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STARS AND STRIPES

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RICHARD CHO/U.S. Navy

Chaplain (Lt.) Daniel Lubega speaks about resiliency on the guided-missile destroyer USS Milius in September.

Chaplains to serve destroyers

Navy to expand permanent positions amid scarcity of counselors

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy plans to permanently assign chaplains to all destroyers by fiscal year 2025 in hopes they can fill a shortage of emotional, mental and spiritual counselors aboard those ships.

While the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps already has permanent positions aboard larger vessels such as aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships and guided-missile cruisers, the service is planning to add 48 positions over the next two years to guided-missile destroyers, Naval Surface Forces spokesman Cmdr. Arlo Abrahamson said by email Feb. 16.

“This is an extraordinarily stressful environment; it’s nonstop when we go underway.”

Chaplain (Lt.) Daniel Lubega
destroyer USS Milius

Chaplains historically supported destroyers at the squadron level, with two assigned to each destroyer squadron, Abrahamson said. Bases with large numbers of ships, such as Naval Sta-

tion Norfolk in Virginia or Naval Station Mayport in Florida, have more chaplains.

Many of those, however, are being reassigned as permanent members of destroyer crews, part of an initiative from Naval Surface Forces Pacific and Naval Surface Forces Atlantic.

The Navy has 29 destroyers with assigned chaplains, Abrahamson said, with plans to add 22 more next year and another 26 by fiscal year 2025.

Chaplains serve not only as religious advisers, but also routinely assist sailors with oper-

SEE SERVE ON PAGE 5

Wild winter weather across US

By RICK CALLAHAN
AND CHRISTOPHER WEBER
Associated Press

Parts of the Southern Plains counted the injured and surveyed the damage Monday after tornadoes and other powerful winds swept through, while some Michigan residents faced a fifth consecutive day without power following last week’s ice storm.

In California, the National Weather Service said a series of winter storm systems will continue moving into the state through Wednesday after residents got a brief break from severe weather Sunday.

Parts of the Northeast that have seen little snow this winter were under a winter storm warning. And forecasters warned of continued high winds in parts of the Plains and of thunderstorms and possible tornadoes in the Ohio Valley.

A look at the weather threats around the country:

Tornado cleanup, forecast

Police in Norman, Okla., responded Sunday night to storm damage in parts of the city, about 20 miles south of Oklahoma City. Officials said there were 12 confirmed weather-related injuries there, none considered critical.

Crews canvassed the damaged area looking for others who might be injured. Possible tornadoes and wind gusts as high as 90 mph were reported in Oklahoma, with downed trees and power lines, road closures and damage to homes around Norman and Shawnee.

Frances Tabler, of Norman, told KOCO-TV that she suffered a small cut on her head when a storm hit her home, tearing off much of its roof and sending debris flying. She said it was a mira-

SEE WINTER ON PAGE 8

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Huawei dominates MWC mobile tech fair

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — A contingent of Chinese companies led by technology giant Huawei is turning the world's biggest wireless trade fair into an opportunity to show their muscle in the face of Huawei's blacklisting by Western nations concerned about cybersecurity and escalating tensions with the U.S. over TikTok, spy balloons and computer chips.

After three years of pandemic disruption, they are among tens of

thousands in Barcelona for MWC, also known as Mobile World Congress, an annual tech industry expo starting Monday where mobile phone makers show off new devices and telecom industry executives peruse the latest networking gear and software.

Out of 2,000 exhibitors and sponsors, 150 are Chinese companies and Huawei Technologies Ltd. has the biggest presence. The smartphone and network equipment maker expanded its foot-

print by 50% from last year and is taking up almost an entire exhibition hall at Barcelona's Fira convention center, organizers said.

The U.S. three years ago successfully pushed European allies like Britain and Sweden to ban or restrict Huawei equipment in their phone networks over fears Beijing could use it for cyber-snooping or sabotaging critical communications infrastructure — allegations Huawei has denied repeatedly.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		South Korea (Won)	
Euro costs (Feb. 28)	\$1.03		1,318.39
Dollar buys (Feb. 28)	0.9227	Switzerland (Franc)	.9375
British pound (Feb. 28)	\$1.17	Thailand (Baht)	34.97
Japanese yen (Feb. 28)	131.00	Turkey (New Lira)	18.8875
South Korean won (Feb. 28)	1,281.00		
Commercial rates		<small>(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.)</small>	
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3769	INTEREST RATES	
Britain (Pound)	1.2022	Prime rate	7.75
Canada (Dollar)	1.3577	Interest Rates Discount rate	5.25
China (Yuan)	6.9465	Federal funds market rate	4.58
Denmark (Krone)	7.0286	3-month bill	4.84
Egypt (Pound)	30.6307	30-year bond	3.93
Euro	1.0588		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8465		
Hungary (Forint)	356.89		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6606		
Japan (Yen)	136.01		
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3071		
Norway (Krone)	10.3521		
Philippines (Peso)	55.35		
Poland (Zloty)	4.45		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7531		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3480		

WEATHER OUTLOOK

TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



TUESDAY IN EUROPE



WEDNESDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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MILITARY

Costly errors on new ships lead Navy to change

By DAVID SHARP
Associated Press

BATH, Maine — The U.S. Navy appears to have learned from its costly lessons after cramming too much new technology onto warships and speeding them into production as it embarks on building new destroyers that are the backbone of the fleet.

Military officials say they're slowing down the design and purchase of its next-generation destroyers to ensure new technology like powerful lasers and hypersonic missiles are mature before pressing ahead on construction.

The Navy has learned "sometimes the hard way, when we move too fast we make big mistakes," said Adm. Michael Gilday, chief of naval operations.

"Let's be deliberate. Let's not have our eyes become bigger than our stomach and get too far ahead of ourselves," Gilday said last week at an event for defense industry officials in San Diego.

The Navy wants to turn the page on recent shipbuilding blunders.

Several newer combat ships designed for speed are being retired early after being beset by problems. A \$13.3 billion aircraft carrier experienced added costs from new catapults that launch airplanes. Workers completed construction of a stealth destroyer before its advanced gun system, al-

ready installed, was scrapped.

For the new ship, the Navy is reducing risk by conducting more land tests and borrowing the radar and targeting system from the latest destroyers that'll soon join the fleet, said Lt. Cmdr. Javan Rasnake, spokesman for the assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition.

It's also working with shipbuilders and designers to refine the ship's blueprint, cost estimates, and workforce and supply forecasts, Rasnake said.

The Navy still plans to field some new technologies on the destroyer.

Last week, it awarded Lockheed Martin a \$1.2 billion contract for hypersonic missiles that travel at five times the speed of sound, and can be fired from destroyers. Last summer, it awarded the first design contract for the new ship outfitted with those missiles and lasers powerful enough to shoot down aircraft.

Matt Caris, a defense analyst with Avascent, said it's important that the Navy gets it right by balancing the best technology that's reliable, affordable and attainable.

"The Navy is trying to thread the needle with some potentially revolutionary capabilities in as low risk and evolutionary process



ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

Spectators watch the USS Lyndon B. Johnson Zumwalt-class destroyer travel down the Kennebec River on its way to sea Jan. 12, 2022, in Phippsburg, Maine.

as possible. This was a lesson learned by the Navy's laundry list of shameful acquisition programs," he said.

Some worry about history repeating itself.

There are new Navy leaders overseeing many programs and "it's easy to imagine them making similar mistakes again with a new cast of characters," said Loren Thompson from the Lexington Institute, a security think tank.

The Navy is in the midst of juggling its priorities as it seeks not just a new destroyer but also a new attack submarine and a replacement for the F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet.

The Navy is in a difficult spot because the Biden administration is not interested in dramatically increasing the military budget, said Bryan Clark, a defense ana-

lyst at the Hudson Institute. Research and development alone would cost an extra \$10 billion to \$20 billion for the destroyer, submarine and jet, he said, representing a big chunk of the \$220 billion Navy budget.

A series of speedy, coast-hugging warships embodied shipbuilding mistakes that the Navy is trying to avoid. Critics said early versions were too lightly armored to survive combat. One version of the craft, known as a littoral combat ship, had propulsion problems. Some of the ships broke down and had to be towed. Plans for a submarine detection system were scrapped.

Combined, the costs of the first ships in that program, the stealthy Zumwalt destroyer and Ford-class aircraft carrier grew by \$6.8 billion in today's dollars, accord-

ing to the Congressional Budget Office.

"They've digested that lesson," Clark said. "Part of what you're seeing is a recognition that the underlying technologies are not ready yet. They don't want to drive the program where the ship starts production before the technology is ready."

Gilday, who is the Navy's top officer, said the transition to the new destroyers will likely start in the "2032 time frame." For now, top Navy leadership want to keep current production lines of destroyers humming until designs are ready.

That means shipyards in Maine and Mississippi will continue making existing Arleigh Burke-class destroyers. They hold the Navy's record for longest production run for large surface warships.

Boeing is retiring its F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jets

Bloomberg

Boeing plans to end production of its F/A-18 Super Hornet, the fighter jet that wowed movie audiences in last year's "Top Gun: Maverick," after more than 2,000 deliveries over 40 years.

The aerospace giant will stop manufacturing the fighters after it hands over the last Super Hornet to the U.S. Navy in late 2025, according to a statement Thursday. Boeing expects to move the 1,500 workers who support the jet — from mechanics to finance staff — to other military aircraft programs, such as the T-7 trainer, a spokeswoman said.

The decision to shutter the Super Hornet assembly line will free up resources to support new military aircraft programs, Boeing said. The planemaker plans to expand the workforce in its St. Louis defense hub for the next five



JOSEPH CALABRESE/U.S. Navy

Boeing announced plans to end production of its F/A-18 Super Hornet in late 2025.

years and build three new facilities there for advanced crewed and un-crewed aircraft.

A Boeing spokeswoman wouldn't discuss the planes it plans to build in the new facilities

but noted that the company does work on classified programs for the U.S. government as well as the company's secretive Phantom Works research arm in the region.

The Super Hornet is the second

storyed Boeing aircraft to glide into retirement this month after the Arlington, Va.,-based planemaker delivered its final 747 jumbo jet on Feb. 1. The fighter has been a key franchise for Boeing's defense division since the company merged with McDonnell Douglas in 1997.

Originally developed by McDonnell Douglas in the 1970s, the F/A-18 Hornet was the first aircraft to have carbon-fiber wings and the first tactical jet fighter equipped with digital, fly-by-wire controls. The Hornets entered active duty in 1983 and flew their first combat missions three years later on the USS Coral Sea. The fighters played key roles during the 1991 Persian Gulf War and provided around-the-clock battlefield coverage in Afghanistan a decade later.

The Super Hornet, a larger ver-

sion with more powerful engines, began service in 1999. Both models of the fighters have been workhorses flown from the decks of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and the aircraft piloted by the service's Blue Angels flight demonstration squadron.

The jets were eventually eclipsed by Lockheed Martin's newer, stealthier F-35. Super Hornet sales dwindled in recent years with prospective customers such as Germany and Canada opting for the more advanced Lockheed fighters, said aerospace consultant Richard Aboulafia.

While Boeing is still vying to sell F/A-18 fighters to India, France's Rafale fighter is thought to be the prohibitive favorite, Aboulafia said. Boeing said if the Indian Navy selects its plane, it could continue making Super Hornets for another two years.

PACIFIC

CIA chief: China has doubt on Taiwan invasion

By HOPE YEN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence shows that China's President Xi Jinping has instructed his country's military to "be ready by 2027" to invade Taiwan though he may be currently harboring doubts about his ability to do so given Russia's experience in its war with Ukraine, CIA Director William Burns said.

Burns, in a television interview that aired Sunday, stressed that the United States must take "very seriously" Xi's desire to ultimately control Taiwan even if military conflict is not inevitable.

"We do know, as has been made public, that President Xi has instructed the PLA, the Chinese military leadership, to be ready by 2027 to invade Taiwan, but that doesn't mean that he's decided to invade in 2027 or any other year as well," Burns told CBS' "Face the Nation."

"I think our judgment at least is that President Xi and his military leadership have doubts today about whether they could accom-

plish that invasion," he said.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war that ended with the Communist Party in control of the mainland. The self-governing island acts like a sovereign nation yet is not recognized by the United Nations or any major country. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter formally recognized the government in Beijing and cut nation-to-nation ties with Taiwan. In response, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, creating a benchmark for a continuing relationship.

Taiwan has received numerous displays of official American support for the island democracy in

the face of growing shows of force by Beijing, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory. President Joe Biden has said that American forces would defend Taiwan if China tries to invade. The White House says U.S. policy has not changed in making clear that Washington wants to see Taiwan's status resolved peacefully. It is silent as to whether U.S. forces might be sent in response to a Chinese attack.

In Sunday's interview, Burns said the support from the U.S. and European allies for Ukraine following Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of that coun-

try may be acting as a potential deterrent to Chinese officials for now but said the risks of a possible attack on Taiwan will only grow stronger.

"I think, as they've looked at Putin's experience in Ukraine, that's probably reinforced some of those doubts," Burns said. "So, all I would say is that I think the risks of, you know, a potential use of force probably grow the further into this decade you get and beyond it, into the following decade as well."

"So that's something obviously, that we watch very, very carefully," he said.



Burns



Japan Coast Guard

Tokyo says China coast guard vessel 2204, seen here in November, appeared to be armed with a deck-mounted machine gun when it entered Japanese territorial waters in the East China Sea, Friday.

Japan protests China coast guard intrusion

Four ships allegedly passed territorial limit around Senkakus

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Japan lodged diplomatic protests with China over alleged intrusions by the China coast guard into waters Japan claims as its territory around islets in the East China Sea, according to Japan's Foreign Ministry.

Four Chinese coast guard ships passed the 12-mile territorial limit around the Senkakus between 10:15 a.m. and 10:40 a.m. Friday, a Japanese coast guard spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone Monday. All four vessels left those waters without incident by 12:15 p.m., he said.

Japan's Foreign Affairs Ministry lodged complaints with the Chinese Embassy in Japan and with the Chinese government in Beijing on Friday, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone Monday.

"This is unacceptable," the spokesman said. "We asked them to leave the area immediately."

Some government officials in Japan are required to speak to the media only on condition of anonymity.

A pair of Chinese coast guard vessels approached Taisho Island in the Senkakus from the north and entered the 12-mile limit at 10:15 a.m. and 10:20 a.m., according to the Japanese coast guard spokesman. Two more vessels entered from the southeast of Kuba Island at 10:32 a.m. and 10:40 a.m.

One of those ships appeared to be armed with a deck-mounted

machine gun, the spokesman said.

The Chinese vessels were met by a larger contingent of Japanese coast guard ships, the spokesman said. He declined to provide the exact number.

They warned the Chinese vessels to leave the area using radio and electronic message boards, he said.

There was no contact between the vessels, the spokesman said. It remains unclear why the ships entered Japan's territorial waters. No Japanese fishermen were operating in the area, which is usually the case when Chinese vessels appear, the spokesman said.

The incidents marked the fifth and sixth times this year that Chinese coast guard vessels intruded into Japan's territorial waters, the spokesman said. The last incident occurred Jan. 30.

There is growing concern in Japan that China is stepping up mil-

itary activities in the region, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said earlier this month.

Japanese lawmakers in December approved a record defense budget of about \$51.4 billion for fiscal year 2023 that emphasized counterstrike capabilities and strengthened standoff air and missile defense.

The Senkakus are 105 miles east of Taiwan. The islets, whose surface area amounts to about 2½ square miles, are also claimed by China and Taiwan, which refer to them as Diaoyu Dao and Diaoyutai, respectively.

The surrounding area is said to contain a wealth of natural resources, including fish, oil and natural gas.

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China says US flight over Taiwan Strait 'disruptive'

Associated Press

BEIJING — China said it closely monitored the flight of a U.S. surveillance plane through the Taiwan Strait on Monday, accusing the U.S. of having "deliberately disrupted and undermined the regional situation."

Chinese forces organized to keep an eye on the passage of the P-8A Poseidon anti-submarine patrol plane and "all matters were in hand," the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater Command said in a social media posting.

China regards self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary, and views the passage of foreign military ships and aircraft through the 100-mile-wide strait as deliberate snubs and provocations.

While U.S. warships regularly transit the strait, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, it is more rare for U.S. military aircraft to do so.

The PLA command accused the U.S. of having "played up" the flight, which it said "endangered peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."

"We firmly oppose this. Theater troops maintain a high level of alert at all times and will resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity," it said.

In a brief statement, the U.S. 7th Fleet said a Navy P-8A Poseidon transited the Taiwan Strait in international airspace on Monday.

"The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate anywhere international law allows including within the Taiwan Strait," it said.

MILITARY

Wife cites care issues in civilian's death

Chief of AFN Pacific technical services division died from heart attack at Yokota Air Base

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The chief of the American Forces Network Pacific technical services division died Thursday at Yokota Air Base in Tokyo after suffering a heart attack, the network reported Saturday.

Robert Hawthorne died at the Urgent Care Clinic, his wife, Kim, said in a message posted Sunday to the Yokota Civilian Medical Forum Facebook group.

She blamed the clinic's inability to provide lifesaving treatment in serious health emergencies and a lack of guaranteed care at Japanese medical facilities for U.S. military personnel for contributing to her husband's death.

"The Yokota [Urgent Care Clinic] has no capacity to treat any life altering events," she wrote in her post. "It matters not whether you are [active duty] or civilian — BOTH are at extreme risk."

Robert Hawthorne began his career as an airman and continued serving as a civilian leader long af-



Hawthorne

ter retiring from military service, according to a Facebook post by AFN.

"Rob was an incredible leader with a storied career in the Department of Defense, serving for 40 years across the Defense Media Activity, American Forces Network, Defense Information Systems Agency, the Air Force Broadcasting Service, Air Force Television and the Air Force New Agency," the post said.

He had a talent for keeping AFN stations broadcasting and networked around the world, it added.

"But what we'll remember most is how he treated people; he was a wonderful mentor and team builder, and his legacy lives on through those he trained and developed through the years," AFN said. "We grieve the loss of a true professional, family man, and friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and the many co-workers

who knew Rob."

Kim Hawthorne's concerns echoed earlier complaints by Cathy Hakun, whose husband, Andrew Hakun, 52, a Department of Defense civilian employee, died in February 2021 after a long, agonizing wait for surgery following a heart attack at home on Yokota.

After Hakun arrived at the urgent care clinic by ambulance, calls were placed to more than 10 nearby hospitals before finding one in Hachioji, 7 miles from Yokota, that would accept him, according to his medical records.

U.S. military personnel in Japan "are living in a country with excellent health care service if you can get to it," his widow said Jan. 27. "Anybody on that base who has to go through urgent care is running an unsurvivable risk."

The Defense Health Agency, under a congressional mandate, imposed limits effective Jan. 1 on Department of Defense civilian employees' access to most health care at military bases in the Indo-Pacific region. Urgent care and some other

services, such as labor and delivery and exams for employment and sports, are still available, but most health care at military hospitals in the region is reserved for beneficiaries of Tricare Prime, the top tier of the military health care plan.

The director of DHA's Indo-Pacific region, Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Heck, in October advised DOD civilians in Japan to look for health care providers in the communities around U.S. military bases.

Kim Hawthorne, in her Facebook post, said staff at Yokota's urgent care clinic are not trained for emergencies.

"My husband had no chronic illnesses nor did he have any cardiac history," she wrote. "What we experienced at the [urgent care clinic] was devastating."

She declined to describe her husband's experience at the base clinic in a Facebook message Monday to Stars and Stripes.

A Yokota spokesman, Air Force 1st Lt. Danny Rangel, in an email Monday, said officials are working on a response to questions sent by

Stars and Stripes about the death.

Health care advocate Randi Wilson, a DOD analyst at Yokota who was inspired to create the Yokota Civilian Medical Forum after the deaths of two coworkers in February 2021, said U.S. personnel in Japan have likely been dying from lack of care for decades.

The forum has identified a dozen such cases over the past two years, she said by phone Monday.

U.S. military leaders in Japan are concerned that support for active-duty troops may suffer if civilian personnel don't want to work in Japan due to inadequate medical care, Wilson said.

Military needs to provide access to primary care for civilians and establish a medical facility certified to provide trauma care for all personnel in Japan, she said.

"We rely completely on Japanese facilities and Japanese facilities can deny care at any time, legally," she said.

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Serve: Navy chaplains can help sailors deal with stress, family issues

FROM PAGE 1

ational stress, family problems and coping with life at sea, according to Chaplain (Capt.) Richard Ryan, force chaplain for Naval Surface Forces Pacific.

"Because of their confidentiality and their easy access, chaplains can talk with sailors about any of their concerns and will make referrals for those that require unique or specialized care," he said by email Feb. 16.

The difference between having a squadron-level chaplain and a chaplain on the ship's crew is significant, Ryan said. Destroyers with a chaplain onboard average 31 counseling sessions per month, compared to just three per month for those without chaplains, demonstrating that chaplains are "a resource that sailors want to utilize."

Having access to mental health resources is an important topic to sailors, given a spate of at least 10

suicides and two suicide attempts since April aboard aircraft carriers such as the USS Ronald Reagan, USS Theodore Roosevelt and USS George Washington.

During a Feb. 10 all-hands call at Yokosuka with Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Honea, one sailor asked Honea if the Navy planned to add "deployed resiliency counselors" typically found aboard aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships to smaller vessels such as cruisers and destroyers.

Honea responded that while larger decks are more capable of accommodating those counselors, the initiative to add chaplains to destroyers is a potential fix and that chaplains are a "great resource to start down that path of any kind of services that you might need," such as counseling.

Chaplain (Lt.) Daniel Lubega, 47, of Huntsville, Ala., has served aboard the Yokosuka-based de-



ALMAGISSEL SCHURING/U.S. Navy

Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Porter attend a liturgical service led by German Navy Chaplain Katja Bruns last year.

stroyer USS Milius since January 2022. He said chaplains are critical to the resiliency of crews, especially when deployed.

"This is an extraordinarily stressful environment; it's non-

stop when we go underway," he said by phone Monday. "So being able to adapt to that, adjust to that, cope with that, it's something that chaplains are uniquely suited to assist sailors with."

Chaplains are trained to support "any religion, or the absence of religion, that a person holds to," Lubega said, but they aren't practicing clinical therapists or psychologists.

"What we practice is, I would say, more along the lines of coaching, but on a small ship like ours, individuals have limited access to trained mental health professionals — so in a certain sense, we do fill that void, and we also connect sailors to" medical or mental health care providers, he said.

Chaplains are, however, trained in areas such as suicide prevention, coping strategies and basic cognitive behavioral therapy skills, Ryan wrote in his email, allowing sailors to have a "common language and build teamwork with their embedded mental health peers."

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US military setting up field hospital for earthquake victims in Turkey

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — U.S. service members are setting up a 100-bed field hospital in one of the areas hit hardest by this month's devastating earthquakes in Turkey, which have killed more than 48,000 people.

The Defense Department hospital, delivered Wednesday

to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, includes two operating rooms, an intensive care unit and medical supplies, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet said in a statement Friday.

Incirlik has become a global hub for earthquake aid in the aftermath of the disaster.

Personnel from Task Force 61/2, under the command of 6th Fleet, are establishing the hospital in the province of Hatay, which is in southern Turkey along the Mediterranean coast and bordered by Syria, according to the statement.

The hospital will be set up by Marines from the task force

and airmen from the 39th Air Base Wing. It is expected be completed in about a week and then turned over to the Turkish health ministry, the Navy said.

Nearly 1.7 million quake victims have been displaced.

On Monday, 6.3-magnitude quake struck the beleaguered area.

Also this week, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11 Seabees sent winterized shelters from Naval Station Rota in Spain to Incirlik, according to a Wednesday post on the base's Facebook page.

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MILITARY

Giant US flags on NFL fields violate code

By ALEXANDER RIEDEL
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department has a message for the service members being cheered on as they unfurl giant American flags horizontally at the Super Bowl and other major events: You're not following the rules.

In a Feb. 10 memo to its public affairs offices, the department said that having service members carry the U.S. flag horizontally or land it on the ground after a parachute jump is no longer acceptable.

The department's leaders have expressed concern over proper flag protocol and alignment with Title 4, United States Code, more commonly known as the U.S. Flag Code.

The code, which is referenced in DOD regulations, provides guidance on how to properly display the American flag, including rules about its size, placement and handling. It states that the flag should be treated with dignity and respect.

"In recent years, some sporting events have asked military members to hold large, horizontal flags during events, and some military units have carried them in parades," Cmdr. Nicole Schwegman, a Defense Department spokeswoman, told Stars and Stripes in a statement Monday. "While many, including service members, find these events moving and patriotic,



EUGENE OLIVER/U.S. Air Force

Airmen unveil a giant U.S. flag during the national anthem before an NFL game at Wembley Stadium in London. DOD this month said it is no longer acceptable for service members to carry the flag horizontally.

according to the code, the flag should never touch the ground or be carried flat or horizontally."

The memo also generally bans the flying of flags by military parachutists, because the Flag Code states that "the flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as

the ground, the floor, water or merchandise."

The exception is when the U.S. flag is used to cover a casket during funeral honors, so long as it isn't lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

While some may see the policy as

limiting their ability to show patriotism, the department's leaders say the restriction is necessary.

It prohibits uniformed service members from participating directly in the "unfurling, holding, and/or carrying of giant horizontal U.S. flags" and bars DOD jump

teams from incorporating the U.S. flag in their demonstrations if it "cannot be caught reliably and handled respectfully by ground personnel."

"I encourage public affairs officers to work with sponsors of community events to develop other ways to showcase the patriotism and capabilities of our military that comply with DOD policy," Chris Meagher, assistant to the secretary of defense for public affairs, wrote in the letter.

The memo drew criticism from some commenters on the popular Amn/NCO/SNCO Facebook page, where it was posted Thursday.

"If we're following flag code for the reasoning for this stupidity, the objects used for these events aren't technically flags, they're banners," one commenter wrote Friday.

The Pentagon's leaders have been concerned with flag protocol in recent years, addressing troops on the issue in previous memos.

In 2020, DOD issued a new policy that banned the display of unauthorized flags on military installations, buildings and vehicles. The policy was seen as effectively banning Confederate flags and other controversial banners without spelling out which flags were undesirable.

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US and allies holding large-scale naval drills in Mediterranean Sea

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. and its allies launched large-scale naval drills Monday in the Mediterranean Sea, where Russian warships have been transiting in increasingly high numbers.

The Dynamic Manta drill, which brings together ships, submarines and aircraft, is being held off the Sicilian coast, NATO's Maritime Command said in a statement.

Anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare tactics are the focus of the exercise, which involves units rehearsing how to hunt down and evade enemy forces.

"The submarines will take turns hunting and being hunted, closely coordinating their efforts with the air and surface participants," the command said.

The exercise, which includes nine different countries, comes amid what some allies have said is an uptick in Russian activity in the Mediterranean.

Italy's top Navy officer, Adm. Enrico Credendino, said last week that Russian military vessels are transiting the Mediterranean at a



NATO Maritime Command

An Italian sailor provides security during exercise Dynamic Manta aboard the Italian ship ITS Carlo Margottini in Catania harbor Friday.

higher rate than even during the Cold War.

The influx, linked to the war in Ukraine, has raised added concerns about potential military miscalculations.

"The risk of an incident is possible, and when there is an incident of this nature, you never know where you might end up," Credendino told the Italian news agency Ansa.

NATO made no reference to Russian forces in its announcement about maritime exercises in the Mediterranean this week.

U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Stephen Mack said Dynamic Mantra is intended to showcase the "strategic defense of the alliance" by countering multiple threats.

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Australian PM says deal on nuclear subs help US, UK

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese says a deal to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines will be the nation's biggest leap in defense capability in its history, adding the United States and Britain also plan to benefit from the partnership.

A decision will be announced in March on how a fleet of Australian submarines powered with U.S. nuclear technology will be delivered under the AUKUS tripartite pact.

Options include a next-generation U.S. Virginia-class sub, a British Astute-class or a new hybrid design.

Critics argue that neither the United States nor Britain has the capacity to start delivering the subs by 2040, while Australia lacks the shipbuilding capability to take a lead role.

Albanese said Tuesday the technology sharing among the AUKUS partners would bring benefits beyond submarines.

"Now, this will be the single biggest leap in our defense capability in our history," Albanese told the National Press Club, referring to Australia's advance from Australian-

built Collins-class diesel-electric submarines that went into service more than 20 years ago.

"AUKUS is about much more than nuclear submarines or even technological interoperability. AUKUS is about the future. It further formalizes the common values and the shared interests that our three nations have," Albanese added.

Albanese said the three governments were focused on how their countries would benefit from spinoffs from the submarine-building cooperation.

"It's a focus that recognizes that it's not a zero-sum game. This is one of those times when one plus one plus one equals more than three because there's a multiplier effect and a benefit from sharing some of the science and innovation," Albanese said.

"All three countries want the sum to be a benefit for all of the three nations," he added.

Critics argue Australia's lack of nuclear expertise will leave it heavily reliant on its nuclear-armed partners.

Australia's only atomic reactor is in the Sydney suburb of Lucas Heights where it produces nuclear isotopes for medical use.

EUROPE

UN chief points to 'massive' rights violations in Ukraine

By JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

GENEVA — Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has triggered "the most massive violations of human rights" in the world today, the head of the United Nations said Monday, as the war pushed into its second year with no end in sight and tens of thousands dead.

The Russian invasion "has unleashed widespread death, destruction and displacement," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said in a speech to the U.N.-backed Human Rights Council in Geneva.

After failing to capture Kyiv in the opening weeks of the invasion on Feb. 24 last year and suffering a series of humiliating setbacks during the fall, Russia has stabilized the front and is concentrating its efforts on capturing four provinces that Moscow illegally annexed in September — Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia.

Ukraine, meanwhile, hopes to use battle tanks and other new weapons pledged by the West to launch new counteroffensives and reclaim more of the occupied territory.

Guterres said "attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure

have caused many casualties and terrible suffering."

The intense fighting for territory in eastern Ukraine was in sharp focus Sunday at a Ukrainian field hospital treating wounded from the intense battle for the city of Bakhmut, which is devastated. A constant flow of battered and exhausted soldiers came in on stretchers.

Anatoliy, the chief of the medical service, said his team treats dozens of soldiers every day and barely has time to eat.

"My medics work practically non-stop. Before the full-scale invasion we had 50-60 wounded in a nine-month rotation, and now sometimes we have more (than that) in one day," he told The Associated Press. He provided only one name for security reasons.

Guterres' remarks came as the Ukrainian military said that Russia launched attacks with exploding drones on several regions of the country from late Sunday until Monday morning, killing two people.

Meanwhile, Belarusian opposition activists claimed a military air base outside Belarus' capital that hosts Russian warplanes came under attack Sunday by Belarusian

guerrillas.

BYPOL, an online messaging app channel run by the activists, and several other online resources operated by the Belarusian opposition, said an A-50 early warning and control aircraft was seriously damaged in the attack at the Machulishchy base near Minsk.

The activists provided no evidence to support the claims, which couldn't be independently verified. Belarusian and Russian officials made no comment, but Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko urged top military and security officials on Monday to tighten discipline.

Russia used the territory of its ally Belarus to invade Ukraine a year ago. Belarus continues to host Russian troops, warplanes and other weapons.

Guterres, in his Geneva speech, cited cases of sexual violence, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and violations of the rights of prisoners of war documented by the U.N. human rights office.

He decried how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, now 75 years old, has been "too often misused and abused."

"It is exploited for political gain and it is ignored, often, by the very same people," Guterres said. "Some governments chip away at it. Others use a wrecking ball."

"This is a moment to stand on the right side of history," he told the council, the U.N.'s top human rights body. Russia withdrew from its seat last year amid a surge in international pressure over the war in Ukraine.

Dozens of high-level envoys at the Geneva meeting — many from Western countries — lashed out at Russia over its conduct of the war. At the simultaneous Conference on Disarmament, another U.N.-backed body, delegates criticized Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to suspend Russia's participation in the New START agreement with the United States, the last nuclear arms control agreement between Moscow and Washington.

Russia was not represented at the council, and its top envoy to the session wasn't expected to speak until Thursday.

Russian officials have shown little sign they may be reconsidering their attack on their neighbor, however.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Pes-

kov said Monday: "We aren't seeing any conditions for a peaceful settlement now."

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council that is chaired by Putin, went a step further, once again raising the specter of nuclear war and a nightmare outcome to Europe's biggest and deadliest conflict since World War II.

He chided the U.S. and its allies for providing Ukraine with military and other support to help push back the Kremlin's forces. Their longer-term aim, he claimed, is to break up Russia.

Putin has also framed the war in those terms, saying it's an existential risk to Russia.

In the Sunday-Monday attacks, Ukraine's General Staff said Kyiv's forces shot down 11 out of 14 Iranian-made Shahed drones.

Ukraine's presidential office said Monday that at least two civilians were killed and nine others wounded by Russian attacks over the previous 24 hours.

It said intense fighting has continued around Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Vuhledar in the Donetsk region, which have come under relentless Russian shelling.

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NATION

Winter: Storms continue in Northeast as things calm in West

FROM PAGE 1

cle her children weren't hurt, although her daughter was trapped for a while in a bedroom.

"I could hear the wind coming. All of a sudden all the back windows, where the kids bedrooms are, I could hear them just crashing, busting out. And I got up, and then the wind just threw me back, and I'm screaming," Tabler told KOCO. "It was just like a blizzard in the house with all the debris flying. I was screaming for my kids."

A tornado touched down Sunday near Liberal, Kan., the weather service said, and more than a dozen homes were reported damaged, according to KSNW-TV. One person had minor injuries, the station said.

There were reports of nine tornadoes in Kansas, Oklahoma and northwestern Texas, said Bob Oravec, a lead forecaster for the weather service. Weather service teams planned to survey storm damage Monday to determine the strength of the tornadoes.

The severe weather threat remained Monday, with thunderstorms expected to produce damaging gusts across the Ohio Valley, according to the Storm Prediction Center. At least a few tornadoes were possible, especially across Ohio on Monday afternoon, the center said. The weather service forecast strong winds Monday in Kansas and Missouri, with gusts topping 60 mph.

Northeast snowstorm

While not expecting a blockbuster storm by regional standards, southern New England braced for what could be the most significant snowfall of what has so far been a mild winter.

A winter storm warning covered parts of the Northeast, including Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island, with heavy snow forecast for



In this grab taken from video provided by KOCO, a view of the damage to a property after severe storms, in Shawnee, Okla., late Sunday is seen.

Monday evening through Tuesday afternoon.

Boston could get 5 inches and a messy Tuesday morning commute, according to the weather service. As much as 10 inches could fall in western Massachusetts, northwestern Connecticut and southern Vermont.

Michigan ice storm

In Michigan, crews continued to work to restore electricity. Leah Thomas, whose home north of Detroit lost power Wednesday night, finally got her power back late Sunday afternoon.

Thomas said she feels lucky that she and their 17-year-old son were able to stay at her parents' nearby home, which still had power, while they are in Florida.

With her husband traveling out of town, Thomas said it was up to her to recharge the battery to their home's backup sump pump Sunday with her car. She went to multiple stores to find a long cable for the task.

Although her basement didn't flood during the outage, Thomas said Monday morning that she lost all the food in her refrigerator, including about \$200 worth of prepared meals she had in her freezer. She said

she would have moved her food to her parents' freezer but did not because DTE Energy had repeatedly notified her that her home's power would be back on soon.

Instead, it took nearly four days for the power to be restored.

"We did lose all our food because we didn't realize the outage was going to be so long. DTE kept telling us the power would be back the same day," Thomas said.

With the local school district on midwinter break, she said, some of their neighbors have been out of town and will return to find a mess from burst water pipes and flooded basements.

"They don't know what they're coming home to," she said.

In hard-hit southeastern Michigan, still reeling from the ice storm and high winds, the state's two main utilities — DTE Energy and Consumers Energy — reported more than 92,000 homes and businesses without power as of late Monday morning. More than 63,000 of those were DTE customers.

California gets a break

California, meanwhile, got a brief break from severe weather after a powerful storm a day earlier swelled Los Angeles-area rivers to dangerous levels, flooded roads and dumped snow at elevations as low as about 1,000 feet.

The sun came out briefly Sunday in greater Los Angeles, where residents emerged to marvel at mountains to the north and east blanketed in white.

Suburban Santa Clarita, in hills north of Los Angeles, received its first significant snowfall since 1989.

"We went outside and we let our sons play in the snow," resident Cesar Torres told the Santa Clarita Signal. "We figured, while the snow's there, might as well make a snowman out of it."

Study: Back-to-back hurricanes likely to happen more frequently

BY SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

What used to be a rare one-two punch of consecutive hurricanes hitting about the same place in the United States weeks apart seems to be happening more often, and a new study says climate change will make back-to-back storms more frequent and nastier in the future.

Using computer simulations, scientists at Princeton University calculate that the deadly storm duet that used to happen once every few decades could happen every two or three years as the world warms from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, according to a study in Monday's Nature Climate Change.

Louisiana and Florida residents have already felt it.

In 2021, major Hurricane Ida blasted Louisiana with 150 mph winds. Just 15 days later a weakening Nicholas came nearby, close enough for its wind, rain and storm surge to add to the problems, said study co-author Ning Lin, a risk engineer and climate scientist at Princeton.

Her study looked at not just the storms but the problems back-to-back hurricanes caused to people.

The Ida-Nicholas combo came after Louisiana was hit in 2020 by five hurricanes or tropical storms: Cristobal, Marco, Laura,

Delta and Zeta. Laura was the biggest of those, packing 150-mph winds.

After Laura, relief workers had set up a giant recovery center in a parking lot of a damaged roofless church when Delta approached, so all the supplies had to be jammed against the building and battened down for the next storm, said United Way of Southwest Louisiana President Denise Durel.

"You can't imagine. You're dumbfounded. You think it can't be happening to us again," Durel recalled 2½ years later from an area that is still recovering. "The other side of it is that you can't wish it upon anyone else either."

Florida in 2004 had four hurricanes in six weeks, prompting the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration to take note of a new nickname for the Sunshine State — "The Plywood State," from all the boarded-up homes.

"We found a trend," Lin said. "Those things are happening. They're happening more often now than before."

There's a caveat to that trend. There haven't been enough hurricanes and tropical storms since about 1950 — when good recordkeeping started — for a statistically significant trend, Lin said. So her team added computer simulations to see if they could establish such a trend and they did.

Lin's team looked at nine U.S. storm-prone areas and found an increase in storm hazards for seven of them since 1949. Only Charleston, S.C., and Pensacola, Fla., didn't see hazards increase.

The team then looked at what would happen in the future using a worst-case scenario of increasing carbon dioxide emissions and a more moderate scenario in line with current efforts worldwide to reduce greenhouse gases. In both situations, the frequency of back-to-back storms increased dramatically from current expectations.

The reason isn't storm paths or anything like that. It's based on storms getting wetter and stronger from climate change as numerous studies predict, along with sea levels rising. The study looked heavily at the impacts of storms more than just the storms themselves.

Studies are split on whether climate change means more or fewer storms overall, though. But Lin said it's just the nastier nature and size that increases the likelihood of back-to-back storms hitting roughly the same area.

Any increased frequency in sequential storms in the past was likely due to a reduction in traditional air pollution rather than human-caused climate change; when Europe and the United States halved the amount of particles in the air since the

mid-1990s it led to 33% more Atlantic storms, a NOAA study found last year. But any future increase will likely be more from greenhouse gases, said two scientists who weren't part of the study.

"For people in harm's way this is very bad news," University of Albany hurricane scientist Kristen Corbosiero, who wasn't part of the study, said in an email. "We [scientists] have been warning about the increase in heavy rain and significant storm surges with landfalling TCs [tropical cyclones] in a warming climate and the results of this study show this is the case."

Corbosiero and four other hurricane experts who weren't part of the study said it made sense.

Some, including Corbosiero, say it is hard to say for sure that the back-to-back trend is already happening.

Colorado State University hurricane expert Phil Klotzbach said the emphasis on worsening effects on people was impressive, with storm surge from rising seas and an increase in rainfall from warmer and stronger major hurricanes.

"You have to have faith and be able to move forward. You've just got to be in constant motion," Durel, the Louisiana United Way president, said. "Our neighbors mean much more than wallowing in aggravation."

NATION

Dilbert distributor cuts ties to Adams over race remarks

By DAVID A. LIEB

Associated Press

“Dilbert” creator Scott Adams continued to see his reach shrink Monday as dozens of newspapers and a major comic strip platform said they would no longer publish his long-running office workplace comic strip over his recent racist remarks.

Newspaper readers around the country were greeted by notes from publishers — and, in at least one instance, a blank space — alerting them to outlets’ decision to stop running the popular comic.

Adams’ fate was effectively sealed Sunday evening when “Dilbert” distributor Andrews McMeel Universal said it was severing ties to the cartoonist. By Monday morning, “Dilbert” was gone from the GoComics site, which also features many top comic strips like “Peanuts” and “Calvin and Hobbes.”

The comic appears in Stars and Stripes, but will be replaced by another strip as soon as possible.

In the Feb. 22 episode of his YouTube show, Adams described people who are Black as members of “a hate group” from which white people should “get away.” Various media publishers across the U.S. denounced the comments as racist, hateful and discrimina-

tory while saying they would no longer provide a platform for his work.

Readers of The Sun Chronicle in Attleboro, Mass., found a blank space in Monday’s edition where “Dilbert” would normally run. The paper said it would keep the space blank throughout March “as a reminder of the racism the pervades our society.”

Newspapers ranging from the Los Angeles Times to smaller papers like the Santa Fe New Mexican and the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette have also said they would cease to publish “Dilbert.” The strip, which lampoons office culture, first appeared in 1989.

“This is a decision based on the principles of this news organization and the community we serve,” Cleveland Plain Dealer Editor Chris Quinn wrote. “We are not a home for those who espouse racism. We certainly do not want to provide them with financial support.”

The Andrews McMeel Universal statement said the distributor supports free speech, but Adams’ comments were not compatible with the core values of the company based in Kansas City, Mo.

“We are proud to promote and share many different voices and perspectives. But we will never

support any commentary rooted in discrimination or hate,” the statement jointly signed by the chair and CEO said.

While Adams’ strips are no longer on GoComics, he maintains an extensive archive on his own website.

In a YouTube episode released Monday, Scott Adams said that new “Dilbert” strips will only be available on his subscription service on the Locals platform.

“They made a business decision, which I don’t consider anything like censorship,” he said of Andrews McMeel Universal, adding that his comments about Black people were hyperbole.

Adams had previously defended himself on social media against those whom he said “hate me and are canceling me.” He also drew support from Twitter CEO Elon Musk, who tweeted that the media previously “was racist against non-white people, now they’re racist against whites & Asians.”

During the Feb. 22 episode of “Real Coffee with Scott Adams,” he referenced a Rasmussen Reports survey that had asked whether people agreed with the statement “It’s OK to be white.” Most agreed, but Adams noted that 26% of Black respondents disagreed and others weren’t



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Scott Adams — shown in 2006 with a cutout of his comic strip character Dilbert — saw the strip dropped Sunday by distributor Andrews McMeel Universal, a result of his comments about race.

sure.

The Anti-Defamation League says the phrase at the center of the question was popularized as a trolling campaign by members of 4chan — an anonymous and notorious message board — and began being used by some white supremacists. Rasmussen Reports is a conservative polling firm that has used its Twitter account to endorse false and misleading claims about COVID-19 vaccines, elections and the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Adams, who is white, repeatedly referred to people who are Black as members of a “hate group” or a “racist hate group”

and said he would no longer “help Black Americans.”

In another episode of his online show Saturday, Adams said he had been making a point that “everyone should be treated as an individual” without discrimination.

“But you should also avoid any group that doesn’t respect you, even if there are people within the group who are fine,” Adams said.

Christopher Kelly, vice president of content for NJ Advance Media, wrote that the news organization believes in “the free and fair exchange of ideas.”

“But when those ideas cross into hate speech, a line must be drawn,” Kelly wrote.

Williamson 1st Democrat to challenge Biden in '24

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bestselling self-help author Marianne Williamson, who brought quirky spiritualism to the 2020 presidential race, has announced she’s running for president again, becoming the first major Democrat to challenge President Joe Biden for his party’s nomination in 2024.

Williamson is formally kicking off her campaign with an event in Washington on Saturday. Without mentioning former President Donald Trump, she noted in a weekend Facebook post that his unconventional White House win makes it “odd for anyone to think they can know who can win the presidency.”

“I’m not putting myself through this again just to add to the conversation,” Williamson wrote. “I’m running for president to help bring an aberrational chapter of our history to a close, and to help bring forth a new beginning.”

Williamson, 70, says she plans to follow her Washington announce-



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

Marianne Williamson — shown on the campaign trail in Iowa, in 2020 — is again seeking the Democratic Party’s nomination for president.

ment with travel to states voting early in the Democratic primary. That includes New Hampshire, where she’s suggested she’d participate in the state’s primary if it defies Democratic National Committee rules and holds the nation’s first presidential nominating contest despite the party making South Carolina its leadoff state for 2024.

“I feel my forty years being up close and personal with the trauma of so many thousands of individuals gives me a unique perspective on what is needed to help repair America,” Williamson wrote. “We need a politics that treats not just symp-

toms, but cause.”

Williamson is the only Democrat in the race — for now. Biden hasn’t yet announced a formal reelection bid that aides say is likely coming in April.

Her primary challenge of a sitting president from her own party would be the longest of long shots under any circumstances. But that’s especially true this cycle, as the Democratic establishment — and even potential presidential hopefuls who could have competed with Biden from the left or middle — has closed ranks with remarkable uniformity behind the president.

DeSantis takes over Disney district, punishing company

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday signed a bill that gives him control of Walt Disney World’s self-governing district, punishing the company over its opposition to the so-called “Don’t Say Gay” law.

The bill requires DeSantis, a Republican, to appoint a five-member board to oversee the government services that the Disney district provides in its sprawling theme park properties in Florida.

“Today the corporate kingdom finally comes to an end,” he said at a bill signing ceremony in Lake Buena Vista. “There’s a new sheriff in town, and accountability will be the order of the day.”

The signing came as DeSantis gears up for an expected presidential run and marks a high-profile legislative victory for a governor whose leveraging of cultural and political divides has pushed him to the fore of national Republican politics. DeSantis, whose book, “The Courage to be Free,” is coming out Tuesday, has moved in recent weeks to expand his national profile and political network through fundraisers and

meetings with donors, elected officials and conservative influencers.

The takeover of the Disney district began last year when the entertainment giant publicly opposed “Don’t Say Gay,” which bars instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade and lessons deemed not age-appropriate.

DeSantis moved to quickly to penalize the company, directing lawmakers in the GOP-dominated Legislature to dissolve Disney’s self-governing district during a special legislative session last year, beginning a closely watched restructuring process.

In February, DeSantis called on lawmakers to again return to deal with Disney and finalize state control over the district in another hastily called special session that signaled the governor’s willingness to wield the power of state government to accomplish political goals.

The new law changes the district’s name and subjects it to various layers of state oversight. Board members are currently named through entities controlled by Disney.

NATION

DeSantis eyes own path to 2024 GOP presidential bid

By STEVE PEOPLES
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Republican presidential contenders typically fight for prime speaking slots at the Conservative Political Action Conference. But as conservative activists gather in suburban Washington this week, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will be courting donors more than a thousand miles away in Texas and California.

The apparent CPAC snub is nothing new for DeSantis, who has emerged in the early phase of the 2024 presidential election as a leading contender for the GOP nomination even as he ignores many conventions of modern politics.

DeSantis is a frequent voice in conservative cultural fights on cable television, but he often avoids gatherings of fellow Republican governors and party leaders, who are quick to complain in private about his go-it-alone approach. He is the only top-tier presidential prospect yet to court voters in Iowa, New Hampshire or South Carolina, the states hosting the GOP's opening presidential primary contests. And he is often at odds with the press, refusing even to notify local media of last week's rare

three-state tour with law enforcement.

Indeed, as DeSantis moves toward a White House run, it is becoming increasingly clear that the 44-year-old Republican governor will manage his presidential aspirations in his own way, on his own timeline, with or without allies in national GOP leadership or relationships with the press.

"DeSantis has, in his style and the actions he's taken as governor, shown a willingness to fight the traditional powers that be, the establishment," said David McIntosh, president of the Club for Growth, an influential conservative group based in Washington. McIntosh described DeSantis' style as "refreshing" and suggested the GOP is ready to move on from former President Donald Trump.

For now, DeSantis is perhaps the most potent threat to Trump's effort to win the GOP nomination for the third time. The Club for Growth will host DeSantis among a half-dozen presidential prospects at a closed-door retreat in Florida next weekend with top donors. Trump is not invited.

Meanwhile, DeSantis has quietly begun to expand his political coalition on his terms just as he re-

leases a book, "The Courage to be Free," which comes out Tuesday.

He spent the weekend huddled behind closed doors at a south Florida luxury hotel for a "Freedom Blueprint" retreat with more than 100 donors, elected officials and conservative influencers. The attendees included former Trump chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton and Texas-based donor Roy Bailey, a former member of Trump's national finance committee.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt and Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee were also in attendance, along with Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson, Utah Sen. Mike Lee, Texas Rep. Chip Roy and Kentucky Rep. Thomas Masie.

Fox News host Laura Ingraham hosted a fireside chat with DeSantis on Sunday before he joined a "fighting back against woke" discussion with Chaya Raichik, who runs the "Libs of TikTok" social media account.

Details from the gathering were disclosed by participants who requested anonymity to discuss the private event.

Trump was largely ignored throughout the weekend retreat, although conservative commenta-



JOHN LOCHER/AP

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks at an annual leadership meeting of the Republican Jewish Coalition in November in Las Vegas.

tor Ann Coulter seized on his failure to build a wall spanning the entire U.S.-Mexico border during a Saturday panel discussion with DeSantis on border security, according to one person in the room. She accused the former president of never actually wanting to build it in the first place.

In the coming days and weeks, DeSantis will use the release of his book to introduce himself to voters beyond Florida, having established his political dominance there last fall by winning reelection by more than 19 percentage points.

He is expected to make his first appearances in key states on the primary calendar such as Iowa and New Hampshire in the coming weeks in addition to general election battlegrounds like Geor-

gia and Pennsylvania. Last week, he made surprise stops in New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago to court law enforcement leaders, although the events were private and he did not notify local media.

The Florida governor is already scheduled to headline two Republican fundraisers in Texas on Saturday. The next day he'll speak at a \$500-a-head reception for the GOP of Orange County, Calif.. He'll serve as the keynote speaker for the Alabama GOP the following week.

While he has begun to expand his profile, DeSantis has done far less than most of the early 2024 class to connect with primary voters and would-be allies in key states.

Mississippi GOP governor now backs longer Medicaid for moms

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi Republican Gov. Tate Reeves did an abrupt about-face Sunday on an issue for which Democrats have been sharply criticizing him this election year, saying for the first time that he wants the state to allow a full year of Medicaid coverage to women after they give birth.

Reeves said on social media that if the Republican-controlled state House and Senate send him a bill to allow a year of postpartum Medicaid coverage, "I will sign it into law."

Reeves said he is willing to do so "as part of our new pro-life agenda." He said more babies will be born because the U.S. Supreme Court upended abortion rights nationwide last year with a case that originated in Mississippi.

"I believe that to be a beautiful thing," Reeves wrote. "I also believe that added stress will be felt by more Mississippi moms. We have to love them. We have to support them."

As governor since January 2020 and during two previous terms as

lieutenant governor, Reeves has resisted efforts to expand the scope of Medicaid and other government programs. He has not publicly changed his opposition to a broader

expansion of Medicaid coverage to working people with low-wage jobs that don't provide private insurance. Mississippi is one of 11 states that have not approved that broader expansion.

Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia have extended postpartum Medicaid coverage to a full year.

Physicians in the Mississippi State Medical Association and businesses leaders in the Mississippi Economic Council have endorsed a full year of postpartum Medicaid coverage, saying it could improve health outcomes in a state with a high rate of maternal mortality.

Mississippi is one of the poorest states in the U.S., and about 60% of births in Mississippi are to women

covered by Medicaid. The state usually allows two months of postpartum Medicaid coverage.

Since the COVID-19 public health emergency started in 2020, Mississippi has allowed a full year of postpartum coverage, although many patients have said the state did little to let them know the coverage remained after the usual two months.

The national public health emergency is set to expire in May. The deadline, combined with the Mississippi election season, has intensified debate over postpartum coverage.

The two Democratic leaders in the Mississippi Legislature — Sen. Derrick Simmons of Greenville and Rep. Robert Johnson of Natchez — criticized Reeves in a joint statement Sunday.

"Saying he'll sign this bill if it comes to him is simply a last-ditch effort to save face on an issue that the vast majority of Mississippians support," Simmons and Johnson said of the governor. "It is not courageous; it is craven political theater."



Reeves

Leaders of House China panel denounce comment about Dem Rep. Judy Chu

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The leaders of a new House select committee on China defended Democratic Rep. Judy Chu on Sunday, saying it was abhorrent and unacceptable for a GOP lawmaker to question her loyalty to the United States based on her Chinese heritage.

"One of my colleagues, unfortunately, attacked Judy Chu, the first Chinese American congresswoman in the United States Congress, saying that somehow she's not loyal to the United States. I find that offensive as an Asian American myself," said Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, the ranking Democrat on the panel, about the comments last week from Rep. Lance Gooden, R-Texas.

Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher, the Republican chair of the China panel who appeared Sunday with Krishnamoorthi on CBS' "Face the Nation," said Gooden was out of line.

"We should not question any-

body's loyalty to the United States," Gallagher said. "That is out of bounds. It's beyond the pale."

In a Fox News interview last week, Gooden criticized Chu for her defense of Biden economic appointee Dominic Ng, who the president named to the business advisory council of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Gooden questioned either Chu's "loyalty or competence." He also suggested that Chu, a California Democrat, should not have a security clearance or access to classified briefings.

Chu, the chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus who was born in Los Angeles, called Gooden's comments "racist," saying the attacks on her and Ng relied on false information from right-wing media.



Chu

NATION

Tool helps teens take down explicit images

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
Associated Press

“Once you send that photo, you can’t take it back,” goes the warning to teenagers, often ignoring the reality that many teens send explicit images of themselves under duress, or without understanding the consequences.

A new online tool aims to give some control back to teens, or people who were once teens, and take down explicit images and videos of themselves from the internet.

Called Take It Down, the tool is operated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and funded in part by Meta Platforms, the owner of Facebook and Instagram.

The site lets anyone anonymously — and without uploading any actual images — create what is essentially a digital fingerprint of the image. This fingerprint (a unique set of numbers called a

“hash”) then goes into a database and the tech companies that have agreed to participate in the project remove the images from their services.

Now, the caveats. The participating platforms are, as of Monday, Meta’s Facebook and Instagram, Yubo, OnlyFans and Pornhub, owned by Mindgeek. If the image is on another site, or if it is sent in an encrypted platform such as WhatsApp, it will not be taken down.

In addition, if someone alters the original image — for instance, cropping it, adding an emoji or turning it into a meme — it becomes a new image and thus needs a new hash. Images that are visually similar — such as the same photo with and without an Instagram filter, will have similar hashes, differing in just one character.

“Take It Down is made specifi-

cally for people who have an image that they have reason to believe is already out on the Web somewhere, or that it could be,” said Gavin Portnoy, a spokesman for the NCMEC. “You’re a teen and you’re dating someone and you share the image. Or somebody extorted you and they said, ‘if you don’t give me an image, or another image of you, I’m going to do X, Y, Z.’”

Portnoy said teens may feel more comfortable going to a site than to involve law enforcement, which wouldn’t be anonymous, for one.

“To a teen who doesn’t want that level of involvement, they just want to know that it’s taken down, this is a big deal for them,” he said. NCMEC is seeing an increase in reports of online exploitation of children. The nonprofit’s CyberTipline received 29.3 million reports in 2021, up 35% from 2020.

Meta, back when it was still Facebook, attempted to create a similar tool, although for adults, back in 2017. It didn’t go over well because the site asked people to, basically, send their (encrypted) nudes to Facebook — not the most trusted company even in 2017. The company tested out the service in Australia for a brief period, but didn’t expand it to other countries.

But in that time, online sexual extortion and exploitation has only gotten worse, for children and teens as well as for adults. Many tech companies already use this hash system to share, take down and report to law enforcement images of child sexual abuse. Portnoy said the goal is to have more companies sign up.

“We never had anyone say no,” he said.

Twitter and TikTok so far have not committed to the project. Nei-

ther company immediately responded to a message for comment Sunday.

Antigone Davis, Meta’s global head of safety, said Take It Down is one of many tools the company uses to address child abuse and exploitation on its platforms.

“In addition to supporting the development of this tool and having, reporting and blocking systems on our on our platform, we also do a number of different things to try to prevent these kinds of situations from happening in the first place. So, for example, we don’t allow unconnected adults to message minors,” she said.

The site works with real as well as artificial intelligence-generated images and “deepfakes,” Davis said. Deepfakes are created to look like real, actual people saying or doing things they didn’t actually do.

Last-minute problem keeps SpaceX rocket, astronauts grounded

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Last-minute technical trouble forced SpaceX to call off Monday’s attempt to launch four astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA.

The countdown was halted with just two minutes remaining until liftoff from Kennedy Space Center. With just a split second to blast off, there was no time to deal with the problem, which involved the engine ignition system.

SpaceX delayed the launch until at least Thursday.

Strapped into the capsule atop the Falcon rocket were two NASA astronauts, one Russian cosmonaut and one astronaut from the United Arab Emirates. They had to wait until all the fuel was

drained from the rocket — an hourlong process — before getting out.

“We’ll be sitting here waiting,” commander Stephen Bowen assured everyone. “We’re all feeling good.”

Bowen and his crew — including the first astronaut from the United Arab Emirates assigned to a monthslong mission, Sultan al-Neyadi — will replace four space station residents who have been up there since October.

Officials said the problem involved ground equipment used for loading the engine ignition fluid. The launch team could not be sure there was a full load.

A SpaceX engineer likened this critical system to spark plugs for a car.



CHRIS O’MEARA/AP

Fuel vents from a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket as it sits on Launch Complex 39-A on Monday after the launch was scrubbed at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla.

Survey: Business economists push back US recession forecasts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A majority of the nation’s business economists expect a U.S. recession to begin later this year than they had previously forecast, after a series of reports have pointed to a surprisingly resilient economy despite steadily higher interest rates.

Fifty-eight percent of 48 economists who responded to a survey by the National Association for Business Economics envision a recession sometime this year,

the same proportion who said so in the NABE’s survey in December. But only a quarter think a recession will have begun by the end of March, only half the proportion who had thought so in December.

The findings, reflecting a survey of economists from businesses, trade associations and academia, were released Monday.

A third of the economists who responded to the survey now expect a recession to begin in the April-June quarter. One-fifth

think it will start in the July-September quarter.

The delay in the economists’ expectations of when a downturn will begin follows a series of government reports that have pointed to a still-robust economy even after the Federal Reserve has raised interest rates eight times in a strenuous effort to slow growth and curb high inflation.

In January, employers added more than a half-million jobs, and the unemployment rate reached 3.4%, the lowest level

since 1969.

And sales at retail stores and restaurants jumped 3% in January, the sharpest monthly gain in nearly two years. That suggested that consumers as a whole, who drive most of the economy’s growth, still feel financially healthy and willing to spend.

At the same time, several government releases also showed that inflation shot back up in January after weakening for several months, fanning fears that the Fed will raise its benchmark rate

even higher than was previously expected. When the Fed lifts its key rate, it typically leads to more expensive mortgages, auto loans and credit card borrowing. Interest rates on business loans also rise.

Tighter credit can then weaken the economy and even cause a recession. Economic research released Friday found that the Fed has never managed to reduce inflation from the high levels it has recently reached without causing a recession.

WORLD

Scores die as migrants travel off Italian coast, dozens still missing

Associated Press

STECCATO DI CUTRO, Italy — The death toll rose to 62 in the migrant tragedy off Italy's southern coast after rescue crews recovered three more bodies on Monday, driving home once again the desperate and dangerous boat crossings of people seeking to reach Europe. Dozens more were believed to be missing.

Children were among the dead after a wooden boat broke up in stormy seas on the reefs near the Calabrian coast on Sunday. At least 80 people survived, but more were feared dead given survivor reports that the boat, which set off

from Turkey last week, had carried about 170 people.

The beach at Steccato di Cutro, on Calabria's Ionian coast, was littered with the splintered remains of the 65-foot boat as well as the belongings the migrants had brought with them, including a toddler's tiny pink sneaker and a yellow plastic pencil case decorated with pandas.

There were only a few life jackets scattered amid the debris.

The U.N. and Doctors Without Borders, which had crews on the scene, said many of the victims were Afghans, including members of large families, as well as

Pakistanis and Iraqis. Afghans were the second top nationality to seek asylum in the European Union last year, and have increasingly fled the spiraling security, humanitarian and economic troubles that followed the Taliban takeover in August 2021.

On Monday, two coast guard vessels searched the seas north to south off Steccato di Cutro while a helicopter flew overhead and a four-wheel vehicle patrolled the beach.

Firefighters confirmed three more bodies had been recovered Monday morning, but held out little hope for finding survivors.

New quake hits Turkey as country continues cleanup

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — A magnitude 5.6 earthquake shook southern Turkey on Monday, three weeks after a catastrophic temblor devastated the region, causing some already damaged buildings to collapse and killing at least one person, authorities said.

More than 100 people were injured as a result of Monday's quake, which was centered in the town of Yesilyurt in Malatya province, Yunus Sezer, the chief of the country's disaster management agency, AFAD, told reporters. More than two dozen buildings collapsed.

A father and daughter who were trapped beneath the ruins of a four-story building in Yesilyurt

were rescued with injuries.

They had entered the damaged building to collect belongings.

Elsewhere in Malatya, search-and-rescue teams were sifting through the rubble of two damaged buildings that toppled on some parked cars, HaberTurk reported.

It was not clear if anyone was trapped under the debris.

Malatya was among 11 Turkish provinces hit by the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that devastated parts of southern Turkey and northern Syria on Feb. 6.

That quake led to more than 48,000 deaths in both countries as well as the collapse or serious damage of 185,000 buildings in Turkey.



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WORLD

Slain model's family charged in Hong Kong

Associated Press

HONG KONG — The ex-husband and former in-laws of a slain Hong Kong model were detained Monday on charges in her killing after police found body parts in a refrigerator and a pot. The case has gripped many in a Chinese territory where any violent crime is rare.

Ex-husband Alex Kwong, his father Kwong Kau and his brother Anthony Kwong were charged with murdering model Abby Choi a day earlier. Alex Kwong's mother, Jenny Li, faces one count of perverting the course of justice. None of the four was granted bail.

Choi, a 28-year-old model with more than 100,000 followers on Instagram, disappeared Feb. 21, according to a report filed later with the Hong Kong Police. Her last post was Feb. 19, featuring a photo shoot she had done with fashion magazine L'Officiel Monaco.

On Friday, police found her dismembered body in a refrigerator in a house rented by Kwong Kau in a suburban part of Hong Kong approximately a 30-minute drive from



PAO JO-YEE/AP

Police found body parts of Hong Kong-based model Abby Choi in a refrigerator and a pot Friday.

mainland China.

Authorities later discovered a young woman's skull believed to be Choi's in a cooking pot seized from the house. Officials said there was a hole in the skull.

The defendants have not yet entered pleas, and it does not appear that their lawyers have commented on the case to the media. The case was adjourned until May.

Choi had financial disputes involving millions of dollars with her ex-husband and his family, police said earlier, adding that "some people" were unhappy with how Choi handled her finances.

N. Korea convenes rare meeting on farming amid food shortage

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un opened a major political conference dedicated to agriculture, state media reported Monday, as outside assessments suggest the country is facing a serious shortfall of food.

South Korean experts have estimated that North Korea is short around 1 million tons of grain, nearly 20% of its annual demand, after the coronavirus pandemic likely disrupted unofficial grain imports from China and the government has restricted food sales at markets.

Recent, unconfirmed reports in South Korean media have said some North Koreans have died of hunger. But most experts have seen no indication of mass deaths or famine in North Korea.

During a high-level meeting of the ruling Workers' Party that began Sunday, senior party officials reviewed last year's work

on state goals to accomplish "rural revolution in the new era," the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

The report said the plenary meeting of the party's Central Committee will identify "immediate, important" tasks on agricultural issues and "urgent tasks arising at the present stage of the national economic development."

KCNA didn't say whether Kim spoke during the meeting or how long it would last. Senior officials such as Cabinet Premier Kim Tok Hun and Jo Yong Won, one of Kim's closest aides who handles the Central Committee's organizational affairs, also attended.

Plenary meetings are key decision-making venues for the Workers' Party. In recent years, Kim has held a plenary meeting two to four times a year to formulate major policies.

It is the first time the party has

convened a plenary session only to discuss agriculture. Monday's report didn't elaborate on its agenda, but the party's Politburo said earlier this month that "a turning point is needed to dynamically promote radical change in agricultural development."

It's unclear whether North Korea will take any significant steps to address food shortages. The impoverished country devotes much of its scarce resources to its nuclear program.

"To produce more grains, they should increase inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural machines. But North Korea rarely comes up with such measures," said Nam Sung-wook, a professor at Korea University in South Korea. "They have a limited budget. They can still take such steps (to produce more grain) with the money they're spending on its missile development program."

STARS AND STRIPES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Transportation
944

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Sheriff's office faces civil rights abuse allegations

CA LOS ANGELES — The California attorney general on Thursday opened a civil rights investigation into the Riverside County Sheriff's Office, one of the largest law enforcement agencies in Southern California, after deaths in county jails hit a two-decade high last year and other allegations of excessive use of force surfaced.

Attorney General Rob Bonta announced the investigation in Los Angeles following what he called "deeply concerning" allegations of misconduct within the sheriff's office and confinement conditions at the sheriff's jails. He did not give examples.

While Bonta said no specific incidents were a tipping point to prompt the civil rights investigation, there have been patterns in data — including disparate impacts on communities of color — that, in his words, have been "disturbing for some time."

Sheriff Chad Bianco, in a video response posted online, called the investigation "a political stunt" and said Bonta, a Democrat, was bowing to anti-law enforcement activists' demands.



JACQUELINE DORMER, (POTTSVILLE, PA.) REPUBLICAN-HERALD/AP

Man pleads guilty to supporting ISIS group

FL ST. PETERSBURG — A Florida man accused in 2020 of plotting terror attacks in the United States and acquiring an arsenal of weapons has pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State extremist group.

Mohammed Al-Azhari, a 25-year-old U.S. citizen, also agreed to accept an 18-year prison sentence during the plea hearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Anthony Porcelli in Tampa federal court. A formal sentencing date has not been set.

Al-Azhari admitted in court papers that he scouted potential terrorism targets around Tampa Bay, sought to acquire multiple weapons and pledged an oath of allegiance to the Islamic State. The FBI recorded many conversations between Al-Azhari and confidential or undercover sources in which he discussed avenging imprisoned Islamic State fighters and using violence to oppose U.S. military actions in the Middle East.

An FBI affidavit says Al-Azhari was recorded as expressing admiration for Omar Mateen, the deceased shooter at the Orlando Pulse nightclub massacre in 2016. In a conversation with a confidential informant, the FBI says, Al-Azhari said, "That's how I want to die, to be honest."

Senate OKs bill to create crime to punish hazing

KY FRANKFORT — The Kentucky Senate voted to carve out a new crime that could

Story time

Regina Burhop, of Pottsville, Pa., reads "Panda Bear, Panda Bear, What Do You See?" by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle on Thursday along with her daughter Ella during the 2023 African American Read-In at the downtown Pottsville Free Public Library. Members of the Martin Luther King Family Enrichment Center joined with the library to celebrate Black History Month.

punish hazing with jail time, responding to calls for action following the death of a university student.

The bill would create a felony crime for hazing that results in the death or serious injury of a student. The offense would be punishable by up to five years in prison. Also under the bill, someone accused of recklessly engaging in hazing would face a misdemeanor charge, punishable by up to a year in jail.

The bill won Senate passage on a 27-7 vote, sending the proposal to the House.

The bill defines hazing as endangering the mental or physical health of a student for recruitment, initiation into or affiliation with an organization, or to enhance or maintain status within a group. It would include consuming alcohol, tobacco or food to the extent that it puts someone at risk of injury, or such "physical brutality" as whipping, beating or branding or exposure to the elements.

Man to serve 10 years for meth-laced fake Adderall

RI PROVIDENCE — A man who admitted to having more than 665,000 counterfeit Adderall pills containing methamphetamine has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison.

Dylan Rodas, 27, of Cumberland, R.I., pleaded guilty in September to possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of

methamphetamine. He was sentenced on Thursday.

It is believed to be the largest seizure of methamphetamine-laced fake Adderall pills in the U.S., as well as among the largest seizures of methamphetamine in DEA New England Field Division history, said Zachary Cunha, U.S. attorney for Rhode Island.

The drugs, with a street value of about \$4.6 million, were seized during two court-authorized searches in Cumberland last March.

Federal agency proposes spotted owl protection

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Federal wildlife officials announced a proposal to classify one of two dwindling California spotted owl populations as endangered after a lawsuit by conservation groups required the government to reassess a Trump administration decision not to protect the brown and white birds.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed that California spotted owls that have their habitats in coastal and Southern California be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

That population "does not have a strong ability to withstand normal variations in environmental conditions, persist through catastrophic events, or adapt to new environmental conditions throughout its range," wildlife officials said.

The other California spotted owl

population, which lives in Sierra Nevada forests in California and western Nevada, would be classified as threatened, the agency said.

The habitat of the medium-sized brown owl with white spots on its head and chest and a barred tail is under serious threat from current logging practices and the effects of climate change.

13 alleged leaders of MS-13 gang indicted

NY NEW YORK — Federal prosecutors announced charges against more than a dozen alleged high-ranking leaders of the international gang MS-13, accusing them of directing criminal activities including murder in the United States, El Salvador, Mexico and other countries over the past two decades.

An indictment unsealed by the U.S. Department of Justice in the Eastern District of New York details charges against 13 defendants including racketeering conspiracy, conspiracy to provide or conceal material support to terrorists and narco-terrorism conspiracy.

Four of the alleged gang leaders were expelled from Mexico and arrested by the FBI at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, according to a Justice Department statement. They face additional charges and could receive the death penalty if convicted, prosecutors said.

Four co-defendants are at large,

while the rest are believed to be in custody in El Salvador pending extradition, the statement said.

In El Salvador the alleged gang leaders operated military-style training camps for firearms and explosives, according to the indictment.

Push returns for state to add hate crime law

SC COLUMBIA — A Democratic lawmaker who called the late pastor of Emanuel AME Church a friend is continuing his push to make South Carolina the 49th state with a hate crime law.

After an avowed white supremacist murdered nine members of the oldest African Methodist Episcopal church in the South in 2015, Rep. Wendell Gilliard revamped his ongoing pursuit of enhanced state penalties for hate crimes.

Before adjourning that summer, lawmakers provided a special session might allow them to stiffen punishments for crimes motivated by bias against particular groups. But no such proposal has become law in the years since.

The measure took its first steps this year when a House subcommittee unanimously advanced the bill Thursday. The House approved a similar bill two years ago with bipartisan support. But the endeavor stalled in the Senate when eight Republicans blocked debate.

From The Associated Press

FACES

‘Everything Everywhere’ rolls on at SAG Awards

Multiverse tale gains momentum, nearly sweeps film acting honors

BY JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

The unlikely awards-season juggernaut “Everything Everywhere All at Once” marched on at the Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday, and even gathered steam with wins not just for best ensemble, Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan but also for Jamie Lee Curtis.

The SAG Awards, often an Oscar preview, threw some curveballs into the Oscars race in a ceremony streamed live on Netflix’s YouTube page from Fairmont Century Plaza in Los Angeles.

But the clearest result of the SAG Awards was the overwhelming success of Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert’s madcap multiverse tale, which has now used its hot dog fingers to snag top honors from the acting, directing and producing guilds. Only one film (“Apollo 13”) has won all three and not gone on to win best picture at the Oscars.

After so much of the cast of “Everything Everywhere All at Once” had already been on the stage to accept awards, the night’s final moment belonged to 94-year-old James Hong, a supporting player in the film and a trailblazer for Asian-American representation in Hollywood. He brought up the ignoble yellowface history of the 1937 film “The Good Earth.”

“The leading role was played with these guys with their eyes taped up like this and they talked like this because the producers said the Asians were not good enough and they were not box office,” said Hong. “But look at us now!”

Hong added that the cast of “Everything Everywhere All at Once” wasn’t all Chinese, though he granted Jamie Lee Curtis had a good Chinese name. Curtis’ win was one of the most surprising of the night, coming over the long-time favorite, Angela Bassett (“Black Panther: Wakanda Forever”), who had seemed to be on a clear path to becoming the first actor to win an Oscar for a performance in a Marvel movie.

A visibly moved Curtis said she was wearing the wedding ring her father, Tony Curtis, gave her mother, Janet Leigh.

“I know you look at me and think ‘Nepo baby,’” said Curtis, who won in her first SAG nomination. “But the truth of the matter is that I’m 64 years old and this is just amazing.”

The actors guild, though, lent some clarity to the lead categories. Though some have seen best actress as a tossup between Yeoh and BAFTA winner Cate Blanchett (“Tár”), Yeoh again took home the award for best female lead performance.

“This is not just for me,” said Yeoh, the first Asian actress to win the SAG Award for female lead. “It’s for every little girl that looks like me.”

Quan, the former child star, also won for best supporting male actor. The “Everything Everywhere All at Once” co-star had left acting for years. He’s also the first Asian to win best male supporting actor at the SAG Awards.

“When I stepped away from acting, it was because there were so few opportunities,” said Quan. “Now, tonight we are celebrating

James Hong, Michelle Yeoh, Stephanie Hsu, Hong Chau, Harry Shum Jr. The landscape looks so different now.”

Best actor has been one of the hardest races to call. Austin Butler (“Elvis”), Brendan Fraser (“The Whale”) and Colin Farrell (“The Banshees of Inisherin”) have all been seen as possible winners.

But it was Fraser who went home with the SAG Award for his comeback performance as an obese shut-in in “The Whale.”

“Believe me, if you just stay in there and put one foot in front of the other, you’ll get where you need to go,” said Fraser, who anxiously eyed the actor-shaped trophy and left the stage saying he was going to go look for some pants for him.

The SAG Awards are considered one of the most reliable Oscar bellwethers. Actors make up the biggest percentage of the film academy, so their choices have the largest sway.

Sunday’s livestream meant a slightly scaled-down vibe. Without a broadcast time limit, winners weren’t played off.

Another streaming effect: No bleeping.

“Abbott Elementary” took the SAG award for best ensemble in a comedy series.

“The White Lotus” won best ensemble in a drama series and another win for Jennifer Coolidge, coming off her wins at the Emmys and the Golden Globes.

The ceremony’s first award went to a winner from last year: Jessica Chastain. A year after winning for her lead performance in



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP photos

Jamie Lee Curtis, right, reacts to Michelle Yeoh winning the award for female lead for “Everything Everywhere All at Once” at the Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday in Los Angeles.



Brendan Fraser took the award for male lead for “The Whale.”



Jennifer Coolidge accepts an acting award for the television drama “The White Lotus.”

the film “The Eyes of Tammy Faye,” Chastain won best female actor in a TV movie or limited series for Showtime’s country music power couple series “George & Tammy.”

SAG Awards winners

- FILM**
Ensemble: “Everything Everywhere All at Once”
Male actor in a leading role: Brendan Fraser, “The Whale”
Female actor in a leading role: Michelle Yeoh, “Everything Everywhere All at Once”
Male actor in a supporting role: Ke Huy Quan, “Everything Everywhere All at Once”
Female actor in a supporting role: Jamie Lee Curtis, “Everything Everywhere All at Once”
Stunt Ensemble: “Top Gun: Maverick”
- TELEVISION**
Drama ensemble: “The White Lotus”
Comedy ensemble: “Abbott Elementary”
Female actor in a drama series: Jennifer Coolidge, “The White Lotus”
Male actor in a drama series: Jason Bateman, “Ozark”
Female actor in a comedy series: Jean Smart, “Hacks”
Male actor in a comedy series: Jeremy Allen White, “The Bear”
Male actor in a TV limited series or movie: Sam Elliott, “1883”
Female actor in a TV limited series or movie: Jessica Chastain, “George & Tammy”
Stunt ensemble: “Stranger Things”

Associated Press

Angela Bassett, ‘Wakanda Forever’ top NAACP Image Awards

From wire reports

Angela Bassett won entertainer of the year Feb. 25 at the NAACP Image Awards on a night that also saw her take home an acting trophy for the television series “9-1-1.”

The Bassett-led Marvel superhero sequel “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever” won best motion picture at the ceremony in Pasadena, Calif.

Viola Davis won outstanding actress for the action epic “The Woman King,” a project she championed and starred in. Will Smith won for the slavery drama “Emancipation,” his first release since last year’s Academy Awards, where he slapped comedian Chris Rock on stage before winning his first best actor trophy.

“Abbott Elementary” won for outstanding comedy series.



RICHARD SHOTWELL, INVISION/AP

Angela Bassett poses Feb. 25 with an acting trophy for the television drama “9-1-1” and one for entertainer of the year at the NAACP Image Awards.

The ceremony, which honors entertainers, athletes and writers of color, was hosted by Queen Latifah.

‘Cocaine Bear’ on a high with \$23.1M, ‘Ant-Man’ sinks fast

The gonzo R-rated horror comedy “Cocaine Bear,” made for \$35 million, sniffed up \$23.1 million in its opening weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday, while Marvel’s “Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania” shrank unusually quickly in its second weekend.

“Quantumania” was still No. 1 with an estimated \$32.2 million in ticket sales in U.S. and Canadian theaters. But the “Ant-Man” sequel dropped a steep 69.7% in its second weekend, the worst-ever decline for an MCU film.

“Jesus Revolution” also debuted strongly. The film, starring Kelsey Grammer and Joel Courtney, launched with \$15.5 million over the weekend.

Other news

■ A Florida judge has issued an arrest warrant for rapper **Kodak Black** for failing a drug test while on bail for a drug charge. The warrant was issued Feb. 23 after Black did not appear for a scheduled drug test and then days later submitted a sample that tested positive for fentanyl.

■ CBS announced Feb. 24 that “**The Late Late Show with James Corden**” will air its final episode on April 27.

■ **Walter Mirisch**, the Oscar-winning film producer who oversaw such classics as “Some Like It Hot,” “West Side Story” and “In the Heat of the Night,” died Feb. 24 in Los Angeles. He was 101.

■ **Gordon Pinsent**, an award-winning Canadian actor acclaimed for his role in the film “Away From Her,” died in his sleep Feb. 26. He was 92.

STARS AND STRIPES

OPINION

Biden backed Carter. He can learn from his story.

BY DOYLE McMANUS

Los Angeles Times

History isn't kind to one-term presidents, at least in the short run.

For most of the last 40 years, Jimmy Carter's presidency has been widely remembered as an epic failure, the cautionary tale of a politician who was soundly rejected by voters when he sought a second term in 1980.

Happily for Carter, 98, who entered hospice care this month, his reputation has since risen, thanks to his admirable post-presidency and biographies that have reassessed his record more favorably.

Carter's presidency, they argue, was better than it looked. He enacted historic environmental legislation, including the first federal funding for renewable energy. He deregulated airlines, making air travel more affordable. He made human rights a central theme of U.S. diplomacy and negotiated landmark peace accords between Israel and Egypt.

But by the time he sought reelection, inflation had soared past 12%, the economy was heading toward recession and voters wanted a change.

After his loss to Ronald Reagan, Carter was a prophet without honor, even in his own party. He was uninvited to Democratic conventions and rarely mentioned by his successors.

Joe Biden witnessed all of it up close. In 1976, Biden, then 33, was a thoroughgoing Jimmy Carter Democrat. He was the first U.S. senator to endorse the former Georgia governor's presidential candidacy. He backed Carter again in 1980, when the then-president faced a bruising primary against the more liberal Sen. Edward Kennedy, of Massachusetts.

What lessons did Carter's tenure teach Biden, who was already thinking about running for president?

First, politics is important, beginning with managing your own party's coalition. Carter failed spectacularly on that score. He disdained bargaining with members of Congress and often didn't even return their calls.

"Carter thought politics was sinful," his vice president, Walter Mondale, said. "The worst thing you could say to Carter if you wanted him to do something was that it was politically the best thing to do."

Even as a first-term senator, Biden saw that was a problem.

"The president is learning, but not fast enough," he said in 1977. "Nixon had his enemies list and President Carter has his friends list. I guess I'm on his friends list, and I don't know which is worse."

When Carter ran into trouble, he was left with few allies. Democrats in Congress helped kill several of his top legislative priorities, including health care and tax reform bills.

Biden is the opposite — a relentless schmoozer who began his 2020 presidential campaign by knitting his party's moderate and progressive wings together.

In his first two years as president, Biden focused on managing unruly Democratic majorities in Congress and passed major bills on climate change, infrastructure spending and semiconductor production.

Second, Carter's troubles reaffirmed an ancient political truism: In an election year, the economy — especially inflation — trumps every other issue.

Carter signed landmark legislation, but once voters encountered gasoline shortages and inflation soaring above 12%, none of it seemed to matter.

He responded to economic crisis by proposing an austerity budget and appointing an inflation hawk, Paul Volcker, to run the Federal Reserve. Volcker pushed interest rates up to 20%, which eventually tamed inflation.

But by then, Carter was a private citizen back in Plains, Ga.

Biden is presumably hoping his Fed chair, Jerome Powell, will be gentler as he tries to steer the economy to a soft landing before the 2024 election.

Meanwhile, the president isn't embracing Carter-style austerity. Instead, he's touting his administration's spending on infrastructure and manufacturing jobs.

A third lesson from Carter's fall: Foreign policy success may not help a president's reelection prospects, but foreign policy failures will hurt.

Carter concluded a major nuclear arms agreement with the Soviet Union, normalized diplomatic relations with China and negotiated the Camp David accords, ending the threat of major war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. But when he ran for reelection in 1980, the only international issue that mattered to most voters was Iran's seizure of 52 American hostages, a problem Carter failed to solve.

Afterward, Carter said he was "one helicopter short" of winning, a reference to the mission's failure. His loss had many causes, but that episode probably doomed his chances.

Biden's biggest foreign policy success — his leadership of a coalition opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine — doesn't appear to have bolstered his approval ratings; they've been stuck around 43% for the last six months.

But at least Ukraine has displaced the public's memory of the botched U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021.

If Biden does run for a second term, as he says he intends, Carter's life may offer one more lesson: The voters' verdict isn't always the last word — win or lose.

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Helping Ukraine may mean helping the entire world

BY JAY AMBROSE

Tribune News Service

It is a time of Russia indulging in nuke talk, yanking people out of prisons to replace the dead soldiers in Ukrainian battlefields and China saying it just might hand Russia more fighting tools. While Ukraine was simultaneously losing some land it had won, there were also some positives, not the least of them a surprise visit by President Joe Biden standing in a danger zone to make it clear that the United States is steadfastly behind Ukraine and NATO.

President Biden, thank you. Here was a bold move, and no doubt it boosted Ukrainian confidence in the United States continuing to supply it with loads of moolah and weapons, not just defensive weapons, but offensive weapons. NATO, with more at stake, is not doing all it could, but is still saying yes, we are with you. Ukraine remains blessed with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the former TV comedian with courage, charisma, high intelligence and rare leadership capacities, no laughing matter to Ukraine's enemies.

Was it OK for him to force 11 political parties with ties to Russia to get out of parliament? It makes it harder to see him as a respecter of rule of law, but may have been necessary for national survival. His speech to Congress a while back was touching, encouraging and democratically heroic. He

doesn't want to give an inch, has accomplished what no one imagined, but could not have done it without the help of America and NATO. Here is the big question. Should America keep helping out? The experts disagree with each other, and here, first, is the point of view that says no.

The conflict is costing us heaps of money, and in this COVID-recovering, overspending U.S. economy, we just can't afford it. This has become a war of attrition with lots of soldiers dying on both sides and women and children being blasted to death in acts of Russian terrorism. The Russians hugely outnumber Ukrainians, and Russian President Vladimir Putin will recruit with however many chains and handcuffs are required. Remember, this war is his whole life right now: the resurrection of the Soviet Union, Russia a foremost power again, his name never forgotten.

Thanks to China and its internationally needed energy resources, the Russian economy has stayed alive and could get better as Russia attains more weapons. Russia might even be serious in its yapping about the possible use of nuclear weapons. If we want to save lives and money, we should stop fighting and win peace if not fairness.

Another perspective is that there is no way virtual surrender would save lives or that Russia would risk the retaliation through nuclear games. With Ukrainian victory, Russia

would simply go to war with other countries and we'd either have to fight for them or see Russia become an incredible, crushing, threatening power again.

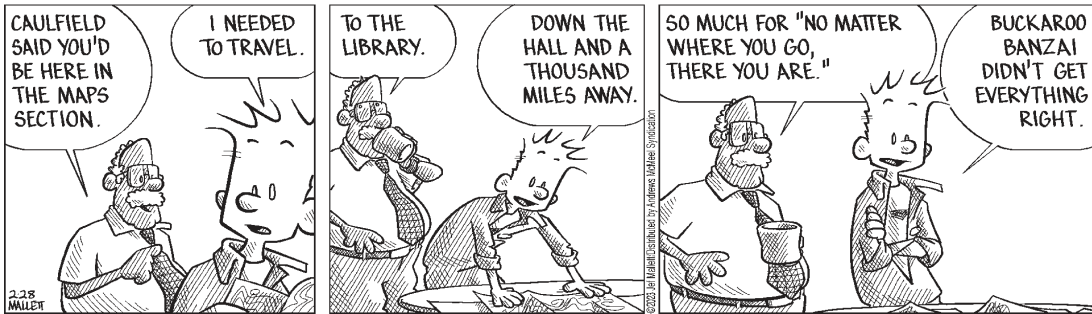
There are also the brave, good Ukrainian people to worry about. It might be that a quick end of the war would keep some from being killed, but there are possibilities of massive death sentences, concentration camps and the torture of totalitarian government. China could be encouraged to go ahead and take over Taiwan, with North Korea and Iran starting their own wars, too, maybe.

The thoughts above are a fraction of the possibilities of varied decisions, but here is something else to keep in mind. This isn't just about the United States, NATO, Ukraine and Russia, but what might happen to the whole world. This, after all, is an era of growing Chinese economic and military might, ongoing Mideast concerns, Europe seemingly unsure about its future, Russia wanting to revive its evil past, South America gone awry, Africa's possible tangled routes, climate change and democracy seemingly insistent on an international turn from conquest to retreat.

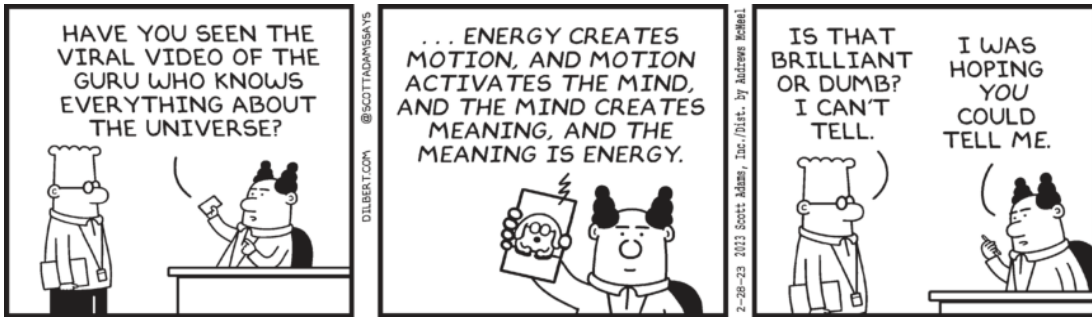
There are also issues about morality, faith, socialism, capitalism and liberty, and we had better be wise.

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service.

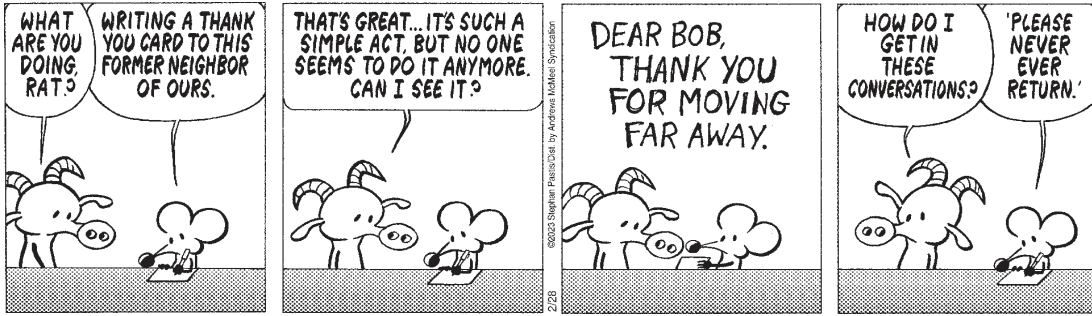
Frazz



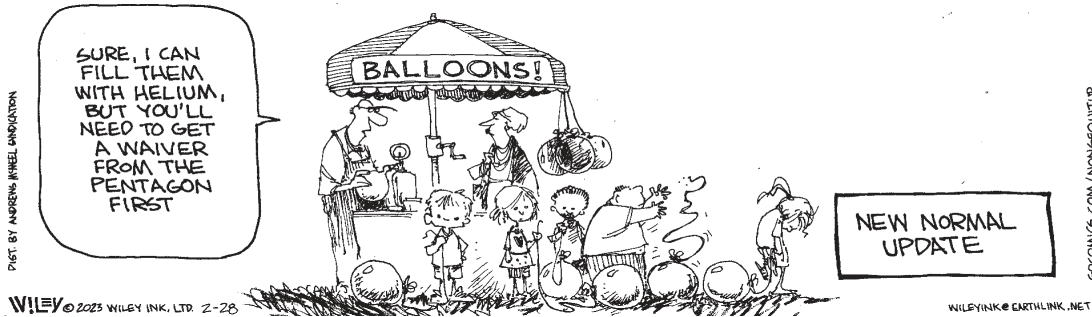
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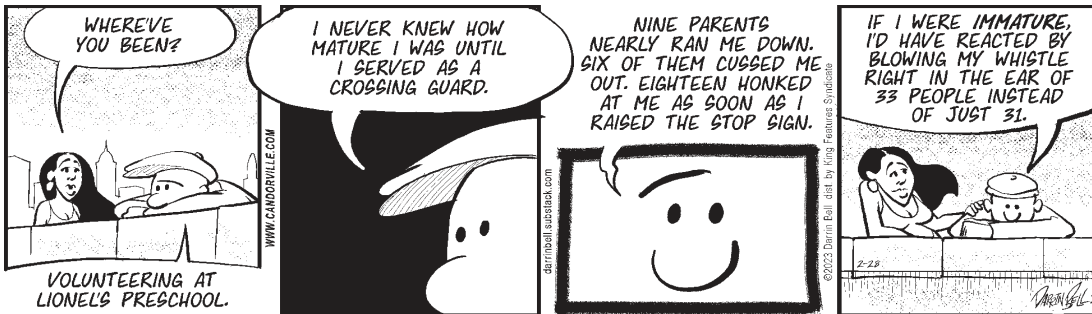
Pearls Before Swine



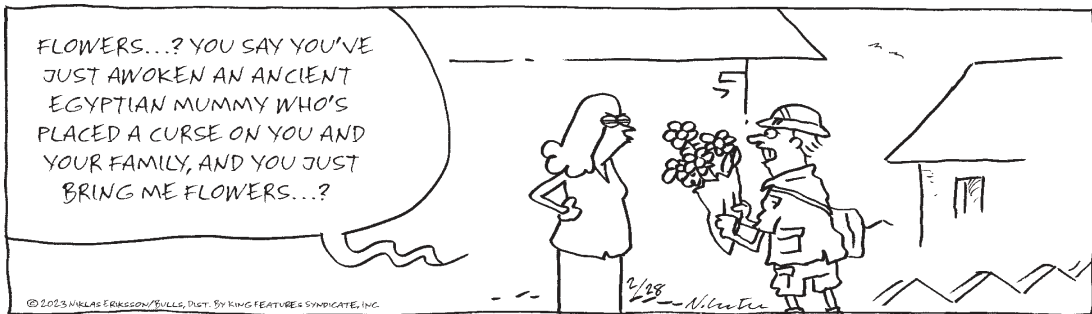
Non Sequitur



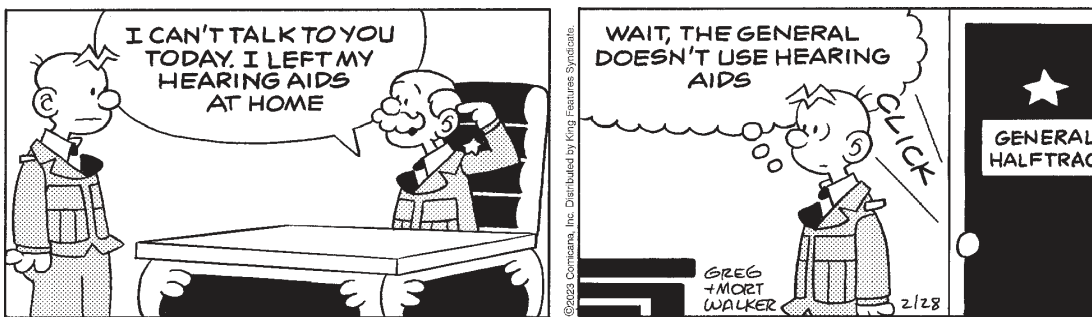
Candorville



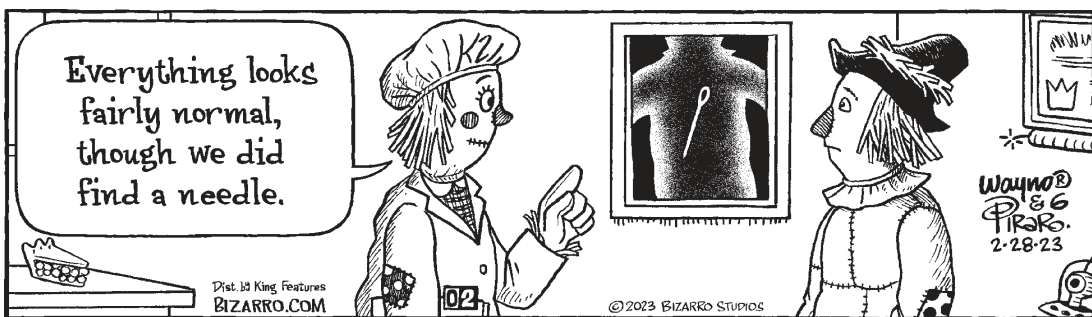
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
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42					43	44				45	46	47
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51					52					53		

ACROSS

- 1 Totals
- 5 Priestly vestments
- 9 Aachen article
- 12 Prudish
- 13 Self-referential
- 14 Citric beverage
- 15 Colorful reef swimmer
- 17 Free (of)
- 18 Goals
- 19 Queried
- 21 2023 memoir by Prince Harry
- 24 Met solo
- 25 Drei minus zwei
- 26 Dogpatch resident
- 30 Ryan of "Top Gun"
- 31 Resurrected
- 32 Miracle- —
- 33 Repeats
- 35 Gels
- 36 Mandolin's kin
- 37 CBS founder
- 38 Old anesthetic
- 40 Play opener
- 42 24 horas
- 43 Uriel, for one
- 48 Blackbird
- 49 Apple center
- 50 Empty truck's weight
- 51 Sea, to Henri

DOWN

- 1 "Me time" resort
- 2 Coffee vessel ending
- 3 Russian jet
- 4 Mascara mishaps
- 5 Like most car radios
- 6 Maui garlands
- 7 "Butter" K-pop band
- 8 Desert-like
- 9 Jessica Alba TV series
- 10 Actress Falco
- 11 Sitcom star Foxx
- 16 Fib
- 20 Bro or sis
- 21 Big rig
- 22 Painter Mondrian
- 23 Pasta variety
- 24 Pub orders
- 26 Low-calorie
- 27 British verb ending
- 28 Art Deco master
- 29 Optimistic
- 31 Hectic routine
- 34 Street, in Montreal
- 35 Virtuous types
- 37 School org.
- 38 Dutch cheese
- 39 Fork part
- 40 Estate measure
- 41 "Mask" actress
- 44 Tier
- 45 Lass
- 46 Mound stat
- 47 Allow

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	L	E	X		A	L	F		Y	O	R	E				
R	O	M	A	N	C	E	R		E	V	I	L				
C	O	I	N	C	I	D	E		M	E	N	S				
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C	H	A	D	S			F	R	A	N						
H	U	L	U			O	L	I	V	I	E	R				
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B	A	R	N				D	I	O	G	E	N	E	S		
S	N	A	G				E	O	N		S	E	E	P		

2-28

CRYPTOQUIP

U S T I L P V S I O G B A T R R
 A G L H R D I D C K G U R D Z V D G X
 Z T J C - J D Z , X G J I P X P D Z I O H D E
 G X U P K D E ? H G J I T B I S G J P I O .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TWO PEOPLE ARE GETTING MARRIED, SOME WOULD SAY THEY'RE ENTERING INTO A UNION CONTRACT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals C

MLB/BOXING

Scherzer on new rules: 'Yeah, I love it'

Mets pitcher says he controls tempo in 'cat-and-mouse' game with batter

Associated Press

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — New York Mets right-hander Max Scherzer described pitching under Major League Baseball's new rules as a "cat-and-mouse" game.

Contrary to previous years, Scherzer feels the pitcher finally has control of the tempo because of the new pitch clock.

In his first start of the Grapefruit League schedule, Scherzer allowed a run in the second inning but struck out five while working the first two innings of the Mets' 6-3 win over Washington.

"Really, the power the pitcher has now — I can totally dictate pace," the three-time Cy Young Award winner said. "The rule change of the hitter having only one timeout changes the complete dynamic of the hitter-and-pitcher dynamic. Yeah, I love it."

The pitch clock is among a series of new rules for this season — including limits on infield shifts and larger bases — that MLB hopes will improve pace of play and introduce more action into the game.

The average game time through three days of spring training is 2 hours, 39 minutes, down from an average of 3:01 for all of spring training last year.

Scherzer says he is learning to play around with the pitch clock.

Washington's Michael Chavis, the second hitter in the second inning, stepped out of the box when he felt Scherzer was taking too

long. That was fine with Scherzer.

The right-hander held the ball for more than 10 seconds before delivering the next pitch as Chavis had to remain in the batter's box, locked eyes with Scherzer. The veteran pitcher felt he had imposed his will, even though Chavis ultimately singled to right.

"I can work extremely quick. And I can work extremely slow," Scherzer said. "There's another layer here to be able to mess with the hitter's timing."

"I can come set even before the hitter's in the box. I can't pitch until eight (seconds left on the clock). But as soon as his eyes are up, I can go. If his eyes are up with 12 seconds to go, I can fire."

"I had the conversation with the umpire (David Rackley) to make sure that's legal. And that is (legal). I'm just getting used to how this is going to be in 2023."

According to MLB, there were 69 pitch-timer violations through the first 35 spring training games over the weekend — including 35 violations in 16 games Sunday.

While Scherzer thinks the timer is working in pitchers' favor, hitters aren't complaining, either.

"I like it," Yankees star Aaron Judge said. "I think you can kind of play around with it a little bit. I think it definitely speeds up the game. Anything that kind of keeps the pitcher moving and on the go, and hopefully keep him out of breath, I'm looking forward to it."

Cardinals manager Oliver Mar-



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Mets starting pitcher Max Scherzer talks with home plate umpire David Rackley after working the second inning of a spring training game against the Nationals on Sunday in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

mol said MLB is providing updates — nearly in real time — on the rules changes package that is making this spring training unique.

The two major changes are a pitch clock and a limit on extreme infield shifts.

"They did a really nice job of sending out a memo this morning with all the things that took place yesterday and questions that players and managers that just had to be addressed in order that

you can cover it with your staff and club as you feel appropriate," Marmol said. "So we did that with our staff and brought two different points with our players because they've done a really good job of communication."

There were more hiccups on Sunday throughout the Cactus and Grapefruit League games, but most took the changes in stride.

Rockies reliever Daniel Bard was called for a ball after throwing a warmup pitch after the 30-sec-

ond deadline heading into an inning. The 30-second mark before innings was also a source of confusion during the Cardinals-Marlins game. Two Cardinals pitchers were called for balls before the start of innings before, according to Marmol, the umpires gathered and realized they were interpreting the rule incorrectly.

"It's spring training for everybody," Marmol said. "Those things will get ironed out before we get out of here."

Fury hands Paul first ring defeat by split decision

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — YouTube star Jake Paul took the first defeat of his professional boxing career Sunday night, losing a split decision to Tommy Fury.

Paul (6-1) knocked down Fury with a short left hand early in the final round of their cruiserweight bout, but the younger half-brother of heavyweight champion Tyson Fury controlled long stretches of the eight-round meeting at Diriyah Arena.

Two judges scored the bout 76-73 for Fury (9-0, 4 KOs), while the third favored Paul, 75-74.

"I've already won every single way in life," Paul said. "I made it farther than I ever thought I would, and beyond. This is a humbling experience. I'll take it on the chin and come back."

Fury is the first actual professional boxer fought by Paul, who built his lucrative second career



AP

Tommy Fury, left, hits Jake Paul during their boxing match Monday in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Fury won a split decision.

by taking on mixed martial artists and a fellow YouTuber in boxing bouts that generated huge social media attention despite featuring more enthusiasm than skill.

Fury also is much better known as a celebrity sibling — and much more accomplished as a reality television star — than as a boxer,

leading to a relatively even matchup with Paul. Fury's unbeaten record entering this bout was built against a series of wildly overmatched opponents with a combined record of 24-176-5.

"In my first main event, 23 years old, I had the world on my shoulders, and I came through,"

Fury said. "This, to me, is a world title fight. I trained so hard for this. This was my destiny."

Both fighters had good moments in the first four rounds in front of a star-studded crowd in Saudi Arabia, but Fury landed more significant shots behind a consistent jab that allowed him to keep Paul at a distance.

Paul appeared to stun Fury with an accurate left hook early in the fifth round, but he also lost a point when the referee penalized him, apparently for pushing down on Fury's head in a clinch. The referee then took a point from Fury in the sixth, apparently for excessive clinching.

Fury had a strong seventh round despite a cut near his left eye from a clash of heads, repeatedly tagging Paul with combinations. But Paul abruptly reversed the momentum with a perfectly timed left that wobbled Fury, who

put his left glove on the canvas to steady himself and bounced up immediately.

Fury finished strong and claimed the decision.

Fury and Paul were slated to meet two times previously, but Fury was unavailable both times. He injured a rib before their scheduled bout in December 2021, and he was denied entry to the U.S. last summer ahead of a planned meeting in August.

Paul used the postponements to taunt Fury, and the emotions built into a contentious weigh-in earlier this week in Saudi Arabia, which jumped at the chance to underwrite this boxing spectacle and social media event.

"All the way through these 2½ years, I had a dream, I had a vision that I would win this fight," Fury said. "No one believed me. Now I can stand up, and everyone can take note."

NBA

ROUNDUP

Lillard gets 71 points in Blazers' win

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. —The celebration surrounding Damian Lillard's record-breaking performance was short-lived.

Lillard set franchise and career marks with 71 points — tied for the most in the NBA this season — and 13 three-pointers in the Portland Trail Blazers' 131-114 victory over the Houston Rockets on Sunday night.

"I enjoy those moments in the game when I'm just going after people," Lillard said, "when I'm in attack mode."

But soon after the streamers fell to the court and the crowd headed for the exits, Lillard was summoned for a drug test. Turns out, the seven-time All-Star who's unafraid of taking a three-pointer from half court is afraid of needles.

"I know I've got a lot of tattoos, but when you're doing a blood draw, it's different from tattoos. It brought me down from here to the floor," Lillard said gesturing with his hand raised then dropping it.

And Lillard got tested on the night he tied Cleveland's Donovan Mitchell for the most points in a game this season after Mitchell also scored 71 in a win over Chicago on Jan. 2. His 13 three-pointers were also one shy of the NBA record set by Golden State's Klay Thompson in 2018. Thompson's Warriors teammate Stephen Curry (2016) and Chicago's Zach LaVine (2019) also made 13 threes. Lillard broke his own franchise mark of 61 points, which he'd done twice, on a three-pointer with 4:42 left that also topped his previous career record for threes, which was 11.

Known for his humility, Lillard was unsure how to mark the occasion.

"I think any hooper enjoys those moments when you're hot, you're in attack mode, you're feeling good," Lillard said. "But it's the stuff afterward that I struggle with, like when I walked off the court, was I supposed to be overly excited, or what?"

Bucks 104, Suns 101: Jrue Holiday scored 33 points, Brook Lopez made a tiebreaking layup with 24.8 seconds left and host Milwaukee edged Phoenix for its 14th consecutive victory.

The nationally televised game didn't include Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo or Phoenix's Kevin Durant.

Antetokounmpo was out with a bruised right quadriceps after leaving in the first quarter of the Bucks' 128-99 victory over the Miami Heat on Friday. Durant has yet to appear in a game for the Suns and hasn't played since Jan. 8 because of sprained right medial



STEVE DYKES/AP

Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard, left, hits a three-point shot over Houston Rockets forward Kenyon Martin Jr., right, during the second half in Portland, Ore., on Sunday.

collateral ligament.

Lopez had 22 points and 12 rebounds for the Bucks, and Khris Middleton added 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Devin Booker scored 24 points, Deandre Ayton had 22 and Chris Paul added 18 for Phoenix. Ayton also had 11 rebounds.

Lakers 111, Mavericks 108: Anthony Davis had 30 points and 15 rebounds, including a putback dunk for the late lead, and visiting Los Angeles erased a 27-point deficit to beat Dallas.

LeBron James scored 26 points as the Lakers won their fourth in five games by turning a showcase of stars from a laughier into a thriller that featured 13 lead changes in the fourth quarter.

Luka Doncic scored 26 points for the Mavs, but the youngest of the four superstars was limited and frustrated after a 14-point first quarter that sent Dallas on its way to the huge lead.

Kyrie Irving had 21 points and 11 rebounds for Dallas, but didn't take over in the fourth quarter the way he did in his first victory with Doncic since the trade from Brooklyn — over lowly San Antonio.

Hawks 129, Nets 127: Trae Young sank a buzzer-beating jumper over Spencer Dinwiddie to lift host Atlanta over Brooklyn a few hours before the Hawks announced they hired Quin Snyder to replace the fired Nate McMillan as coach.

Young finished with 34 points for the Hawks, who recovered after blowing an 18-point lead to overcome four Nets with at least 20 points.

Cam Johnson had 27 points for Brooklyn, including a three-pointer from the corner to tie it at 127 with 7.8 seconds remaining. Mikal Bridges scored 24 for the Nets, who have lost four of five. Cam Thomas added 22 points and Dinwiddie had 20.

Dejounte Murray scored 28 points and Bogdan Bogdanovic added 22 for Atlanta, which won its second consecutive game under interim coach Joe Prunty after McMillan was fired Tuesday.

Nuggets 134, Clippers 124 (OT): Nikola Jokic had 40 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists to lead host Denver to an overtime victory against Los Angeles in a matchup of Western Conference contenders.

Paul George nearly won it for the Clippers with an incredible shot at the end of regulation, but his long heave from just in front of the three-point line in the backcourt came just after the buzzer.

It was the 23rd triple-double of the season for Jokic and his 14th in the past 19 games. Denver is undefeated this season when he has a triple-double.

Michael Porter Jr. had 29 points and 11 rebounds for the Nuggets. Jamal Murray added 21 points and 12 assists.

Bulls 102, Wizards 82: DeMar DeRozan scored 29 points, Zach LaVine added 27 and host Chicago overcame its shooting woes from long range to beat Washington.

Alex Caruso and LaVine each sank three-pointers midway through the third quarter to turn a one-point deficit into a 57-52 lead the Bulls wouldn't relinquish. Before the consecutive threes, the

Bulls converted only one of their first 16 three-point attempts.

The Bulls won their second game in a row after losing six straight to close the first half of the season. They finished shooting 8-for-30 from three-point range, while the Wizards shot only 6-for-28 from long range.

Cavaliers 118, Raptors 93: Donovan Mitchell scored 35 points and Jarrett Allen had 23 points and 11 rebounds, sending host Cleveland past Toronto.

Mitchell made eight three-pointers — one shy of his career high — and had six rebounds and four assists in 31 minutes as the Cavaliers snapped their three-game losing streak and remained fourth in the Eastern Conference.

Darius Garland added 18 points and 11 assists, and Evan Mobley had 18 points and nine rebounds for Cleveland, which improved to 26-7 at home this season.

Kings 124, Thunder 115: De'Aaron Fox had 33 points and eight assists and visiting Sacramento defeated short-handed Oklahoma City.

Keegan Murray scored 20 points and Domantas Sabonis added 14 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists for the Kings, who won their third straight.

Warriors 109, Timberwolves 104: Klay Thompson scored 32 points, including a key three-pointer with 2:05 to play, and host Golden State held off Minnesota.

Donte DiVincenzo put Golden State ahead for good with a three with 3:02 left and finished with 21 points, eight rebounds and five assists. He also won a jump ball in the final minute.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	44	17	.721	—
Philadelphia	39	20	.661	4
Brooklyn	34	26	.567	9½
New York	35	27	.565	9½
Toronto	30	32	.484	14½

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	32	29	.525	—
Atlanta	31	30	.508	1
Washington	28	32	.467	3½
Orlando	25	36	.410	7
Charlotte	19	43	.306	13½

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	43	17	.717	—
Cleveland	39	25	.609	6
Chicago	28	33	.459	15½
Indiana	27	35	.435	17
Detroit	15	46	.246	28½

Western Conference

Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	36	23	.610	—
Dallas	32	30	.516	5½
New Orleans	30	31	.492	7
San Antonio	14	47	.230	23
Houston	13	47	.217	23½

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	43	19	.694	—
Utah	31	31	.500	12
Minnesota	31	32	.492	12½
Portland	29	31	.483	13
Oklahoma City	28	32	.467	14

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Sacramento	35	25	.583	—
Phoenix	33	29	.532	3
L.A. Clippers	33	30	.524	3½
Golden State	31	30	.508	4½
L.A. Lakers	29	32	.475	6½

Sunday's games

Milwaukee 104, Phoenix 101
Atlanta 129, Brooklyn 127
Chicago 102, Washington 82
L.A. Lakers 111, Dallas 108
Cleveland 118, Toronto 93
Sacramento 124, Oklahoma City 115
Golden State 109, Minnesota 104
Portland 131, Houston 114
Denver 134, L.A. Clippers 124, OT

Monday's games

Detroit at Charlotte
Miami at Philadelphia
Boston at New York
Orlando at New Orleans

Tuesday's games

Chicago at Toronto
L.A. Lakers at Memphis
Milwaukee at Brooklyn
Washington at Atlanta
Denver at Houston
Sacramento at Oklahoma City
Indiana at Dallas
San Antonio at Utah
Minnesota at L.A. Clippers
Portland at Golden State

Wednesday's games

Chicago at Detroit
Phoenix at Charlotte
Brooklyn at New York
Cleveland at Boston
Philadelphia at Miami
L.A. Lakers at Oklahoma City
Memphis at Houston
Orlando at Milwaukee
New Orleans at Portland

Thursday's games

Toronto at Washington
Philadelphia at Dallas
Indiana at San Antonio
L.A. Clippers at Golden State

Friday's games

Orlando at Charlotte
Portland at Atlanta
Brooklyn at Boston
New York at Miami
Phoenix at Chicago
Utah at Oklahoma City
Memphis at Denver
New Orleans at Golden State
L.A. Clippers at Sacramento
Minnesota at L.A. Lakers

Saturday's games

Toronto at Washington
Detroit at Cleveland
Atlanta at Miami
Houston at San Antonio
Philadelphia at Milwaukee
Minnesota at Sacramento

SPORTS BRIEFS/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

BRIEFLY

Hawks hire Snyder to replace McMillan

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Quin Snyder has been hired as coach of the Atlanta Hawks to replace the fired Nate McMillan, the team announced Sunday.

The Hawks reached an agreement with Snyder on a five-year deal only five days after firing McMillan on Tuesday. The team scheduled a news conference later Monday to introduce Snyder.

The announcement from the team Sunday came shortly after the Hawks' second straight win under interim coach Joe Prunty, a buzzer-beating 129-127 win over the Brooklyn Nets.

Because Snyder, 56, was available, the agreement to return to Atlanta, where he was an assistant on Mike Budenholzer's staff during the 2013-14 season, was reached quickly.

The decision to fire McMillan at the All-Star break allowed Fields to negotiate exclusively with Snyder. Had Fields waited until after the season, other teams might have had interest in Snyder.

"From our first conversation, it was clear that Quin had all the characteristics we were looking for in our next head coach," Fields said in a statement released by the team. "He has both an incredible basketball and emotional IQ, and we share the same core values and basketball philosophies of having honest communication and collaboration with players, tremendous attention to detail and placing a great emphasis on player development."

Snyder was coach of the Utah Jazz from the 2014-15 to 2021-22 seasons, accumulating a 372-264 record and leading the team to the playoffs in six of his eight seasons.

McMillan went 99-80 as Atlanta's coach, including a 27-11 record as interim in the second half of the 2020-21 season. His success that season in leading Atlanta to the Eastern Conference finals earned him the full-time position.

Source: Machado, Padres agree to new 11-year deal

All-Star slugger Manny Machado has agreed to a new \$350 million, 11-year contract that will keep him with the San Diego Padres through 2033, according to a person with knowledge of the deal.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because Machado must pass a physical before the deal, which was first reported by ESPN, is finalized.

"We're excited to be here for the rest of our careers and have

this hat go into the Hall of Fame," Machado said as he passed a group of reporters before batting second against the Arizona Diamondbacks and going 2-for-3.

Machado, 30, had said that after this season he planned to opt out of the \$300 million, 10-year free-agent deal he signed in 2019. With the \$120 million he already has received, the new deal increases the free-spending Padres' commitment to Machado to \$470 million over 15 years.

Kirk, after 8-year wait, wins the Honda Classic

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Chris Kirk stuck his approach to the par-5 18th to tap-in range, and his birdie on the first hole of a playoff lifted him past Eric Cole for the victory at the Honda Classic on Sunday.

Cole had a chance, playing his third shot from the sand to just outside of 10 feet for a birdie that would have extended the playoff. But it lipped out, and Kirk nudged his ball in for his fifth career win — his first since prevailing at Colonial in 2015.

They finished 72 holes tied at 14-under 266, Kirk shooting 69 on Sunday, Cole shooting 67.

Kirk earned \$1,512,000 for the win, and is now eligible to play the Masters again for the first time since 2016.

Holland, who transformed Virginia basketball, dies

Terry Holland, who elevated Virginia basketball to national prominence during 16 seasons as coach and later had a distinguished career as an athletic administrator, has died, the school announced Monday. He was 80.

Holland died Sunday night, according to the school, which confirmed the death with his family. His health had declined since being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2019 and he stopped taking his prominent courtside seat at Virginia home games.

Holland took over a flailing program in 1974. The Cavaliers had had just three winning seasons in 21 years and Holland created a culture that proved a formula for success: His Cavaliers played rugged defense.

Two of his first three teams finished with losing records but only one more did as Holland compiled a 326-173 record, led Virginia to nine NCAA Tournaments, two Final Fours and the 1980 NIT title. He also guided the Cavaliers to their first Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament title in 1976 despite a modest 15-11 regular-season record.



JULIA NIKHONSON/AP

Maryland guard Hakim Hart reacts after a basket during the second half against Northwestern on Sunday in College Park, Md. Maryland won 75-59 to finish unbeaten at home in Big Ten play.

TOP 25 ROUNDUP

Terps cruise in 2nd half, top No. 21 Northwestern

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — No matter what the postseason holds for the Maryland Terrapins, they'll be able to point to some real accomplishments in Kevin Willard's first season as their coach.

For example, they won all their Big Ten home games.

Jahmir Young scored 18 points and Don Carey added 13 to help Maryland wrap up an undefeated home season in conference play with a 75-59 victory over No. 21 Northwestern on Sunday.

"Going 10-0 in this conference at home, that's pretty impressive for this group," Willard said. "I just think it shows you how great of a program this is, how great of a fan base it is."

The Terrapins (20-9, 11-7) finished 16-1 overall at home, and they used unusually impressive three-point shooting to turn back the Wildcats (20-9, 11-7). Maryland's win also clinched at least a share of the Big Ten title for No. 5 Purdue.

The Boilermakers (24-5, 13-5) now have a record 25 Big Ten championships, three more than Indiana, which is one of several teams that can still tie Purdue at the top this year. Remarkably, Maryland and Northwestern also are in that group. The Terps have made huge strides since Willard arrived from Seton Hall, and

Chris Collins' Wildcats entered the AP Top 25 this week before losing to Illinois and Maryland.

"This league is hard. You play good teams," Collins said. "We're not down in any way. We're still excited. We've got a big week coming up again, and you've just got to learn from these games and go home and try to make it right when you get another opportunity to play."

The Terrapins have not been a good three-point shooting team this season. They entered their game Sunday at 31% from beyond the arc but went 14-for-22 against Northwestern. Young and Carey made four each.

The 6-foot-1 Young threw down an emphatic dunk to give Maryland a 35-32 lead. He later made a three at the buzzer to put the Terps up 41-39 at halftime.

"I was feeling it from three early on, so just trying to get a shot up," said Young, who scored 16 of his points before halftime.

Maryland was 8-for-11 from long distance in the first half, and both teams were shooting around 60% from the field. The Terps didn't regress much in the second. A three by Carey capped a 12-2 run that put Maryland up 67-51, and it was smooth sailing from there.

Chase Audige led Northwestern with 16 points.

No. 4 UCLA 60, Colorado 56:

Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 17 points and Tyger Campbell had 13 of his 14 points in the second half as the visiting Bruins hung on to beat the Buffaloes and claim the Pac-12 regular-season title.

Amari Bailey added 11 points for UCLA (25-4, 16-2 Pac-12), which won its eighth in a row to close out an undefeated February.

KJ Simpson had 14 points to lead Colorado (15-15, 7-12).

No. 20 Providence 88, Georgetown 68:

Ed Crosswell scored a career-high 25 points and the visiting Friars easily dispatched the last-place Hoyas despite leading scorer Bryce Hopkins matching his season low with six points.

Providence (21-8, 13-5) got double-digit performances from Jared Bynum, who had 18 points, and Noah Locke and Devin Carter, who each added 12. That helped Providence bounce back from its largest loss of the season — an 87-69 defeat at No. 18 UConn on Wednesday — as it continues to position itself for one of the top seeds in the Big East Tournament.

Primo Spears had 26 points to lead Georgetown (7-23, 2-17), which has lost 13 straight games against AP Top 25 teams dating back to its surprising 2021 Big East Tournament championship under coach Patrick Ewing.

AUTO RACING

Busch gets first win with RCR in Fontana farewell

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

FONTANA, Calif. — Kyle Busch still smiles at the memory of getting thrown out of California Speedway during his first competitive trip there in 2001. The 16-year-old upstart dominated a NASCAR Truck Series practice, only to be told he couldn't run in a race sponsored by Marlboro because he was too young to smoke.

"That was my 'Welcome to NASCAR' moment and my 'Welcome to California Speedway' moment," Busch said.

Anger, conflict and disrespect have always appeared to be Busch's favorite fuels, and the record-setting veteran burned plenty of them Sunday while rewarding his new team — and sending this beloved track off in style.

Busch stormed up from the back after an early speeding penalty to earn his first victory for Richard Childress Racing, winning on the two-mile Southern California track for the fifth and final time.

Busch held off Chase Elliott and Ross Chastain in the NASCAR Cup Series' final race on the gloriously weathered asphalt at Auto Club Speedway, which will soon be demolished to make room for a proposed half-mile track. Busch asked Fontana officials for a chunk of that asphalt as a souvenir after he burned it up one last time on his way to Victory Lane.

"That's what I enjoy the most about this racetrack," Busch said. "It's big. It gets spread out. But man, you can move around and you can spread out and you can make your own destiny by trying

to find something that will work for your race car. It's a sad day for me to see this racetrack in its last race being a two-mile configuration. Glad I was able to win the final run here."

Busch drove his Chevrolet to victory in only his second race with RCR, which scooped him up in December after his 15-year tenure with Joe Gibbs Racing ended. This win was Busch's first since Bristol last season on a dirt track, and his first on pavement since Pocono in 2021.

With his 61st career victory, Busch earned a win in his record 19th consecutive Cup season, breaking a tie with Richard Petty, Busch said he set his focus on Petty's longevity record "a long, long time ago."

"I'm just so thankful for the opportunity to set that bar, and would love to continue to keep raising it," Busch said.

The victory was also the combined 95th win by Kyle and Kurt Busch, breaking the NASCAR record for brothers previously held by Bobby and Donnie Allison.

Elliott finished 2.998 seconds behind Busch in his Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet. Daniel Suárez finished fourth, and Kevin Harvick was fifth in the Bakersfield native's 750th Cup start.

"Congratulations to Kyle," Elliott said. "For him to leave and then to go get the job done like that is pretty cool. He's always been really good to me, so happy for them."

After that teenage trouble, the Las Vegas native has enjoyed plenty of highlights down the I-15 at Fontana. Busch got his first Cup



JAE C. HONG/AP

Kyle Busch and his crew members celebrate after winning Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series race at Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, Calif. The win was Busch's first for the Richard Childress Racing team.

victory at this speedway back in 2005 in a Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet, and only Jimmie Johnson (6) earned more Cup victories here.

Even the California fans appreciate a driver who typically gets boos after his triumphs. Fontana serenaded him with cheers as he claimed another surfboard trophy.

"There's nothing more rewarding than being able to go to Victory Lane," Busch said. "I death-gripped that wheel throughout the second half of that race, but we got the victory."

Busch was sent to the back early in the race for speeding on pit road, and the penalty infuriated him. To absolutely nobody's surprise, he roared through the field in response, passing Michael McDowell for the lead with 20 laps to go.

"That's why he's won as many races as he has," said Randall Burnett, Busch's crew chief. "Because he always pushes it to the limit."

Goodbye Fontana

The traditional five-wide salute before the race carried added poignancy because of the finality of this race. NASCAR is shutting down the track built by Roger Penske with vague plans to build a new track in its place, along with selling off much of the surrounding property.

The decision brings an end to an entertaining era for stock car racing in Southern California's rich car culture. The big track east of Los Angeles is a favorite of nearly every racer in multiple disciplines, with its coarse grip and wide-open spaces creating impressive racing for a quarter-century.

NASCAR currently has nowhere to race in the area in 2024, and the new track might not even be ready by 2025 — if it happens at all.

Dry Sunday

A week of unusual rainstorms

and occasional snow finally abated Saturday night, and NASCAR dried the asphalt impressively before the race. Although sand and debris bothered some drivers, the track managed to avoid any major problems from collected rainwater weeping out of cracks in the track.

Big crash

The race featured a major wreck out of a restart shortly before the midway point involving 10 cars, the most in any collision in a Cup race at Fontana. Four drivers — including pole-sitter Christopher Bell — couldn't continue after the wreck that sent several cars skidding into the infield.

For starters

Defending champion Kyle Larson was out of contention after developing engine trouble on the opening laps. Shortly after Brad Keselowski spun from contact with Corey LaJoie, Busch was sent to the back.

Nemechek wins delayed NASCAR Xfinity race at Fontana

Associated Press

FONTANA, Calif. — John Hunter Nemechek held off Sam Mayer and earned his third career Xfinity Series victory in a rare Sunday night race on the final NASCAR weekend at Auto Club Speedway's famed two-mile track.

Nemechek reclaimed the lead shortly after a restart with 12 laps to go and held on in his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota despite overheating on the final lap. The son of veteran racer Joe Nemechek won on the Xfinity circuit for the first time since Texas in late 2021.

Nemechek is off to an outstanding start in his new full-time Xfinity seat for JGR, finishing second



WILL LESTER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/AP

NASCAR Xfinity Series drivers pass the finish at Auto Club Speedway as track dryers are used on the surface Saturday in Fontana, Calif.

last week at Daytona.

"I feel like this is one of the best opportunities that I've had in my lifetime," Nemechek said. "Everything is going according to plan. ... I'm proud to be a part of this Joe Gibbs organization. Second and then first. Let's keep it going."

Nemechek led 49 of the 150 laps and finished strong in a Fontana race delayed for more than 24 hours after persistent rains and snow flurries during an unusual Southern California storm forced it out of its regular Saturday start time. The race began about 45 minutes after Kyle Busch claimed his fifth career victory at Fontana

in the Cup Series event.

Because of the Xfinity delay, Nemechek has the technical distinction of being the final driver to win a stock car race on the two-mile track at Auto Club Speedway. NASCAR plans to tear up the beloved asphalt east of Los Angeles soon, with vague plans to build a short-track course on the site in the next two years — although NASCAR has also reportedly sold most of the land around the facility.

"It's cool to be the final winner here," Nemechek said. "It means a lot. Maybe when they tear this place up, they'll send me a piece of asphalt, just for the memory."

NHL

Scoreboard

ROUNDUP

Kaprizov's hat trick lifts Wild in OT

Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Boston	58	45	8	5	95	219	124
Toronto	60	37	15	8	82	207	158
Tampa Bay	59	37	18	4	78	212	176
Buffalo	58	31	23	4	66	220	203
Detroit	58	28	22	8	64	179	184
Florida	61	29	26	6	64	210	213
Ottawa	58	28	26	4	60	177	185
Montreal	59	25	30	4	54	163	214
Metropolitan Division							
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Carolina	58	39	11	8	86	198	151
New Jersey	59	39	15	5	83	208	157
N.Y. Rangers	60	34	17	9	77	201	168
N.Y. Islanders	63	31	25	7	69	183	174
Pittsburgh	59	29	21	9	67	192	190
Washington	62	29	27	6	64	188	187
Philadelphia	61	23	28	10	56	161	202
Columbus	60	19	35	6	44	154	222
Western Conference							
Central Division							
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Dallas	59	31	16	12	74	191	154
Minnesota	60	33	21	6	72	175	166
Colorado	57	33	19	5	71	182	157
Winnipeg	60	35	24	1	71	183	159
Nashville	57	29	22	6	64	169	171
St. Louis	59	26	28	5	57	180	215
Arizona	59	20	30	9	49	160	211
Chicago	58	21	32	5	47	147	209
Pacific Division							
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Vegas	59	35	18	6	76	192	166
Los Angeles	61	33	20	8	74	205	206
Edmonton	60	32	20	8	72	230	202
Seattle	59	32	21	6	70	203	189
Calgary	60	27	21	12	66	193	188
Vancouver	59	23	31	5	51	200	239
San Jose	60	18	30	12	48	179	223
Anaheim	60	19	34	7	45	152	250

Associated Press
ST. PAUL, Minn. — Kirill Kaprizov scored with 20 seconds left in overtime, completing a natural hat trick and lifting the Minnesota Wild past the Columbus Blue Jackets 3-2 on Sunday.

Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 22 for the Wild, who trailed 2-0 heading into the third period.

Mathieu Olivier and Liam Foudy scored for Columbus, while Elvis Merzlikins made 42 saves.

The Wild have earned points in eight of their previous nine games (6-1-2).

Maple Leafs 5, Kraken 1: Auston Matthews had two goals and Mark Giordano scored in his first game back in Seattle since being traded to Toronto last season.

Timothy Liljegren had a goal and an assist for Toronto, and John Tavares also scored. Mitchell Marner had three assists; William Nylander and Michael Bunting had two each. Ilya Samsonov made 26 saves.

Vince Dunn scored for Seattle. Phillip Grubauer started and gave up four goals on 21 shots before he was replaced early in the second period by Martin Jones, who had 11 saves.

Penguins 7, Lightning 3: Sidney Crosby started a second-period surge and helped host Pittsburgh win its second straight following a four-game losing streak.

Crosby's power-play goal with 4½ minutes left in the period broke a 2-2 tie and started a sequence in which Pittsburgh scored five goals in 4:27, the second-fastest five goals scored in team history.

Nikita Kucherov scored his 23rd goal of the season and became the fastest to 700 career points in franchise history. Brayden Point scored his 36th of the



ABBIE PARR/AP

Minnesota Wild left wing Kirill Kaprizov, right, celebrates after scoring the game-winning goal in overtime to beat the Columbus Blue Jackets on Sunday in St. Paul, Minn. Kaprizov had a hat trick in the game.

season and Anthony Cirelli his ninth for the Lightning, who have lost four of their last six overall. Brian Elliott made 29 saves.

Rangers 5, Kings 2: Vincent Trocheck had two goals and an assist, Igor Shesterkin made 26 saves and host New York ended a four-game losing streak.

Mika Zibanejad and Artemi Panarin each had a goal and an assist, Alexis Lafreniere also scored and Adam Fox had two assists for New York.

Viktor Arvidsson had a power-play goal late in the second period, Matt Roy scored early in the third and Phillip Danault had two assists for Los Angeles.

Islanders 4, Jets 0: Semyon

Varlamov picked up a shutout with a 23-save effort and visiting New York handed Winnipeg its third straight loss.

Bo Horvat scored a short-handed goal, and Alexander Romanov, Brock Nelson and Adam Pelech also scored for New York.

Sabres 7, Capitals 4: Dylan Cozens had the first three-goal game of his career and added an assist, and host Buffalo won its third straight.

Buffalo had 12 players register at least a point, including Tage Thompson, with his team-leading 40th goal. Jeff Skinner, Zengus Girgensons and Vinnie Hinostroza also scored in a game the Sabres broke open by scoring four

times in a seven-minute span in the second period.

Alex Ovechkin scored his team-leading 33rd goal and registered his 1,467th career point to tie Stan Mikita for 16th on the NHL list. Dylan Strome and T.J. Oshie had a goal and assist apiece, and Sonny Milano also scored for the Capitals.

Predators 6, Coyotes 2: Roman Josi scored two goals and visiting Nashville won its third in a row, beating Arizona.

Juuse Saros stopped 26 shots for the Predators, who are currently 10th in the Western Conference standings. Connor Ingram, who broke into the NHL with Nashville, had 28 saves for Arizona.

Flurry: Perennially contending Caps have gone from buyers to sellers

FROM PAGE 24

for Denis Gurianov.

More are ongoing around Kane, San Jose's Erik Karlsson, Arizona's Jakob Chychrun, Philadelphia's James van Riemsdyk and Washington's handful of pending free agents after the perennially contending Capitals went from buyers to sellers.

Prices have been high on a lot of players, most notably Chychrun, who is the top player left to change places by the deadline.

"I can see the marketplace taking towards the end of the week to sort out for some teams," said Hart Levine of PuckPedia, a website that tracks the salary cap and player movement.

What has already happened

The Islanders made their splash in late January, getting Horvat, a 30-goal scorer, from Vancouver and signing him to an eight-year extension. The Rangers, after

the All-Star break in early February, got Tarasenko and big defenseman Niko Mikkola from St. Louis to start loading up to try to repeat or improve on their trip to the Eastern Conference finals.

"You want to win, and you want to be a part of good hockey teams who can win," Mikkola said. "The whole team is good, and we can go deep. We all know that."

The Maple Leafs want to go deep, but they haven't won a playoff series since 2004 — before the NHL had a salary cap. Acquiring O'Reilly, a playoff MVP in 2019 when the Blues won the Stanley Cup, and tough depth forward Noel Acciari sets them up better for that pursuit.

What's about to happen

The worst-kept secret in the sport is Kane's connection to the Rangers.

After New York got Tarasenko, thinking the price for Meier or Kane would be too

high, Kane said: "If things were going to happen ... that was a team that I was definitely looking at."

Not much of a poker face, but Kane has a full no-movement clause, meaning the three-time Cup champion who was league MVP in 2015-16 can choose where he wants to go. Rangers GM Chris Drury took care of his end of the money aspect Saturday by trading Vitali Kravtsov to Vancouver and waiving Jake Leschyshyn.

Chychrun has been on the trade block since before last season, and the 24-year-old defenseman with two seasons left on his contract after this one figures to finally get dealt.

What may or may not happen

Sellers also are buying while still selling — mass hysteria. Well, not quite hysteria, but it's not as simple as the haves and the have-nots at this deadline.

St. Louis, even after trading Tarasenko, Mikkola, O'Reilly, Acciari and Barbashev, could also be in the market for Chychrun or other players signed beyond this season. Same goes for Washington, which won the Cup in 2018 and has made the playoffs every year since 2014, but has been beset by injuries and other events that could end the streak.

The Capitals sent Orlov and Hathaway to the Bruins and still could trade forwards Lars Eller, Conor Sheary and Marcus Johansson and defenseman Nick Jensen, Trevor van Riemsdyk and Erik Gustafsson, all of whom are pending free agents.

"It's a little bit emotional, and it's not fun," said Eller, who scored the Cup-clinching goal five years ago. "Just try to stay in the moment, stay in the present."

AP sports writers Jimmy Golen in Boston and Jay Cohen in Chicago contributed to this report.

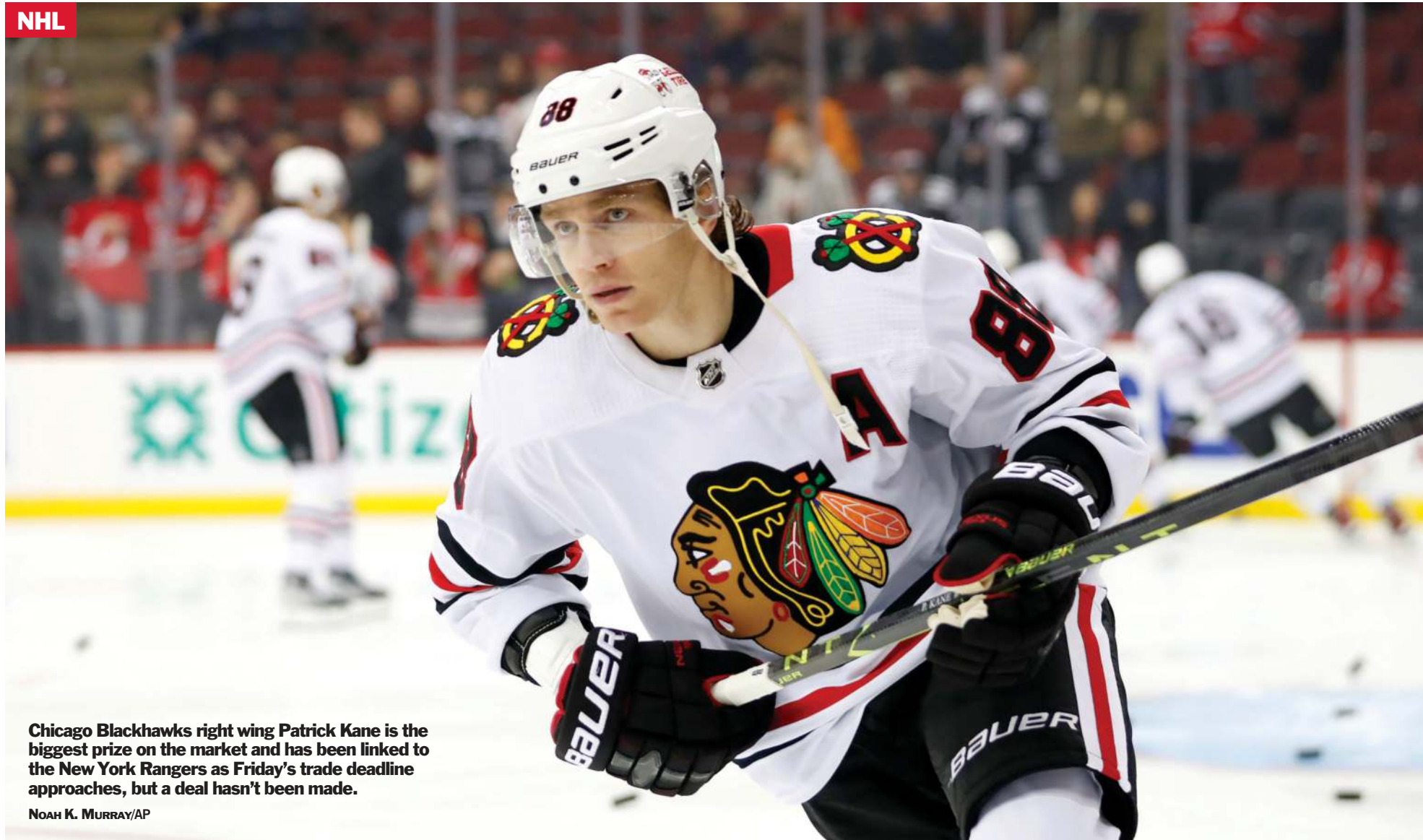
SPORTS



Fury wins split decision

You-Tube star Paul defeated in first bout against professional boxer » Page 19

NHL



Chicago Blackhawks right wing Patrick Kane is the biggest prize on the market and has been linked to the New York Rangers as Friday's trade deadline approaches, but a deal hasn't been made.

NOAH K. MURRAY/AP

Flurry of deals already made



Tampa Bay acquired left wing Tanner Jeannot from Nashville on Sunday trading away defenseman Cal Foote and five draft picks.

MARK ZALESKI/AP

Teams aren't waiting until closer to deadline

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

The NHL's top contenders did not wait until the last minute to do their shopping before the trade deadline.

League-leading Boston got bigger and tougher by adding Dmitry Orlov and Garnet Hathaway. Toronto got defensive by trading for Ryan O'Reilly. The Rangers answered their New York-rival Islanders' move for Bo Horvat by acquiring Vladimir Tarasenko — and they're not done yet.

A handful of big moves already have been made around the league, including a few Sunday, and more are expected before the trade deadline Friday at 3 p.m. Eastern. Patrick Kane going from Chicago to the Rangers is the most highly anticipated deal on the docket, and yet plenty of uncertainty remains about what else will shake out.

"I am certainly not going to predict where the mar-

INSIDE

Kaprizov's hat trick lifts Wild over Blue Jackets in overtime Page 23

ket goes next," Bruins general manager Don Sweeney said last week after making what could be his first big trade or his only big one. "That's for all teams, all 32 teams, to continue to discuss and those discussions will continue."

Discussions led to a flurry of trades Sunday.

San Jose traded winger Timo Meier to New Jersey, Tampa Bay gave Nashville a boatload for forward Tanner Jeannot, Stanley Cup champion Colorado reacquired veteran defenseman Jack Johnson in a trade with Chicago in exchange for Andreas Englund, St. Louis sent forward Ivan Barbashev to Vegas for 20-year-old prospect Zach Dean, and Dallas got 20-goal-scorer Evgenii Dadnov from Montreal



Sweeney

SEE FLURRY ON PAGE 23

Lillard scores 71 points in Portland victory » NBA, Page 20

