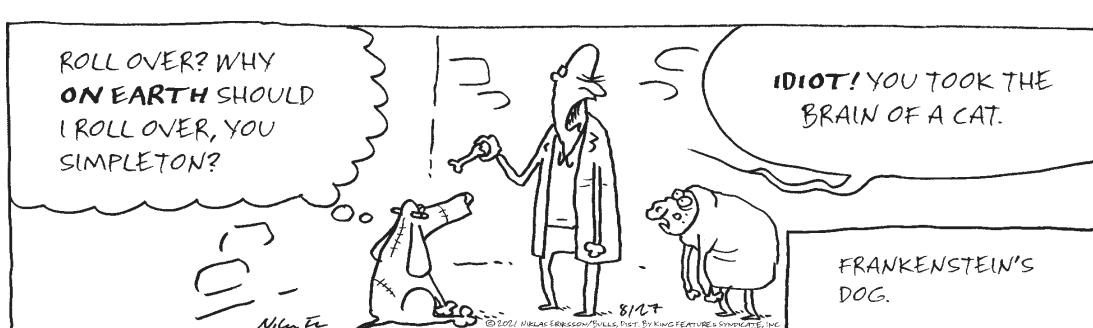
57 Social worker's load
24 In the style of
26 Mix-up
28 "Let me repeat ..."
30 Oscar winner
Kingsley

Candorville



1 Use
6 Efron of "Parkland"
9 — chi
12 Pooh's creator
13 Farm female
14 Days of yore
15 1945 conference site
16 Sneeze trigger
18 Alpine songs
20 Asia's — Sea
21 Dorm VIPs
23 — Paulo
24 Disney mermaid
25 Gift tag word
27 Long-legged shorebird
29 Vienna's river
31 African desert
35 Triangular letter
37 Choir voices
38 "The Creation" composer
41 Documentarian Burns
43 Leary's drug
44 List-ending abbr.
45 Number puzzle
47 Author Isabel
49 Protuberances
52 Chou En- —
53 Small batteries
54 Not moving
55 Compass dir.
56 B'way show purchase

Carpe Diem



42 Funnel-shaped
45 Minn. neighbor
46 Hawaiian coffee
48 Rebel Turner
50 Before
51 Rds.
Answer to Previous Puzzle

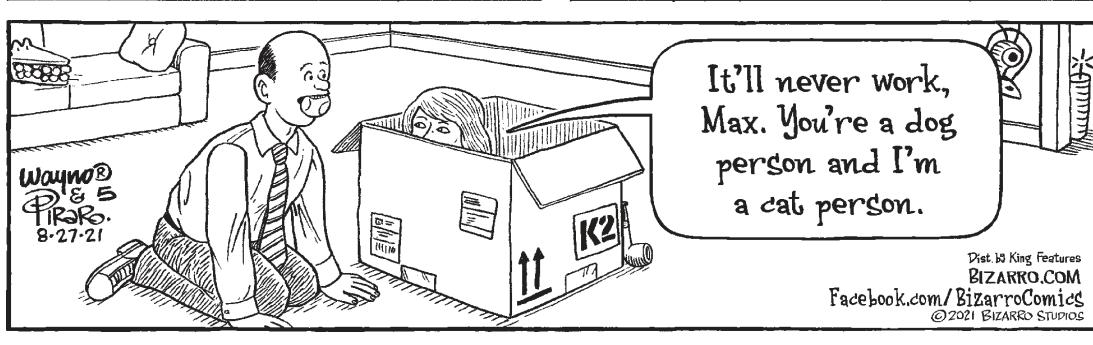
T	E	A	R	R	E	V	S	P	U	N
E	T	R	E	E	M	I	O	E	N	O
E	T	A	S	D	O	E	M	A	I	D
M	A	L	I	B	U	S	T	A	R	T
					S	E	C	B	L	T
P	A	S	T	I	M	P	A	I	R	E
E	D	U	N	E	U	E	E			
R	E	D	L	I	G	H	T	C	E	L
								T	H	Y
A	N	N	A	L	S	E	A	R	T	Y
S	E	E	M	T	A	R	A	R	E	A
P	A	S	A	A	B	E	N	O	A	M
S	T	E	S	R	A	D	O	D	D	S

Beetle Bailey



8-27
CRYPTOQUIP
WC R T A U T Q X E T Q W V W E G U U
E N X Y T A B E H W X V T C X A H T I X
G B K E N X G Z X H W Y G V , G H X
R T A T Y Y W K X B E - I H T B X ?

Bizarro

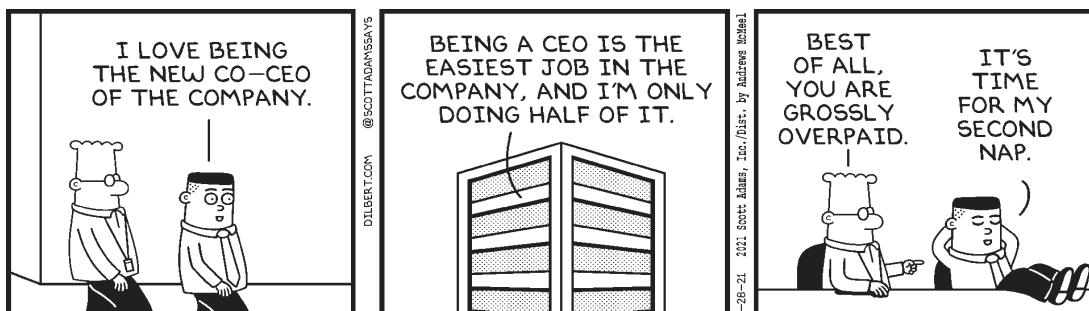


Yesterday's Cryptoquip: LINDA RONSTADT SONG ABOUT PEOPLE AGONIZING WITH AN AUDIBLE ALLERGY SYMPTOM: "IT'S SO WHEEZY."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals C

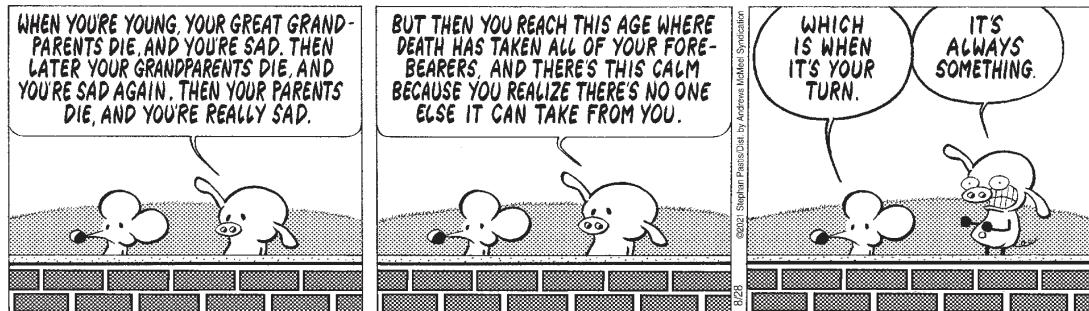
Frazz



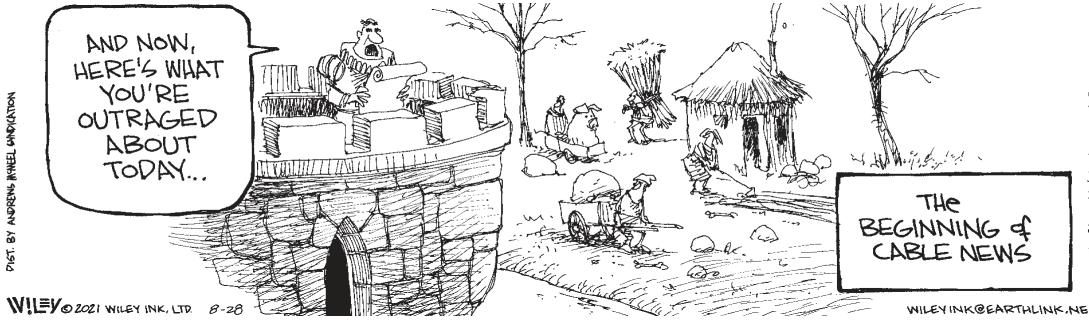
Dilbert



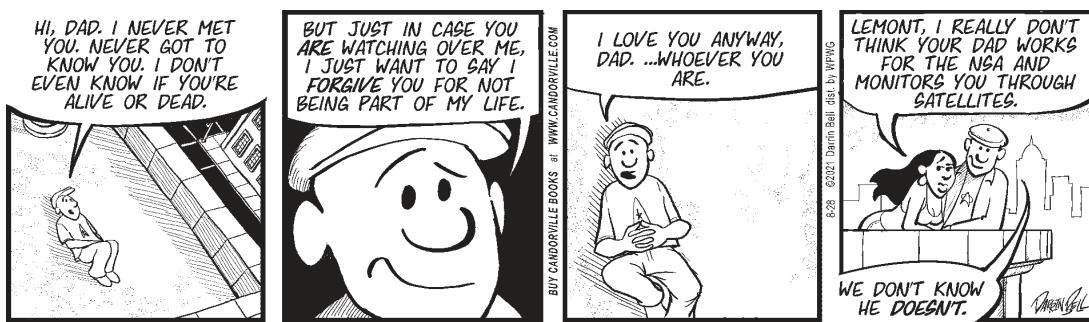
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



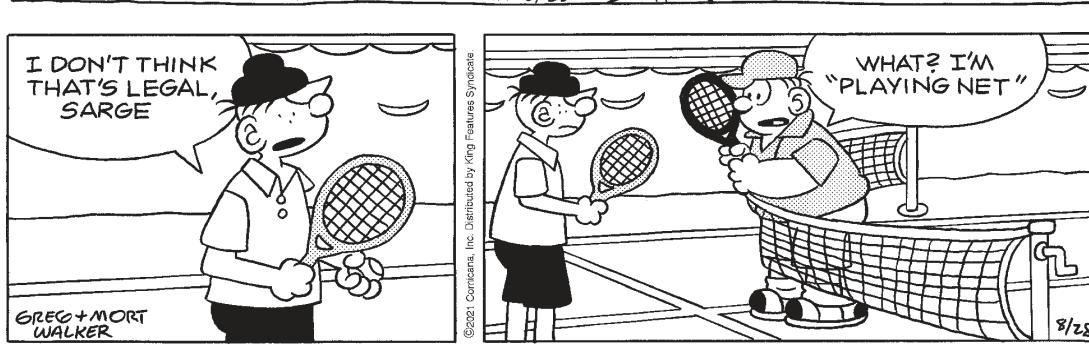
Candorville



Carpe Diem



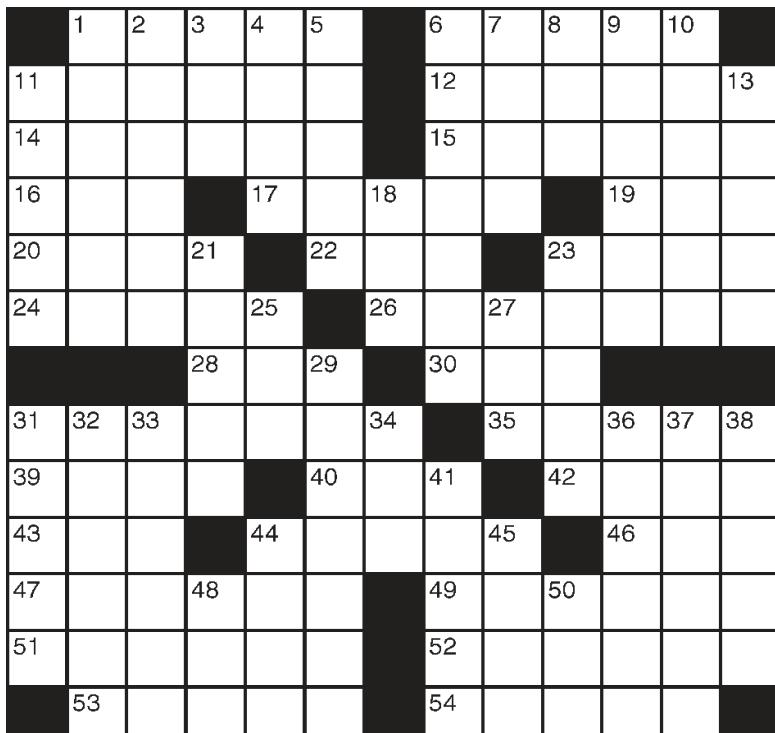
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- Investigate
- Singer Clark
- Public persona
- Try to rip open
- Presumed facts
- Canada's capital
- Oz's Good Witch
- Boy king
- Tripoli's land
- Shoe width
- Mideast airline
- Prune
- Novelist Hunter
- "Olympia" artist
- Cottonwoods
- Big shot
- For each
- Snack on a stick
- Barking sounds
- Entice
- Deep hole
- Cry of pain
- Playwright Levin
- Edition
- Mentalist
- Geller
- Second
- Like goat hooves
- Starr of the comics
- Sandpaper type
- Passion
- Map feature

DOWN

- Singer Clark
- Bit of advice
- Wicker material
- Church seat
- "... cone — cup?"
- Weep loudly
- Cybercommerce
- Punk rock pioneer
- Princess, e.g.
- Scale
- Dawn goddess
- "Seinfeld" character
- Math ratios
- Body of work
- Woodland
- Pigs
- Stanley of "Big Night"
- European
- Carolina college
- Conclude
- W. Hemisphere gp.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	V	A	I	L	Z	A	C	T	A	I
M	I	L	N	E	E	W	E	E	L	D
Y	A	L	T	A	A	L	L	E	R	G
R	A	S		S	A	O	A	R	A	L
F	R	o	M		S	T	I	L	T	
D	A	N	U	B	E	S	A	H	A	R
H	A	Y	D	N	R	I	C	L	S	D
E	T	A	L		S	U	D	O	K	U
A	L	L	E	N	D	E		N	O	D
L	A	I		A	A	S	I	E	R	T
S	S	E		T	K	T		C	A	S

8-28

CRYPTOQUIP

W M X M T E P L K S P Q Q W M

M T S W N Z I L M J T A C J S C Z A M M Q

C I T X P L J P T A J T M J Z Z Q N S V R J W M E :

Q C M Q N V P K S N L L P W .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU LOVE TO VISIT ALL THE COUNTRIES OF EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS, ARE YOU OCCIDENT-PRONE?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals L



Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
 Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Europe commander
 John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff
 Lt. Col. Michael Kerschbaum, Pacific commander
 Michael Ryan, Pacific chief of staff

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
 leonard.terry@stripes.com

Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
 reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
 moores.sean@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF
Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
 slavin.erik@stripes.com
 +49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
 kidd.aaron@stripes.com
 +81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington

Joseph Cacchiali, Washington Bureau Chief
 cacchiali.joseph@stripes.com
 (+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
 bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION
Mideast

Robert Reismann, Mideast Circulation Manager
 robert.w.reismann.naf@mail.mil
 xsscirculation@stripes.com
 DSN (314)583-9111

Europe

Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager
 lewis.karen@stripes.com
 memberservices@stripes.com
 +49(0)631.3615.9090; DSN (314)583.9090

Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
 +81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US
Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003
 633 3rd St. NW, Suite 116, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

OMBUDSMAN

Ernie Gates

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA, Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2021
 stripes.com

OPINION

Disaster in Afghanistan – What next?

BY ARTHUR I. CYR

Special to Stars and Stripes

The terrible disaster now unfolding in Afghanistan is a destructive reversal for the United States, and a serious policy and leadership failure on the part of President Joe Biden and his senior associates. However, the collapse of the established government institutions in Afghanistan is not a strategic defeat for the U.S. — not yet.

The unwillingness of the administration to anticipate, at least at the top, and prepare for this scenario is a major failure. Rest assured that the background of the debacle will be investigated, though this will only unfold over time in Congress, the media and elsewhere.

That the Democrats hold majorities in both houses, along with the White House, means their party's congressional leaders will not encourage aggressive fact-finding hearings. However, the power of these leaders is limited, and the scale of a failure this significant means there will be Democrats along with Republicans who will press for investigation.

Most striking is that the American withdrawal from Afghanistan has unfolded contrary to customary procedures, as well as common sense. Normally, civilians leave first, then the military, with a rear guard securing exits as long as necessary.

The explanation is that clearly no one at the top of the administration believed Afghanistan's government and military would disintegrate immediately. Consequently, there was no preparation for handling this worst case.

Predictably, various agencies are aggressively leaking to the media that they warned the White House this collapse was likely to happen. Skepticism is the right attitude toward this self-protection until more facts are available.

The Biden administration apparently failed to coordinate withdrawal with our allies. A substantial international coalition overthrew the Taliban regime and occupied the country following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. The U.S. has led this United Nations and NATO effort, but many nations have been involved. This again is a prime topic for in-depth serious investigation.

There is also an opportunity to reverse course and use this failure to strengthen as well as repair relations with our closest allies. We must give emphasis to sustained working-level military and intelligence cooperation.

News reports are impressive of British and French military patrols in Afghanistan operating beyond the Kabul airport and successfully rescuing their citizens, Afghan nationals and some Americans. Permitting American forces guarding the airport to join them makes sense.

In April 1975, as South Vietnam collapsed, U.S. officials made maximum effort to rescue our citizens and allies, successfully. Defense Secretary James Schlesinger overcame or ignored all potential bureaucratic barriers and immediately implemented a vast airlift of Americans and our South Vietnamese allies. Approximately 40,000 people

were quickly extricated, most going initially to Guam.

"Someone to talk to" is how McGeorge Bundy, President John F. Kennedy's national security adviser, described Anglo-American rapport. Fundamental affinity helped forge an enduring special relationship during the total struggle of World War II.

Media commentary on Afghanistan regularly refers to the disastrous Soviet invasion and ultimate defeat in the 1980s, but usually overlooks the earlier history of British engagement. During the 19th century, the British experienced frustration, but eventually achieved influence. Condemnation of Biden by Britain's Parliament provides powerful incentive to repair our relations immediately.

The two-decade occupation of Afghanistan has brought extensive economic and social modernization. That clock cannot be turned back completely, and economic aid to the nation provides useful practical leverage.

Employing a network of electronic surveillance and human agents will help monitor the behavior of the Taliban. Selectively, we should employ carefully planned special operations missions.

The international effort completely to transform Afghanistan was misguided though well intentioned. In the future, realism should guide us.

Learn More: Hans Morgenthau, "Politics Among Nations."

Arthur I. Cyr at Carthage College is the author of "After the Cold War" and "Liberal Politics in Britain."

No, the press hasn't turned hawkish on Afghanistan

BY RAMESH PONNURU

Bloomberg Opinion

President Joe Biden's handling of Afghanistan has few vocal defenders. What they lack in numbers, though, they make up for in unity of message: The press is being too hard on Biden. The president is a victim of "a press corps desperate to show they do not have a liberal bias." It's the "overt editorializing" from the press that has made Biden's Afghan record unpopular — editorializing that reflects the media's alliance with national-security hawks. On Aug. 22 and 23, White House chief of staff Ron Klain used his Twitter feed to publicize five critiques of the media's coverage of Afghanistan.

Bad press stings more for Democratic politicians than for Republican ones. The Democrats generally have friendlier relations with reporters, who generally have views more in alignment with theirs. Harshly negative stories can feel like a disturbance in the natural order, and Democrats in politics can react to them with a sense of betrayal. What makes it worse is that Democratic politicians cannot even get much benefit from attacking the press, the way Republicans can; Democratic voters don't think of reporters as foes the way Republican voters do.

But the theory of press bias that Biden and some of his cheerleaders have adopted is wrong. It isn't consistently hawkish. It wasn't in 2005-07, when seemingly every day brought grim news from Iraq. Looking further back, coverage of the Vietnam War, especially after the first few years of U.S. involvement, was hardly favorable toward military action either.

So why is Biden taking so much flak? There

are at least eight better explanations than the ones coming from the White House.

First, the press is biased, not toward hawkishness per se, but toward government action to relieve visible human suffering. When it comes to domestic politics, that generally works in favor of Democrats. In foreign policy, it can work for U.S. military action or against it, depending on whether action or inaction seems to be more responsible for bloodshed and oppression. The press will therefore have a soft spot for military action if it is seen as motivated by humanitarian concerns. (Recall that in Donald Trump's first months as president, the media — specifically images of children subject to chemical warfare — prompted him to order airstrikes in Syria.)

Second, many journalists covering Afghanistan have built relationships with Afghans who are now at grave risk from the Taliban. That circumstance, too, is pushing the coverage in a hawkish direction.

Third, Biden's decisions have generated nearly uniform criticism from Republicans — even the ones who agree that we should be getting out of Afghanistan say he has carried out the policy badly — while a lot of Democrats, including veterans of the war such as Denver-area Rep. Jason Crow, have broken with the administration. That's a formula for unfavorable coverage.

Fourth, Biden's pre-withdrawal spin could hardly have aged worse. He's now saying that of course our departure is taking place amid chaos. Back on July 8, he said, "the likelihood there's going to be the Taliban overrunning everything and owning the whole country is highly unlikely." News stories do him a favor whenever they don't mention this soundbite.

Fifth, the administration's spin hasn't gotten better. Jen Psaki, the White House press secretary, said on Monday that it's "irresponsible" to characterize Americans as "stranded" in Afghanistan. This weird semantic battle is not one the White House can win.

Sixth, the administration's attempts to blame its predecessor for the situation undercuts its own position. When Biden's allies say that Trump owns this debacle, they're conceding it's a debacle. If things were going well, they would be saying that withdrawal is a great achievement that Trump only talked about but Biden accomplished.

Seventh, Biden's policies have put him in a box politically: He can't even voice the lowest-common-denominator sentiment of Americans that the Taliban are murderous barbarians. His policy will be an even bigger disaster if they start taking American hostages, and he knows it. He therefore doesn't want to provoke them, even if it disarms him rhetorically.

The eighth reason for the bad press is the most important: The news that's being reported is just bad. Biden wouldn't have had to send troops back to Afghanistan if it weren't. When Republicans in Trump's first weeks in office complained that the press was not letting him have a traditional presidential honeymoon, it rang hollow: When your national security adviser has to go after 23 days on the job, there's no way to make it a positive story. There's no way to make this story good either. Biden's problem isn't a biased press; it's a recalcitrant reality.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist Ramesh Ponnuru is a senior editor at National Review and a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

SCOREBOARD/TENNIS

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL Preseason

Sunday's games

Cleveland 17, N.Y. Giants 13
San Francisco 15, L.A. Chargers 10

Monday's games

New Orleans 23, Jacksonville 21

Friday's games

Indianapolis at Detroit
Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets

Pittsburgh at Carolina

Minnesota at Kansas City

Saturday's games

Green Bay at Buffalo

Baltimore at Washington

Chicago at Tennessee

Arizona at New Orleans

Tampa Bay at Houston

L.A. Rams at Denver

L.A. Chargers at Seattle

Sunday's games

Jacksonville at Dallas

Las Vegas at San Francisco

Miami at Cincinnati

New England at N.Y. Giants

Cleveland at Atlanta

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Schedule

Saturday's games

SOUTH

Alcorn St. (0-0) vs. NC Central (0-0) at Atlanta

MIDWEST

Nebraska (0-0) at Illinois (0-0)

E. Illinois (0-0) at Indiana St. (0-0)

FAR WEST

UConn (0-0) at Fresno St. (0-0)

Hawaii (0-0) at UCLA (0-0)

Sunday's games

FAR WEST

UTEP (0-0) at New Mexico St. (0-0)

S. Utah (0-0) at San Jose St. (0-0)

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Connecticut	18	6	.750	—
Chicago	12	12	.500	6
New York	11	15	.423	8
Washington	9	14	.391	8½
Atlanta	6	18	.250	12
Indiana	5	18	.217	12½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Las Vegas	17	7	.708	—
x-Seattle	18	8	.692	—
Minnesota	15	9	.625	2
Phoenix	14	10	.583	3
Dallas	10	14	.417	7
Los Angeles	10	14	.417	7

Wednesday's games

Phoenix 106, New York 79

Thursday's games

Dallas at Washington

Las Vegas at Atlanta

Los Angeles at Connecticut

Friday's games

Phoenix at New York

Chicago at Seattle

YOUTH BASEBALL

Little League World Series

Double Elimination

Wednesday's games

Game 21: Ohio 4, New Hampshire 3
Game 22: Texas 10, Nebraska 0
Game 23: South Dakota 1, California 0
Game 24: Hawaii 2, Michigan 0

Thursday's games

Game 25: Michigan vs. Texas

Game 26: Ohio vs. California

Saturday's games

Game 27: South Dakota vs. Game 26 winner, Noon

Hank Aaron Championship

Game 28: Game 24 winner vs. Game 25 winner

Sunday's games

Third Place

Game 29: Game 27 loser vs. Game 28 loser

Championship

Game 30: Game 27 winner vs. Game 28 winner

PRO SOCCER

MLS

Eastern Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New England	15	3	4	49	44	26
Orlando City	9	4	7	34	30	24
Philadelphia	8	5	8	32	27	20
Nashville	7	2	11	32	32	20
NYCFC	9	6	4	31	34	19
CF Montréal	7	7	7	28	27	26
D.C. United	8	10	3	27	32	31
Atlanta	6	6	9	27	25	26
Columbus	6	9	6	24	22	27
New York	6	9	4	22	23	24
Inter Miami CF	6	9	4	22	21	31
Chicago	5	11	5	20	23	33
Cincinnati	3	8	8	17	19	34
Toronto FC	3	12	6	15	25	44

Western Conference

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	12	3	6	42	35	17
Sporting KC	11	4	6	39	36	21
Colorado	11	4	4	37	29	19
LA Galaxy	11	8	2	35	32	32
Minnesota	7	6	7	28	22	23
Real Salt Lake	7	7	6	27	30	23
San Jose	6	7	8	26	24	29
Portland	7	10	3	24	27	39
LAFC	6	9	5	23	25	28
Vancouver	5	7	8	23	23	30
FC Dallas	5	9	7	22	25	30
Austin FC	5	11	4	19	17	24
Houston	3	8	10	19	23	32

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Friday's games

Cincinnati at Columbus
Toronto FC at CF Montréal
Miami at Orlando City

Saturday's games

Nashville at Atlanta
Chicago at New York

LA Galaxy at Los Angeles FC

New England at New York City FC

Philadelphia at D.C. United

Colorado at Sporting Kansas City

Minnesota at Houston

Sunday's games

FC Dallas at Austin FC

Real Salt Lake at Vancouver

Portland at Seattle

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	10	3	2	32	23	9
North Carolina	8	4	3	27	22	9
Washington	6	5	4	22	19	18
Reign FC	7	7	1	22	20	17
Gotham FC	5	4	6	21	17	14
Orlando	5	5	6	21	19	19
Chicago	6	7	3	21	16	22
Houston	5	6	3	18	17	20
Louisville	4	7	4	16	13	22
Kansas City	2	10	4	10	9	25

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Wednesday's games

Kansas City 2, Louisville 1

Portland 2, Gotham FC 1

Saturday's game

Kansas City at Chicago

Sunday's games

North Carolina at Washington

Orlando at Gotham FC

Louisville at Houston

Portland at Reign FC

Winston-Salem Open

Wednesday

At Wake Forest University Winston-Salem, N.C.

HIGH SCHOOL

Players set to take to courts, courses again in DODEA Japan

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

CAMP ZAMA, Japan — Players and coaches could be forgiven if they spent time dwelling on what might have been if there was no coronavirus pandemic and they played fall sports in DODEA Japan in 2020.

But that's the past and the return of fall sports this weekend is the immediate future.

"We gotta move on," said Trojans volleyball assistant coach Parish Jones. "All that's behind us. We have to prepare the young ones, give them some quality time now."

Easier said than done, though, with many athletes coming off a year in which their athletic activities were limited. And it shows in workouts, some coaches said.

"That gap year hurt all of us," Kinnick volleyball coach Tony San Nicolas said. "Where they should be as a junior this year, where they should be as a senior, they're just not there yet."

Cross country does get a Far East championship, but like last year, it will be done virtually.

"I like running meets in person, it's kind of a different environment," said Edgren senior Morgan Erler. Running the virtual meet "got boring after three laps on the track. But I was glad at least we got something."

DODEA Japan's tennis, cross country and volleyball seasons begin Friday and Saturday with Yokota and King playing tennis and volleyball at Perry, and Robert D. Edgren and Kinnick visiting Zama. King cross country will host Perry at Sasebo's Isanoura Park.

DODEA Okinawa's fall season, which also includes golf, opens Sept. 7. DODEA Korea has yet to release its fall season schedule.

Volleyball

Though the Trojans are young, they have a strong core of experience in sisters Nina and Emma Sakamoto-Flack. The junior and freshman are two of the more accomplished hitters. Junior Remi Sherratt returns at setter and Kierstyn Ayumo, a sophomore, is a middle blocker.

Kinnick's two coaches have a daughter each on the Red Devils' varsity: Junior setter Jillian Stevens is assistant coach Travis Stevens' daughter, and San Nicolas' junior daughter Cierra is on the roster.

Patricia Swiderski returns to coach Perry after two years off, and has three junior returners from 2019: Chelsea Campbell, Raven Rayos and Breaunna Hayes.

The Cobras are senior-heavy with Hanna O'Mara, Mijun Heard and Kathryn Kent, along with ju-

nior Aileen Fitzgerald and sophomore Mali Schenker. Not much height in the lineup, "but they're quick, fast and we're going to cover the court," coach Rick Andrew said.

Taking over for retired 33-year coach Sarah Richardson is Paul McCarthy for the Eagles. Junior Annalise Tackney returns from 2019, as does senior setter Kinley Turner, but she transfers on Sept. 21.

Veronica Pascoe assumes Yokota's coaching duties and has two senior returners in Elena Haas and Sophie Middlebrook. Haas is part of one of two sister pairings, along with her freshman sister Erika; there's also senior Leila and freshman Keila Kinjo.

Cross country

Erler, who finished second in the girls Far East virtual field last winter, is joined by Zama senior Aubrey Giles (third) and Yokota senior Aiko Galvin, who finished sixth.

"I'm more happy to do in-person competitions" within the district this year, Galvin said, adding of the virtual Far East event: "Last year was bad."

Among boys returners are Kinnick senior Austin Shinzato, second in the Division I virtual meet. Gabriel Escalera of Zama took third last year at D-II and Madarius Bryant, a Yokota senior, finished sixth.

Tennis

Jenna Mahoney, the two-time DODEA Japan girls singles champion, is back along with her doubles partner and fellow senior Caitlin Carroll.

That there's no Far East "is really sad," Mahoney said. "But we'll take what we can get and do our best."

E.J. King's roster shows promise, with seniors Kaito Bergman and Ayanna Lonesky, sophomore Kouta Kodama and freshman twins Moa and Miu Best, daughters of coach McKinzy Best.

Senior Parker Harrell, a move-in from a Japanese school, joins seniors Joshua Blanquisco and Darren Matel on Perry's roster.

Shuji Miller takes over as coach at Yokota, which has but two returners from the 2019 team, junior Zeman Davis and senior Karina Morioka. Zama also has two senior returners, Liam Hunter and Pulani Tremel.

Kinnick is senior heavy with Sam Rexrode, Donna Manson and Qiana Fowler; the Red Devils played intramurals last fall.



PHOTOS BY DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Above: Kinnick junior running back Brandon Euceda bulls through teammates during Tuesday's practice. **Below:** Zama American senior quarterback Dominic Petruccio returns after two years of playing high school football in Texas.

Finally: Football back this weekend in DODEA Japan

Kinnick, led by senior QB DeLaughter, visits Zama and senior QB Petruccio

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

Thanks to the coronavirus pandemic-induced shutdown and the usual transfers, DODEA Japan football fans can expect to see more new faces than usual as the 2021 season gets set to kick off. Especially at quarterback.

There's just one game this weekend: Kinnick, led by senior Zeke DeLaughter, visiting Zama and senior Dominic Petruccio; kickoff is Friday at Naval Air Facility Atsugi.

Edgren was slated to play at Yokota on Saturday, but that game was pushed back to Nov. 6 due to equipment issues, DODEA Japan officials said.

Petruccio spent the last two years playing in Texas, following Zama's loss to Osan in the 2018 Far East Division II title game.

"Coming from Texas, he's bringing a depth of experience," coach Scott Bolin said. "And he's slipped seamlessly back into the system he left."

DeLaughter came to Yokosuka Naval Base in the summer of 2020 from South Carolina, and slides into the quarterback slot.

"Zeke has the core of what is fundamental to being quarterback in this offense," 11th-year Red Devils coach Dan Joley said. "This is my answer. I am 100% confident he can do the job."

DODEA Japan's season runs for nine weeks, through the first week of November, with no Far East championship games at the end of the line. DODEA Okinawa's season starts Sept. 17; DODEA Korea has yet to release a football schedule.

DODEA Japan's three other teams are also breaking in new quarterbacks, though two of them spent time on DODEA Pacific fields two years ago, the last complete season.

Dylan Tomas transferred to Yokota over the summer and takes over for the Panthers after starting as a freshman two years ago at Edgren.

"That answered our biggest offseason question: Who's going to play quarterback?" said Tim Pujol,



in his 22nd season as Yokota's coach. "Dylan's talented and smart, and that's a good combination."

Edgren, which doesn't open its season until Sept. 11, is still weighing its choices at the helm: Douglass Tackney, a running back; Dennis Nelson, a tight end; and strong-armed freshman Jayse Ulechong.

"We know (Tackney and Nelson) can step into the quarterback role and perform extremely well," first-year Eagles coach Marcus Thomas said. "Ulechong can really throw the ball, which would give us the ability to keep Doug and Dennis at their primary positions."

Then, there's Perry, which also has a couple of options at quarterback, senior Roy Clayton and sophomore newcomer Nickolas Elizondo. The Samurai open the season next Saturday at home to Zama.

"I am thrilled that football is back," Samurai coach Frank Macias said.

ornauer.dave@stripes.com
Twitter @daveornauer



TERRANCE WILLIAMS/AP

The Orioles celebrate after defeating the Angels 10-6 on Wednesday in Baltimore and ending their 19-game losing streak.

Winning scent: O's snap 19-game skid

BY NOAH TRISTER

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — After 19 consecutive losses, the Baltimore Orioles were ready to try just about anything.

Newcomer Chris Ellis found that out while preparing to make his first big league start.

"I was sitting at my locker, kind of just going over the lineup for the day, and I saw Trey Mancini walking through there with a bunch of sage. Everybody was getting a whiff of it," Ellis said. "Maybe we'll have to start doing that before every game."

The Orioles finally stopped their slide Wednesday night, rallying to beat Los Angeles 10-6 after a shaky start by Shohei Ohtani left the Angels' bullpen with too much to do.

Los Angeles was up 6-2 in the fourth inning and 6-4 when Ohtani left the game after the top of the sixth. Baltimore scored a run in the seventh and five in the eighth. Ramón Urias and Kelvin Gutierrez drew bases-loaded walks to put the Orioles up 7-6, and pinch-hitter Austin Hays added a two-run double.

Baltimore was two losses shy of the American League record for the longest skid — which it set in 1988 when the team started 0-21.

"The clubhouse is loud right now. There's a lot of people that are very excited, relieved," manager Brandon Hyde said. "It's good to hear our guys feel good about the game they just played."

Ohtani allowed three homers on the mound and struck out three times at the plate, but the Orioles still seemed headed to a 20th straight loss after Brandon Marsh hit his first career homer, a three-run shot in the fourth that made it 6-2.

It was 6-5 when Jake Petricka (0-1) allowed a single, a double and an intentional walk to start the bottom of the eighth. He then

walked Urias, his final batter, on four pitches to tie the game.

James Hoyt came on and struck out Jahmai Jones, but then he walked Gutierrez on a full count. Hays then doubled to left with the bases loaded, and Cedric Mullins added a sacrifice fly.

When Tyler Wells retired the final batter of the game on a flyout to right, he hugged catcher Pedro Severino and Baltimore celebrated casually on the field. The fans — many of whom probably came to see Ohtani — roared their approval.

"They really were behind us tonight," Mancini said. "I'm so thankful and we are so thankful, especially after this streak, that they're still so supportive of us."

Mullins and Anthony Santander hit solo homers in the first, and DJ Stewart hit a two-run shot off Ohtani in the fourth.

"I feel like the homers were a little bit ambushed," Ohtani said through a translator. "I need to make better pitches when they're expecting the fastball."

Jared Walsh hit a solo homer for the Angels.

Tanner Scott (5-4) won in relief for the Orioles.

Ohtani allowed four runs and five hits in five innings. Ellis yielded three runs and five hits in three-plus innings after Baltimore claimed him off waivers from Tampa Bay on Friday.

Mullins' homer came on Ohtani's first pitch of the game, but after Santander's solo shot gave the Orioles a 2-0 lead, the Angels tied it almost immediately on a two-run single by Marsh in the second.

Walsh homered for Los Angeles in the fourth, and Marsh added his three-run shot later in the inning.

Mullins brought home a run in the seventh with a groundout.

Conner Greene, recalled from Triple-A Norfolk before the game, pitched two hitless innings of relief for Baltimore.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	79	48	.622	—
New York	74	52	.587	4½
Boston	72	56	.563	7½
Toronto	66	59	.528	12
Baltimore	39	86	.312	39

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	73	55	.570	—
Cleveland	62	62	.500	9
Detroit	61	67	.477	12
Kansas City	56	70	.444	16
Minnesota	55	71	.437	17

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	75	52	.591	—
Oakland	70	57	.551	5
Seattle	69	58	.543	6
Los Angeles	63	65	.492	12½
Texas	44	82	.349	30½

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	68	58	.540	—
Philadelphia	63	63	.500	5
New York	61	65	.484	7
Washington	54	71	.432	13½
Miami	52	75	.409	16½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	78	49	.614	—
Cincinnati	69	59	.539	9½
St. Louis	64	61	.512	13
Chicago	56	73	.434	23
Pittsburgh	46	81	.362	32

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	82	44	.651	—
Los Angeles	80	47	.630	2½
San Diego	68	60	.531	15
Colorado	58	69	.457	24½
Arizona	43	85	.336	40

Wednesday's games

St. Louis 3, Detroit 2, 10 innings
 Houston 6, Kansas City 5, 10 innings
 Tampa Bay 7, Philadelphia 4
 Cleveland 7, Texas 2
 Toronto 3, Chicago White Sox 1
 Baltimore 10, L.A. Angels 6
 Minnesota 9, Boston 6, 10 innings
 Chicago Cubs 5, Colorado 2, 7 innings
 Colorado 13, Chicago Cubs 10, 10 innings
 San Francisco 3, N.Y. Mets 2
 Arizona 5, Pittsburgh 2
 Miami 4, Washington 3, 10 innings
 Milwaukee 4, Cincinnati 1
 L.A. Dodgers 5, San Diego 3, 16 innings

Thursday's games

L.A. Angels at Baltimore
 Chicago White Sox at Toronto
 Minnesota at Boston
 Texas at Cleveland
 N.Y. Yankees at Oakland
 Kansas City at Seattle
 Cincinnati at Milwaukee
 Arizona at Philadelphia
 St. Louis at Pittsburgh
 San Francisco at N.Y. Mets
 Washington at Miami
 L.A. Dodgers at San Diego

Friday's games

Tampa Bay (McClanahan 8-4) at Baltimore (Harvey 6-13)
 Boston (Rodríguez 9-7) at Cleveland (TBD)
 Toronto (Matz 10-7) at Detroit (Manning 3-5)
 Houston (Odorizzi 6-6) at Texas (TBD)
 Chicago Cubs (Thompson 3-3) at Chicago White Sox (Keuchel 8-7)
 Milwaukee (Lauer 4-4) at Minnesota (Albers 0-0)
 San Diego (Musgrove 8-8) at L.A. Angels (Quintana 0-3)
 N.Y. Yankees (Cole 12-6) at Oakland (Mariana 8-8)
 Kansas City (Bubic 4-6) at Seattle (Gilbert 5-5)
 Arizona (Widener 2-1) at Philadelphia (Nola 7-7)
 St. Louis (Happ 7-6) at Pittsburgh (Peters 0-1)
 Cincinnati (Miley 10-4) at Miami (Thompson 2-5)
 Washington (Espino 3-4) at N.Y. Mets (Hill 6-5)
 San Francisco (Gausman 12-5) at Atlanta (Fried 11-7)
 Colorado (Freeland 4-6) at L.A. Dodgers (TBD)

MLB ties easy to find at LLWS tournament

BY ADAM BABESKI

Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. —

Players at the Little League World Series this year may not be playing live in front of crowds of thousands, but they have some major league fans.

Former Little League star and free agent third baseman Todd Frazier was in the stands Tuesday as he cheered on his nephew, Carson Frazier, who was playing amid COVID-19 restrictions for the same Toms River, N.J., team that Frazier led to the tournament title in 1998.

Retired catcher Jason Kendall, like Frazier a former major league All-Star, has tweeted support for his favorite team, as well. "Shout out to the boys from my hometown, Torrance Little League," Kendall wrote, referring to California's team at the tournament. "Proud of you guys. I'm watching every pitch and rooting for you to bring back a championship."

The pipeline from the Little League World Series to the majors began with Boog Powell, who played for the Orange, Fla., Little League team in 1954. He went on to win two World Series titles with Baltimore and the American League MVP with the Orioles in 1970, highlights of a productive 17-year career. Since then, a parade of major league All-Stars and MVPs has come through South WilliamSPORT, including Gary Sheffield, Jason Varitek, Cody Bellinger and Lance Lynn.

Starting in 2017, MLB has played the Little League Classic in Williamsport during the tournament, with Little Leaguers in attendance.

On Sunday, members of the Cleveland Indians and Los Angeles Angels arrived at the Little League complex ahead of their game. While the big leaguers were expected to remain in the stands to watch some of the action, an unexpected rain delay in the game between Hawaii and Nebraska changed their plans.

Mike Trout headed to the Nebraska dugout, while Angels play-

ers Kurt Suzuki and Kean Wong, both natives of Hawaii, took the opportunity to visit the Honolulu team.

"It was a wonderful surprise for the kids," Hawaii manager Brandon Sardina said. "It was great to have somebody from our state that they recognize to talk to and ask questions. He had a lot of great advice for the kids, like how to prepare after rain delays."

Nebraska manager Dustin Radner said the rain delay couldn't have worked out any better. "That was just another reason why these guys will remember this game forever," he said.

Oakland Athletics reliever Yusmeiro Petit played for Venezuela's team in the 1994 Little League World Series. He was excited for the competing players this year, but sorry the international teams did not get the chance to play, as he did. Travel restrictions enacted because of the pandemic have limited this year's tournament to U.S. teams only.

"It's so special for a kid who is 12 years old, and I have some special memories," he said. "I'm sorry for the other countries that can't come here and play because of the COVID situation."

Mark Rodgers, manager of the Palm City, Fla., Little League team is also a major league agent. Rodgers said he has used the story of one of his clients, Orioles first baseman Trey Mancini, to motivate his players. Mancini was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2020. After recovering from chemotherapy, he competed in the final round of the Home Run Derby in July.

"He's become our ambassador, we've Zoomed with him several times," Rodgers said. "I used him as an example of overcoming adversity. 'Baseball is not about living and dying, having colon cancer is about living and dying. Baseball has got to be fun.' That's the message that Trey gave to these kids."

AP Sports Writer Janie McCauley contributed to this report from Oakland, Calif. Adam Babeski is a sports journalism student at Penn State.



GEORGE J. PUSKAR/AP
 Cleveland Indians' Wilson Ramos, left, takes a photo with Manchester Conn.'s Paul Virdokian as they sit in the stands at Lamade Stadium.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Army, Monken look to build off 9-win season

BY JOHN KEKIS
Associated Press

Army won nine games last season and finished just outside the AP Top 25 despite having to cope with a schedule that constantly changed because of COVID-19.

Coach Jeff Monken hopes to build off that success despite the usual loss of senior stars. The class of 2021 won 35 games, the most for a class in West Point history.

"I'm just excited about the leadership that we've got, a good group of seniors," said Monken, whose 49 wins in seven seasons put him at the doorstep of second place all-time at the academy. "I am anxious to see them compete. It's going to be interesting."

Last season's schedule ended up including three Championship Subdivision teams the Black Knights defeated by a combined score of 118-35, though The Citadel played Army to a near standoff, losing just 14-9 at Michie Stadium. Shutouts of Middle Tennessee State (42-0) and archrival Navy (15-0) helped Army end the season with the top defense in the nation (275.3 yards per game) under first-year coordinator Nate Woody.

Those gone from that defense include linebackers Jon Rhattigan and Amadeo West. Also departed are 6-foot-6, 300-pound offensive guard Peyton Reeder and fullback Sandon McCoy (10 TDs), key cogs on a team that finished fourth nationally in rushing with an average of 273 yards.

"I wish we could re-sign those guys that we lose every year to new contracts and keep them around," Monken joked. "But that's not college football."

Still, more than 20 returning players participated in 10 or more games on defense last season. The offense had six quarterbacks take snaps in games. Monken hinted the quarterback position will have many faces, among them seniors Christian Anderson



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Army coach Jeff Monken saw his team win nine games last season. He's on the verge of becoming the second-winningest football coach in West Point history.

and Jabari Laws, junior Tyhier Tyler, and sophomore Cade Ballard.

"There are enough guys that played," said Monken, who is two wins from tying Jim Young for second in academy history, behind Hall of Famer "Red" Blaik's seemingly untouchable 121 wins in 18 seasons.

Defense rules

The Black Knights chose four defensive players as team captains — senior DL Nolan Cockrill, senior DB Cedrick Cunningham, se-

nior LB Arik Smith, and DB Marquel Broughton, just the third junior since 2015 to be so honored.

"We lean on other leaders on the team," Smith said. "It's by committee. There's no one guy. It's been going well."

Cockrill had a breakout junior year with 28 tackles, including seven for losses. He led the team with four QB hurries and had two pass breakups and one forced fumble. Cunningham had 37 solo stops, and Smith tied for the team lead with Rhattigan in total

tackles with 78. Broughton led the team with 40 solo tackles.

"We want to make sure that we don't outsmart ourselves," Woody said. "Being able to be somewhat multiple in coverages and make quarterbacks have to think where they want to go with the ball is incredibly important to us."

Almost 10

Army finished last season at 9-3 after a three-point loss to West Virginia in the Liberty Bowl, just missing its third double-digit win season in four years. The Black Knights were without eight key players and offensive coordinator Brent Davis.

Commander-in-Chief's Trophy

Army won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy last year for the third time in four years with a decided home advantage — both games were played on consecutive weekends at Michie Stadium. The Navy game was moved from Philadelphia because of the pandemic.

The traditional regular-season finale against Navy this year is at East Rutherford, N.J. The game against Air Force will be played in Arlington, Texas. The Falcons and Black Knights have not played at a neutral site since 1965 at Soldier Field in Chicago. Air Force is at a little bit of a disadvantage because they play at Annapolis in September.

Schedule

The schedule is a distinct upgrade from last year. The Black Knights play two Power Five teams and Liberty, which finished ranked 17th last season. The stiffest challenge promises to be on the road at Wisconsin, ranked No. 12 in the preseason. Wake Forest of the ACC visits in late October.

Bell, Enagbare among the nation's best on the worst

BY ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

Great players make for great teams. Well, not always.

Elite talent is spread across college football, and some of the top players at their positions are on teams that struggle.

Consider this: five players on The Associated Press All-America first or second teams were at schools with losing records.

In that spirit, let's take a look at some great players on not-so-great teams:

WR David Bell, Purdue

With his knack for making the difficult catches as well as the easy ones, Bell is among the most dependable receivers in the country. He started all six games as the Boilermakers went 2-4 in their pandemic-shortened season, and he finished with 53 catches for 625 yards and eight touchdowns. He had four 100-yard receiving games and made a season-high 13

catches for 121 yards and three TDs against Iowa.

DE Kingsley Enagbare, South Carolina

Enagbare broke out in a big way for a Gamecocks team that went 2-8 in 2020, and he should thrive on the edge in new defensive coordinator Clayton White's 4-2-5 base alignment. Enagbare recorded two sacks and a career-high nine tackles in the opener against Tennessee and finished with a team-best six sacks and three forced fumbles in eight games. He missed the last two games because of injury and is coming off hip surgery in the offseason.

RB Jahmyr Gibbs, Georgia Tech

One of the most versatile players in the country and a preseason All-ACC pick, he had 968 all-purpose yards and seven touchdowns while playing in only seven games because of injury for the 3-7 Yel-

low Jackets. He became the seventh Power Five player since 2000 to compile 450 rushing yards, 300 receiving yards and 200 kickoff return yards in a team's first eight games of a season.

OT Abraham Lucas, Washington State

Lucas excelled in Mike Leach's "Air Raid" system and was expected to declare for the NFL draft after the Cougars played only four games (1-3) last season in Nick Rolovich's run-and-shoot offense. The 6-foot-7, 319-pounder said he didn't think he was quite ready to go pro. Already one of the best pass protectors in the country, Lucas will add to his game with another year in an offense featuring more runs and tighter line splits.

LB Carlton Martial, Troy

Martial is the preseason defensive player of the year in the Sun Belt Conference after making a nation-leading 113 tackles for a team that finished 5-6. He showed



SEAN RAYFORD/AP

South Carolina defensive lineman Kingsley Enagbare (52) had a team-best six sacks and three forced fumbles in only eight games.

up as a walk-on and has made a rapid ascent. He made 21 tackles and a late interception in a narrow loss to conference champion Coastal Carolina, and he enters the season as Pro Football Focus' No. 3 college linebacker.

Jalen Pitre, S, Baylor

Pitre is listed as a safety but actually is a safety-linebacker hy-

brid. He can be a rush end, a true linebacker or a high safety. He led the Bears with 60 tackles and 13 for loss during a 2-7 season. Among his TFLs were 2.5 sacks. He also ran back both of his interceptions for touchdowns, including a 30-yarder in a closer-than-expected loss at Iowa State. Pro scouts love his high motor and football IQ.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



RICK SCUTERI/AP

Air Force defensive tackle Jordan Jackson (94) sat out last season while rehabbing his shoulder. He took a part time job delivering food. He is hoping the team can return to its 2019 form.

Jackson ready to shoulder load for Falcons' defense

Lineman sat last season with injury as team went 3-3 in shortened schedule

BY PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

Air Force defensive lineman Jordan Jackson delivered in a big way last season.

Food, that is.

While rehabbing from shoulder surgery, Jackson returned home and took a side job with the food delivery platform Uber Eats. He was one of 35 or so Falcons players granted an administrative turnback, which allows cadets to take up to two semesters away from the academy.

With Jackson among those returning to the mix, the Falcons may resemble the 2019 squad — 11-2 mark, bowl win, top-25 ranking — more than the version that finished 3-3 in a 2020 season shortened by the coronavirus. The team also had two games canceled in '20 and fell to Army in the season finale to lose out on hoisting the coveted Commander-In-Chief's Trophy.

"It was tough," Jackson said in an interview produced by Air Force's "Falcon Vision" about watching from home as his teammates took the field in '20. "Growing up always playing football, not somebody who usually is able to sit out."

In the Mountain West preseason poll, the Falcons were predicted to finish third in their division. That may be due to the fact they're a relative unknown given all the players returning.

Air Force has experience at QB in Haaziq Daniels, who started every game in 2020 and finished second on the team in rushing with 297 yards. He also threw for 433 yards and three TDs.

Defensive back Milton Bugg III and linebacker La-kota Wills return from taking a turnback to lead what could be a stalwart defense. In 2019, Bugg finished with three interceptions. His brother, Mason, also is on the team as a free safety.

The key will be quickly restoring the chemistry. This was a defense that in '19 allowed a program-low



CHRISTIAN MURDOCK/AP

Air Force defensive back Milton Bugg III stops San Jose State wide receiver Tre Walker in a Sept. 27, 2019 game. Bugg had three interceptions in 2019 but sat out last season.

100.5 yards rushing per game.

For Jackson, it was a difficult assignment being away from teammates. He was coming off a '19 season where he recorded 38 total tackles, 4½ tackles for loss and 3½ sacks. The time off allowed him to heal his shoulder — and earn a little extra money by delivering food.

"It's definitely different going to a full-time job," he said.

Top of the line

The Falcons are looking to replace offensive linemen Parker Ferguson and Nolan Laufenberg, who both signed NFL deals (Ferguson with the New York Jets and Laufenberg with the Denver Broncos).

The schedule

Air Force opens at home against Lafayette on Sept. 4. The following week the Falcons travel to Annapolis, Md., to face Navy for the first leg of the Commander In Chief's Trophy race. They play Army in Arlington, Texas, on Nov. 6.

Navy looking to reignite offense

By NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

Anyone who watches Navy football knows if the Midshipmen aren't gaining significant yardage on the ground, something's wrong.

Something was definitely wrong in 2020.

"We didn't practice last year. I don't know how (much) clearer to say it. We missed 15 practices," coach Ken Niumatalolo said. "When we couldn't do things, it was totally different from other schools. We were in our rooms, and you could come out for a little bit ... but you couldn't be with anybody else. You had to be with your roommates."

Whatever the reason, Navy's offense sputtered last season, averaging just 177.6 yards rushing, the team's lowest output since 1994. The Midshipmen finished 52nd in the country in that category — after finishing in the top six in each of Niumatalolo's first dozen seasons as coach. It was no surprise, then, that Navy floundered to a 3-7 record, only its third losing season in 18 years.

Niumatalolo didn't want to spend too much time looking back, but he clearly feels the coronavirus pandemic hurt his team's chances quite a bit in 2020.

"We were in a pandemic last year. I mean, obviously we're still in it," he said. "And then the way we practiced was totally on me. ... I was going to make sure that we erred on the side of caution. So I wouldn't call what we did practice, when we finally came back. ... We were practicing socially distanced football. That doesn't work."

Niumatalolo made it clear he expects Navy to look like Navy again.

"Our offense is so intricate in the triple-option stuff. You can't just roll the ball out and start operating," he said. "So we'll be back. I'm not worried about that."



TERRANCE WILLIAMS/AP

Navy wide receiver Mychal Cooper, left, and the rest of the team missed 15 practices last season because of COVID protocols.

Running the offense

The quarterback position is obviously crucial in Navy's option-based attack. Sophomores Xavier Arline and Tai Lavatai and junior Maasai Maynor are the top options. Arline started three games last season.

Discipline

One thing that didn't change last year was Navy's aversion to penalties. The Midshipmen averaged 4.4, the ninth best in the country.

Defensive standout

Linebacker Diego Fagot has been named to watch lists for the Bednarik Award and the Nagurski Award. Those honors go to the top defensive player in college football.

Navy's defense started slowly last year, allowing 55 points in the team's opener against Brigham Young and 40 in a loss to Air Force the following month. In the final three games, the Midshipmen allowed 44 points combined against Memphis, Tulsa and Army — although they lost all three games because of their offensive woes.

"We're just looking forward. We're not looking to 2020 anymore. It's all about 2021," Fagot said. "We learn from 2020, but we're just going to keep pressing forward."

Big plays

Navy doesn't throw the ball much when things are going well, but receiver Mychal Cooper has 35 catches for 675 yards in his career — an average of 19.3 yards. When the Midshipmen do pass, they want to make it count.

Schedule

Navy opens at home against Marshall on Sept. 4, then hosts Air Force on Sept. 11 — 20 years to the day after the terrorist attacks of 2001. The Midshipmen are at Notre Dame on Nov. 6, and the matchup with rival Army is Dec. 11 in East Rutherford, N.J.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



JOSH MORGAN/AP

Clemson coach Dabo Swinney and the Tigers start the season with a marquee matchup against No. 5 Georgia on Sept. 4, in Charlotte, N.C.

Critical games dot early slate

BY HANK KURZ JR.
Associated Press

Every weekend in college football, the schedule offers compelling matchups.

Early in the season, some pit Power Five conference blue bloods against each other. Late in the season, there are rivalry show-downs and interconference bragging rights games.

The early ones are the hardest to predict and they're also the best to lose on the theory that an early stumble can be overcome with success the rest of the way. A late loss? Not so much.

This season's return to normal scheduling a year after the pandemic threw everything into a state of flux also marks a return to those critical games. Here are some of them.

No. 3 Clemson vs No. 5 Georgia (Charlotte, N.C), Sept. 4: This is important for both, of course, but it's spot at the start of the season is more a chance for the winner to add the 'W' to its playoff resume than for the loser to get knocked off that list. It's also the marquee game on each team's schedule. The Bulldogs aren't scheduled to play Alabama, LSU or Texas A&M of the SEC West, and the Tigers' dominance in the ACC is clear: Clemson has won the last four ACC championship games by an average of 34 points.

No. 11 Oregon at No. 4 Ohio State, Sept. 11: The Buckeyes have won all nine previous meetings with the Ducks, but the last meeting came in the 2015 national championship game, a 42-20 victory. Oregon could do the frequently maligned Pac-12 a huge favor and seem to have the weapons to make it happen, especially on an offense stacked with talented, young receivers. But Ohio State is no stranger to big early

games and while its pass defense was sketchy last year, allowing 304 yards per game, it brought in a freshman pass rusher and two DBs considered among the best secondary gets of last season's recruiting class.

No. 8 Cincinnati at No. 9 Notre Dame, Oct. 2: In quarterback Desmond Ridder, the Bearcats have a guy who seems to get better with each game, so much so that NFL scouts have noticed. He ran for 12 TDs last season and completed two-thirds of his passes. Cincinnati one of five teams the Fighting Irish will face that has had more time to prepare than Brian Kelly's group. Wisconsin transfer Jack Coan has replaced Ian Book at QB for Notre Dame, but will operate behind a young line.

No. 1 Alabama at No. 6 Texas A&M, Oct. 9: The Aggies haven't contended for a national championship since 1939 and hope coach Jimbo Fisher's fourth season changes that. The defending national champion Crimson Tide will have new faces on offense, including freshman quarterback Bryce Young, and that can always be a dicey proposition on the road, especially in College Station.

No. 14 Miami at No. 10 North Carolina, Oct. 16: If the league's prognosticators are right, this could become the decisive game in the ACC's Coastal Division, which earns the winner a likely matchup with No. 3 Clemson in December.

The 'Canes also have plenty of motivation for this game, having been embarrassed 62-26 at home last season by the Tar Heels. Coach Mack Brown's third season in his return to Chapel Hill comes with huge expectations, much riding on the arm of Heisman contender QB Sam Howell.

Era: No rescheduling of games in 2021

FROM PAGE 48

host of challengers.

"It's an interesting time," North Carolina coach Mack Brown said. Is it ever.

The pandemic: The season is a go, unaltered at this point, with all the conferences onboard — unlike last year at this time. Vaccination rates among college football teams appear to be significantly ahead of the general adult population.

Last season, 118 Bowl Subdivision games were either canceled or postponed as teams battled COVID-19. There will be no rescheduling of games in 2021. Conferences have said teams will be forced to forfeit if they can't field a team because of COVID-19 issues.

Health and safety protocols are still not uniform across all of major college football, but the common ground is this: Unlike last year when everyone was being tested frequently for the virus, only unvaccinated players and team personnel will be subject to routine surveillance testing. Only unvaccinated individuals will be automatically quarantined if they come into contact with someone infected with the virus.

"That gives us a competitive advantage in my mind, as we should not miss any time as a football team due to COVID," new Arizona coach Jedd Fisch said before the school proudly tweeted the team had reached 100% vaccination status.

Many coaches have been publicly encouraging vaccination.

"I think it's irresponsible to not to get the vaccine," said Ole Miss coach Lane Kiffin, whose team also is 100% vaccinated.

Not every coach is taking this approach. Washington State's Nick Rolovich initially said he did not plan to be vaccinated on a campus where it is mandatory for all students and employees before saying he would comply with a governor's mandate.

Where the pandemic could have a deeper impact is with fans. The number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths has been on the rise. But schools have been touting a return to full-capacity stadiums and tailgating after a season of playing in mostly empty buildings.

"I'm really excited, man, just to get back in The Swamp finally with 90,000 screaming out there," Florida defensive end Zach Carter said.

It seems unlikely those plans will change unless local governments step in, which happened last week in Hawaii. The Rainbow Warriors' opening game against Portland State on Sept. 5 will be played without fans.

Oregon and Oregon State became the first Power Five schools to announce fans will need to show proof of either vaccination or a



ROGELIO V. SOLIS/AP

Mississippi defensive back Jaylon Jones practices earlier this month. Ole Miss has reached 100% vaccination status as a team.

negative COVID-19 test to attend their games.

"I think disruptions that players had to deal with, and may still have to deal with in the future relative to our circumstance right now, (are) probably something that helps them be a little more resilient," Alabama coach Nick Saban said.

Super seniors and transfers: The NCAA froze eligibility for every football player who played through the uncertainty of the pandemic last season, essentially handing them another year to play if they wished.

The result is hundreds of players who would have otherwise had no choice but to move on after 2020 will be back playing in 2021. Call them super seniors, and they won't count against the scholarship limit of 85. Other players are back after opting out of 2020.

Longtime Utah coach Kyle Whittingham described his roster, brimming with extra experienced players, as "the most unique since I've been a football coach."

Then there are the transfers.

After an NCAA rule change in the spring, football players can now transfer one time and be immediately eligible to play. For decades, transferring players would have to sit out their first season after switching schools. It led to more player movement than ever.

"Transfer portal's changed everything. Super seniors coming back has changed everything," Brown said.

Athlete compensation: The NCAA lifted its ban on college athletes earning money from their names, images and likenesses on July 1, and football players started cashing in immediately.

Quarterbacks are endorsing fast food and offensive linemen are promoting barbecue joints. At Michigan, Ohio State, North Carolina and Texas, players will be making money from jersey sales.

Every Miami football player was offered a deal to make \$500 a month to promote a local gym and a Utah-based company will pay every walk-on at BYU the equivalent of tuition to promote its protein bars and snacks.

Saban said Bryce Young, next up to be Alabama's starting quarterback, has NIL deals lined up that could be worth \$1 million.

There are concerns about how all this money will affect team culture, competitive balance and corruption, but college sports is mostly trying to embrace the change.

NCAA reform and CFP expansion: Two of the biggest stories in college sports will be taking place off the field this season.

A plan to expand the College Football Playoff from four to 12 teams is in the pipeline. There still appears to be support, but the Southeastern Conference's planned addition of Texas and Oklahoma in 2025 seems to have leaders in other conferences stepping back to take in the full picture.

"There's lots about the current playoff expansion proposal that is good," said Pac-12 Commissioner George Kliavkoff, an unequivocal expansionist. "The real question is the details of that. The details unfortunately were worked out with a subset of the folks who have to sign off on it. The result is not every detail was covered and not every concern was addressed."

The next CFP managers meeting is scheduled for Sept. 28 in Chicago.

Meanwhile, the NCAA is in the process of scaling back, starting with a rewrite of its constitution this fall. The result could be a national structure for college football that is shaped more than ever before by conferences.

Put it all together and college football is in the midst of a dizzying period of change. As for the immediate future, at the very least it looks better than last year.



DON WRIGHT/AP

Steelers quarterback Dwayne Haskins passes against the Detroit Lions during the second half, Saturday, in Pittsburgh. Haskins has built a strong case for Pittsburgh to keep him on as the No. 3 QB behind starter Ben Roethlisberger and backup Mason Rudolph.

QB Haskins hoping to catch on in Pittsburgh

By WILL GRAVES

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Dwayne Haskins isn't the same quarterback he was when he arrived in Pittsburgh in January. The self-doubt that crept in following his ignominious flameout in Washington is gone, replaced by a sense of confidence he believes will help him stick around when rosters are trimmed to 53 next Tuesday.

"I think being here (allows me) to be myself," Haskins said Wednesday after being named the starter for Pittsburgh's preseason finale against Carolina on Friday night. "It enables me to go out there and have fun. I feel like when (I can do that) you see it in my play, see it in (the way I) operate out of the huddle, how I talk to my teammates. And I feel like it's contagious in a way because I have a lot of energy."

While Haskins likely hasn't done enough to unseat Mason Rudolph as the primary backup to Ben Roethlisberger when the regular season opens on Sept. 12 in Buffalo, it appears he has the inside track on sticking around as the No. 3. He will get one last chance to show head coach Mike Tomlin and offensive coordinator Matt Canada how far he's come over the past eight months when he faces a Carolina team that plans on having several defensive regulars in the lineup during the first half on Friday.

The vibe will certainly be different for Haskins than the last time he saw the Panthers on the other side of the line of scrimmage. He walked onto the turf at FedEx Field on Dec. 27, 2020 as the starter for a team trying to earn a division title.

He walked off it in shock after being replaced by Taylor Heinicke in the second half of what became a 20-13 loss. He was cut the next day, a staggeringly quick downfall for a player taken with the 15th

overall pick in the 2019 draft.

The Steelers took a flier on him three weeks later, and he's drawn praise from both Tomlin and Canada for his mature approach to the job. He's not the starter or the focal point of the offense, just a 24-year-old trying to stick in the league. It's not what he envisioned on that giddy night 28 months ago when Washington pinned its hopes on the kid with the big arm who grew up in the city's suburbs. Yet he's come to terms with where he's at both in his career and his life.

He's made it a point to immerse himself in Canada's offense, and he's looked solid at times while completing 28 of 42 passes for 271 yards and a touchdown during Pittsburgh's first three exhibition games. Canada said Haskins has been moving in the right direction "for the most part" since organized team activities began in May.

"He comes in to work," Canada said. "He's trying to learn our way. He's trying to watch our system, watch what we do. I've been really happy with that. I think he's making quick decisions. So he's improved."

Haskins believes he has a solid working knowledge of what Canada is trying to do in his first year calling plays in the NFL, pointing out that their relationship dates back to when Canada was attempting to recruit him out of high school more than a half decade ago.

There's a comfort level in Pittsburgh that Haskins hints was hard to come by in the nation's capital. Asked about the process of putting himself back together, Haskins' response is telling.

"It's really just trusting in myself and believing in myself and taking a lot of time to self-reflect on things," he said. "And of course being in a situation where the people around you want to see you succeed."

Shanahan not showing hand on Niners' starting passer

By JOSH DUBOW

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Coach Kyle Shanahan is pretty sure who will start at quarterback to open the season for the San Francisco 49ers, even if he's in no rush to let everyone else know whether it's Jimmy Garoppolo or Trey Lance.

Shanahan has said he will wait possibly up until the season opener on Sept. 12 at Detroit to announce his starter but also has said nothing has changed since the start of training camp when Garoppolo came in as the No. 1.

"I've got a pretty good idea," Shanahan said Wednesday. "But as you guys can see with everything, I don't know our schedule a couple of days from now. So, I've always had a pretty good idea. But there's lots of days between now and then, at every position."

All signs continue to point to Garoppolo keeping the job for now over the rookie Lance as he has gotten the bulk of work with the starters in training camp and Lance has shown some predictable growing pains after playing only one game in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

When Garoppolo was asked before practice if he had a good idea about who Shanahan planned to start, he said yes and laughed.

"It's whatever he decides," Garoppolo said. "I have a pretty good idea. I'm pretty happy with where I'm at right now and everything, just the offense as a whole. Kyle's the head man. He'll make the call."

Denver and Jacksonville announced their Week 1 starters at quarterback Wednesday.

Coach Vic Fangio informed the Broncos that Teddy Bridgewater edged incumbent Drew Lock to win the starting quarterback job. What broke the tie was Bridgewater's cool headedness, confidence and a veteran's savvy honed over seven seasons and five stops in the NFL over a career defined by his comeback from a devastating knee injury.

Jaguars coach Urban Meyer finally ended the charade of a true competition by naming No. 1 overall draft pick Trevor Lawrence the team's starter for the season opener at Houston on Sept. 12, one of the least surprising decisions in franchise history.

Shanahan said he sees no benefit in doing the



JAE C. HONG/AP

49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo signals during the first half of a preseason game against the Los Angeles Chargers, Sunday, in Inglewood, Calif.

same other than ending questions about it.

"If you could give me another reason that it's a big advantage that helps our team, affects anything that has to do with us, then I will name it," he said. "But I don't think it does. Why tell people? I know you guys want an answer, which is fine. I get the suspense of it, but I'm not just going to answer it to end your guys' suspense."

Lance did work with the starters for a handful of plays in practice Wednesday and for the first time this camp, Garoppolo got time with the second string.

Even if Garoppolo starts, the Niners plan to mix in Lance in certain situations to take advantage of his ability to run and to get him ready to eventually be the full-time starter. The team invested three first-round picks in him this offseason.

8 Titans on COVID list, including QB Tannehill

By TERESA M. WALKER

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans' virus outbreak keeps growing, with quarterback Ryan Tannehill among three players added Thursday to the reserve/COVID-19 list.

General manager Jon Robinson said Tannehill, tight end Geoff Swaim and linebacker Justin March-Lillard are joining four other players on the reserve/COVID-19 list. That makes three Titans starters out, along with coach Mike Vrabel, bringing the team's outbreak to eight people.

Robinson said the Titans are close to being either 97% or 98% vaccinated or with antibodies present, indicating a person recently or previously had COVID-19. Tannehill said at the start of training

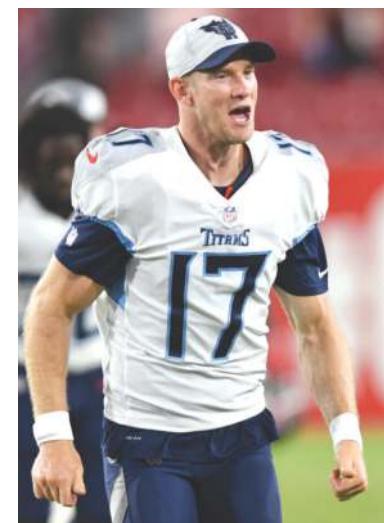
camp that he was in the process of being vaccinated.

Vrabel announced Sunday that he had tested positive for COVID-19 a day after the Titans beat Tampa Bay 34-3 in Florida. He later received monoclonal antibodies treatment.

Linebacker Harold Landry was the first starter affected by the team's latest virus outbreak, going on the reserve/COVID-19 list Wednesday.

Robinson said the Titans, who stepped up precautions and required masks inside the team's headquarters Tuesday, are going "above and beyond" what they did last season when they had the NFL's first virus outbreak.

The others on the list include defensive lineman Anthony Rush, linebacker Nick Dzubnar and run-



JASON BEHNKEN/AP

Quarterback Ryan Tannehill was among three added to the Titans' reserve/COVID-19 list Thursday.

ning back Jeremy McNichols. The reserve/COVID-19 list is for players who either test positive for the virus or are in quarantine after close contact with an infected person.

SPORTS

Enough is enough

Woeful Orioles knock off Angels, end 19-game skid » **MLB, Page 43**



COLLEGE FOOTBALL

NEW ERA

Optimism reigns after pandemic-wrecked 2020 season



BY RALPH D. RUSSO

Associated Press

The 2021 college football season holds the promise of a return to normal after a pandemic-wrecked fall led to cancellations, postponements and headache after headache.

The games are on. Fans are getting ready to head back into the stadiums.

At the same time, college sports is entering a new era, with less-restrictive transfer rules and players who are permitted for the first time to be paid endorsers.

And the pandemic is not over. While there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic that this season won't be the struggle 2020 was, there is still more than a little uncertainty about how this all plays out — off the field and on as No. 1 Alabama tries to win a second consecutive national title against a

"It's an interesting time."

Mack Brown
North Carolina
coach

SEE ERA ON PAGE 46

INSIDE

Critical games easy to spot on early schedule
Page 46

Alabama linebacker Keanu Koht practices on Aug. 9 in Tuscaloosa, Ala. In a season that will bring reforms to rules once considered fundamental to the spirit of college athletics, some things never change — the Crimson Tide enter the season ranked No. 1.

VASHA HUNT/AP

Army looks to build on 9-win campaign » **College football, Page 44**

