

Katy Perry on getting back her 'Smile'

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EUROPE & PACIFIC

WEEKEND EDITION

SPORTS PROTESTS Demanding social justice, players take a timeout

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BONHOMME RICHARD

Report: Sailor suspected of arson in fire on warship

By Caitlin Doornbos Stars and Stripes

Investigators are questioning a U.S. sailor considered an arson suspect in the fire that left the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard extensively damaged while moored at Naval Base San Diego in July, according to reports published Wednesday.

No one has been charged and no motive has been discovered, according to The New York Times. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives have focused on one sailor from the ship, according to a report Wednesday in the Times, which cited an unnamed Navy official.

The Associated Press, citing an unnamed senior defense official, said Thursday that investigators are questioning a sailor considered a suspect.

SEE ARSON ON PAGE 6



DENIS POROV/AP

Smoke rises from the USS Bonhomme Richard at Naval Base San Diego on July 12.



Laura slams Gulf Coast

Powerful hurricane brings wind, rain, wall of seawater

By Gerald Herbert, Melinda Deslatta and Stacey Plaisance Associated Press

LAKE CHARLES, La. — Hurricane Laura pounded the Gulf Coast with ferocious wind and torrential rain Thursday and unleashed a wall of seawater that could push 40 miles inland as the Category 4 storm roared ashore in Louisiana near the Texas border.

Laura arrived as one of the strongest hurricanes ever to strike the U.S. based on its wind speed of 150 mph. Louisiana took the brunt of the damage when the system barreled over Lake Charles, an industrial and casino city of 80,000 people, and nearby low-lying fishing communities. Powerful gusts blew out windows in tall buildings and tossed around glass and debris.

Police spotted a floating casino that came unmoored and hit a bridge. Drone video showed water surround-

Dustin Amos walks near debris at a gas station on Thursday in Lake Charles, La., after Hurricane Laura moved through the state. The hurricane was one of the strongest ever to strike the U.S. based on its wind speed of 150 mph.

GERALD HERBERT/AP

ing homes with much of their roofs peeled away. Gov. John Bel Edwards reported Louisiana's first fatality — a 14-year-old girl who died when a tree fell on her home in Leesville, more than 100 miles inland.

"It looks like 1,000 tornadoes went through here. It's just destruction everywhere," said Brett Geymann, who rode out the storm with three family members in Moss Bluff, near Lake Charles. He described Laura passing over his house with the roar of a jet engine around 2 a.m.

"There are houses that are totally gone. They were there yesterday, but now gone," he said.

Hours after the system made landfall, initial reports offered hope that the destruction might be less than originally feared, but a full damage assessment

SEE LAURA ON PAGE 11

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	Change in price	...	...	...
Germany	\$2.45	\$2.88	\$3.05	\$2.69	..	..	..	\$3.06	..
Change in price	+1.6 cents	+1.8 cents	+1.3 cents	-0.1 cents	..	..	..	+1.3 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$3.70	\$3.92	\$3.66	..	..	..	\$2.58	\$2.34
Change in price	..	+2.3 cents	+1.7 cents	-1.7 cents	..	..	..	No change	No change
UK	..	\$2.78	\$3.01	\$2.99	..	..	..	\$2.96	\$2.90
Change in price	..	+1.8 cents	+1.3 cents	-0.1 cents	..	..	..	+1.3 cents	-0.1 cents

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	Change in price	Guam	Change in price
Japan	..	\$2.90	..	\$2.49	\$2.29	..	\$2.319	\$2.309
Change in price	..	+1.0 cents	..	No change	+1.0 cents	..	+1.0 cents	+1.0 cents
Okinawa	\$2.249	..	..	\$2.489	\$2.259**	\$2.669	\$2.919	..
Change in price	+2.0 cents	..	..	No change	+2.0 cents	+2.0 cents	+1.0 cents	..

* Diesel EFF ** Midgrade
For the week of Aug. 28 - Sept. 03

EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Euro costs (Aug. 28)	\$1.16	Switzerland (Franc)	0.9095
Dollar buys (Aug. 28)	€0.8205	Thailand (Baht)	31.24
British pound (Aug. 28)	\$1.29	Turkey (Lira)	7.413
Japanese yen (Aug. 28)	103.00	(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.)	
South Korean won (Aug. 28)	1156.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770		
British pound	\$1.3200		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3118		
China (Yuan)	6.8878		
Denmark (Krone)	6.3800		
Egypt (Pound)	15.4987		
Euro	\$1.1799/0.8476		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7501		
Hungary (Forint)	302.02		
Israel (Shekel)	3.7073		
Japan (Yen)	106.24		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3058		
Norway (Krone)	8.9145		
Philippines (Peso)	48.59		
Poland (Zloty)	3.74		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3668		
South Korea (won)	1,185.14		

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.10
30-year bond	1.41

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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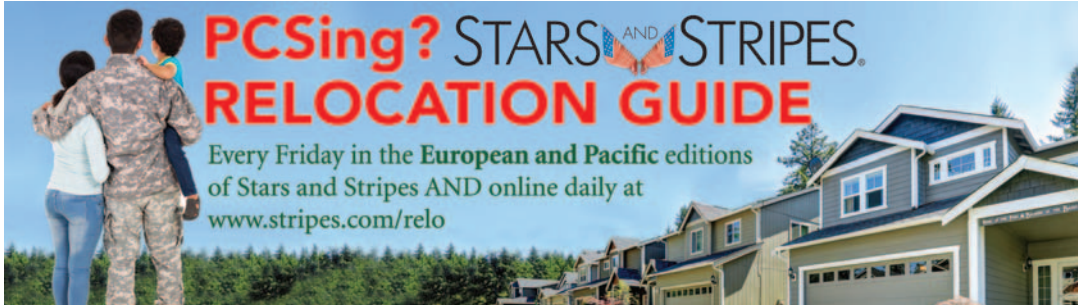
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PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

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PACIFIC



DEVIN LANGER/U.S. NAVY

A sailor fires a .50-caliber machine gun aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Chung-Hoon during the Rim of the Pacific exercise Aug. 19 in waters near the Hawaiian Islands.

Commander says Chinese drill in South China Sea won't deter Navy

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The commander of the Navy's 3rd Fleet said Wednesday he was aware of reports China had launched two ballistic missiles into the contested South China Sea but that America's naval presence in the region is robust.

"In terms of their launching missiles, the U.S. Navy has 38 ships underway today in the Indo-Pacific region, including the South China Sea," Vice Adm. Scott Conn said during a telephone news conference. "And we continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international laws allow to demonstrate our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and reassure our allies and partners."

Conn is heading the two-week Rim of the Pacific exercise in waters off the Hawaiian Islands, which is slated to conclude Monday. Navies from nine nations have joined the United States for the biennial exercise, which was vastly scaled down from previous years due to the coronavirus pandemic. The entire exercise is being held at sea.

The news conference was intended to focus on the exercise, but in the wake of rising tensions in the South China Sea, where China is conducting its own naval exercise this week. Conn spent most of his time fielding questions about Beijing.

"Our forces continually monitor exercises throughout the region, to include the recent [China] exercise that you mentioned," Conn said in response to a question about China launching two medium-range missiles into the South China Sea on Wednesday.

"Our naval forces are ready to respond to any threat to our allies or partners throughout the region," he added.

One of the two Chinese missiles, a so-called "aircraft-carrier killer," was meant as a "clear warning" to the U.S., according to the South China Morning Post, which cited a "source close to the Chinese military."

The missile exercises came a day after China alleged a U.S. high-altitude U-2 surveillance plane overflew a Bohai Sea no-fly zone near a Chinese navy live-fire drill, the Hong Kong-based newspaper reported Wednesday.

Asked for his strategic assessment of how China's actions in the South China Sea in the past year had ratcheted up the threat level, Conn paused before answering.

"I'd like to focus on RIMPAC," he said. "China's going to do what China's going to do. As long as



U.S. NAVY

The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer JS Ashigara participates in a missile drill during the Rim of the Pacific exercise Aug. 17 in waters near the Hawaiian Islands.

they do it in accordance with international laws and norms, they have every right to do so."

Conn took exception to a reporter's description of RIMPAC and the South China Sea exercise as "dual exercises."

"This RIMPAC has been planned for the last two years, and they occur every two years," said Conn, touting the venerable exercise as an effective way of building trust and relationships between like-minded nations.

"I'm aware of [China's] exercise," he said. "I would say one of the main differences is that we have 10 nations here participating in our exercise. I'm pretty sure the number of nation's participating in China's exercise is probably less than two."

RIMPAC participants include Australia, Brunei, Canada, France, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines and Singapore. Twenty-two ships, a submarine and about 5,300 personnel are involved in the exercise.

On Sunday, Australia's HMAS Arunta became the first upgraded frigate to successfully fire surface-to-air missiles during RIMPAC, the Navy said in a statement.

The Anzac-class frigate had completed a "midlife capability" upgrade in 2019, during which it received a new long-range phased-array air search radar.

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Esper lays out US efforts against Chinese threats

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

China is the "pacing threat" and the focus of much planning and training in the U.S. military, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in a speech Wednesday from Honolulu.

Beijing is putting the world order "under duress" by disregarding international norms, he said at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. His speech was livestreamed on Facebook.

Esper said that during his year in office he has focused the Defense Department on China, creating a new defense policy office focused solely on the communist nation and a China Strategy Management Group to integrate the department's efforts.

He also said he had directed the National Defense University to "refocus its curriculum by dedicating 50% of the coursework to make China" and told the military to make China "the pacing threat in all of our schools, programs and training."

Esper's speech follows a formal State Department announcement July 13 denouncing China's claims to resources and territory in the South China Sea as "completely unlawful, as is its campaign of bullying to control them."

On Wednesday, Esper said, "Beijing has repeatedly fallen short of its promises to abide by international laws, rules or norms, despite continuing to reap the benefits of the international system and free markets."

The U.S. disputes Chinese claims of sovereignty over the 1.4 million square miles of the South China Sea and 27 islands and reefs it has built up and militarized there.

The speech came the same day that the U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security imposed sanctions on 24 Chinese companies for their part in constructing and militarizing the South China Sea features, according to a Commerce Department statement Wednesday.

To counter China's claims, the Navy and Air Force this year have stepped up their presence in the area to keep skies and sea lanes, or according to their own statements, to maintain "a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The U.S. has also teamed with allies and friendly nations, including Japan, Australia, India, Singapore and Thailand and others, to demonstrate cooperation in the region through joint exercises in military power. Sales of arms and equipment are part of the package.

"Our robust network of allies

and partners remains the enduring asymmetric advantage we have over near-peer rivals, namely China, that attempt to undermine and subvert the rules-based order to advance their own interests, often at the expense of others," Esper said Wednesday.

Beijing, the defense secretary said, fails to "honor the commitments it made to the international community, including promises to safeguard the autonomy of Hong Kong and not to militarize features in the South China Sea."

China's actions threaten the rights and sovereignty of regional partners and allies, Esper said, so the U.S. has been working with nations such as Bangladesh, Mongolia and the Philippines to "develop their national security policies, strategies, plans and laws."

Esper said the U.S. has more than \$160 billion worth of foreign military sales underway to boost regional partnerships across the Indo-Pacific, \$22 billion of which were started "in this fiscal year alone."

Those projects include selling F-35 Lightning II stealth fighters to Japan, Seahawk and Apache helicopters to India and F-16 fighters and M1 Abrams tanks to Taiwan, something Beijing firmly opposes.

At a press conference July 14, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said the U.S. should end military sales to Taiwan to "avoid further harming Sino-U.S. ties and peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," according to a transcript of his remarks.

Looking forward, Esper said his department is "prioritizing the development and deployment of game-changing technologies, such as hypersonic weapons, 5G and artificial intelligence" that could prove vital to security in the region.

That was made possible with "largest research and development budget in the department's history," he said. The 2020 Defense Department budget allocated \$104.6 billion to research, development, test and evaluation projects. The Pentagon requested a \$2 billion increase for research and development in fiscal year 2021.

"We are divesting from legacy systems and focusing on modernizing our force so we can deter, compete — and if necessary, fight and win — across all domains: air, land, sea, space and cyberspace," Esper said.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Russia blames US troops for Syria incident

Associated Press

MOSCOW — The Russian military on Thursday blamed the U.S. troops for a collision of Russian and U.S. military vehicles in Syria's northeast.

U.S. officials said Wednesday that a Russian vehicle sideswiped a light-armored U.S. military vehicle, injuring four Americans, while two Russian helicopters flew overhead, one as close as 70 feet from the U.S. vehicle.

U.S. National Security Council

spokesman John Ullyot said in a statement that a Russian vehicle struck the American vehicle near Deyrick, in northeast Syria. He blamed the Russian military for "unsafe and unprofessional actions" that breached deconfliction protocols between the two countries.

In Thursday's statement, the Russian Defense Ministry said Gen. Valery Gerasimov, chief of the Russian military's General Staff, had a phone call Wednesday

with Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to discuss the incident.

In the call, Gerasimov pointed out that the Russian military had notified the U.S.-led coalition about the route of a Russian military police convoy.

"Despite that, in violation of the existing agreements, the U.S. troops attempted to block the Russian patrol," the ministry said in a statement. "In response to that, the Russian military police took

the necessary measures to prevent an incident and to continue the fulfillment of their task."

Russia, which has waged a military campaign in Syria that helped President Bashar Assad reclaim control over most of the country following a devastating civil war, long has bristled at the presence of the U.S. troops deployed in the country to fight Islamic State and have called for their pullout.

While there have been several

other recent incidents between the American and Russian troops who patrol eastern Syria, U.S. officials described the latest incident as the most serious one. U.S. troops are usually accompanied by members of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

The U.S. and Russia have deconfliction protocols to prevent collisions and other incidents and their military commanders have frequent conversations to try to avoid contact between troops.

Silver Stars awarded to 3 for Taliban battle

By CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

Two Green Berets and an Air Force pararescueman were awarded Silver Stars for their heroism during a nearly eight-hour firefight last year after the Special Forces team "stumbled upon" an elite Taliban force in a small Afghan village.

The team was so close to the enemy fighters that they heard the sounds of their voices and of the safety handles on their hand grenades being released, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) officials said Wednesday. The Americans fought their way out and humped over a mile to safety.

All three Silver Stars were awarded at a small ceremony in the Rock Garden on the 7th Group compound at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. last Friday, along with six Bronze Star Medals with Valor devices, three Army Commendation Medals with Valor devices and four Purple Hearts earned over the 1st Battalion's six-month deployment last year.

Bronze Stars were awarded posthumously to Master Sgts. Luis Deleon-Figueroa and Jose Gonzalez, both of whom were mortally wounded in the close-quarters battle in Faryab province exactly one year earlier.

Their names and that of Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Goble, a Green Beret killed in Afghanistan on Dec. 23, 2019, were inscribed on stones laid in the garden during the ceremony.

"The event is humbling," Command Sgt. Maj. Brock Buddies, the top enlisted leader of 1st Bat-

talion, 7th SFG(A), said in a statement. "Every year we remember the men and women of this formation, their legacy and acts of heroism."

The 1st Battalion deployed from July 2019 through late January, officials said, and was awarded a Meritorious Unit Citation for applying pressure on the Taliban to "set the stage" for a peace settlement the group signed with the U.S. on Feb. 29. Since the signing, the insurgents have not attacked U.S. forces.

During the past year, the "Red Empire," as 7th Group is known, suffered five fatalities while fighting in Afghanistan, including the three from 1st Battalion and two from 3rd Battalion — Sgts. 1st Class Javier Gutierrez and Antonio Rodriguez — the last two U.S. combat fatalities in the country this year, killed just weeks before the pact was signed.

One other American and an Afghan commando were wounded alongside Deleon-Figueroa and Gonzalez, 7th Group said in a synopsis of the August 2019 gun battle it provided to Stars and Stripes.

The team, also known as an Operational Detachment-Alpha, had been conducting operations against a different target when it came upon the Taliban force, it said. Provincial officials have said the battle occurred in Almar district, near Afghanistan's northern border with Turkmenistan.

Amid the fighting that followed, all four of the wounded were medically evacuated by a helicopter that landed under enemy fire in a courtyard about half the size of a



7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)

Members of 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) salute during a memorial and awards ceremony on Aug. 21 at the group's compound on Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., where three stones were inscribed with the names of Green Berets from the unit's 1st Battalion who were killed in Afghanistan in 2019.

football field, "and within inches" of the other team members who eventually made their way out over ground the hard way.

"The ODA, who had lost contact with their supporting vehicles after the Taliban shot one of their radios, then fought their way out of the village and moved over a mile, by foot and under fire, to safety," the synopsis said.

An ODA is typically made up of 12 Special Forces members of various specialties and is also known as an A-Team. Officials did not say how many Afghans accompanied them. Two other ODA members also earned Bronze

Stars that day, but all names other than the three slain soldiers were withheld for security reasons.

The Bronze Star with "V" device for valor recognizes acts of heroism that do not rise to the level of a Silver Star, which is the third-highest medal for combat bravery and recognizes "exceptional gallantry" on the battlefield.

The Silver Stars were awarded to service members who braved enemy fire to "thwart the enemy attack" and who "undoubtedly saved the lives of team members" while risking their own during the harrowing August battle, of-

ficials said.

"The actions of the warriors we are recognizing today speak volumes about them as individuals," said Lt. Gen. Francis Beaudette, commander of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, who presented the awards.

"They also clearly reflect the families and communities that shaped these men," he was quoted saying during the closed event. "Even if they cannot be here physically — thank you for what your families do to support you every day."

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US offers up to \$5M for tips on 2 Americans missing in Afghanistan

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The United States is offering rewards of up to \$5 million for information about the disappearance of two Americans in Afghanistan, one of them a Navy veteran.

Former Navy diver and longtime contractor Mark Frerichs went missing in early February in an undisclosed part of the country, the State Department said in a statement Wednesday.

He had been living in Afghanistan since approximately 2010 and worked on construction projects in various provinces, it said.

The second man, author Paul Overby, was last seen in eastern Khroz province in May 2014, where he was doing book research. It's thought he was planning to cross the border into Pakistan to carry out further research, the statement said.

The reward offers are "for information

leading to the location, recover and return of Mr. Frerichs and Mr. Overby," it said.

In an interview with ABC News in May, Frerichs' family said they feared he would be left behind in Afghanistan as the U.S. pushes ahead with plans to draw down its forces in the country.

A U.S.-Taliban deal signed Feb. 29 stipulates that all foreign troops could withdraw from the country within 14 months. However, many of the conditions expected of

the Taliban for the withdrawal to happen haven't yet been met.

The ABC report said Frerichs was abducted on Jan. 31, likely by the Haqqani Network, a Taliban-affiliated group known for killing hundreds of American troops.

The reward offers totaling \$5 million follow a separate \$1 million reward announced by the FBI in 2018 for information on Overby's disappearance.

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MILITARY



JOSHUA CONTI/U.S. Air Force

An Atlas V AEHF-6 rocket launches from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., on March 26.

US, Japan pledge to work together on lunar exploration, space security

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The United States and Japan will cooperate on efforts to return to the moon and boost space security, according to a joint statement issued after military, space and other government officials from the two nations met Wednesday in Tokyo.

The seventh meeting of the Japan-U.S. Comprehensive Dialogue on Space included participants from Japan's Ministry of Defense and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, as well as representatives of the U.S. Department of Defense and NASA.

"Recognizing the increasing importance of space for national security as well as the dependence of contemporary society on space systems, both sides welcomed significant developments in their respective defense institutions, namely the establishment of the Space Operations Squadron of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force and the Space Command and Space Force of the United States," the joint statement said.

The Space Force was established in December as an independent service branch with an initial force of 16,000 military and civilian personnel.

None of the 10 Space Force units based outside the continental U.S. is in Japan. Misawa Air Base, however, in the northern part of the country, hosts the Joint Tactical Ground Station, Delta Detachment, an element of the Army's 1st Space Battalion, 1st Space Brigade. It conducts ballistic missile warning and space situational awareness among its tasks.

The U.S. and Japan plan to expand cooperation in a variety of areas, including space security, space exploration and commercial space activities, the joint statement said.

They reaffirmed their commitment to Artemis, the program through which the U.S. and its international and commercial partners plan to explore the moon in preparation for a human mission to Mars.

Japan also congratulated the U.S. on the recent successful test flight of its Crew Dragon capsule, produced by private company SpaceX, to the International Space Station earlier this month, the statement said. The U.S. congratulated Japan on the successful final mission by the Kounotori 9 cargo spacecraft to the space station in May.

It makes sense for Japan and the U.S. to strengthen ties in an area where both are threatened by China and North Korea, according to Paul Buchanan, an American security analyst based in Auckland, New Zealand.

"Space is the new high ground," he said in a telephone interview Thursday. "It's not surprising that they will develop their ties in space."

Adversaries are already using space technology for reconnaissance and geospatial surveys, although the U.S. has a big advantage in those areas, Buchanan said, adding that future threats to spacecraft could include low-orbit interceptors being developed by Russia and China.

At the Tokyo meeting, U.S. and Japanese officials discussed space resources and recognized the important role of the private sector in exploring outer space.

"In light of the inherent vulnerability of space systems and growing concern for threats to the continuous, safe and stable use of outer space, both sides committed to enhance cooperation on [space situational awareness]," the joint statement said.

Japan's Cabinet Office and the U.S. Department of Defense have substantially approved a plan to

host U.S.-provided space situational awareness payloads on Japan's Quasi-Zenith Satellites to be launched by the end of March 2024, the statement added.

The two governments planned an eighth space meeting in the U.S. next year, according to the joint statement.

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Family members and civilians getting new IDs after 3 decades

By **STEVE BEYNON**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department is replacing its 30-year-old identification cards for military families, retirees and civilians workers in an effort to upgrade the cards and avoid security risks.

The Defense Department began issuing the new IDs in July and some are already in circulation. But Michael Sorrento, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center, said that cardholders don't have to scramble for the new IDs. In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, he said he doesn't want ID facilities jam-packed with people, so the old cards do not need to be replaced until they expire or the phase-out date in January 2026.

Only about 20 sites, however, now issue the new cards due to the equipment required to make them. But all ID sites worldwide will likely have the new equipment by the end of the year, according to a Defense Department news release.

Sorrento said the change is needed because the old IDs have "virtually no security features" and the modern updates can help civilians be processed through se-

curity checkpoints more quickly. The new IDs are enhanced with security features to deter counterfeiting and fraud, and could eventually be used to order future replacement cards online and get them delivered through the mail, rather than going to an ID center in person.

This will be the first change to the IDs since 1993. Sorrento said they are "essentially the CAC [Common Access Card] card without the chip. CACs are the ID cards issued to service members and some DoD civilian workers, and the card's built-in chip allows them to access online resources through DoD computers.

People eligible for the next generation ID card are members of the ready Reserve, inactive National Guard, non-CAC eligible civilians, Medal of Honor recipients and 100% disabled veterans. Getting the new card is free of charge.

Sorrento said it's possible in the future that physical cards might not be needed as much and the DoD may shift to digital IDs. He did not give details on what that would look like, but he said the underlying technology for the new cards supports that possibility.

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MILITARY

US watchdog: Many Afghan police use drugs

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Approximately half of all police in Afghanistan's southern provinces use drugs and up to 70% of police positions in those regions are "ghost" positions not actually filled by a person, a report released Wednesday by a U.S. government watchdog said.

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, known as SIGAR, monitors the billions of dollars the U.S. spends in war-ravaged Afghanistan.

The report said Afghanistan's

Internal Security Directorate, partnering with the National Security Directorate, found that approximately 50% of all police in Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand and Uruzgan provinces used drugs. The report did not specify what kind of drugs.

The agencies also found that between 50% and 70% of police positions were "ghost soldier" jobs unfilled by real people.

The report comes as efforts appear to be ramping up to start negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban on

Afghanistan's future.

Across Afghanistan, the rosters of many units' soldiers and police are filled with fake names or names of men who were killed in battle but never officially declared dead.

Tariq Ariyan, a spokesman for the Afghan Interior Ministry, said the ministry had received the report and would investigate.

Abdul Sattar Husseini, a lawmaker and member of parliament's internal security committee disagreed with the report, but said he can't deny that there

are some drug users in the police ranks. He said around 25% to 30% of police might use drugs and the Interior Ministry was trying to identify them. He offered no evidence for those percentages.

According to Afghan authorities, there are more than 350,000 Afghan security forces, but neither the international community nor Afghan authorities knows how many soldiers and police exist or how many are available for duty at any given time.

The start of intra-Afghan talks, envisaged under a U.S.-Taliban

peace agreement signed in February, has been hampered by delays that have frustrated Washington. Some had expected the negotiations to begin earlier this month.

The Taliban have held their promise under the February agreement not to attack U.S. and NATO troops as required by the February deal but have been staging near-daily attacks on Afghan government forces. They say a permanent cease-fire will be part of the negotiations once they begin.

Rocket unit adds to Army artillery's punch in Europe

By IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — The 41st Field Artillery Brigade received a boost in firepower with the activation Thursday of its second Multiple Launch Rocket System unit.

The 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment was activated at a change of command ceremony, during which Col. Seth Knazovich handed over responsibility for the brigade to Col. Daniel Miller.

Like its sister unit, 1st Battalion, 6th Regiment, the new unit will "provide long-range fires for Europe at the discretion of either U.S. Army Europe or EUCOM," Knazovich said, referring to the U.S. European Command.

About 350 of the 77th Field Artillery Regiment's soldiers and their families have arrived in the Grafenwoehr area.

"Over the past six to seven months, half the formation has gotten on the ground and the other half will come in over the next 30 to 60 days," Knazovich said.

Knazovich assumed command

of the 41st Field Artillery Brigade when it was activated at Grafenwoehr in 2018, in line with the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, which called for more firepower in Europe as part of a Russian deterrence strategy.

During the Cold War, the brigade spent 33 years in Germany before being withdrawn in 2005. The brigade's return to Europe was an early result of the 2017 act, spurred by the priority of boosting NATO's collective defense.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the United States and NATO have also boosted their forces in Eastern Europe with rotational units.

The 41st Field Artillery Brigade is equipped with the M270A1, a self-propelled multiple rocket launcher in service since the 1980s, with a top range of more than 100 miles.

Grafenwoehr Training Area is home to the 7th Army Training Command and the service's largest training ground in Europe. The command and the new unit haven't been slated to leave, local Army officials said Thurs-



IMMANUEL JOHNSON/Stars and Stripes

day, under a plan supported by the White House to eventually move about 12,000 troops out of Germany.

The area is targeted to lose the Vilseck-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment, the only brigade-sized ground unit left in Germany. The

unit and its roughly 4,500 soldiers would move back to the U.S. and rotate to Europe when needed, according to an outline of the plan announced by Defense Secretary Mark Esper in July.

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Arson: \$4B likely cost to replace ship, analysts say

FROM FRONT PAGE

The fire started aboard the vessel on a Sunday morning and burned for four days. Winds and explosions spread and intensified the flames, causing extensive damage. Eleven of 14 decks were damaged by fire and water and the ship's superstructure was nearly gutted, according to a July email from Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday to admirals and master chiefs.

The fire has clouded the warship's future. Replacing the Bonhomme Richard could cost \$4 billion, according to the AP, which cited defense analysts.

A scant crew of 160 sailors, far from the full complement, were aboard the ship when the fire was reported around 8:30 a.m.

"The fire started in the lower vehicle storage area — six decks below the flight deck and near the middle of the ship — spreading aft, forward and up," Gilday wrote in the email.

One of the ship's fire suppression systems was down for maintenance, Rear Adm. Philip Sobek, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 3, which includes the Bonhomme Richard, said at the time.

No one died in the fire, but 38 military and 23 civilian firefighters were treated for injuries such as heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation. More than 400 sailors from 16 ships at the base fought the fire.

The investigation into the fire remains underway. A Navy official told U.S. Naval Institute News that the service didn't "want anyone to jump to conclusions."

"We are going to be thorough and methodical," the unnamed official said, according to USNI News.

5 more installations lift pandemic travel restrictions

By CATLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Another eight military installations have lifted their travel restrictions put in place because of the coronavirus pandemic, bringing the number of installations without these restrictions for personnel to 102, the Pentagon announced Wednesday.

Five Air Force bases and three Army installations had lifted their restrictions as of Monday, according to the Pentagon's document that shows the latest status on travel restrictions for 231 military installations around the

world.

Travel restrictions were put in place in March to try to prevent the spread of the virus among Defense Department personnel and their families. Defense Secretary Mark Esper signed a memorandum May 22 that laid out the conditions needed for locations to allow for travel to and from bases.

Installations have to meet specific criteria in order to have the travel restrictions lifted, including a health protection condition less than "Charlie" and availability of essential services, according to the Pentagon.

The five Air Force installations that lifted their restrictions this week are Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina, and Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Last week, Kirtland had to reinstate its travel restrictions after they had been lifted Aug. 10. The base is located in Bernalillo County, which has had the highest number of coronavirus cases in the state, according to the New Mexico Department of Health.

The three Army installations

that have lifted their travel restrictions as of Monday are Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, Fort Custer Training Center in Michigan, and Fort Detrick in Maryland.

Fort Drum in New York was also reported by the Pentagon as having lifted travel restrictions, however Valerie Schneider, a spokeswoman for Fort Drum, stated Thursday that the restrictions are still in place.

No installations had to reinstate their travel restrictions this week, according to the Pentagon.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Tokyo's case count surges past 20K with new reports

By JOSEPH DITZLER
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japan's capital city reported 250 new coronavirus cases Thursday, pushing the total number there during the pandemic above 20,000, according to public broadcaster NHK.

U.S. military bases in the country announced three new infections, all on Okinawa, two at a Marine Corps base and one at an Air Force base.

More than half, 52%, of the new infections in Tokyo occurred within people in their 20s and 30s, according to NHK, which cited the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. People in their 60s account for 24% of those cases.

With Thursday's cases, Tokyo has reported a total of 20,096, according to metro government data. More than 16,000 have recovered and 356 have died.

The number of new daily cases has ranged between 39 and 95 in the past week, and the moving seven-day average is about 225, according to the metro government.

Central Tokyo is still off-limits to most U.S. military personnel. A handful of U.S. bases are in or near the Tokyo metro area, including Camp Zama, headquarters for U.S. Army Japan, Yokota Air Base, headquarters for U.S. Forces Japan, and Yokosuka Naval Base, home of the U.S. 7th Fleet.

At Yokosuka, the largest U.S. naval base in the country, the falling number of active cases there means some base services will resume, according to a Facebook post Thursday.

The barber and beauty shops at the Navy Exchange opened Thursday, the post said. The bowling center is scheduled to open Friday and the library, fitness centers and gym are set for Saturday.

"For now, our goal is to make as many safe options available on-

base given the limited activities and travel available off-base," the post said.

On Wednesday, the naval base reported 39 active cases, along with six new ones since Friday. The installation has been under a substantial risk of the coronavirus spreading, in military terms Health Protection Condition-Charlie, since Aug. 10.

Anyone affiliated with the base, including civilian employees and family members, is barred from activity in the local area except for essential services such as paying bills, grocery shopping and medical appointments.

That may change, however, as base authorities review data on the coronavirus in the surrounding area over the weekend, according to the post.

On Okinawa, the Marines reported two new cases at Camp Kinzer, according to a Facebook post by Marine Corps Installations Pacific. The two individuals were placed into quarantine as a result.

The Marines also reported that three people had recovered from the virus.

At Kadena Air Base, an individual allegedly quarantined with coronavirus symptoms has tested positive, according to a Facebook post by Kadena on Thursday. The person's contacts are limited to family members.

Another four people at the base have recovered from the virus, the post said.

Okinawa prefecture reported 36 new cases Thursday, a prefectural health official told Stars and Stripes by phone. The prefecture has reported 2,014 cases since the pandemic began.

A woman in her 80s from Naha city died Wednesday, bringing to 25 the total deaths due to the coronavirus on Okinawa, according to prefecture's website.

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A medical worker, top left, guides people during the COVID-19 testing at a makeshift clinic in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday.

S. Korea's daily case count soars, raising the possibility of lockdown

By KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's daily count of new coronavirus cases soared to 441 on Thursday, making it triple digits for nearly two weeks, health authorities said amid warnings the nation could face a lockdown.

A U.S. service member and a Defense Department civilian contractor also tested positive and were placed in isolation facilities after flying to the South from the United States, the military said Thursday.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control said the 441 new cases included 434 local transmissions and seven imported cases, the highest number since March 7.

That raised the total number of cases to 18,706, with 313 deaths. 14,461 patients have been released after fully recovering, up 93 from the previous day.

The government has warned it may need to implement the strictest level of prevention measures if the caseload continues to climb.

The latest outbreak, which began Aug. 14, has dealt a blow to hopes that South Korea had the virus under control as it had

weeks of relatively low numbers after containing an earlier outbreak with an aggressive approach to testing and tracing.

It largely began with a cluster of infections that the KCDC linked to the Sarang Jeil church and a massive anti-government rally in Seoul led by the pastor, but has since spread nationwide. Thursday's figures included 313 in Seoul and surrounding areas.

South Korea, a nation of some 51 million people, has so far avoided the need for the type of lockdown that has been employed in the U.S. and many other countries.

The government, however, has banned indoor meetings of more than 50 people and outdoor gatherings of more than 100. It has also ordered karaoke rooms, clubs, buffet restaurants and other high-risk facilities to close, but has stopped short of a lockdown. Many cities have also mandated that masks be worn in public.

U.S. Forces Korea, which commands some 28,500 service members on the divided peninsula, has also raised its health alert level to Charlie, meaning most off-post travel is banned along with many recreational activities in local communities.

USFK has had only 24 locally transmitted cases, including two soldiers, but its total has risen to 168 with an influx of American troops testing positive after flying to the South for new assignments or after trips abroad.

Those included the service member and civilian contractor. One arrived at Osan Air Base on a government-chartered flight Sunday, while the other arrived at Incheon International Airport on a commercial flight Monday, USFK said.

Both tested positive on their initial coronavirus test, which is required before a mandatory two-week quarantine, and have been transferred to isolation facilities on Camp Humphreys or Osan, according to the press release.

All transportation assets or quarantine facilities used by the affected troops have been thoroughly cleaned, it added.

"Despite the recent confirmed cases, USFK remains at a high state of readiness with less than 1% of its active-duty service members currently confirmed positive with COVID-19," the command said.

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Guam extends public health emergency as island reports 10th death

Stars and Stripes

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero signed an executive order Thursday that gives a 30-day extension to a coronavirus public health emergency set to expire Sunday.

The order, announced Thursday afternoon by the Guam governor's office, came the same day the island reported its 10th coronavirus-related death, a 96-year-old woman pronounced dead on arrival that morning at Guam Memorial Hospital.

The previous day, the govern-

ment announced that two people, a man, 61, and a woman, 62, had died of the virus within minutes of each other. The woman, a nurse, was a longtime employee of Guam Memorial Hospital, where she worked in intensive care and the emergency department.

"In less than 24 hours, we lost three souls to the virus," Guerrero said in a statement. "To the people of Guam, you are our best tool against this virus. If we each do our part, if we each protect one another with social distanc-

ing, hygiene and mask-wearing, we can prevent more days filled with grief."

Guerrero tested positive for the coronavirus Aug. 8. Just days later, Guam's lieutenant governor, Josh Tenorio, announced that he also had been infected.

The U.S. territory has been under a government-mandated "Pandemic Condition of Readiness 1" since Aug. 15. The updated order, which is now set to expire Sept. 30, shutter's non-essential businesses, forces schools

to shift to virtual instruction, prohibits most public gatherings and closes parks and beaches to most visitors.

A stay-at-home order is in effect until at least Sept. 4 and directs "all persons in Guam" to remain in their residences, except for essential activities such as shopping for food, obtaining medical care or commuting to and from work.

As of Thursday evening, Guam had recorded 1,232 cases and 10 deaths, according to the governor's office. Of those, 183 are U.S.

service members, not counting the approximately 1,150 infections from the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, which diverted to Naval Base Guam in late March and spent about two months fighting an outbreak onboard.

The U.S. military on Guam, which is under Health Protection Condition-Charlie, signifying a "substantial" risk of infection there, does not regularly publicize new cases.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

More than 1M Americans applied for jobless relief

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Just over 1 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits last week, a sign that the coronavirus outbreak continues to threaten jobs even as the housing market, auto sales and other segments of the economy rebound from a springtime collapse.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that the number of people seeking jobless aid last week dropped by 98,000 from 1.1 million the week before. The number of initial claims has exceeded 1 million most weeks since late March. Before the coronavirus pandemic, they never topped 700,000 in a week.

More than 14.5 million are collecting traditional jobless benefits — up from 1.7 million a year ago — a sign that many American families are depending on unemployment checks to keep them afloat.

Until July 31, the unemployed were receiving an extra \$600 a week in federal money on top of regular state unemployment benefits as part of an extraordinary lifeline extended to help them through the crisis. The loss of that money is putting the squeeze on many families.

“My income is basically cut in half,” said Taylor Love, 34, an unemployed massage therapist in Austin, Texas. “Paying our mortgage is going to be a struggle. We’re going to have to dip into what little savings we have.”

After passing a massive financial rescue package in March, congressional Republicans and Democrats have been unable to agree on more aid. President Donald Trump signed an executive order last month that stripped-down version of the expanded unemployment benefits. At least 39 states have accepted or said that they would apply for federal grants that let them increase weekly benefits by \$300 or \$400.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Gyms across metro Phoenix and Tucson are expected to reopen Thursday as coronavirus transmission numbers in three major Arizona counties are likely to drop to moderate levels that allow them to restart their businesses.

Arizona Department of Health Services Director Dr. Cara Christ said earlier this week that three large counties that include those cities should fall from “substantial” to “moderate” spread levels when the state releases its weekly metrics Thursday morning. The counties are Maricopa, Pima and Pinal.

Gyms aren’t waiting for the numbers to be posted, with many reopening well before the expected 9 a.m. posting.

Gyms, bars and nightclubs, movie theaters and water parks were ordered to close on June 29

by Gov. Doug Ducey as the state experienced a huge surge in coronavirus cases. As cases ebbed in late July the health department issued reopening guidelines for affected businesses. Daily case counts that once topped 4,000 are now regularly under 500.

California

SACRAMENTO — California will more than double its coronavirus testing to up to 250,000 people a day while reducing costs and providing faster results under terms of a contract with a Massachusetts company worth up to \$1.4 billion, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced Wednesday.

California and other states have worked to boost the number of tests they can process each day to help identify outbreaks and guide public health officials’ decisions on how to slow the spread of the virus. California now averages about 100,000 tests per day and has administered nearly 11 million to date, by far the most in the nation.

But this week, in a move that surprised state and local health officials, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it’s not necessary to test asymptomatic people who have had close contact with others who are infected.

Newsom was emphatic in stating the new federal guidelines “are not the policy of the state of California.”

In California, each test costs \$150 to \$200 and it takes between five to seven business days for the results to come back.

Newsom said the state expects to add tens of thousands more tests each day by November. And when the new contract is fully implemented by next March each test would cost \$30.78 and the state will add 150,000 more tests per day, with results back in under two days.

Indiana

SOUTH BEND — The University of Notre Dame has added security personnel at its COVID-19 quarantine and isolation sites after students were observed leaving the off-campus apartments and hotels in violation of safety protocols, officials said Wednesday.

Notre Dame provides secured rooms off-campus to isolate students who test positive for coronavirus and quarantine those who’ve had close contact with them or are awaiting test results.

University spokesman Dennis Brown told the South Bend Tribune that students under quarantine or isolation agreed to a code of conduct requiring them to remain in their designated rooms. Brown says the university has contracted with two security services to provide eight people to monitor the sites around the clock. He says students who don’t adhere to the code of conduct will



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Meg Beasley and other activists pause in silence near the Washington Monument in memory of the 180,000 people who have died in the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., early Thursday in Washington.

face sanctions that could include dismissal.

In-person classes for Notre Dame’s 12,000 students began Aug. 10. Eight days into the semester the university moved classes online for two weeks after confirmed COVID-19 cases spiked. The university on Wednesday reported 496 cases.

Kansas

TOPEKA — Kansas officials on Wednesday reported the highest seven-day jump in new COVID-19 cases since the state confirmed its first positive case, albeit with a declining death rate.

The state Department of Health and Environment reported 1,536 new cases since Monday, an increase of 4%, to bring the total to 39,937. The department reported an additional 11 COVID-19-related deaths, to put the pandemic total at 437.

The two-day jump in reported coronavirus cases gave Kansas its biggest seven-day spike in new cases since the pandemic reached the state in early March. The average number of new cases for the seven days ending Wednesday was 578, almost 18% higher than the previous peak of 491 cases a day for the seven days ending Aug. 17.

“I think it’s because people are starting to congregate with schools and with other settings and, quite honestly, the activities we saw even a week or two ago are coming home to roost,” Dr. Lee Norman, state secretary of health and environment, said in an interview.

Still, the death rate appears to be dropping. The 437 deaths reported Wednesday represent 1.0% of the reported cases, the lowest figure since April.

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — A Nevada hotel that was fined for hosting a Trump campaign event in defiance

of coronavirus restrictions sued the state and the city of Las Vegas over the health mandates.

The lawsuit filed by Aherm Hotel and Convention Center in Clark County District Court Monday also names Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak and Las Vegas planning director Robert Summerfield as defendants. The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

The company, which held an “Evangelicals for Trump” event earlier this month, claims in the lawsuit that Sisolak’s directive limiting gatherings to 50 people represents “disparate treatment” of Aherm and similar businesses.

The lawsuit says there is no rational basis that a hotel or convention center should be treated differently than restaurants and casinos, which are allowed to operate at 50% capacity.

The lawsuit asks the court to declare the ban on gatherings of more than 50 people invalid and unenforceable.

The lawsuit also seeks to force the governor to amend the directive to allow hotels, convention centers and restaurants to host events, conferences or meetings if they meet the standards under a phase of Nevada’s reopening plan.

Sisolak’s office declined to comment. A spokesman said the city does not comment on pending or ongoing litigation.

New Mexico

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Supreme Court upheld the authority of the state health secretary to restrict or close businesses because of the coronavirus pandemic, in a unanimous 4-0 decision Wednesday spurred by restrictions on indoor dining at restaurants.

In the decision announced by Justice Judith Nakamura, the court also rejected assertions by the restaurant industry that a July 13 ban on indoor dining service was arbitrary and capricious.

“Bottom line, it is well established that differing opinions do not make an action arbitrary and capricious,” Nakamura said. She invoked recent statements by U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts that the judiciary should not normally second-guess decisions regarding health emergencies.

The decision bolsters the emergency powers of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and her Cabinet, even as the first-term Democrat announced plans to lift a ban on indoor dining as part of a revised public health order that will take effect Saturday. Among other things, the new order will clear the way for restaurants, breweries, wineries, distillers, cafes and coffee shops to serve customers indoors in limited capacities.

West Virginia

MORGANTOWN — Seventeen West Virginia University students have been placed on probation for conduct violations related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Office of Student Conduct made the decision following hearings for the students, the university said Wednesday in a statement.

An additional 15 students will undergo similar hearings and could face probation if found responsible, while another student with a history of repeated COVID-19 related violations could be suspended or expelled if found responsible, the statement said.

Classes on the Morgantown campus began Wednesday. Students began moving in earlier this month for the start of the fall semester. The university began identifying potential students involved in off-campus parties as part of an investigation into violations of health and safety policies.

“I want to thank the majority of our students who are doing the right things,” Dean of Students Corey Farris said.

NATION

17-year-old arrested after 2 killed in Kenosha

Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. — A white, 17-year-old police admiral was arrested Wednesday after two people were shot to death during a third straight night of protests in Kenosha over the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake.

Kyle Rittenhouse, of Antioch, Ill., about 15 miles from Kenosha, was taken into custody in Illinois on suspicion of first-degree intentional homicide in the attack Tuesday that was largely captured on cellphone video. The shooting left a third person wounded.

"I just killed somebody," the gunman, carrying a semi-automatic rifle, could be heard saying at one point.

In the wake of the killings, Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers authorized the deployment of 500 members of the National Guard to Kenosha, doubling the number of troops in the city of 100,000 midway between Milwaukee and Chicago. The governor's office said he is working with other states to bring in additional National Guard members and law officers. Authorities also announced a 7 p.m. curfew, though protesters ignored it again Wednesday.

Protesters marched past the intersection where two people were shot Tuesday night, stopping to gather around the spot where one person was shot, and to pray and lay flowers. Danjon Spann said he decided to join the demonstration because one of those killed the night before was a friend.

"I couldn't take it any more," he said. "I couldn't just sit there and watch my friend die."

The dead were identified only as a 26-year-old Silver Lake, Wis., resident and a 36-year-old from Kenosha. The wounded person, a 36-year-old from West Allis, Wis., was expected to survive, police said.

"We were all chanting 'Black lives matter' at the gas station and then we heard, boom, boom, and I told my friend, 'That's not friends,'" 19-year-old protester Devin Scott told the Chicago Tribune. "And then this guy with this huge gun runs by us in the middle of the street and people are yelling, 'He shot someone! He shot someone!' And everyone is trying to fight the guy, chasing him, and then he started shooting again."

Scott said he cradled a victim in his arms, and a woman started performing CPR, but "I don't

think he made it."

According to witness accounts and video footage, police apparently let the gunman walk past them and leave the scene with a rifle over his shoulder and his hands in the air as members of the crowd were yelling for him to be arrested because he had shot people.

As for how the gunman managed to slip away, Sheriff David Beth described a chaotic, high-stress scene, with lots of radio traffic and people screaming, chanting and running — conditions he said can cause "tunnel vision" among law officers.

Rittenhouse was assigned a public defender in Illinois for a hearing Friday on his transfer to Wisconsin. The public defender's office had no comment. Under Wisconsin law, anyone 17 or older is treated as an adult in the criminal justice system.

Much of Rittenhouse's Facebook page is devoted to praising law enforcement, with references to Blue Lives Matter, a movement that supports police. He also can be seen holding an assault rifle.

In a photograph posted by his mother, he is wearing what appears to be a blue law enforcement uniform as well as the kind of brimmed hat that state troopers wear.

The sheriff told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that militia members or armed vigilantes had been patrolling Kenosha's streets in recent nights, but he did not know if the gunman was among them.

However, video taken before the shooting shows police tossing bottled water from an armored vehicle to what appear to be armed civilians walking the streets. And one of them appears to be the gunman.

"We appreciate you being here," an officer is heard saying to the group over a loudspeaker.

Before the shooting, the conservative website The Daily Caller conducted a video interview with the suspected gunman in front of a boarded-up business.

"So people are getting injured, and our job is to protect this business," the young man said. "And part of my job is to also help people. If there is somebody hurt, I'm running into harm's way. That's why I have my rifle — because I can protect myself, obviously. But I also have my med kit."



DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

A motorist fist-bumps a protester marching by to demonstrate against the Sunday police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wis., on Wednesday.

Kenosha protests peaceful after a night of chaos and shootings

Associated Press

KENOSHA, Wis. — Protests in Kenosha over the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, were mostly peaceful following the arrest of a 17-year-old police admiral accused of killing two people and wounding a third during a chaotic night of demonstrations and unrest.

As of early Thursday, there were no groups patrolling with long guns as there were during previous nights of protests over the Sunday shooting of Blake, who was left paralyzed. Protesters also stayed away from a courthouse that had been the site of standoffs with law enforcement.

Kyle Rittenhouse, of Antioch, Ill., about 15 miles from Kenosha, was taken into custody on Wednesday in Illinois on suspicion of first-degree intentional homicide in shootings late Tuesday that were largely captured on cellphone video.

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, issued a statement asking those who wanted to ex-

ercise their First Amendment rights to "please do so peacefully and safely" and urging others to "please stay home and let local first responders, law enforcement and members of the Wisconsin National Guard do their jobs."

"A senseless tragedy like this cannot happen again," Evers said.

In Washington, the Justice Department said it is sending in more than 200 federal agents from the FBI, U.S. Marshals Service and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The White House said up to 2,000 National Guard troops would be made available. The Justice Department also announced that the U.S. attorney's office and FBI would conduct a civil rights investigation into the shooting of Blake, in cooperation with Wisconsin state law enforcement agencies.

Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, who is Black, said in an interview with the news program "Democracy Now!" that

the shootings were not surprising and white militias have been ignored for too long.

"How many times across this country do you see armed gunmen, protesting, walking into state capitols, and everybody just thinks it's OK?" Barnes said. "People treat that like it's some kind of normal activity that people are walking around with assault rifles."

In Wisconsin, it is legal for people 18 and over to openly carry a gun without a license.

Witness accounts and video indicate the gunman first shot someone at a car lot just before midnight, then jogged away, fell in the street, and opened fire again as members of the crowd closed in on him.

A witness, Julio Rosas, 24, said that when the gunman stumbled, "two people jumped onto him and there was a struggle for control of his rifle. At that point during the struggle, he just began to fire multiple rounds, and that dispersed people near him."

Portland protesters clash with US agents near federal building

Associated Press

Protesters and U.S. agents assigned to protect federal property in Portland clashed late Wednesday outside a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Building in another night of violence over Oregon's largest city.

Some people in a crowd of about 200 dressed or vandalized building security cameras, shined laser lights at the agents and threw rocks and bottles at them,

Portland police said in a statement issued Wednesday.

During the clashes, agents shot non-lethal munitions at the crowd and set off stun grenades and irritants that released green and white plumes into the air, The Oregonian/Oregonian Live reported.

One apparently injured protester was carried away by fellow demonstrators, the newspaper reported.

A federal agent was injured after being hit in the leg by a rock and police made

11 arrests, the Portland police statement said.

Portland has been gripped by nightly protests for nearly three months since the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The demonstrations, often violent, usually target police buildings and federal buildings.

Some protesters have called for reductions in police budgets while the city's mayor and some in the Black community have decried the violence, saying it's

counterproductive.

The Wednesday night protest followed another protest where demonstrators smashed windows at City Hall late Tuesday night and into Wednesday morning and 23 people were arrested.

Demonstrators in the crowd of about 150 also threw bottles and eggs at police, put metal bars in the street to try to damage police vehicles and smashed a security camera on the City Hall building, police said in a statement.

NATION

Pence defends police amid rising racial tensions

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Vice President Mike Pence forcefully defended law enforcement but made no mention of the Black Americans killed by police this as he addressed Republican convention proceedings that unfolded amid new protests against racial injustice following the latest shooting.

Wednesday evening's featured speaker, Pence argued that Democratic leaders are allowing lawlessness to prevail from coast to coast. He and others described cities wracked by violence, though protests in most locations have been largely peaceful.

"The American people know we don't have to choose between supporting law enforcement and standing with African American neighbors to improve the quality of life in our cities and towns," he said. He assailed Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden for saying there is an "implicit bias" against people of color and "systemic racism" in the United States.

"The hard truth is ... you won't be safe in Joe Biden's America," Pence said. "Let me be clear: The violence must stop — whether in Minneapolis, Portland or Kenosha."

Absent from Pence's 37-minute speech: a direct mention of Jacob Blake, the Black man who was wounded by police on Sunday in Kenosha, Wis. There was also no reference to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or other Black people who have been killed by police this year, spurring a new nationwide protest movement.

As their convention nears its conclusion Thursday, Republicans are seeking to reconcile their depiction of President Donald Trump as a smooth, stable leader with the reality that the U.S. is facing a series of crises that include the demonstrations, a potentially catastrophic hurricane and a raging pandemic that is killing more than 1,000 Americans a day.

The historic convergence of health, economic, environmental and social emergencies is only increasing the pressure on Trump, as he looks to reshape the contours of his lagging campaign against Biden with Election Day just 10 weeks off and early voting beginning much sooner.

The convention keynote gave Pence another opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty to Trump. The vice president, who is also the chair of the White House coronavirus task force, defended the administration's handling of the pandemic, a political liability that was otherwise largely absent from the convention program. He also delivered sober, encouraging words to Gulf Coast residents as Hurricane Laura neared.

"This is a serious storm," Pence said. "And we urge all those in the affected areas to heed state and local authorities. Stay safe and know that we'll be with you every step of the way to support, rescue, respond and recover in the days



PHOTOS BY ANDREW HARNIK/AP

President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump, left, stand with Vice President Mike Pence and his wife, Karen Pence, as Trace Adkins, center, sings the national anthem on the third day of the Republican National Convention at Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine in Baltimore on Wednesday.

and weeks ahead."

Positioning himself as a potential heir to Trump in 2024, Pence delivered sharp attacks against Biden but also presented an optimistic vision of the country's future. He spoke from Baltimore's Fort McHenry, where an 1814 battle inspired the national anthem — which has been at the center of a cultural debate, fueled by Trump, over athletes who kneel rather than stand in protest of racial injustice.

Trump made an unannounced appearance to join Pence after his remarks for a performance of the anthem at the fort. The president, the vice president and their wives later greeted guests, some of whom were in walkers and stood for the anthem.

Some in the crowd gathered close together to get a glimpse of the Pences and the Trumps in violation of social distancing guidelines. Pence was seen shaking a greeter's hand.

While the Fort McHenry speech was orchestrated to present a grand scene, earlier portions of the program were lower energy. The show for Americans at home lacked some of the production elements that had made previous nights memorable, including slickly produced videos and surprise announcements, such as an unexpected presidential pardon and a citizenship ceremony.

Besides Pence, there was no major headline speaker and few boldface names. George W. Bush, the sole living former Republican president, isn't expected to address the convention. Mitt Romney, the party's 2012 nominee who has emerged as a Trump foe, is also absent from the lineup.

The convention unfolded after



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

The Trumps arrive after the vice president delivered his convention speech Wednesday.

three nights of protests in Kenosha prompted Trump to issue repeated calls for Democratic Gov. Tony Evers to increase the deployment of National Guard troops to help keep the peace. Trump also directed the Department of Justice to send FBI agents and U.S. marshals to the city as reinforcements, a day after a white 17-year-old who had been outspoken in support of police was accused of killing two protesters and wounding another.

Many of the speakers Wednesday night reinforced Trump's law-and-order message, warning that electing Biden would lead to violence in cities spilling into the suburbs. Trump's campaign believes his aggressive response will help him with suburban women who may be concerned by the protests — though it may only deepen his deficit with Black voters.

The Trump campaign's focus on law enforcement continued a weeklong emphasis on motivating his political base — rather than appealing to moderate voters.

An August Fox News poll found that registered voters were somewhat more likely to say they trusted Biden than Trump on handling issues related to policing and criminal justice, 48% to 42%, and significantly more likely to trust Biden than Trump on handling race relations, 53% to 34%. Biden's advantage on criminal justice issues mirrored his advantage overall.

Michael McHale, the president of the National Association of Police Organizations, told the convention, "The violence and bloodshed we are seeing in these and other cities isn't happening by chance. It's the direct result of refusing to allow law enforcement to protect our communities."

And Burgess Owens, a former NFL player now running for Congress in Utah, declared, "This November, we stand at a crossroads. Mobs torch our cities while popular members of Congress promote the same socialism that my father fought against in World War II."

The night included remarks from the president's daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, as well as several administration officials including departing counselor Kellyanne Conway, the manager of Trump's 2016 general election campaign, and press secretary Kayleigh McEnany.

"This is the man I know and the president we need," said Conway, a week before she is to leave the White House. "He picks the toughest fights and tackles the most complex problems. He has stood by me, and he will stand up for you."

NATION

Laura: Arkansas preps for weakened storm as Louisiana eyes damage

FROM FRONT PAGE

could take days. Wind and rain blew too hard for authorities to check for survivors in some hard-hit places. Meanwhile, Laura began weakening as it churned toward Arkansas, which was under an unusual tropical storm warning.

Hundreds of thousands of people were ordered to evacuate ahead of the hurricane, but not everyone fled from the area, which was devastated by Hurricane Rita in 2005.

"There are some people still in town, and people are calling ... but there ain't no way to get to them," Tony Guillory, president of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, said over the phone from a Lake Charles government building that was shaking from the storm.

Guillory said he hoped the stranded people could be rescued later in the day, but he feared that blocked roads, downed power lines and floodwaters could get in the way.

"We know anyone that stayed that close to the coast, we've got to pray for them, because looking at the storm surge, there would be little chance of survival," Louisiana Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser told ABC's Good Morning America.

More than 600,000 homes and businesses were without power in the two states, according to the website PowerOutage.us, which tracks utility reports.

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson declared an emergency ahead of Laura and set aside \$250,000 for the state to prepare for the hurricane's impact in his state. Hutchinson said the state will have search-and-rescue teams on stand-by.

Forecasters had warned that the storm surge of 15 to 20 feet

would be "unsurvivable" and the damage "catastrophic" along a stretch of coast from Lake Charles to Port Arthur, Texas. Damaging winds extended outward as far as 175 miles, according to the hurricane center.

Dick Gremillion, the emergency director in Calcasieu Parish, said authorities were unable to get out to help anyone or survey the storm's effects.

"The wind is still over 50 mph. It's going to have to drop significantly before they can even run any emergency calls. We also need daylight," Gremillion said in an interview with Lake Charles television station KPLC.

More than 580,000 coastal residents were ordered to join the largest evacuation since the coronavirus pandemic began and many did, filling hotels and sleeping in cars since officials did not want to open large shelters that could invite more spread of COVID-19.

But in Cameron Parish, where Laura came ashore, Nungesser said 50 to 150 people refused pleas to leave and planned to endure the storm, some in elevated homes and even recreational vehicles. The result could be deadly.

"It's a very sad situation," said Ashley Buller, assistant director of emergency preparedness. "We did everything we could do to encourage them to leave."

Becky Clements, 56, did not take chances. She evacuated from Lake Charles after hearing that it could take a direct hit. With memories of Rita's destruction almost 15 years ago, she and her family found an Airbnb hundreds of miles inland.

"The devastation afterward in our town and that whole corner of the state was just awful," Cle-



PHOTOS BY GERALD HERBERT/AP

Chris Johnson views destruction at his home on Thursday, in Lake Charles, La., after Hurricane Laura moved through the state. Johnson stayed in his home as the storm passed.



A truck and Interstate 10 sign is seen on Thursday, in Lake Charles, La., after Hurricane Laura moved through the state.

ments recalled. "Whole communities were washed away, never to exist again."

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Pete Gaynor urged people in Laura's path to stay home, if that's still safe. "Don't go out sightseeing.

You put yourself, your family at risk, and you put first responders at risk," he told "CBS This Morning."

FEMA has plenty of resources ready to help survivors, Gaynor said. Edwards mobilized the National Guard to help, and state

Department of Wildlife crews had boats prepared for water rescues.

Forecasters expected a weakened Laura to cause widespread flash flooding in states far from the coast. Little Rock, Ark., expected gusts of 50 mph and a deluge of rain through Friday. The storm was so powerful that it could regain strength after turning east and reaching the Atlantic Ocean, potentially threatening the densely populated Northeast.

Laura hit the U.S. after killing nearly two dozen people on the island of Hispaniola, including 20 in Haiti and three in the Dominican Republic, where it knocked out power and caused intense flooding.

It was the seventh named storm to strike the U.S. this year, setting a new record for U.S. landfalls by the end of August. The old record was six in 1886 and 1916, according to Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

Over 6,400 Guardsmen deploy to assist Texas, Louisiana

BY COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — More than 6,400 National Guard troops in Texas and Louisiana responded in the hours after Hurricane Laura made landfall along the Gulf of Mexico coast as a dangerous Category 4 storm.

National Guard officials in Louisiana posted photos on social media of their troops conducting route-clearance operations Thursday morning as Laura moved northward. The storm struck early Thursday, making landfall with 150 mph winds near Cameron, La., about 30 miles east of the Texas border, the National Hurricane Center said, warning of continued "life-threatening" flooding throughout the region.

About 5,400 National Guard troops started response work

Thursday afternoon, National Guard officials said. About 1,000 were responding in Texas. Officials said more troops could respond in the coming days as the extent of flooding and damage is assessed.

"The devastation activated included crews charged with conducting search-and-rescue missions, route clearance, damage assessment and supply delivery operations in the areas impacted by the storm. Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said at least one person — a 14-year-old girl — had been killed by the storm as of Thursday morning.

The National Hurricane Center had warned Wednesday that Hurricane Laura had strengthened into an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm with winds exceeding 150 mph. The

center issued a hurricane warning for the region stretching from Texas' San Luis Pass, just south of Galveston, to Intercoastal City in Louisiana, just south of Lafayette. The center also warned of the risk of "catastrophic" storm surge flooding, which it labeled "a life-threatening situation."

The storm was continuing to move north through Louisiana early Thursday afternoon, retaining tropical storm strength as it moved toward the state's border with Arkansas, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Army Col. Thomas Frlouax, the director of the Louisiana National Guard's Joint Staff, said Wednesday that he expected at least 6,000 of the state's Guard troops to respond in the coming days. He said they were outfitted with 220 high-water vehicles, 19 helicop-

ters and 65 boats.

In Texas, 1,000 Guard troops were activated to operate 20 aircraft — including helicopters and cargo aircraft, which began ferrying in supplies ahead of the storm — and 177 high-water vehicles, National Guard officials said.

The Coast Guard said Thursday morning that it had begun search-and-rescue operations via helicopter and boat.

Hurricane Laura struck about three years after Hurricane Harvey hit the same region of Texas and Louisiana in late August as a Category 4 storm that caused massive flooding, especially throughout Houston. That storm left the region with an estimated \$125 billion in damage and killed more than 100 Americans. The entire Texas National Guard —

12,000 troops — was activated in response to that storm.

In addition to troops responding to Laura, Texas has about 2,000 troops on active duty to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. They could be quickly deployed to respond to the hurricane, if needed, officials said.

In Louisiana, the National Guard ceased its coronavirus response ahead of Hurricane Marco, which fizzled to less than tropical storm strength before making landfall near the Mississippi River's mouth late Monday, Frlouax said. It had about 1,100 troops working that mission.

He said troops would return to the coronavirus mission as areas of the state hit by Laura were stabilized.

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NATION

Citizens fighting Calif. fires urged to flee

By CAMILLE FASSETT
Associated Press

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. — With California firefighters strapped for resources, residents have organized to put out flames themselves in a large swath of land burning south of San Francisco, defending their homes despite orders to evacuate and pleas by officials to get out of danger.

They are going in despite California's firefighting agency repeatedly warning people that it's not safe and actually illegal to go into evacuated areas, and they can hinder official efforts to stop the flames. The father-in-law of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said the effort near a cluster of wildfires around the city of Santa Cruz is larger and more organized than he recalls in previous blazes.

"People are frustrated with the lack of resources available. People are always going to try to sneak back in, but it sounds like this is growing to a new level," said Ken Pimlott, who retired as director of Cal Fire in 2018. "I haven't seen people re-engage to this scale, particularly with the level of organization."

The group of wildfires near Santa Cruz has burned 125 square



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Civilian volunteers Brian Alvarez, left, and Nate Bramwell fight the CZU Lightning Complex Fire in Bonny Doon, Calif., on Aug. 20.

miles and destroyed more than 500 buildings. While those fires are 20% contained, firefighters have been pushed to the breaking point since lightning ignited more than 500 blazes in one night last

week, most of them in the central and northern parts of the state.

In Boulder Creek, a community at the base of the Santa Cruz Mountains near a state park filled with towering redwoods, some

people call the group of residents fighting the flames the "Boulder Creek Boys." They say the group, which includes former volunteer firefighters, has been protecting homes and extinguishing blazes

behind fire lines for over a week, at times using nothing but dirt and garden hoses.

About 10 miles north of Santa Cruz, crews of civilians stayed back to protect homes in the tiny community of Bonny Doon that they believed firefighters were too strapped to protect, patrolling neighborhoods through the night in shifts. Brothers Robert and Jesse Katz even brought in their own firetruck, fighting alongside official crews.

Cal Fire Deputy Director Daniel Berlant said he's not heard of residents organizing to the extent civilian groups are now in the Santa Cruz Mountains. But he said it's always problematic for residents to stay or reenter evacuation zones, and sometimes they need to be rescued by official crews.

"Our firefighters have equipment, communication and decades of experience, which allow us to battle dangerous fires," Berlant said. "We absolutely stress that everyone needs to evacuate early. These efforts, while well-intentioned, absolutely slow us down."

He said it can also cause problems for firefighters when civilians compete for roads and water pressure.

Rumor of suspect's suicide sparks Minneapolis chaos

By JEFF BAENEN
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — An emergency curfew expired and downtown Minneapolis was calm Thursday morning after unrest broke out following what authorities said was misinformation about the suicide of a Black homicide suspect.

Gov. Tim Walz mobilized the Minnesota National Guard at the request of Mayor Jacob Frey, who imposed the curfew after people broke windows and stole merchandise Wednesday night from stores on and near the Nicollet Mall, a pedestrian plaza that runs the length of downtown. People broke into a Target store and stole merchandise and set a popular British pub on fire. Other businesses were damaged, including some outside of downtown.

Emotions have remained raw over the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed Black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes on May 25. Floyd's death sparked protests worldwide, including several nights of violence in Minneapolis. Demonstrators also gathered in Minneapolis this week to protest after Jacob Blake, a Black man, was shot multiple times by police in Wisconsin on Sunday, leaving him paralyzed.

"We once again see the unrest on our streets. And not just Minnesota but as a nation, this pain continues on," Walz said at a late night news conference.

TV footage and reporter's tweets Wednesday night showed people grabbing merchandise at a Saks OFF 5TH store, and broken windows and shrimp scattered on the sidewalk outside Ruth's Chris Steak House. One officer was hospitalized with a non-life threatening injury, police spokesman John Elder said.

At least 33 people were arrested as authorities moved in to restore order, the State Patrol said Thursday morning.

Police Chief Medaria Arradondo tried to dispel



CARLOS GONZALEZ, (MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.) STAR TRIBUNE/AP

Police clear out and secure Saks OFF 5th Wednesday, in Minneapolis.

rumors that spread on social media about the death of the unidentified Black man, who was suspected in a Wednesday afternoon homicide and fatally shot himself on the Nicollet Mall as officers approached several hours later. His death, which was captured on city surveillance video and released by police within 90 minutes, nonetheless sparked protests and unrest in the heart of downtown.

City Council Member Jeremiah Ellison, a leader of the effort to overhaul the police force following Floyd's death, tweeted a call for understanding about why the violence broke out even though police didn't kill the man.

"MPD did not kill him, but people assuming they did is rooted in a steep distrust," he wrote. "That distrust is our failure to own. Seeing windows broken and items stolen can be beyond frustrating, especially when all that rage was sparked (this time) by misinformation. But so often our policing institutions have themselves been the source of misinformation. We forfeited our goodwill and this is the ugly cost."

Vindman's twin claims White House retaliation

By MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The twin brother of a key witness in the impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump has filed a federal complaint alleging retaliation by the White House and possible ethical violations and sexist behavior by top officials, including Robert O'Brien, now national security adviser.

In the complaint, Lt. Col. Yevgeny Vindman alleges he faced retaliation from Trump and White House officials after raising concerns about the president's pressure on Ukrainian officials to investigate Democrat Joe Biden's family — the heart of the Democrats' impeachment inquiry.

Vindman also said he reported "multiple allegations" that O'Brien and another official misused government resources, excluded women from meetings and made sexist and demeaning remarks. The White House strongly denied those claims, calling them "ridiculous and false."

The complaint was first revealed by House Democrats, who on Wednesday pressed the Pentagon's inspector general, Sean O'Donnell, to investigate what they called a "concerted effort" by the Trump administration to retaliate against Vindman and his brother, retired Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman.

The development is the latest

twist in the fallout from impeachment. Administration officials who testified against Trump have been fired, demoted or reassigned while those who refused to participate have faced little consequence. Democrats have pushed back on the seeming retaliation, pledging to protect those who cooperated with the impeachment inquiry and those who want to talk to Congress in the future.

Both Vindmans worked for the National Security Council in the White House and were reassigned to the Army after the Senate voted to acquit Trump in his impeachment trial. Alexander Vindman was a star witness in the inquiry, appearing in his military uniform and testifying that he didn't think it was "proper" for Trump to demand that a foreign government investigate Biden. Vindman said he had raised concerns internally over the matter.

In a letter to the Pentagon watchdog, the Democrats said "it is all the more urgent" that the Defense Department investigate and closely examine actions taken by White House officials against the Vindmans in light of the new complaint.

"If the White House refuses to cooperate fully — including by denying requests for documents or for interviews with White House officials — we will have no other choice but to infer that any such actions were retaliatory," the Democrats wrote.

YOU MADE THE GRADE



Second-place winner Nora Conlin (above), 11, of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, won a \$1,500 Exchange gift card. Three winners were selected from more than 500 high-achieving military students who qualified for the sweepstakes by maintaining a B average or better in spring 2020.

Through the Army & Air Force Exchange Service's *You Made the Grade* program, first- through 12th-graders, including homeschooled students, with a B average or higher are eligible to receive a \$5 Exchange gift card each grading period during the school year.

Students who make the grade qualify to enter a worldwide sweepstakes to win a \$2,000, \$1,500 or \$500 Exchange gift card. Drawings are held in December and June.



To learn more about the *You Made the Grade* sweepstakes, visit our Community Hub: shopmyexchange.com/community

WORLD

Mosque shooter sentenced to life in prison

Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — The white supremacist who slaughtered 51 worshippers at two New Zealand mosques was sentenced Thursday to life in prison without the possibility of parole, the first time the maximum available sentence has been imposed in the country.

Judge Cameron Mander said the crimes committed by 29-year-old Australian Brenton Harrison Tarrant were so wicked that a lifetime in jail could not begin to atone for them. He said they had caused enormous loss and hurt and stemmed from a warped and malignant ideology.

“Your actions were inhuman,” Mander said. “You deliberately killed a 3-year-old infant by shooting him in the head as he clung to the leg of his father.”

After the sentence was announced, survivors of the shootings raised hands and fists in celebration and greeted supporters waving signs with painted hearts and carrying roses outside the court building.

The March 2019 attacks targeting people praying at the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch shocked New Zealand and prompted new laws banning the deadliest types of semi-automatic weap-

ons. They also prompted global changes to social media protocols after the gunman livestreamed his attack on Facebook.

During the four-day sentencing hearing, 90 survivors and family members recounted the horror of that day and the trauma it continues to feel. One of those who spoke was Temel Atacogcu, who survived being shot nine times during the attack at the Al Noor mosque.

Atacogcu said he felt relieved at the sentence.

“Finally we can breathe freely, and we feel secure, and my kids feel secure,” Atacogcu said. “The justice system has locked up this ideology forever.”

Tarrant pleaded guilty in March to 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one count of terrorism, reversing his earlier not guilty pleas.

He fired his lawyers and told the judge he didn't wish to speak at his sentencing. A standby lawyer appointed by the court told the judge that Tarrant did not oppose the

maximum sentence.

The judge said Tarrant recently told a psychiatrist that he now rejects his extremist views and considers his attacks “abhorrent and irrational.”

But Mander said he was skeptical Tarrant had abandoned his ideology, especially considering that the gunman told police after the attacks he wished he'd killed more people. Mander said Tarrant had shown no empathy toward his victims and remained detached and self-centered.

Tarrant arrived in New Zealand in 2017, never sought work, and began planning for his attack by stockpiling high-powered weapons and joining shooting clubs, the judge said.

“It appears that while traveling in Europe you developed deep-seated racial views regarding the migrant population of some Western countries,” the judge said.

Tarrant flew a drone over the Al Noor mosque and researched the layout, according to prosecutors. On the day of the attacks, he drove to the mosques with six guns, including two AR-15s.

“You committed mass murder,” the judge said. “You slaughtered unarmed and defenseless people. You maimed, wounded and crippled many others. Your victims in-

clude the young and the old, men, women and children.”

Dressed in a gray prison tracksuit, Tarrant showed little emotion during his four-day sentencing. He watched the speakers, occasionally giving a small nod or covering his mouth as he laughed at jokes, often made at his expense.

He was noticeably thinner than when he was first arrested. He didn't show the braveness he did at his first court appearance the day after the attacks, when he made a hand gesture sometimes adopted by white supremacists.

The sentencing hearing gave survivors and family members a chance to confront the gunman. As the hearing went on, the speakers became more emboldened and the numbers who signed up to speak swelled.

Some chose to yell at the gunman and give him the finger. Others called him a monster, a coward, a rat. Some sang verses from the Quran or addressed him in Arabic. A few spoke softly to Tarrant, saying they forgave him.

“It was very empowering,” said Aya Al-Umari, who spoke about the death of her brother, Hussein. “Every one of us was so powerful in delivering our statements.”



Tarrant

Death toll rises from Afghanistan flooding

Associated Press

CHARIKAR, Afghanistan — The death toll from two days of heavy flooding in northern and eastern Afghanistan rose to at least 150 on Thursday, with scores more injured as rescue crews searched for survivors beneath the mud and rubble of collapsed houses, officials said.

Heavy rains, compounded by mudslides, often threaten remote areas of Afghanistan, where infrastructure is poor. Summer often brings heavy rainfall and flooding to the country's north and east.

Flash floods inundated the city of Charikar in northern Parwan province starting Tuesday night. The Health Ministry said the local hospital was partially destroyed and many injured were being transferred to the capital Kabul.

Powerful flood waters in the mountainous province dislodged thousands of large rocks that caused major injuries and destroyed entire homes, burying people under the rubble, officials said.

Several excavators reached the

area and were digging for those stuck beneath the rubble.

Mohammad Qasim Haidari, Afghanistan's deputy minister for disaster management, said the casualty toll may rise as rescue teams and volunteers were still working to locate people buried under destroyed houses.

He said 102 people died in Parwan, 19 in the capital Kabul, 17 in northern Kapisa, seven in eastern Wardak, three in northern Panjshir, two in eastern Nangarhar and one in eastern Paktia and over 200 others were injured.

Wahida Shahkar, spokesperson for the Parwan provincial governor, said soldiers and police were deployed to help people search for their loved ones under the mud.

The head of the provincial hospital, Abdul Qasim Sangin, said every 30 minutes to an hour a corpse was being delivered to the hospital. He said several children were among the dead and some of the injured are in critical condition.

A popular vacation destination for many Afghans, Charikar was the location of many of Parwan province's casualties and also



RAHMAT GUL/AF

An Afghan man looks for belongings in his house that was damaged by a mudslide in the Parwan province north of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday.

suffered much property destruction in the flooding.

Hamid Agha, 50, a Charikar resident, said he lost all his family members to the floods except two sons who are truck drivers and were delivering goods in another

province.

Agha was able to pull himself out of the rising waters but was unable to save his family. “Out of 11 family member in the house only I am alive,” he said. “We buried six bodies but four others

are still missing.”

A group of people was seen Thursday digging out their belongings, including blankets, clothes, mattresses and pillows, from houses partially or completely filled with mud.

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WORLD

Germany calls for an end to military drills in east Med

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Germany's foreign minister on Thursday called for an end to military drills taking place in the eastern Mediterranean area to try and defuse tensions and create conditions for NATO allies Greece and Turkey to resolve an ongoing dispute over offshore energy exploration rights.

Foreign Minister Heiko Maas' comments came as European Union foreign ministers were set to meet in Berlin in an attempt to persuade EU-member Greece and its neighbor Turkey to pull back from the brink of a potential conflict. The ministers were expected to debate over a range of sanctions and other policy options that might convince

Turkey to temper its insistence on drilling for energy reserves in disputed parts of the eastern Mediterranean.

Maas, who engaged in shuttle diplomacy between Athens and Ankara earlier this week, stressed the need to "create the conditions for Turkey and Greece to resolve their problems directly with each other."

"The situation remains very difficult," Maas said. "The precondition for these talks is that the maneuvers that are going on in the eastern Mediterranean be ended — each side can make its contribution to that and so create the space for diplomatic talks, because for sure the parties won't sit down at the table if warships are facing off in the eastern Mediterranean."

Russia: No signs of crime in Navalny coma case thus far

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian authorities said Thursday they have found no indication so far that opposition leader Alexei Navalny's coma, which his allies and German doctors treating him believe may have been brought about by poisoning, was caused by a criminal act.

A preliminary inquiry launched last week hasn't found any indication of "deliberate criminal acts committed against" Navalny, Russia's Prosecutor General's office said. The statement comes amid growing pressure from the West to investigate the sudden illness of the Kremlin's fiercest critic and authorities' apparent reluctance to do so.

Navalny, an opposition politician and corruption investigator who is a longtime foe of President Vladimir Putin, fell ill on a flight back to Moscow from Siberia on Aug. 20 and was taken to a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk after the plane made an emergency landing.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday he saw no grounds for a criminal case until the cause of the politician's condition was fully established.

On Thursday, Russian police said they have been conducting a preliminary probe — an inquiry to determine whether a criminal investigation should be launched — to "establish all the circumstances of the incident."

Korean typhoon damages buildings and floods roads

BY KIM TONG-HYUNG

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — A typhoon barreled through the Korean Peninsula on Thursday, damaging buildings, flooding roads and toppling utility poles before weakening into a tropical storm.

No casualties have been immediately reported in either South or North Korea as a downgraded Typhoon Bavi headed into China after passing near the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, South Korea's weather agency reported.

Bavi had packed maximum winds of 83 miles per hour when it made landfall early Thursday in a western coastal region of North Korea that is a major source of farming and fishing in a nation that deals with chronic food shortages.

After the strong winds and rain stopped, pedestrians and cyclists returned to Pyongyang's wet streets Thursday afternoon, moving between scores of uprooted trees and at least one bent traffic sign.

The North's Korea Central TV showed footage of snapped trees and utility poles and flooded roads. It reported damage to houses and public facilities in North Hwanghae and South Hwanghae prov-



AHN YOUNG-JOON/AP

A woman holds an umbrella against the strong wind and rain caused by Typhoon Bavi in Seoul, South Korea, on Thursday.

inces, where the typhoon made landfall. Roads were also flooded in the city of Nampo, which is closer to Pyongyang.

In South Korea, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety reported damages to buildings, walls, roads and other structures.

By Thursday afternoon, power had been restored to most of more than 9,300 South Korean homes, including over 3,500 in cities and towns near Seoul and around 900 in the southern resort island of Jeju, which was hit by the typhoon Wednesday.

More than 470 domestic flights in and out of Jeju and the southern mainland city of Busan were canceled. South Korean authorities also shut down public parks and sea bridges, halted some railroad services and moved hundreds of fishing boats and passenger vessels to safety.

Workers in Seoul and other major cities were restoring makeshift coronavirus testing stations that had been dismantled out of concerns that the tents and booths wouldn't have withstood the strong winds.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 charged after stolen boat found on sandbar

DE DAGSBORO — Two Pennsylvania men have been charged with boating violations after they were discovered in a stolen vessel that was stuck on a sandbar in a Delaware river, according to Delaware's natural resources department.

Matthew Tortu, 24, and Travis Gooding, 21, both of Coatsville, Pa., were found in a small skiff that was grounded in the Indian River Bay early Saturday morning. Fish and Wildlife Natural Resources Police said in a statement Tuesday. Officers determined the boat had been taken from Dagsboro, according to the statement.

Tortu and Gooding were charged with one count each of felony theft, felony conspiracy, criminal mischief, no boating safety certification, no navigation lights and negligent operation of a motor vessel, officials said. Gooding was also charged with failure to maintain a proper lookout.

Man charged with killing elephant seal on beach

CA LOS ANGELES — A 30-old-man was charged Tuesday with shooting and killing a protected northern elephant seal on a California beach, federal prosecutors said.

Jordan Gerbich, of Santa Maria, faces one count of taking a marine mammal, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office. The elephant seal was found on a gunshot to the head on a beach near San Simeon last September.

The area is popular viewing area along the central coast where visitors can observe the enormous seals, which can weigh more than 1,000 pounds. The animals are a protected species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

If convicted of the misdemeanor or offense, Gerbich could face a maximum sentence of one year in federal prison, officials said.

Investigators did not name a possible motive for the shooting.

City undeterred in plan for 9/11 commemoration

WV SUMMERSVILLE — At a time when festivals, concerts and other events are being called off due to the coronavirus pandemic, one West Virginia community is forging ahead with plans to honor law enforcement officers and first responders.

The city of Summersville will host a parade, music and fireworks on Sept. 11, the 19th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the U.S., WCHS-TV reported.

According to a post on Summersville's Facebook page, the city is joining efforts with the city of Richwood and the Nicholas County Commission to invite residents to participate. Attendees will be asked to observe social distancing along the parade route.

Prior to the fireworks, a moment of silence will be held for law enforcement officers and first responders.



MATT HAMILTON, CHATTANOOGA (TENN.) TIMES FREE PRESS/AP

Sun hits the pavement

Senior Brynne Gillilan, 18, paints her senior parking space on Monday at Northwest Whitfield High School near Tunnel Hill, Ga. The students are scheduled to return to school in Whitfield County this Monday.

Woman helped son sell drugs from prison

RI PROVIDENCE — A Rhode Island woman has pleaded guilty to helping her son continue to sell crack cocaine even while he was serving a state prison sentence on drug charges, federal prosecutors said Tuesday.

Lisa Ellis, 52, of Pawtucket, pleaded guilty in federal court in Providence to cocaine distribution charges, according to a statement from U.S. attorney for Rhode Island, Aaron Weisman.

Ellis in 2018 acted as point-of-contact for her son, James Gomes, 33, as he continued to arrange drug sales from behind bars to people on the outside, prosecutors said. Ellis, when taking phone calls from her son, confederated in his associates on her cellphone, who were then directed by Gomes to make crack sales, even specifying customer, quantity and price, authorities said.

She would then collect the proceeds of the sales, keep some for herself, and deposit the rest in her son's prison account.

Grand Canyon rock fall reveals fossil footprints

AZ FLAGSTAFF — It's something of a modern-day chuckwalla, strolling in sand dunes on an island in what now is the Grand Canyon region.

That's how Steve Rowland, professor emeritus of geology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and his fellow researchers interpret fossil footprints that were revealed in a rock fall near a popular Grand Canyon hiking trail.

THE CENSUS

\$480K

iro said Monday that agents executed search warrants last week in 30 locations believed to be connected to the organizations, whose activities he said have been linked to two Philadelphia-area shootings. The searches also netted 20 guns and tens of thousands of doses of fentanyl and cocaine and other drugs.

They estimate the tracks are 313 million years old, give or take a half-million years.

At that age, they'd be among the oldest tracks of animals that lay eggs with a protective hard or leathery shell and the earliest evidence of vertebrate animals walking distinctively in sand dunes, Rowland, Mario Caputo and Zachary Jensen wrote in a research paper published this month.

"I think our interpretations will hold up very well," Rowland said Monday.

The rock fell from the Manakacha Formation, made up of sandstone, limestone and mudstone that points to it being a onetime coastal plain when Arizona was near the western edge of the super continent, Pangaea. Dinosaurs weren't around yet.

7-foot-long triceratops skull excavated

SD SIOUX FALLS — A seven-foot-long triceratops skull has been unearthed in South Dakota, a Missouri college has announced.

A geology professor and students from Westminster College were excavating fossil remains

The amount of money seized during an eight-month investigation of three drug trafficking organizations in Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood, authorities said.

Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro said Monday that agents executed search warrants last week in 30 locations believed to be connected to the organizations, whose activities he said have been linked to two Philadelphia-area shootings. The searches also netted 20 guns and tens of thousands of doses of fentanyl and cocaine and other drugs.

last year at the Grand River National Grassland when they were alerted that a rancher had discovered something unusual poking out of the earth. The group found it was the tip of a triceratops horn, leading them to believe it could lead to a significant excavation. The college's expeditions usually find just fragments of dinosaur bones.

The professor returned with students and alumni this summer, and they unearthed a skull that weighed 3,000 pounds.

The skull was transported back to Missouri, where Westminster College is hoping to rest it.

Police officer's wife dies trapped in SUV

FL MIAMI SHORES — A Florida police officer's wife died after becoming trapped in the back of his patrol vehicle for several hours during a hot afternoon, police said Monday.

Investigators are treating the death of Clara Paulino, 56, as an accident, the Miami Herald reported.

Aristides Paulino, 58, who works for the city of Miami, was asleep in the couple's Miami Shores home Friday afternoon

after finishing a midnight shift, the Herald reported. Clara Paulino had climbed into the backseat of his marked SUV to find something when the doors somehow closed, and a self-locking mechanism engaged, officials said.

Temperatures reached over 90 degrees Fahrenheit as Paulino spent about four hours stuck inside the SUV until her family discovered her body, police said.

The SUV has a cage that separates the back seat from the front seat and has bars on the windows, Matthew Reyes, the vice president of the Miami Fraternal Order of Police, told NBC-6. He said the vehicle's doors lock and can only be opened from the outside.

Center named after abolitionist vandalized

MA BOSTON — A Boston social services organization named in honor of 19th century abolitionist Harriet Tubman that's been the center of a redevelopment dispute has been vandalized with graffiti, officials say.

The Harriet Tubman House in the city's South End was spray painted with what United South End Settlements, which runs the building, called "inaccurate messages concerning the preservation of the iconic Honor Roll mural," according to The Boston Globe.

The organization said it intends to preserve the mural despite plans to demolish the building and replace it with a condo development. The sale has sparked debate over gentrification of the neighborhood.

From wire reports

WEEKEND



Ethan Hawke
reinvents 'Tesla'
Movies, Page 20

KATY

PERRY

TURNS HER FROWN UPSIDE DOWN

Ten years ago, she shot to pop stardom with her blockbuster album 'Teenage Dream.' Then the music business changed, and the hits dried up. With the release of 'Smile,' Perry talks about learning to live with less than No. 1s.

Q&A, Page 32; Review, Page 33

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



KENT NISHIMURA, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

PopID CEO John Miller demonstrates how the PopPay payment facial recognition software works Aug. 5 at a payment register at Lemonade in Pasadena, Calif.

New contactless way to pay

Using facial recognition as a form of payment — creepy or cool?

By SAM DEAN
Los Angeles Times

A new way to pay has arrived in Los Angeles: your face.

As so-called contactless payments rise in popularity during the pandemic, a Pasadena company called PopID is rolling out the nation's first payment system based on facial recognition, first at a number of restaurants near its headquarters, including mom-and-pop operations such as Daddy's Chicken Shack and regional chains such as Lemonade.

The system is simple: A customer signs up on their phone, takes a selfie and adds cash to their PopPay account from a credit card or bank account. When it comes time to pay for their meal, they look into the camera of a PopID tablet or kiosk (no smiling necessary), the cashier verifies their name, and money is withdrawn from the account.

For customers, the experience is eerily seamless, at least when it's functioning properly. (The software struggles at recognizing faces with masks.)

For restaurants, the service is fast and cheap, assuming customers sign up for it. Easier ordering can speed up lines, and PopID is offering lower fees to process each payment than other payment processing or credit card companies.

PopID's system is the first to get up and running in the U.S., where facial recognition technology is under intense scrutiny from regulators and privacy advocates.

Eight cities in the U.S., including San Francisco, Oakland and Boston, have banned government use of the technology, arguing that the software is both too powerful a surveillance tool and too inaccurate when finding matches to be safely used by police.

John Miller, the 42-year-old Pasadena entrepreneur who founded and runs PopID, didn't plan on wading into cutting-edge privacy issues when he quit his nanotech job 10 years ago. He just wanted to start a global cheeseburger chain.

"It didn't take long to realize I'm not very good at it," Miller said. Cali Burger opened its first location in Shanghai in 2012, advertising Double-Doubles and Animal Style fries, only to get sued for trademark infringement by In-N-Out. The burger chain tweaked the formula and opened dozens of franchises around the world, but seeing the day-to-day difficulties of running a restaurant reactivated Miller's innovation circuits.

PopID was Miller's solution to two restaurant

problems at once: slow lines and high fees from payment processing and credit card companies. Those fees can be as high as 3 percent for each transaction — small change that adds up, considering most restaurants run on 3-5 percent profit margins. Because PopID payments come directly from the users' preloaded accounts, Miller said, "there's enough arbitrage built in that we can lower the rates versus credit cards and Apple Pay" and still make the money.

But trust is hard to earn when it comes to facial recognition. Miller said the company is complying with the strictest laws in the nation for face data, the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act, and prioritizes customer consent for all uses of personal information.

Some privacy advocates see an important distinction between government use of facial recognition technology and use by private businesses — as long as the businesses don't end up giving their data to the government.

That scenario was vividly illustrated in July, when the digital rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation found that a San Francisco business association gave the San Francisco Police Department real-time access to a private network of cameras and cache of footage during the height of the Floyd protests. If police combined access to surveillance footage with access to a database like PopID's, protesters who used the payment service could be quickly identified en masse.

Nathan Sheard, associate director of community organizing at EFF, said written, informed consent would be key to ethical use of the technology, as well as a clear policy of pushing back when law enforcement comes knocking to request access to the PopID database and informing the user if the company is ordered by a court to comply.

Miller said that level of protection is baked into PopID's user agreement and basic structure.

Customers choose to sign up for the system and have to click a button or tell a cashier every time they use it, setting it apart from the kind of passive surveillance that most privacy advocates argue is ripe for abuse. PopID's software also runs on stand-alone devices, which means companies can't simply connect their own security cameras and start logging their employees' every move in a searchable database.

Most important, the agreement signed by users when joining the service makes clear that PopID will share user data only when customers explicitly tell it to, whether that means pushing a button to pay or signing up for a loyalty points system with a given shop.

GADGET WATCH

Headphones designed for skiers

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Outdoor Tech's Chip series headphones claim to be perfect for getting audio into the ears of skiers. I'm not a skier, so I never tested the feature on the slopes. But after examining a few sets of the wireless headphones, it's clear that Outdoor Tech mastered the technology.

The Chip 2.0 Universal Bluetooth helmet headphones (\$142.95) are designed to fit into any helmet that has audio-compatible ear pads, essentially giving you a helmet with built-in audio.

But the first feature I noticed is that they have glove-friendly controls, which totally makes sense. So even though it's been well over 100 degrees where I live, I got out of my winter gloves to try Outdoor Tech's patented 2-button controls.

The controls are standard for any wireless earbuds to adjust volume, music selection and pause to answer calls, but how about doing it in freezing weather? Sure enough, it was simple with my gloves on. To confirm the difference, I also tried the controls on everyday earbuds with my gloves, which were impossible to control.

Each earpiece has a 40 mm driver to produce high-quality sound on or off the slopes. The left and right earpieces resemble mini hockey pucks — 2 inches round by a half-inch thick — and are connected to each other with a thin, tangle-free cable. For the most part, they are mini speakers stored in the helmet directly against your ears. And unlike earbuds, which go in your ears and block outside sounds, with this design, the Chips allow users to hear surrounding ambient noise on the slopes, which is a great feature.

For audio testing, I was able to rip them into my bike helmet with the help of some duct tape, and then off for my ride week. The audio was crystal clear and the controls are perfect. Though these are made for ski helmets and designed to rest on your ears, I actually preferred them to the earbuds I regularly use, which probably tune out my surroundings too much.

After my unofficial experiment with the headphones, I messaged a good friend of mine who lives and skis regularly in Park City, Utah.

He and his wife are users of Outdoor Tech's wired Chips while skiing for music and hands-free calls, so they don't have to dig out a smartphone buried in their ski jacket.

Late last season they switched to the Bluetooth Chips 2.0 for the same great sound and convenience without dealing with the wire. He confirmed that the chips fit in the ear pocket of the ski helmet and produce great sound with the ability to hear ambient sound.

Outdoor Tech takes it a step further with the Chips Ultra true wireless headphones (\$229.95), a totally cable-free audio solution.

Each sleek-looking Bluetooth 5.0 speaker is just a little smaller than the Chips 2.0, and fits into helmets with audio-compatible ear pads. While the sound out of the Chips 2.0 was perfectly acceptable, I thought the Chips Ultra gave me a little more bass.

Online: outdoorotechnology.com

Urbanistas, a Swedish lifestyle audio company, has introduced the London ANC true wireless Bluetooth 5.0 earbuds, designed for everyday use.

I'm in the midst of testing a few different sets of earbuds, and they all have great features. After using the London earbuds a few times, I was really impressed by the sound, looks and many other features.

As I said in reference to the Chips headphones, blocking your surroundings isn't always a good thing. With the London built-in active noise-canceling feature, sounds of the outside world can be turned on or off with the push of a button.

The in-ear-styled earbuds sit comfortably (multiple sizes of ear tips are included) and come with a USB-C wireless charging storage case with indicator lights. You'll get about five hours before needing a charge, and the case is good for four additional charges.

When testing them, I played around with a few apps to fine tune the sounds of my eclectic playlist from the '70s, '80s and '90s, but always came back to the default settings. That doesn't mean you can't make something a little better; I just liked it right out of the box. All of my music sounded strong and clear, filled with the right amount of bass at any volume level.

Online: urbanista.com; \$149; available in black, pink, white and blue



Outdoor Tech's Chips Ultra wireless headphones have 40 mm drivers and a built-in microphone for hands-free calls.

OUTDOOR TECH/TNS

WEEKEND: MOVIES



Bryan Cranston, right, looks at the gorilla named Ivan, voiced by Sam Rockwell, in a scene from "The One and Only Ivan."
DISNEY+/AP

EYE TO EYE

'One and Only Ivan' explores grown-up ideas without being condescending

BY SONAYA KELLEY
Los Angeles Times

Katherine Applegate's children's novel "The One and Only Ivan" is chock full of big ideas.

The story, about a 400-pound gorilla who performs in a suburban mall's circus attraction, touches on themes of greed and capitalism, empathy and liberation from oppressive systems.

"And ironically enough, 'Ivan' is about isolation," said Applegate. "Ivan was in a cage in the middle of a mall for 27 years without seeing others of his own kind. So in a strange way, it's perfectly timely."

Based on a true story, the book has been adapted into a live-action film of the same name by screenwriter Mike White. It's now available for streaming on Disney+, after the COVID-19 pandemic spurred the studio to forgo a theatrical release.

Produced by and featuring a vocal turn from Angelina Jolie in a prominent role as an aging elephant, the cast is led by another Oscar winner — Sam Rockwell — as the titular silverback. The ensemble — which also includes Danny DeVito, Helen Mirren, Chaka Khan, Phillipa Soo and Brooklynn Prince — delivered their animal turns using state-of-the-art, motion-capture technology, while Bryan Cranston leads a smaller cast of human characters as the struggling circus owner.

"I had to scrape the bottom of the barrel for our actors," joked director Thea Sharrock. "It was really, really tough."

Sharrock, who made her directorial debut with 2016's adaptation of Jojo Moyes' romance novel "Me Before You," sought to retain the empathy and nuance of Applegate's bestselling novel by heaving close to the source material.

"Having a theater background, I was taught very early on that the most important person in the room is the playwright or writer," she said. "When you adapt a book that lots of people already love, and particularly when it's for children, there's a huge responsibility (to get it right). Probably the most important part of my job was to not betray that connection that they have with it but to understand what the things are that create the love affair between the reader and the story."

"I'm also incredibly proud of the ground-

breaking CGI that has gone into this," she added. "I truly believe that the level of artistry is unique. My heart goes out to all of the animators who spent hours and hours creating something of this caliber."

"It's an event (film)," agreed Jolie, who, in addition to serving as a producer, voices the elephant Stella, Ivan's longtime friend whose dying wish is for him to help the circus' new baby elephant find a life outside the confines of the circus.

"What has been achieved with the animation is advanced. What looks seamless is so complicated," Jolie said of the film's unusual production process. "That was kind of directing three different movies at the exact same time. She's hearing my voice and working with us as people, but then she's also thinking of the animals' body movement, how long it takes for them to move across a room. She was directing the animation. If you take a big sigh, or the elephant shifts its weight, or there's a twinkle in the eye — it is part of the soul of the animal. It had to be monitored intensely to make sure it's accurate."

The actress was first introduced to the novel by her kids.

"My daughter Shiloh was the one that brought the book to my attention," she said. "As a mom, I related to (Stella), and I loved what she represents. I think we all have that time in our life where we start to think of passing our wisdom on. Where our focus is: What makes the next generation safe? What makes those I love safe?"

"I'm so happy to be able to bring this film to families at this time," she added. "If this film meets this moment and is something for families to do together, then really there is nothing better."

Having spent the past decade acting predominantly in blockbuster tentpoles like "Kung Fu Panda," "Maleficent" and their sequels — and up next in Marvel's hotly anticipated sci-fi epic "The Eternals" — Jolie says the audience payoff is primarily what draws her to make big-budget movies.

"If we're going to do a big movie, I like thinking of the audience and giving them as much as we can," she said. "And to show them something new and give them something outside. Or else a very deep, small film that's extremely intense and emotional. I don't take lightly the idea of putting something in front of an audience."

The longtime activist says she's been spending the bulk of her time recently working to find the answer to questions that have been raised or magnified by the pandemic.

"I've worked with the refugee agency at the UN for about 20 years now," she said. "Looking at the world through a global foreign policy lens, there's a lot to be concerned about."

"(But) my hope really does come from the younger generations," she added. "I see them fighting and demanding answers, questioning what is very broken about our society and the way many things have been mishandled for decades. There's a lot to do. (Creating) better tools to give young people so they can strengthen their fight has become a central focus for me."

She says it's crucial to approach children's entertainment with a degree of frankness and honesty.

"I think some people approach (this) work lightly," Jolie said. "I think going into things like ('Ivan'), it may appear as a children's story, but that's not how Katherine approached it. It's not how Ivan's life was approached. What I love about the book is that there are certain lines where it's so simply put, but says so much. And I think that's why children relate to the book so much and will love the film, because it's not presented to them with some manufactured idea of what we think. The way (Ivan) says things with such purity, it's just drops of truth."

"It's funny," Applegate said. "With kids, particularly middle-grade readers for whom I often write, they're just ruthlessly honest. They understand so much more than we give them credit for. So it's deeply important not to condescend. They understand the world is not black and white; it's gray. And they're grappling with those questions internally, so I think sometimes books and movies are the best way for them to be able to vocalize those fears and concerns."

"Hopefully, like many pieces of art that are strong like this, children continue to ask questions and do their own investigating," Jolie said. "Hopefully this will inspire them even further to know that there's a lot that must be addressed and fought for, and their instinct will be to ask the right questions and demand the right things."

WEEKEND: MOVIES

'Constantly thinking'

New film explores genius of Nikola Tesla and his relationship with fellow brain Thomas Edison

By BROOKE LEFFERTS
Associated Press

Ethan Hawke portrayed several real people in recent years, including musician Chet Baker and abolitionist John Brown, but his new role as pioneering inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla presented the challenge of playing a genius. In the new independent film "Tesla" by writer-director Michael Almereyda, Hawke shines light on the Serbian immigrant's many theories and inventions.

Hawke plays Tesla as an outsider with a brilliant mind who has visions of the future, including of wireless communications systems. Kyle MacLachlan plays charismatic Thomas Edison, and Almereyda imagines the two as competitors chasing investors and ideas.

This is the third time he

actors have worked together. In a recent interview with The Associated Press, it was clear they have an easy rapport, full of mutual respect and teasing.

AP: How did you approach playing a genius?

Hawke: I've met a handful of people that were truly brilliant in my life. My father, Tom Stoppard, a few people whose brain doesn't work like other peoples,' and they're just unique people. They're distant. So I just wanted him not to be average. I wanted him not to speak in a way that was normal. I wanted him not to walk in a way that was normal and to wear his hair in a way that was normal and everything that he had any agency in, any choice he had, it was something he created.

MacLachlan: The challenge, I think, is finding the person, the human, the frailties, you know? As you go through these guys,

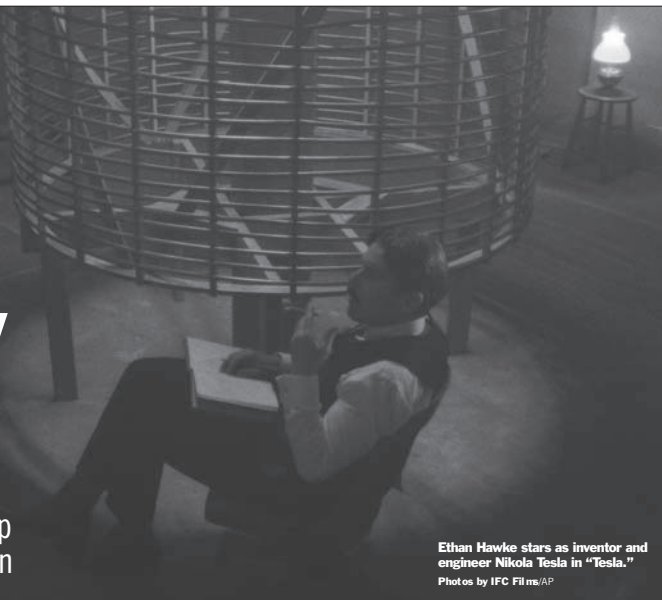
the thing that I think that I respond to most — I'm thinking of (director) David Lynch now — is the absolute commitment to the artistic process, particularly in David's case. If I'm working on a character or I've got a role to do, a job, you're very committed. But during the rest of the time, I'm off just kind of messing around, I don't know, making dinner. You know what? Edison's not making dinner somewhere! You know what I mean? He's constantly thinking. Almost, I wonder if he's at the mercy of this mind, and would he like to get off the treadmill? I don't know.

Hawke: It's a little bit of torture. A person like Tesla and a person like Edison had a lot of it ... When you think about creating something that had never existed. Creating the Internet. Creating electricity. Conceiving of a way that people could communicate without seeing one another. And knowing that's possible ... You're seeing a lightning storm and wondering "How does that work?" My brain doesn't do that. I just accept it. So I kind of, I was just in awe of these two men.

MacLachlan: Yeah, I feel the same way.

The film is a period piece and has a physically dark, moody feel but also uses some modern touches, like breaking the fourth wall. How did you contribute to that?

MacLachlan: That's the responsibility of the director. He takes care of that. We take care of what's happening between us in the scene, and we build our arsenal of whatever it is that we need as the character. And then we just play. I mean, it's one of



Ethan Hawke stars as inventor and engineer Nikola Tesla in "Tesla."

Photos by IFC Film/AP



"Tesla" includes fanciful scenes that never happened, such as Edison (left) and Tesla showing ice cream in each other's faces.

the beauties of working with Ethan that it's like wherever we go, wherever Ethan goes, wherever I go, we're so connected, and so much great stuff I think comes out of that just by allowing it to happen.

Hawke: Kyle and I have a scene in which Michael wanted to do this thing where he played with "What's reality?" So he wanted to imagine that we shove ice cream in each other's face. Right? Because you kind of know that probably didn't happen. And so ... it kind of pops, because your brain goes, "Wait, that never happened." So then you realize none of this really happened because they're obviously acting; we're interpreting their actions. And it does something kind of beautiful to your brain. And I remember Kyle and I saying after that scene, whatever that

is, is what's special about what Michael sees about the world.

What's been the silver lining of the pandemic for you?

Hawke: I don't think I've ever had five months of dinners at home. I'm a very restless person and I like to move, and there's been aspects of this that have been powerfully good for my soul. To not get my self-esteem from my work, but get it from my behavior with my family. You know, that's something that's never been asked of me. I lost work, but I'm getting time with my wife and my kids, and I'm getting time with myself.

MacLachlan: The amount of time that I'm spending at home with my family right now. My son is 12. It's a great age. And we're together all day, every day. And we haven't gotten sick of each other, which is a good sign!



Kyle MacLachlan stars as Thomas Edison in "Tesla."

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Magnetic portrait

Hawke gives visionary his due in drama 'Tesla'

By JUSTIN CHANG
Los Angeles Times

The past few years have brought a fresh resurgence of interest in the life and legacy of Nikola Tesla, the popularity of an Elon Musk electric car being only the best-known example.

Previous movies — and, in some ways, history itself — assigned Tesla to a subordinate role, that of the tragically thwarted genius, remembered as much for his lopsided rivalry with Thomas Edison and his ill-fated dealings with various titans of industry as for his groundbreaking advances in the study of electrical power and wireless communications.

In their quietly entrancing new drama, "Tesla," writer-director Michael Almeréyda and his star, Ethan Hawke, have conspired to give this Serbian-born, American-made visionary his cinematic due. Their aim, superficially stated, is to dramatize how a turn-of-the-century iconoclast managed to anticipate and revolutionize a future that few of his contemporaries saw coming. But Almeréyda, never one to embalm unconventional minds in conventional storytelling, has no interest in a mere recitation of his subject's accomplishments. He infuses classical narrative with an invigorating formal playfulness.

"Tesla" is, in more than one sense, a movie about the uneven distribution of power. It's the story of a stubborn, uncompromising genius in conflict with a series of dubious benefactors, many of whom want to funnel his gifts into more conventional and lucrative forms.

It begins with Hawke's Tesla stumbling around a courtyard on roller skates, which were at the time a fairly recent invention — a funny, gently disorienting image of a



IFC FILMS/AP

Ethan Hawke plays the titular inventor and contemporary of Thomas Edison in "Tesla."

wildly adventurous mind, forever chasing after new concepts and experiences while often struggling to master its environs. He is accompanied by his friend Anne Morgan (Eve Hewson), a superior skater and the movie's shrewdly counterintuitive choice of narrator. Providing a rare woman's voice in a story dominated by the whims and aspirations of men, she adroitly navigates this story from one funny-sad vignette to the next while providing her own essential perspective on Tesla, one that is by turns appreciative of his genius and critical of his shortcomings.

On occasion, Alan will neatly demolish the fourth wall by whipping out a MacBook and running a Google Image search on some of the movie's real-life figures — including her wealthy father, banker J.P. Morgan (Donnie Keshawarz) — a nifty fact-checking gag that also ties Tesla's moment to our technologically advanced present. Sometimes Alan informs us that something we've just witnessed didn't actually happen, just in case you were confused by that scene of Tesla and Edison (Kyle MacLachlan) attacking each other with ice cream cones — a deft, ego-deflating visualization of the rivalry that develops after Tesla asks the veteran inventor to finance his new project.

Since that project is a motor that makes use of alternate current, a more elegant and efficient means of harnessing power than Edison's direct-current methods, no such support is forthcoming. But if the movie's Edison is arrogant, thin-skinned and easily threatened, MacLachlan's witty, sympathetic performance rises the yoke of easy villainy. A similar emotional generosity informs Jim Gaffigan's big-hearted turn as engineer and entrepreneur George Westinghouse, who supports Tesla and makes his AC innovations a force to be reckoned with — at least until the company faces bankruptcy and the two are forced to part ways.

Tesla is an observer, agent and sometimes victim of that flux: His grand visions are the definition of "ahead of their time," at times leading him into eyebrow-raising realms of study. What comes through most in Hawke's brilliantly internalized performance is Tesla's intense commitment to his work, as well as his weariness about having to continually explain and defend it to men of deeper pockets and lesser minds. The progress of human civilization can be infuriatingly banal, but that doesn't mean our biopics have to be.

"Tesla" is rated PG-13 for some thematic material and nude images. Running time: 102 minutes.

'Ivan' tells true story with realism and expression

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

For years now, Disney has been at the forefront of computer-generated talking animals movie technology. Sometimes it's a hit ("The Jungle Book") and sometimes it's a real mess ("The Lion King"). But "The One and Only Ivan" finds a sweet spot, beautifully establishing characters with plausible pathos and emotion that drive this primarily character-driven piece.

"The One and Only Ivan" is based on the book by Katherine Applegate, about a real gorilla, Ivan, born in 1962, that was captured by poachers as a baby and brought to live with humans in the United States. At 3 and fully grown, the family placed him in a Washington state mall attraction, where he remained for 27 years, until the public called for his release to a zoo. The film, written by the prolific screenwriter Mike White, directed by Thea Sharrock, gives Ivan, and his furry friends, a voice.

Sam Rockwell provides the voice of Ivan, who seems resigned to his life at the mall, with his owner/master/circus ringleader

Mack (Bryan Cranston), his buddy, a stray mutt named Bob (Danny DeVito), and his wise old elephant pal Stella (Angelina Jolie). Ivan is satisfied to be the main attraction, roaring for the delight of audiences, though his spirit is more sensitive, intuitive and artistic. Gifted some old crayons by Julia (Ariana Greenblatt), the plucky young daughter of Mack's employee, Ivan scribbles impressionistic portraits of bugs and objects. But there's an undeniable melancholy in Ivan's demeanor, and in Rockwell's performance.

That pathos is piqued when Mack, strapped for cash and looking to make the mall circus the hottest ticket in town, brings in some fresh talent: an adorable baby elephant, Ruby (Brooklyn Prince). Ruby is fascinated by stories "of the wild," and Stella makes Ivan promise he'll take Ruby out of this dusty old mall basement and into the natural environment where she belongs.

Thus, the adaptation gives the animals agency too. They aren't sitting around, waiting for a letter-writing campaign, but staging their own dramatic escapes, passing off crayon messages to Julia and ultimately expressing their heart's desire any way they can. The story isn't all that different than

the standard Disney film fare, but it's the underlying true tale that offers stakes and emotion, as well as the vocal performances from Rockwell, Prince, DeVito and Jolie.

What stands out about "The One and Only Ivan" is just how amazingly rendered the computer-generated animal performances are. It's not just the photorealistic visuals, but the animators have landed on a performance style that blends both animal and human expression. Every animal moves, and "speaks" with motions expected of their species, but there's recognizable human emotion conveyed visually and vocally, too. It certainly helps that an expressive primate carries the majority of the emotional weight, as well as a cute, doe-eyed baby elephant (there are a few moments right out of "Dumbo" that will pull the heartstrings). Sharrock's directing is unshowy, focused on the characters and performance moments that make this film a simple, yet effectively moving story about dreaming of a life beyond the walls, something we can all appreciate at this particular moment.

"The One and Only Ivan" is rated PG for mild thematic elements. Running time: 104 minutes. Now available on Disney-Plus.

'Desert One' explores a failed mission

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

From legendary documentary filmmaker and two-time Oscar winner ("Harlan County, USA") and "American Dream" Barbara Kopple comes "Desert One," the story of Operation Eagle Claw, a failed rescue mission during the Iran hostage crisis in 1980.

Kopple weaves together archival news footage and interviews with everyone from hostages to hostage takers, from special forces servicemen to ex-President Jimmy Carter. If there's someone who was involved in this situation, Kopple tracks them down to unpack just what happened — even an Iranian passenger on a bus that the mission accidentally intercepted. It's an autopsy of sorts, offering context for the mission, the situation in Iran and the U.S., and the political ramifications on Carter's (failed) reelection bid. It's an extraordinarily detailed dissection of the mission itself, the planning, the men involved and what exactly went wrong.

The thoroughly exhaustive "Desert One" follows a standard formula. It's produced by the History channel, so there's no surprise that it includes detailed interviews and sweeping score feel decidedly of that TV military historiography genre. The second act becomes bogged down in the details of planning and execution of the mission, and the mission itself, which is predominantly rendered with animated sequences. But Kopple carefully threads the needle on connecting the political choices behind the mission, one Carter long kept as a Plan B, choosing instead to pursue a path of diplomacy to free the hostages. The success and the tragedy of the mission cost him his second term, losing to a pro-war Reagan.

What's almost immediately obvious about "Desert One," though, is that it is a piece of glossy military propaganda, even if the host is a story of U.S. military triumph, but of sorrow. Before the title sequence, a phone call with Carter authorizing the mission is advertised with onscreen text as a never-before-heard classified recording. The content of the call isn't shared, but it signifies to the audience the filmmakers' access, which has been granted by the U.S. government.

Yet this feels at odds with Kopple's investigative instincts, which are less focused on military tragedy and more on the larger forces and impact: how the hostage crisis was wielded for political and cultural gain, by both Ayatollah Khomeini and Reagan. That's the real meat of the story, not necessarily how long the special ops forces trained with night vision goggles. "Desert One" is unrated. Running time: 106 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

By **CHRISTOPHER BYRD**
Special to *The Washington Post*

One of the most insidious aspects of depression is how it can color and distort the world. For Stiles, the teenage protagonist of *What Happened* who is sorting through his perceptions, identifying what is real and what isn't is a matter of life and death. *What Happened* is a game about depression, high school and LSD, which at times comes across as an after-school special laced with profanity. But it can also be undeniably daring. Given its inherently volatile subject matter (we're talking kids and psychedelics here), it will likely provoke mixed feelings.

At the start of *What Happened*, Stiles drops a tab of acid in the bathroom. He then sees a projection of himself — which will haunt him for most of the game — chastising him for the action. “Back to square one,” his “mind” tells him. An instant later he is submerged in water gasping for air as if drowning or, more accurately, in the throes of a panic attack. Soon after the water disappears, he finds himself in the banal confines of the boy's bathroom at his high school. Emerging from the stall, he has little time to collect himself before a bully bursts into the bathroom and assaults him, dunking his head in a sink.

After the bully leaves, things don't get much better. Stiles emerges from the bathroom into a faceless world where invisible stories walk past him — their only identifying markers are the backpacks, ear buds, or other objects they carry. The invisible people around him speak to how detached he feels from his environment. More examples quickly pile up. The things that once gave Stiles comfort, such as friendship and baseball, have lost their luster. The world around Stiles is hazy, not only because he is tripping,



Journey through a troubled mind

What Happened, an innovative take on teen depression and anxiety, is hampered by two-dimensional characters

but as a consequence of his thoughts irrigating everything in sight. Because Stiles is a prisoner to his own negative emotions, he is prey to misperceptions, which are amplified by the LSD.

Notwithstanding his grief for his deceased father and the anger he nurses toward his mother for starting to date again, Stiles is tormented over a recent breakup with a girl tellingtally named Maya. (The word “Maya” is sometimes used to de-

scribe worldly illusions in Indian philosophy.) Through flashbacks, we see that Maya broke up with Stiles on account of his aloofness, his refusal to see a therapist and his intempered use of LSD. Making matters worse, Stiles believes that his ex has hooked up with his erstwhile best friend, Ben.

“Time can turn good memories bitter,” his mind tells him at one point while at another point it counsels him that “you're not

getting anything by rewinding these thoughts.” Although the external personification of his mind can be a source of sound advice, generally it is full of reproach and derision. Tonally, *What Happened* nails the persistent, hectoring voice that can accompany rampant depression. It also makes ingenious use of transitions between scenes that illustrate the effects of acid. At various points we see a sprawling tunnel of lockers, a

forest that erupts inside the high school, a theatrical backdrop where Stiles moves around like a stick figure, hellish scenes of hung bodies and the like. These visual hallucinations, however, are all-encompassing in a way that is preposterous considering that Stiles is shown to have taken no more than a tab of acid. For that matter, Stiles' mental state appears more in keeping with outright psychosis than with an LSD experience. Some gamers might be underwhelmed by the liberties taken here.

In addition to the credibility issues, the characters in *What Happened* are fairly two-dimensional. Seeing that Maya and Ben probably aren't the coldesthearted people Stiles thinks they are doesn't make them particularly interesting, nor does it give the story's reversals any real force. Moreover, although I enjoyed seeing how one scene folded into another, I can't say I was enthralled by many of the actual game mechanics, which mainly come down to searching for objects to advance the story. Wandering through a black and white forest looking for lightbulbs that can be placed into sockets to clear one's path of obstructing tree branches did nothing to make me feel more invested in the game's world. If anything, I wished *What Happened* consisted more of simply walking from point A to B and experiencing the story without the roadblocks of its so-so gameplay elements.

For those with a distinct taste for the experimental side of gaming, *What Happened*'s artful transitions between scenes recommend themselves even if other aspects fall short. I look forward to seeing what the game's developers might do next since they clearly have an aptitude for stepping outside of the usual video game safe spaces.

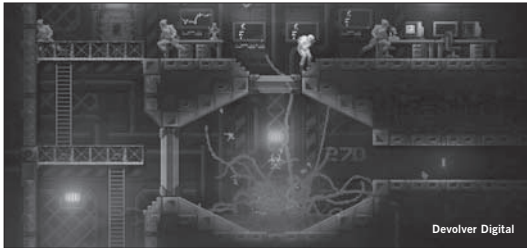
Platform: PC
Online: whathappenedgame.com

Carrion: Don't play this one right before bedtime

By **CHRISTOPHER BYRD**
Special to *The Washington Post*

Sometimes it's good to be bad. That sentiment cuts to the marrow of *Carrion*, the new *Metroid*-like game that sinks players into the role of a viscera-colored, creepy-crawly monster with tentacles and teeth. Though the game evokes the limited color palette of the 16-bit era, I'd be hard pressed to think of anything as rousingly nefarious on Super Nintendo. Then again, Devolver Digital, which also gave the

world *Hotline Miami*, specializes in publishing games with the sort of look that might have concerned the sort of '90s parent who fretted over *Mortal Kombat*. At the start of *Carrion*, a monstrous entity escapes from a hazard-marked container into the bowels of an underground facility. Naturally, all it wants to do is to feed and evolve, so the first order of business is to prey on the human staff. The secret is to search for containment tanks to break into and obtain DNA



upgrades. Using the right trigger of the control pad and the right thumb stick, you can grab enemies with a tentacle and steer them into your gaping maw.

The facility that lies between you and freedom is patrolled by drones, mechs and armed guards with electric shields that can sap your health should you touch them. To move between sections of the base, you have to uncover save points where you can “spread your biomass” — in other words, infect your surroundings with your malignant growth. The

larger you become, the more resilient you are to attacks. At the same time, though, your frame becomes more awkward to haul around, which can make it tricky to cram yourself into an elevator.

Weight management is an important aspect of *Carrion*. Most upgrades can only be used when your fleshy bulk is within one of three ranges. To knock through reinforced surfaces you need to be in one of the larger ranges, but to use an invisibility cloak you need to be at your lightest and most nimble. Spread throughout the

game there are murky aquatic environments where you can be part of your body as pulsating-looking eggs, which can be reabsorbed later when you wish. Over time, you'll find yourself ditching part of your body to, say, use your invisibility cloak to slip through laser traps and then retrieving it to use a temporary invincibility shield that is only available to you in your largest guise.

I was hooked by *Carrion*'s atmosphere and gameplay from the start and satisfied with its eerily subdued ending. Creeping through a shaft before dropping onto a human victim never grew old over the few days I played through the game. I never overcame my squeamishness at seeing that slithering, foul abomination on the screen. The creature is so hideous that it can divide itself into a pack of worms to slip past underwater obstacles or drape a tentacle onto a person to assume control of their body. Yuck!

Perhaps the finest compliment I can pay *Carrion* is that I was reluctant to play it before going to sleep. The last thing I wanted was to see that infernal creature in my dreams.

Platforms: Nintendo Switch, Xbox One, PC
Online: facebook.com/carrionofficial

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Tiger & Turtle — Magic Mountain is located in Duisburg, Germany, a drive of just over three hours from the Kaiser-slautern Military Community. Ample parking and a convenient approach to the attraction are available on the adjacent Berze-lusstasse.

TIMES

The site is open around the clock, but walk-on entry to Tiger & Turtle is currently closed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

COSTS

Free

INFORMATION

Learn more about the art installation and check for reopening updates at the city's website, duisburg.de/tourismus.

— Gregory Broome

Tiger & Turtle — Magic Mountain is an art installation billed as a “walkable roller coaster.” The attraction in the northern German city of Duisburg is currently closed.

Photos by Jackie Broome



In the loop

The views of Duisburg are remarkable from Tiger & Turtle — Magic Mountain

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

The fantastically named Tiger & Turtle — Magic Mountain art installation in Duisburg, Germany, is billed on the city's website as a “walkable roller coaster,” a claim bold enough to demand scrutiny.

Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, it was not even walkable when my family visited. We were able to scale the hilly paths leading up to the site, but a locked gate prevented us from setting foot on the twisting metal structure. Social distancing precautions, as the city's website helpfully explained when I finally read it after making the long drive north, are impossible on the installation's narrow walkways.

But the structure definitely looks like a roller coaster, and we enjoyed our time there even in the absence of the expected walk/ride, so I'm willing to accept the city's grandiose characterization.

Designed by German artists Heike Mütter and Ulrich Genth and opened in 2011, Tiger & Turtle — Magic Mountain sits prominently atop a high hill in southern Duisburg. The climb can be completed the easy way, via a set of meandering paved and signposted walkways, or the hard way, via perilously

steep swaths sliced through the surrounding thicket of trees and bushes.

We tried a little of each approach on the ascent and descent and came away largely unscathed.

The reward for reaching the top is a remarkable vantage point of the surrounding area. Magic Mountain is located very close to the Rhine River, albeit a primarily industrial section of the famous waterway. The view of the port and smokestacks is fascinating, if not exactly beautiful.

More conventionally attractive scenery is available by shifting one's gaze in the direction of Duisburg's historic old city and the sprawling countryside of the Ruhr valley. Tiger & Turtle was clearly positioned to further enhance these views from atop the structure, but the experience from solid ground is rewarding enough.

Finally, a review of Tiger & Turtle would be incomplete without addressing the elephant in the room. How do you walk the loops? The anticlimactic answer is — you don't. The stairs stop before the inversions, so there's no chance of going upside-down on this walkable roller coaster. As magical as this mountain is, that would be a step too far.

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There is a variety of scenery visible from the site, including this less-than-majestic industrial section of the Rhine River. In other directions, visitors can see Duisburg's historic district and the Ruhr valley.



Tiger & Turtle — Magic Mountain is surrounded by green space in a residential corner of the city. Walking and bike paths surround the steep hill upon which the art installation is perched.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Large gathering for the good of science

German experiment tracks how coronavirus could spread in 'real life' concert simulation

Associated Press

Germany held a pop concert Saturday to see how those attending could spread coronavirus if they had it.

German researchers studying COVID-19 packed part of a Leipzig arena with volunteers, collecting data in a "real life" simulation of a pop concert but one with strict health and safety controls.

About 1,500 people took part in the experiment run by the University Hospital in Halle, each taking a coronavirus test ahead of time, testing negative, and having to wear protective masks throughout the day's testing.

Researchers equipped each volunteer with contact tracers to record their routes in the arena and track the path of the aerosols — the small particles that could carry the virus — they emitted as they sang and talked. Fluorescent disinfectants were used to highlight which sur-

faces at the mock concert were touched most frequently.

German pop singer Tim Bendzko appeared on stage to create as realistic a reaction from the crowd as possible for three scenarios.

Afterward, he said he had expected the day to feel more sterile and like an experiment, but that the crowd was into the concert.

"We really had a lot of fun," he said. "I've survived drive-in concerts this summer and in that respect, for us, this is a first step toward normalcy."

Under the first scenario, which simulated the very beginning of a pandemic, the concert-goers were kept close together in the room with no social distancing. In the second, the researchers instituted hygiene measures and larger social distances between the volunteers. In the third, a distance of 1.5 meters (5 feet) between participants was strictly enforced.

Stefan Moritz, who led the study, said



HENDRIK SCHMIDT, DPA/AP

Around 1,500 visitors took part in an experiment last weekend at the Arena Leipzig in which pop singer Tim Bendzko performed. Scientists used sensors to monitor walking paths and fluorescent disinfectant to see which surfaces were often touched.

researchers had only about a third of the volunteers they had hoped for, partially because many Germans are still away on summer holidays and partially due to fears of participating even with the safety measures taken. But he said the experiment had gone well.

"We are satisfied with the numbers," he told reporters. "We have good data quality." The results of the study are expected in four to six weeks, he said.

In general, Germany has been praised for its handling of the pandemic with its rapid response and robust testing. It has

registered only 9,267 confirmed virus deaths so far, one-fourth of Britain's virus death toll.

But the numbers have been rising recently, and Germany's disease control center reported 2,034 new cases of COVID-19 on Aug. 22, the first time the daily national increase has topped 2,000 since the end of April.

The Robert Koch Institute said coronavirus outbreaks are being reported in nursing homes, hospitals, schools and "especially among travelers and in the context of religious or family events."

No lack of charm on Europe's tiny, lesser-known islands

Majorca and Mykonos, Sicily and Sardinia, Crete and Corsica: these are European islands familiar to many. But the stunning beaches, unique landscapes and tasty culinary traditions that make them such beloved destinations aren't exclusive to their famous shores. Dozens of smaller islands pack equally beautiful locales and interesting cultures, and their off-the-beaten-track vibe comes as a bonus. While none of these small islands we're calling in on today are secrets to the residents of the countries to which they belong, they're by and large far from an American tourist's radar.

plify Gruenderzeit-style architecture, alongside a fascinating wellness culture and history. Norderney is home to Germany's largest thalasso spa, a type



Karen Bradbury

of facility which uses sea water as the basis for therapy. A 10-mile beach of fine sand and 50 miles of cycling paths past dunes and tidal flats

add to its allure. Online: tinyurl.com/y4vt8y9

Get there: Reederei Norderney operates a ferry service that departs from Norddeich on the mainland regularly throughout the day.

Lampedusa

Along with Linosa and the uninhabited Lampedusa, the three Pelagie Islands, found south of Sicily, are known and loved by Italians for their scenery and heritage. Lampedusa has more a recent claim to fame, its position as the southernmost point of Europe and proximity to Libya making it an epicenter of migrant arrivals. Its beaches offer massive work factor, particularly the Spiaggi dei Conigli, or Rabbit Beach, voted Europe's best beach by TripAdvisor users in 2013. Another animal closely associated with Lampedusa is the sea turtle, particularly the loggerhead, for which the island's beaches serve



istock

The whitewashed round churches of Bornholm — known as Denmark's sunshine island — are among its many attractions.

as prime nesting habitat. The volunteer-run Lampedusa Turtle Rescue Center aids some 200 injured turtles annually and is a popular place to visit. Online: visitisicily.info/en/lampedusa

Get there: flights depart frequently from Palermo and Catania on Sicily; alternately, take a ferry from Sicily's Porto Empedocle. The journey takes approximately 10 hours.

Bornholm

Optimistically billed as Denmark's sunshine island for the fact that it receives more hours of sunshine than anywhere on the mainland, this island that's actually much closer to Sweden than Denmark enchants with endless stretches of sandy

beaches, thatch roof houses, smokehouses turning out herring and other tasty sea creatures and cycling trails galore. Things to see in Bornholm include the ruins of the Hammershus, a nearly 1,000-year-old hilltop castle and fortress offering superb views over the Baltic Sea; the charming fishermen's village of Svaneke; and pretty, white-washed round churches. The Osterlars Church, the largest of the four, was built around 1160. Those who venture inland to Aakirkeby can tour and taste wine at the island's only vineyard. With its fertile soil and mild climate, Bornholm has become of late a popular place to produce ingredients for world-class restaurants, and new restaurants

springing up on the island make it a food destination in its own right. Online: bornholm.info/en

Get there: ferries depart for Bornholm from Copenhagen and Koge, a city just south of the Danish capital. There is also service from Ystad, Sweden and Sassnitz, a town on the German island of Ruegen.

Tresco

Poised some 25 miles off the southwestern tip of Cornwall is an archipelago known as the Scilly Islands, five of which are inhabited: St. Mary's, Tresco, St. Martin's, St. Agnes and Bryher. Although travelers generally land at and depart from St. Mary's, the second-largest island of Tresco might lay claim to the more interesting sights. This sophisticated island, which is privately owned, is home to the famed Tresco Abbey Garden, home to more than 20,000 plants from all corners of the world, many of which grow nowhere else in Britain. Within the garden is found the Valhalla collection, a display of figureheads salvaged from local shipwrecks. Bronze-age burial sites and castle ruins add to the island's considerable charm. Online: visitislesofscilly.com

Get there: A ferry departs from the harbor of Penzance to the Isles of Scilly each morning and returns in the afternoon. It's also possible to fly to the Isles of Scilly from Land's End, Newquay or Exeter Airport. Day trippers have the option of flying out the islands and returning by ferry.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY DAVID EDGE/Stars and Stripes

A pulled beef sandwich with sauerkraut, jalapenos, onions and barbecue sauce from PauMi's Sandwiches & more in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Better than good

PauMi's Sandwiches & more in Wiesbaden serves a fresh, perfectly balanced sandwich

By DAVID EDGE
Stars and Stripes

All it takes to turn what should have been a good sandwich into merely a forgettable source of calories is one bad ingredient.

Too much sauce kills great meat. A fine combination of accompaniments is wasted on stale or long-frozen bread.

So when I find a sandwich shop that understands how to balance their flavors and uses fresh ingredients, I don't forget it. At first blush, PauMi's Sandwiches & more seems like one of those places.

The shop is less than a five-minute drive from the Army's Hainberg installation and a seven-minute walk from Wiesbaden's Crestview housing area.

PauMi's is a very small shop with only enough room for two people to sit and eat. I chose to take my food home because the shop is located on a very busy street due to nearby construction.

Almost everything on the menu is either made in-house or sourced locally, including the breads, jams, milkshakes and lemonades.

The menu at PauMi's is surprisingly large for such a small shop. There are 19 sandwiches to choose from. They also offered five salads and three types of bowls for those trying to avoid the carbs.

For lunch, I tried their pulled beef sandwich. I was pleasantly surprised — the first bite exploded with the sweet and tangy flavors of the barbecue sauce and sauerkraut. The jalapenos and onions cut the sweetness of the sauce and the beef was well-seasoned.

The shop also offers something for those with a sweet tooth. I ordered macarons and three different mini-cupcakes. The macarons were crispy and light as air, filled with a decadent caramel.



AFTER HOURS
GERMANY



The desserts at PauMi's Sandwiches & more include caramel, strawberry and pistachio macarons on the top row from the left. The bottom row from left are chocolate with chocolate buttercream, strawberry with lemon buttercream and vanilla with vanilla buttercream mini-cupcakes.

PAUMI'S

Address: Ziegelerstr 12, Wiesbaden 65191
Hours: Monday-Friday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday; 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Prices: About six to 12 euros for most sandwiches.
Menu: German. Most of the servers speak English, are friendly and very helpful.
Information: Email: kontakt@pauimis.de; Online: pauimis.de

— David Edge

The mini-cupcakes were all light and fluffy. My favorite was the strawberry cupcake with lemon buttercream. It reminded me of the same cake that my grandmother used to make for my birthday.

The prices are reasonable, with sandwiches ranging anywhere from six to 12 euros, and the portions are a good size for the money that you pay. I most definitely plan to visit PauMi's again.

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A chocolate chip cookie without the side of guilt

By MARTHA LYNCH

The San Diego Union-Tribune

It can be tough to maintain healthful eating habits in stressful times, when the snack you hanker for probably begins with "chocolate" and ends with "cookie."

Chef Nicole Burgess offers some help through a recipe she developed for National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day. Burgess, the pastry chef at Pechanga Resort Casino in Temecula, Calif., wanted a recipe for those who may be working to shed so-called quarantine weight.

But these definitely don't taste like diet cookies.

"I originally made these 'healthy' chocolate chip cookies on accident at home," said Burgess, who decided to substitute almond flour on a day when she was out of regular flour. The almond-flour version, lower in carbohydrates and higher in healthy fats and fiber, was a pleasant surprise.

Comparing the new version with the original, "They tasted

the same to me," she said. "So I incorporated this into the special events we baked for at Pechanga before COVID-19 hit, and added on more and more healthy substitutions as we went to make them healthier and healthier."

"So far, we've had great feedback!" Burgess added. "Personally, I love them. They're the same decadent cookie taste, but without the guilt. And now that so many people are struggling from gyms being closed, it's the perfect time to try what we call a 'diet cookie.'"

Although the cookies are not on the regular menu at Pechanga, they have been served for special events, she said.

"Oftentimes we receive requests for specific dietary restrictions — low carb, vegan, keto, etc., and we can almost always accommodate them. From what I've been told, guests who have had these as part of a special event say that they taste the exact same as regular, calorie and fat-ridden cookies — just guilt-free."

QUARANTINE CHOCO-CHIP COOKIE

Makes 14 to 20 small or 10 to 15 large

Ingredients

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup plus $\frac{1}{8}$ cup almond

flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Himalayan salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda

4 tablespoons brown sugar

2 tablespoons regular sugar

2 tablespoons agave or honey (whichever natural sweetener you prefer)

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons melted

coconut oil

4 tablespoons oat milk (more can be used if needed)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dark chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Combine dry ingredients and mix well. In separate bowl, mix wet ingredients.

Add wet and dry mixtures together and stir until all of the dry mixture has absorbed. If using an electric mixer, mix

enough to incorporate everything (roughly 2 minutes). Stir in the chocolate chips. Remember to never overmix cookie dough.

Make tight dollops of dough and separate on the cookie sheet. Tip: Use an ice cream scooper!

Bake 7-9 minutes and take out before the outsides get slightly browned.

Let sit 10-15 minutes to allow the dough to finish cooking, then enjoy.

Cooking note: If you like your cookie a little more crispy, leave it in the oven for a minute or two extra. Check every minute to make sure you don't end up burning them. If you like that gooey chewy cookie, always use the smaller recommended time.

Storage note: The baked cookies can be frozen for storage, and if you're short on prep time, Burgess says it's best to freeze the cookie dough balls and bake them when you need them.



PECHANGA RESORT CASINO/TNS

Chef Nicole Burgess, the pastry chef at Pechanga Resort Casino in Temecula, Calif., developed "Quarantine Choco-Chip Cookies" for National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day, observed Aug. 4.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Life at 32,000 feet



iStock

By NATALIE B. COMPTON
The Washington Post

Flight attendants have always had unique occupational hazards, from managing bad behavior onboard to balancing perpetual jet lag. But the pandemic has brought even more (and tougher) challenges for the essential workers. They've faced backlash as the enforcers of airlines' tightening mask policies. They've worried for the health and safety of their family members, colleagues and themselves. And like many during this global health and economic crisis, their jobs are more at risk than ever.

We spoke with four flight attendants about their experiences working during the pandemic.

Customer service has changed drastically

Eliminating standard food and drink services stripped flight attendants of most in-flight social interactions, which was a source of joy for many airline employees.

Paul Bowles, a Delta flight attendant who lives in Salt Lake City, says that before the pandemic, his favorite part of a shift was "being on the cart" talking to passengers. Now, a human connection at a masked distance is difficult.

"With the mask on, you have to smile with your eyes which I think can be a lot harder especially because I wear glasses," says Bowles. "I find myself almost squinting a little bit harder than I normally do so people can see those good vibes coming from me."

Jamie Gibson, an Annapolis, Md.-based flight attendant for private jet companies, has felt the same strain.

"So much of hospitality and service is body language," she said. "It's been interesting to try to navigate half of your face not showing while still trying to show a sense of warmth."

The ups and downs of being a flight attendant during the pandemic

Some of the biggest health concerns aren't onboard

Raven Johnson, who has been a flight attendant for four years, has gone from flying about 100 hours with regional carrier Mesa Airlines to about 30 to minimize her risk of getting COVID-19. But she still worries about her choice to continue working during the pandemic.

"Am I getting this virus? Am I going to bring this home to my family?" the Houston-based flight attendant says.

At the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, Johnson says she wasn't allowed to wear a mask or gloves in-flight. She said the flight attendants were told COVID-19 wasn't a big deal, that it was like the flu. That's since changed.

"People at my job were getting the virus because they weren't wearing a mask at first because no one knew what this was," Johnson says.

Gibson, who's been a flight attendant for seven years, has been more concerned about her health at hotels than on flights.

"We are bringing packs of Lysol wipes to our hotel room, wiping off light switches, doorknobs," she says. "It's just a whole new semblance of vigilance when it comes to the hidden surfaces that we touch."

Some flight attendants have felt comforted by airline sanitation efforts. Angel Figueroa, a flight attendant for Southwest Airlines who lives in Ontario, Calif., hasn't been concerned about catching the coronavirus at work.

"Between every flight, they're coming on and wiping everything down," says Figueroa, who's flown with Southwest for 15 years. "Everyone from a flight attendant standpoint is really good about washing your hands, using hand sanitizer, wearing gloves, wearing a mask."

Many of the perks of the job are gone

Johnson loved spending time with new colleagues exploring new places until the next flight. Now she says crews don't hang out anymore, both for social distancing reasons and because there isn't anywhere to go.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

In a holding pattern

Cruise guests still waiting for refunds months later

By RON HURTBISE

Sun Sentinel

Months after the coronavirus pandemic shut down cruising, customers are still complaining that they still haven't received refunds for prepaid fares and fees.

The first time Ken Knox called MSC Cruises' Fort Lauderdale headquarters to ask when his family would get refunds for the cruise that was canceled on April 29, he was told within 30 days.

The next time the Tucker, Ga., resident called, he was told the family would have its refunds within 60 days. And the time after that, he was told within 90 days. It's now been more than 100 days, and the family is angry. They want their \$13,000 back.

After all, Knox said, the cruise line wasted no time taking his seven family members' money for the seven-day Caribbean voyage scheduled to depart PortMiami on June 13. Why is it taking so much time to give it back?

It's a question that continues to clog cruise lines' social media pages, review sections of websites operated by Yelp and the Better Business Bureau, and email accounts of consumer-focused travel websites such as The Points Guy.

The Better Business Bureau

gives MSC Cruises an "F" rating for the amount of unresolved and unaddressed consumer complaints, as well as the amount of time it has taken to respond to complaints.

Cruise lines willing to address criticism about the delays say they've been struggling to meet an unprecedented challenge.

Chris Chaimes, Carnival Cruise Lines' chief communications officer, addressed the issues in an online discussion on brand ambassador John Heald's Facebook page.

"As we've said before, the volume of cancellations is something we have never seen, and frankly, could never have imagined," Chaimes said. "We annually sail more than 5 million guests. We have canceled cruises for more than six months — from March through October — including the very busy spring break and summer vacation periods. So our guests can easily do the math with regard to the millions of cancellations we have had to process (and continue to process)."

He blamed "small pockets of refunds" yet to be issued from spring cancellations on "some back-end technical glitches where the refunds were literally stuck in a queue that we could not see."

As a result, "we have had to go in and manually pull, sort and

process them," he said, adding "these were mostly transactions where guests had used multiple forms of payment or some group bookings."

Royal Caribbean spokesman Jonathon Fishman said "a majority" of that company's refund requests are taking less than 30 days. "Our top priority is making sure our guests are taken care of and that they are receiving refunds and future cruise credits in a timely manner," he said.

The Better Business Bureau gives Royal Caribbean and Carnival its highest rating, A-plus, despite recording hundreds more complaints than the smaller MSC Cruises. For those companies, the bureau's site notes no examples of unaddressed complaints or delays in responding.

In an Aug. 10 conference call with investors to discuss Royal Caribbean's second-quarter \$1.3 billion net loss, Chief Financial Officer Jason Liberty said about half of all customers who booked cruises that were later canceled requested refunds rather than credits toward future cruises.

When the pandemic forced the global cruise industry shutdown in March, cruise lines behaved as if they expected to resume operations within weeks and continued to book voyages scheduled after expected expiration of no-sail orders from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



DREAMSTIME/NTS

The Federal Maritime Commission is looking into how long it's taking for customers to get refunds for cruises canceled by the pandemic.

But the CDC has extended its order three times — from April 13 to July 15 to Sept. 30. In early August, the cruise industry voluntarily extended its suspension of U.S.-based sailings to Oct. 31.

In addition to posting complaints on Yelp, the Better Business Bureau's site or cruise lines' social media pages, frustrated consumers can also file complaints with the Federal Maritime Commission's Office of Consumer Affairs and Dispute Resolution Services at www.fmc.gov/resources-services/cruise-passenger-assistance. While the office cannot force cruise

lines to provide faster refunds or any other kind of compensation, it can help consumers make contact with someone at the cruise line, which could expedite resolutions.

The Federal Maritime Commission has proposed regulations that would require cruise lines to provide refunds within 180 days of any cancellations resulting from a government order or declaration, such as the CDC's no-sail order. But such a six-month window would be little help to Knox or the thousands of other consumers angry that they don't have their money back.

FROM PAGE 26

"I'm on an overnight now and I haven't done anything all day but stay in bed and watch TV. I brought my own food, so I haven't even needed to leave the room at all. It's nerve-racking."

Johnson's free time once spent seeing cities across the United States, Mexico and Canada is now passed sitting in a hotel room.

"I just go to work, stay home, and I'm just hoping that this all blows over because I mainly got this job to travel," Johnson says. "I miss how things were before."

The few, the problematic

While clashes over mask policies do occur, flight attendants say most passengers comply.

"I've only run into to a few people that were kind of headstrong about it, but everyone complies," says Bowles.

If a passenger fails to comply with Delta's mask policy after verbal warnings, they can be given a "notice of violation" card banning them from flying Delta until the mask policy is lifted.

Delta says it's banned about 130 people from flying on the airline as a result of refusing to wear masks onboard, including a customer who'd flown 2 million miles with the airline.

Southwest Airlines has made headlines for implementing the strictest mask policy of domestic airlines. Still, Figueroa has only

had a few people express their disapproval.

"At the end of the day, they're going to [wear a mask] because they want to get from Point A to Point B," says Figueroa.

Job insecurity

With the end of the CARES Act approaching, which required airlines to keep frontline employees working through Sept. 30, carriers like American Airlines and United say they may furlough tens of thousands of employees.

"From a job security standpoint, I need people to be flying in order to have a job," Figueroa says.

Bowles became a flight attendant because it promised flexible hours, fulfilling work and travel. Two years into the job, he's at risk of losing it. "I know Delta hasn't announced if they're going to furlough or not, but they've announced that they are over-staffed," he says. "If something doesn't change by October, I'll lose my job."

Gibson thinks this crisis will leave a lasting change in public opinion of flight attendants.

"It's actually been very eye-opening, I think, for a lot of people that we're not just flight attendants, we are a necessary member of the flight operations," Gibson says. "It's just made me that much more proud to be a flight attendant helping people, especially at a time of need."

Germany

DIRECTORY

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Hotels

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

A surfer rides a wave at Yugawara Beach in Kanagawa prefecture, Japan. The surf is gentle enough that even novice surfers can stay on the board.

Surf's up

Yugawara Beach a great place for novice surfers to hang 10

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

With Japan's rainy season's over and the temperature soaring into the 90s, it's an ideal time for beach lovers to head for the seashore to soak up the sun.

One of the most accessible patches of sand for people living in western Tokyo or nearby Kanagawa prefecture is at Yugawara, a seaside town famous for its hot springs.

The drive to the town takes you along Japan's east coast south of Tokyo and includes some spectacular views of Sagami Bay. For most of the way the coast is rocky. You might see fishing boats and islands in the

distance. Yugawara itself is surrounded by green, tree-covered hills that block views of nearby Mount Fuji. Small temples and shrines sprout from the hillsides, which are also dotted with homes.

There's plenty of parking beside the beach, especially if you arrive early, which is a smart move to avoid traffic and get your beach time in before the sun gets too intense. Some parking lots include showers, toilets and hoses to clean off the sand before you head home.

Getting to the beach is as easy as walking across the road and down a set of concrete steps leading to a shady spot under an elevated road that covers the back half of the sand. Some might see it as an eyesore, but if you want



The surf is not extreme at Yugawara Beach in Kanagawa prefecture, Japan, but lifeguards are on hand just in case.

to have a snooze in the shade, it's the perfect spot.

The surf at Yugawara isn't in the same league as waves at Bells Beach, Australia, or Waimea Bay, Hawaii, or even up to the standard of what you can find in nearby Chiba prefecture, but on any given morning you'll find dozens of surfers catching waves.

You might find yourself floating for a while, waiting for a decent set. It's a chance to practice any Japanese you know talking to the other surfers, who might enjoy a chance to polish up their

English. There are lifeguards in the middle of the beach ready to rescue anyone who gets into trouble between the flags.

You might see a few people out riding Jet Skis or paddling inflatable boats, but there's nothing too extreme going on.

Yugawara is a great place for novice surfers and people with young kids who want to have a splash in relatively placid waters or work on a tan or a sandcastle ashore.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Location: 259-0312 Yoshihama, Yugawara-machi, Ashigarashimo-gun, Kanagawa Prefecture

TIMES

Open daily, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

COSTS

Expressway tolls will vary, but parking costs less than \$10.

FOOD

Yugawara is also known for seafood and has plenty of restaurants, including a McDonald's at the south end of the beach that opens at 7 a.m. and a convenience store where you can stock up ahead of your day on the water.

INFORMATION

Online: yugawara-resort.com/yugawara

— Seth Robson

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

FAKE FLIGHTS

Some folks miss air travel so much, they're paying for virtual simulations

By SHANNON McMAHON
The Washington Post

When an in-flight virtual reality experience called First Airlines started offering faux flights in the Ikebukuro neighborhood of Tokyo in 2017, you could say it was ahead of its time. Three years later, in the grips of a global pandemic that has grounded the vast majority of flights, Tokyo's business travelers are leaning on the VR experience for a taste of international travel without leaving their city.

"I often go overseas on business, but I haven't been to Italy," one local businessman, who tried the experience recently, told Reuters. "My impression was rather good because I got a sense of actually seeing things there."

The appeal of an "in-flight" meal, a first-class "lounge" and a first-class seat plucked off an Airbus aircraft is that most frequent travelers are unlikely to see the real thing any time soon. The First Airlines experience channels all the minute details of flying, from departures screens in the lounge to flight attendants carrying out safety protocols. And the two-hour virtual reality experience, complete with a four-course meal and window TV screens replicating exterior views, is much cheaper than an actual first-class plane ticket at about \$62, or 6,580 yen.

First Airlines calls itself the world's "first virtual aviation facility," with equipment and small touches that make its indoor spaces feel like an actual airport and airplane, even when you supplied VR headset isn't on.

The experience begins with an "official boarding pass" issued for the given flight destination and kicks off with boarding procedures, drink service and a four-course culinary experience created by top chefs with the passenger-chosen destination in mind.

Replacing the arrival in any real-life destination is a VR headset programmed with on-ground tours and experiences in places such as Paris, Hawaii,

New Zealand, Rome, New York, California and Helsinki. The New York menu includes Manhattan clam chowder and cheesecake, while the Hawaii and Rome options feature poke and minestrone soup, respectively.

Bookings are up by 50 percent, the company recently told Reuters, and advance reservations are required. The mock flights "depart" five days a week, and according to the existing schedule, they are regularly selling out.

But First Airlines isn't the only mock-travel player in the game: Taiwanese carrier EVA Air has upped the ante by offering an actual flight—to nowhere—that's almost three hours long and Hello Kitty-themed.

EVA Air's Hello Kitty Dream Jet has been popular for years for its charming theme and Hello Kitty-shaped in-flight food, and the airline extended the service into the United States on some routes in 2017. But since suspending the Hello Kitty Jet service this April because of the coronavirus pandemic, the airline now flies its Sanrio-themed aircraft locally as a special flight-to-nowhere service.

The Hello Kitty Jet flew on Taiwanese Father's Day in early August for passengers who were willing to spend \$180 on the experience. The flight departed Taiwan's Taoyuan airport and circled the coastline as well as Japan's Ryukyu Islands before returning to the same air hub.

Passengers were "able to overlook the magnificent scenery of Taiwan's east coastline" from a lower-than-normal altitude of 25,000 feet, EVA Air said in a news release. "The on-board meal (was) a selection of seafood chirashi-sushi rice designed by Michelin-starred chef Motoko Nakamura."

EVA Air did not immediately respond for comment on if or when the flight might



Firstairlines.jp photos



Tokyo-based First Airlines prides itself on providing the equipment and small touches that make its indoor spaces feel like an actual airport and airplane.

be offered again. But Taiwan, which hasn't had a confirmed coronavirus death since the seven it saw in the spring, remains closed or is imposing strict quarantines on visitors from most countries.



evakitty.com photos

Eva Air's Hello Kitty Dream Jet does leave the ground, but because of the coronavirus pandemic, the airline now features the aircraft in a flight-to-nowhere service from Taiwan.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Travel's COVID silver lining

Remote work, learning extends summer vacation season into fall

By BREANNA T. BRADHAM
Bloomberg

Many families across America would usually be packing up right about now, getting ready for that last summer getaway to the Caribbean or Europe before Labor Day and the traditional start of school. But the coronavirus pandemic has upended travel, while remote work and remote learning have blurred the boundaries of the summer high season.

Some have managed to take time off over the past few months, often avoiding airplanes and sticking closer to home — burning gasoline instead of jet fuel as they drove to beaches, state parks and lakes. Hotels have been out and recreational vehicles in; big city shopping trips have given way to camping and hiking.

Now that the sultry, golden days of late August are upon us, the urge to get away can be overpowering — fear notwithstanding. But there's a silver lining in this fraught, tragic time when mass transit and big hotels seem too big a risk. With many offices still closed and likely to stay that way, and remote working (and schooling) quickly becoming the rule, your vacation plans don't have to end with August.

The pandemic, it turns out, may have permanently changed how the country takes a break.

Americans, understandably, want to get as far away from each other as possible right now, since preliminary research shows virus transmission is more likely to happen

inside. As a result, this summer's emphasis on the great outdoors seems likely to continue into the fall, travel industry experts said.

Lesser known national parks have been getting a lot of online search interest, said Whitney Scott, vice president of marketing at Kampgrounds of America (KOA). "People want to try and find something where it's not going to be crowded, where they can feel safe and they can have some privacy and peacefulness," she said.

About one-quarter of travelers have reported changing their plans so they could drive (rather than fly) to a holiday spot, according to Longwoods. But even then, there are travel restrictions to deal with, such as New York's 14-day quarantine rule for arrivals from more than 30 states. Staying in your own state has become the path of least resistance — kind of like camping in your own backyard.

"It's very safe to say that road-trip travel, at least for the next six to 12 months, is going to be the preferred method of travel," said Amir Eylon, chief executive officer of the market research firm Longwoods International.

Hotel and motel occupancy near outdoor vacation destinations is in the mid-50% range, compared with normal summer levels of 90%, said Chip Rogers, CEO of the American Hotel and Lodging Association. City hotels, by contrast, have barely recovered at all, he said.

"The urban markets continue to struggle," Rogers said. "The secondary and tertiary markets — where you can drive to them and

there are outdoor activities such as the beach, mountain hiking and things like that — they're struggling, but doing a little bit better."

American hotels were almost half-full for the week ending Aug. 8, according to data analytics company STR. The states with the highest occupancy rates were South Dakota, Montana and Idaho. The lowest were Hawaii and Washington, D.C.

Many Americans who would have opted for hotels in the past are now looking for a place to sleep that's more, well, socially distanced. Recreational vehicle renting surged which, as national parks reopened, played right into the parallel jump in park and campground traffic. "Many of our campgrounds are having record years, even though they were closed for a couple of months," said KOA's Scott.

KOA, which has more than 520 campgrounds across North America, did a survey back in April that found respondents ranked camping as the safest form of travel. August is shaping up to be a great month for campgrounds, Scott said. KOA campgrounds are equipped with Wi-Fi, so families that are doing work and school remotely could do so from their RVs.

Motels and their outdoor walkways, long dismissed as a seedy, low-rent option, have been big winners. Now, wary travelers are looking for this airy alternative to the traditional hotel, with individual heating and cooling units, Rogers said. They often don't require elevators, either.

Hotels aren't losing out entirely to their motel brethren. Many have been betting on staycationers to fill rooms. The exact geographic limits of the term are debatable (Merriam Webster calls it "a vacation spent at home or nearby"). But people are interested in the concept nonetheless: "staycation" reached its highest point ever in Google search traffic this summer.

The flexibility brought on by the necessities of the pandemic have had an effect on the way people are scheduling their time away. Hotels are seeing bookings that would normally be limited to the weekend stretched into weekdays, signaling a new flexibility about when guests are traveling. AHLA's Rogers said. He's been talking with others in the industry about how to push September as a good time to travel.

But the money isn't enough to keep the industry afloat for long. Jan Freitag, senior vice president of lodging insights at data analytics provider STR, is skeptical that staycations are happening in strong enough numbers to make a significant difference. He noted that a key trend has been that economy-class accommodations are outpacing luxury options.

With conventions canceled and companies hesitant to send employees out, the effects could be particularly stark come October as leisure travel typically cools off.

"That is becoming a significant pain point," Rogers said. But 2020 isn't a typical year, and the travel industry is hoping you stretch your vacation plans into the fall, and beyond.



WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Touch less, but talk more

Singles, love experts say dating during a pandemic takes patience, communication

By LISA BONOS

The Washington Post

The first time we touched, it was an accident. We were on our fourth date—a masked walk through Georgetown—keeping as much distance as possible on narrow city side-walks.

"I'm sorry," he said, apologizing for inadvertently brushing his hand against mine. "In normal times, I would have grabbed your hand on purpose."

We laughed as we remarked at how strange it was to date in 2020. Once a week we'd talk over Skype even though we lived only a few blocks from each other. On the weekends, we'd go for long, masked walks. Oddly, I found myself feeling closer to him over Skype than in person: Over a screen I could see his whole face, and neither of us was anxious about accidentally getting too close. After a month of dating, we did hold hands (and do other things) on purpose.

This is what it's like to date amid the spread of a deadly virus: spending several weeks to months getting to know someone over the phone, video chat or socially distant dates before the masks come off. Taking that step often involves detailed discussions about whom you're seeing regularly—be it family, friends, roommates or other dates—to help determine the right time to share a hug or first kiss. And there are no clear rules on when it's safe to progress. Everyone is making it up as they go along.

It's a big change from the culture of immediacy that Tinder and other dating apps ushered in several years ago. Abiding by social distancing while getting close to someone can be frustrating, but pandemic dating offers a chance to connect in new ways.

Showing someone you care looks differ-

ent than it did a year ago. Being cautious is now a sexy character trait, and planning a good date might have nothing to do with snagging a hot restaurant reservation. The Washington Post spoke to singles and love experts about how to keep things fun, interesting, safe (and yes, sexy!) while taking it slowly:

Be patient

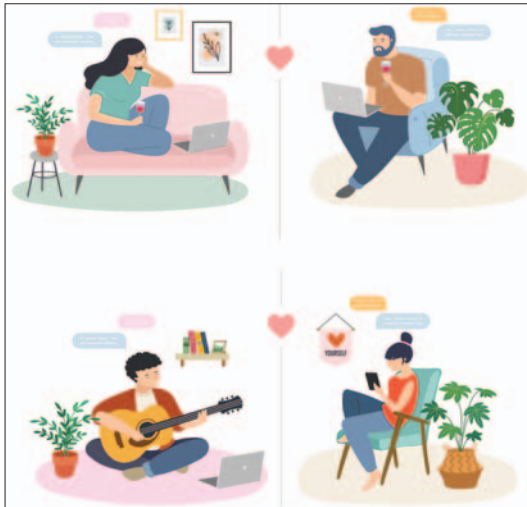
Matchmaker Tammy Shaklee says her Type-A clients—typically very goal-oriented and driven—are having difficulty with the pandemic's slower pace. "They're having to learn patience, tenacity and duration," Shaklee says, as daters face an uncertain timeline for when it'll be safe to see each other in person and be physical.

Christine B., a 27-year-old executive assistant in New York who, for privacy reasons, spoke on the condition that only her first name and last initial be used, finds the restrictions have taken a lot of the pressure out of dating.

"It's nice to talk to someone once a week and get to know them over a course of several months," she says, adding that she thinks the slower burn makes her less likely to make snap judgments about a potential match. "Instead of writing someone off the second you see something you don't like ... you get to know someone first. Once you meet them [in person], if you don't like something about them, maybe that doesn't matter as much."

Make virtual dates special, but don't let them go all night

Lindsay Metselaar, host of the millennial dating podcast "We Met at Acme," has several rules for virtual dates: "First of all, you have to have good lighting, obviously," she says, adding that it's still not a good idea to get too drunk. And just because you have unlimited



data or strong Wi-Fi, don't let your date go all night. "You always have to have somewhere to be after because it's kind of pathetic, even though you're doing nothing—and no one's doing anything!—to be on this date for all five hours of your night. So if you have to lie, lie. Just don't be too available, even though it's virtual dating ... You still need to have some mystery around you."

When you're tired of Skyping or FaceTiming from the same spot on your couch, Shaklee suggests taking your virtual date outside—to a place that's special to you. She had two clients who each cycled to their favorite spots (one went to a national monument in D.C., the other was on a trail in Minneapolis). Once you've identified common interests, plan virtual dates around them, the matchmaker says, such as attending a service streamed by your church or viewing a virtual concert.

Go deep

In his recent surveys of daters, Justin Lehmiller, a researcher at Indiana University's Kinsey Institute, reports that "People are actually using this as an opportunity to get to know each other at a much deeper level than they were before. And that has the potential to lead to much stronger relationships."

Lehmiller and other dating experts brought up the 36 questions that lead to love, a social science experiment popularized in a New York Times "Modern Love" column, as an exercise to try right now. But daters are bringing their own big questions to the table, too.

Shawn Williams, a 69-year-old woman in Detroit who's been virtually dating a woman in Minneapolis since March, talks to her girlfriend every night. Each time, they alternate asking each other questions that lead to a larger discussion.

By doing this, "we bypassed all the

small talk and were able to build trust and really get to know each other on a deep level," Williams says. "We both agreed that the one gift of the pandemic is that it slowed us down. It would have taken us much, much longer to get to know each other if we were hopping on a plane each weekend to see each other."

Be direct

Pandemic dating is a lot like long-distance dating, Lehmiller says, as singles might be geographically close but constrained by their ability to meet.

One big predictor of success in long-distance relationships, Lehmiller says, is maintaining good communication.

"The people who have high levels of communication, who are really trying to get to know each other at a deeper level, are more likely to succeed," he says.

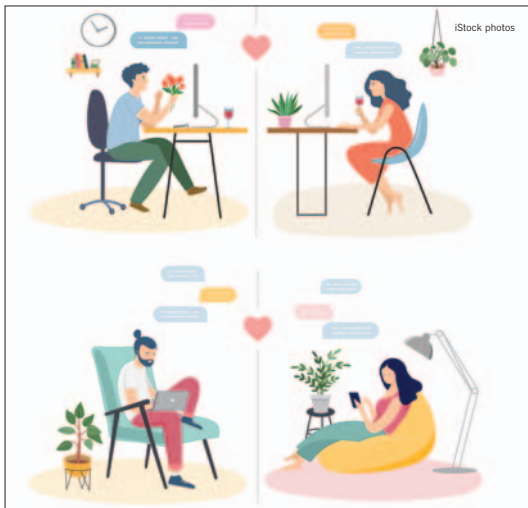
Now, surrounded by the severity of a deadly disease, it's necessary to discuss where you stand and if you're exclusive—for your safety and your partner's.

When can we touch?

No one has an easy answer for this. Even Anthony Fauci has been vague about when it's safe to get physical.

Jordana Abraham, co-founder of the Ship dating app and co-host of the "U Up?" podcast, says anecdotal evidence suggests that the fourth or fifth date is a popular moment to make out for the first time. Others will converse for months before getting physical.

The risks and restrictions in our new reality can make looking for love seem tougher than ever. But they also present an opportunity to strip away the trivialities and flashy distractions and focus on what really matters: Do you have a connection? Are you compatible? Can you listen to and support one another? And is your life better with this person in it?



WEEKEND: MUSIC

Q&A

FINDING HER
'SMILE'

A decade ago, Katy Perry could sing the alphabet and top the music charts.

Her name was synonymous with being No. 1 on the Billboard chart, as the pop star logged hit after hit after hit with anthems like “Teenage Dream,” “Firework,” “Roar” and more.

But as the saying goes, when you’re on top, the only way to go is down.

That was part of Perry’s experience roughly three years ago when she released “Witness,” which had some success but didn’t dominate the charts like she’s used to doing. Though the first single, “Chained to the Rhythm,” became a Top 5 hit, the other singles fizzled, and the star’s popularity dwindled as newcomers, mainly budding rap stars, took over the music scene.

“For me in 2017, 2018, I went through a reckoning of self and really re-prioritized what was important and my association with validation, or my relationship with validation. There was just a shift that happened in my life and my career. I wasn’t getting as high on my own supply as I used to anymore,” Perry said. “It’s like I had been to the top of the mountain. I’d seen the view. I had gotten too used to it. So, of course, the universe decided to come and say, ‘All right sweetie, let’s figure this one out.’”

“I definitely had to go on a real emotional, psychological and spiritual journey during those years to find my smile, ‘cause I lost it,” Perry continued. “That’s why the record is called ‘Smile.’”

“Smile,” her fifth major-label album, was released Friday, at a time that the 35-year-old — who is engaged to actor Orlando Bloom and on Thursday gave birth to a baby girl — is thinking about life differently.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Perry

Ten years after she
rocketed to stardom with
‘Teenage Dream,’ Katy Perry
learns to let go of being No. 1

By MESFIN FERKADU ■ Associated Press

talks about finding her smile again, wedding planning during the coronavirus pandemic and celebrating the 10th anniversary of her epic “Teenage Dream” album, which propelled her to international pop-star status.

AP: What will fans hear on “Smile”?

Perry: It’s a record full of hopefulness and resilience and a little bit of joy and some fun ... I think that it’s always a good time to have a little hope injected, especially these days. This record is really talking about my own experience in walking through hell and finding the light and coming out of that. So if anyone else is having that same journey and can be inspired by the positivity and the hope inside of it, then I’m happy for it.

On the title track you sing: “Had a piece of humble pie / That ego check saved my life.” What made you write that lyric?

I mean, like, I am not invincible. I am not perfect. I have fallen flat on my face so many different times and

learned from that growth and have been living in the public, in the spotlight for over 12 years, and have had moments that were really intense.

For me, I don’t necessarily like to avoid or ignore, I just like to come to terms. I’m like, “Look, I needed that. That was a humbling experience.” Obviously when you’re in it, you hate it. But I do believe that you have the choice when you can zoom out just a little bit from the situation and say, “OK, what am I getting from this? Where is the lesson? Where is the growth?” Not just like, “F--- it all to hell, Joyce Ann, just burn! Everything should just burn!” But where is the gratitude for this obstacle?

You namedrop your parents on the song “Only Love.” What was their reaction to that?

I played it for my mom; she was very touched. This song really talks about if life were to hand you a curveball, and the weird thing is that I was putting the finishing touches on it, vocally, in my bedroom during that week of March 13 when everyone went into lockdown and everybody was, like, scrubbing their lemons and buying thousands of toilet paper rolls. Nobody knew what the hell was going on, and there’s so much intense feeling and emotion.

And I was almost finished with my record. This was the last song that I put on the record and it’s funny ‘cause it kind of paralleled the feeling at the time. “Holy crap, life is handing me a curveball, and what is precious to me anymore? What’s really important?” You start to go, “Whoa, this is what’s important. Forget about all the B.S. and even the career stuff. I gotta take care of my mom and my dad. I gotta take care of them.” And I think that everybody kind of shifted gears a little bit.

But this song is really about, like, at the end of it all ... what are we gonna say? “Oh, I wished I worked one more day.” Or are you just going to say, “I wish I had a little bit more love. I wish I connected with my brother or my sister or my mom or my dad just a little bit more, or my partner or my children or whoever.” You know? I just want a little bit more love.

It’s the 10-year anniversary of “Teenage Dream,” which matched the record Michael Jackson’s “Bad” set for most No. 1 singles from an album. How does it feel when you think about that album and period of your life?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

Katy Perry, photographed in Hollywood, Calif., in July, just released her latest album, “Smile.”

JAY L. CLEDDENIN, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

Katy Perry

Smile (Capitol Records)



Katy Perry has two very personal projects being released this summer — the 12-track album “Smile” and her baby girl, who arrived Thursday. Only one will really make people grin.

“Smile” comes three years after the dismal release of “Witness,” a criminally underappreciated album that’s considered a commercial dud.

That album contained the sociopolitical “Chained to the Rhythm,” and the music flirted with a more hip-hop sound. Its underperformance — and some heartbreak, we assume — led to a period that Perry describes in the liner notes as “my own darkest times.”

“Smile” is a course-correction back to pure pop, with no featured artists and no political messages. It is Perry’s “I’m so sorry” album, littered with references to a chastened songwriter — “ego check,” “humble pie,” “better version” and “2.0.” Like the cover image, she’s a sad clown.

To be honest, there are only rare moments of levity. Perry is pregnant with her first child with actor Orlando Bloom, and one of the best lines on the album is, “Look at me now / I’m in full bloom.”

Most of the set is a bit of a hummer. Just the titles alone — “Never Really Over,” “Cry About It Later” and “Tearful Eyes” — are about mistakes, regret and lessons learned. This isn’t an album of pop songs as much as a therapy session set to music.

“I’ve gone to sleep / Night after night punching a pillow,” she sings on “Resilient.” “I know the higher I climb / The harder the wind blows.” She’s even sad when celebrating overcoming couples’ issues in “Champagne Problems.”

The fireworks have vanished. There’s no eye of the tiger anymore. Her dancing sharks have left the stage.

The depressive mood only lifts with the electric title song, clearly the best of a middling list of tunes. “Smile” is Perry at her most Perry: “Used to be dull / In my I sparkle,” she sings, finally with some bluster.

There are misfires, like “Tucked,” a Kylie Minogue riff, and “Harleys in Hawaii,” which is clumsy and needy, despite a Charlie Puth writing assist.

So “Smile” is something of a housekeeping album. Apologies to everyone — parents, fans, lovers, other women, old lovers. Here’s hoping motherhood gives Perry a real reason to smile.

— Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

FROM PAGE 32

I hope you can’t see the 10 years on my face. It’s amazing. In your twenties, you hear about people that are more mature than you saying time flies. It’s starting to fly. You are such a different person in your twenties than you are in your thirties. And I love that record, and it means a lot. Every record has a special meaning for me. And I try and always approach writing music from a super vulnerable, authentic open-book place, so that whoever wants to relate to it, can. I think “Teenage Dream” — it really encapsulated this fantastical view of love. It was nostalgic in some ways.

It was a special moment, and I can’t believe 10 years has passed. I’m kind of happy that “Smile” is coming out around the same time. It’s like, “All right, let’s dip into that energy.”

Mariah Carey mentioned that being pregnant made her voice stronger. Has being pregnant done anything to your voice?

It’s interesting having 45 extra pounds just kind of like sitting on you; 30 of that is just right here on my lung capacity. It’s not been too challenging, but I’ve definitely had to change a couple of keys. But I think that’s just because of the physical intensity of it. I’ve been so active. I’ve been doing the most. I go to the opening of every Zoom link. I am a mom on the move. I am promoting. Do not say that I did not work hard! I worked hard for this moment. I worked hard! Created a life. I worked hard! That’s the next thing on the calendar that we can look forward to.

How is wedding planning going during the pandemic?

We have ideas, but anyone that makes plans in 2020 is just a little LOL. There’s bigger things going on in the world. I don’t want to say, “Oh, how sad is it that I had to postpone or cancel or whatever.” It’s so many other horrible things going on. What we’re hoping for is just a safe, healthy baby. That’s the next thing on the calendar that we can look forward to.

Josh Turner

Country State of Mind (MCA Nashville)



From its title to its songs and sounds, Josh Turner’s “Country State of Mind” is a tribute to his idols and beyond, a compendium of some great country music.

Turner is from the genre’s traditional side and his voice, naturally deep but capable of taking high flight, makes him an ideal performer for this collection.

Several tracks have guest performers, including two of Turner’s idols, John Anderson and Randy Travis.

Allison Moorer joins Turner on Hank Williams’ “Alone and Forsaken,” which has a stunning, near-traditional quality that derives from the purity of the melody and the timelessness of the lyrics.

Alan Jackson’s “Midnight in Montgomery” relates a visit to Williams’ grave, complete with a sighting of the legend’s ghost. The title track, a big hit for Hank Williams Jr. in 1986, rounds out the Williams trilogy with Chris Janson joining Turner.

“Forever and Ever, Amen” is the best-known song on the album. Travis only sings the closing “Amen” this time, but it’s his first recording since a 2013 stroke he’s still recovering from, and it’s a deeply moving moment.

Kris Kristofferson duets on his “Why Me,” a nod to Turner’s gospel roots, and Anderson’s appearance on “I’ve Got It Made” gives the song a double dose of subwoofer-shaking vocals.

Maddie & Tae and Runaway June represent Nashville’s newer generations, with Maddie & Tae’s contributions to Bruce Robison’s “Desperately,” a 2004 hit for George Strait, especially poignant.

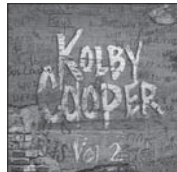
Johnny Cash’s gloomy “The Caretaker” is an apt epilogue, with Turner personalizing some of the aging cemetery custodian’s lines — “Who’s gonna cry / When old Josh dies?”

Turner’s congenial style and the smart selection make “Country State of Mind” a great introduction into the genre and a terrific reminder of some of its greatest songs.

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press

Kolby Cooper

Vol. 2 (Combustion Music)



Kolby Cooper could add a fresh voice to country radio — if he couldn’t get past the censors.

The 21-year-old fire breather from the piney woods of East Texas offers relief from the parade of inauthentic junk laden with John Deere tractor references that’s still way too pervasive these days. He’s edgy, that’s for sure.

On “Vol. 2,” a new five-song EP, Cooper doesn’t take long to start the beatdown. One of the songs, “2 Words,” begins with a 15-second banjo intro and then drops hard into a breakup song as emphatic as any you will ever hear. And the two words it’s built around are enough to take commercial radio off the table.

That’s probably OK with Cooper, who still lives in Bradford, Texas, not far from Palestine, a little farther from Dallas. He has the look of a guy who might pump your gas at one of those East Texas stations that still hasn’t converted to pay-at-the-pump.

His wisecracker palates with the give-a-caree vibe of someone still kicking dust off his jeans.

Cooper’s first EP, 2018’s “Vol. 1,” was followed by his only full-length album, “Good Ones Never Last,” which helped make him a word-of-mouth sensation. His previously best-known breakup song, “It Ain’t Me,” registered more than eight million Spotify streams.

Yes, breakup songs are a specialty. But Cooper, who married early, says neither song is autobiographical.

“I showed the song to my wife,” he says. “And she was like, ‘Oh sure, that’s a good song. But are we OK?’”

The answer was yes. And Cooper shows his range and depth on new song “Cannonball,” a ballad about commitment that’s original in its own way.

Versatile and fearless, Cooper is the kind of voice that could redeem country music — if only his songs can be cleared for airplay.

— Scott Stroud
Associated Press

Troye Sivan

In a Dream (Capitol)



Somewhere between a single and an album sits the EP, and that’s how we get our latest dose of Troye Sivan — his six-track “In a Dream.”

It’s a perfectly timed appetizer for an evolving artist — a wistful and experimental musical

postcard for an uneasy era.

Sivan reunites with producer Oscar Görres, who worked on some songs from “Bloom,” Sivan’s last, marvelous full-length album in 2018, including the awesome track “My My My!”

This time, Görres and Sivan stretch and play with song structure and length, an indication that perhaps Sivan is restless mining the same territory. Lyric-wise, he’s lost a little of his swagger, sounding more vulnerable.

“Easy” has a ’80s, “Pretty in Pink” vibe with echoing computer-altered vocals and spacey, thick slabs of synth. The less-than-a-minute “could cry just think about you” has Sivan’s vocals so distorted he sounds like he’s singing deep in a swimming pool.

The clear standout is the dreamy “Take Yourself Home,” the only song finished during the pandemic. It is stunning, hypnotic and sexy. It even has an anti-urban feel. “I’m tired of the city,” he sings. “If I’m gonna die, let’s die somewhere pretty.”

Sivan’s voice gets drungery for “STUD,” a pleading song to a wannabe lover distorted by various effects. He looks back with “Rager teenager!” which reveals a confessional side to the Australian singer-songwriter and lyrics that call back to a pre-coronavirus era. “I just wanna sing loud / I just wanna lose myself in the crowd.”

The title track comes last, a sturdy and more conventional song offering a glimpse of an artist stuck in heartbreak. “It’s all just feeling real now / So far away but I still love you everywhere.”

Not too little, not too much. Sivan’s EP is the Goldilocks of quarantine.

— Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

Deep Purple

Whoosh! (earMUSIC)



“Whoosh!” makes it three for three for the pairing of Deep Purple and producer Bob Ezrin, an album that at its numerous heights evokes the band’s most successful era of the early ’70s.

With a stable lineup for nearly 20 years, the hard rock pioneers’ new album is built on its best assets: Ian Gillan’s robust vocals, the sturdy foundation set by the rhythm section of Ian Paice and Roger Glover, Steve Morse’s inventive inventory of six-string tones and phrasings, and Don Airey’s Hammond A-100.

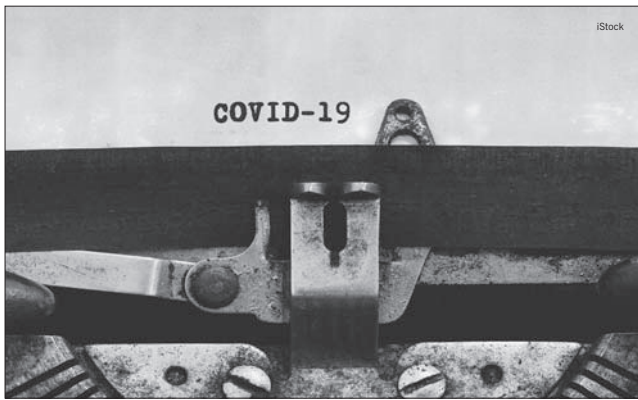
First song and first single “Throw My Bones” is a magnificent reintroduction after the three-year break since the band’s last album that was re-recorded, only a tease in the way the Beatles’ “Paul is dead” rumors with clues in songs supposedly confirming his premature demise? After all, the group’s 2017-2019 tour was called “The Long Goodbye,” but concerts are planned, post-pandemic, behind this album, as well.

Written by the two members of Deep Purple’s towering “Mark III” lineup missing from the current roster, Ritchie Blackmore and the late Jon Lord, “And the Address” is the last song on the album, but for a bonus track. It was also the first tune on the band’s 1968 debut, “Shades of Deep Purple,” so it is just a coincidence, or are they completing the circle and really drawing the shades on their career?

Any band able to emulate its best years shouldn’t call it quits after an album as good as “Whoosh!” — unless Deep Purple wants to go out on a peak.

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press

WEEKEND: BOOKS



Isolation reformation

Authors join forces to write about loneliness

By JOAN FRANK
Special to The Washington Post

Could there be a timelier gift to quarantined readers than Jennifer Haupt's "Alone Together: Love, Grief, and Comfort in the Time of COVID-19"? I doubt it. Author/editor Haupt's new anthology delivers on its title, with an outpouring of responses to our shared ordeal by a wonderfully diverse group of (90+) writers.

When the contract for her second novel was canceled "because of the [virus-blighted] plummeting economy," Haupt did not sit long in her misery. She thought of all the small bookstores she loved being hit hard: What could she do?



Haupt chose to recruit a "community of writers" to contribute "an essay or poem about their COVID-19 experiences to a fundraising anthology." Proceeds from its sales will benefit the Book Industry Charitable Foundation, a group founded to help struggling indie booksellers.

In the anthology's foreword, Garth Stein ("The Art of Racing in the Rain") admits that "perhaps this America is doomed" and that art may "remain submerged for so long, we will not be able to revive it." But the contributors to this collection, Stein vows, mean to brighten our dark days with "little fires ... burning everywhere."

Thank heaven, these short accounts do comfort. They're compulsively readable, too, even when painful — first, because they do what good writing always does, giving us the sharp relief of recognition. But they also inform, with dramatic power. Several manage some humor. All help us feel less lonely as we negotiate each new (Ground-hog) day.

NPR's poet-in-residence, Kwame Alexander, with an 11-year-old daughter at home, surely speaks for an enormous population of worried parents. Alexander declares that he is elated to be doing "some of the things ... we used to do growing up and my kid is enjoying it!" The Newbery Medal-winning author is also convinced that "words and books show us that we're all one" and that "we can be united by something bigger than all of our differences." Thus, Alexander urges parents "to help children imagine a better world" by "helping them tell their stories of the past, the

present, and the future."

Intense emotion, unsurprisingly, suffuses these writings, as does longing for our prior, unthinking ease of connection and closeness. Susan Henderson, coping with her father's death during the pandemic, writes, "I cry easily these days," a declaration I've heard people make repeatedly. And yet, blasting the music of Earth, Wind and Fire while she showers, she discovers that she "can still feel joy." Henderson writes, "All I desire anymore are simple things: to be out in the world without a mask ... to sit close enough to the people I love to hear them breathe."

Organized into five sections ("What Now?," "Grieve," "Comfort," "Connect," and "And Do Not Stop"), these voices feel linked — often by a sudden, refocused perspective on cycles of life and loss. Grace Talsan, who lost a close friend to the virus, comes to realize that "there are reasons humans have death rituals and because we could not have them, it's hard to believe she's really gone." Talsan is forced to consider — like so many of us — the strangely altered relationship to time and to so-called productivity that the lockdown has enforced. "I think my dead are appearing to me now," she writes, "because finally I have the time to grieve them."

It's bracing to see ourselves dig deeper, facing the worst, to devise, invent, reach out. Jane Hirshfield reports from isolation, "Today, when I could do nothing, / I saved an ant." Stephen P. Kiernan reads poetry on the phone to a stressed Jenna Blum while she stews in the bathtub. Jean Kwok finds grace in "compassion toward others and myself." Jennifer Rosner makes "a daily cooking call" to her mother and discusses recipes. Roberto Lovato finds comfort in the scent of lavender. In "Pandemic Date Night," Sommer Browning and David Shields, separated and hungry for each other, text: "S... I can't wait until you get here. ... D: What will we do first? (Rhetorical question?)"

No one's mincing words. Devi Laskar, formerly a reporter, "still [seeks] the truth ... but sometimes ... can't bear it." Kristen Millares Young struggles to "keep my children safe" as "the news brings fresh and hellish revelations by the minute." Hope and determination persist, if erratically. Richard Blanco wants "to sing again," and Luis Alberto Urrea warns, "Despair is the most powerful weapon of the dominant."

Something's here, in short, for each of us. In the raw surge of brave voices, "Alone Together" will, indeed, give some love, some light, some "help for pain" (subverting Matthew Arnold). Who can't use a little of those right now?

Snakes of all kinds in Hiaasen's 'Squeeze Me'

By COLETTE BANCROFT
Tampa Bay Times

Pink pearls, pythons and a philandering president add up to a rather unusual Palm Beach social season in Carl Hiaasen's riotously funny new novel, "Squeeze Me."

Hiaasen's other novels have been set in Florida locales known for outrageous behavior, like Miami and Key West. This time, he proves there's plenty of weirdness to be found even in "gilded, fussy Palm Beach."

A native Floridian, Hiaasen has lived all his adult life for the Miami Herald, for which he writes an award-winning, take-no-prisoners column. He knows and loves Florida and hates what has been done to it, and those passions shape his razor-sharp satirical fiction.

"Squeeze Me" is Hiaasen's 15th novel for adults; he's also written half a dozen books for kids, including the Newbery Award winner "Hoot." He has published several collections of his columns, a memoir, a nonfiction book about the Disney empire and a gift book for graduates, "Assume the Worst," illustrated by Roz Chast.

"Squeeze Me" opens on a January night at a charity gala at the Lipid House in Palm Beach. One attendee leaves her \$50,000 table and several guests and wanders off into the grounds. By the time her tipsy friends realize she's missing, all that's found on the bank of the ko pond is her beaded clutch, "her martini glass and a broken rose-colored tab of Estézy."

The missing woman is Kiki Pew Fitzsimmons, twice widowed and hugely rich at age 72. Police drag the ko pond and review surveillance videos, but Kiki Pew and her striking necklace — a pair of pink pearls (harvested from Queen conchs) seem to have vanished without a trace.

A few days later, a young woman named Angie Armstrong is summoned to the club. She runs a one-person "critter-removal company, Discreet Capture." Usually clients want raccoons wrestled out of their antics, but this time what the very nervous club manager wants her to pull out of a tree is one of the largest Burmese pythons she's ever seen. This one is "deep into capture." Usually Burmese pythons have an unusually large lump in its midsection.

Floridians know that Burmese pythons are a spectacularly successful invasive species. In the past few decades, the snakes, which can grow to be 20 feet long or more, have nearly wiped out the native creatures of the

Everglades; they've been known to eat alligators. Hunting them has barely made a dent. The only thing that has kept them from spreading northward is that they can't tolerate cold. But if the climate warmed up — oh, wait.

This specimen's food coma makes it fairly easy for Angie to decapitate it and carry it off to her storage freezer to await a biologist's dissection. She hasn't heard about Kiki Pew's disappearance, so she's untroubled by the lump in the snake — until someone breaks in and steals the frosty reptile.

Soon Kiki Pew's body — having been removed from the pythons — is found, and one of those pink pearls leads to Diego Beltran, an innocent undocumented immigrant, being blamed for her death because, really, who wants to admit there are killer reptiles in Palm Beach?

The case becomes particularly high profile, and Diego is a convenient scapegoat, because Kiki Pew is a friend and member of a group of wealthy widows called the Potussies (a vulgar version of their more vulgar name) who are ardent fans of the president of the United States and members of his private club in Palm Beach, here called Casa

Altogether it's clear who they are, Hiaasen refers to the POTUS and FLOTUS only by their Secret Service code names. His is Mastodon, which he loves because it sounds tough. "On his only second day in the White House, the President had ordered his chief of staff to arrange a trip to the National Zoo for a close-up look at a real mastodon. The chief of staff wasn't brave enough to tell the President the truth, so he cooked up a story that the zoo's beloved mastodon herd was on loan to a wildlife park in Christchurch, New Zealand."

Her code name is Mockingbird, and she is in her own way as formidable a woman as Angie, though not nearly as likable as the wildlife wrangler. The two are the book's main characters, with separate stories will collide.

In the meantime, Mockingbird is courting danger by having an intense affair with her buff Secret Service agent. Mastodon is unlikely to notice, given how busy he is with the team of strippers he passes off as nutritionists, but there are prying eyes everywhere at Casa Bellicosa.

There are also more pythons showing up in Palm Beach. It might almost be plausible for them to be found in people's backyards, but there's burning up in bakery trucks and bikini boutiques.

All this leads to a raucous finale at the Commander's Ball, a celebration of Mastodon's ego that includes a disgusting tanning bed accident, just a touch of LSD and, of course, pythons. Lots and lots of pythons.



WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“Irresistible”: After the devastating loss of the 2016 presidential election, Democratic consultant Gary Zimmer (Steve Carell) aims to bounce back by latching onto a small-town Wisconsin man, Jack Hastings (Chris Cooper).

Caught on camera giving an eloquent speech about overcoming differences, Hastings goes viral, and, presuming the town to be Trump country, Zimmer thinks it's just what the party needs to recalibrate and encourages Hastings to run for mayor.

As the race attracts national interest, Republican consultant Faith Brewster (Rose Byrne) rolls into town to support the incumbent (Brent Sexton).

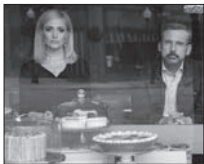
Written and directed by Jon Stewart, the film is far too snarky to be considered satire.

While Wisconsin conforms to certain Midwest stereotypes — yes, the state sure does have nice folks and great beer and cheese — the premise just misses the mark.

Zimmer constantly belittles Hastings and his campaign for assuming small-town conservatism without anyone demonstrating it; then when the town pulls one over on him, it's played as a big reveal, that we should be surprised these people had the know-how to do so.

With the film not shot in Wisconsin and not featuring one single hearty Wisconsin accent, Zimmer's disregard for the Midwest is a fair analogy for how the film treats the region, too.

Throw in the odd coupling of Zimmer and Hastings' daughter, Diana (the always great Mackenzie Davis), as well as the odder relationship between Zimmer and Brewster, and this is a tale that is absolutely resistible.



Focus Features

Rose Byrne and Steve Carell in “Irresistible,” now on DVD.

Also available on DVD:

“Blood Quantum”: A fisherman and his sheriff son discover that a deadly virus has inspired a zombie apocalypse that threatens their Canadian First Nations reserve. In English and Micmac.

“Cut Off”: A woman (Jasna Fritzi Bauer) must find hidden clues in a cadaver in order to save her missing daughter. In German.

“Magnum P.I.: Season Two”: The reboot of the 1980-88 series stars Jay Hernandez as the infamous ex-Navy SEAL turned sleuth.

“Rogue”: A hired gun (Megan Fox) sets off with a team to Africa on a rescue mission.

“Z”: A boy's imaginary friend wreaks havoc.

— Katie Foran-McHale/TNS



FX/TVS

The vampires of FX's “What We Do in the Shadows” show up for their neighbors' Super Bowl bash. From left, Nandor (Kayvan Novak), Laszlo (Matt Berry), Nadja (Natasha Demetriou) and “energy vampire” Colin Robinson (Mark Prochsch).

Blood-sucking silliness

FX's ‘Shadows’ described as ‘Office,’ ‘Seinfeld’ with vampires

By MICHAEL ORDONA
Los Angeles Times

Some might be confounded by FX's hit mockuseries “What We Do in the Shadows,” a surprise Emmy nominee for comedy series. But its brain trust insists there's nothing to be confused about — just the sheer joy of silliness and inside jokes.

“My parents watch a lot of TV, but when I asked them about the first season, they said, ‘It took us a while to figure it out.’ I was like, ‘What is there to figure out?’” says co-showrunner and writer Paul Simms.

He and fellow writer Stefani Robinson both chuckle from the safety of their respective homes via a Zoom call.

“There's nothing underneath,” Simms says, laughing again. “This is about vampires living in the real world and it's silliness and for better or worse, there's no social commentary or homework or anything like that.”

Robinson, who is also an executive producer, sums up the show succinctly. “The easiest way that I've been able to describe it is, ‘The Office’ with vampires,” he says. “It was a documentary, but it wasn't — it's that, but with vampires.”

“Shadows” emanates from the 2014 indie fave feature written and directed by “Flight of the Conchords” Jemaine Clement (who developed the television series and serves as co-showrunner) and Taika Waititi.

Following that film's mockumentary format, a camera crew hangs around with a new set of low-key vampires hilariously embodied by Matt Berry (the libidinous Laszlo), Natasha Demetriou (Nadja, the most arcane of the three), Kayvan Novak (Nandor, with a hilarious Eastern European accent) and Mark Prochsch (as office-work-

er-type “energy vampire” Colin Robinson, whose very dullness sucks the energy from others).

They are cared for by their frustrated human familiar, Guillermo (Harvey Guillen), who wants to be a vampire but may actually be a vampire slayer.

The show is nominated for eight 2020 Emmys, including three writing nods — one each for Robinson and Simms — and a third to their colleagues Sam Johnson and Chris Marcil.

Though Guillermo is on a journey of self-discovery, the vampires, having had their formative periods hundreds of years ago, change at a glacial pace.

It's one sitcom setup after another, but the solutions are unique because the blood suckers are super-powered undead and have no regard for human life. Stylistically, Robinson nails it with the “Office” comparison, but it's also like “Seinfeld” with vampires.

Simms says, “They've each had more time than any of us will have in our lifetimes to grow, to learn new things, and they've completely squandered all those opportunities. Just sort of sat around.”

Regarding Robinson's nominated episode, “On the Run,” Simms feigns resignation: “Even I'll admit Stefani's was the episode of the season.”

In it, Laszlo escapes an old enemy (Jim the Vampire — played by Mark Hamill, with an ace Transylvania-ish accent) by fleeing to a small town.

From there, it's the familiar story of a mysterious loner who comes to town and becomes a local hero. But he's a vampire.

In the episode, Laszlo boasts of being able to escape detection with his foolproof disguise: a toothpick and a pair of blue jeans — and a new identity: Jackie Daytona.

Simms says, “I remember laughing a lot

in the writers' room about Jim saying, ‘I'll have a normal martini’ (mimes tossing it over his shoulder) and (people) not recognizing Laszlo. Sticking to the idea that that disguise works was really key.”

Simms, meanwhile, is nominated for writing “Ghosts,” one of several episodes in which the “rules” of supernatural creatures lead to comedic situations — in this case, since the vampires were once humans who died, their spirits should be wandering around.

“Can I tell you when I think you nailed the episode? It was all the ‘Updog’ stuff,” Robinson says of a long-gestating joke in which Colin keeps trying to trick people into saying, “What's up, dog?” The silly gag still amuses her (she confesses “Austin Powers” formed her sensibilities from a “too young”) age, she notes, laughing as she remembers “Colin summoning his grandmother's ghost just for an ‘Updog’ joke.”

“There are details in Paul's scripts,” she says, “you can tell someone very smart wrote it, someone who's well read and aware of their surroundings and is educated, but is also stupid and funny and silly. It feels like this person is observant, has a real point of view about what's going on in the world and within themselves. It's a hard thing to pull off, I think.”

Simms smiles: “Yeah. I like some stupid, silly stuff.”

Robinson says, “A Paul joke that made it into ‘On the Run’ that I love was the ‘mechanical Turk’ joke. It's about the singing (Big Mouth) Billy Bass; it's something so specific that only a very small group of people would understand what this is and why it's funny, but at the same time ...”

Simms completes the thought: “... it's talking about a singing Billy Bass.” And both laugh.

WEEKEND: HEALTH AND FITNESS



iStock

The young are not immune

Learn how COVID-19 affects children, babies and how to protect them

Mayo Clinic News Network

Children of all ages can become ill with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). But most kids who are infected typically don't become as sick as adults and some might not show any symptoms at all. Know the symptoms of COVID-19 in babies and children, why children might be affected differently by COVID-19 and what you can do to prevent the spread of the virus.

How likely is it for a child to become sick with COVID-19?

While all children are capable of getting the virus that causes COVID-19, they don't become sick as often as adults. Most children have mild symptoms or no symptoms.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association, in the United States children represent about 9% of all COVID-19 cases. Hospitalization rates for children are much lower than for adults.

However, if children are hospitalized, they need to be treated in the intensive care unit as often as hospitalized adults, according to research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In addition, people of any age with certain underlying conditions are at higher risk of serious illness with COVID-19.

Research also suggests disproportionately higher rates of COVID-19 in Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black children than in non-Hispanic white children. Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black children also have had higher rates of hospitalization.

Rarely, some children might also develop a serious condition that appears to be linked to COVID-19.

Why do children react differently to COVID-19?

The answer isn't clear yet. Some experts suggest that children might not be as severely affected by COVID-19 because there are other coronaviruses that spread in the community and cause diseases such as the common cold. Since children often get colds, their immune systems might be primed to provide them with some protection against COVID-19. It's also possible that children's immune systems interact with the virus differently than do adults' immune systems.

How are babies affected?

Although rare, children under age 2 appear to be at higher risk of severe illness with COVID-19 than older children. This is likely due to their immature immune systems and smaller airways, which make them more likely to develop breathing issues with respiratory virus infections.

Newborns can become infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 during childbirth or by exposure to sick caregivers after delivery. If you have COVID-19 or are waiting for test results due to symptoms, it's recommended during hospitalization after childbirth that you wear a cloth face mask and have clean hands when caring for your newborn. Keeping your newborn's crib by your bed while you are in the hospital is OK, but it's also recommended that you maintain a reasonable distance from your baby when possible. Research suggests that only about 2% to 5% of infants born to women with COVID-19 near the time of delivery test positive for the virus in the days after birth. However, if you are severely ill with COVID-19, you might need to be temporarily separated from your newborn.

Infants who have COVID-19 or who can't be tested due to a lack of availability and have no symptoms might be discharged from the hospital, depending on the circumstances. Frequent follow-up with the baby's health care provider is needed — by phone, virtual or in-office visits — for 14 days.

Children's COVID-19 symptoms

While children and adults experience similar symptoms of COVID-19, children's symptoms tend to be mild and cold-like. Most children recover within one to two weeks. Their symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Poor feeding or poor appetite

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19 and you think he or she might have COVID-19, call your child's health care provider. Keep your child at home and away from others as much as possible, except to get medical care. Follow recommendations from the CDC, the World Health Organization (WHO) and your government regarding quarantine and isolation measures as appropriate.

Factors used to decide whether to test your child for COVID-19 may differ depending on where you live. To test for COVID-19, a health care provider uses a long swab to take a sample from the back of the nose. The sample is then sent to a lab for testing. If your child is coughing up phlegm (sputum), that may also be sent for testing.

COVID-19 prevention tips

There are many steps you can take to prevent your child from getting the virus that causes COVID-19 and, if he or she does become sick, to avoid spreading it to others. The CDC and WHO recommend that you and your family:

- Keep your hands clean. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Encourage your kids to sing the entire "Happy Birthday" song twice (about 20 seconds) so they spend the time they need to get their hands clean.

- Practice social distancing. Avoid close contact (within about 6 feet) with anyone who is sick or has symptoms. Minimize trips outside your house. When you do go out, leave your children at home — if possible. Since people without symptoms can spread the virus, don't allow your child to have in-person play dates with children from other households — even if they are all feeling well. Postpone your child's in-person visits with older adults. Consider organizing virtual family meals, game nights or video dates to keep your child engaged.

- Clean and disinfect your home. Focus on cleaning surfaces every day in common areas that are frequently touched or that easily get dirty. Wash your child's bedding and washable plush toys, as needed, in the warmest possible setting. Dry items completely. If you're caring for a baby with COVID-19, wash your hands after diaper changes or handling the baby's bedding, toys or bottles.

- Wear cloth face masks. This advice is based on data showing that people with COVID-19 can transmit the virus before realizing that they have it. Don't place a face mask on a child younger than age 2, a child who has any breathing problems, or a child who has a condition that would prevent him or her from being able to remove the mask without help.

In addition, keep up with your child's well visits and vaccines. If your child is due for a well visit, talk to your child's doctor about your state's return-to-school plan. Don't let fear of getting the virus that causes COVID-19 prevent your child from getting his or her vaccines to prevent other serious illnesses.

— Mayo Clinic News Network

WEEKEND: FAMILY

Seen and heard

Tips for how to help youth overwhelmed by recent violence, protests

By ANA HOMAYOUN

Special to The Washington Post

Recent incidents of police violence and resulting protests highlighting systemic racism, social inequality and police brutality have caused many teens — and adults — already overwhelmed by the ongoing pandemic to feel increasingly anxious and concerned. The past few months have been exhausting for so many of us. It can be easy for young people navigating so many layers of uncertainty to feel beleaguered with pain and sadness.

Parents may wonder how to advise children facing this unprecedented moment with no blueprint or guidebook. How can we help teens find their voice and feel heard and allow them to process emotions and experiences in such chaotic and uncertain times?

Here are a few ways adults can address teens' disappointment, loss and rage.

Define, acknowledge and validate the losses and disappointments (big and small). In many ways, we haven't been very good at this. In the first weeks of panicked pivoting to remote learning and working from home, we were struggling through the day, hour and minute as success. As the situation continues, and as it continues to change, it's time to take a deeper dive to reflect on how we can cope and live in our new reality.

Jeanmarie Cahill, a psychotherapist in the San Francisco Bay area, says many parents are struggling with how to support their children through loss and disappointment, feelings that are compounded by uncertainty about the future.

Parents "don't know what's normal teenage behavior, or what has to do with [the coronavirus] or what has to do with seeing a photo on Instagram of their friends not social distancing and they weren't invited," Cahill said.

Allow kids the time and space to acknowledge their experiences and feelings. Letting them define the loss gives them a sense of ownership and validates their concerns. It's especially important because the depth of the crisis highlighted in news stories and images can make their worries seem small by comparison.

Feelings may be amplified for Black children and teens processing multiple layers of grief and/or trauma in the wake of George Floyd's death. In the recent CNN/"Sesame Street" town hall on racism, Atlanta Democratic Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms shared her approach for speaking and listening to her children.

"Sometimes I just simply need to listen to let them feel and let them express their emotions," she said. "Because I don't have all of the answers. And I am searching for the answers in the same way they are."

Help kids identify choices, routines and rituals. I've been working with students for nearly two decades on executive functioning skills, which include organizing, planning, prioritizing, focusing



iStock

Many youth are stressed because of the pandemic. Now some are even more so amid recent incidents of police violence and the ensuing protests.

and completing tasks. Over the past few months, the loss of simple routines and rituals — saying hello to classmates in the hallway, talking to a teacher after class, the daily commute to and from school — has disrupted the sense of normalcy that reinforces safety and stability. Now more than ever, choices, rituals and routines matter, and taking the time to help kids identify ways to start and end their days and weeks, and to transition between activities, can provide a sense of structure.

Matty Pahren, 21, a junior at Duke University, says having a daily routine has been essential to her well-being. Pahren, of Richmond, Va., and her sister, Becky, 17, go for a walk or run nearly every day, even though "before this, I hated running, and I would have to drag myself to the gym at school." When she doesn't have a set schedule, she has found a rhythm by taking time for herself, doing something productive, resting and then working out. Pahren also finds activities that "make Friday and Saturday feel a little bit different," such as game and trivia nights with family; she also plays online games, such as those on Jackbox or games such as Codenames and Skribbl.io, with friends.

Encourage teens to develop a sense of competence. This new normal is an opportunity for kids to practice their executive functioning, creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills to develop increased confidence.

Mimi Zoila, 19, and Tiana Day, 17, met through Instagram less than two days before they organized a peaceful protest over the Golden Gate Bridge in June. Zoila, a student at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa and a resident of Marin County in California, had obtained a permit for 50 to 300 people to walk across the bridge, and she was looking for someone to help organize and spread the word. Day, who just graduated from high school in San Ramon, Calif., had led a protest in her hometown and offered to help.

There has always been power

in taking action in a moment that might otherwise leave you feeling powerless. Right now, this ability to experience a sense of autonomy and competence is all the more important, whether it relates to school or urgent social issues. Acting as background singers to your children's lead vocals can help them solidify skills and gain a sense of competence that builds confidence.

Students don't need to organize large protests to feel competent. Helping children actively engage in studying, understanding and discussing events related to racism, police brutality and structural injustice can be important starting points. And parents don't need to know all the answers or even where to start. Offering to listen and discuss plans provides an opening for kids to explore.

Promote an exploratory mindset. It's vital to encourage teenagers to think creatively and come up with alternative solutions when initial plans dissolve.

Oliver Gower, 18, a recent high school graduate from Newton, Mass., has been looking online for jobs he could do while stuck at home. His mom, who works in marketing, helped him line up a job doing voice-overs, and he has now found somewhat consistent work — doing something he had never imagined.

One of my students decided to check in on all of her elderly neighbors (from a safe distance) about helping with errands.

In this moment, it can be easy to get stuck on what can't be done. Creative thinking can open up new avenues.

Encourage them to establish connections. When schools closed and students started doing everything online, old rules about social media and technology use went out the window. With so many ways of interacting off-limits because of social distancing, young people can benefit from parents encouraging positive ways to stay connected, to help them cope with stress and reflect on social change.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Military spouses' takes on COVID-19

Recently, I decided to change my "lurker" status, and post something in a popular military spouse Facebook group to which I belong. In my first post to the group, I asked how military families had been affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

Most of the 50-plus comments described what I'd expected — delays, disappointments and uncertainty. Marine wife Christine said, "My husband was in Korea for a year. He missed our oldest's high school graduation due to the travel ban, among other things. I lost my job. Had to do virtual school with my 3 kids. No academic/school support. Solo parenting through it all."

And Air Force spouse Julie, whose family got orders to Belgium: "I quit my job on Feb. 28 at 30 weeks pregnant. We shipped out stuff, we moved out of our house, and sold one of our two cars. We had our luggage packed and were staying with my parents for a week. March 13 came around, and the travel ban went into effect. I am currently in therapy for PPD/anxiety and we have no real answer on when we are leaving or if they are shipping our stuff back."

Brittany and her Navy family moved into a house 40 minutes from base in Italy, two days before the lockdown: "I was terrified for my husband to drive to work ... Police checkpoints and fines if you didn't have a valid reason to be outside. My one saving grace is that we rented a house with about two weeks of lead time on walks. Only we were only allowed on their balconies, and some were stuck in the lodge for six months."

Air Force spouse Tanya lamented not being able to travel outside of Japan: "I feel sad that my daughter will almost be two by the time she gets to meet her grandparents, aunts, uncle and cousins, extended family members. They will be strangers and I can't hug them. I'm crying." There were other predictable themes — mothers giving birth without husbands, couples losing child care, military spouses facing unemployment, spouses handling remote learning alone, etc.

But some comments took me by surprise. I hadn't realized how travel bans affected divorced military realtors stationed overseas. Spouses told sad stories of being unable to see children with whom they share custody.

Also, the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on new trainees was an eye-opener.

New Army wife Kelsey said, "My husband joined the Army and shipped to basic in February, right before COVID-19 made its way to America. We had no idea what we were in for. My husband's basic was extended ... By the time he is able to get home, he won't be able to see my husband for eight months when it was supposed to be just two ... I expect the Army will have a huge retention problem for these unfortunate COVID-19 new soldiers."

I also had no idea that families were paying thousands to transport pets due to cancellations. During a recent PCS, Marine wife Courtney couldn't fly her pet from Hawaii to Georgia as planned. Instead, she paid a pet carrier \$2,400 to fly her dog to California, then had to drive him across the U.S. Air Force spouse Alexis who is PCSing to Japan said, "We have two very large dogs and most airlines aren't shipping pets ... just think about taking out a small loan just to bring your fur babies with you to your next home."

But the real surprise was the light that some spouses found in the darkness. Jessica, a military spouse and reservist, was grateful that virtual drills have allowed her to spend more time with her new baby. Coast Guard wife Mysty said, "We've taken more opportunities to go outdoors for hikes, picnics and other activities instead of spending time and money in shops and restaurants. We've been able to make better connections with friends, family, strangers, shipmates and coworkers. This is a challenge that can bring people together."

Extended separation gave Army wife Laura new appreciation: "I think this whole experience with COVID-19 should really put people in perspective with how blessed we truly are, to have homes, jobs, our health and each other."

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

ALTERNATIVE CINEMA
BY FRANCIS HEANEY / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Francis Heaney, of New York City, is a professional puzzle maker and editor who frequently constructs the American Values Club Crossword. For 15 years he has edited puzzle books for Sterling. His early interest in puzzles was encouraged by his grandmother, who gave him a subscription to Games magazine for his 10th birthday.

- ACROSS
1 Red Guard members
8 They can get canceled
14 Sticky situation
20 Remove brains from
21 "Likewise!"
22 Way to go
23 Alternative title for "The Dirty Dozen"?

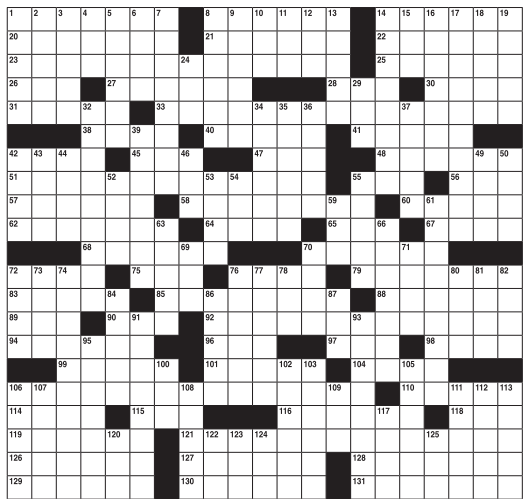
- 25 Sorted in order
26 Hear here!
27 Complete
28 "Vous êtes ..." (French map notation)
30 Alan with six Emmys
31 Pulled from a raffle drum
33 Alternative title for "Cleopatra"?

- 38 Words to a betrayer
40 Partner of cut
41 St. ___ Chapel, New York City public building in continuous use since 1766
42 Dessert often topped with caramel sauce
45 Newsweek co.
47 Zip
48 Disc-brake components
51 Alternative title for "Frankenstein"?

GUNSTON STREET

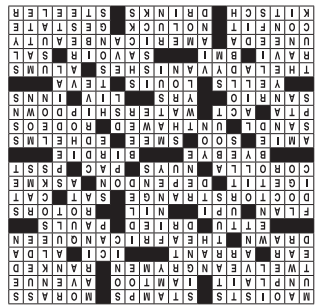


"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.



- 61 Shortcut for a frequent contact
63 Approximately
68 Outmoded part of a laptop
69 Hither and ...
70 What a koozie might keep cool
71 Seller of the Ultimate Waffle Sandwich
72 Nile snakes
73 ___ Hari
74 "Regardless ..."
76 Stone to cast?

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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FACES



More than a Disney princess

Auli'i Cravalho, voice of Moana, stars in first live-action film

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Auli'i Cravalho's life changed forever at age 14 when she was cast as the voice of Disney's "Moana." The Hawaiian native loved singing and acting, but they were just hobbies to her. So were horseback riding, swimming and microbiology, for that matter. A career in Hollywood seemed implausible at best.

"But life decided to surprise me," said Cravalho, who went from obscurity to performing at the Oscars in just a few months.

Now at 19, Cravalho is checking off another milestone: Her first live-action film, "All Together Now," is being released Friday on Netflix. And once again, she's in the lead.

Based on Matthew Quick's novel "Sorta Like a Rock Star," the film from director Brett Haley finds Cravalho playing a very different kind of character from the adventurous Polynesian princess. Amber is a high school student with a to-die-for voice, an unflappable optimism and a dream of going to Carnegie Mellon. She also happens to be living in a school bus with her alcoholic mother.

"This felt like the next step," she said. "I'm a little older, and I love the challenge of showing these tougher emotions and telling these deeper stories."

She'd actually auditioned for Haley before. She didn't get that part, but he promised he'd remember her.

"I was like, sure, OK, I'm never going to hear from this guy again," she said, laughing. And then Amber Appleton came along.

"I really related to Amber. I genuinely understood her optimism," she said. "I am an optimist almost to a fault myself. I also have to kind of get real and be like, 'Oh, wait, I can reach out and ask for help.'"

Cravalho had already had some on-camera experience, including in the short-lived television show "Rise," which was canceled after one season. ("My first heartbreak.") But she was

nervous about a feature film and acting opposite people like Carol Burnett.

"My biggest challenge is figuring out what to do with my face on screen," she said.

Thankfully, she had an unusually empathetic and supportive director in Haley, who helped her feel comfortable and gave her space to play around with her character and lines. And he's excited for audiences to see her in a more dramatic role.

"Yes, she's optimistic. Yes, she's bright and shiny. But she also has a depth of emotion. She really is layered. She's not just this Disney princess," Haley said. "I think you can see that in her performance. She goes to so many different places in the role."

Cravalho has for the past few years been living outside of Hawaii, first in New York and now in Los Angeles. She finished up high school on her laptop from the set of "Rise," and she empathizes with all the students having to do that now.

For now, she'll continue pursuing acting and already has another series in the works in Amazon's thriller "The Power," but she'd also like to go to college and keep her options open. She's only 19, after all.

"I'm not really sure where my career will take me. I've been lucky to play strong women characters, so I hope I'll continue on that path," she said. "But I'm also young and figuring out what fuels me as a person and figuring out that my career (can be) different from who I am."



Auli'i Cravalho, left, and Rhenzy Feliz are two of the stars of "All Together Now," streaming on Netflix.

JORDAN STRAUSS, INVISION/AP

All-star lineup celebrates Latino theater achievement

The Associated Press

Chita Rivera, Gloria Estefan, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Thalia will headline a benefit digital concert in October to celebrate Latino culture and achievement in theater.

"Viva Broadway! Hear Our Voices" will be held online Oct. 1 and will be hosted by Andrea Burns. It will be directed and choreographed by Sergio Trujillo.

"It's going to celebrate the past. It's going to pay attention to the present and look to the future," said Trujillo, who said the themes will explore Latin representation, inclusion and diversity.

The concert will be broadcast on Playbill.com, Playbill's YouTube Channel and on the Broadway League's Viva Broadway website. Proceeds will support Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and Broadway Bridges.

The event will include performances from members of the original cast of the Broadway musical "In the Heights" — including Karen Olivo, Andrea Burns, Janet Dacal, Olga Merediz, Carlos Gomez and Luis Salgado — as well as performances from Broadway-bound musicals, a peek at John Leguizamo's next work and a look at



From left: Chita Rivera, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Gloria Estefan and Thalia will participate in "Viva Broadway! Hear Our Voices," an online benefit concert Oct. 1.

the first Spanish-language production of "A Chorus Line." "This is a great medium for us to get our message across and create a really exciting virtual concert," said Trujillo. "It's going to be a really thrilling experience."

Perry, Bloom welcome baby girl named Daisy

Katy Perry has given birth to a baby girl named Daisy Dove Bloom.

The pop superstar and her partner, actor Orlando Bloom, got UNICEF to announce the news on its Instagram account. Both Perry and Bloom are goodwill ambassadors for the United Nations agency that helps children.

UNICEF posted a black and white photograph of the infant's hand and said the happy couple told the organization: "We are floating with love and wonder from the safe and healthy arrival of our daughter."

In the Instagram post, the couple also

spoke about how fortunate they were to have had a "peaceful" birthing experience with good healthcare — something, they said, many families do not experience.

The baby is Perry's first. Bloom and his former wife, Miranda Kerr, have a son, Flynn, who was born in 2011.

Lennon killer denied parole for 11th time

The man who gunned down John Lennon outside his Manhattan apartment in 1980 was denied parole for an 11th time, state corrections officials said Wednesday.

Mark David Chapman was denied after being interviewed by a parole board Aug. 19, according to corrections officials. Chapman, 65, is serving a 20-years-to-life sentence at Wende Correctional Facility, east of Buffalo.

Chapman shot and killed the former Beatle on the night of Dec. 8, 1980, hours after Lennon autographed an album for him. He has said previously that he feels "more and more shame" every year for the crime.

Chapman's next parole hearing is scheduled for August 2022.

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OPINION

Recent clashes show why US forces should exit Syria

By DANIEL R. DePETRIS
 Special to Stars and Stripes

This week, four U.S. servicemembers were injured in northeastern Syria and diagnosed with concussion-like symptoms after being pursued and deliberately rammed into by a Russian military convoy. Nine days earlier, a joint U.S.-Kurdish military patrol near the Syrian town of Tal al-Zahab was engaged with small-arms fire from a nearby pro-Syrian regime checkpoint.

If there is a lesson in these two incidents, it is that the U.S. military should not waste another moment before it packs up and withdraws from this irreconcilable conflict. The supposed benefits of the approximately 600-strong U.S. service member presence in Syria have long since been overshadowed by the costs.

Seventeen months after recapturing the last small portion of territory under Islamic State's control, the U.S. mission in Syria has transformed from a manageable counterterrorism operation into a multi-dimensional exercise in stabilization. In effect, the U.S. military is being used to prevent Bashar Assad from reestablishing full control in a low-grade version of regime change. Instead of acknowledging success and redeploying back home after the elimination of ISIS' territorial caliphate, U.S. military personnel have spent the last year and a half performing tasks at odds with the original mission.

The near-catastrophe on Aug. 17 is not the first time U.S. troops in eastern Syria have quarreled with hostile forces. Present-day Syria is the real life equivalent of "Mad Max," where central authority is nonexistent, a kaleidoscope of forces seek to carve out their own areas of control, and minor incidents frequently deteriorate into confrontations between opposing armies. Turkish and Russian troops, pro-Syrian militias, Kurdish forces, and U.S. servicemembers are all operating in an area the size of a small U.S. state.

The most infamous clash occurred in February 2018, when hundreds of Russian

private security contractors armed with T-72 tanks and 125-mm guns launched an artillery attack against a small detachment of U.S. and Syrian Kurdish fighters encamped in an isolated outpost in Deir ez-Zor province. The 40-man team was able to hold off the much larger force by virtue of tactical skill, courage under fire, and the mighty firepower of the U.S. Air Force. By the time the hours-long battle was over, 200-300 Russian mercenaries were killed and the remainder retreated to its original position. It was a miracle the U.S. didn't suffer any casualties.

Two smaller but no less troubling incidents took place in October and November 2019. In the first, U.S. troops stationed in the Syrian border city of Kobani came under fire from Turkish shelling in what was an official U.S. withdrawal to a deliberate provocation by Ankara. Weeks later, a U.S. convoy traveling on the M-4 highway was nearly hit by Turkish artillery fire. Three months later, U.S. and Syrian soldiers came to blows when a U.S. team ran into a Syrian regime checkpoint near the city of Hama. What was supposed to be a routine inspection turned into a deadly exchange of fire. Were it not for the Russian military's deescalation, the casualties would have almost certainly been worse.

Despite all this, U.S. officials continue to argue Washington has core national security interests in Syria that necessitate a troop presence. U.S. Central Command commander, Marine Corps Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, stated on Aug. 12 that local security forces require U.S. assistance to be fully capable of handling the threat of ISIS on their own. U.S. policymakers, however, have failed to offer a convincing case to the American people about why the U.S. military is responsible for taking the lead in destroying what is left of the scattered organization. Given the tendency of terrorist groups to constantly adapt depending on the environment and the skill with which these groups can bide their time, a counter-insurgency objective is a recipe for another endless U.S. military deploy-

ment in a highly combustible part of the Middle East.

U.S. troops accomplished everything they sought to achieve. To the extent ISIS continues to control an territory at all, it is relegated to remote, inhospitable sections of the northern Iraqi countryside and small parts of the Syrian desert. Local actors in Syria are more than capable of conducting mop-up operations against ISIS, particularly at a time when the group is largely inactive. Instead of conducting the kinds of operations that captured international attention five years earlier. Just as important, diverse stakeholders ranging from the Assad government, Iran, Russia, Turkey and the Kurds all have an incentive to ensure ISIS doesn't resurrect itself. Nobody in the Middle East has an interest in sitting passively by as ISIS militants attempt to make a comeback. This will be the case even if Washington withdraws U.S. forces from Syria.

Syria itself is likely to be a broken, dysfunctional country for many years to come.

The extensive damage that has resulted from nearly a decade of civil war will require at least \$250 billion to repair. It could very well take a generation before Syria's economy recovers to its pre-war level. Assuming such a recovery is even possible, Syria will remain internally divided by a litany of competing interests. The social, ethnic and sectarian divisions that fueled the war in the first place will continue to percolate. If Iran and Russia believe Syria can be turned into a compliant vassal state, both are likely to be disappointed.

Syria's systemic issues can't be resolved by the U.S. military — nor should Washington make the grave error of backing Syria's fractious politics as a U.S. problem.

The only job left for the U.S. to do in Syria is to complete what it should have done last year: implement a full and unconditional withdrawal before a similar security incident causes the life of one more American.

Daniel R. DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a columnist at the Washington Examiner.

Putin wins any starting contest with Germany, Europe

By ANDREAS KLUTH
 Bloomberg Opinion

Let no one say that Angela Merkel isn't onto Vladimir Putin's dirty tricks and cynicism. As a former member of East Germany's national press speaks Russian just as the Russian president, a former KGB officer stationed in Dresden, is fluent in German. They've known each other for decades. She still recalls vividly his attempt during a visit in 2010 to intimidate her, a known cynophile, by letting his black Labrador Koni sniff her.

So as the worldly-wise leader of a country that's often naively Russophile, Merkel's done her best over the years to call Putin out. When he seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and then instigated the fighting in its eastern Donbas region, she took the West's lead in condemning the breach and containing the crisis.

When Russia kept feeding the West, including Germany, disinformation and fake news, she let him know that she didn't like it, but kept up the dialogue. After a Russian cyberattack on the Bundestag and her own election as German chancellor, such methods "outrageous." And after an execution last summer of a Chechen who had fought against Russian forces, in a Berlin park in broad daylight, Merkel demanded Russian answers but received none.

And then, this month, came the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, the most prominent figure in Russia's remaining opposition

movement. Merkel's reaction has been stronger than that of any other Western leader. She's had Navalny airlifted out of Russia and brought to a clinic in Berlin, where she's put guards around his bed.

But now, with Navalny still in a coma, all sides are reverting to the usual script. The doctors in Berlin have confirmed that they found a cholinesterase inhibitor in Navalny — though there's no proof of course that Putin had anything to do with getting this nerve agent into his body. Merkel and her foreign minister, Heiko Maas, immediately and "urgently" demanded that Russia investigate the poisoning "in a completely transparent way."

On cue, a Kremlin spokesperson feigned astonishment that "our German colleagues are in such a hurry in using the word poisoning." The speaker of the lower house of Russia's parliament suggested the whole episode may be just another "provocation by Germany" and other members of the EU aimed at creating more allegations against our country. "And everything goes on as usual. [A Siberian branch of Russia's Interior Ministry released a statement Thursday that said investigators have been unable to determine all the circumstances of the incident.]"

In these recurring charades between the West and Russia, and in particular between Merkel and Putin, everybody knows the game, and yet everybody keeps playing it. It's like a nightmare from which there is no waking up — as George Orwell's "1984." Like the Ministry of Truth in the

novel, Putin's Kremlin can insist that "war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" — and get away with it.

The getting away with it is the point. Neither Putin nor anybody who works for him seriously pretends, or actually wants to convince skeptics, that they're telling the truth. The point instead is to denigrate in order to display the naked power that allows them to abolish truth with impunity.

For these purposes it's moot whether Putin is acting out of a sense of strength or vulnerability. Unlike Big Brother, he hasn't yet scratched all opposition. In Russia's next step, instead of denigrating in Syria or Libya, in the Baltics, on the streets of Berlin or in Belarus.

The game, in short, is asymmetrical. Thanks to her biography of growing up in a communist regime and hating it, Merkel understands that "the West" only lives as an idea, one that couldn't survive the abolition of reality. Thanks to his biography of serving as a KGB officer in a communist regime — and pinning it for — Putin has no scruples. That gives him the edge in matters of life and death. And both leaders know it.

Andreas Kluth is a columnist for Bloomberg Opinion. He's the author of "Hannibal and Me."

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Police shooting and aftermath painful for Kenosha, WI

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Another horrendous shooting by police. Another Black man wounded. Another police department under national scrutiny.

With the shooting of Jacob Blake on Sunday night, Kenosha, Wis., and its police were plunged into the middle of the angry national debate over policing.

By the way, the city faces yet another tragedy.

Two people were shot to death and a third was injured during protests late Tuesday night. Kyle Rittenhouse, a 17-year-old from Illinois, was being arrested and is being held in Lake County, Ill.

Like Anas and his colleagues, he will come after violence earlier in the week left several businesses in ruins. The violence is reprehensible and dishonors the good people fighting for a just cause.

Blake survived the shooting but remains in serious condition at Froedter Hospital. His father says he is paralyzed from the waist down.

"They shot my son seven times — seven times, like he didn't matter," said Blake's father, also named Jacob Blake. "But my son matters. He's a human being, and he matters."

"I will not know precisely what led police to open fire on Blake, the video of a man being shot in the back in front of his kids is sickening.

Blake's shooting provoked angry denunciations from a wide spectrum of American life — from LeBron James to Hillary Clinton. Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said he was "struck Blake 'pierce the soul of the nation.'"

We hope the shooting also forces a reckoning: Wisconsin must face up to the chronic problem of over-aggressive policing of people of color.

We support a package of bills that aim to reduce police brutality. Gov. Tony Evers is asking the Legislature to consider them in a special session next week.

Among other things, the measures would ban police chokeholds and no-knock search warrants and make it harder for officers with troubled pasts to move from one job to another.

We also support a proposal by state Sen. Van Wangoard, a Republican and former police officer, to allow officials to analyze police-involved deaths the same way the National Transportation Safety Board investigates plane crashes.

The article is not here two too many times before. Black Americans account for less than 13% of the population nationally but are killed by police at more than twice the rate of white Americans, according to an analysis by The Washington Post. Hispanic Americans also are killed by police at higher rates than whites.

Phildander Castle.

Freddie Gray.

Breonna Taylor.

George Floyd.

They are among the many people of color who were victimized by police violence.

Andrew White House correspondent for the PBS NewsHour, put it this way on Twitter: "That's at the heart of being Black in America — living with that terrible anticipation of death. That's the trauma in our bones."

It's unwise to prejudge an investigation but on 10 seconds of raw video, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett put it well:



MARCO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Fire burns in the hollow of an old-growth redwood tree in Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Calif., on Monday. The CZU Lightning Complex wildfire tore through the park but most of the redwoods, some as old as 2,000 years, were still standing.

"The shooting of Jacob Blake is shocking, and, based on what's visible in the video, appears to lack any possible justification," Barrett said.

The people of Kenosha — and the entire state — need answers about Blake's shooting. And we need assurances that steps will be taken to prevent it from happening again.

Enough is enough.

Trump's approach more likely to bring economic progress

The Wall Street Journal

Joe Biden is running on his record in the Obama administration of staging a turnaround after an economic crisis, and last week we reminded readers there's less to that record than the spin. Conversely, there's more to President Donald Trump's flip from pessimism in his first three years than his detractors admit, and this debate is crucial to how well the economy recovers after COVID-19.

Biden and the economic left claim Trump inherited a long expansion, and nothing much changed. But recall that Trump was able to win in 2016 in part by running against the "secular stagnation" that liberals said was inevitable. The Obama-Biden recovery was the slowest in decades, and by the second half of 2015 it was losing steam and came close to a recession in 2016.

Trump promised to spur growth again, and his win immediately revived animal spirits. The NFIB Small Business Optimism Index, which had languished below 100 for all but one month of President Barack Obama's tenure, jumped 10 points to nearly 106 in December 2016. The OECD's Business Confidence Index showed a similar flip from pessimism in the first half of 2015 and 2016 into growing optimism. The University of Michigan's consumer confidence survey quickly exceeded its Obama-era high.

In its first two years, Trump pursued two major policy shifts. Instead of raising taxes as Obama-Biden did, he cut them. The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed by a GOP Congress restored global competitiveness to the U.S. corporate tax code, years after even European governments cut their marginal rates. Rationalizing taxation of overseas profits encouraged companies to invest in the U.S. to fund investment, increase wages, or return to shareholders for other uses.

Tax reform also encouraged business investment by allowing immediate 100% expensing of capital spending. The result of these measures was a CapEx surge, with job creation and productivity gains in its wake.

The other track was deregulation. The administration eased restrictions on new energy pipelines, opened new areas to exploration, and rationalized emissions rules in the energy industry. This spurred a boom in gas and oil production. America is now net exporting of many products, allowing Washington to new freedom to advance American interests in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The Trump administration also freed banks of the more pointless elements of post-2008 regulation, such as investigations into racial discrimination in auto lending based solely on borrowers' last names. And wouldn't you know, the financial system still looks set to survive the COVID-19 shutdown. Republicans killed another 16 Obama-era rules through the Congressional Review Act.

These policies delivered what they promised: a burst of growth. From the end of 2017 through September 2018 the economy grew by more than 3%.

Work also increased. The unemployment rate fell to 3.5% by September 2019. Many liberal economists had assumed the 4.7% unemployment of November 2016 was a floor. More impressive, this rate declined even as the number of people working increased. Labor participation among the prime working-age population increased to 83.1% as of January this year, a rate not seen since 2008. Participation among working-age men exceeded 89% in early 2018 for the first time since 2010.

Wage growth, adjusted for inflation, accelerated after years of stagnation. The improvement was especially pronounced among low-skilled and minority workers led behind by the Obama economy. Median weekly full-time earnings for Blacks increased 19% in Trump's first three years, to \$806. That followed a period of 11% growth during Obama's seven post-recession years in office.

The Obama-Biden policy mix of easy monetary policy, higher taxes and hyper-regulation skewed economic gains toward highly educated workers in industries such as tech and finance at the expense of other workers; toward asset owners at the expense of labor income; and toward larger companies at the expense of smaller. These inequities began to unwind under the Trump administration.

Trump's main policy mistake has been to raise the cost of doing business, by disrupting supply chains, raising tariffs and adding uncertainty. Tariffs on industrial inputs such as steel bogged down what could have been a bigger manufacturing boom.

Trump deserves credit for challenging Chinese trade abuses and intellectual-property theft, and he has been less effective by refusing to build trade alliances, not

least his withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal that excludes China. His immigration restriction has also hurt an economy that needs more workers to grow.

It's easy to forget this record after the hell millions of Americans have suffered in recent months, and Democrats hope you do. Never before has a government suddenly shut down an entire economy, and Trump shares the blame. At least he soon reversed course and urged a reopening, while Biden still says he might lock the country down again.

Amid the COVID nightmare, Trump has also gone along with Speaker Nancy Pelosi's demand for Keynesian income supports for individuals to survive the shutdown. But income transfers are no more than a palliative, and the deficits and debt will hang over the economy for decades.

The issue for the election is which candidate and party can best lead America to a sustained period of COVID expansion. That will rely too much on easy monetary policy. But Biden would return to the Obama-Biden policy mix, with a Bernie Sanders lurch left: much higher taxes, much more regulation, trillions in more spending with perhaps a little less protectionism.

There is no doubt Biden will "I'll try to make his tax cuts permanent, block further regulation, and wouldn't nationalize health care or the energy industry. He prefers faster growth to raise wages instead of income transfers or welfare. If voters look past the ravages of COVID-19, Trump has the better case."

Calif. wildfires worse this year, with no end in sight

Los Angeles Times

Fire season has barely begun, and California has already had two of the three worst fire years on record since 1900. And they are burning through Northern California at the same time, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes during a pandemic. As if 2020 couldn't get any worse.

And yet, this terrifying start of fire season was entirely predictable. Forecasters have repeatedly warned that climate change will fuel larger, more frequent and more devastating wildfires in the state. And that's what we're seeing. The 10 largest fires in the state have occurred since 2000.

Warmer temperatures and prolonged droughts are making more areas of the state vulnerable to fire, including geography that has been considered lower risk, such as the usually damp, cool coastal redwood forests of Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties that have burned over the last two decades. In January, the state's worst Death Valley hit 130 degrees, the hottest temperature recorded on the planet in almost a century.

There was little the state could do to prevent these fires. They weren't caused by poorly maintained power lines or sparks from a vehicle. Instead, thousands of dry lightning strikes added to scores of many small fires that merged into conflagrations. Given the size, severity and number of fires, there simply are not enough firefighters or equipment available in California or neighboring states to respond. The region is under siege, and we are unprepared.

The reality is California has to know, the coming years are likely to be even worse as the planet continues to warm. And it's not just fires. The state is facing more floods, coastal erosion and deadly heat waves.

Intense weather events are becoming more common around the planet, and they will overwhelm communities unless we act now. That means doing everything possible to slash the greenhouse gas emissions that are warming the planet. And at the same time, it means doing everything possible to adapt communities and infrastructure to a world in which climate is already creating environmental havoc.

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The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

Transportation 944

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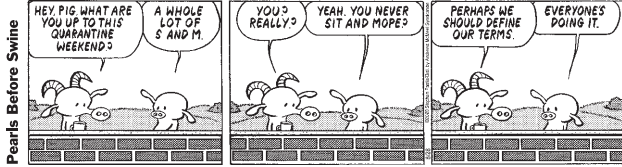
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Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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55				56				57			

- ACROSS**
- Lukewarm
 - Priestly garment
 - Toward the stern
 - Saudi's neighbor
 - Hogwash
 - 1455, to Ovid
 - Desert plant
 - Dallas footballers
 - Sunflower State
 - Theater award
 - Citrus drink
 - A billion years
 - Shelled out
 - 25 Sod
 - 27 Gaggle members
 - 29 Finishing last
 - 31 Actor Keanu
 - 35 Eric Clapton hit
 - 37 Pocket bread
 - 38 Postage
 - 41 Sugary suffix
 - 43 Beer barrel
 - 44 Composer Porter
 - 45 Swiss cereal
 - 47 Las Vegas footballers
 - 49 Shades
 - 52 Takes too much, briefly
 - 53 Diner dessert
 - 54 Moved sideways
 - 55 Summer hrs.
 - 56 Ninny
 - 57 Road curves
- DOWN**
- 24 Compass dir.
 - 26 Made a movie
 - 28 Obliterate
 - 30 Snooze
 - 32 Minnesota footballers
 - 4 Early Peruvian footballers
 - 5 Keaton of "Morning Glory"
 - 6 Esoteric
 - 7 Novelist Anita
 - 8 "Incidentally," selection
 - 9 in a text
 - 10 Arrive by jet
 - 11 Sports bar fixture
 - 17 Shepherd of rhyme
 - 19 Waterlogged
 - 21 Part of NATO
 - 22 Pair with an air
 - 33 Paris summer
 - 34 Droop
 - 36 Soundreels
 - 38 Seafood selection
 - 39 Pond hoppers
 - 40 Top invitees
 - 42 Cosmetics mogul Lauder
 - 45 Hosp. scans
 - 46 Pot covers
 - 48 Clean air org.
 - 50 Golf prop
 - 51 Radical '60s gp.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

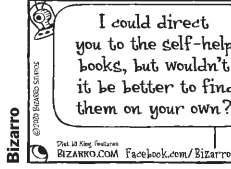
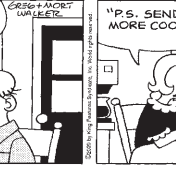
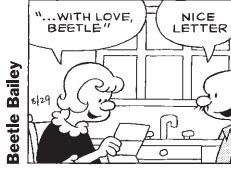
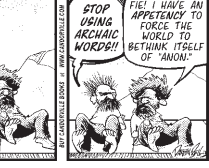
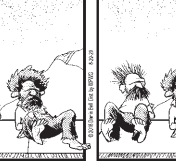
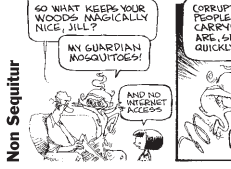
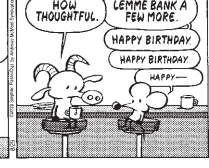
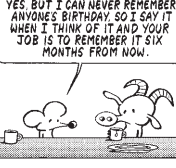
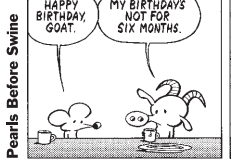
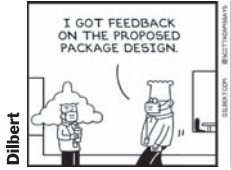
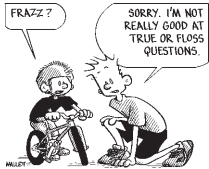
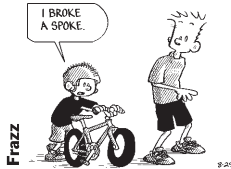
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8-28

CRYPTOQUIP

EO KLXLPVEBELU SVL BYL
 USGL SIL SU S VLSXXF
 OSGHTU MHM UEWILV, BYLF
 KHTXQ PL PVEBWL F'U MLLVU.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT REDDISH-BROWN PIGMENT IS USED FOR MANUFACTURING AUTOMOBILE TAGS? LICENSE PLATE UMBER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals C



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	
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39					40		41		42			
43				44				45		46		
47			48					49		50		
51								52				
		53						54				

ACROSS

- 1 Takeout food request
- 6 Jockey's handful
- 11 Thin, silky fabric
- 12 Winter weasel
- 14 Pollen-producing organ
- 15 Push forward
- 16 Trendy
- 17 Serves wine
- 19 Architect I. M. —
- 20 Military sch.
- 22 Blackbird
- 23 — d'oeuvres (appetizers)
- 24 "If I — rich man..."
- 26 Concentrated
- 28 2001, to Cato
- 30 Roofing goo

DOWN

- 53 — a beet
- 54 Conceals
- 1 Catch sight of
- 2 Even (with)
- 3 "Ben-Hur" studio
- 4 Leak out slowly
- 5 Salami variety
- 6 Issue in paperback, say
- 7 Messes up
- 8 "As I see it," in a text
- 9 Japan, in Japan
- 10 Derivative looks
- 11 "Hogwash!"
- 13 "Beloved" actress Kimberly
- 21 Fiend
- 23 Judean king
- 25 "— Blue?"
- 27 Indent key
- 29 Some summer workers
- 31 Out of whack
- 32 Annoy
- 33 Sense of taste
- 34 Kind of sale
- 36 Comfort
- 37 Arkansas range
- 38 Unkempt
- 41 Homeward, to Santa
- 44 "Star Wars" princess
- 45 Delhi dress
- 48 Leary's drug
- 50 Carried out

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	E	P	I	D	A	L	B	A	F	T
O	M	A	N	I	R	O	T	D	L	V
Y	U	C	A	C	O	W	B	O	Y	S
K	A	N	S	A	S	O	B	I	E	
A	D	E	E	O	N	S	P	E	N	T
T	U	R	F	G	E	E	S	E		
L	O	S	I	N	G	R	E	E	V	E
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S	T	A	M	P	O	S	E	K	E	G
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8-29

CRYPTOQUIP

U V R R V F H L V Z P W V R S G Q H
 S X V S ' R K A E E Z R S G J M H B
 L P S X J H Q S V P W R M P W - J V Q H

U Q G B A J S R : V P R E H G K G E V Z.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF CELEBRITIES ARE THE SAME AGE AS A REALLY FAMOUS POP SINGER, THEY COULD BE BRITNEY'S PEERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T

NFL



JEFF CHIU, POOL/AP

San Francisco 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan didn't lose either of his coordinators or key assistants after last season's run to the Super Bowl. The 49ers also return the highest percentage of overall snaps played last season (81.6%), and the defense has a league-high 87.2% of snaps returning.

The continuity edge

Team retention a benefit during COVID-19

By JOSH DUBOW
AND DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

An offseason centered around Zoom meetings, an abbreviated training camp and the absence of exhibition games made continuity more vital than usual in this year of the coronavirus in the NFL.

The joy San Francisco 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan experienced last January when trusty defensive coordinator Robert Saleh was passed over for the head job in Cleveland has become even more pronounced. Similar feelings have reverberated around the league among coaches with the benefit of stability on their rosters and staffs after the COVID-19 pandemic made the process of installing systems and building chemistry more challenging than usual.

No club has as much continuity this season as Shanahan's defending NFC champion Niners.

Their coordinators and key assistants are all back, as well as most of the contributing players who anchored last year's turnaround season. According to a study by SportRadar, the 49ers return the highest percentage of overall snaps played last season (81.6%). The defense also has a league-high 87.2% of snaps returning.

"It's definitely a lot more easy on your anxiety when you can't go in and you can't meet with the players except on Zooms," Shanahan said, reflecting on the off-season program that largely took place behind a screen. "We've

DID YOU KNOW?

The 49ers are one of three teams bringing back players who participated in more than 80% of snaps last season. The Bills (81.5%) and Colts (80.3%) are just behind. While the Raiders have the largest share of offensive players (94%) returning from last season, with rookie Henry Ruggs III the only new projected starter on that side of the ball, the defense figures to have at least five new starters.

SOURCE: Associated Press

added a few different guys player-wise and we have added a couple of different coaches, but the foundation of our team and especially our defense and our defensive coordinator, that hasn't changed. I do think that helps a lot, especially where we left off."

The 49ers are one of three teams bringing back players who participated in more than 80% of snaps last season. Buffalo (81.5%) and Indianapolis (80.3%) are just behind. Though the Colts acquired a new quarterback, Philip Rivers, the Bills brought in big-play wide receiver Stefan Diggs, and left tackle Trent Williams stepped in for the Niners, Rivers and Williams at least have previous experience with their new coaching staffs, ending the transition.

New Carolina Panthers coach Matt Rhule and his staff have faced quite the opposite this summer.

Rhule is one of five coaches taking over a team. He also is transitioning from college to the pros,

with the only club that has a new head coach, projected starting quarterback and coordinators.

With stalwarts like Cam Newton, Greg Olsen, Luke Kuechly and Trai Turner all departed, the Panthers are the only team with less than half of the snaps last season returning (49.9%), with a league-low 33% on defense and third-lowest 58% on offense. Fortunately for Rhule, new quarterback Teddy Bridgewater has familiarity with offensive coordinator Joe Brady's system, having spent the 2018 season together in New Orleans.

"There's no playbook for this time. It isn't like you can call up the other NFL head coaches and commiserate and say, 'Hey, how are you guys handling this?' You kind of have to figure it out on your own. So, that has obviously been challenging," said Rhule, who estimated he had met about 20 of his players before the start of training camp last month.

Raiders coach Jon Gruden can relate. While the Raiders have the largest share of offensive players (94%) returning from last season, with rookie Henry Ruggs III the only new projected starter on that side of the ball, defense is a different story. The Raiders figure to have at least five new starters there, all while adjusting to new surroundings after the offseason move from Oakland to Las Vegas across the California-Nevada border.

"We are not the lone ranger. Everybody in the league is going through this," Gruden said.

AP pro football writer Teresa Walker and AP sports writers Steve Reed and John Warrick contributed to this report.

Higher-risk coaches aren't staying home

By DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

Danny Smith will turn 67 in the middle of this pandemic-altered NFL season, an age that has put Pittsburgh's special teams coordinator at higher risk for harm from the coronavirus.

Taking a precautionary sabbatical this year, however, would not have suited Smith well.

"It never entered my mind. Man, I don't do anything but coach football. I don't have any hobbies," Smith said this week. "I've been called a lot of names in this business, but a 'house cat' has never been one of them, and I'm not one to sit at home and do nothing."

Courage and perseverance have forever been part of the ethos of the sport, occasionally to a bull-headed fault. Still, 67 players across the league exercised their collectively bargained right to opt out of the 2020 season for health reasons.

To date, no member of any team's coaching staff has announced an intent to sit out. Most coaches in the league are at least two decades older than the players they're directing, even with the recent hiring trend toward younger, offense-minded head coaches. The gap between the eldest of coaches and the youngest of players reaches the 50-year range.

For many of the game's most seasoned teachers, coaching football is all they've ever wanted to do.

"There's no way I'd opt out," said 64-year-old Vikings head coach Mike Zimmer, adding: "Us coaches that are in these high-risk areas, we kind of understand how safe it really is in this building. Where we have to be careful is when we step outside the building. I've talked to the coaches about a lot of these things as well. I think we love to do what we do so much that this is important to us."

Said Dallas defensive coordinator Mike Nolan, who is 61: "I never even thought about opting out myself. That was a player option, but I never saw it as a coach

option."

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age. In baseball, the Minnesota Twins decided to hold two assistant coaches — 68-year-old Bob McClure and 66-year-old Bill Evers — out of the ballpark this season out of concern for their health and gave them temporary reassignments until the pandemic passes.

Two other major league assistant coaches, Ty Van Burkleo (Cleveland) and Willie McGee (St. Louis), each made their own choice to stay home. McGee did so after 18 members of the organization, including 10 players, were diagnosed with confirmed coronavirus cases.

Some underlying medical conditions can also increase the risk. The stress of the job has led to more than a few health scares for NFL head coaches over the years. Zimmer's current offensive coordinator, Gary Kubiak, had to resign as Denver's head coach due to health problems. Tampa Bay head coach Bruce Arians has endured three forms of cancer. Just this week, Washington head coach Ron Rivera announced he's been diagnosed with a treatable form of skin cancer.

ESPN reported last week that at least nine coaches in the league have tested positive for COVID-19 this year. Three head coaches — Sean Payton (New Orleans), Doug Pederson (Philadelphia) and Anthony Lynn (Los Angeles Chargers) — have gone public with their diagnosis.

"I'm very comfortable with our protocols now that I've gotten used to the protocols," said Arians, who is 67. "We had a week of staff meetings where we went through the protocols, how to teach with a mask on and all of the things that we are going to do differently. I'm very, very comfortable with it. As far as on the field, I'll maintain a mask and probably a shield just for personal use, and coach like I've always coached."

AP pro football writer Schuyler Dixon and AP sports writers Fred Gooden and Will Graves contributed to this report.



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach Bruce Arians, 67, says he's comfortable with the COVID-19 protocols the league established.

NFL

Breakout season?

These second-year players worth watching

BY JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

Johnathan Abram's physical play and loud talking made him a player Jon Gruden felt would be a tone-setter for the Raiders defense last season.

Instead, the rookie safety injured his shoulder in the season opener and didn't play again last season. Now Abram is one of several second-year players poised for a breakout season in 2020.

"You saw once he got on the field how much the energy changes on

defense and how he's really an enforcer out there," Gruden said.

'To have him out there for a yearlong basis, I feel like that really gives the defense a change of attitude.'

"So, to have him out there for a year-long basis, I feel like that really gives the defense a change of attitude."

There were plenty of rookies who made an immediate impact last year with defensive end Nick Bosa helping the San Francisco 49ers

make it to the Super Bowl, quarterback Kyle Murray reviving a dormant offense in Arizona and receiver A.J. Brown helping Tennessee reach the AFC title game.

Others played smaller roles, whether it was because of injuries, adjusting to the pro game or other factors. While Abram's season was cut short because of an injury, Tennessee first-round defensive tackle Jeffrey Simmons started late because of one.

The 6-foot-4 lineman was expected to be a top-10 draft pick in 2019 before tearing his left ACL in February, which dropped him to No. 19 overall and the Titans.

Simmons recovered in time to play nine games of the regular season and three playoff games. Simmons had two sacks even as he felt unable to cut or bend as he knows he can when fully healthy.

"We all got a glimpse of that last year when he came in and wrecked shop," teammate DaQuan Jones said. "I'm just excited for him to come out there fully healthy and do what he does best, be a big, dominant player."

Pittsburgh WR Diontae Johnson

When the Steelers traded away star receiver Antonio Brown last offseason, they used one of the two draft picks they got from the Raiders on Johnson in the third round. He showed flashes



Don Wright/AP

Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Diontae Johnson showed flashes of brilliance last season as a rookie, making 59 catches for 680 yards and five touchdowns.

as a rookie with 59 catches for 680 yards and five TDs despite substandard quarterback play from Mason Rudolph and Devlin Hodges. With a healthy Ben Roethlisberger this season, Johnson could be the latest star receiver in Pittsburgh drafted after the first round.

New England LB Chase Winovich

The third-round pick last year was only a part-time player as a rookie, getting on the field for less than one-third of the defensive snaps. But he produced in that limited time with 5½ sacks and 26 quarterback pressures on 203 pass rush opportunities, according to SportsInfo Solutions. With Dont'a Hightower having opted out this season, and Jamie Collins and Kyle Van Noy leaving in free agency, Winovich will have to carry a much bigger load in year two.

Green Bay TE Jace Sternberger

The third-round pick missed more than half of his rookie season with an ankle injury and didn't catch a single pass in the regular season. He did catch a TD pass in the NFC title game against San Francisco but will be counted on to contribute much more this season after Jimmy Graham left in free agency. With questions at wide receiver behind Davante Adams, quarterback Aaron Rodgers needs another dependable option in the passing game and Sternberger could provide just that.

Miami WR Preston Williams

After going undrafted a year

ago, Williams had 32 catches for 428 yards and three TDs before a knee injury ended his season after eight games. Williams was tied for the NFL lead among rookies in catches and ranked fourth in yards receiving at the time of his injury but he's recovered now. There should be plenty of opportunities in Miami, especially after Allen Hurns and Albert Wilson both opted out this season.

Buffalo DT Ed Oliver

The No. 9 overall pick had five sacks as part of one of the NFL's stingiest defenses last season. But Oliver has the potential to be a game-breaker and could emerge as one of the top pass-rushing interior defensive linemen this season.

Arizona CB Byron Murphy

The top pick in the second round struggled as a rookie, allowing the most TD passes (nine) of any player in 2019, according to SportsInfo Solutions. Murphy could have less pressure this season with Patrick Peterson expected to play all year after being suspended the first six games a year ago. The Cardinals had been hoping to move Murphy into the slot this season but might have to keep him outside after Robert Alford went down with a season-ending injury for the second straight year.

AP pro football writer Teresa Walker in Nashville, Tenn., contributed to this report.



DANIEL GLUSKOTER, ABOVE, AND WILFREDO LEE, BELOW/AP

Above: Oakland Raiders safety Johnathan Abram injured his shoulder during the season opener last year and didn't play again. He's being looked at by head coach Jon Gruden as a tone-setter.

Below: Buffalo Bills defensive tackle Ed Oliver, right, had five sacks in his rookie season, but has the potential to be a game-changer.



NFL



PHOTOS BY STEVEN SENNE/AP

Above: New England Patriots wide receiver N'Keal Harry catches a pass during a drill at training camp Tuesday in Foxborough, Mass. Below: Gunner Olszewski, right, tries to get free from J.C. Jackson on a passing drill. After Julian Edelman, the rest of the young Patriots receiving corps had 117 catches.

Patriots' young receivers say they'll catch on fast

By KYLE HIGHTOWER
Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — One of the things Rob Gronkowski's absence in the Patriots' offense last season highlighted was the inexperience in their receiving group.

A looming presence at 6-foot-6, Gronk was a threat to make big plays whenever he was on the field and he in turn opened throwing lanes for his teammates.

But without him, the offense suffered as Tom Brady struggled to build chemistry with rookie receivers N'Keal Harry, Gunner Olszewski and Jakobi Meyers.

Brady's departure, a disjointed offseason and truncated training camp have created more issues for New England's offense in 2020. But those are challenges the trio feels more equipped to tackle in Year 2.

"I think I learned just like everybody else did last year," said Olszewski, who converted to receiver as a rookie after playing cornerback in college. "We're all new receivers in the NFL. And this is our second year as NFL receivers. I don't consider myself more behind or ahead of anybody. I've been a receiver since I've been here, and that's the position I play."

As Brady worked to cultivate trust with the new faces on offense last season, veteran Julian Edelman did his best to pick up the slack, leading the Patriots with 100 catches for 1,117 yards and six touchdowns.

But the remaining seven receivers on the roster combined for only 117 catches and 10 touchdowns. Harry, the Patriots' first-round pick in 2019, had two of



those TDs but played just seven games before going on injured reserve for the remainder of the season.

While it wasn't the rookie season he expected, Harry said he's taken a lot of lessons from it.

"I learned that in the NFL, you have to prove yourself day in and day out," he said. "This is a league where nothing is given to you. You earn everything day by day. That's my approach coming into this season and that's my approach stepping on to the field every day."

One of the things Harry focused on during the time off was his footwork, enlisting the help of trainer Rischad Whitefield, known as "The Footwork King" while working out this summer in Houston. According to Next Gen Stats, Harry ranked last among Patriots receivers with an average of 2.2 separation yards.

Receiver Mohamed Sanu said he's already noticed improvement from Harry.

"I know he works at it every day. He's trying to get better at

the little details. Asks great questions. As a second-year player, that's what you want to do," Sanu said. "I know we want to get better and better at all the little, minor details — the intricacies of the offense. It's great. All of the receivers — not just N'Keal — are working toward the same goal: trying to be consistent every day, snap after snap, play after play, meeting, walkthrough. I love it."

Meyers said he, Harry and Olszewski were the first to raise their hands when quarterbacks Jarrett Stidham and Brian Hoyer reached out to organize some informal throwing sessions. They did the same with Cam Newton after he signed.

"I feel like we're getting more comfortable with understanding what we have to bring to the team," Meyers said. "I feel like the more we're around each other, the more we get comfortable with each other. We've got to understand this is a business and one day we could be here and one day we couldn't be."

Sudfeld now in crucial backup role for Eagles

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Nate Sudfeld has watched the backup quarterback play important play-off games for the Philadelphia Eagles each of the past three seasons.

Now he's the guy one play away from being the starter.

"I want to stay ready," Sudfeld said Friday. "You treat yourself like the starter. You make sure they can call the game with you in there like they do for the starter. I want to give the coaches confidence in me that I can go in and pick up where it was left and move it forward."

Sudfeld was the No. 3 quarterback in 2017 when Carson Wentz tore two knee ligaments and Nick Foles stepped in and led the Eagles to the franchise's first Super Bowl title. He was in the same role in 2018 when Wentz injured his back and Foles led the Eagles to an NFC East title and a road playoff win.

Last season, Wentz started all 16 games for the second time in his four seasons. But a concussion knocked him out of Philadelphia's wild-card playoff game early and Josh McCown couldn't pull out a win.

"I've been around a ton of great quarterbacks in general, including some great starters and backups," Sudfeld said. "I think you can't try to be like someone else. You have to be who you are and own who you are because guys really respond to authenticity. I can't try to go out there and be exactly like Carson, Nick, Josh, or whoever. I have to be myself, make sure I'm prepared, and make sure I know what my process is and how that works for me to go out and be successful."



YONG KIM/AP

Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nate Sudfeld throws the football during training camp Monday in Philadelphia.

Sudfeld has only thrown 25 passes in his four-year career that began as a sixth-round pick by Washington in 2016. He's not even guaranteed the backup job after the Eagles spent a second-round pick on Jalen Hurts. Coach Doug Pederson said Sudfeld is "right now" the No. 2 quarterback.

"Nate has done a nice job for us, and Nate has come in and really done everything we've asked him to do from a backup position and really just moved the team when he's in there, executing the offense, and that's where he's at," Pederson said.

Sudfeld is disappointed he won't get to showcase his skills in preseason games that were canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic. But he's eager to battle it out at practices.

"You learn in this league to never assume anything," Sudfeld said. "You have to go out there and earn it every single day. It's a broken record, but rent is due every day. You have to bring it, so I'm definitely not taking anything for granted, and I am thankful for the opportunity that I have, and I am trying to put my best foot forward to help this team and keep improving as a player."

Hurts was runner-up for the Heisman Trophy last year at Oklahoma, when he threw for 3,851 yards and 32 touchdowns. He's been impressive in training camp.

Sudfeld is among many who have noticed.

"Jalen has been awesome. I've been really impressed. He can really spin it," Sudfeld said. "Everyone thinks that he is an athletic guy, which he is, but he can spin it. He is also smart in the (quarterbacks) room, and it's been great having him in the film room."

PRO BASKETBALL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Stockton carries on family German tradition

She's the fourth child of NBA Hall of Famer to sign a pro contract to play in Bundesliga

By KEN MAGUIRE
Associated Press

Laura Stockton sounds perfectly happy to ride buses around Germany if it means she gets to play professional basketball.

The 23-year-old daughter of retired Utah Jazz great John Stockton spent the past year-plus rehabbing an ACL injury that ended her collegiate career at Gonzaga.

"I'm not picky," she told The Associated Press. "I'm just ready for whatever."

Stockton has signed her first professional contract to play for Herner TC in the German league. Germany is familiar ground for the Stocktons. Three of Laura's older siblings — all point guards — have played there.

"I really love the history, the old buildings, the castles," she said in a phone interview. "I'm a big food connoisseur, so I love their food."

Stockton cites spatzle (an egg pasta dish) and doner (meat cooked on a rotisserie) as her favorites from past visits, but she knows culture and cuisine come after winning on the court. Herner was the 2019 league champion and was 13-8 when last season was canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The team usually travels by bus to away games. It's a far cry from Gonzaga's private charter flights. Stockton said that's no problem.

"Back in AAU that was the life," she said. "We were all jammed into minivans and taking big road trips, so I'm used to that."

In four seasons at Gonzaga, the 5-foot-8 point guard compiled 459 assists — third all-time at the school. Her father holds the NBA record for assists (15,806) after 19 seasons with the Jazz. He retired in 2003.

Laura Stockton said she doesn't remember watching her father's NBA games as a kid but has fond memories of the family room at the Delta Center.

"I remember taking pregame naps with my dad," she said. "He would take a nap before his games and I would just hop in there, too."

The basketball lessons followed. "I've learned a ton," she said. "I think the most important thing is the competitive



ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

Former Gonzaga point guard Laura Stockton runs through a drill during a practice at the 2017 NCAA college basketball tournament in Seattle. The 23-year-old daughter of retired Utah Jazz great John Stockton spent the past year-plus rehabbing an ACL injury that ended her collegiate career and recently signed a professional contract to play in Germany's Bundesliga.

energy and edge and what that can bring to your game. All of my family is like that. We're super competitive and we'll do whatever it takes to win and fight to the end."

Her mother, Nada, who is a former volleyball player, is also "super tough and she doesn't get the credit that she probably deserves."

Stockton tore the ACL in her left knee during the West Coast Conference tournament in March 2019. She said she's 100% now, thanks in part to 1-on-1 games with older sister Lindsay, who like older brothers Michael and David played in Germany.

Herner coach Marek Piotrowski said he has had nothing but good experiences with Gonzaga players, including Sonja Greinacher and Haidee Palmer. In a statement, he said he expects Stockton to be a leader.

"He wants me to be a leader, control the pace, find players," Stockton said. "The facilitating kind of comes naturally to me, and that's obviously what the point guard is asked to do most of the time."

Gonzaga women's head coach Lisa Fortier said Piotrowski won't be disappointed. "Her club is going to be very happy with her," Fortier said in a statement. "She is a

competitor and a winner, and she always finds a way. I can't wait to follow her pro career."

Stockton is signed for 2020-21 — most European contracts are only one season. She said plans to arrive there in early September. Before the knee injury toward the end of her senior season, Stockton thought she might have a shot at the WNBA. It remains a goal.

"I'm always keeping my options open," she said. "That's obviously where the best of the best play, but right now I'm just excited to be going to Germany."

Huskers surrounded by college teams pushing on with football



NATI HARNIK/AP

Midland University tight end Austin Harris, right, chats with a teammate during practice in Fremont, Neb., on Tuesday. Midland University is among five small colleges in the state that are pushing forward with plans to play football this fall.

By ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

FREMONT, Neb. — The temperature was approaching 90 and a light breeze was blowing while Jeff Jamrog put his Midland University football team through its paces under the midday sun.

From the street running past Heudum Field, it looked like a typical August practice. A group of linemen hit a blocking sled, there was a skeleton passing drill and a no-tackle scrimmage.

Signs of normalcy vanish at the field entrance. Visitors are checked for fever. A hand sanitizer dispenser hangs on a wooden post a few steps from the gate. Everyone, unless participating in a drill, is supposed to wear a mask.

"It's annoying," linebacker Theo Blum said of masking up. "After the

first three or four days, most people got used to it. It is what it is. We wear it. Maybe we get the sun off our face a little bit and get nice tan lines. We do what we have to do to play."

While the majority of college football teams won't play this fall because of the coronavirus pandemic, Midland is among five in Nebraska pushing forward. They do not include the Nebraska Cornhuskers, who will be idle after the Big Ten decided to push back the season to the spring.

Disappointed Huskers fans will find no consolation in the fact Memorial Stadium will be surrounded by teams — albeit all from small colleges — attempting to carry on as usual. Of the 52 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics schools planning to play, 35 are in Nebraska and bordering states Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and South Dakota.

Jamrog and Midland athletic di-

rector Dave Gillespie each spent nearly two decades with the Huskers as players, coaches and administrators. Both said they feel terrible their alma mater isn't playing this fall and understand the outrage the Big Ten's decision has caused.

Midland's league, the Great Plains Athletic Conference, announced July 21 it would attempt a football season starting Sept. 12. The NAIA is allowing each team to play nine games, two fewer than usual, but playoffs won't be held until spring.

Gillespie said Midland is following GPAC protocols and local health department guidelines.

"There doesn't seem to be any consensus nationally on what the right thing to do is (as far as playing), and you can get a lot of different opinions on that," Gillespie said. "It's not completely safe, and we're never going to make it completely safe."

NHL

Scoreboard

Stanley Cup playoffs
CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS
(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)
At Toronto
(6) N.Y. Islanders 1, Philadelphia 0
N.Y. Islanders 4, Philadelphia 0
Wednesday: Philadelphia 4, N.Y. Islanders 3, OT
Thursday: Game 3
Saturday: Game 4 (AFN-Sports, 6 p.m.)
Saturday CET: 1 a.m. Sunday (JKT)
Sunday: Game 5
x-Wednesday, Sept. 2: Game 6
x-Thursday, Sept. 3: Game 7
(2) Tampa Bay 2, (4) Boston 1
Boston 3, Tampa Bay 2
Wednesday: Tampa Bay 2, Boston 1
Friday: Game 4 (AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m.)
Saturday CET: 8:30 a.m. Saturday (JKT)
Sunday: Game 5
x-Tuesday, Sept. 1: Game 6
x-Wednesday, Sept. 2: Game 7
WESTERN CONFERENCE
At Edmonton, Alberta
(1) Las Vegas 1, (5) Vancouver 1
Las Vegas 5, Vancouver 0
Vancouver 5, Las Vegas 2
Thursday: Game 3
Saturday: Game 4 (AFN-Sports, 2 a.m.)
Sunday CET: 9 a.m. Sunday (JKT)
Monday: Game 5
x-Tuesday, Sept. 1: Game 6
x-Thursday, Sept. 3: Game 7
(3) Dallas 2, (2) Colorado 1
Dallas 5, Colorado 2
Wednesday: Colorado 6, Dallas 4
Friday: Game 4 (AFN-Sports, 10:00 p.m.)
Saturday CET: 11:30 a.m. Saturday (JKT)
Sunday: Game 5
x-Tuesday, Sept. 1: Game 6
x-Wednesday, Sept. 2: Game 7

Wednesday
Flyers 4, Islanders 3 (OT)
N.Y. Islanders 0 1 2 0-3
Philadelphia 1 0 0 0 1-4
**First Period—1, Philadelphia, Hayes 2 (Konecny, Ercan), 1:57; 2, Philadelphia, Hayes 3 (Farabee), 9:43; 3, Philadelphia, Couturier (Sanheim, Giroux), 15:09.
 Second Period—4, N.Y. Islanders, Lee 5 (Leddy, Barzill), 11:45 (pp).
 Third Period—5, N.Y. Islanders, Beauvillier 7 (Bailey), 11:11; 6, N.Y. Islanders, Pageau 6 (Pelich), 17:51.**

Ays outlast Stars, get back in series

EDMONTON, Alberta — Nazem Kadri scored the go-ahead goal with 6:06 remaining in a wild third period as the Colorado Avalanche regrouped to beat the Dallas Stars 6-4 in Game 3 on Wednesday night.

Dallas has a 2-1 advantage in



Jason Franson, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP
 The Dallas Stars' Mattias Janmark, right, is checked by Colorado Avalanche right wing Pierre-Edouard Bellemare during Game 3 of their second-round playoff series Wednesday in Edmonton, Alberta.

Overtime—7, Philadelphia, Myers 3 (Couturier), 2:40.
Shots on Goal—N.Y. Islanders 7-11-15-1-34, Philadelphia 11-9-8-3-31.
Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Islanders 1 of 3; Philadelphia 0 of 2.
**Goalies—N.Y. Islanders, Groves 0-0-1 (21 shots-20 saves), N.Y. Islanders, Varlamov 8-0-0 (10-7), Philadelphia, Hart 7-0 (24-31).
 T—2:47.**

Lightning 7, Bruins 1
Tampa Bay 2 4 1-7
Boston 0 1 0-1
**First Period—1, Tampa Bay, Palat 2 (Kucherov, Sergachev), 12:46 (pp), 2, Tampa Bay, Gourde 3 (Germak, Coleman), 13:01.
 Second Period—3, Tampa Bay, Sergachev 1 (Kucherov, Point), 2:14 (pp), 4, Boston, Marchand 2 (Krug, Pastrnak), 4:56 (pp), 5, Tampa Bay, Killorn 3 (Palat, Kucherov), 8:35 (pp), 6, Tampa Bay, Point 6 (Killorn, Sergachev), 15:23; 7, Tampa Bay, Killorn 4 (Gourde, Bogosian), 18:01.
 Third Period—5, Tampa Bay, Kucherov 4 (Point), 3:58.
 Shots on Goal—Tampa Bay 7-18-6-31, Boston 8-8-2-24.
 Power-play opportunities—Tampa Bay 2 of 6; Boston 1 of 3.
 Goals—Tampa Bay, Vasilevsky 8-3-0 (24 shots-23 saves), Boston, Halak 4-21 (16-12).
 Tampa, Viadar 0-0-0 (15-12).
 T—2:27.**

Avalanche 6, Stars 4
Colorado 0 3 3-6
Dallas 1 1 1-2
**First Period—1, Dallas, Seguin 2 (Benn, Haskanen), 11:12.
 Second Period—2, Colorado, Zadorov 2 (Kadri), 1:00; 3, Colorado, Burakovsky 4 (Makar, Zadorov), 4:41; 4, Colorado, Landeskog 2 (MacKinnon, Makar), 11:00.
 Third Period—5, Dallas, Gurianov 7 (Perry, Hintz), 4:42; 6, Dallas, Comeau 2, 5:02; 7, Dallas, Benn 3 (Lindell), 10:47; 8, Colorado, Rantanen 5 (MacKinnon), 12:02; 9, Colorado, Kadri 7 (Connauton, March), 13:54; 10, Colorado, Bellemare 1 (Rantanen, Cole), 18:26 (er).
 Shots on Goal—Colorado 12-13-7-32, Dallas 10-11-16-37.
 Power-play opportunities—Colorado 0 of 10; Dallas 3 of 7.
 Goalies—Colorado, Francouz 2-3-0 (37 shots-26), Dallas, Khudobin 6-0 (31-26).
 T—2:39.**

the second-round series. Game 4 will be Friday.

Leading 3-1 in the third, Colorado saw the Stars rally for three straight goals, including one that caromed into the net off the leg of Jamie Benn to put Dallas up.

Mikko Rantanen and Kadri responded with goals 1:52 apart to give the Avalanche a 5-4 advantage. Kadri tipped in the winner off a pass from Kevin Connauton.

Pierre-Edouard Bellemare added a late empty-netter to seal the win. It was Bellemare's first playoff goal.

"It's a character win," Kadri said. "It would've been easy for us to get down on ourselves. We're pretty comfortable playing in every situation. Obviously, blowing the lead, it wasn't our best. But this is a game that could definitely give us some momentum and hopefully change the series."

Nikita Zadorov, Andre Burakovsky and Gabriel Landeskog scored for Colorado as part of a three-goal second period.

Pavel Francouz stopped 33 shots for the Avalanche.

"We stuck to it. We stuck to our game plan," said Cale Makar, who had three assists. "I know everybody believes in this group."

Nathan MacKinnon had two assists to give him at least a point in all 11 postseason games for Colorado.

Roundup

Flyers blow 3-goal lead, recover to top Islanders

Associated Press

TORONTO — Philippe Myers scored 2:40 into overtime to give the Philadelphia Flyers a 4-3 victory over the New York Islanders 4-3 on Wednesday, tying the second-round playoff series at a game apiece.

The Islanders overcame a 3-0 first-period deficit, with Jean-Gabriel Pageau getting the tying goal with 2:09 left in regulation.

Myers ended it quickly, connecting on a shot from the right point that glanced off the stick of the Islanders' Anders Lee on the way in.

"(Sean Couturier) gave me to the puck low to high there, and I saw that I had a lane," Myers said. "I was just trying to get it on net, and it went in. I'll take it. Good feeling."

Kevin Hayes scored twice in the first period for Philadelphia, Couturier also had a goal, and Carter Hart made 31 saves.

"We've been very good at protecting leads," Philadelphia coach Alain Vigneault said. "And tonight it got a little bit away from us, but we found a way to get it done in overtime."

Lee and Anthony Beauvillier also scored for the Islanders. Semyon Varlamov had seven saves before he was benched late in the first period. Thomas Greiss finished with 20 stops the rest of the way.

The Flyers scored three times in the first 15:09, chasing Varlamov. He had shut them out in Game 1 and built an Islanders'



FRANK GUNN, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Tampa Bay Lightning left wing Patrick Maroon, left, battles for the puck with Boston Bruins goaltender Jaroslav Halak on Wednesday during Game 3 of their Eastern Conference playoff series in Toronto.

playoff record shutout streak of 13:37 before Philadelphia broke through in the first period.

Hayes scored off a rush with a wristler from the left circle that rattled in off the post 1:57 into the net. Hayes got his second when he beat Varlamov with a sharp-angle shot from the left at 9:43.

Lightning 7, Bruins 1: At Toronto, Ondrej Palat, Mikhail Sergachev and Alex Killorn scored power-play goals to give Tampa Bay a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal series.

Killorn finished with two goals and an assist, Nikita Kucherov had a goal and three assists, and Sergachev and Brayden Point

each added a goal and two assists. Palat and Yannick Gourde had a goal and an assist each. Andrei Vasilevsky had 23 saves.

The Lightning ended an 0-for-16 drought in man-advantage situations that began in Game 1 of Tampa Bay's first-round victory over the Columbus Blue Jackets.

Brad Marchand had his fourth goal of the series for Boston, scoring on the power play at 4:56 of the second period. Jaroslav Halak was pulled after giving up four goals on 16 shots. He was replaced by 23-year-old Dan Vladar, who stopped 12 of the 15 shots he faced in his NHL playoff debut.



COLE BURSTON, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Philadelphia Flyers center Derek Grant, top, tries to get a shot past New York Islanders goaltender Semyon Varlamov, center, during Game 2 of their playoff series on Wednesday in Toronto.

MLB

Unusual season adds uncertainty to trade deadline

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The unusual circumstances surrounding the abbreviated baseball season are creating plenty of questions for teams looking to upgrade their rosters before Monday's trade deadline.

The expanded playoff format reduces the number of teams eager to write off the season and make moves aimed at the future. The lack of minor league games makes it tough for teams to decide which prospects to pursue from other organizations.

"This is going to be a really unique deadline, I think, in a variety of different ways," said David Stearns, Milwaukee Brewers president of baseball operations. "I don't know that anyone knows for sure how it's going to play out in terms of volume of transactions and what types of transactions."

A big question looming over the trade deadline is the uncertain status of the season itself. Why should a team risk its long-term future and trade top prospects to pursue a title when the pandemic could put the postseason at risk? Coronavirus outbreaks have already put the Miami Marlins and St. Louis Cardinals well behind schedule this season, though Texas Rangers general manager Jon Daniels senses there now is more optimism.

"You would have asked me that question two or three weeks ago, I would have thought it would have been a little quieter than I think it's going to be now," Daniels said. "And I think the biggest piece of that is, it really speaks to the confidence level across the industry that we're successfully playing out the season, and the confidence level that we're going to be able to crown a champion at the end of the postseason."

The unique nature of this postseason could reduce the number of teams interested in trading established players to build up their farm systems.

Eight teams from each league will make the playoffs this year. Heading into Wednesday's games, the National League had only six teams with winning records. The AL had seven teams above .500.

"There are very few teams right now that I think look in the mirror and say, 'We don't have a chance at making the playoffs,'" Stearns said. "So that is going to limit the type of conventional conversations that you can have."

There's another issue hindering trades of prospects. Without any minor league games, organizations will have a tough time getting an accurate measure of prospects from outside their own

systems.

Pittsburgh Pirates general manager Ben Cherington noted that MLB does have a data sharing plan among teams that gives teams some access to what prospects at other organizations are doing at alternate training sites.

"It's a little bit different from team to team just because every team's player group is a little bit different and every team's setup is a little bit different," Cherington said. "It does help us confirm — you can confirm quite a bit through the data in terms of, for a pitcher, velocity and spin and things like that compared to what we've seen in the past. ... Likewise for other teams, other teams are getting that on our guys, too."

Here's a rundown of some established players on struggling teams who could be mentioned in trade talks.

Pittsburgh Pirates P Keone Kela: Contenders often are looking for relief help. Kela has a solid track record after posting a 2.12 ERA last year and recording 24 saves in 2018. Kela left the Pirates' game Friday with forearm tightness, which could scare off some suitors.

Texas Rangers P Lance Lynn: Lynn's 4-0 record and 1.59 ERA make him one of baseball's best pitchers this season. He'd be the top available starter if Texas chooses to shop him. Lynn remains under contract through 2021, which may entice the Rangers to keep him unless someone makes a huge offer.

Boston Red Sox DH J.D. Martinez: Boston already signed relievers Brandon Workman and Heath Hembree to Philadelphia last week, but more moves could be on the way. Martinez has struggled so far this season but posted an OPS over .900 every year from 2016 to 2019.

Kansas City Royals P Trevor Rosenthal: Rosenthal's another guy who could appeal to teams looking to boost their bullpens. The former St. Louis Cardinals closer signed a minor-league deal with Kansas City in December and has posted seven saves and a 1.46 ERA.

Detroit Tigers 2B Jonathan Schoop: He's on a one-year deal and could interest any teams looking for a power-hitting infielder. Schoop hit over 20 homers every year from 2016 to 2019. He hit a grand slam Tuesday as his OPS improved to .833.

Seattle Mariners P Taijuan Walker: After injuries limited him to a total of four games in 2018-19, Walker has bounced back and emerged as a reliable starter. He's on a one-year deal and could help any team looking to boost its rotation.



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Tampa Bay Rays relief pitcher Diego Castillo, right, celebrates with catcher Michael Perez after closing out the Baltimore Orioles in a 4-3 win Wednesday. Perez hit the go-ahead homer in the eighth inning.

Roundup

Rays squeeze past Orioles with rare homer by Perez

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Michael Perez hit a go-ahead solo homer in the eighth inning and the AL East-leading Tampa Bay Rays beat the Baltimore Orioles 4-3 on Wednesday night.

Perez homered to center off Mychal Givens (0-1). It was his first long ball since Aug. 10, 2018.

Ryan Sherriff (1-0) worked a perfect eighth in his first big league game since May 7, 2018, due to Tommy John surgery.

Diego Castillo pitched the ninth to get his first save. Ten Tampa Bay relievers have a save this season.

Brandon Lowe hit his 10th homer for the Rays, who have won nine of 11.

The Orioles are 8-3 on the road after losing the first two games of the series. Their only other defeat away from home came opening day at Boston.

Blue Jays 9, Red Sox 1: Rowdy Tellez drove in four runs with two homers and a double, and host Toronto beat Boston.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit a pair of doubles, including a three-run bouncer down the left-field line that kept a four-run seventh inning. Randal Grichuk also homered and drove in two runs.

Five Toronto pitchers combined to allow three hits, struck out seven and walked three.

Mets 5, Marlins 4: Wilson Ramos singled home the go-ahead run in the eighth inning after hobbled Mets closer Edwin Diaz and the bullpen blew another lead provided by Jacob deGrom, and host New York beat Miami.

DeGrom set the Mets up nicely by matching a career high with 14 strikeouts and handing off a 4-

1 lead to begin the eighth inning, but the Marlins loaded the bases with one out against Justin Wilson. DeGrom set a career high with his 10th consecutive start allowing two or fewer runs.

Indians 6, Twins 3: Mike Clevinger pitched effectively in his first start since breaking COVID-19 protocols and Tyler Naquin doubled home the go-ahead run in a three-run eighth inning as host Cleveland beat Minnesota to tighten the AL Central.

Clevinger gave up a homer to Max Kepler on his third pitch, but settled in and held the Twins to two runs in six innings in his first start since Aug. 5.

Tigers 7, Cubs 6: Niko Goodrum hit a two-run double to cap his team's five-run sixth inning, and host Detroit held on to beat Chicago.

Detroit finished with a season-high 18 hits. Jonathan Schoop, Miguel Cabrera, Cameron Maybin and Austin Romine had three each.

Phillies 3, Nationals 2: Aaron Nola threw seven strong innings, and visiting Philadelphia took advantage of Washington's sloppy outfield defense to rally for a victory.

Bryce Harper delivered the go-ahead RBI single in the seventh to help the Phillies win their third in a row. The defending World Series champion Nationals have dropped three consecutive games to drop to a season-high six games under .500.

Braves 5-2, Yankees 1-1: Freddie Freeman hit a two-run homer in the sixth inning off Chad Green and host Atlanta, led by another strong start from Max Fried, rallied to beat New York to

sweep a doubleheader.

The Yankees have lost five straight and saw outfielder Aaron Judge aggravate his strained right calf. The second game of the twinbill was Judge's first since being activated from the injured list, and he left in the middle of the sixth inning.

In the opener, Ian Anderson dazzled in his big league debut holding the Yankees hitting into the sixth inning and ending Gerrit Cole's 20-game winning streak.

Cardinals 6, Royals 5: Kolten Wong drew a bases-loaded walk to cap off a four-run rally in the ninth inning that lifted host St. Louis over Kansas City.

Tyler O'Neill tied the game at 5 with a two-out, two-run single with the bases loaded off the glove of third baseman Maikel Franco.

White Sox 10, Pirates 3: Jose Abreu homered, Dallas Keuchel pitched six dominant innings, and surging Chicago pounded visiting Pittsburgh to win for the ninth time in 10 games.

Athletics 3, Rangers 1: Mike Fiers extended his mastery over Texas, allowing only an unearned run in six innings to lead visiting Oakland.

Fiers (4-1) struck out seven and scattered three hits. He is 6-0 with a 3.18 ERA in his last nine starts against the Rangers.

Rockies 9, Diamondbacks 7: Charlie Blackmon hit a grand slam to help host Colorado build a big lead and hold on during a tense ninth inning to beat Arizona.

Blackmon's second career slam made it 8-1 in the top of the eighth. After the Diamondbacks scored twice in the bottom half of the inning, they rallied for four runs in the ninth.

SPORTS PROTESTS

Mets' Smith makes plea to athletes

By JAKE SEINER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mets slugger Dominic Smith doesn't care if white teammates join him in kneeling for the national anthem. Doesn't need them to cut a check to his charity, either.

"If you give your time, that's the only way we can change," he said.

Smith spoke through tears Wednesday night after deciding for the first time to protest during "The Star-Spangled Banner" before New York played the Miami Marlins. It was a last-minute decision, spurred by reports he'd seen moments earlier about athletes boycotting games across the country.

While the Mets were at Citi Field, three Major League Baseball games were postponed, along with games in the NBA, Major League Soccer and the WNBA. The athlete-driven protests are a reaction to the shooting by police in Kenosha, Wis., on Sunday of Jacob Blake, a Black man, apparently in the back while three of his children looked on.

By the time Smith recognized the gravity of actions being taken by other professional athletes, the Mets and Marlins were deep into their warmups, first pitch moments away.

"To kind of see those things happen very fast, it wasn't really a thought over here," Smith said. "But that's why I decided to take a knee tonight."

"I've been very emotional. Just to kind of see this continuously happen, I mean, it was a long day for me. Kind of wasn't there mentally."

"I think the most difficult part is to see people still don't care. For this to just continuously happen, it just shows the hate in people's heart. That just sucks, you know? Black men in America, it's not easy. Like I said, I just wasn't there today, but I'll bounce back, I'll be fine."

Smith is a 25-year-old Black man from Los Angeles who was a first-round draft pick by the Mets after participating in MLB's Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) youth program. Following the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and the shooting of Blake and others, Smith has been vocal about the injustices he's faced, both as a citizen and in a predominantly white sport.

"His world is much different than mine," teammate Michael Conforto said Wednesday. "So it's definitely helped me to listen and understand where he's coming from and where a ton of people are coming from here."



MATT SLOCUM/AP

The New York Mets' Dominic Smith decided to take a knee for the first time Wednesday during the national anthem.

Groundskeepers at Oracle Park in San Francisco cover the pitcher's mound and work on the infield after Wednesday's game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Giants was postponed.

BEN MARINO/AP



Three MLB games called off

Players decide not to play in wake of Blake shooting

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Three Major League Baseball games were postponed Wednesday as players across the sports

landscape drove the decisions in the wake of the weekend shooting by police of Jacob Blake, a Black man, in Wisconsin.

Games between the Cincinnati Reds and Brewers in Milwaukee, Seattle Mariners and Padres in San Diego and the Los Angeles Dodgers and Giants in San Francisco were called off hours before they were set to begin.

"There are serious issues in this country," Seattle's Dee Gordon tweeted. "For me, and for many of my teammates, the injustices, violence, death and systemic racism is deeply personal. This is impacting not only my community, but very directly my family and friends. Our team voted unanimously not to play tonight."

Other MLB games had finished, were in progress or just about to start as the announcements were made. Outfielders Jason Heyward of the Cubs and Matt Kemp of the Rockies, sat out while their teams played.

Kemp, who is Black, announced on social media he would skip Colorado's game in Arizona "in protest of the injustices my people continue to suffer."

All three postponed games were to be made up as doubleheaders Thursday. There was the possibility, too, that other games around the majors could be affected.

The baseball postponements came after the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks didn't come out on the floor for Game 5 of their first-round playoff series with the Orlando Magic on Wednesday afternoon. NBA officials later announced that all three of the day's scheduled playoff games had been postponed.

Cleveland's three major teams unite for change

CLEVELAND — Cleveland's three major professional sports franchises — the Browns, Cavaliers and Indians — are teaming up to fight social injustice.

The move comes one day after the NBA postponed playoff games, and other leagues followed suit, amid a player-led boycott to protest the shooting of a Black man by police in Wisconsin.

Cleveland's teams announced an alliance to "develop a sustainable and direct strategy to address social justice facing the city and all Northeast Ohio communities."

Kevin Clayton, vice president of diversity, inclusion and engagement for the Cavaliers, hopes the partnership and one-of-a-kind program triggers similar efforts elsewhere. "This collaboration is unique in all of sports," he said. "Other cities are going to model after this."

The three-team union will focus on strengthening the relationships between law enforcement and citizens, promote nonpartisan voting activities and provide educational opportunities in the area.

The key leaders for the effort include: Browns general manager Andrew Berry and first-year coach Kevin Stefanski; Cavs GM Koby Altman and coach J.B. Bickerstaff; and Indians president of baseball operations Chris Antonetti, GM Mike Chernoff and manager Terry Francona.

— Tom Withers, Associated Press

of Jacob Blake, we respect the decisions of a number of players not to play tonight. Major League Baseball remains united for change in our society and we will be allies in the fight to end racism and injustice," MLB said in a statement.

Said players' union head Tony Clark: "At this critical time, players have been deeply affected by the recent events in Wisconsin and by similar events in other parts of the country. We are proud of the stand that our players have taken, and we remain committed to supporting their efforts to effect change in MLB communities and beyond."

Brewers star Christian Yelich said he exchanged tears with Bucks guard Pat Connaughton to let him know they wouldn't be playing at Miller Park and that "we wanted to be united with them in what they started."

Brewers player representative Brent Suter said he informed Cincinnati's Mike Moustakas and pitcher Wade Miley — both former Brewers — of the decision.

"They just said flat out, 'We support you guys no matter what. Whatever you decide to do, we're all in favor. We want to follow your lead,'" Suter said. "So that was a great comfort for us going to the meeting."

Dodgers star Mookie Betts, who is Black, told his teammates he was sitting out and they backed him.

"For me, I think no matter what, I wasn't going to play tonight," Betts said. "I have to use my platform to at least get the ball rolling."

Once Betts made his decision, the Dodgers stood by him, Clayton Kershaw said.

"More than anything as a teammate of Mookie's, as a member of this team ... as a white player on this team is how do we show support? What's something tangible that we can do to help our Black brothers on this team?" Kershaw said.

"Given the pain in the communities of Wisconsin and beyond following the shoot-

SPORTS PROTESTS

NFL practices canceled in response to Blake shooting

By DENNIS WASZAK JR.
Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. — Empty practice fields made for loud and powerful statements at facilities across the NFL.

The Arizona Cardinals, Chicago Bears, Denver Broncos, Green Bay Packers, Indianapolis Colts, New York Jets, Tennessee Titans and Washington Football Team all chose to not practice Thursday in response to the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, in Wisconsin.

"Instead, the team will use the day to discuss and work toward making a lasting social impact and inspiring change in our communities," the Colts said in a statement posted on Twitter.

Blake, 29, was shot by police, apparently in the back, on Sunday in Kenosha as he leaned into his SUV, three of his children seated inside. The shooting was captured on cellphone video and ignited new protests in the U.S. three months after the death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer touched off a nationwide reckoning over racial injustice.

The Detroit Lions canceled their practice Tuesday, protest-



ADAM HUNGER/AP

New York Jets personnel clear practice equipment at the team's training camp in Florham Park, N.J., Thursday. The Jets canceled their practice in an apparent response to the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, in Wisconsin. The Jets provided no immediate details on their decision to not practice.

ing the incident involving Blake, and racial injustice. They were on the field Thursday, but the impact of their actions was clear across the rest of the league.

"I think that if there's any chance that we got everybody to maybe stop and think for a minute, that's really great," Lions coach Matt Patricia said Thurs-

day during a video call. "I think we have a simple saying as 'Just listen.' Right now, that's all we want people to really do is listen. We understand that this isn't

a sprint, it's not a race; it's a marathon."

On Wednesday night, the Washington Football Team announced it would not hold its practice at its home stadium on Thursday afternoon. It was supposed to be broadcast live on local radio and televised at night.

"In place of our practice at FedEx Field, the players, coaches and football staff will meet as a football family and we'll continue our open dialogue on the issues of racism and social injustice in our country," coach Ron Rivera said in the statement.

Washington, which recently dropped its longtime name of Redskins, last week hired Jason Wright as the first Black team president in NFL history.

The Packers also announced Thursday they would not hold their scheduled practice.

Jets coach Adam Gase and a few players said Wednesday they spoke about the shooting of Blake and racial injustice on Tuesday night.

Wide receiver Jamison Crowder and safety Bradley McDougald said the Jets were still discussing how they would handle the situation as a team.

NBA scoreboard

Playoffs

At Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

FIRST ROUND

Best-of-seven; if necessary

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Milwaukee 3, Orlando 1

Orlando 123, Milwaukee 110

Milwaukee 111, Orlando 96

Milwaukee 121, Orlando 107

Milwaukee 121, Orlando 106

Wednesday: Game 5, p.p.d.

Boston 110, Philadelphia 106

x-Friday: Game 6

x-Sunday: Game 7

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Toronto 134, Brooklyn 110

Toronto 104, Brooklyn 99

Toronto 117, Brooklyn 92

Toronto 150, Brooklyn 123

Boston 4, Philadelphia 0

Boston 109, Philadelphia 101

Boston 126, Philadelphia 101

Boston 102, Philadelphia 94

Boston 110, Philadelphia 106

Miami 4, Indiana 0

Miami 113, Indiana 100

Miami 109, Indiana 100

Miami 124, Indiana 115

Miami 129, Indiana 97

WESTERN CONFERENCE

L.A. Lakers 3, Dallas 2

Portland 100, L.A. Lakers 93

L.A. Lakers 111, Portland 88

L.A. Lakers 116, Portland 108

L.A. Lakers 135, Portland 115

Wednesday: Game 5, p.p.d.

x-Friday: Game 6

x-Saturday: Game 7

L.A. Clippers 3, Dallas 2

L.A. Clippers 118, Dallas 110

Dallas 135, L.A. Clippers 114

L.A. Clippers 130, Dallas 122

L.A. Clippers 154, Dallas 111

Wednesday: Game 5, p.p.d.

x-Friday: Game 6

x-Saturday: Game 7

CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS

(Best-of-seven; if necessary)

Eastern Conference vs. Boston

Thursday: Game 1

Friday: Game 2

Monday, Aug. 31: Game 3

Wednesday, Sept. 2: Game 4

Friday, Sept. 4: Game 5

x-Sunday, Sept. 6: Game 6

x-Tuesday, Sept. 8: Game 7

FROM BACK PAGE

later to read a statement demanding action from lawmakers and encouraging voting by citizens.

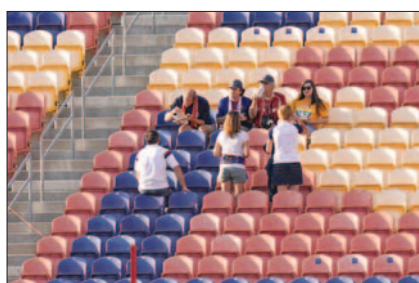
They changed the narrative across the entire sports landscape, putting the focus squarely on social justice reform in protest of the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, by police in Kenosha, Wis., while three of his children in his car looked on.

Major League Baseball games between the Cincinnati Reds and Brewers in Milwaukee, Seattle Mariners and Padres in San Diego and the Los Angeles Dodgers and Giants in San Francisco were called off hours before they were set to begin, and players and teams from the WNBA, MLS and tennis sat out their competitions Wednesday night.

The Stanley Cup playoffs were played as scheduled Wednesday with two games preceded by moments of reflection, but NHL players are discussing options to protest, according to a person with knowledge of those talks. Two prominent Black NHL players expressed frustration that the predominantly white league went ahead.

The U.S. Tennis Association, along with the ATP and WTA Tours, announced play would be paused after two-time Grand Slam women's champion Naomi Osaka had already said she wouldn't play her semifinal match at the U.S. Open and Southern.

"I don't expect anything drastic to happen with me not playing, but if I can get a conversation started in a majority white sport I consid-



RIK BOWNER/AP

A few fans remain in the stands after the scheduled MLS game between Real Salt Lake and Los Angeles FC was postponed Wednesday, in Sandy, Utah. Major League Soccer players boycotted five games Wednesday night in a collective statement against racial injustice following the police shooting of Jacob Blake Sunday night.

er that a step in the right direction," Osaka tweeted. "Watching the continued genocide of Black people at the hand of the police is honestly making me sick to my stomach."

The Bucks' decision to sit out will not lead to the end of the league's postseason, according to people with knowledge of the situation.

NBA players from the 13 teams still remaining at the NBA's bubble at Disney World met Wednesday evening and Thursday morning to discuss whether to resume play or to cancel the balance of the playoffs, which are set to run through mid-October. After an 11 a.m. players meeting,

which ran concurrently with an emergency meeting of the NBA's Board of Governors, the players decided to continue playing.

Before coming to Disney, many NBA players wrestled for weeks about whether it was even right to play, fearing that a return to games would take attention off the deaths of, among others, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd in recent months.

They ultimately decided coming to the bubble and playing televised games would give them the largest platform, though now at least some are wondering if that's still true. Toronto coach Nick Nurse said he's heard some players on his team say they were

thinking about going home.

Clippers coach Doc Rivers hopes they won't.

His players considered boycotting a playoff game in 2014 after audio tapes featuring former owner Donald Sterling were revealed. He said this time is different because it's the whole league, rather than one team, weighing the decision.

"I think every team has to decide what they want to do and honestly I hope everyone plays," Rivers said. "I just think showing the excellence in doing your job, there's nothing wrong with that, but also fighting for what's right is important as well."

It certainly is for the Bucks, who play about 40 miles from Kenosha. Sterling Brown, one of the players to read the statement, has a federal lawsuit pending against the city of Milwaukee alleging he was targeted because he was Black and that his civil rights were violated in January 2018 when officers used a stun gun on him after a parking violation.

And it is for the Raptors, whose team president, Masai Ujiri, had an altercation with an Oracle Arena security guard after Game 6 of last year's NBA Finals. A video of it released recently appears to show an Alameda County sheriff's deputy initially showing Ujiri, who is Black, twice.

"Boycotting the game has come up for them and again, as a way to try to demand a little more action and I think that's really what they don't want," Nurse said. "I think that's what I can sense from the discussion."

SPORTS

BLACK LIVES MATTER



Sign of the times

Demanding action after Blake shooting, athletes force play stoppage

By **BRIAN MAHONEY**
Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla.

NBA players didn't come to Disney solely for a restart. They wanted social reform. The Milwaukee Bucks showed how far they're willing to go to get it by opting not to play in their playoff game Wednesday. Two more games were postponed later in the day, the second time this season NBA basketball came to an immediate halt.

Other sports followed, just as they did in March when the season was suspended four months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

This time, the players will decide how long the stoppage lasts.

"The biggest thing that we all understand is if we're not playing, what are we doing? What are we doing to show and to help what's going on outside this bubble?" Boston Celtics forward Grant Williams said, shortly before the Bucks were scheduled to tip off their game against the Orlando Magic.

Instead, the Bucks players remained in the locker room, finally emerging hours

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San Jose Earthquakes players depart after MLS players boycotted five games Wednesday. The players' action came after all three NBA playoff games were called off in protest over the police shooting of Jacob Blake on Sunday night.

AP photos

2nd-year players with breakout potential » NFL, Page 48

