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EUROPE
& PACIFIC
WEEKEND
EDITION

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Unemployment claims approach 41 million in US amid reopenings

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Roughly 2.1 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week, a sign that companies are still slashing jobs in the face of a deep recession even as more businesses reopen and rehire some laid-off employees.

About 41 million people have applied for aid since the virus outbreak intensified in March, although not all of them are still unemployed. The Labor Department's report Thursday includes a count of all the people now receiving unemployment aid: 21 million. That is a rough measure of the number of unemployed Americans.

The national jobless rate was 14.7% in April, the highest since the Great Depression, and many economists expect it near 20% in May.

States are gradually restarting their economies by letting some businesses — from gyms, retail shops and restaurants to hair and nail salons — reopen with restrictions. As some of these employers, including automakers, have recalled a portion of their laid-off employees, the number of people receiving unemployment benefits has fallen.

SEE CLAIMS ON PAGE 8



OMAR RUBI/U.S. Navy

Army Sgt. Isaac Rood, assigned to the 44th Medical Brigade, gives COVID-19 swab testing instructions to airmen outside the Javits Center in New York City on May 26. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the DOD might alter strategies for subsequent outbreaks.

Military virus aid could look different if 2nd wave hits

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Mark Esper said that as the U.S. military prepares for another potential wave of the coronavirus, it could do things a bit differently, providing more targeted aid for cities and states and possibly shorter quarantine times for troops.

Speaking as he flew back from a trip to the Marine Corps recruit base at Parris Island, S.C., Esper said the Pentagon is look-

ing at a variety of plans. But he said U.S. forces might not be deployed the same way if or when the virus surges in a second large wave or even, more likely, a series of smaller bursts.

He also said that the military has started doing antibody tests on service members who had COVID-19 and recovered, in order to determine if their plasma can be used in others to prevent or treat the virus.

Esper said he spoke with military service

SEE AID ON PAGE 8

RELATED

Troops could get hazard pay, awards to recognize service during pandemic
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South Korea restores anti-coronavirus measures in Seoul amid new outbreaks
Page 9

Online: Get the latest news on the virus
[stripes.com/coronavirus](#)



KETIN SRANOC/AP

Help-wanted signs are posted in front of a Burger King on May 21 in Harmony, Pa.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Germany	\$2.223	\$2.626	\$2.881	\$2.653	Azores	--	--	\$2.972
Change in price	+8.2 cents	+7.7 cents	+6.5 cents	+0.4 cents	Change in price	--	--	-1.6 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.223	\$3.430	\$3.355	Belgium	--	\$2.834	\$2.190
Change in price	--	+6.8 cents	+6.9 cents	+3.5 cents	Change in price	--	No change	No change
U.K.	--	\$2.536	\$2.791	\$2.563	Turkey	--	--	\$2.682
Change in price	--	+7.7 cents	+6.5 cents	+0.4 cents	Change in price	--	--	+6.5 cents

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Japan	--	\$2.669	--	\$2.439	South Korea	\$2.039	--	\$2.699
Change in price	--	+6.0 cents	--	No change	Change in price	+8.0 cents	--	+6.0 cents
Okinawa	\$2.009	--	--	\$2.439	Guam	\$2.019**	\$2.429	\$2.679
Change in price	+8.0 cents	--	--	No change	Change in price	+8.0 cents	+8.0 cents	+6.0 cents

* Diesel EFF ** Midgrade
For the week of May 29 - June 4

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Switzerland (Franc)		0.9681
Euro costs (May 29)	\$1.08	Thailand (Baht)		31.85
Dollar buys (May 29)	60.8842	Turkey (Lira)		6.8180
British pound (May 29)	\$1.20	(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.)		
Japanese yen (May 29)	105.00			
South Korean won (May 29)	1,206.00			
Commercial rates				
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3775			
British pound	\$1.2285			
Canada (Dollar)	1.3773			
China (Yuan)	7.1464			
Denmark (Krone)	6.7533			
Egypt (Pound)	15.8391			
Euro	\$1.1038/0.9060			
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.528			
Hungary (Forint)	316.36			
Israel (Shekel)	3.5126			
Japan (Yen)	107.74			
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3085			
Norway (Krone)	9.8371			
Philippines (Peso)	50.55			
Poland (Zloty)	4.02			
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7547			
Singapore (Dollar)	1.4174			
South Korea (Won)	1,235.95			

INTEREST RATES	
Discount rate	3.25
Prime rate	2.25
Available funds market rate	0.95
3-month T-bill	4.14
30-year bond	1.40

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.05
3-month bill	0.14
30-year bond	1.43

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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MILITARY

Kansas soldier prevents shooting spree



JOHN RICHMEIER, LEAVENWORTH TIMES/AP

Authorities gather on Centennial Bridge after a shooting Wednesday near Leavenworth, Kan. A Fort Leavenworth soldier is being credited with saving lives after he stopped a person who was randomly shooting on the bridge that connects Kansas and Missouri.

From wire reports

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — A Fort Leavenworth, Kan., soldier stopped a shooting spree when he rammed his vehicle into a gunman who had just wounded another soldier Wednesday, police said.

One soldier was seriously injured in the shooting on Centennial Bridge in Leavenworth, Kan., and the suspect was taken into custody after another soldier intervened, Leavenworth Police Chief Pat Kitchens said.

Leavenworth police had been called to investigate a report of a person firing shots on the bridge. It's unclear what led to the suspect seemingly firing shots at random on the bridge, Kitchens told reporters, but one person was struck — an active-duty soldier who appeared to be an unintended target.

Kitchens said another soldier from Fort Leavenworth was waiting in traffic when he witnessed the shooting. The soldier intervened, he said, "by striking the shooter with his vehicle."

Kitchens said the soldier's actions brought an end to the shooting, "likely saving countless lives."

Officers initially believed they were responding to a road rage incident on the bridge that connects Kansas and Missouri not far from Fort Leaven-

worth, Kitchens said. Instead, they discovered that a man had been using multiple weapons to fire randomly at vehicles.

The suspect was trapped under a car, Kitchens said.

The soldier who was shot was taken to a hospital, and was in serious but stable condition Wednesday afternoon.

The suspect was also taken to a hospital with serious injuries from the crash.

Two additional vehicles were struck by gunfire, Kitchens said, but no other injuries were reported.

Kitchens said police have not yet determined why the suspect, said to be a Platte County, Mo., resident, began firing shots on the bridge, but police were looking into the person's history within the community.

The Leavenworth County Sheriff's Office, the Platte County Sheriff's Office, the Kansas Highway Patrol and other agencies assisted at the scene.

"What was a very, very dangerous situation fortunately was ended quite quickly," Kitchens said. "Again, very likely countless lives were saved by the person who intervened."

The Kansas City (Mo.) Star and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Marine infantry recruit, 18, drops 186 pounds to make it to boot camp

By IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

Gabriel Ramirez spent his childhood dreaming of being a Marine, but that dream seemed unattainable as a 365-pound teen nicknamed "Meatball."

This week, Ramirez, 18, was on his way to boot camp, 186 pounds lighter.

At the end of Ramirez's sophomore year at Rancho Buena Vista High School in California, Marine recruiter Staff Sgt. Anna Rodrigues spoke to his class and later asked him about his interests.

"The kids I talk to, one thing I look for is heart," Rodrigues said in a phone interview Wednesday. "I am looking for someone that won't quit and will accept the challenge."

The talk made a big impres-

sion, Ramirez, of Oceanside, Calif., said in a service statement prior to leaving for Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

"She looked at me, not at my weight," Ramirez said in the statement. "She told me, 'It's all up to you if you want it,' and from there I got her card."

In his junior year, Ramirez sometimes doubted he could both get in shape and improve his test scores enough to get into the service. But after he saw Rodrigues again, he visited Recruiting Substation Oceanside and worked out with the Marines there.

"I did my first workout with them and it killed me," Ramirez said in the statement. "I ran a 26-minute mile and a half. I couldn't do any pullups and I couldn't even do 20 crunches. But they always encouraged me, motivated me

and pushed me."

Ramirez continued for a while, but at one point the obstacles in his life got to be too much, he said in the statement.

He put all the weight he lost back on and stopped coming to work out.

Rodrigues called and asked what had happened, at which point Ramirez said he asked her why she was wasting her time with him.

"There were a lot of people that put Gabriel down, and I would tell him you can be upset about it or you can show them you won't be the person they think you are," Rodrigues said.

Rodrigues kept motivating him, at times texting or calling daily. Ramirez lost the weight, graduating from high school last year when he was 17 and has enlisted



BERNADETTE PLOUFFE/U.S. Marine Corps

Gabriel Ramirez lost 186 pounds on his way to becoming a Marine recruit.

for an infantry job, Rodrigues said.

"She told me to stop doubting myself and just put my mind to what I want to accomplish,"

Ramirez said. "I was the only one that could make this happen for me. No one could do it for me."

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Air Force resumes large-scale drills with exercise over Europe

By BRIAN FERGUSON
Stars and Stripes

Air Force fighter jets and aerial tankers from across Europe converged over the North Sea for a quickly arranged exercise that simulated a large-scale attack by enemy forces.

The one-day drill Wednesday was hosted by the U.S. Air Force's 48th Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath in England. It involved 16 allied aircraft trying to intercept 18 adversaries before they reached the English coastline.

It was the first large-force exercise conducted by Air Force units in Europe since

the spread of the coronavirus forced cancellations to several planned activities, service officials said.

Complex training events are usually planned months in advance and require considerable support. But U.S. Air Forces in Europe units, and in particular their younger pilots, have started planning events quickly using teleconferencing and other remote means, participants said.

They began planning about 45 days ago and much of the work was finalized Tuesday, a day before the exercise began.

"When I was making the training plan this spring, it was starting to look like we were going to miss out on a lot of training,

but that hasn't been the case at all," said Maj. Sean Foote, chief of weapons and tactics for the 48th Fighter Squadron, based at Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany. "Obviously there are going to be some challenges because we had to reduce some of the flying initially, but it was never to the point where it had an impact on our operations."

Units from RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall, as well as the 52nd Fighter Wing from Spangdahlem, the 31st Wing from Aviano Air Base, Italy, and NATO at Gellenkirchen Air Base, Germany, participated in the exercise.

The 35 aircraft included F-16 Falcons,

F-15 Eagles, KC-135 Stratotankers and a NATO Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS jet.

The opposition in the scenario had the same capabilities of real-world potential adversaries, officials said.

"If it was easy and we win every time, then the training's not going to be good for anybody," Foote said, adding that Spangdahlem will host a similar exercise in June.

"Our future goal is to eventually get (other) NATO partners involved as well," he said.

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MILITARY



THEON GOBOLD/Stars and Stripes

An RQ-4 Global Hawk is displayed at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo in September.

Global Hawk surveillance drones will return to Tokyo

By SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Air Force is sending unmanned RQ-4 Global Hawks to Tokyo again this summer to take advantage of favorable weather conditions, officials said Thursday as U.S. forces prepare for typhoon season in the Far East.

Global Hawks routinely relocate from Guam to Japan to avoid typhoons that batter the island and the nearby Northern Marianas, which include Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

On average, the northwest Pacific, including Guam, sees 32 numbered tropical cyclones per season, some as weak as a tropical depression and some equal to Category 5 hurricanes in the United States. Last year, there were 29 named storms, 17 of them typhoon-strength and four of them classified as super typhoons in the northwest Pacific.

In addition to supporting intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance requirements, the Global Hawk has provided imagery during humanitarian-assistance and disaster-relief operations, such as Operation

Tomodachi, the U.S. military response to the earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in March 2011.

"This shift of aircraft to Yokota Air Base ensures persistent reconnaissance in a region where challenges to a free and open Indo-Pacific have increased," 374th Airlift Wing spokesman 1st Lt. Stuart Thrift said in an email Thursday.

The Air Force would not discuss the Global Hawk's arrival date at Yokota or the number of people deploying with them.

The North Kanto Defense Bureau, a local branch of Japan's Ministry of Defense, however, stated on its website Monday that six Global Hawks and about 80 personnel will be deployed there from the end of this month to sometime around October.

"Based on the current security environment, the need for [Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance] activities in this area continues to be high," the website stated. "They will be temporarily deployed to Yokota Air Base this year after considering the way to secure the most effective operation of Global Hawks."

Yokota Gov. Yuriko Koike and

six leaders of cities and a town near Yokota submitted letters Tuesday to Japanese defense officials and 374th Airlift Wing Commander Col. Otis Jones urging safety precautions and efforts to minimize noise from the drones.

Last summer, four Global Hawks supported by about 20 service members and 100 civilians from the Guam-based 319th Reconnaissance Wing flew out of Yokota from August to October.

In previous years, Guam's Global Hawk detachment has flown out of Misawa Air Base on the northern tip of Japan's Honshu island. The drones moved to Yokota in 2017 because of runway construction at Misawa, which hosted the aircraft again in 2018.

The Northrop Grumman-built drones, which can cost \$100 million depending on configuration, are thought to be capable of operating at an altitude of 60,000 feet, high above civilian air traffic, which normally does not surpass 40,000 feet. They can stay aloft for 34 hours and have a range of 14,000 miles.

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Airmen won't need their new uniforms until September 1

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force has delayed its switch to new color schemes for uniform boots, undergarments and flag patches until September, citing "unnecessary stress" on its service members due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Airmen, including Space Force service members, by Sept. 1 must wear coyote brown boots, T-shirts and spice brown U.S. flag patches with their two-piece flight uniforms and utility uniforms in the operational camouflage pattern, better known as OCPs, according to a notice on the Air Force website. The original deadline was June 1.

Airmen who must wear black combat boots in industrial areas are exempt from wearing the new boots.

Other changes are delayed to Sept. 1. All officers in utilities must wear spice-brown rank insignia, except first lieutenants and lieutenant colonels, who will wear black threaded insignia.

Only coyote-brown T-shirts and socks of green or coyote brown and issued by the Defense Log-

istics Agency may be worn with OCPs starting Sept. 1.

Also, the spice-brown flag patch will be mandatory; infrared flag patches will not be authorized. Thermal undergarments must also be coyote brown.

On Sept. 1, airmen wearing the new two-piece flight suit must have all mandatory badges in place, spice-brown U.S. cloth flags, green or coyote-brown socks and coyote-brown boots and thermal undergarments.

The Air Force began transitioning to the Army's utility uniform camouflage pattern in October 2018. It replaced the airman battle uniform, a gray, blue and green tiger-stripe pattern.

Airmen may wear the battle uniform until April 1, 2021, but many have already switched to the new pattern.

A new set of coyote-brown boots on the exchange website ranges in price from \$89 to \$264, while T-shirts and socks can be had from Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support for about \$5 and \$2, respectively.

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DANIEL TER HAAR/U.S. Air Force

The Operational Camouflage Pattern uniform features Air Force specific spice brown name tapes.

B-1B Lancers train with Japanese fighter jets between Korea and Japan

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A pair of U.S. B-1B Lancer bombers flew alongside 16 Japanese fighter jets during a mission Tuesday over the Sea of Japan, an Air Force statement said.

The bombers — deployed to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, from the 9th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, 7th Bomb Wing, out of Dyess Air Force Base, Texas — trained with eight Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15 Eagles and eight F-2 Viper Zeros before returning to Andersen, the statement said.

"The U.S. steadfast commitment remains unchanged, and integration missions are a way for the U.S. to demonstrate that commitment," squadron commander Lt. Col. Ryan Stallsworth said in the statement.

Four B-1Bs from Dyess arrived on Guam on May 1 with approximately 200 airmen to assist Pacific Air Forces' training and deterrence missions, the statement said. The supersonic B-1s can carry air-to-surface and anti-surface missiles, along with 2,000-pound bombs.

The missions with Japan make the air forces better at combining their firepower over vast distances,

Stallsworth said.

The Air Force flights in the South China Sea on Tuesday. On April 29, two Lancers appeared over the sea during a 32-hour round trip from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D. That flight demonstrated the new "dynamic force employment model" aimed at making its global bomber presence less predictable, the Air Force said at the time.

Two B-1Bs also flew over the South China Sea on Tuesday. On April 29, two Lancers appeared over the sea during a 32-hour round trip from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D. That flight demonstrated the new "dynamic force employment model" aimed at making its global bomber presence less predictable, the Air Force said at the time.

On April 22, B-1B Lancers from

Ellsworth flew alongside six Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons from the 35th Fighter Wing, seven Japanese F-2s and eight Japanese F-15s over Draughton Range near Misawa Air Base in northeastern Japan, Tuesday's Air Force statement said.

On Feb. 3, two B-52 Stratofortress bombers from Minot Air Force Base, N.D., trained with

Japanese forces near Misawa Air Base. That training involved 13 Japanese F-2s, four F-4 Phantoms and 28 F-15s, along with six Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons from Misawa's 35th Fighter Wing, according to the statement.

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PACIFIC

Army expects to finish Pathways 2020 exercises

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — U.S. Army Pacific expects to complete all Pacific Pathways exercises scheduled for this year, despite the coronavirus pandemic that has curtailed most multilateral training until the end of June, according to its commander.

"Things will normalize," Gen. Paul LaCamera said during a virtual conference last week that included military commanders from allies and partner nations in the region.

"We will either return to a normal or adapt to a new normal, but either way, we will figure it out as a team of allies and partners," LaCamera told listeners, according to a news release published by the Army on Wednesday.

Pacific Pathways is a series of exercises in which Army units link up with foreign militaries at various locations in an expeditionary-style deployment. Plans had called for Pacific Pathways exercises in Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Fiji, Palau and Yap in the second half of 2020.

The Defense Department issued a stop-movement order for service members in mid-March, due to the pandemic, that had been expected to remain in place

until June 30. Last week, the Pentagon issued a memo that, while making the stop-movement order indefinite, gives installations more leeway in relaxing travel restrictions based on improving conditions.

About 1,400 soldiers with the Hawaii-based 25th Infantry Division were in Thailand for the first leg of Pathways when the order was instituted. They returned home in early April and were placed in mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Soldiers with the 25th ID only recently began small-unit arms training after a total monthlong hiatus for such drills.

The service's top officer also promised a resumption of multilateral Army exercises in the Pacific.

"Our intent is to get back with these exercises as soon as the conditions allow," Gen. James McConville, the Army's chief of staff, said in the news release. "We have to stay ready."

The Army's plan to resume collective training is based upon the experience with recruits at basic training sites, where the use of masks, physical distancing and virus testing proved successful in limiting spread of the contagion, the news release said.

"We're putting procedures in



LAWRENCE BROADNAX/U.S. Army

Thai Royal Maj. Gen. Takad Lordsiri speaks with a U.S. soldier during the opening ceremony of the Hanuman Guardian exercise, part of Pacific Pathways, at Fort Kanchanaburi, Thailand, on March 31.

place for our troops so they can still operate in this environment and make sure that we continue our relationships," McConville said.

The coronavirus outbreak struck as the Army was set to launch Defender Pacific this year. The exercise would bring to the Pacific a division headquarters and several brigades from the continental U.S. for 30- to 45-day training stints in countries such as the Philippines and Thailand.

Defense News reported earlier this year that the Army had

requested \$364 million for Defender Pacific for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

Army officials did not mention Defender Pacific in the Wednesday news release.

It will likely be another month before a time frame for resumption of exercises is within reach, U.S. Army Pacific spokesman Col. Derrick Cheng told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday.

The teleconference last week was an opportunity for regional military leaders to share thoughts about "what are the mil-to-mil

activities that are still viable and available" as nations cope with the pandemic, he said.

"There was discussion that everybody wanted to continue the virtual engagement to maintain the connections, but everybody was looking forward to the physical engagements, looking at the earliest opportunity to get back to the business at hand," he said. "There wasn't a clear picture and set dates of when we could do that."

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MILITARY

Navy completes probe into Roosevelt outbreak

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's top officer is reviewing recommendations from an investigation into the handling of the coronavirus outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt, the spokesman for Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday said Wednesday.

More than 1,150 Roosevelt sailors — one of whom died — tested positive for the illness after the outbreak began aboard the aircraft carrier in March. It immediately diverted to Guam to seek treatment for some sailors, quarantine others and sanitize the vessel.

"The Chief of Naval Operations has received and is reviewing

the command investigation into the events surrounding the [coronavirus] outbreak aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt," Gilday spokesman Cmdr. Nate Christensen said in a statement. "It will take time for the investigation's recommendations to be reviewed and endorsed by [Gilday]."

The investigation was launched at Gilday's request after he reviewed the results of a preliminary inquiry into the outbreak prompted by then-acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly's removal of the ship's commander in April.

Modly made the decision after a letter Capt. Brett Crozier wrote pleading for help for his crew was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle and picked up by media

worldwide. Modly said Crozier broke his chain of command with the letter to make Navy leaders aware of his concerns about the outbreak.

"The spread of the disease is ongoing and accelerating," Crozier wrote March 30. "We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die."

Modly received backlash from sailors and lawmakers for removing Crozier and resigned about a week later when a recording of a speech he gave to the Roosevelt's crew was leaked to the public. He called Crozier "too naive or too stupid" to command the carrier.

Details on the investigation's results were not immediately available. In a statement last month, Christensen said the re-



ZACHARY WHEELER/U.S. Navy

An F/A-18E Super Hornet lands aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Philippine Sea on Monday.

port would "provide a more robust documentation of events and give a fuller consideration of the circumstances surrounding the matter."

The Roosevelt returned to sea for carrier qualification flights for its aircrew last week. After qualifications are completed, the

remainder of the crew will re-embark, according to a statement May 18.

The carrier has been away from its San Diego homeport since it left for patrol on Jan. 17.

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Navy offers new guidance for ships at sea amid virus

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Ships at sea will now operate as clean "bubbles," allowing only people aboard who have been medically screened and who adhere to health mitigation measures, according to new standards released Wednesday by the Navy.

After serious outbreaks of the coronavirus on the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt and the destroyer USS Kidd while the ships were at sea, the Navy has developed a new standardized operational guidance for the fleet during the pandemic based on lessons learned from combating the disease.

The outbreaks also prompted the Defense Department's inspector general to initiate an evaluation of the Navy's approach to preventing the spread of infectious diseases aboard its ships and submarines. The evaluation will determine whether the Navy has put in place policies and procedures to prevent and stop the spread of diseases, and if mitigation measures that are effective at preventing the spread of the coronavirus had been implemented across the fleet, according to an announcement May 11.

The new guidance also comes the same day that the Navy's own investigation into its response to the outbreak on the Roosevelt was delivered to Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations. The initial investigation was expanded April 29 after acting Navy Secretary James McPherson said the first inquiry left him with "unanswered questions."

His decision followed Defense Secretary Mark Esper's own request days before for more time to review the Navy's first investigation after he was briefed by McPherson and Gilday on the report's recommendations.

Much of the mitigation measures in the new guidance already have been implemented by recently deployed ships such as the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, which had medical screenings and a restriction of movement for all sailors before they were allowed aboard. The Navy's message Wednesday to the fleet makes



CONNOR D. BLAKE/U.S. Navy

Seaman Alexis Bias disinfects mooring line on the USS Theodore Roosevelt on May 21, following an extended visit to Guam in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

these measures the standard across the force for operating during the coronavirus pandemic.

After the two-week restriction and the crew is at sea with no cases for more than 14 days, the ship is now considered an established "bubble" that only personnel and contractors who have also been screened and gone through self-isolation will be allowed to board.

One of the theories with the outbreak aboard the USS Kidd is the crew might have come into contact with an infected

person during their counter-drug mission, Esper said during a news conference May 5 at the Pentagon.

The guidance does allow for a waiver in "extraordinary circumstances" for someone such as a contractor or inspection team to skip a restriction of movement period prior to boarding a ship. Approval from the naval component commander — such as the admiral of a regional command like Pacific Fleet — is required before they are allowed into the "established bubble," according to the guidance.

Sailors will still need to practice personal mitigation measures such as wearing face coverings, self-monitoring, and washing their hands, according to the guidance. Areas on the ship will also be required to be cleaned daily. The guidance also goes over requirements if a sailor becomes sick with the coronavirus and procedures for the ship once it returns from a deployment, including more health screenings.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Pentagon working on plans for Afghanistan drawdown

By DAN LAMOTHE
AND SUSANNAH GEORGE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is preparing for President Donald Trump to withdraw thousands of American troops from Afghanistan before the presidential election as military leaders recommend keeping at least a small counterterrorism force to remain in the country, current and former U.S. officials said.

The troop cuts would follow the withdrawal of several thousand service members since the Trump administration signed a deal with the Taliban on Feb. 29. The agreement called for the United States to reduce the number of service members in Afghanistan from about 12,000 to 8,600 by mid-July, with a possible full pullout by next spring if the Taliban meets several conditions.

The Taliban has mostly refrained from attacking U.S. forces since March, as required in the deal, but peace negotiations between the insurgent group and the Afghan government have largely stalled in a bloody quagmire. Scores of civilians were killed or injured as a result of Afghan government operations and in Taliban attacks last month, a significant increase over April 2019, according to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

U.S. officials, however, still expect Trump to cut more troops before Election Day as he seeks to deliver on a promise to end America's "forever wars."

At a news conference Tuesday evening, Trump declined to set a timetable for withdrawal. But he said that the U.S. has been in Afghanistan long enough, and that "we can always go back if we want to."

"I have no target," he said of a potential end to America's 18-year-old war. "But as soon as reasonable. Over a period of time, but as soon as reasonable."

Senior Pentagon officials are expected to meet soon with the president to discuss options, one defense official said. Several proposals have been drawn up for Trump, including one that would remove all U.S. troops this year, another defense official said. The officials, like some others interviewed for this story, spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The New York Times first reported Tuesday that senior U.S. defense officials and Trump would meet in coming days to discuss options for Afghanistan, including possibly removing all troops there.

Two Afghan officials said Wednesday that they are aware Trump wants a faster withdrawal, but that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has not officially been informed of any change in plans.

The discussions have been complicated by the coronavirus, which has spread rapidly in Afghanistan.

In-person military training programs have been suspended,



JONATHAN CAMIRE/Defense Department

Advisors from the 2nd Security Force Assistance Brigade conducting advising during their 2019 deployment to Afghanistan.

joint operations curtailed and face-to-face meetings severely reduced, according to senior Afghan defense officials. U.S. troops who visited Afghan bases regularly are now largely confined to their bases, the officials said.

Army Gen. Scott Miller, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, has long understood that deeper cuts to the U.S. military in Afghanistan were possible this year, said one former senior defense official familiar with his thinking. Before the U.S. deal with the Taliban was signed in February, Miller told other senior U.S. officials that he was comfortable with the terms of the agreement because they safeguarded American interests and included a counterterrorism force.

Last year, Miller directed his top officer overseeing Special Operations, Maj. Gen. Christopher Donahue, to form a network of U.S. forces that could carry out counterterrorism missions and partner with Afghan forces to collect intelligence if a few thousand troops or fewer remained in the country.

The network, built around what U.S. military officials called "regional targeting teams," has been operating for months and can be adjusted if more troops are withdrawn, a senior U.S. military official told The Washington Post during a briefing in Afghanistan in February.

It would probably take a few months for the military to withdraw all of its troops, the former senior defense official said.

The effort would include shipping weapons and other sensitive equipment out on aircraft, transferring other items to Afghan forces and abandoning some items that are of lesser value. Several thousand forces from NATO allies also remain in Afghanistan, and some of the nations would need American aircraft to help remove their equipment, the for-

mer senior defense official said.

Miller has stressed to U.S. forces the need to determine what equipment should stay and go; some items have already been shipped out of the country in recent months.

U.S. military officials in Afghanistan declined to comment about ongoing planning, referring questions to the Defense Department.

The Pentagon's chief spokesman, Jonathan Rath Hoffman, said in a news conference Tuesday that he had no updates on any forthcoming meetings between Defense Department officials and Trump.

"I think it's been clear for some time that the U.S. has been looking at different options and how we are going to continue with our presence in Afghanistan," he

said.

The bottom line, he said, is that U.S. officials have said for months that the future of Afghanistan is "going to be best suited for peace" when there is an agreement between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

The planning for an expedited withdrawal comes as a rare three-day cease-fire between Afghan forces and the Taliban, established in recognition of the Islamic holiday Eid, appeared to be holding longer than initially conceived. The cessation of violence was scheduled to end Tuesday at midnight but had continued, according to Afghanistan's national security council.

As recently as Tuesday, the Taliban was discussing whether to extend the cease-fire, according to Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the group. Taliban officials have declined to comment on the status of the truce since then.

Bringing down the levels of violence in Afghanistan is a key demand of Afghan, U.S. and Taliban officials as all parties wrangle over how to proceed. A condition in the U.S.-Taliban agreement had also been a significant stumbling block, with senior Afghan officials balking at the idea due to security concerns.

Ghani ordered the release of up to 2,000 prisoners during the cease-fire this week as a goodwill gesture. U.S. officials praised the move, stressing that all parties should seize on the opportunity for peace.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Troops could receive hazard pay, awards

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—Thousands of troops who have deployed to help battle the coronavirus pandemic could soon receive hazard pay and awards to recognize their service, the military's top general said Thursday.

A group of Pentagon officials comprised of the senior enlisted leadership from each service is now determining what the rules will be for hazard pay and awards for personnel, Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a virtual town hall event at the Pentagon.

More than 55,600 Defense Department personnel have been deployed throughout the United States for coronavirus relief efforts, including about 46,000 National Guard members, according to the Pentagon. Some of these service members have conducted testing or treated coronavirus patients, increasing their risk of becoming infected by the virus.

"I expect that we'll put out some guidance that will be definitive under [Defense Secretary Mark Esper's] signature about hazard-

ous duty pay, about awards, about unit awards, individual awards, etc. All of that kind of stuff is absolutely under consideration," he said.

Milley said the policy could be determined within the next 30 days.

During the town hall, Esper also reiterated his support for extending federal orders for Guard members who are on coronavirus missions approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Some National Guard members who were called up in late March to support relief efforts were set to have their orders end June 24, just short of the 90 days required to receive some GI Bill benefits.

"If it's a valid mission assignment, we should certainly extend it. And we should extend that mission assignment until the mission is accomplished," Esper said.

The Pentagon is also working to make certain Guard members receive time to quarantine once their mission is complete so they do not infect their families or community when they return home, the defense secretary said.

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JOE LEONARD, DAILY HERALD/AP

Members of the Illinois National Guard work with the public at the state's new drive-thru COVID-19 testing facility at Rolling Meadows High School, May 22, in Rolling Meadows, Ill.

Aid: Pentagon to examine response for future outbreak

FROM FRONT PAGE

leaders the other day and asked if they would be interested in getting units of blood or plasma to send aboard ships or with deployed forces to use as needed. He said they all responded that it would be helpful. Esper said he has taken the test to see if he has the virus antibodies but doesn't yet have the results.

Unlike the nasal swab tests being used to diagnose active infections, antibody tests look for blood proteins called antibodies, which the body produces days or weeks after fighting an infection. The blood test could show if someone had the coronavirus in the recent past, which most experts think gives people some protection.

It's not yet known what antibody level would be needed for immunity or how long any immunity might last and whether people with antibodies can still spread the virus.

The Pentagon, Esper said, is also taking a broad look at how best to respond to any future outbreaks.

Noting that a lot of the military aid rushed to communities as the pandemic struck ended up going unused or was used much less than anticipated, he said the military may send medical staff rather than entire hospital ships and Army field hospitals.

The two U.S. Navy hospital ships that went to New York City and Los Angeles, for example, treated few patients. And Army field hospitals deployed to other cities also got less use than initially anticipated. Instead, they ended up pulling doctors and nurses out of those facilities and sending them to local hospitals, where they could be better overworked and stressed medical staff.



MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS OMAR RUBI/U.S. Navy

U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Fergus, assigned to the 44th Medical Brigade, congratulates soldiers assigned to the Urban Augmentation Medical Task Force 005-1, outside of the Javits Center, in Queens N.Y., on Sunday.

‘If we can handle that first wave, we can handle anything else after that.’

Mark Esper
defense secretary

"I think that's a big lesson learned," Esper said.

Saying that he and Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, think the virus may come back in smaller waves, Esper said the result may be that the military may be more likely to provide personal protective equipment and doctors

to cities in need.

"If one were to assume that the biggest wave that hit is the first wave, we've demonstrated that we have the hospital capacity, the ventilator capacity, all those other," Esper said. "If we can handle that first wave, we can handle anything else after that."

Esper added that Dr. Anthony Fauci, the federal government's top infectious-disease expert, and Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus task force coordinator, suggested in a recent Pentagon meeting that a 14-day quarantine may not be necessary. He said they thought fewer days might work, and the Pentagon is looking at that idea now.

Claims: Initial applications for jobless aid drop 8 straight weeks

FROM FRONT PAGE

First-time applications for unemployment aid, though still high by historical standards, have now fallen for eight straight weeks. In addition to those who applied last week, an additional 1.2 million applied under a new program for self-employed and gig workers, who are eligible for jobless aid for the first time. These figures aren't adjusted for seasonal variations, so the government doesn't include them in the overall data.

Analysts are monitoring incoming economic data to gauge how consumers are responding as many retail establishments gradually reopen. Jobs won't return in any significant way as long as Americans remain slow to resume spending at their previous levels.

Data from Chase Bank credit and debit cards shows that consumers have slowly increased their spending since the government distributed stimulus checks in mid-April. Consumer spending had plunged 40% in March compared with a year earlier but has since rebounded to 20% below year-ago levels.

Most of that increase has occurred in online shopping, which has recovered to pre-virus levels after having tumbled about 20%. But off-line spending, which makes up the vast majority of consumer spending, is still down 35% from a year ago, according to Chase, after having plummeted 50% at its lowest point.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

S. Korea restores restrictions in Seoul amid new outbreaks

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Museums, theaters, parks and other public facilities in the Seoul metropolitan area will close for two weeks starting Friday, health authorities said as they raced to contain a new outbreak of the coronavirus.

The announcement came Thursday after South Korea reported 79 new confirmed cases, its biggest daily number in nearly two months.

The spike underscored the risks of lifting strict containment measures as South Korea and other nations try to return to normalcy amid the ongoing pandemic.

U.S. Forces Korea also eased restrictions on most bases in the country earlier this month except for those in the Seoul area but kept all bars and other "adults-only" establishments off-limits.

In addition, USFK commander Gen. Robert Abrams renewed a public health emergency that gives him authority to enforce the rules for civilians as well as service members through Aug. 20.

Col. Edward Ballanco, the commander of the Army garrison in the southeastern city of Daegu, said Thursday that military patrols had found "a bunch of people in bars over the last week." He didn't give details.

Several American soldiers have been demoted and civilian employees and contractors have been banned from U.S. installations for violating the rules over the past few months.

"The penalties are severe and it's just foolish right now ... to suffer these penalties just to go into a bar when you can go into a restaurant and order a drink," Ballanco said in a Facebook Live community update.

The latest increase largely stemmed from a cluster of infections among workers at a distribution center operated by South Korean e-commerce company Coupang in Bucheon, a satellite city to the west of Seoul.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control said it has linked at least 82 infections to workers there and was testing 4,000 more people who may have been exposed.

Similar outbreaks have been

reported in recent weeks at nightclubs and bars in the Seoul area, which is home to about 25 million people, about half of South Korea's population.

Health Minister Park Neung-hoo said government-run public facilities would close from Friday to June 14 in the densely populated capital and surrounding areas to slow the spread of the virus.

He urged bars, clubs and other entertainment facilities to do the same and called on companies to adopt flexible hours to minimize crowds and to follow quarantine rules including maintaining cleanliness and wearing face masks.

Residents were asked to avoid unnecessary gatherings and to stay home if they felt ill.

The government stopped short of reimposing restrictions nationwide, but Park warned the next two weeks would be "crucial" in determining if measures need to be expanded.

"If we fail to eradicate the spread of the virus in the metropolitan area at an early stage, it will lead to more community infections," he told reporters



KIM GAMEL/Stars and Stripes

Pedestrians cross the street in Seoul, South Korea, on Thursday.

Thursday after an emergency meeting.

South Korea never ordered severe lockdowns but has been lauded for its aggressive testing and tracing efforts that helped drive the daily number of cases from a peak of 909 on Feb. 29 to single digits earlier this month.

The government ended a strict social distancing campaign on May 6 and began what it calls "everyday life quarantine," including a phased plan to reopen schools.

However, health workers are finding it increasingly difficult to track transmissions as public activity resumes, KCDC director Jeong Eun-kyeong said.

"We will do our best to trace contacts and implement preventive measures, but there's a limit

to such efforts," she said.

The new measures in Seoul appeared to have little effect on the U.S. military community because Yongsan Garrison and the nearby K-16 base were the only U.S. installations kept under a heightened alert level known as Health Protection Condition-Charlie.

That means people affiliated with USFK in the area can't eat at off-base restaurants or attend other social activities in the local communities, although they can travel to unrestricted areas to do so.

Nonessential travel to the capital, including the two main airports, also is prohibited without special permission.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

US deaths hit 100K; India, Russia cases rise

Associated Press

MOSCOW — As the United States crossed a somber landmark of 100,000 coronavirus deaths, India registered record numbers Thursday while Russia continued to swiftly ease restrictions in sync with the Kremlin's political plans despite a continuing high pace of infection.

The once-unthinkable death toll in the U.S. means that more Americans have died from the virus than were killed in the Vietnam and Korean wars combined.

Elsewhere around the world, India saw another record daily jump in coronavirus cases, while Russia reported a steady increase in its caseload, even as the city of Moscow and provinces across the vast country moved to ease restrictions in sync with the Kremlin's political agenda.

India, home to more than 1.3 billion people, reported more than 6,500 new infections, bringing the nation's total to over 158,000. The spike comes as the nation's 2-month-old lockdown is set to end Sunday. The country has recorded over 4,500 deaths.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is preparing guidelines to be issued this weekend, possibly extending the lockdown in hard-hit areas. Earlier this month, the country allowed the reopening of shops and factories and the resumption of some train service and domestic flights.

Meanwhile, India's top court ordered state authorities to provide free train rides and proper food and water to hundreds of thousands of poor migrant workers returning to their villages in the blazing heat after being thrown out of work in the cities and towns.

TV images have shown desperate and hungry migrants looting food carts at train stations, and at least four people have died on the trains this week as daytime temperatures climbed to 113 degrees Fahrenheit.

South Korea on Thursday reported its biggest jump in corona-



DAVID GOLDMAN/AP

Rhode Island National Guard Pfc. Gerald Moniz distributes gallons of milk and produce along with volunteers with the Dairy Farmers of America to families in need, Wednesday, in Pawtucket, R.I.



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Michael Pitts, left, and Deborah Bibbins, mother of graduate Cameron Magee, cheer him as the New Orleans Charter School and Math High School class of 2020 holds a drive-in graduation ceremony in New Orleans, on Wednesday.

virus cases in more than 50 days, a setback that could erase some of the hard-won gains that have made it a model for the rest of the world.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin announced earlier this week that the country's postponed Victory Day military parade marking the 75th anniversary of the

Nazi defeat in World War II will be held June 24, declaring the nation has passed the peak of the outbreak.

Russian media reported that the Kremlin now also plans to go ahead with another high-priority item on Putin's political agenda — a referendum on constitutional amendments that could allow him to remain in power through 2036. He postponed the vote in April because of the outbreak.

The government reported more than 8,300 new infections Thursday, down from more than 11,000 earlier this month. The total number of infections topped 379,000, the world's third-largest caseload behind that of the United States and Brazil.

Russian officials reported 174 new deaths, for a total of almost 4,150.

Some Kremlin critics allege that the relatively low mortality rate reflects manipulation by authorities trying to set a positive environment for the parade and

the constitutional vote. Russian officials have angrily rejected the allegations.

Moscow, which accounted for about half of all infections, ordered an easing of the tight lockdown in place since late March, saying that non-food stores, dry cleaners and repair shops can reopen on Monday. The mayor also announced that residents will be allowed to walk in the parks with some restrictions and engage in sports in the mornings.

Across the vast country, numerous provinces already have eased the lockdowns.

In the U.S., Las Vegas casinos and Walt Disney World have made plans to reopen, and crowds of unmasked Americans are expected to swarm beaches over the summer months. Public health officials predict a resurgence by fall.

Despite the risks, the pressure for easing restrictions has risen across the globe as the economic pain has worsened.

French unemployment claims jumped 22% in April, as 843,000 more people sought work and the virus lockdown prevented companies from hiring. The jobless ranks in France don't include 8 million people who received paycheck subsidies from the government.

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 5.7 million people and killed over 355,000, with the U.S. having the most confirmed cases and deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Europe has recorded about 170,000 deaths.

The true death toll from the virus is widely believed to be significantly higher, with experts saying many victims died without ever being tested.

Some nations are seeing improvements. New cases in Spain and Italy have fallen steadily for two months. China reported just two new cases on Thursday, both from abroad. New Zealand has reported no new cases for six days and has just eight active cases remaining.

VA continues hydroxychloroquine trails despite concerns

By NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs will continue to use hydroxychloroquine to treat some coronavirus patients despite warnings from experts and a decision by the World Health Organization to halt its clinical trials because of safety concerns.

Hydroxychloroquine, an antimalarial drug that also typically is used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, remains an unproven treatment for the coronavirus. President Donald Trump held up the drug as a "game-changer" for treatment of the virus and said that he took a dose every

day for two weeks as a preventive measure.

The WHO announced Monday that it temporarily stopped its clinical trials of hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for the virus after observational studies were published that found the drug might do more harm than good. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, said Wednesday that the drug is not an effective treatment, based on available research.

Fauci and the WHO referenced a study published Friday in the *Lancet*, a peer-reviewed journal, that looked at 96,000 coronavirus patients worldwide and found those who received hydroxychloroquine were at higher

risk for death and irregular heart rhythms.

The VA, however, said it would continue to administer the drug to some coronavirus patients.

"In certain cases, medical providers and patients want to try hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19, and [Food and Drug Administration] guidance, which VA follows, permits that," VA press secretary Christina Noel said in an email. "VA only permits use of the drug after ensuring Veterans and caretakers are aware of potential risks associated with it, as we do with any other drug or treatment."

In late March, the FDA granted emergency approval for doc-

tors to use hydroxychloroquine to treat hospitalized coronavirus patients in specific instances. The potential benefits of using the drug must outweigh the risks, and there must be no adequate approved or available alternative, the FDA guidance says.

About 1,300 VA patients have received hydroxychloroquine. The department did not say how many of those patients recovered from the virus nor how many died. Noel said only that the answers to those questions would require a review of all patient records.

The National Institutes of Health and the University of Virginia funded an analysis in April of the VA's use of hydroxychloro-

quine on more than 200 coronavirus patients. Researchers found no benefits of using the drug and discovered a possible link between the drug and more severe higher death rates. The researchers urged medical providers to wait for more rigorous studies of hydroxychloroquine before it's approved as a treatment for the virus.

As of Wednesday, 1,191 VA patients and 31 employees had died of the coronavirus. The department reported more than 13,500 positive cases of the virus among its patients, about 11,000 of whom have recovered.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

Nation's capital to begin reopening Friday; mayor sees likely case surge

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's capital will begin a gradual reopening Friday, even as Mayor Muriel Bowser warns that it probably will result in more coronavirus infections.

Restaurants will be permitted to seat guests outdoors, barbers and hair salons will open with limited capacity and nonessential businesses will be allowed to offer curbside or front-door pickup services. But nail parlors, gyms and public playgrounds will remain closed and gatherings of more than 10 people will be prohibited.

Dog parks, tennis courts and golf courses will reopen, but playground equipment and public pools will remain closed. Sports that involve close contact, including football, soccer and basketball, are still banned. For now, all area businesses are encouraged to work remotely as much as possible.

Bowser said Wednesday that the public health emergency she declared in March will remain in place.

"The virus is still in our city, in our region and in our country," Bowser said. "We know, without a vaccine or a cure, there will be new infections."

Washington remains an area of concern. There were 263.2 new cases per 100,000 people in the District of Columbia over the past week, the highest rate in the country for new cases per capita. Last week, Dr. Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House's virus task force, mentioned D.C., Chicago and Minneapolis as areas that merited close monitoring.

All told, there have been more than 8,400 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Washington and 445 residents have died.

Washington, working closely with neighboring jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia, has pursued a more conservative timeline than much of the rest of the nation.

Bowser said she doesn't expect all residents and businesses to embrace the newly relaxed rules. Some businesses may opt to remain closed and many residents may be slow to change their own pandemic habits.

"We know people are nervous," she said. "This is a scary virus and they should be nervous."

Arizona

PHOENIX — A judge presiding over a lawsuit seeking the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths among residents at Arizona's nursing homes says he understands the public's need for disclosing such information but he also sees the state's concerns in withholding the data.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Christopher Coury, who heard arguments Wednesday afternoon in the case, said he was struggling with the notion

that the public shouldn't be informed about providers that don't meet the standard of care. But he also expressed skepticism at the argument by news organizations that filed the lawsuit that releasing such information wouldn't harm the competitive positions of nursing homes.

"There are meritorious positions on both sides," said Coury, who plans to issue a ruling by the end of the week.

California

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom has crafted himself as a data-driven governor, letting the facts dictate what has been a largely cautious approach to public safety amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Now some California health officials are wondering if that's still the case as he moves rapidly through his four phases for reopening. Among the critics is Sara Cody, the Santa Clara County health officer at the forefront of shutting down the San Francisco Bay Area in mid-March, which served as a model for California and other parts of the country.

"The state modifications are being made without a real understanding of the consequences of what the last move has been," she told the county Board of Supervisors Tuesday. "Making changes too frequently leaves us blind."

In less than 10 days, Newsom has announced rules allowing 47 of the state's 58 counties to reopen restaurants and malls, religious services and, as of Tuesday, hair salons. He said Wednesday that gyms could be open within weeks. All must be done with modifications.

Georgia

ATLANTA — Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said Wednesday that he wants to lift more restrictions on businesses as long as people continue to heed coronavirus guidance from officials and public health experts.

The Republican governor's comments came as state data shows the number of new daily infections trending upward after weeks of decline.

"We can't keep fighting the virus from our living room," Kemp said, according to video of his remarks posted online by WMAZ-TV. Kemp was touring a temporary medical pod setup at a hospital in Macon.

Kemp said that using common sense and following health advice, including social distancing and wearing masks, will allow Georgians to get out of their homes safely and help spur the economy. He said people should patronize businesses that follow health restrictions and sanitation guidelines.

Georgia was one of the first states in the nation to allow businesses including tattoo parlors and bowling alleys to reopen in

late April, despite warnings from public health experts that the move was too soon.

Michigan

LANSING — A Republican legislative leader said Wednesday that Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer "lied" and engaged in a "cover-up" by requesting the removal of a social media post about her husband's attempt to get his boat in the water during the coronavirus pandemic, only to later acknowledge he did drop her name as a joke.

The governor confirmed Tuesday that her husband, Marc Mallory, called a dock company last week before he traveled to their home in the Elk Rapids area, after she had urged people to "think long and hard" about visiting the region.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey questioned why her staff contacted his office Friday to successfully push Republican Sen. Tom Barrett to delete his Facebook post about Mallory. The post was based on a post by the owner of NorthShore Dock, who said his staff took a call from Mallory asking if his boat could be put in the water before the Memorial Day weekend.

When Mallory was told there was no chance, Tad Dowker wrote, Mallory replied, "I am the husband to the governor, will this make a difference?" according to The Detroit News. NorthShore Dock subsequently said on Facebook that Mallory was respectful and understood why the company could not quickly get his boat in the water.

"The governor lied. Not only did she lie, but she directed her staff to lie on her behalf in order to cover up her own lies," Shirkey said in statements from the Senate floor.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — Professional sports can resume in Pennsylvania where the governor's stay-at-home order to stem the spread of the coronavirus is no longer in force, but without spectators, Gov. Tom Wolf's administration said Wednesday.

Those teams and competitors will be allowed to practice or play in counties where Wolf's "yellow" or "green" designation applies in his spotlight-colored three-phase reopening plan.

To resume, a team or a league must develop a coronavirus safety plan that has been approved by Wolf's state Department of Health and it must include testing or screening and monitoring of all "on-venue" players and personnel, the administration said.

Fans or spectators cannot be permitted inside or outside the sporting venue property, the administration said.

The NHL announced that it hopes to return at some point this summer with an expanded 24-



JOHN ROARK, THE IDAHO POST-REGISTER/AP

Isaac Hill wears a gas mask along with his cap and gown during the graduation ceremony for Skyline High School at Motor Vu Drive-In in Idaho Falls, Idaho, on Wednesday.

team playoff format in two host cities. Pittsburgh is among the finalists to serve as an NHL "hub" and Penguins general manager Jim Rutherford said Wednesday that players will be allowed to work out independently in small groups at the team's practice facility in Cranberry starting as early as next week.

South Carolina

COLUMBIA — The leader of South Carolina's health agency announced Wednesday that he is stepping down after a health scare to spend more time with his family as the state continues to fight the coronavirus.

Rick Toomey's decision to leave the Department of Health and Environmental Control came less than 15 months after he took over the agency. DHEC's board had spent 17 months looking for its new director before choosing Toomey, who was a board member.

Toomey spent two weeks on leave starting in late March because of high blood pressure. Toomey said that health scare played a part in his decision to leave, along with wanting to spend more time in his Beaufort home, where his new grandson also lives.

"It is a difficult decision," Toomey said at an emergency board meeting Wednesday. "I have grown to love, to admire the effort of the individuals who make up DHEC."

The board then voted to make agency attorney Marshall Taylor

the interim director after Toomey leaves June 10.

Toomey said it was hard to leave in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, but he felt like the agency reaching its goal of testing 2% of the state's population in May made the timing work.

Texas

AUSTIN — Texas officials fighting to block widespread mail-in voting during the pandemic claimed victory after the state's highest court ruled Wednesday that a lack of immunity to the coronavirus doesn't qualify someone to cast a ballot by mail.

The decision was unanimous by the Texas Supreme Court, which is stocked with nine Republican justices, including one who revealed last week that she had tested positive for COVID-19. Texas generally limits mail balloting only to voters who are over 65 years old or have a disability.

Justice Eva Guzman wrote the court was unified in the conclusion that "fear of contracting a disease is not a physical condition."

The Texas Democratic Party blasted the decision and moved its hopes to a similar challenge playing out in federal court. But the top elections lawyer in Houston, Harris County attorney Douglas Ray, said he believed the ruling leaves room for each voter to decide themselves whether they qualify, and gives clerks basically no ability to second-guess the reasoning. In Texas, voters do not have to describe their disability when requesting a mail-in ballot.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Africa's endangered wildlife at risk as tourism falls

By JOE MWIHIA
Associated Press

NANYUKI, Kenya — The armed rangers set off at dusk in pursuit of poachers. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new alertness, and a new fear.

With tourists gone along with their money, protecting endangered wildlife like black rhinos has become that much more challenging. And the poachers, like many desperate to make a living, might become more daring.

Rhinos have long been under threat from poachers who kill them for their horns to supply illegal trade fueled by the mistaken belief that the horns have medicinal value.

Now there are concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic may increase such poaching, said John Tekeles, a patrol guide and head of the dog unit at Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya.

"We are more alert because maybe more poachers will use this time to come in to poach," Tekeles said.

The number of black rhinos in Africa has been slowly increasing though the species remains "critically endangered," according to a report in March by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, or IUCN. It credits effective law enforcement as one of the reasons for the improvement.

Ol Pejeta is home to more than 130 black rhinos, the single largest population in East and Central Africa, said Richard Vigne, the conservancy's managing director.



KHAILI SENOSSI/AP

A ranger observes the last remaining two northern white rhinos — Fatu, left, and Najin, right — at the Ol Pejeta conservancy in Kenya.

Protecting them is expensive. Ol Pejeta spends about \$10,000 per year per rhino on that protection, Vigne said.

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"In our case, that comes to close to \$2 million a year," he said. "In the time of COVID, when tourism has completely stopped, where most of our revenue comes from tourism, the revenue we need to earn to protect the rhino comes from tourism, it's a complete disaster."

The conservancy anticipates seeing \$3 million to \$4 million in lost revenue this year. Therefore, Vigne said, "our ability to look after the rhinos is compromised."

Conservationists across Africa are now monitoring to see how poachers might try to take advantage, and whether more rare wildlife will be killed.

Africa's various rhino species had been seeing a downward trend in poaching, according to the IUCN, with 892 poached in 2018, a drop from a peak of 1,349 in 2015.

And the population of black rhinos had been growing by an annual rate of 2.5% between 2012 and 2018 to more than 5,600.

That growth was projected to continue over the next five years, the IUCN has said.

Cash, long a refuge in uncertain times, now under suspicion

By ZEINA KARAM
Associated Press

BEIRUT — In troubled times, people have been known to hoard currency at home — a financial security blanket against deep uncertainty. But in this crisis, things are different. This time cash itself, passed from hand to hand across neighborhoods, cities and societies just like the coronavirus, is a source of suspicion rather than reassurance.

No longer a thing to be shoved mindlessly into a pocket, tucked into a worn wallet or thrown casually on a kitchen counter, money's status has changed during the virus era — perhaps irrevocably. The pandemic has also reawakened the debate about the continued viability of what has been the physical lifeblood of global economies: paper money and coins.

From the supermarkets of the United States and Japan to the shantytowns of Africa to the gas stations of Tehran, a growing number of businesses and individuals worldwide have stopped using banknotes in fear that physical currency, handled by tens of thousands of people over their useful life, could be a vector for the spreading coronavirus.

Public officials and health experts have said that the risk of transferring the virus from person to person through the use of money is minimal.

Still, in the midst of the coronavirus era, a thousand calculations are being made before cash is handled — mostly with gloved hands.



JENNY KANE/AP

U.S. currency and credit cards sit on a table at a restaurant in New Orleans, La.

Some leave the money laid out on surfaces for days, for the virus to die. Others disinfect banknotes with spray. Some even microwave them in the belief that it kills the virus. In China, banks are now required to sterilize cash with ultraviolet light or heat.

"In many areas, cash was already beginning to disappear due the increased risk of robbery, the ease of internet ordering, and the ubiquity of cell phones," said Zachary Cohele, an assistant professor at the department of economics at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut.

"Cash now carries an extra stigma," Cohele said.

But is ditching cash altogether even feasible? Humans have a centuries-old emotional relationship with physical money that is difficult to erase.

"Currency represents value that we can hold in our hands," Cohele said. "Cash provides a way for us to translate a day's work into something tangible and easily traded."

"Cash ist Fesch" is a common saying in Austria and southern Germany. The phrase, which literally means cash is beautiful, reflects an attachment to cash — and not just among the older generation or those who worry about the loss of privacy that comes with cashless payments.

"I always pay with cash — as a matter of principle!" Engel Strobl, a 76-year-old pensioner, said while shopping at a bakery in central Vienna. "I don't want that we

lose our right to our own money. You know what I mean anyway!"

For some among the younger generation, paying with cash is also a status symbol.

Since the virus outbreak, however, shops that have remained open have posted signs encouraging people to pay with cards. Many are. According to Germany's central bank, the Bundesbank, 43% of people have changed their payment behavior in the past few weeks; now, a large percentage are likely to make contactless payments with a card.

Japan, for its sophisticated reputation, is also a solid believer in cash. But the threat of the coronavirus could be the impetus the nation needed to move toward going cashless.

"The culture is slowly changing," says Hiroki Maruyama, who heads the Fintech Association of Japan, a nonprofit.

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett has said that "cash combined with courage in a crisis is priceless." And in crisis-hit countries and parts of the world gripped by conflict or inflation, cash is still carried in thick wads for simple shopping expeditions.

In Lebanon, as the economic situation deteriorated late last year and the fear of banks collapsing mounted, many people began saving cash in their homes and the sale of home safes likewise surged.

As banks imposed capital controls, trips to the bank to withdraw foreign currency — followed by a trip to one of the ubiquitous ex-

change shops to change money on the black market — became the norm.

"I wear gloves. But honestly? Corona is the last thing on people's minds right now," said a money changer in Beirut who asked to be identified by his first name, Ihsan, fearing unwanted attention from authorities.

Cash still rules in many other parts of the Middle East, as well as West and Central Africa. Monthly banking account fees are prohibitive for many, and the self-employed often keep their savings at home in hard currency. In parts of Africa, ATM machines often don't work.

Dorothy Harpool, a director and lecturer at Wichita State University's W. Frank Barton School of Business, predicted that the pandemic would lead some consumers to rethink their use of cash. But going completely cashless, she says, is a long way off.

"Until everyone and every country has reliable access to the internet, I do not believe the pandemic will singularly change past practices," Harpool said. In particular, cash transactions are also likely to remain for businesses operating under the radar of government and other regulatory bodies.

Ihsan, the Beirut money changer, said that there are certain things you just can't do without cash.

"Like how else can you bribe a government employee to get your business done? With a credit card?"

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WORLD

Chinese lawmakers endorse Hong Kong security law

Associated Press

BEIJING — China's legislature endorsed a national security law for Hong Kong on Thursday that has strained relations with the United States and Britain and prompted new protests in the territory.

The National People's Congress approved the bill as it wrapped up an annual session that was held under intensive anti-coronavirus controls. The vote was 2,878 to 1 with six abstentions, in line with the high-profile but largely ceremonial body's custom of near-unanimous support for all legal changes decided by the ruling Communist Party.

The law will alter Hong Kong's mini-constitution, or Basic Law, to require the territory to enforce measures to be decided by the NPC's standing committee, a small body controlled by the ruling party that handles most law-making work.

The law reflects the determination of President Xi Jinping's

government to tighten control over Hong Kong following 11 months of anti-government protests. Activists in Hong Kong say the law will undermine the "high degree of autonomy" promised to the former British colony when it was handed back to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework and might be used to suppress political activity.

Premier Li Keqiang, the country's No. 2 leader, defended the law as consistent with Beijing's promises.

"The decision adopted by the NPC session is designed for steady implementation of 'one country, two systems' and Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability," Li said at a news conference.

The law and the way it is being enacted prompted U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday to announce Washington will no longer treat Hong Kong as autonomous from Beijing. That

could hurt the territory's attractiveness as a business center.

Pompeo's notice adds Hong Kong to the Trump administration's conflicts with China over trade, technology, religious freedom, Chinese handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the status of Taiwan, the self-ruled island Beijing claims as its own territory.

Li called for mutual respect and Sino-U.S. cooperation to promote "extensive common interests" in resolving global problems and promoting trade, science and other fields.

"Both countries stand to gain from cooperation and lose from confrontation," Li said.

On Thursday, three pro-democracy lawmakers were ejected from Hong Kong's legislative chamber during a debate over a bill that would criminalize insulting or abusing the Chinese national anthem.

Also Thursday, the NPC approved a government budget that

will increase spending to generate jobs in an effort to reverse an economic slump after Chinese industries were shut down to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Private sector analysts say as much as 30% of the urban workforce, or as many as 130 million people, lost their jobs at least temporarily during the shutdown. They say as many as 25 million jobs might be lost for good this year.

The budget calls for giving local governments \$280 billion to spend on meeting goals including creating 9 million new jobs. That is in line with expectations of higher spending but a fraction of the \$1 trillion-plus stimulus packages launched or discussed by the U.S., Japan and Europe.

Li, the premier, said Beijing is in a "strong position to introduce new measures" if necessary but wants to avoid flooding the economy with too much money. He said 70% of planned spending is aimed at putting wages in work-

ers' pockets in order to support consumer spending, the biggest driver of the economy.

"We will do our utmost to keep China's economic growth stable," Li said. "At the same time, we must make sure that all measures taken are well calibrated."

In an anti-virus measure, Li sat on a dais in the Great Hall of the People, the seat of the legislature in central Beijing, and talked by video link with reporters at a media center 4 miles away. The reporters, wearing masks, sat in widely spaced chairs in an auditorium, watching Li on a video screen.

The premier called for international cooperation in fighting the coronavirus pandemic but didn't answer a question about how an investigation into the origins of the pandemic demanded by Washington and some other governments should be conducted.

Hundreds flee quarantine in Zimbabwe and Malawi

BLANTYRE, Malawi — Man-hunts have begun after hundreds of people, some with the coronavirus, fled quarantine centers in Zimbabwe and Malawi as officials fear they will spread COVID-19.

In Malawi, more than 400 people recently repatriated from South Africa and elsewhere fled a center at a stadium in Blantyre while police and health workers

watched. At least 46 escapees had tested positive for the virus.

And in Zimbabwe, police spokesman Paul Nyathi said officers were "hunting down" more than 100 people who escaped from centers where a 21-day quarantine is mandatory for those returning from abroad.

From The Associated Press

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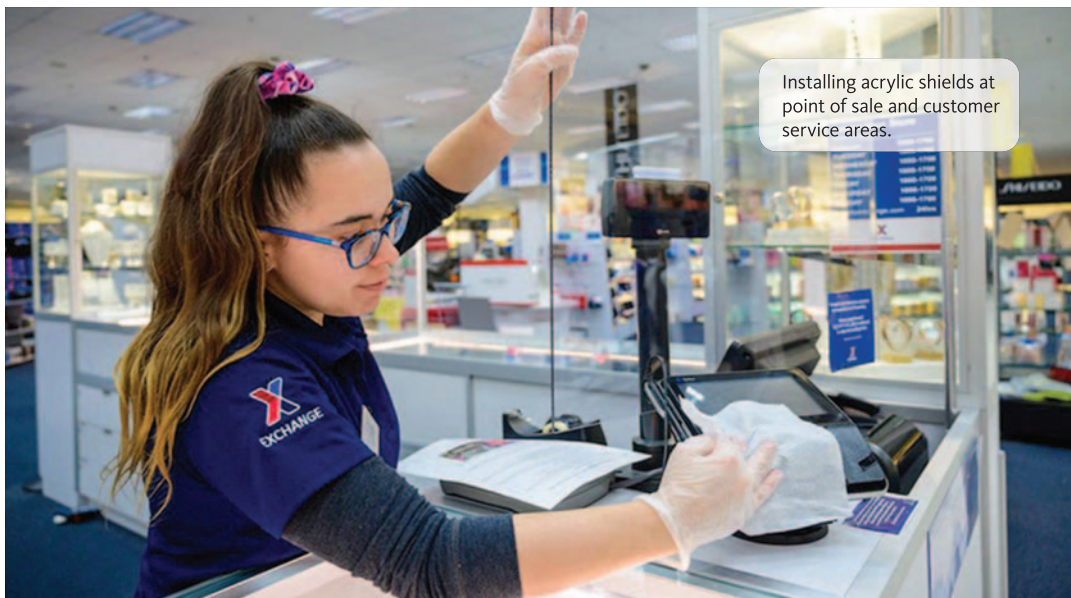
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NATION

Violence rocks Minneapolis in wake of death

By DOUG GLASS
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Fires burned and looters struck Thursday after violent protests over the death of a black man in police custody rocked a Minneapolis neighborhood for a second straight night, with damage stretching for miles across the city and Mayor Jacob Frey appealing to the governor to activate the National Guard.

Amid the violence, a man was found fatally shot Wednesday night near a pawn shop. Asked to confirm reports that he had been shot by a store owner, police spokesman John Elder said that was “one of the theories.”

Pockets of looting continued Thursday at stores where windows and doors were smashed. KSTP-TV reported some fires at businesses continued to burn with no firefighters on scene. A liquor store employee displayed a gun as he stood among the debris of broken bottles and beer cans inside the business.

Protesters began gathering in the early afternoon Wednesday near the city's 3rd Precinct station, in the southern part of the city where George Floyd, 46, died on Memorial Day after an officer knelt on his neck until he became unresponsive. Protesters also skirmished with officers, who fired rubber bullets and tear gas in a repeat of Tuesday night's confrontation.

On Thursday morning, smoke



DAVID JONES, STAR TRIBUNE/AP

A man runs near a burning building after a night of unrest and protests in the death of George Floyd

hung over Minneapolis and looters carried merchandise from a damaged Target store with no interference by police. Video of the store's interior showed empty clothing racks and shelves and debris strewn about. Obscenities were spray-painted on the exterior of the store.

Protests spread to other U.S.

cities. In California, hundreds of people protesting Floyd's death blocked a Los Angeles freeway and shattered windows of California Highway Patrol cruisers on Wednesday.

It was a second and much more violent night in Minneapolis since the death of Floyd, whom police were seeking to arrest outside a

Minneapolis grocery store on a report of a counterfeit bill being passed. A bystander's cellphone video showed an officer kneeling on Floyd's neck for almost eight minutes as he eventually became unresponsive.

The U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI in Minneapolis said Thursday they were conducting

“a robust criminal investigation” into Floyd's death and was making the case a priority. The FBI had already announced it was investigating whether Floyd's civil rights were violated. The new announcement came a day after President Donald Trump tweeted that he had asked an investigation to be expedited.

Mayor Jacob Frey tweeted for calm early Thursday. “Please, Minneapolis, we cannot let tragedy beget more tragedy,” he said on Twitter. He also asked for the public's help in keeping the peace.

The officer and three others were fired Tuesday, and on Wednesday, Frey called for him to be criminally charged.

Frey asked Gov. Tim Walz to activate the National Guard, a spokesman confirmed Thursday. The governor's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Walz tweeted for calm Wednesday night, calling the violence “an extremely dangerous situation” and urging people to leave the scene.

On Wednesday night, officers responding to a reported stabbing near the protests found a man lying on the sidewalk with what turned out to be a bullet wound, Elder said. The man was pronounced dead at a local hospital. Elder said a suspect was in custody but said the facts leading up to the shooting were “still being sorted out.”



SPACE/AP

NASA astronauts Doug Hurley, center, confer with technicians after leaving the Crew Dragon capsule at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Wednesday after an aborted launch.

Bad weather delays SpaceX launch

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — The launch of a SpaceX rocket ship with two NASA astronauts on a history-making flight into orbit was called off with less than 17 minutes to go in the countdown Wednesday because of thunderclouds and the risk of lightning.

Liftoff was rescheduled for Saturday afternoon.

The spacecraft — designed, built and owned by SpaceX — was set to blast off in the afternoon for the International Space Station,

opening a new era in commercial spaceflight. It would have also marked the first time in nearly a decade that the U.S. launched astronauts into orbit from American soil.

But thunderstorms for much of the day threatened to force a postponement, and the word finally came down that the atmosphere was so electrically charged that the spacecraft was in danger of getting hit by lightning.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said the agency and SpaceX worked together to “make

the right decision” and put safety first at a time when some were wondering whether the public attention surrounding the flight would create undue pressure to launch.

Veteran space shuttle astronauts Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken were supposed to ride into orbit aboard SpaceX's sleek, white-and-black, bullet-shaped Dragon capsule on top of a Falcon 9 rocket, taking off from the same launch pad used during the Apollo moon missions a half-century ago.

Trump preparing executive order targeting social media protections

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is preparing to sign an executive order Thursday aimed at curbing liability protections for social media companies, two days after he lashed out at Twitter for applying fact checks to two of his tweets.

Trump had threatened social media companies with new regulation or even shuttering on Wednesday, but he alone can't do that. The proposed order would direct executive branch agen-

cies including the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission to study whether they can place new rules on the companies — though experts expressed doubts much could be done without an act of Congress.

A similar executive order was previously considered by the administration but shelved over concerns it couldn't pass legal muster and that it violated conservative principles on deregulation and free speech.

Two administration officials

outlined the draft order on the condition of anonymity because it was still being finalized Thursday morning.

Trump on Wednesday claimed tech giants “silence conservative voices.” “We will strongly regulate, or close them down, before we can ever allow this to happen.” Later, also on Twitter, he threatened, “Big Action to follow.”

Press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said Trump would sign an executive order relating to social media companies but provided no further details. White

House strategic communications director Alyssa Farah said Trump would sign it Thursday.

Trump and his campaign lashed out at the company after Twitter added a warning phrase to two Trump tweets that called mail-in ballots “fraudulent” and predicted “mail boxes will be robbed.” Under the tweets, there's now a link reading “Get the facts about mail-in ballots” that guides users to a page with fact checks and news stories about Trump's unsubstantiated claims.

Trump accused Twitter of “in-

terfering in the 2020 Presidential Election” and insisting “as president, I will not allow this to happen.” His campaign manager, Brad Parscale, said Twitter's “clear political bias” had led the campaign to pull “all our advertising from Twitter months ago.” Twitter has banned political advertising since last November.

Later Wednesday, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey tweeted, “We'll continue to point out incorrect or disputed information about elections globally.”

WEEK



Arcade
Spirits

Video games, Page 22

TEARING UP THE PLAYBOOK

Kumail Nanjiani on his unconventional new rom-com, sheltering in place and selling films during a pandemic **Pages 20-21**

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECH

Priced to sell

Apple's latest, the iPhone SE, is actually affordable

By JIM ROSSMAN

The Dallas Morning News

Affordable isn't exactly the first word that jumps to mind when I think about Apple.

This isn't a complaint. Apple products cost more than the competition, and I'm OK with that.

But a few weeks ago, Apple did something it doesn't do very often — it released an affordable iPhone. The new iPhone SE starts at \$399.

Some might even call it cheap.

Is it right for you? Could it be right for me? Let's take a look.

Mom's next phone

The iPhone SE should look really familiar if you are an iPhone user. It shares the basic iPhone body design Apple has used since 2014.

It has a home button with a touch ID sensor, pretty tall bezels above and below the screen and a glass back.

The new SE is identical to the iPhone 8 on the outside, but inside, it has the A13 Bionic processor from Apple's newest phone, the iPhone 11. Yes, the same iPhone 11 that came out last September with a starting price of \$699.

This means the iPhone SE will be a viable phone for the next five years or so.

What I mean by viable is the SE will continue to be supported for iOS updates.

This is Apple's second-generation iPhone SE. The first SE was released in 2016. It had the body of an iPhone 5S with the internal processor of the iPhone 6S.

The new iPhone SE is the perfect next phone for my parents.

Specs

Everything inside the iPhone SE should be familiar, as the parts have been used before. This is an off-the-shelf upgrade, which means Apple used parts it already had to make this phone to keep costs down.

Apple has been using robots at the iPhone factories in China to make parts for the iPhone 8 for many years, so those machines are long since paid for. Using them to keep churning out parts for the iPhone SE is very cheap for Apple.

There are lots of new parts inside, though, from the battery to the CPU. Everything had to be reconfigured to fit inside the smaller case.

The display is a 4.7-inch Retina HD touch screen display. It is not an OLED screen like Apple uses on its newest iPhones, but it's still a great screen.

It has Touch ID, which is a fingerprint sensor inside the home button. I'd gotten really used to using my face to unlock my phone, but in this time of wearing masks to the store, I'm finding the Touch ID to be a better (faster) way to authenticate when I use Apple Pay.

Internal storage starts at 64 gigabytes (\$399), with upgrade options for 128 GB (\$449) or 256 GB (\$549).

Doubling the storage to 128 GB for an extra \$50

istock

is a no-brainer if you can afford it.

The SE is water- and dust-resistant and can survive a dunk into 5 feet of water for up to 30 minutes.

The A13 Bionic CPU is Apple's fastest-ever chip in a smartphone. The chip in the SE is exactly the same as the iPhone 11. Battery life in the SE is the same as the iPhone 8, which is up to 13 hours of video playback.

It has wireless charging and it can fast charge with an 18W USB adapter (sold separately) up to 50% in 30 minutes.

The SE measures 5.4 by 2.65 by 0.29 inches and weighs just 5.22 ounces.

The radios inside the SE are an upgrade. It supports gigabit-class LTE, which means faster data transfers from cell towers.

It also has Wi-Fi 6 and Bluetooth 5.0.

The SE is a dual SIM phone, with one physical SIM card and one eSIM. This means you can have two phone numbers on the SE as long as one is an eSIM (electronic SIM).

Cameras

Apple describes the main camera in the SE as the "best single-camera system in an iPhone."

The SE has a single camera on the back with a 12-megapixel sensor and a f/1.8 wide angle lens. There is no optical zoom, but there is digital zoom up to 5x.

The front camera has a seven-megapixel sensor.

Because the SE has the A13 Bionic processor, it can shoot portrait mode photos with the front and back cameras.

The SE also has next-generation Smart HDR, which is a mode that uses multiple exposures to create better tonal range. It also has auto image stabilization.

It can shoot 4K video at up to 60 frames per second, and you can capture 8 megapixel still photos while you are shooting 4K video.

Conclusions

The first thing I did when I unboxed the SE was take the SIM out of my XS Max and put it in the SE to use as my daily phone.

Aside from having to retrain myself to use a fingerprint instead of my face to unlock and use Apple Pay, I thought the SE was a great phone.

But I've found I'm a screen size snob.

I'm not sure I want to go back to using a phone with a smaller screen, but the experience of carrying the SE as my everyday phone has been flawless. It is fast and light and does everything I need it to do.

I do miss the zoom lens, but for a phone that costs one-third of what I paid, I can overlook it.

I have a few friends who don't mind spending \$1,000 and up on a new phone every year, but most of the people I know are looking to save money.

For \$400, this is the iPhone I'm recommending for almost everyone, including my wife and my parents.

Pros: Inexpensive, fast, great camera
Cons: Small screen

GADGET WATCH



PELICAN/TNS

The new Pelican Dayventure Tumblers are available in three sizes.

Never miss a beat with this party-ready portable speaker

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Despite all the current virus- and quarantine-related weirdness going on right now, we're past Memorial Day, so it's unofficially summer. There are some great new gadgets to ensure that your fun in the sun sounds perfect, is well charged and is well chilled. Ultimate Ears Hyperboom is party-ready with the most powerful sound I've seen from a portable wireless speaker.

With booming bass, the party-happy speaker has a wide dynamic range to bring music to all ends of your party.

The USB rechargeable 24-hour battery charges in 2.6 hours and the Hyperboom has adaptive EQ so it reads the environment and automatically adjusts the sound to fill any space.

With the latest Bluetooth, it can store and remember up to eight paired devices so playlists can come from many sources. A splash-proof IPX4 lets it sit poolside, and the BOOM app lets you customize the sound and more.

A top sided one-touch control button changes the music, controls the volume and accesses music services. Covered ports include a USB charge out, optical input, aux input and power.

Online: ultimateears.com;

\$399.99

Portable power is a must for any season, and there's none more ready for sand, water and adventures than the **myCharge Adventure H20 15000 mAh portable charging battery**.

With an IP67 waterproof rating, it can withstand dirt and dust and water to a depth of 3 feet for up to 30 minutes. The exterior is

built with a shockproof rubber finish, and a built-in carabiner keeps it within reach.

The battery has 15,000 mAh, making it ideal for up to eight extra charges for the average smartphone.

MyCharge Adventure H20 can power wireless speakers, digital cameras, watches or anything else needing some power on the go. There's 2 built-in USB ports and 2.4A of output for power-hungry tablets.

Other features include smart-sense technology to ensure device compatibility and safe cell for safe charging. Online: mycharge.com; \$59.99

Other great gadgets to round out the summer season include the **Kanex GoBuddy+**.

It's a bottle opener surrounded by a USB cable with a standard USB-A port on one end and an Apple-certified Lightning Cable-Yinc cable on the other.

When the cable is not needed, it tucks away in the perimeter of the opener. The tangle-free cable extends to 6 inches and a carabiner clip is included for attaching to a belt or backpack.

Online: kanex.com; \$3.99

Pelican Products — yes, the same company that manufactures the world's elite high-performance protective cases — has launched a lineup of rugged and ready tumblers specially designed to withstand the rigors of everyday life.

The new Pelican Dayventure Tumblers are available in three sizes, with a choice of five colors (black, canyon red, pacific blue, seafoam and silver) with a sweat-proof powder finish. Each will fit 99% of all car cup holders and will keep your beverages hot or cold.

Online: pelican.com



MYCHARGE/TNS

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ON THE COVER: Kumail Nanjiani's latest project is "The Lovebirds," a comedy originally scheduled for an April theatrical release. Costarring Issa Rae, it's now streaming on Netflix.

Netflix

WEEKEND: MOVIES



AMAZON STUDIOS/TNS

"Carnival Row," starring Orlando Bloom and Cara Delevingne, had to suspend filming in the Czech Republic in March.



Ready to roll

After the coronavirus crisis, the race to resume film production goes global

By STACY PERMAN and ANOUSHA SAKOUI
Los Angeles Times

Ever since the coronavirus crisis put entertainment production in a deep freeze, Hollywood has been eager to get the cameras rolling again. After all, box office revenue has sunk to virtually zero and more than 100,000 entertainment industry workers have lost their jobs.

With stay-at-home orders in place and domestic production at a standstill, filmmakers are starting to see a thaw abroad.

In recent weeks, several countries have raised their flags, vying for production. They tout their incentives, facilities and locations but also their low COVID-19 numbers, testing capabilities and measures to keep productions safe and minimize outbreaks.

"It's about options," said Joseph Chiassone, executive vice president at Entertainment Partners, an industry consultancy based in Burbank, Calif. "Before it was who had the higher incentives, infrastructure and crew to support my production." Now Chiassone says, the formula has shifted, with people also asking: Is it safe and is it close? The globe began spinning last month when Netflix's content chief, Ted Sarandos, mentioned during an earnings call that the streaming giant was shooting in Iceland and South Korea.

With its vigilant COVID-19 testing, a Netflix endorsement and a plan for safe and secure production on the table, Iceland received an upsurge in interest from filmmakers.

Iceland recently announced it would open the country to foreign film crews beginning May 15 under strict test-

ing and tracking measures. Those entering the country will be offered a variety of quarantine and testing options and will be asked to comply with stringent safety requirements on set. Further easing of restrictions is expected on June 15.

In recent weeks, as governments review border policies and airlines have limited travel, film commissions and producers have been establishing guidelines and protocols to get a jump on filming.

"We want to get that production out of suspended animation," said Adrian Wootton, chief executive at the British Film Commission, noting that film was one of the country's fastest growing sectors.

Major players including Walt Disney, Netflix and Warner Bros. have made substantial investments in the United Kingdom. Last year, Disney signed a long-term lease at Pinewood Studios outside of London, while Netflix locked up 14 soundstages at Shepperton Studios. Warner Bros. has its own studios at Leavesden, near the capital.

Major U.S. studios "have got production that is suspended here that they want to start up again," Wootton said.

BFI, which hopes to reopen this summer, has compiled a 26-page set of proposals to restart high-end TV and film production with feedback from unions and other industry groups.

The recommendations include requirements for coronavirus health and safety training for all crew members; the use of masks, gloves, hand-washing, cleaning and twice daily temperature checks; a dedicated COVID-19 health and safety supervisor; and quarantining of foreign crews.

Elsewhere in Europe, the Czech Republic was among the first countries to resume production. The country's film commissioner has said international filming halted

by the pandemic would begin this month. Before the shutdown, Cara Delevingne and Orlando Bloom were filming Amazon Studios' second season of "Carnival Row," and Disney's Marvel Studios was filming "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier."

The country has exempted actors and performers from wearing masks while working but requires testing proof every 14 days. Foreign actors and crew members must test negative for the virus before boarding a flight to the country, and within 72 hours of arrival, undergo a second test, and remain quarantined until they receive a negative result.

Neighboring Slovakia, meanwhile, touts the fact that it never closed for filming.

"Unlike in other countries, filming was not banned, as it is considered manufacturing and not a cultural event," said Zuzana Bielkova, head of the Slovak Film Commission.

However, she noted that most production outside of small-scale projects was halted until the country got the virus under control. Local films and TV shows are expected to begin again in June.

"We do have quite a few requests from international (mostly U.K., German, U.S.) film crews that would like to film in Slovakia in the summer and autumn," she said.

Bielkova said the commission offers online location scouting so international crews don't have to travel in person while searching for locations. Among the new protocols, anyone entering the country must first undergo a 14-day quarantine (except for those with proof they are COVID-19 negative).

In New Zealand, where Disney's "Avatar" sequels were being filmed before the virus halted production, and where early and strict restrictions resulted in low infection rates and containment, the government has approved protocols for domestic filming, some of which are already underway.

"We also look forward to welcoming back international productions that were shooting here and those that had planned to shoot here and want to create a safe environment for that," said Annabelle Sheehan, chief executive of the New Zealand Film Commission. "I think every country will create effective (health and safety plans) that account for COVID issues as they move toward resuming production in their countries."

While Australia's borders remain closed to international filming, the country has been opening up its domestic production. In March, Tom Hanks and his wife, Rita Wilson, announced they'd both tested positive for the coronavirus while Hanks was in Australia filming the untitled Baz Luhrmann Elvis Presley biopic.

The longstanding Australian soap opera "Neighbors" resumed production this month under strict health and sanitation protocols, including no kissing or hand holding. Cast and crew isolated into three groups and deployed camera tricks to make actors appear more intimate on screen than they are in person.

Back in the U.S., some enterprising film executives are urging producers to look closer to home.

Lynn-Wood Fields, the marketing producer at Montana Studios in Hamilton, suggests Montana.

"It is in the U.S., there are direct flights, we have unbelievable resources, including testing, and we're open," she said. "We have a joke here: 'Six feet, that seems a little close.'"

Fields said that the 12,000 square feet of operational soundstage space in Hamilton and its post-production space in Butte can compete with any country. As well, she said it has partnered with a primary care doctor to test crews weekly and cast daily and a manufacturing partnership producing antiviral masks.

Last year, the state passed a competitive production rebate of up to 35%.

"We have progressive COVID-19 testing," Fields said, also noting: "Our numbers are so much lower than New Zealand."

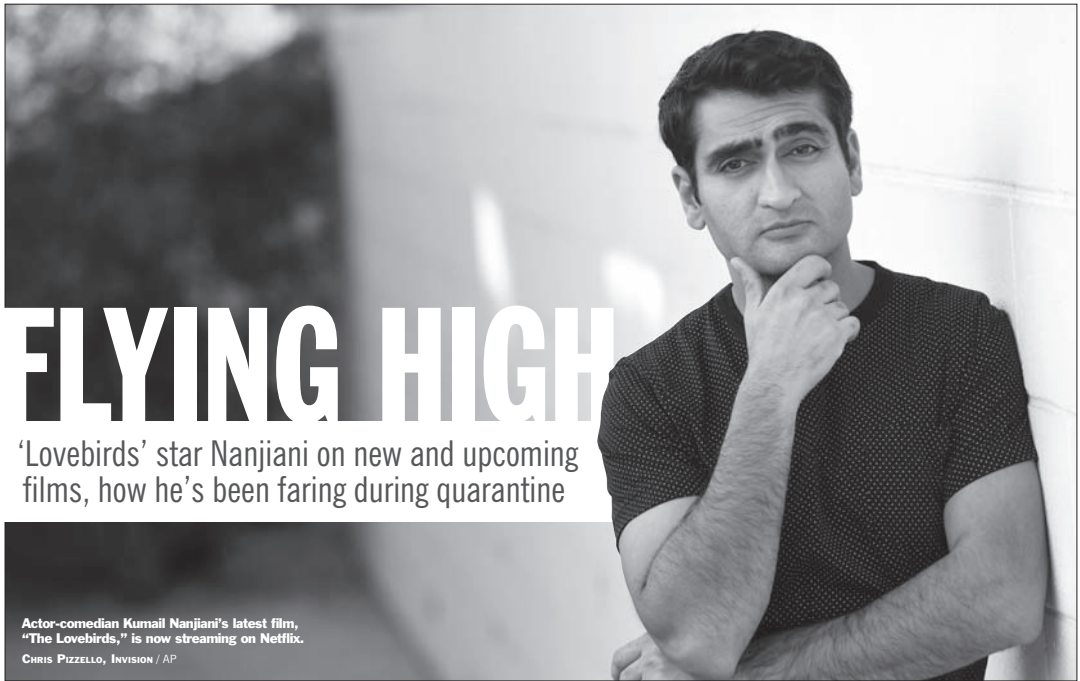
In part, the appeal of filming abroad is because the U.S. has yet to contain the virus or provide adequate testing, and safety and health measures on set have yet to be established, let alone implemented.

Another hurdle: Insurance companies that have long protected studios from a multitude of circumstances that could hamper or delay filming are reluctant to underwrite productions, regardless of geography.

Locally, film officials are working with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to establish criteria for filming on set and on location. Despite progress, no date has been set for the start of filming, said Paul Audley, president of FilmLA.

Attorney Dan Stone, a partner in the litigation and entertainment and media groups of Greenberg Glusker, says the lack of a unified approach could further delay the return of domestic production. "Ultimately the industry will need some form of uniform guidelines," he said.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



FLYING HIGH

‘Lovebirds’ star Nanjiani on new and upcoming films, how he’s been faring during quarantine

Actor-comedian Kumail Nanjiani’s latest film, “The Lovebirds,” is now streaming on Netflix.

CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION / AP

By SONAIYA KELLEY
Los Angeles Times

Kumail Nanjiani is tired of romantic comedies ending with the boy and girl riding off into the sunset together. That’s why his latest rom-com, “The Lovebirds,” centers around a couple on the brink of a breakup.

“There are all these movies that end when the couple gets together, but there aren’t as many movies about the couple living together and continuing to stay together,” he said by phone while quarantined in Los Angeles. “It’s just not something I’ve seen explored in comedy. You know how couples fight about the same things they’ve been fighting about since they first met? I feel like couples have like five fights and just have them over and over. I thought that was interesting to explore in the context of a wacky comedy setup.”

Directed by Michael Showalter (who also directed Nanjiani in the semi-autobiographical love story “The Big Sick,” which Nanjiani co-wrote), the film is something of a pioneer in the wake of the coronavirus crisis, completely eschewing a theatrical release and instead heading straight to streaming. It was set to debut March 16 at Austin’s South by Southwest festival before opening in theaters April 3, but Paramount canceled its theatrical release entirely and sold it to Netflix, where it’s now available for streaming.

For Nanjiani, who along with

co-star Issa Rae also executive produced the film, the decision ultimately turned out for the best. “I think this movie is actually a fantastic fit for Netflix,” he said. “It’s the type of movie that I’ve seen do well on Netflix. Hopefully it’s a movie that people will connect with right now because it’s a comedy and it’s escapism.”

The Times recently caught up with Nanjiani. This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Los Angeles Times: How have you been spending your time in quarantine?

Nanjiani: I’ve been working from 9 to 5 and watching movies at night. Trying to keep to a regimented schedule, for me, has been really great. But reading scripts, it all feels a little bit weird because you don’t know when any of this is going to be real, when the world’s going to return. But it’s been good to have something to feel productive.

In the beginning I took solace in the schedule. And while I’m still taking solace in it now, I’m feeling a little bit like, “Why does every day literally have to be the same?” Time moves weirdly. Some weeks fly by and yet I can’t believe right now it’s only Tuesday. I’m like, “Maybe it’s time to switch up the schedule. Maybe Wednesday and Thursday are the new weekend.”

You were one of the first celebrities to be vocal about how seriously this pandemic should be taken. What made you realize other people maybe

weren’t taking things seriously enough?

I feel like I’m such a scold, like I’m such a nerd. It wasn’t some crazy insight I had or anything. I don’t have the luxury of being cavalier about this. I’ve been following this disease for a long time because my wife is immunocompromised. I saw that my wife is in two different high-risk groups and I was like, “OK, that’s concerning.” It felt like nobody in America was concerned about it. I was reading warnings from epidemiologists and experts who were all saying,

because the thought of having a pandemic show up to America this way, people don’t expect it. America hasn’t really had to deal with any sort of conflict within its boundaries in many, many years. Different countries that have handled it better have had a little bit more strife within their borders. So I think people just didn’t expect that this could happen to a place like America.

Are you quarantining in LA?

Yeah.

What are your thoughts on how the local government is handling the shutdown and now reopening the county?

I think this movie is actually a fantastic fit for Netflix. It’s the type of movie that I’ve seen do well on Netflix. Hopefully it’s a movie that people will connect with right now because it’s a comedy and it’s escapism.

Kumail Nanjiani

“The world needs to prepare for this; this thing is going to travel all over the world.” And every-one here was just so lax about it. Honestly, it was really frustrating and really, really scary.

And so I started tweeting about it at the beginning. People really hated when I was doing that. People had such a negative reaction to it, which I think is somewhat understandable

I think they’ve done a good job. They should have shut down a little bit earlier, but they still did a lot better than many other places around America. They caught on quickly. Some other places in America, I feel like they’re ignoring warnings and hoping against hope that this thing is somehow just magically going to disappear. Right now the mandate in LA is, if you

leave your house, have a mask on. My wife and I have started going on walks at night because when we would go on a walk in the afternoon, we were the only ones wearing masks. In the beginning (of the mandate), everybody was wearing a mask. Now it’s a surprise when you see someone wearing a mask. Even here in LA, people are getting a little bit cavalier about it.

Why do you think people have been so cavalier about adhering to social distancing guidelines?

I think it’s hard to quarantine for this long. It’s an invisible thing, right? You don’t see the threat. Usually there’s a problem, you do the thing (you’re told), the problem goes away, life returns to normal. This is not like that. You don’t really see the effects of social distancing, the effects of quarantining. The entire point is that you don’t see any real change. Things stay the same and the curve flattens. That’s kind of hard, I think, for people to wrap their heads around.

I think people are feeling like, “I did the thing, I was at home for nine weeks” — which is a very long period of time — “this should’ve solved the problem.” That’s not how it works. I understand I’m speaking from a place of privilege: I have a home. I have a job, and a lot of people don’t have that. A lot of people need to go back to work to make

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WEEKEND: MOVIES

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money to feed themselves, feed their families. So I understand that frustration. It's the people who don't have those concerns and are still being cavalier about it that I find a little frustrating.

How do you feel about "The Lovebirds" skipping theaters and being released on Netflix?

There are a lot of movies in theaters that are still looking for new dates or haven't found a home. Netflix is exactly the result that both Issa and I wanted. It was a few weeks before the shutdown where I was sort of the one who was freaking out about this and I was speaking to Issa and saying, "There's a chance that theaters might be closed. I think we should talk to the producers and just open the door and have conversations with Netflix." So we were lucky in that we started those conversations before the shutdown, before theaters closed. We were already a little bit ahead of the curve on that.

Watching a movie in a theater, to me, is a wonderful experience. I love watching comedies in the theater; it's such a communal thing. Obviously that's not going to happen right now, and there are much bigger problems in the world than the fact that our movie is going into theaters.

What was it like working opposite Issa?

I've been a fan of Issa's for many years. I met her very briefly but did not know her until we started working on this movie. I was thrilled because I know she's very smart, she's very funny.

But more than that, watching "Insecure" she's very good at relationships, both romantic and platonic. And character work. I knew that getting her brain on a movie like this would really elevate it. The reason I wanted to do this movie was because of the central relationship of this couple, so I thought, "Issa's the best at this, so that'll be great."

And working with her, she's really fun to improvise with. I've never met anyone who's so good at so many different things. Usually people have specialties and with Issa, she just is so good at doing so many different things. It's really inspiring.

We now have to wait longer for "The Eternals," which was delayed to February and will kind of kick off the fourth phase of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Are you anxious about that movie coming out and how it will be received?

I'm anxious about everything I do coming out and how it will be received. It would have been nice if it was coming out this year, but there are bigger problems; we've got a little bit longer. But, yeah, I'm very curious how that movie will be received. Chloe Zhao is a true filmmaker, an absolute genius, and I completely, completely trust her. I'd love to work with filmmakers like her over and over for the rest of my career if I could; that would be the dream. The movie is so... the scale of it is so big and it's just hard to wrap your head around it as you're shooting it when you're shooting these little pieces. It's by far the biggest movie I've ever been a part of. I'm just excited to see it myself.

Rom-com 'Lovebirds' plays it safe

By LINDSEY BARR
Associated Press

"The Lovebirds" stars Issa Rae and Kumail Nanjiani are two of the most exciting voices working in film and television today, as actors, writers and creators. Rae's "Insecure" and Nanjiani's "The Big Sick" are both vibrant, stimulating and fresh and rooted deeply in the diversity of their own experiences. So it's at least notable that this film, a dark, night-goes-wrong comedy that seems very much in each of their wheelhouses, was not created or written by either. And at times, you kind of wish it had been.

As it is, "The Lovebirds" feels a little too familiar and a little too safe, like all the edges have been smoothed out. Perhaps that's because it was originally a studio film that was supposed to open in theaters nationwide. But the shutdown changed the course of things and the film is now streaming on Netflix.

There are some amusing twists, turns and wardrobe changes as the night gets weirder and more dangerous for this ordinary couple who thought they were just headed to a dinner party.

Directed by Michael Showalter, "The Lovebirds" starts out like a rom-com — a one night stand turns into an all-day hang for Issa (Nanjiani) and Kumail (Issa Rae) as they futilely try to resist the connection. But cut to four years later, and all the love-dovey excitement of that first day has turned into bickering and resentment. The way this particular fight spirals out of control, from light jabbing to full-on insults, is almost uncomfortably relatable and precise for a comedy this broad. It's a wonder they break up on the drive to their friend's party.



NETFLIX/AP

Issa Rae, left, and Kumail Nanjiani star in the rom-com crime caper "The Lovebirds."

But that turns out to be the least of their problems when a collision with a biker (who dies, but not because of them) sets off a series of increasingly odd events. They flee the scene after a pair of obnoxious hipsters starts assuming things about why they're standing over the body of a dead man and continue making poor decisions (including Lelani keeping her sky-high stilettos on for almost half the movie).

In an attempt to clear their names, they accidentally get wrapped up in a bizarre New Orleans underworld of murderous henchmen, a sadistic politician's wife and some unlucky frat guys. It's a little bit "After Hours"

meets "Game Night" with a dash of "Eyes Wide Shut" — but that might be overselling it.

Their hijinks are all a bit too random to fully get on board with the journey, and if you stop for a moment to actually think about what is happening and why, the whole thing might just unravel before you. Rae and Nanjiani make the ride fun enough with their easy chemistry and silly, wide-eyed panic at everything they're witnessing. Still, "The Lovebirds" lacks the singularity of its stars' other noteworthy roles.

"The Lovebirds" is rated R for sexual content, language and some violence. Running time: 86 minutes.

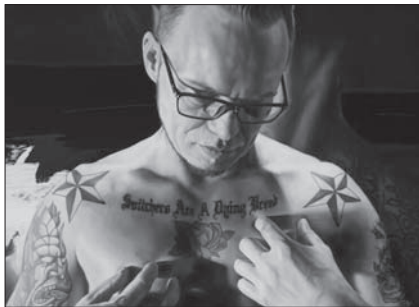
'The Painter and the Thief' a startling portrait of its subjects

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Norwegian documentary filmmaker Benjamin Ree's "The Painter and the Thief" is a film about a bold art world heist, and the strange relationship that develops between the painter and the man convicted of stealing her work. That event sets the stage, but it proves to be a bit of a MacGuffin for what this film unfolds: a story of deep human connection between two souls that actually see each other, and the healing power wrapped up in that sense of visibility.

It begins like a procedural, with surveillance footage capturing the crime, and courtroom conversation that illustrate the first sketch between the Czech painter Barbara Kysilkova and Karl-Bertil Nordland. She's curious about where her paintings are, but she's curious about him too, and asks to draw him. Feeling guilty and indebted to her, Nordland agrees to sit for a portrait.

There's a similarity here to "Portrait of a Lady on Fire," in that to really get to know someone is to study them: their hands, their gestures, the way they move. Nordland, twitchy and self-conscious, covered in tattoos like "Honor Among Thieves" and "Snitchers Are a Dying Breed" is a drug addict who fell in with gangsters. When Kysilkova prods



NEON/AP

Karl Bertil Nordland in a scene from "The Painter and the Thief."

him, gently, and then with force, about where her paintings ended up, he's baffled. He was so high that day he has no idea where they are or why he even stole them, cutting the canvases from the frames, except that they were "beautiful."

The moment at which "The Painter and the Thief" reveals itself to be so much more than a story of a stolen painting and the junkie who took it, occurs when Kysilkova reveals her first portrait to Nordland. At first, he doesn't even seem to see it, and then suddenly his eyes widen

in shock, his jaw drops, and he starts to sob in a way that makes it seem like he hasn't in a very long time. He's emotionally, mentally and physically overcome with his own sheer visibility; that Kysilkova took the time to look at him long enough to render his likeness in oil.

To be seen, to be acknowledged is an almost primal human emotional need, which "The Painter and the Thief" beautifully lays out, showing the audience the ways in which Nordland's childhood, in which he was abandoned by his mother and ignored

by an absentee father, led to his struggles with drugs and crime. He has a compulsive drive to self-destruct just because he wants someone to look at him, to pay attention to him.

But Nordland sees Kysilkova too, and the film switches perspective between the two subjects, as they each study the other throughout their tumultuous but deeply bonded friendship. We start to understand that Kysilkova doesn't just look at Nordland as an aesthetic object. In him, she sees herself, her own trauma, her own addiction, which is painting, creating art out of all the dark and scary things in life.

It is an almost startlingly intimate film, following this strange relationship between these two, as they go through the challenges of life: a car accident that nearly paralyzes Nordland, during which Kysilkova becomes his greatest advocate; a stint in jail for him; her own struggles with relationships and money and her career. A frisson of mystery wafts throughout, the whereabouts of her paintings always on Kysilkova's mind. Ultimately though, it was never really about the paintings, but the grace that came out of their theft, because she chose to look further, to look beyond the crime and see the person behind it.

"The Painter and the Thief" is not rated. Running time: 102 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

ARCADE SPIRITS

Charming visual novel set in an alternate future

BY CHRISTOPHER BYRD
Special to The Washington Post

For those who carry fond memories of basking in the backlit glow of arcade machines, *Arcade Spirits* will elicit some warm fuzzies. This visual novel written by Stefan Gagne and Aenne Schumann is about the ups and downs of a staff working to keep a small-time arcade afloat. The game, which was recently released on consoles, plays on nostalgic feelings with knowing references to game culture while speaking to the economic anxieties that underlie so much of modern life.

Arcade Spirits tells the story of Ari Cader, a 20-something (you can choose Ari's pronouns at the start of the game) whose post-adolescent life has been marked by financial hardship. Owing to an unstable upbringing — punctuated by frequent moves and her parents' slide down the economic totem pole — Ari has adopted a philosophy of apathy. "Going with the flow" is the favored catchphrase she uses to temper her ambitions and protect herself from disappointment. It's also a way for her to come to terms with what she calls the "Cader family curse" — her notion of implacable destiny.

At the start of the game we find Ari, who has just lost another job, in the small apartment she shares with her friend Juniper. Eager to see Ari overcome her fatalistic despondency, Juniper advises her to download "Iris," a digital assistant, to help with her job search. After securing her permission, Iris sifts through Ari's personal data to gain a sense of her interests and motivations and recommends that she apply for a job at an arcade. As it happens, some of Ari's favorite childhood memories — from before her parents' fortunes took a nosedive — were of sinking quarters into arcade machines with nary a concern for the future.

Heeding Iris' advice, Ari wanders over

to the Funplex, a scrappy arcade situated along a strip mall. At the arcade, which was founded in the 1970s and is mostly a haven for retro games, she meets Francine, the Funplex's octogenarian proprietor. Francine leads her through a strange job interview — "If you were a dinosaur, what dinosaur would you be?" — and eventually offers her an entry-level job. Ari's duties include watching over the establishment to make sure that customers are happy and not engaging in unruly behavior as well as helping them to redeem tickets for cheap prizes. Francine tells her that while the Funplex can provide a steady paycheck, the employees who thrive there are those whose dreams align with working at an arcade. Over the rest of the game's eight levels, the narrative explores the trade-offs that arise with following those dreams, where reality is capable of turning them to ash.

If players choose to help Ari fight for her dreams — at different points she can give up on them, which ultimately results in a *Game Over* — they'll encounter the diverse set of employees and enthusiasts whose lives converge around the arcade. Each of these characters has their own struggles. Gavin, the Funplex's business

manager, has a cold demeanor that belies his concern for his fellow employees. Naomi, the arcade's technician who keeps the games running, is more at home with her soldering iron than with new people. Ashley, the Funplex's other floor attendant and costumed mascot, is bubbly and artistic though uncomfortable in her own skin; she excels at cosplay. They, as well as the Funplex's regular patrons, can be romanced if one wishes.

As Ari takes on more responsibilities, Iris records her conversational choices and calculates which traits most exemplify her. Different conversation options are pegged to different character attributes such as gutsy, quirky, kindly, steady (i.e. prudent), and basically (as in basic — a person who sticks with the most pedestrian options). Raising specific character attributes closes off some conversational branches, so the story invites multiple

playthroughs.

Though the story moves around to different locations, many static images are numbingly repeated. The art style, unfortunately, is not strong enough to bear such repetition. The story, on the other hand, held my interest in part for its levity and willingness to look at some of the downsides of gaming, like toxic players. In different ways, "*Arcade Spirits*" also raises the question of whether the Funplex's most devoted patrons would be better off if they spent less time gaming. Accordingly, there is a note of ambivalence in its overall celebration of game culture, which adds a welcome counterpoint.

Arcade Spirits is the video game equivalent of a beach read. It is charming, reliable and knows its audience.

Platforms: Mac, Nintendo Switch, PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One

Online: arcadespirits.com



Role-playing visual novel
Arcade Spirits ignores the
gaming crash of 1983.

PQube photos

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

Lured by the siren song

Lorelei may not sing, but statue's beauty is bewitching

By MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

The myth of a siren, the creature who lures sailors with her song to crash their ships upon rocky shores, is at least as old as Homer's *Odyssey*.

Not as old, but at least as popular in Germany, is Lorelei, the siren with her golden hair and melodic voice, who was the demise of many Rhine River boatmen.

She once sang her song from high atop a rocky outcrop where the Rhine flows at its narrowest point.

Lorelei makes her first appearance in an 1801 Clemens Brentano ballad as Lore Lay, a woman who bewitches and murders men, but falls to her death from a cliff.

It was Heinrich Heine whose 1821 poem made her the river siren, bringing death and despair to boatmen.

The Lorelei rock, where the boatmen supposedly crashed, is an outcrop that rises 410 feet over the river. It gives a foreboding feel to those sailing downriver or driving past it on the highway.

The top of the Lorelei has long been a popular place for a fantastic view of the Rhine valley. From various points you can see where boats maneuver through the narrow opening between the rocks. Downriver is a view of Burg (Castle) Katz on the hillside above St. Goarshausen.

The top of the outcrop has been remodeled and last year the Lorelei culture and landscape park opened, along with a visitors center. Paths lead through rose bushes to the lookout points. Benches

let you rest among the flowers or watch the river. There is even a rock where you can sit and pose, pretending you are Lorelei, high above the Rhine.

The Lorelei is also a stop on the Rheinsteig, a hiking trail that stretches 200 miles from Wiesbaden to Bonn, along the east bank of the Rhine.

If you are hiking, there are stairs that lead down to St. Goarshausen in one direction, or 400 stairs down to the Lorelei statue.

In Heine's poem, she sits on top of the outcrop high above the river, but here the statue of Lorelei stands at the end of a harbor breakwater stretching out into the Rhine.

The only way to get a good look at the siren is to take a 10-minute walk down a rocky path. By Russian artist Natascha Jusopov, it depicts a nude woman with long hair sitting on a rock. It's not quite as romantic as having her sing her siren song from atop the cliff, but the setting also makes a nice place to take a break and watch the ships ply the Rhine.

After visiting Lorelei, take a stroll through St. Goarshausen's old town. It features very narrow cobblestone lanes, a couple of wine taverns and a statue paying tribute to the salmon fishermen that once lived and worked here, the last along the Rhine.

If you haven't had enough adventure, take the ferry across the river to St. Goar and its Burg Rheinfels.

We're saving that for another quick trip on the Rhine.

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The statue of Lorelei stands at the end of a harbor breakwater.



A boat travels up the Rhine River, past the Lorelei, a rock jutting 410 feet above the river. On top of the rock is the main viewing platform with its flags.



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

The statue of Lorelei, the siren that, according to lore, lured sailors to crash their boats on the rocks at the narrowest point of the Rhine River. The statue is by Russian artist Natascha Jusopov.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

From Wiesbaden, the easiest way to get there is to take autobahn A 66 toward Ruedesheim. When it ends, follow highway B 42 to St. Goarshausen. Once there, follow the Lorelei signs up the hill. From the Kaiserslautern area, take A 63 to A 61 to Bingen, then take L 400 to B 9 toward St. Goar. At Engelsburg, take the ferry across the Rhine to Kaub, then B 42 to St. Goarshausen. You can also take the ferry farther up the road at St. Goar over to St. Goarshausen. The address is Auf der Lorelei, Lorelei 7, 56348 Bornich. The parking lot to see the statue is on the left, shortly before reaching St. Goarshausen on B 42.

TIMES

The Lorelei culture and landscape park is open 24/7; the visitors center is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. There are temporary hours due to the coronavirus pandemic. Social distancing on the rock is 6 feet, and masks need to be

worn inside the visitors center. The Lorelei statue can be visited any time, but for safety reasons, it's best to go only during daylight.

COSTS

The Lorelei culture and landscape park and visitors center are free. Parking is 3 euros for the day. The ferry costs 4.80 euros one way, including driver. Adult passengers pay 1.50 euro, children 6 to 14 pay .80 euro.

FOOD

There is a snack bar at the Lorelei culture and landscape park and restaurants in St. Goarshausen, but all are under coronavirus restrictions for now.

INFORMATION

German language-only website: www.loreley-besucherzentrum.de. There is also a summer toboggan run at the Lorelei that just reopened if you want an adventure of a different kind. Info in German: www.loreley-bob.de.

— Michael Abrams

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Southern Europe trying to lure back tourists

By MENELAOS HADICOSTIS
AND BARRY HATTON
Associated Press

The Mediterranean resort town of Ayia Napa is known for its boisterous parties. Each summer, thousands of young foreign tourists pack the dance floors of its night-life district after a day at the beach.

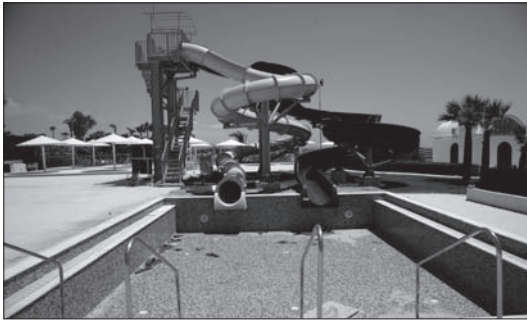
But the pandemic silenced the exuberant Napa Strip district as the island nation of Cyprus went into a lockdown to halt the spread of the coronavirus. Now nightclub owners wonder when social distancing rules will be eased enough for the party to resume — and what that will look like.

“We know at nightclubs, young people will go to dance and have a good time. But then you have to tell them that they have to keep 2 meters (6 feet) apart from each other?” asked Charalambos Alexandrou, the spokesman for a group representing local clubs, bars and restaurants.

Across southern Europe, in places where tourism drives much of the economy, officials are weighing how to entice travelers to come back, even while the pandemic remains a threat. Juggling the sometimes-competing needs of health and business, authorities are introducing measures to reassure visitors that taking a holiday is safe again.

Social distancing rules may work in restaurants, but that’s not likely to solve the quandary facing Ayia Napa’s nightclubs. Others have said this will be “a season of trying to survive,” not seeking a profit.

One idea being considered is asking holidaymakers to take a COVID-19 test prior to their arrival. Cyprus has reported



PETROS KARADIANAS/AP

A swimming pool is empty May 10 at a closed hotel at the popular Cyprus seaside resort of Ayia Napa, a favorite among tourists from Europe and beyond.

916 cases of COVID-19 and 17 deaths.

The country’s deputy minister for tourism, Savvas Perdios, said Cyprus will initially look to bring tourists from nearby countries that have managed to contain the virus — Greece, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and some central European and Nordic nations.

Authorities will take more time to assess the course of the pandemic in the United Kingdom and Russia, the island’s primary tourism markets, before rolling

out the red carpet for those countries.

Tourists in the near future will have to navigate a different set of expectations, routines and rules to counter the virus.

Christos Angelides, president of the Cyprus Hotel Managers’ Association, said new rules being announced soon will mean that from the moment tourists step out of their bus or taxi from the airport, their luggage will be disinfected and taken straight to their rooms. Reception procedures will be done electronically,

with employees behind a plexiglass screen and cleaning staff in full protective gear.

Guests eyeing a vacation in Portugal, another major southern European holiday destination, will probably look beyond a hotel’s online reviews to see if it has the “Clean&Safe” seal now being awarded by local tourism officials. The seal indicates that the establishment, be it a hotel, restaurant or other venue, has enacted recommended hygiene and safety procedures to protect against the virus.

The idea has been a big success in a desperate sector that accounts for 15% of Portugal’s gross domestic product and 9% of the country’s jobs. The online classes needed to obtain the seal are being attended by around 4,000 people a week.

The Portuguese government says discotheques will be the last to open, but many hotels intend to start reopening June 1.

Among the changes being adopted: Guests will not check into their rooms until 24 hours after the last occupant has checked out, to allow time for thorough cleaning and airing of the space. Buffets are unlikely to be offered, but room service is expected to thrive.

Another challenge is how to reopen southern Europe’s famous beaches.

Portugal has come up with a plan to get people back on the sand starting on June 6. Sunbathers must stay 5 feet apart, with umbrellas at least 10 feet apart. New signs and an app will use a traffic-light system of red, yellow and green indicating which beaches are full, partly full or have few people. Paddle boats and water slides will be prohibited.

Explore the colors of the Continent’s Blue Flag beaches

Blue flags with circular white logos depicting a cresting wave flap gently in the wind by beaches throughout the world, assuring would-be bathers that the waters in which they’re about to plunge meet stringent quality standards. The Blue Flag program is operated under the auspices of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark. In order to fly this prestigious eco-label, a series of strict environmental criteria must be met and maintained, and issues pertaining to safety, access and public education must be addressed as well.

In 2019, 3,797 beaches, 695 marinas and 67 boating operations across 47 countries were awarded the right to fly blue flags above their properties. Within Europe, Spain boasts of the most Blue Flag properties, closely followed by France and Greece. Other countries with numerous Blue Flag beaches include Turkey, Italy and Portugal.

While the blue flag logo has nothing to do with a site’s natural beauty, it’s perhaps no surprise that the two so often go hand in hand. Any attempt to pin down Europe’s best beaches in terms of stunning scenery is bound to be contentious; thus, today’s virtual tour instead comes color coded. Here are some Blue Flag beaches where the waters and sands come in delightfully different hues.

Black: Glittery, jet-black sand

resulting from the gradual erosion of lava rocks by the force of the sea is found on the beaches of Stromboli, a small island to the north of Sicily with one of the most active volcanoes on earth. Ficogrande is dotted with pebbles, lapped by crystal-clear



Karen Bradbury

waters and overlooked by rows of tidy, white-washed houses. Out to sea, a rock of volcanic origin known as Strombolichio arises. This

fortress-like formation, a basalt sea stack, is topped by a slender white lighthouse. **Gold:** The aptly named Golden Sands in Bulgaria is more than just your ordinary beach. Located on the Black Sea just north of Varna, the best assets of this wildly popular resort are its light golden sands, clean seas, lush greenery and mineral springs. The two-mile-long stretch of beach is backed by forest and is wide enough to accommodate vast numbers of sun seekers.

A mix of properties including bungalows, campgrounds and five-star luxury hotels makes the area a favorite across all budgets. Many people come to the area seeking balneological treatments as part of rehabilitating centers.

Should looting about in the sun grow old, hiking through endless acres of shady woodlands of hornbeam and oak is another option. Rare orchids are among the 500 species of plants that thrive in this environment. Animals here include roe deer, wild boar and badgers. Caves, the remnants of an ancient basilica and the mysterious Aladsha Monastery, hewn into a karst cliff, beg for exploration.

Orange: The sands of Porto Ferro Beach in Sardinia contain an eye-pleasing mix of crushed shells, volcanic material and orange limestone, which lends the beach a tangerine glow at certain hours of the day. Sweeping views of the mile-long expanse of sand can be taken in from atop one of the tall sand dunes. This somewhat out-of-the-way beach gives off a hippie vibe, and its western exposure ensures great sunsets. Age-old towers flanking the bay, erected to help spot marauding pirates, lend the area additional charm. For a change of pace, leave the chaise longue long enough for a hike to the nearby Lake Baratz, Sardinia’s only saline lake.

Pink: The small island of Elafonisi, in the southwest corner of Crete, is famous for its pastel palette. Millions of microscopic crustaceans gradually ground to bits give the sands their tender pink tone. While the main beach heaves with bodies in high season, the island proper, a nature reserve, offers not only much



iStock

The small, picturesque promontory of Strombolichio is visible from Stromboli’s black beach on the small Italian island north of Sicily.

more space but also rare plants, including sea daffodils. A wide and shallow lagoon provides a habitat for loggerhead sea turtles. At low tide, it’s possible to wade through azure waters to reach this idyllic island. For a stroll that combines a history lesson, make way to the large wooden cross erected in memory of a shipwreck. On Feb. 22, 1907, 38 souls perished when the passenger steam boat Imperatrice lost its way in strong winds. The wreck remains at the bottom of the sea. Sports types might wish to give the Lafonisi Run, typically staged in August, a go: the finish line is in the sea itself.

Blue: It’s not just ocean beaches that can earn blue flags. One of Iceland’s best-known tourist attractions, the Blue

Lagoon thermal spa, is not only unique but also engages in environmentally friendly practices. A geothermal power company drills for the seawater, and after harnessing its energy, it is led directly to Blue Lagoon for bathing, wellness, medical treatments and the harvesting of ingredients for use in skincare products. The water’s milky blue shade is due to its high silica content, and the water temperature in the bathing area tends to hover around a balmy 102 degrees. At 44 euros, entrance to the Blue Lagoon, silica mud mask, towel rental and a drink is a slice of luxury within reach.

To virtually explore all the other Blue Flag beaches and properties, see blueflagglobal/bf-sites.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Customers enjoy the warm spring weather at the Bremerhof beer garden in Kaiserslautern, Germany, while sitting at tables spaced widely apart and no more than six per table.

Reopened under new rules

Enjoy a beer, maintain social distance at Bremerhof beer garden in Kaiserslautern

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Under clear, blue skies in mid-May at the Bremerhof beer garden in Kaiserslautern, Germans did what they do every spring when it's warm enough to sit outdoors: They soaked up the sun and emptied their beer mugs.

But all was not business as usual. The Bremerhof reopened its beer garden on May 13, after a monthslong closure due to the coronavirus, but with strict hygiene rules in place.

Gone, for now, are the long tables crammed with strangers. No longer do guests sit a mere sausage-length away from neighboring diners.

Face masks are a mandatory fashion accessory while walking to a table or the restrooms. Even the servers wear them.

Under new guidelines aimed at preventing a resurgence of the coronavirus, tables are supposed to be a minimum of 6.5 feet apart — and they were at least that, with room to spare, in the Bremerhof's spacious beer garden. It was an odd feeling to have a sense of privacy, along with quiet, in a setting that's typically loud and crowded.



**AFTER HOURS
GERMANY**

It was my first time in a restaurant since the pandemic hit. For the most part, I felt comfortable, mostly because everyone was so spread out and the tables looked clean. They're supposed to be disinfected after each use, but I didn't see it with my own eyes and had to trust that it had been done. I wish I'd brought a few disinfectant wipes to do the job myself, to be certain.

The menu was printed in black and white on disposable paper. I'm guessing it's thrown out after each use, since it would be difficult to sanitize a piece of paper.

Though the food choices are fewer than before the pandemic, there's plenty of variety, from traditional German fare such as rumpsteak or schnitzel to salads and flammkuchen. I tried the goulash, a Hungarian stew with chunks of beef and pork, onion and bell pepper. It was delicious and reasonably priced, at just under 8 euros (less than \$9).



A notice on a table at the Bremerhof beer garden reminds patrons they must wear a face mask when walking or getting up from their seat.

Beer usually flows aplenty in a beer garden — and the Bremerhof serves up the usual German lineup of pils, wheat and dark beer, cola beer and shandy, or radler in German — a 50/50 mix of beer and lemonade. Wine, alcohol-free beer, coffee and juice are also available.

The Bremerhof asks customers to make reservations, but it's possible to be spontaneous and get a table without one. Either way, customers need to leave their names and a phone number, in case they have to be contacted if another guest or a staff member is diagnosed with the virus.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com
Marcus Kloeckner contributed to this story.

THE BREMERHOF

Location: Bremerhof 1, 67663 Kaiserslautern, Germany

Hours: Vary each week; call ahead to check.

Prices: Flammkuchen starts at 8.90 euros (just under \$10); salad range from 9.90 euros to 12.40 euros (\$10.85 to \$13.85); on the more expensive side, larger cuts of rumpsteak (beef steak) cost 19.90 euros (\$21.80). Credit cards are accepted.

English menu: Yes

New rules in place because of coronavirus: Reservations are encouraged but not required; customers must leave their name and contact information before being seated. Face masks are required while moving around the restaurant, including going to the restrooms.

Information: Phone: +49 (0) 631 316 32-0; email: info@bremerhof-kl.de; Online: bremerhof-kl.de; facebook.com/bremerhof

— Jennifer H. Svan



Servers at the Bremerhof beer garden must wear face masks and patrons must wear them when they are not seated at their table.



A bowl of goulash is a tasty lunch option.



The beer garden is surrounded by green fields and lush forest.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



Ruin resolution

American couple finally visits Pompeii site after being stranded in quarantine for 2-plus months

By COLLEEN BARRY
AND ALESSANDRA TARANTINO
Associated Press

An American couple waited a lifetime plus 2½ months to visit the ancient ruins of Pompeii together.

Colleen and Marvin Hewson, retirees from the Detroit area, were first in line when the archaeological site reopened to the public Tuesday following Italy's coronavirus lockdown. Their long-delayed visit capped an unlikely adventure that had stranded them in modern Pompeii, a small tourist town, since early March.

"We have been patiently waiting since then for the ruins to open," Colleen Hewson said as the couple got the chance to stroll through the ruins of the Roman city destroyed in A.D. 79 by a volcanic eruption, trailed by journalists capturing another milestone in Italy's reopening.

"Here we are; we finally made it inside. It only took 2½ months," Marvin Hewson added.

For the Hewsons, seeing Pompeii was meant to be the highlight of a trip celebrating his 75th birthday and their 30th wedding anniversary. Marvin Hewson, a history buff, had visited once while serving in the U.S. Navy in the 1960s and always vowed to get back; the trip was his wife's gift to him.

The couple arrived in Rome on March 5 for the vacation of a lifetime, her first time overseas. By the time they made it to the gates of Pompeii several days later, the popular tourist site was closed and Italy was under lockdown due to the coronavirus epidemic that broke out more than 500 miles to the north.

Attempts to book flights out failed, and they resigned themselves to life under lockdown. Back

in the United States, their four adult children relaxed when they realized their parents were far from the epicenter of Italy's virus outbreak and in good local hands.

"We made a great connection with our Airbnb host family," Colleen, 63, said. The host translated news for her and her husband, and helped keep them busy, tasking them with picking oranges and lemons from trees near the condominium where they stayed and teaching them to make limoncello.

"It helped to pass the time," Marvin said.

Under lockdown, they fell into a routine, walking more than 7,000 steps a day, often to a grocery store near the archaeological site that allowed time to sit on a bench and gaze upon the ruins, "wishing we could be inside," Colleen Hewson said. In all those weeks, "our Italian never got better," she quipped, and they would use charades to communicate things they were looking for in the grocery store.

The couple was leaving Pompeii on Tuesday for Rome, where they planned to spend a couple of days sightseeing before returning home to Michigan at long last. Since Italy's restrictions on movement have eased, their Airbnb host has driven the couple to the Amalfi coast, expressing surprise at the lack of traffic.

The couple said they feel lucky to have been able to spend the lockdown in such a beautiful setting. From their condominium's rooftop, the couple could see Mt. Vesuvius to one side, and the island of Capri to the other.

"We looked at real estate. It would be a dream," Marvin said. "We saved a lot of money because all of the stores were closed. We really are thinking of coming back."



PHOTOS BY ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/AP

For Detroit couple Colleen and Marvin Hewson, above and top right, the visit to the archaeological site of Pompeii, near Naples, was meant to be the highlight of a trip to celebrate his 75th birthday and their 30th anniversary.



The Hewsons pose May 26 with Fabio Sposato, the owner of the apartment where they stayed in modern Pompeii.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Dressed for travel?

CDC: Hazmat suits not necessary on planes

By NATALIE B. COMPTON
The Washington Post

Last year, supermodel Naomi Campbell made headlines when she shared a video of herself very thoroughly sanitizing her Qatar Airlines seat. There were disinfecting wipes involved, plastic gloves and a face mask.

And that was before the coronavirus pandemic.

With the world battling a highly contagious global health threat, Campbell has taken her in-flight hygiene habits a step further by wearing a hazmat suit on board.

Campbell is not alone in wearing hazmat suits on planes. The behavior is becoming more common for regular air travelers, as well as airline staff.

Disposable PPE suits can cost less than \$20 online, but health experts aren't advocating wearing them on planes during the pandemic.

"Wearing a hazmat suit on an airplane is unnecessary and could cause undue concern for other travelers," Scott Pauley, a press officer for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) told The Washington Post in email. "CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain."

Nonetheless, multiple carriers are

requiring flight attendants to wear hazmat suits on planes, including Philippine Airlines, AirAsia and, most recently, Qatar Airways, CNN reported.

On May 18, Qatar Airways announced it would require members of its cabin crew to wear disposable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) suits over their uniforms in addition to other gear including safety goggles, gloves and a mask.

"At Qatar Airways, we have introduced these additional safety measures onboard our flights to ensure the continued health and well-being of our passengers and cabin crew, and to limit the spread of coronavirus," Qatar Airways Group chief executive Akbar Al Baker said in a statement.

According to Adrian Hyzler, chief medical officer for Healex International, a company specializing in security and international medical and travel-assistance services, neither the European Union Airline Safety Association (EASA) nor the International Air Transport Association (IATA) recommends hazmat suits for airline crew unless they're dealing with sick passengers.

Hyzler said one concern with wearing hazmat suits is improperly getting out of them. If there's any trace of the coronavirus on the suit, wearers may come into contact with it as they take off their PPE.



AMER SWEIDAN/Qatar Airways

Qatar Airways announced May 18 it would require its cabin crew to wear disposable Personal Protective Equipment as well as safety goggles, gloves and a mask.

Another issue is they can give the wearer a false sense of security.

"This is something with all PPE that makes the wearer think that they are somehow better protected," Hyzler said. Hyzler warned there are other downsides to wearing hazmat suits.

"There are hundreds of different kinds of hazmat suits, and unless they're sophisticated ones, they may be very hot as well," said Hyzler.

Wearing a hazmat suit at the airport

won't necessarily get you stopped at security. "Travelers are screened at checkpoints regardless of what they are wearing. If they trigger an alarm, it could likely result in a pat-down," TSA spokesperson Lisa Farbstein said in an email.

Hyzler, and the CDC, discourage wearing hazmat suits on planes but still recommend face masks.

"If everyone's wearing a mask, there's reduced risk of (coronavirus) transmission," Hyzler said.

Iceland, Greece plan to reopen borders June 15

From wire reports

Government officials in Greece have announced that the country would open to foreign visitors on June 15.

According to BBC.com, Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis revealed May 20 that travelers arriving at popular destinations around the country would be subjected to coronavirus testing and government-mandated health protocols.

Tourism Minister Harry Theoharis said Greece would provide a list before the end of May consisting of approved countries it would allow visitors from based on "epidemiological criteria" from health and safety experts.

Theoharis said the plan is to allow travelers from approved countries to arrive only through Athens International Airport starting on June 15 before expanding the order to all of Greece's other airports on July 1.

Tourists arriving will not be subjected to a mandatory quarantine.

Iceland also announced last week that it plans to reopen its borders to tourists by June 15. The country will welcome travelers from all over the world, including the United States, but will subject visitors to either testing or quarantine.

The reopening plan could be moved up if the number of cases stays low.

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LODGE and RESORT

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

The wilderness awaits



PHOTOS BY ONDEVAN/TNS

Florida couple's camper vans rigged for comfort, isolation

By TAYLOR DOLVEN
Miami Herald

This was to be the year of expansion to Orlando for Ondevan, a camper van rental dream-turned-business for Hallandale Beach, Fla., residents Omar Bendezu, 34, and Haley Kirk, 28.

"My plan was to have a proper location with someone helping me there part time," Bendezu said. "I was planning to add seven to eight campers this season. My plan was to grow the fleet and grow in the market coverage and grow the business in general."

Those plans evaporated when the COVID-19 pandemic spurred travel restrictions in mid-March. Until then, around 95% of Ondevan's customers were from outside Florida, many international. Kirk remembers the especially grim day that President Donald Trump announced U.S. airports would be closing to European travelers.

"This is supposed to be the high season," she said. "The day after that, it was Omar just receiving call after call after call after call of people trying to figure out if they could cancel their booking."

It was an abrupt blockade for the growing business spawned over coffee at Moises Bakery in Hallandale Beach back in 2017, when Kirk and Bendezu were newbies. A stranger approached them and asked if they would like to buy her RV.

Bendezu, who had always dreamed of being his own boss, asked how much the camper van cost, thinking maybe he could rent it out on Airbnb. "\$5,000," the woman said.

The only parking spot the couple had was in their condo's garage, so they regrettably turned the woman down. But it got them thinking.

"I remembered these types of campers in Australia that tourists were doing, and I thought, 'why don't I do that?'" he said. Where others may have seen an oversaturated market full of hotels, motels and vacation rentals, Bendezu and Kirk saw an opportunity in South Florida's tourism scene: #VanLife.

Bendezu contacted a friend who had a van for sale. It was in terrible shape — and just what he needed, he said. "A really cheap van, so I could remake it."

He worked with a carpenter to tear out the van's insides and replace them with a retractable bed and kitchenette, perfect for road trips through the wilderness. The couple went door to door to ask local business owners who had painted the murals on their walls. One of the artists, Muta, agreed to paint the couple's first van at a live event in Wynwood, Fla., during Art Basel in 2017.

The couple landed on a name for the company: Ondevan, a nod to Bendezu's native Peru where Ondevan is slang for "¿A donde van?" (Where are you all going?).



Within a month, the camper van rental company was born. By the end of the year, their fleet grew to three vans. Tourists from all over the world booked road trips. Some stayed in Florida to explore the Everglades, beaches and natural springs. Others drove cross country to see the Grand Canyon. One couple in their 70s from Spain took an Ondevan all the way to Alaska and back.

With each trip came insight into Florida's most remote paths. The couple put together a state map for tourists based on feedback from customers about where the best natural attractions and bathrooms are located. By December 2019, the fleet had grown to 11 vans, and the couple was able to hire two employees to handle bookings and cleanings in between trips.

Instead of expanding to Orlando, this year the couple scrambled to reset their strategy. They settled on a policy where customers could cancel and get a credit to re-book their trip any time in the next two years, or receive a 50% cash refund and use the other 50% as a credit toward a trip in the next year. So far, it has worked, saving the company some money. But they've seen their bookings plummet. In April 2019, Bendezu they had an occupancy rate of 82%. In April 2020, it was down to 10%.

Normally, the vans rent for around \$120 per day. Now, they are available for around \$69 per day.

Overnight, the company pivoted to focus on South Floridians, who are desperate for some travel after weeks of isolation, by offering a 30% discount. They launched a new business offering camping gear rentals for people who may not have enough money to spend on a van and still want to get outdoors. They listed the company on a website promoting local businesses during the pandemic called Support Local Florida and tweaked the main messaging on their website, which now reads, "Let's save travel together, book your trip with a local business."

Now all of their customers are from South Florida, most of them on long road trips while they can work remotely.

"Many people didn't know I existed," said Bendezu. "They're finding the company, they are excited by the photos. Now people have the time to do all these long trips. All my customers are local."

If bookings remain this low for the rest of the year, the couple will need to reassess the business. So far they've

been able to keep their two employees working part-time, but with or without customers, they have to pay for auto insurance, parking rentals and administration fees that add up quickly. So far, they've received a loan of \$1,000 from the Small Business Administration, and will be approaching banks about private loans.

The couple had planned to move into a house they bought last year, but instead they'll remain in their one-bedroom rental and continue renting out the house to a tenant. It's a small sacrifice compared to other small business owners who have fared far worse, they said.

"When that travel mandate went down, especially because most of the customers were international, that was really scary," Kirk said. "Right now we're a little optimistic. Right now we've gone through the worst of the terror."



JOSE A. IZULIAS, EL NUEVO HERALDO/TNS

Haley Kirk, left, and Omar Bendezu, owners of Ondevan, a company that provides camper vans to tourists to travel around the U.S., are pictured May 5, in Miami.

Top: One of the vans in Ondevan's fleet in Miami. The interior of the modified vans rented by Ondevan, insets, offers a retractable bed and kitchenette to make camping more convenient and comfortable.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

With sand so pure, it squeaks

Florida's Grayton Beach tops list of best beaches in America

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON
Associated Press

The sand along the coast of Grayton Beach State Park is so unique, some say it speaks to you. It's compared to sugar, and is so white it's almost blinding in bright sunlight. And people who have been cooped up because of stay-at-home orders can once again go walk along it and hear the unique sound the beach makes when bare feet sink in the sand.

"It's that fine powdery sand that talks to you," said Dave Rauschkolb, a restaurant owner, surfer and beach enthusiast who lives nearby. "The 'squeak, squeak, squeak' of the sand when you walk in it."

It's a large reason the beach was picked as the best in the United States by Stephen "Dr. Beach" Leatherman, a coastal scientist and professor at Florida International University, who has been ranking the nation's beaches for 30 years.

"It's some of the finest white sand in the world. The first time I saw it I felt like I had to put on sunglasses, it was so bright. Some people thought it was snow, I said, 'No that's not snow!'" Leatherman said with a laugh. "The sand is the highest quality in the world. It's pure quartz crystal."

It is one of two Florida beaches that were on the 2020 list released May 21, along with Caladesi Island State Park at No. 6. The other beaches on the list, in order, are Lignumvitae Beach on Ocracoke Island, N.C.; Coopers Beach in Southampton, N.Y.; Duke Kahanamoku Beach in Oahu, Hawaii; Lighthouse Beach in Buxton, N.C.; Hanalei Beach on Big Island, Hawaii; Coast Guard Beach on

Cape Cod, Mass.; Coronado Beach in San Diego, Calif.; and Beachwalker Park on Kiawah Island, S.C.

Leatherman says he gives bonus points for beaches where smoking is banned and that are staffed with lifeguards, which elevated the North Carolina beaches.

"Beaches are not big, giant ashtreys, and that's what some people use them for, which is really disgusting," Leatherman said.

Grayton Beach State Park won the list's top spot — even without a smoking ban — based on its sheer beauty. Beyond the sand, it has crystal-clear emerald water, freshwater ponds that are a geological rarity and towering dunes that are unique along Florida's 1,350 miles of coastline.

Even the walk from the parking lot is special, Rauschkolb said.

"You have to take what I call the tree tunnel trail," he said. "You can just walk in this little wonderland under the canopy of the scrub oak and poke your head out and suddenly see the Gulf."

While there are currently some restrictions at the nearly 2,000-acre park because of the coronavirus outbreak, it is open. Groups larger than 10 are not allowed and the park is controlling capacity to allow for social distancing. Cabins and camping are temporarily closed.

In normal times, the park attracts 500 to 1,000 people during peak summer days. But with 1.5 miles of beach and plenty of trails, it doesn't get overcrowded, said Ben Faure, who manages 37 state parks in the Panhandle for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

"Grayton Beach is one of the gems along the Emerald Coast of Florida," Faure said. "We like to call it a desert



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION/AP

Beachgoers walk on a boardwalk at Grayton Beach State Park in Santa Rosa Beach, Fla.

oasis. It really is a unique place with the sugar-white sands that are almost 99.9% pure quartz. Your feet squeak as you walk on the beach, it's so pure."

Lynn Cherry, a board member of the nonprofit support group Florida Parks Foundation, lives about an hour from the park and has visited many times.

"Oh, the fishing is great at Grayton Beach! I have caught lots of fish at Grayton Beach State Park," Cherry said.

And the Gulf of Mexico tends to have calmer surf than Florida's Atlantic Ocean beaches.

"On a typical day, it's a nice surf and very enjoyable swimming," she said.



RUNNING MAN PICTURES, FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION/AP

The sugar-white sand and emerald-green water of Grayton Beach State Park in Santa Rosa Beach, Fla., helped it earn No. 1 on Dr. Beach's 2020 list of best beaches in the U.S.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Tweets of a different kind

As the pandemic quiets the human world, wild birds seem to be singing even louder

By DARRYL FEARS
The Washington Post

In a strange new world where the volume was suddenly turned down — empty sidewalks, less traffic and fewer early-morning leaf blowers — people stuck in their homes are tuning their ears to a sweet natural sound they've long taken for granted: bird songs.

Across the country, scientists who study birds say they're besieged by family members and friends asking the same question: Is the bird population exploding?

"I'm hearing from a lot of people saying, wow, there are so many birds," said T. Scott Sillett, a wildlife biologist who heads the Smithsonian's Migratory Bird Center, which runs the national Neighborhood Nestwatch — a kind of bird census conducted by volunteers. Sillett shakes his head.

"For one, we're hearing more birds because there's less human noise, fewer tires humming and horns," he said. "We're less conspicuous in our houses, and the birds are coming down to see. People are saying, wow, this bird is nesting right here under my window."

The bird was probably there all along.

"There's a surge in interest in birdwatching right now," said Mike Parr, president of the American Bird Conservancy. "People are in their houses and running out of Netflix and Zoom meetings and wondering what to do and they're realizing there are birds in their backyards."

The scientists, or bird nerds as they're called, say it would take more than a year of research before they could answer whether more robins, meadowlarks, blue jays, orioles, cardinals and sparrows are out because people are in. But they're sure about one thing: More people are paying attention.

Each year, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology holds an annual Global Big Day of birdwatching, which happened this year on May 9. The organizers didn't notice an unusual increase in birds, but the number of people participating in the event rose to 50,000, a 45% increase from the year before, said Ian Davies, a project leader for eBird, the online portal that runs the event.

The birds they sighted and checked on a list grew 40% because there were so many pairs of staring eyes. "Not only was it up that Saturday, but over the past six weeks, participation has been up about 50%, our largest growth," Davies said. "People are just turning to birds. They're looking out their windows and getting fascinated by them."

John Fitzgerald, executive director of the Cornell Lab, says he knows one reason people think there are more birds than before: It's spring. Birds are flocking back from South America

and the southern United States to mark territories and mate.

Both actions involve a ton of singing. Cardinals, blue jays and robins are tweeting boundaries to territories they've staked out. They're also tweeting for love, acting on hard-wired impulses to get busy, lay eggs and fly south with a new generation of birds before winter.

The irony is that scientists say bird populations have been declining over the past few decades. A study in September showed that nearly 3 billion birds have been lost in North America since 1970, a 29% drop in the United States and Canada.

Fewer sparrows and finches are visiting bird feeders every year, the study said. And the flutelike song of the western meadowlark is fading to silence. With such a reduction in bird totals, it would take a major drop in noise pollution to better hear those that remain, experts said.

One scientist is trying to determine if the coronavirus pandemic quarantines are having an impact on bird behavior and populations. Olivia Sanderfoot, a National Science Foundation graduate researcher at the University of Washington, launched a study that will observe bird feeders while monitoring air quality and noise pollution in the Pacific Northwest.

When the study launched on April 1, "I thought we would be able to get a few family and friends or maybe 30 volunteers," Sanderfoot said. She now has 860.

"Yes, I do think the quarantine has to do with the number of volunteers. I don't think we would have gotten this support if this were a typical spring," Sanderfoot said. She called it "a very powerful data set for ecology. I could not go to 800-plus locations across the Pacific Northwest every week."

For the study, birdwatchers have to commit to standing at one predetermined station for 10 minutes to record all the birds they see or hear. The information they collect is logged into eBird and reviewed.

The plan is to build a model of bird habitats in Washington, Oregon and Northern California and record their behaviors during a period of improved air quality and fewer cars on roads.

"I will only be able to better understand how social distancing impacted birds once we have 2021 data," Sanderfoot said.

"One thing that's especially true in urban and high-density [areas], greatly reduced human traffic leaves more acoustic space out there," Fitzgerald said. "Birds do respond negatively to a lot of human noise, according to acoustic studies. It's quite reasonable to imagine birds are using more of that space with people in their houses. City parks are usually overrun with human beings, and now species are stopping to check them out and use them."



iStock

As human-created noise has lessened amid the coronavirus pandemic, people are taking more notice of the birds in their backyards, such as these American goldfinches.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

A world built of pillows and blankets

Fort-building can help kids process COVID-19 on their own terms

BY SUSAN C. MARGOLIN
Special to The Washington Post

My friend texts a photo from her living room — a mound of yellow- and green-fringed blankets draped over a chair, framed by a wall of couch pillows.

"I need to go find a dark hole to climb into," she writes. "Like this." It is her son's fort, which he erected on the first day of remote learning. It is now his reading nook when he ditches online classes. He sleeps there, too.

Being cooped up inside is hard. So in our living rooms, bedrooms and basements, kids are turning to fort-building to create safe havens as the COVID-19 world feels out of their control.

In Farmington, Mich., 9-year-old Malia Mitchell has not left her two-bedroom apartment for weeks, except for family drives. She understands why, but also worries about her grandparents' and great-grandparents' health.

So Malia built a fort behind the couch that she calls "my little apartment," stocked with snacks, stuffed animals, blankets and an iPad charger. It is her go-to place to FaceTime friends, relax away from her parents and sister, eat and sleep.

"We don't have a large space, but I feel like she needs her own little place — maybe just to process what's going on or to be alone," her mother says.

Forts have always been a part of childhood, says David Sobel, professor emeritus at Antioch University's education department and author of "Children's Special Places: Exploring the Role of Forts, Dens, and Bush Houses in Middle Childhood." Sobel researched the developmental function forts play in children's lives across cultures. They are universal, he says, driven by "biological genetic disposition" as children develop a "sense of self," separate from parents.

Metaphorically and physically, building forts reflects children's growth as individuals, Sobel says; they create a "home away from home," free from parental control.

All forts, according to Sobel, share common traits: They are handmade, somewhat secretive and "you can look out, but others can't see in." They are safe — physically and emotionally.

Inside, forts are kids' private, secure worlds. "I feel like you're in a safe place, your own bubble of coziness," says 11-year-old Grayson Drewry, of Port Townsend, Wash. "There are no



other things affecting you — you're blocked out from the world.

"Everything is wrong right now, but it's a safe space where no one worries about you," she adds. "If you locked yourself in your room, people would worry, but if you hide in your fort all day, no worries."

Grayson's mother, Tiffany Drewry, agrees, saying that an assigned school fort-building competition lifted Grayson's spirits. For the school competition, Grayson transformed her room into a pastel-pink tent constructed with sheets and pillows propped up by a mop. She decorated it with photos, created a welcome video and spent most of her day inside.

"I needed that," Grayson told her mom. But are quarantine forts any different from the archetypal rainy day or weekend forts?

"It's the same, but intensified," says Emily King, a child psychologist in Raleigh, N.C. "Kids make sense of the world through play. In quarantine, all our needs are amplified."

Fort-building can help kids process this unnerving new reality on their own terms — through imagination and, most importantly, control.

"Everything is different," King says. "They're facing uncertainty — not knowing how long we're going to be doing this." With so much disruption, "They're feeling what we're all feeling — great loss."

Without familiar routines, children need to feel in control of something, she adds. "What everyone kids create in their imaginative world feels safe and predictable to them. It's like 'Every time I go into this fort, it will be just like I left it.'"

Forts also help children reset their stressed

bodies and brains, says Carol Stock Kranowitz, educator and author of "The Out-of-Sync Child." The darkness inside a fort eliminates the stimulus they do not need and intensifies what they do need — such as physical comfort and solitude.

In the COVID-19 world, our nervous systems are on high alert. We are wired to defend ourselves from environmental threats — which feel more acute for kids with sensory issues.

Our brains react with "self-therapy" for protection, Kranowitz says. Self-therapy can also be soothing and fun, such as with forts.

"It's primal," she says.

Kranowitz adds that everyone can relate to the impulse to build forts.

"It's all about safety and control. We seek out comfort. We need to restore order," she says. "And in COVID, we're doing more of these things." A person who likes chocolate may eat a little more. A walker may go farther, longer. A child who builds forts constructs more elaborate ones. And maybe moves in for a while.

King, Sobel and Kranowitz agree that forts can nourish parent-child connections, under one condition: Children must be in charge. Parents can help build or enter, but only if invited.

"Don't mess with their fort," King says. Do not take over, alter or dismantle it. If the fort is tolerable, she adds, "let them go to town on making it feel safe and comfortable. It's theirs."

If a child asks for help, "enter whatever world they create," Sobel says.

Six-year-old Nacelle Bumford of Forest Hill, Md., alternates among several forts in quarantine — including a tent she calls her "office."

"We use them as her safe place," her mother, Linette Bumford says. Inside, Nacelle savors two minutes of "cuddle time," which benefits them both. "She calls me into her 'office' for meetings that we both schedule on her calendar. It makes her feel in control of her day."

Parents and children feed off one another, after all. We absorb and deflect one another's moods. That may be true now more than ever.

"If I were to build a fort or lock myself in the bathroom for time away, everybody would think that something's wrong," Drewry says. "But I think that a lot of adults are doing the same thing now, whether it's in the bathroom, the laundry room or bedroom. I have to tell you it's the same impulse. We all need comfort now."

WEEKEND: MUSIC



Brad Paisley
recently wrote
online with Country
Music Hall of
Famer "Whisperin"
Bill Anderson,
inset.

Paisley photo: AP
Anderson: Adkins Publicity

BY KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

During a recent songwriting session, singer-songwriters Sarah Loethen and Christoffer Wadensten pieced together the lyrics and melody of a song they were writing about the global pandemic.

Loethen played the first verse and Wadensten, who performs under the artist name Meadows, came up with a melody for the chorus on his acoustic guitar.

But as Wadensten started to play, he realized that Loethen couldn't see his fingers playing the chords. His guitar had fallen below the frame of his video screen, so he raised his guitar and tried again. "Yes, that's tasty!" Loethen responded after playing the melody herself many thousands of miles away.

This songwriting session spans two continents. Loethen lives in Fayetteville, Ark., while Wadensten is in Örebro, Sweden. But like many songwriters and artists confined to their homes during the pandemic, they are still collaborating with each other as technology allows.

Remote songwriting during the pandemic gives a creative outlet for many writers and performers who can't tour or record right now, but still need to exercise their craft. Writers and artists are relying on technology to co-write and record songs remotely while many recording studios were shuttered because of the spread of the new coronavirus around the world. But many say co-writing songs online requires a learning curve that can be technically challenging and also difficult

Many songwriters going online to craft the next hit remotely

to do long term.

"The only thing I really struggle with is the timing difference, not really being able to play together," said Loethen, of the slight audio and video delay that comes with most video conference call software. "There's sound cutting in from time to time and there might be some lag. It's not too bad."

Luckily the two actually met in person to co-write months before the pandemic through the songwriting residency program called House of Songs in Bentonville, Ark., which has been helping to set up more remote co-writing sessions with artists living in different locations during the pandemic.

"I don't generally do a lot of co-writes," Wadensten said. "I feel very good doing this with Sarah because I know a bit more how that works and how our chemistry is."

In Nashville, hit songwriters spend hours every day writing with each other, sometimes at a house, or a publisher's office, or a recording studio. So when state and local officials started issuing stay-at-home orders, the writers moved online

with Zoom or Skype to keep their musical ideas flowing.

"I actually love it, to be honest," said Ross Copperman, a producer and writer in Nashville who has co-written 17 No. 1 country hits, including his latest, "Nobody But You," performed by Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani.

"I have found that it works really good if somebody has a studio that can make tracks," Copperman said from his home in Nashville. As a producer, too, he's been using various iPhone apps and other technology that can be used at home to finish songs for upcoming albums.

"Michael Hardy used, like, a headset speaker microphone plugged into his iPhone, and the vocal sounded incredible," said Copperman. He said he's been trying to stay busy despite the slowdown in the music industry and has been working remotely with artists like Dustin Lynch and Michael Ray. But he admits that the attention that video calls require can be draining.

"My attention is good for, like, an hour and half on Zoom, and then I just start kinda getting a headache," he said.

Grammy-winning songwriter and producer Shane McAnally, who has co-written hits like "Body Like a Back Road" by Sam Hunt and "Space Cowboy" by Kacey Musgraves, is less of a fan of video-call songwriting.

"I have a hard time with it because I am the kind of person who needs to feel the other person in the room and tap into their energy," said McAnally, who said he's been writing online with Brandy Clark. McAnally also said the sound quality on video calls is lacking, and he finds himself getting distracted easily when staring at a screen.

"It's hard for me to stay focused," he said. "It feels very one dimensional."

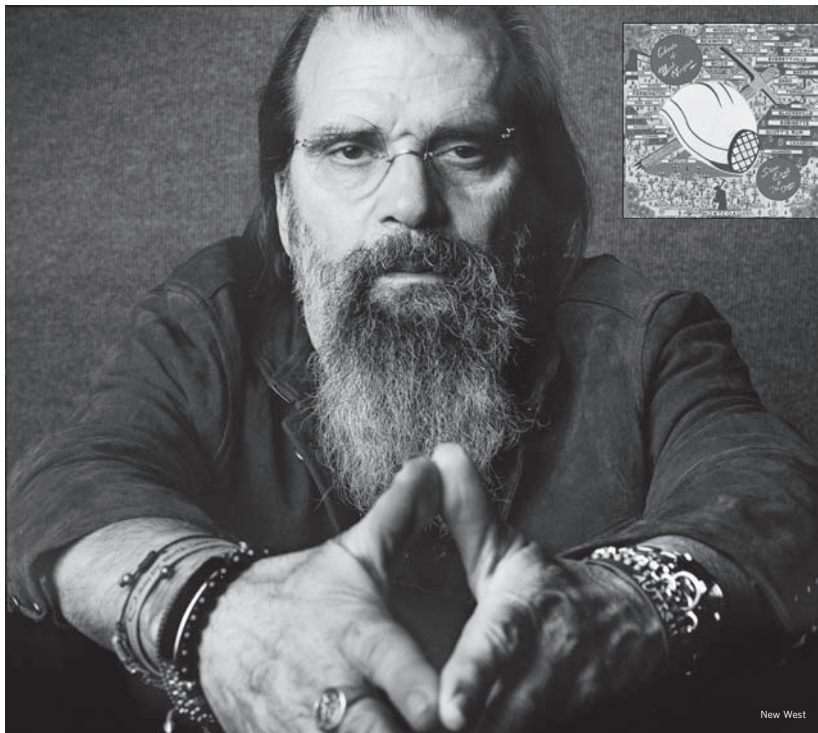
Country star Brad Paisley said he's been experimenting with online co-writing for a while. He even co-wrote his 2007 song "Online" over Skype. He said he feels more dialed in when he's online with a co-writer.

"You're focused," Paisley said from his home in Franklin, Tenn., where he recently wrote online with Country Music Hall of Famer "Whisperin'" Bill Anderson. "In writers sessions, there's so much that happens. There's, like, small talk about family. You get distracted by a text."

Paisley said that having his own recording studio at home has helped him stay productive at home during the stay-at-home orders. He re-recorded parts of his latest single, "No I In Beer," at his home.

"I am trying to be creative," Paisley said. "I've got nothing on my schedule until 2021 at this point. I hope that's not true. I hope there's some tour dates that we still play this year."

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS



New West

Steve Earle & the Dukers

Ghosts of West Virginia (New West)

Contemplating the treacherous political landscape of West Virginia, Steve Earle decided to build a bridge.

The singer-songwriter known for his liberal views undertook a project that would speak for the other side on the issue of coal mining. Earle's empathetic attempt to address the divide has resulted in one of his best albums: "Ghosts of West Virginia."

The set draws material from the 2010 Upper Big Branch mine explosion that killed 29 men. Earle wrote folk songs for a play about the disaster, and has used them as the foundation of a concept album that considers coal's role in the life of West Virginians from their perspective.

Earle's grunting, gravelly tenor is perfectly cast as he assesses the state's mythology and geology. On the song "It's About Blood," a fanfare for the common man, Earle lists the victims of the 2010 tragedy, his voice more anguished with each name recited.

"Black Lung" offers a nuanced, wrenching look at another aspect of the risky profession. "If I Could See Your Face Again" is a lament from a miner's widow sung beautifully by Eleanor Whitmore, part of the crack quartet that provides Earle with mostly acoustic support in mono, reinforcing the rootsy vibe.

There's poetry in the simple observations of the songs, which are even more topical than Earle intended as his characters weigh the need to make money versus the risk of not being able to breathe. Sound familiar?

—Steven Wine
Associated Press

**Indigo Girls**

Look Long (Rounder)

"Look Long" is the Indigo Girls' first studio album in five years, a passionate and tuneful collection on which the combined voices of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers sound as instinctive and magical as ever.

Recorded in England at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios, it's where they made 1999's "Come On Now Social," one of their most memorable albums.

This one forgoes the all-star guests, which then included Sheryl Crow and Garth Brooks, but it sees the return of producer-drummer John Reynolds and some of the excellent supporting players, like bassist Clare Kenny and keyboardist Carol Isaacs.

With 11 songs covering themes from romance and parenting to family memories, gun culture and gay identity, Ray and Saliers do their best to rinse the salt out of a few wounds, gently dress others and also attempt some preventive care.

The yearning "Country Radio" is about "just a gay kid in a small town" who hears and loves the songs, even if the stories don't quite fit his identity.

"Feel This Way Again" and "Favorite Flavor" deal with the challenges of being a parent, the sweet harmonies and banjo of the former reminding of the Dixie Chicks, while the latter is a joyful pop tune with backing vocals from Lucy Wainwright Roche. It's a quirky creation, like a collaboration between fellow Georgians R.E.M. and the B-52s.

Indigo Girls are their most elemental and best on "Look Long," with Reynolds and the ace band sprucing up the tunes without breaking the duo's foundational folk-rock mold.

—Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press

**Marshall Chapman**

Songs I Can't Live Without (Tallgrass Records)

As Marshall Chapman sings the great North American songbook on her new album, the style of tunes chosen is all over the map, probably because they came from such diverse locales as New York, Tennessee, Detroit, Oklahoma and Canada.

That's part of the beauty to "Songs I Can't Live Without," and Chapman makes them all her own. The South Carolina native, who lives in Nashville, covers nine mostly familiar tunes so convincingly it's easy to envision her recording an entertaining set devoted to any one of the composers.

Leonard Cohen, for example, would be a good choice. Chapman's slight twang and thoughtful phrasing bring out the wit in his "Tower of Song."

Her sultry alto is a fine match for Bob Seger's road-warrior narrative "Turn the Page."

There are compelling performances of songs identified with Johnny Cash, Chet Baker, J.J. Cale, Bobby Charles and Elvis. The lean arrangements throughout benefit from the work of guitarist Will Kimbrough, who masterfully creates appropriate atmospheres.

The finale is the sauntering gospel of "He's Got the Whole World In His Hands," with Chapman resurrecting a favorite from her childhood. She grew up to become a fine songwriter, but it's her skills as a interpreter that make this album — her 14th — perhaps her best.

—Steven Wine
Associated Press

**Victor Wainwright and the Train**

Memphis Loud (Ruft)

Here's an hourlong set to help fill the void created by all of those canceled summer music festivals.

"Memphis Loud" was tracked live in the studio by Victor Wainwright and the Train, creating a vibe suitable for a crowd enjoying a sunny, lazy weekend afternoon, when time seems to slow down.

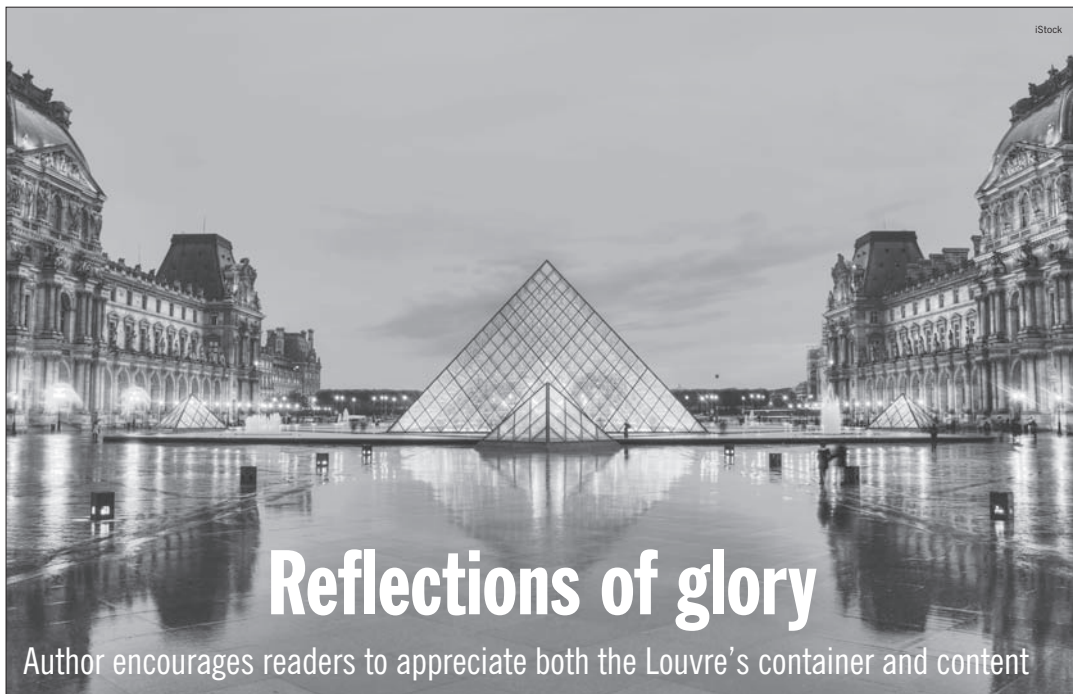
The Memphis-based Wainwright and his six-piece band are right for the job because they serve up something for everyone with their rootsy, funky, well-cooked jam-band mix of R&B, jazz and Americana. Influences run deep, and piano man Wainwright even honors Little Richard with his shouts of "Woo!"

"Everybody start a party," Wainwright sings on the opener "Mississippi," and that sums up the mood. But there's plenty of variety to the arrangements. "Walk the Walk" is fueled by joyful syncope, the witty "South End of a North Bound Mule" could be a country hit, and foggy Duke Ellington-style horns on the ballad "Sing" suggest a product of the theater.

Wainwright and the Train lose steam at the end with a dog song and a too-long gospel-style finale. But the rest of "Memphis Loud" deserves an audience, even if it can't be at a festival.

—Steven Wine
Associated Press

WEEKEND: BOOKS

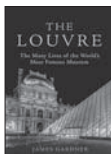


Reflections of glory

Author encourages readers to appreciate both the Louvre's container and content

By CHARLES TRUEHEART
Special to *The Washington Post*

The Louvre is shuttered now, empty of human-kind for the first time in eight centuries. But in a normal year, 10 million people cross the threshold of the world's largest museum, one of the biggest structures on the planet. They can be a bewildering, even forbidding, experience. The Louvre's 36,000 holdings, only a 10th of which are on display, are chronologically diffuse and promiscuously inclusive. The building's eccentric footprint and daunting size — its longest gallery is nearly a half-mile long — may be why most visitors settle for paying their respects at the five stations of the cross: the Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, "Liberty Leading the People" and the gift shop.



In his courageous and erudite new book, "The Louvre: The Many Lives of the World's Most Famous Museum," critic James Gardner is bold to take in, and take on, what few mortals have the chance or the stamina to do. Think of reading this book as the full experience you are temporarily denied today, or may

never have had the energy to undertake.

Along among the greatest museums of the contemporary age, the Louvre was not built as a museum. The foundations (unearthed only recently) date to the 12th-century fortress of that name, and upon them were erected over centuries a sprawling palace that became, off and on, the seat of the French monarchy.

In whatever incarnation, the Louvre has always been intimately tied to the glorification of the French king and, before and after royalty's final demise in 1871, to the transcendent eminence of France. Yet as a residence it had to share the monarch's affections with other, more sumptuous dwellings (Amboise, Blois, Fontainebleau). Louis XIV spent the first decades of his long reign enhancing and investing in the Louvre, then abandoned it entirely for the magnificent palace he built at Versailles, where he moved the court. The Louvre stood idle and decaying for more than a century afterward.

The Louvre grew up and out (westward), not abstractly but toward another magnificent pile, the Palais des Tuileries. The museum's 1610 Grande Galerie — in Gardner's words, "pharaonic in ambition and almost superhuman in scale" — was conceived as a grand passageway to the Tuileries, home to the kings and the Napoleons. In 1871, at the bloody end of Napoleon III's rule,

the angry citizens of the capital burned the Tuileries to the ground, making it a "phantom limb," today remembered by the eponymous gardens that stretch to the Place de la Concorde.

That bitter denouement of the Second Empire does not diminish the Bonapartes' contributions to the Louvre. Napoleon I was a prodigious looter of art and antiquities from every realm he conquered, of course, but the credit for the great museum as we know it goes especially to his nephew Napoleon III, in power from 1848 to 1870. His passionate reinvigoration of the Louvre as a public showcase for

Western civilization's greatest art is singular in a reign better remembered for the wholesale modernization of the Paris cityscape, which the emperor delegated to Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann.

The contemporary visitor to the Louvre enters via the Carroussel, through the late-20th-century glass pyramid of architect I.M. Pei. That once-shocking addition and the radical reorientation of the whole museum created a new public nexus in a zone that was originally the Louvre's unlovely backside. One casualty, for Gardner — who admires the Pei — is the facade

few visitors today may see: the one that faces east. Often called the Colonnade, and in contrast to the "drab adequacy" of the facade facing the pyramid, this eastern front is "as fine a piece of architecture, classical or otherwise, as will be found anywhere in the world."

Here and throughout, Gardner is intent on persuading us to see the Louvre for itself, to appreciate the container as much as the content.

Most visitors to the Louvre today do not come to admire its interiors but what those interiors contain. They are so eager to get to the paintings on the second floor that they most often ignore the stairways that enable their ascent. They are so dazzled by the masterpieces on the walls that they miss the ceilings of those chambers, ceilings which, to the "period eye" of the Second Empire, were among the crowning glories of the age. Every molecule of the Louvre's Second Empire interiors feels charged with meaning and formal consequence, and each room is a product of hundreds of discrete acts of aesthetic judgment.

As for the museum's best-known artifact, the tiny Mona Lisa (La Joconde), Gardner recalls that Leonardo da Vinci's early-16th-century portrait became the icon it is today only in the late 19th century, and ponders the peculiarity of its celebrity. He laments the difficulty of appreciating the painting from



Many visitors are so eager to admire the Louvre's art and displays that they fail to appreciate the building's magnificent interior.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

“Watchmen: An HBO Limited Series”: HBO’s “Watchmen” was one of the best-reviewed TV series of 2019. And because show creator and runner Damon Lindelof decided to walk away after the first season, the show begins and ends here.

The HBO series used the 1980s comic book of the same name as a base, but then charted its own course. With a strong focus on racial animosity in America, the series opened with a graphic depiction of the real-life 1921 Tulsa, Okla., race massacre, where a white mob attacked black residents and businesses. The show also included the supernatural creations from the comic for an interesting mix. “It’s a gumbo of genres,” series star Regina King told the *Los Angeles Times*. “And everyone loves gumbo.”

Also available on DVD:

“1BR”: A horror movie where a woman realizes her “perfect” apartment may not be so perfect. **“Debt Collectors”:** A martial arts expert finds work as a debt collector for the mob.

“Harley Quinn: The Complete First Season”: The DC anthology stars in her own animated series.

“Robert The Bruce”: Angus Macfadyen stars as the Scottish king in this sequel to Oscar-winner “Braveheart.”

“Rogue Warfare: The Hunt”: Commandos seek to rescue their leader from terrorists.

“Witches in the Woods”: A students’ snowboarding trip goes wrong — very, very wrong.

—Tribune News Service

FROM PAGE 34

a crowded distance and behind tinted bulletproof glass, but “the main impediment to appreciating Mona Lisa, oddly, is our constant exposure to it... like a dollar bill or an American flag, it is so familiar that we no longer see it.”

Gardner is keen to explore the “many lives” of his subtle and to point out all the ways the Louvre even today remains a work in progress and polyfunctional. It had military uses from the outset and episodically into recent times. It once housed (and the king underwrote) many of the artists and artisans whose work would adorn the palace and museum. The French Ministry of Finance occupied what is now the Richelieu wing, along rue de Rivoli, until 1993.

President François Mitterrand, who served from 1981 to 1995, masterminded the remake of the complex, which created underground one of the biggest retail malls, biggest convention centers and biggest parking garages in Paris. Gardner, bless his heart, does not overlook even the most prosaic of these. The twilight acres of subterranean parking are “a stunning achievement, if not a thing of beauty,” he observes, “and can even be read as a sly parody of the glittering, sunlit splendor of the upper regions.”

Open the book and enjoy the visit.



HUNGRY FOR MAGIC

Netflix show host says viewers need an escape from quarantine

By KEVIN C. JOHNSON
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The third season of Justin Willman’s “Magic for Humans” launched this month on Netflix, and it may be just the trick to elevate quarantined viewers’ spirits.

Willman says the timing of the new season is a blessing when people need it.

“Right now people are craving escapism, wanting something to watch and feel good about, something you can watch with your grandmother and kids,” he says.

The series blends magic, comedy and social experiments without the use of CGI or camera tricks. The seven new episodes were filmed in 2019 and will explore themes of fear, self-care, tradition, vices and more.

Willman, 39, typically would’ve spent the past couple of months promoting “Magic for Humans” on talk shows. Instead, he’s at home in Los Angeles with his wife, Jill Sippkins, and their 1½-year-old son, Jackson.

Even from home, though, he’s busy promoting his show.

“I’m playing to the new medium and still blowing minds within these limitations and challenges and coming up with creative strokes,” he says. “We were thrown a curveball, but it’s a curveball we’re able to handle.”

Being in quarantine, he says, has been a shock to the system. He had been scheduled to be on his “Magic in Real Life” tour, “and all in the course of a week, everything slowed to a halt.”

“It’s super sad, but I’m trying to find the silver lining — trying to make the best of it,” he said.

Willman has been enjoying spending time with his son, who appears with him in a series of occasional videos on social media. Jackson unwittingly spoils his dad’s “Quarantined Magic Lessons.”

“He’s at an age where everything is magic to him — he’s a funny straight man,” Willman says. “I’ve discovered he has a pretty

amazing comic timing, busting me on my tricks. People are finding it very funny. I found its comedic angle truly by accident.”

“I’m looking forward to showing it to him when he’s older. He’ll probably roll his eyes at me.”

Willman hopes to inspire other young magicians with his Social Distancing Magician Starter Kit.

“I always wanted to make a magic kit and put it out there,” says Willman. As a youngster, he was disappointed with the quality of the magic kits that were available. Back then, he became interested in magic after breaking both arms in a fall (from a bike, while wearing in-line skates). During his recovery, he felt isolated.

“This was my chance,” he says. “I’ve got time now, so I said, ‘Let’s create that magic kit.’ We’re all stuck in our homes feeling helpless.”

“The response has been great. A lot of parents are getting it for their kids, but they’re also getting it for themselves. Some of the parents always liked magic, but never had a chance to do it.”

Proceeds from the kits (\$49 at justinwillman.com) go to DirectRelief.org, a COVID-19 relief fund, and the End Alzheimer’s Association’s efforts in the Alzheimer’s community, which is being hit disproportionately by the pandemic. Willman’s mother, Sonja Willman, has Alzheimer’s. The final episode of season two of “Magic for Humans” addressed her recent diagnosis.

Willman says the pandemic will cause viewers to see elements of the series through a different lens. In a recurring segment called “Close-Up Magic,” he approaches strangers and leans in so close that their noses nearly touch.

“Hey, you wanna see some close-up magic?” he asks them. “And I do the trick right to their noses. With social distancing, it now takes on an element of danger we didn’t expect.”

Another episode finds Willman performing magic at a nudist colony — where he’s

also naked.

“It may sound scandalous on the surface,” he says, but the episode includes a lot of blurred scenes. The episode plays to his fear of being onstage without clothes.

“As a magician, it takes on an extra layer. I need pockets — places to put my stuff. I need my props. In the fear episode, I pick five of my real-life fears and face them head-on.”

In season three, he also lampoons influencer culture, levitates at a car wash and talks to kindergartners about their bucket lists.

Videos from the show have been viewed more than 150 million times on social media.

Willman, whose first magic and comedy special was “Sleight of Mouth” in 2015 on Comedy Central, is astounded by the success of “Magic for Humans.”

“You don’t realize the reach of a streaming platform like Netflix that goes around the world, where people don’t have to wait for a specific time to see a show,” he says. “Every day is like a premiere day when someone sees your show. You’re in their living room, and you’re making them smile — entertaining them.”

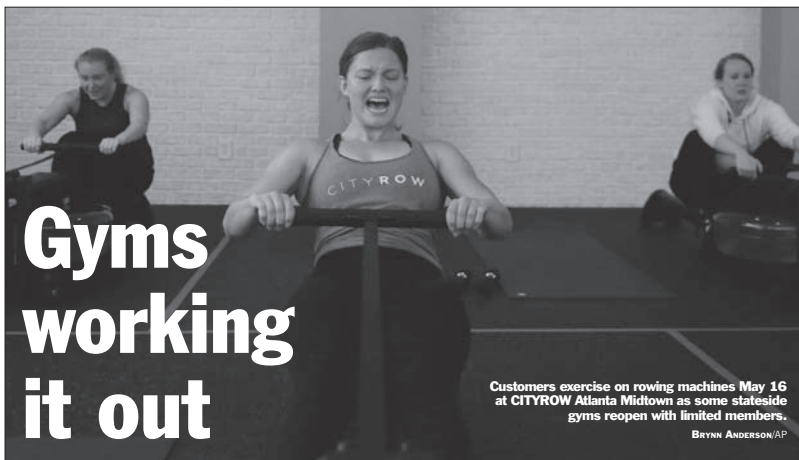
From 2009 to 2013, Willman hosted “Cupcake Wars” on Food Network and has seen his fan base grow as a result of “Magic for Humans.”

But as much as Willman loves the series, he’s eager to get back on the road to perform for fans in person, his favorite part of his career. The new tour dates are now scheduled to run August to November.

“Hopefully that sticks,” he says. “We’re all playing it day-by-day. But fans have been really understanding and eager to see it happen when it happens.”

“I’m eager to get back out. The TV show is a passion, but the goal is to create new fans to entertain in packed theaters. I feel I’ll come back better than ever with even more gusto.”

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS



Gyms working it out

Customers exercise on rowing machines May 16 at CITYROW Atlanta Midtown as some stateside gyms reopen with limited members.

BYNN ANDERSON/AP

Smaller classes, reservations the new norm as gyms reopen

By KELLI KENNEDY
Associated Press

Mike Weeks and his wife are fitness junkies. During quarantine, they tried home workouts — push-ups, planks, bike riding around town — but it wasn't the same. The semi-retired oil and gas explorer longed for his old gym routine. "To say I missed it immensely is an understatement."

So on May 8, the first day that Life Time gym reopened, the Oklahoma City resident was right there, though "slightly apprehensive."

"I'm 66 years old," he says, and "purportedly in the high-risk category."

For Weeks, the benefits ultimately outweighed the risks. But as businesses across the United States reopen, even the most dedicated gym rats are concerned about returning to a seemingly healthy habit during a pandemic — and doing it in a place known for sweat, germs and hard-to-clean equipment.

Big-box gyms and local fitness studios are reopening under a patchwork of protocols based on state and local guidance, but most are following these basics: spacing out cardio machines, touchless entry, smaller class sizes, increased cleaning and requiring users to clean all equipment before and after each use.

Mindbody, an online booking platform for fitness classes, salons and wellness appointments, reported all bookings down 70% compared to last year but says they have picked up as states lift restrictions. Florida bookings were up 99% week over week, Texas jumped 94% and Georgia is up 48%.

New Horizon Athletics in Jamestown, Tenn., is not allowing new members since it had to limit class sizes for social distancing. At Body Renew Alaska in South Anchorage, workout-goers have to reserve a 45-minute time slot; only 40 are allowed per slot, and the gym closes at 45 minutes past every hour for a 15-minute deep clean.

CycleBar in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., installed a pricey HVAC system and cut class sizes in half, but the pent-up demand has been so overwhelming that they had to add classes for Tuesday's reopening.

At Urban Body Fitness in Atlanta, gymgoers get a touchless thermometer check and their own disinfectant bottle along with a stern warning to clean equipment before and after use. Only 30 are allowed at a time in the 14,000-square-foot gym.

Owner Rad Slough had plenty of diaphanous desire to return — and a slew of members who canceled.

"Some of them are just really scared, and some of them have lost their jobs. The bulk of them are just still freaked out and not coming back for awhile," said Slough.

He warns that those who don't follow protocol will have their membership revoked. Experts, though, say there's a lack of uniform standards and enforcement across the fitness industry.

"I'm still very concerned," said Dr. Kristin Englund, an infectious diseases expert at the Cleveland Clinic. "If they're not wearing a mask or wiping down the equipment, what is the abil-



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Jason Nichols, facilities operation manager, disinfects equipment May 18 at the Life Time Biltmore in Phoenix as it opens for business after being closed due to the coronavirus. State and local guidance mandates increased cleaning, among other protocols, for reopening.

ity to enforce that or not allow them to come back?"

Most experts agree: For the majority of healthy Americans under 65, the physical and mental benefits of working out outweigh the risks. And there are always risks.

"Everyone will have to keep in mind that the world we're trying to get back to is going to carry risk," said Dr. Deverick Anderson, director of the Duke Center for Antimicrobial Stewardship and Infection Prevention. "I think responsibility is on both sides of that coin. Don't just rely on your gym to do everything. You've got to play a part in this process as well."

Spots at fitness classes will likely be harder to come by because of reduced capacity. Many will likely require reservations, making it more difficult to squeeze in last-minute workouts. And after months of being shuttered, many small studios across the United States will struggle to reopen at all.

Kelli McMullen's yoga studio in Brighton, Mich., went from generating about \$40,000 a month before the pandemic to \$1,000 from donations. Most members of her 23-person staff are teaching online classes for free. The Space will likely be closed for three more months.

Aaron Fowler brought along a mask when he returned to his interval training class at CITYROW in Atlanta last weekend but quickly discarded it, finding it too difficult to breathe. He also wore gloves and used his own hand towel.

"Just to be able to work out for an hour to kind of relieve some of that stress was pretty key for me," said Fowler, 35, who oversees transportation at an Atlanta university. He signed up for the next class, but will assess the risk day by day. He expects the virus threat to last a year.

"And," he says, "I don't know if I can go that long without it."

How to stay safe when you do head back to the gym

Are some workouts, like yoga or spinning classes, less safe than others? Should I wear a mask? Do I need more than six feet apart in cardio classes where there's panting and heavy breathing?

There are many legitimate concerns about how gyms and fitness studios can safely reopen without furthering the spread. But infectious disease experts say risk can be greatly mitigated by following some simple rules:

Wash, rewash, repeat

"When you put down that dumbbell, you've got to immediately wash your hands. You've got to assume that if you were to accidentally touch your eyes, you're putting yourself at risk," says Dr. Deverick Anderson, director of the Duke Center for Antimicrobial Stewardship and Infection Prevention.

Bringing your own towel, wash every piece of equipment before and after using it so you're not relying on whether someone before you followed the rules. Most gym wipes aren't strong enough, so bring your own disinfectant or inquire what the gym is using. And before you hop on the treadmill or grab your weight, let the spray sit on the equipment for a minute or two.

Surfaces, not people, may offer more opportunities for contact with the virus. Experts have said different things, but some believe the virus can last for up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to two or three days on plastic and stainless steel. But the federal Centers for Disease Control says — and re-emphasized recently — that surfaces are not thought to be a major path for transmission.

If respiratory droplets from an infected person do land on surfaces, "they absolutely can be spread there, and it's a very common thing to wipe sweat off your forehead," said Dr. Kristin Englund, an infectious disease expert at Cleveland Clinic. "But if you wipe past your eyes or nose, you're going to be carrying the virus there."

Cardio

Cardio workouts and fitness classes may pose increased risks.

"Being on an elliptical machine and breathing very heavily on that, those activities make me anxious about being able to spread the virus more heavily because people are going to be panting and sweating," Englund said. "I think there's a greater risk for taking classes where you are going to be doing a lot of cardio."

Anderson agrees that there should be at least six feet of distance in cardio settings — along with an understanding that the risk there is "not the same as walking into the grocery store six feet apart."

Masks

Anderson acknowledges that it's impractical to wear masks while sweating, but he suggests wearing them to enter and exit facilities. Employees, he says, should definitely be wearing masks.

An abundance of signs stressing hand washing and equipment cleaning protocol is helpful, at first, but eventually people become inured to them, he says.

Bottom line

To some degree, since guidance varies by city and state, your workout will be as safe as you choose to make it. Each facility is bound to have folks who are and aren't following safety precautions.

So is it worth it?

Says Anderson: "For many people, I think the answer to that is yes. For some people, the answer to that is still no as we learn more and more about this disease and who is at most risk."

— Kelli Kennedy

Most experts agree: For the majority of healthy Americans under 65, the physical and mental benefits of working out outweigh the risks. And there are always risks.

WEEKEND: FAMILY

A life well-lived?

COVID-19 is forcing boomers to think about their mortality

By TAMARA LUSH
Associated Press

Elizabeth Hubbard was booked for a cruise that followed the path of Lewis and Clark's expedition in the Pacific Northwest. Joel Demski was set to watch and cheer his grandson graduating from the Naval Academy. James Kelly planned a trip to Scotland, to scatter his father's ashes in the Clyde River near Glasgow.

They are all older than 60. And like millions of others, they now face the painful realization that their plans, their hopes, their bucket-list items, were not simply deferred but in many cases denied thanks to the coronavirus.

The global pandemic has left them wondering about the time they have left, and how to spend those moments when movement is severely limited. Instead of taking in the Seven Wonders of the World or making family memories, many are worried about the mundane, like whether it's safe to grocery shop or even go outdoors.

Guilt, anger and frustration seep in, with all this precious time lost.

"One less year is one less trip," said 72-year-old Bob Busch, an avid traveler from Sarasota, Fla., who canceled a 35-day camping trip with his wife. They are healthy this year, but what about in the future, after the pandemic has passed? "How many times can you hook up the trailer and head west?"

Demski, who lives in Vero Beach, Fla., was crestfallen when the Naval Academy canceled its graduation ceremonies. Instead of taking in the celebration in Annapolis with his grandson, he is left with concern as the young man ships out on his first assignment. Plans to see another grandson graduate from UCLA in California have also been scrapped. "I'm really just sad. It's sadness for the whole country," said Demski, who is a few months shy of his 80th birthday.

Mick Smyer, a psychology professor, who studies aging and the elderly at Bucknell University, in Lewisburg, Penn., said the Baby Boom generation is among the least additional years of vitality. This pandemic is hitting in the middle of their generation's "developmental task," which, as the American Psychological Association defines it, is "the fundamental physical, social, intellectual, and emotional achievements and abilities that must be acquired at each stage of life for normal and healthy development."

In other words, boomers are feeling their mortality. As headlines blare about elders being more susceptible to dying of the coronavirus, the healthy wonder: Will I be able



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

James Kelly poses with a photo of his late father, also named James Kelly, at his home May 1. Kelly had to delay plans to travel to Scotland, where he planned to scatter his father's ashes, because of the coronavirus.

to achieve, see and do everything I wanted out of life?

"Boomers are thinking back about whether it has been a good life, and what was it all about," he said. "Now there are fewer options in the near term. The next two years are off the table, and how many good years are left?"

Kelly, a 63-year-old psychologist, also plays guitar and writes country rock and Americana songs. Lately, he's been pondering his fate as he sits alone in his Atlanta home, thinking about when he'll be able to bring his father's ashes to his native Scotland.

"My most recent songs have been about aging. Dealing with life and loss," he said. "The road behind and the road ahead, about how much is behind me and how little is in front of me."

"There's not a lot more road in front of me," he recently wrote in a song lyric.

At the same time, many acknowledge that their sacrifices are also a product of privilege. Millions of people who are unemployed or working in essential, yet low-wage, jobs don't have that luxury now — or possibly ever.

"Some of my emotion, in all honesty, is guilt," said Judy Foreman, a 70-year-old from Flourtown, Pa. "We're inconvenienced and we're scared, and we're able to handle it," she said. "I try to help as much as I can. When I get a food order, I leave a huge tip. I give to food pantries." But the feeling that time is slipping away grates on her. She can't travel to visit one of her daughters in California. She can't even hug her three grandsons, who live across the street.

"It's depression, loneliness. It's

boredom. Fear. Mostly fear," she said. She spends hours wiping down groceries, sanitizing doorknobs and thinking about how the future will be permanently different from now on.

"I do all this because I don't want to die. So yeah, I'm feeling my mortality," she said in a quiet voice.

Helen Miltiades, a professor of gerontology at Fresno State in California, said older adults are struggling in ways younger folks aren't.

"The whole phrase 'the new normal.' People are using that, but what does that mean?" she asked. "People make jokes about it. That's a way of coping with change without really understanding what the change entails. I don't think we have that figured out yet."

Hubbard, who was supposed to go on the cruise with her husband, canceled that. The 70-year-old Miami resident is holding onto a shred of hope that she can see Hugh Jackman — her favorite actor — on Broadway this fall, but she's prepared for disappointment.

"This was supposed to be my decade," she said. "And it's going to be very different than I expected."

Dena Davis is more optimistic. She's a 73-year-old professor of bioethics at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Penn. She has postponed her sabbatical because of the pandemic and figures her plans for retirement have been pushed back.

"If you're lucky, the reason there isn't that much more time is because you've already had a lot of time ... It depends on the way you look at it," she said. "I'm not seeing endless vistas in front of me. There are pretty big vistas behind me. You can't have it both ways."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Pandemic ramps up PCS move rivalries

It's summer PCS season, when 40% of the 400,000 military and DOD civilian moves take place each year. This time brings back memories of our family's final military move in May 2017. It was our 11th in 23 years of marriage, and it was pretty much like all the rest — a stressful experience involving tedious planning, unexpected crises, broken and lost belongings and physical exhaustion.

Like most military spouses, I've told stories of PCS moves to my friends around kitchen islands, buncos tables and backyard patios. Like the time the movers snatched the leg off our dining room buffet, or when they neglected to put our crib back together when I had a newborn baby and a toddler, or that move when my husband's entire collection of military challenge coins disappeared. Within military spouse culture, telling tales of moving mishaps is a sort of competitive sport. Kind of like talking about childbirth. The spouse who has endured the most misery wins.

It's hard to imagine the PCS experience getting worse for military families, but thanks to the coronavirus, moving hassles have reached epic new levels. The Stop Movement Order announced by Secretary of Defense Mark Esper in April has been extended through June 30, causing delays that could last until the end of the year.

Two-thirds of PCS moves have been delayed, causing a massive backup. Some military families who had already started the moving process got trapped in limbo between two locations, paying double housing costs due to leases or mortgages executed before the Stop Movement Order. Others shipped household goods and moved into temporary housing, then got stuck without their belongings. Parents can't register their children for the 2020-21 school year because they don't know where they will be living. Kids who planned to enter new schools at the end of summer may have to enroll mid-school year, making it more difficult for them to adjust socially and academically. While Congress is working to pass legislation that would provide financial relief to many of the affected families, uncertainty and stress abound.

To make matters worse, the backup is further complicated by the military branches' efforts to offer incentives to delay retirements and separations, and to reenlist those who had already retired or separated. They hope these strategies will balance the drop in recruits caused by the COVID-19 shutdown, and provide medical personnel and troops who can deploy immediately so that readiness is not further compromised. However, moving priority will go to those who can deploy or fill medical billets, while waiting families will be pushed back in the line.

The Pentagon says that it will allow 30,000 waiting families to be granted waivers to move before June 30. However, those who are able to move will be required to follow mandatory coronavirus prevention guidelines that could further delay the process. No matter which way you cut it, military families will endure major PCS hardships this year.

One day, when life returns to some form of normalcy, military spouses will inevitably gather together like they always have, to chat around fire pits, buncos tables, kitchen islands, base housing patios, backyard barbecues and coffee shops. They will share bottles of wine and pots of coffee, they will laugh, and they will tell miserable tales about childbirth, deployments and PCS moves — just like military spouses have for decades. The only thing that remains to be seen is, now that the pandemic has upped the ante, who will win the unspoken competition over who has endured the most hardship?

I, for one, will resist the urge to offer up my often-told PCS stories while in the company of anyone who has endured a PCS move during the pandemic. Out of respect, I will graciously concede defeat.

But there's no guarantee I won't try to get back in the game with a good labor and delivery story. Our firstborn weighed more than nine pounds, so it's a doozy.

Score.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

As headlines blare about elders being more susceptible to dying of the coronavirus, the healthy wonder: Will I be able to achieve, see and do everything I wanted out of life?

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

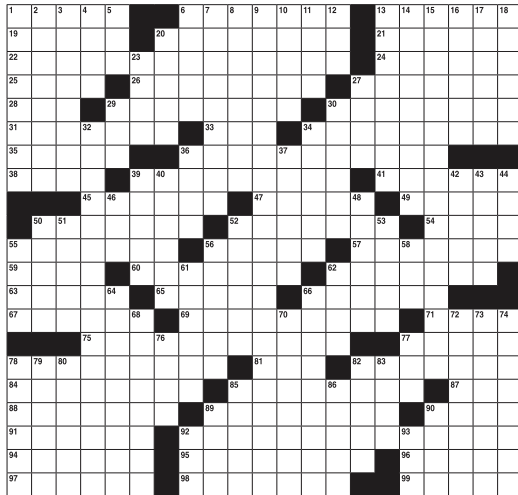
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

WIDE-OPEN SPACES

BY BYRON WALDEN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Byron Walden is a math and computer science professor at Santa Clara University, "currently on sabbatical at the exotic location of my dining-room table." He picked up his love of crosswords from his grandfather and father and is now passing it along to his 7-year-old son. This puzzle is themeless. It features longer, sometimes more challenging vocabulary than usual, with only 122 answers (versus the standard 140). —W.S.

- ACROSS**
1 How some stock shares are sold
6 Caesar-salad ingredient
13 Big name in swimwear
19 African grazer
20 Yalitra ____, best-actress nominee for 2018's "Roma"
21 Woodworking machine
22 R.J. Reynolds product that once sponsored "The Dick Van Dyke Show"
24 Had legs, so to speak
25 Flying class?
26 Like some leaves and knives
27 Blast
28 "The Confessions of ____ Turner" (1967 Pulitzer-winning novel)
29 Scrapped
30 One who might say, "Your money's no good here?"
31 Overwhelming favorite
33 Roofing material
34 Dyes that can be used as pH indicators
35 Echo voice
- DOWN**
36 Eponym of Agatha's airport
38 Editorial reversal
39 Simmering sites
41 On the schedule
45 Chef's creation
47 Crosses one's fingers
49 Sophisticated
50 Subjects of four famous violin concertos by Vivaldi
52 Can't take
54 Body part that's also a Hebrew letter
55 Christ, to Christians
56 Flavorful
57 Colts, maybe
59 Sch. on Chesapeake Bay
60 Interstellar clouds
62 Fundamental dispositions
63 With 55-Down, inning ends
65 Proun art material
66 Creature seen basking on the shores of the Galápagos
67 Superman co-creator Jerry
69 Sports icon with the autobiography "Faster Than Lightning"
71 Entertainer Minelli
75 Bitcoin and the like
77 47th U.S. vice president
- DOWN**
78 Comic actor whose wife left him to marry their neighbor Frank Sinatra
81 Airt of the gospel music reality competition "Sunday Best"
82 Classic Chevrolets
84 Eaglelike
85 One with a small but devoted fan base
87 AAA service
88 Restrained from biting
89 Places of intense scrutiny
90 Entertainment on a diner place mat, maybe
91 Alka-Seltzer tablet, for one
92 Early omnivore
94 Returning after curfew, say
95 Substance used to preserve the Declaration of Independence
96 Apt rhyme for "bone"
97 ____, Pieces
98 Has in mind
99 Mary I or Elizabeth I
- DOWN**
1 Major tributary of the Mississippi
2 Gymnastics event for both men and women
3 The ____, State, nickname for Maine
4 Targets of formicide
5 Mythical flier
6 Isolated
7 Account
8 Popular performance-enhancing supplement for athletes
9 Freaking out
10 Good-size wedding band
11 Computed
12 Rockysque interjections
13 Spends extravagantly
14 Some biodesisel sources
15 Victorian home?
16 Whole
17 Judged
18 Things taken while waiting
20 Representative
23 "Capeesh"
27 Whiffs
29 Org. for lightweight
30 End-of-level challenges in video games
32 Items in 18" x 18" x 1 1/2" boxes
34 Like the hands in the Allstate logo
36 Keystone ____
37 ____ and the Blowfish
39 What sneers express
40 Popular dating app
42 Lake drained by the Truckee River
43 Iniquities
44 Places of inquiry



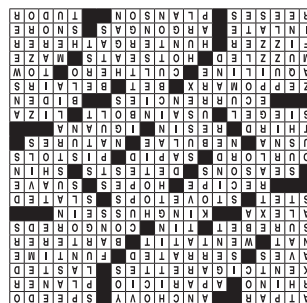
- ACROSS**
46 Spanish: "that"
48 State capital on the Mississippi
50 Word with roll or bar
51 Muppet wearing a horizontally striped shirt
52 Chinese port city on Korea Bay
53 Occupy, as a booth
55 See 63-Across
56 English county that's home to Brighton
58 Weather-map symbol
61 Butter, in Burgundy
62 Doctors Without Borders and others, in brief
64 Having a low neckline, as a dress
66 "Gotta split!"
68 Group of 18th-century thinkers that included Voltaire and Rousseau
70 Numbers of concern to showmen
- DOWN**
72 The "Last Great Race on Earth"
73 Love match?
74 Respondent
76 South African money
77 Slo-____ fuse
78 Pan flute musician in iconic commercials of the 1980s
79 Like a jackass
80 Your current occupation?
- DOWN**
82 Some skilled workers in "Brave New World"
83 Lead-in to while
85 Party line?
86 Former North Carolina senator Kay
89 Let fly
90 Clickable list
92 W.W. II general ____ Arnold
93 Clock setting on the Big Island: Abbr.

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



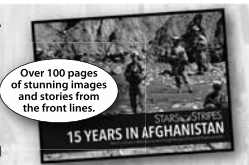
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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Deputies: Man posed as officer, pointed gun

SC SPARTANBURG — Deputies arrested a man who allegedly flashed a badge, pointed a gun and pulled the trigger on a group of people during a fight at a South Carolina apartment complex, according to a sheriff's office report.

David Wayne Coburn, 57, is accused of first pulling out a badge and telling the group to disperse Monday evening, according to the Spartanburg County report.

Witnesses said they told Coburn to leave because the fight didn't involve him and they knew he wasn't an officer. Coburn left but later returned with a gun, the report stated. A witness said Coburn pulled the trigger but nothing came out because there wasn't a magazine in the gun.

Scallop fishing to be limited for months

MA BOSTON — Scallop fishing off New England will be subject to limitations for about the next 10 months, federal regulators have said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said it has closed the northern Gulf of Maine fishing area, which means vessels fishing under federal regulations can't fish for or possess scallops in the area until March 31. The closure is necessary because of projections that the total allowable catch for the area has been spent, NOAA said.

Classic car in diocese fundraiser stolen

NM GALLUP — A Roman Catholic diocese in New Mexico says thieves stole a classic car officials were using to raise money for a vocations program.

The Gallup Independent reported security cameras from the Diocese of Gallup captured two men in a dark Chevy Silverado steal the 1966 Plymouth Sport Fury last week. No arrests have been made.

The Rev. Matthew Keller started the V8s for Vocations program several years ago to raise funds to educate seminary students studying for the priesthood in the Diocese of Gallup. Keller said a woman he had lost her husband donated the Fury to V8s for Vocations a couple of years ago.

Man accused of trying to kidnap nurse

NJ HOWELL — A New Jersey man who was arrested and sent for a psych evaluation last week tracked down a nurse from the medical center he was at and assaulted her before she was able to figure him out, police said. An officer and his police dog found Leonardo Larrarte, 37, after the alleged attack last Friday and arrested him. He is charged with attempted kidnapping and burglary. NJ.com reported Monday.

His arrest came less than a day after Larrarte was arrested by Lakewood police for an altercation he had with his roommate,



TOM GRALISH, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/AP

A great sunset setup

Couples watch the sun set from the Cherry Hill, N.J., side of the Cooper River on Tuesday, a day when local temperatures reached the 80s.

Howell Police Chief Andrew Kudrick said.

The Lakewood resident was then sent to Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus for a psych evaluation where he had a brief interaction with the nurse he would later go on to track down, Kudrick said.

Upon his release, Kudrick said Larrarte walked 6 miles from his residence to the nurse's home in Howell where he proceeded to attack the caregiver's 64-year-old mother before punching and choking the nurse. Larrarte ran away after the victim fought him off, Kudrick said.

Teen swims to shore to save dad and sister

ME WATERVILLE — A 16-year-old Maine girl swam great lengths to save her dad and sister when their boat took on water and capsized.

Kiana French swam to shore to find help after the 12-foot aluminum boat capsized on Parlin Pond on Sunday afternoon, the Morning Sentinel reported.

She said her father, Gary French, and sister, Cierrah French, were in a state of shock and could not swim to shore.

Cierrah French, a cancer survivor, still feels pain in her knee from choriocarcinoma, a rare form of cancer. She said the water was cold and that her fingers and toes went numb.

Kiana French said she strapped on her life jacket in the water, and then recovered the other two jackets floating near the boat and helped her sister put one on as her dad clung tightly to the boat. She

THE CENSUS

93

The number of sea turtle eggs two men had in a bag when they were arrested in Florida over Memorial Day weekend, wildlife officials said. Bruce Bivins, 63, was spotted putting objects he dug out of the sand into the bag as he walked on Singer Island, a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission affidavit said. An officer later stopped Bivins, who was in a truck driven by Carl Cobb, 63, the affidavit said. Bivins and Cobb were each charged with unlawful possession of more than 11 sea turtle eggs, which is a third-degree felony. Both men have had previous encounters with the law for mishandling sea turtle eggs, the Palm Beach Post reported.

knew if she waited with them the currents would get worse, so she headed to shore.

Kiana French walked along the shoreline and called out for help until she saw a boat and was taken in by Maine Game Warden Kris MacCabe and his wife. Her father and sister were rescued by another boat.

Nurse reunited with her savior firefighter

NY NEW YORK — A Virginia nurse has been reunited with the New York firefighter who saved her from a burning building nearly 40 years ago.

Deirdre Taylor, who is working in New York to fight the coronavirus pandemic, was reunited Monday with retired FDNY firefighter Eugene Pugliese, 75, the New York Daily News reported.

Pugliese, a Vietnam Marine Corps veteran, said he remembers saving Taylor and her mother from a burning building in SoHo like it was yesterday.

"I didn't even have gear on," Pugliese said. "I had a helmet

and an ax. We took the elevator up and we went to the floor below. We went upstairs. The hallway was pretty well charged. There was a lot of smoke."

Taylor said she thought she would never have the opportunity to thank Pugliese for his bravery. "The fire obviously shaped the rest of my life," she said. "I always knew I was given a second chance at life."

100-year-old shipwreck exposed by storm

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A shipwreck can be seen protruding from the Great Salt Lake and it could be more than 100 years old.

Utah State Parks posted a photo of a tangle of brown beams Monday on Facebook after a recent storm eroded part of the beach and exposed the shipwreck, The Salt Lake Tribune reported.

The wreck is of a steel hold boat with wooden planking that dates back to the start of the 20th century, park manager Dave Shearer said.

Shearer believes the boat could

have been used by the Southern Pacific Railroad to build the causeway across the lake in 1902 or to maintain the causeway in the years after.

Troopers arrest 4 after chase that hit 174 mph

NE GIBBON — Four people from Illinois have been arrested in Nebraska — including a driver accused of leading troopers on a chase exceeding 170 mph in southeastern Nebraska, officials said.

The Nebraska State Patrol said the arrests came Monday night, about 24 hours after a trooper had tried to pull over a Chevrolet Camaro for excessive speeding on Interstate 80 near York. The car fled, reaching a speed of 174 mph before troopers disabled it with spike strips, the patrol said. It exited the interstate at Gibbon, and troopers later found the car abandoned at Gibbon High School.

On Monday night after receiving a tip, troopers pulled over a Jeep in Gibbon and found the suspected driver of the Camaro, Tyler Liles, 22, of Creve Coeur, Ill., inside. The driver of the Jeep, who is suspected of having traveled from Illinois to pick up Liles, and two others from Illinois also were arrested on suspicion of a range of charges, from obstruction to minor drug counts.

Liles faces charges of willful reckless driving, felony flight to avoid arrest, and seven other counts.

From wire reports

FACES

Generating comedy like a hurricane

Improv helps Ben Schwartz move from bit player to star

By THOMAS FLOYD
The Washington Post

Before Ben Schwartz and Thomas Middleditch stride onstage to do long-form improv, the comedy duo, at Schwartz's behest, always share a hug. "I love you," Schwartz utters every time. "OK," Middleditch often responds, not exactly saying "yes, and" to the gesture but sheepishly acknowledging his affection, nonetheless.

"What's nice — though he had to drag me there, because I'm a man, you understand — is it just implies this sense of trust," Middleditch says of the ritual. "That's very Ben. He's a real sap, but he's a lovely sap."

Middleditch isn't alone in highlighting Schwartz's sincerity. "You see safe with him, and you like him," says Billy Crystal, who starred with Schwartz in the film "Standing Up, Falling Down." Greg Daniels, the co-creator of Schwartz's next project, Netflix's "Space Force," says the actor "just generates comedy at you like a hurricane — but he's also very vulnerable, and he just wears his heart on his sleeve."

Raised in the Bronx by a music teacher mother and social worker father, Schwartz had the virtues of honest work ingrained in him early. Before he was booking roles, selling scripts and packing theaters, he interned for the Upright Citizens Brigade comedy troupe and worked as a page for the "Late Show With David Letterman," pitching jokes for the monologue on the side.

Nearly two decades later, Schwartz, 38, is still hustling. "Standing Up, Falling Down" and "Sonic the Hedgehog," in which he voices the central speedster, hit theaters in February to favorable reviews. Last month, Netflix released a trio of acclaimed "Middleditch and Schwartz" improv specials. And the first season of "Space Force," which he appears in alongside Steve Carell and John Malkovich, launches May 29.

"I've just worked my butt off," Schwartz says. "Being an actor or writer, as a kid, it was like me saying I wanted to be an astronaut. I knew nobody that did it, and it didn't feel like a real thing. So I feel really lucky that I've gotten this far."

Many TV viewers still recognize Schwartz as the endearing inept entrepreneur Jean-Ralpho Saperstein from NBC's "Parks and Recreation," which he recurred on from 2010 to 2015.

"After that," Schwartz recalls, "I was like, 'You know what? I really want to try to be the lead of my own show.'"

That aspiration steered Schwartz to the Showtime pilot "The Wrong Mans." A remake of the British action-comedy series, which starred James Corden and Matthew Baynton, the American version cast Schwartz

and Jillian Bell as its leads, with J.J. Abrams attached as an executive producer. For Schwartz, the three-year process of developing the show, shooting the pilot and awaiting a series pickup came with a catch: It prevented him from pursuing work as a cast member elsewhere on television.

"I took myself out of auditioning for television shows," Schwartz says, "because I couldn't be the lead of 'The Wrong Mans' and something else."

Last summer, Showtime finally arrived at its decision — and passed on the series.

"It was heartbreaking for me when it didn't go because I really believed in the project. I really believe that Jillian Bell is a genius, and I loved our team," says Schwartz, who also was a producer on the show. "Once it doesn't go, I look back at those three years and I'm like, 'Man, did I make a mistake by devoting so much of my time in television to this?' Because now that it's in the rearview, I have nothing to show for it."

Within days, however, Schwartz pivoted. Daniels, best known as the mind behind "The Office" and "Parks and Recreation," learned that "The Wrong Mans" wasn't moving forward and promptly offered Schwartz an audition for "Space Force."

Following his "Wrong Mans" letdown, and the responsibility that came with producing the show as well as starring in it, Schwartz relished the comparative simplicity of his place in the "Space Force" hierarchy.

"You show up as an actor, and you get to say Greg Daniels' words and you get to act with John Malkovich and Steve Carell," Schwartz says. "It was exactly what I wanted coming off of three years of developing and it not working out."

If Schwartz felt handcuffed because of his commitment to "The Wrong Mans," one wouldn't know it from his prolific and eclectic run of recent projects.

He says his title role in "Sonic the Hedgehog" involved 20-plus recording sessions and hundreds of ad-libbed quips, as he brought his comic sensibility to the lucrative tentpole.

Schwartz also spent the past few years honing his long-form improv shows with Middleditch, which they regularly perform on tour and at Los Angeles' Largo at the Coronet nightclub. Setting out to bring exposure to the form — in which the improvisers use a conversation with an audience member to create a spontaneous 50-minute sketch — they filmed four shows last year in New York. Netflix released three of those performances in April, showcasing the duo's knack for threading together freshly spun characters and narratives.

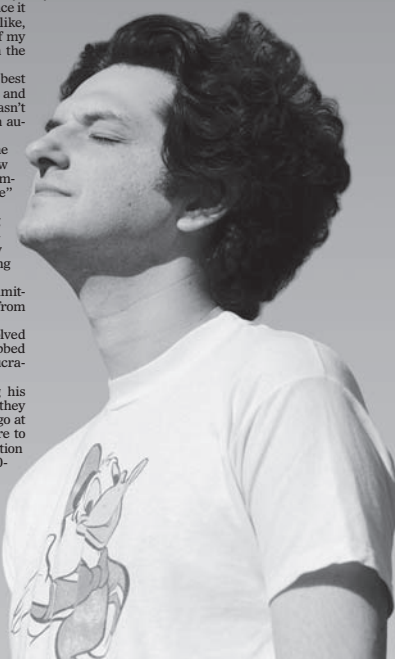
"He always gives me credit for coming up with weird characters," Middleditch says. "But I would say that they don't mean anything if Ben's not there to give them purpose for the story that

we're telling. A lot of improvisers and comedians have superpowers, and that's definitely one of his."

Reflecting on how the "Wrong Mans" detour rerouted his career, Schwartz shares no regrets. Even when he's not onstage, he remains an improviser at heart — and he knows better than most that improv is about taking chances.

"A lot of this art form is living and breathing and making mistakes," Schwartz says. "The biggest thing I've learned for myself from all of this, starting with improv, is you get out there, you take a risk, you fail, you learn from your risk, and you repeat."

"The more you do that, the more likely you are to find your voice."



Ben Schwartz

CARMEN CHAN/The Washington Post

New 'Hunger Games' book sells more than a half million copies

Associated Press

A decade after the "Hunger Games" series had apparently ended, readers were clearly ready for more.

Suzanne Collins' "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" sold more than 500,000 copies last week, even as many of the country's bookstores were closed or offering limited service because of the coronavirus pandemic. The total includes print, e-books and audiobooks, according to Collins' publisher, Scholastic.

NPD BookScan, which tracks around 85 percent of the print market, reported Wednesday that "Songbirds and Snakes" topped last week's list with 270,000 copies sold. Collins' book, a prequel to her previous "Hunger Games" novels, came 10 years after the author seemingly wrapped up the dystopian series with "Mockingjay."

The opening for "Songbirds and Snakes" was slightly higher than the numbers reported for "Mockingjay" in 2010, when Scholastic announced first week sales of more than 450,000. Collins' novels, which also include "The Hunger Games" and "Catching Fire," have sold more than 100 million copies worldwide and are the basis for a billion-dollar movie franchise.

ASCAP to honor songwriters, publishers with virtual awards

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers announced Thursday that it will hold three-day virtual events for its four awards shows, which focus on pop, R&B, Latin and film music.

The ASCAP Pop Music Awards will be held June 17-19; the ASCAP Screen Music Awards on June 23-25; the ASCAP Latin Music Awards on July 7-9; and the ASCAP

Rhythm & Soul Music Awards on July 15-17.

ASCAP will honor some of today's top songwriters and publishers at its ASCAP Virtual Awards; winners and guest participants will be announced later. Last year the organization gave awards to Billie Eilish and her brother-collaborator Finneas, Ben Pasek and Justin Paul, Cardi B and Daddy Yankee.

Simon & Schuster names Jonathan Karp as new CEO

Jonathan Karp, who has worked with authors ranging from Sen. Edward Kennedy to Susan Orlean, has been named the new CEO of Simon & Schuster. He replaces Carolyn Reidy, who died two weeks ago.

Karp, who joined the company in 2010, most recently served as president and pub-

lisher of Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing. He takes over Simon & Schuster at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has devastated the economy and when the publisher's future ownership is uncertain.

Other news

■ Apple Music is launching its first radio show in Africa. The streaming platform announced Thursday that "Africa Now Radio with Cuppy" will debut Sunday and will feature a mix of contemporary and traditional popular African sounds, including genres like Afrobeats, rap, house, kuduro and more.

■ The winner, and still champion, is CBS. The network finished the traditional television season, which ended last week, as the most-watched broadcaster for the 12th consecutive year, the Nielsen company said.

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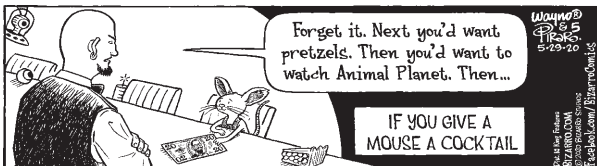
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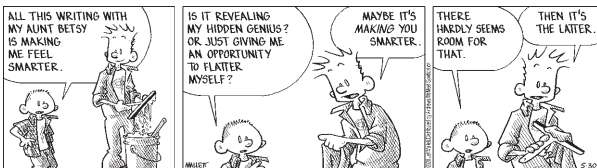
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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals I

Frazz



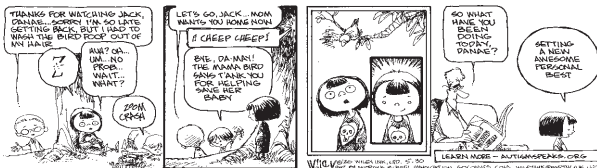
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



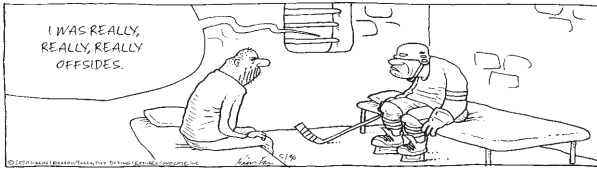
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18				19					20			
			21						22			
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30						31			32			
33						34			35			
						36			37			
38	39	40				41			42	43	44	
45						46			47			
48						49			50			
51						52			53			

ACROSS

- 1 Energy
- 2 Fly high
- 3 Quarterback
- 4 Difficult
- 5 Blackbird
- 6 Construction piece
- 7 Jai —
- 8 157, on older phones
- 9 Title akin to POTUS
- 10 Meditative practice
- 11 Signed a contract, perhaps
- 12 "Right you —"
- 13 Triumphed
- 14 Historic mission
- 15 Zero-star review
- 16 Boxer
- 17 Animated Betty
- 18 Bashful
- 19 Achy
- 20 Piercing tool
- 21 Sashimi fish
- 22 Speak one's mind
- 23 Hot tub
- 24 Transcript no.
- 25 Practiced what one preached
- 26 Jacob's twin
- 27 Algerian port
- 28 Cornfield noise
- 29 Stitched
- 30 Merlot or Chianti
- 31 Mound stat

DOWN

- 1 Gas container
- 2 Blue
- 3 25 MSN rival
- 4 Greek consonant
- 5 Luau bowlful
- 6 Samovar
- 7 "Gosh!"
- 8 Microwaves
- 9 Concerning
- 10 Galileo's birthplace
- 11 Roman orator
- 12 Tolerate
- 13 Harangue
- 14 Curved entrance
- 15 "The Creation" composer
- 16 Skin soother
- 17 Sitar music
- 18 Use an old phone
- 19 Genie's home
- 20 A billion years
- 21 Lawyers' org.
- 22 season
- 23 Lovers' quarrel
- 24 Mimic
- 25 First game of the season
- 26 Striped critter
- 27 Accra's country
- 28 Rapper Kanye
- 29 On the Baltic, say
- 30 Grassy area
- 31 Half a sextet
- 32 Scored 100 on love
- 33 Yuri Zhigago's
- 34 Olympic skater
- 35 Michelle

Answer to Previous Puzzle

P	O	T	F	I	B	P	A	L	E	D
A	X	E	A	M	O	E	R	I	C	A
T	I	N	S	P	O	N	G	E	B	O
O	D	D	T	U	T	U	S			
N	E	S	S	G	Y	M		E	V	E
			W	I	N		B	O	B	C
M	E	S	A	S			T	O	R	T
K	S	I	B	O	B		V	O	N	
N	E	T	S		E	P	A		Y	E
				F	A	L	T		Q	U
B	O	B	M	A	R	L	E	Y	U	N
O	R	T	I	Z		S	T	P	I	T
G	A	U	G	E		E	S	E	P	S

5-30

CRYPTOQUIP

BX Y OAZ BJ GNFSHUIUHZ

BOWNDYWI YLNAI SDNIUBW,

GYDLNPZQDYIUJ YWQ XYIJ,

BJ PU WAIDBUWI-QUWJU?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: COUNTRY LEADER WHO IS VERY MUCH IN FAVOR OF THE RIVER FLOWING IN LONDON: PRESIDENT PRO THAMES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals F

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OPINION

This is not your grandfather's debt problem

By EUGENE STEUERLE

Special to The Washington Post

Now that the COVID-19 crisis has produced predictions that we soon will reach a debt-to-GDP ratio previously seen only once before — during World War II — it's time to lay to rest the wacky assertion that there's no cause of concern since we've been there before.

It's not just that peacetime debt cannot be compared to wartime debt. It's that the numbers themselves aren't comparable, except in the narrowest sense, because they leave out massive debt-like obligations that recent Congresses have legislated for the future.

A simple review of the history of our debt-to-GDP ratio makes the problem clear. During World War II, federal debt peaked at 106% of gross domestic product in 1946, but then fell by an average of close to 3 percentage points each year until it reached a low of 23% in 1974 — all without dampening long-term economic growth. Today, with enormous emergency pandemic spending added to already grim debt projections, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget projects current debt to exceed 106% of GDP by 2023 and head upward from there.

This is not your granddaddy's debt problem. Even at the height of World War II, following a decade of depression, the debt situation was nowhere near as serious as it is now. In fact, if budget offices in the early 1940s had done 10-year budget projections, as the Congressional Budget Office does today, they would have shown massive surplus, into the future.

Why? It's simple. Wartime expenses rose dramatically but temporarily. To pay for

them, permanent tax increases of a lesser annual magnitude were adopted. Those tax increases over time would pay for far more than the cost of the war, even when they were cut moderately after fighting ended. Meanwhile, with the troops coming home, spending was set to decline dramatically.

Congress did face a very real budgetary threat: that future surpluses would be so large they could cause the Depression to return. Thus began the first of the post-World War II efforts at expansionary fiscal policy. But until the late 1970s, those expansionary spending increases and tax cuts mainly offset the contractionary nature of what the CBO now calls the “current law” budget — that is, all the scheduled spending and taxing in the law on the books.

While revenue rose with economic growth, spending largely depended upon annual appropriations. There was little built-in growth of mandatory or entitlement spending. Even in the rare cases of permanency, mainly in a much smaller Social Security program, it had only a tad of the built-in growth we have today.

Demographics also worked in our favor then. In the decades after the war, the population expanded, women entered the workforce, and workers became more educated. Those changes made it easy to maintain labor force supply and output even as retirement years expanded enormously; today, a typical worker retires on Social Security for about 13 more years than one did in 1940. Those forces of expansion have ended, and we pretend that lower birth and immigration rates will require no benefit cuts or tax increases as the worker-to-Social Security-beneficiary ratio continues to drop dramatically from around 4-to-1 in 1965 to 3-to-1 in 2010 to close to 2-to-1 in less than two decades.

Democrats and Republicans like to claim

that today's spending adds onto the New Deal agenda they either love or hate. That, too, is incorrect. Most New Deal spending was temporary: It was targeted at unemployment, just as the wartime spending was aimed at defeating the Axis. When the war ended, both needs had subsided, and almost all New Deal programs ended or commanded much smaller shares of our national income.

In that sense, COVID-19 spending parallels New Deal spending: It will largely end when the crisis ends. But that's not true of most spending committed today into the future. It's misleading to equate our short-term and still smaller need to deal with this or any other recession with those much bigger and more permanent budget problems.

To make room for tomorrow's needs, Republicans need to agree that tax rates must be set high enough to cover spending in good times, while Democrats must agree to schedule significantly less automatic future growth in spending. That leaves to future Congresses both sustainable budgets and enough slack to address future problems, whether another pandemic, recession or war, or how our spending and tax policies have largely abandoned low- and moderate-income working families — the ones suffering the most economically in the current crisis.

World War II does provide a lesson for today. Budgetary shortfalls are good in bad times, bad in good times — and horrible when scheduled regardless of the times.

Eugene Steuerle is Richard B. Fisher chair at the Urban Institute, co-founder of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center and a member of the board of directors of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Lockdowns' effect on young people is cause for alarm

By HENRY OLSEN

Special to The Washington Post

The pandemic's death toll and economic damage have been horrific. Its psychological impact on the young, however, might prove to be its most enduring and dangerous effect of all.

A recent study from the Census Bureau shows that about half of Americans reported symptoms of depression in early May, double that from a similar study in 2013-2014. In other words, that's unsurprising: more than 100,000 people have died of COVID-19, and more than 40 million have lost their jobs. What might be surprising, however, is that symptoms of psychological distress are directly correlated with age. The younger the person, the likelier he or she is to experience mental health issues.

The data are stark on this point. Among those aged 18 to 29, 32% reported symptoms of anxiety and 36% had symptoms of depression. Those numbers decline with each successive age cohort, reaching their low points among respondents 80 years old or older. Only 11% of the most elderly had anxiety symptoms, and only 9% presented as depressed.

This may be counterintuitive, since the elderly are most at risk of dying of COVID-19. But it becomes less surprising after considering the impacts of the measures taken to fight the pandemic. The shutdown has devastated the economy, and younger workers have borne the brunt of the layoffs. According to one study, workers under 25 years of age are 93% more likely to have lost their jobs than those over 35. The most

recent unemployment report bears this out: More than a quarter of workers between 18 and 24 are unemployed, roughly double the rate of workers 25 or older.

Millions of college students were also forced to go home as campuses closed. Moving is tough at any time, but moving from a largely independent life to one with enforced dependency is even more stressful. These students also had to suddenly deal with the first economic crisis of their adult lives, worrying about their immediate or future job prospects as they went overnight from the hottest labor market in U.S. history to the coldest.

The shutdown also crushed their social lives. Most people over 30 are married or in a stable relationship, so they have someone to socialize with during a shutdown. Being with the same person 24/7 has its stresses, but being alone all the time can be far worse. Restrictions on bars and social gatherings also disproportionately took away the socializing activities of the younger set. For many young people, the sudden loss of human contact and economic security is just too much.

This almost certainly has been a reason for the much criticized flouting of social distancing rules over Memorial Day weekend. The pictures of people crammed together drinking were almost uniformly younger — the same people most in need of respite. Older people look at those pictures and see potential disease carriers. Younger people see them as a picture of saving themselves.

Peers may be almost all immune to these experiences. Governors, mayors and

members of President Donald Trump's team are mostly people in their middle ages or more advanced years. They haven't lost their jobs, and they don't stay locked in a room with no one to talk to. It's natural their views are affected by their own experiences. One can say that gives them the distance needed to make informed decisions, but it also means they lack natural empathy with those who are most affected by those decisions. That is potentially a huge problem for the nation.

This paradoxically creates an opportunity for Trump. While younger voters have tended to be the most hostile to him throughout his presidency, he is also the leading figure in favor of letting them return to a world where they can have hope and happiness again. While former Vice President Joe Biden walks out with a mask and says, “Stay closed,” Trump walks maskless and says, “Embrace life.” Many pundits have noted that Biden is doing better than expected in polls among seniors, but those same polls also show Trump doing better than expected among the young. Those trends might be related.

The mental health plight of the young ought to be of prime concern to all regardless of the political impacts. The risk aversion and desire for creature comforts that characterized the generations that came of age during the Great Depression and World War II affected American life for decades. If today's young are similarly traumatized by the pandemic, COVID-19 will haunt us for the rest of the century.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

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.

Trump is debasing his office with tweets on Scarborough

The Wall Street Journal

President Donald Trump sometimes traffics in conspiracy theories — recall his innuendo in 2016 about Ted Cruz's father and the JFK assassination — but his latest accusation against MSNBC host Joe Scarborough is ugly even for him. Trump has been tweeting the suggestion that Scarborough might have had something to do with the death in 2001 of a young woman who worked in his Florida office when Scarborough was a GOP congressman.

"A lot of interest in this story about Psycho Joe Scarborough. So a young marathon runner just happened to faint in his office, he had a head injury & died. I would think there is a lot more to this story than that? An affair? What about the so-called investigator? Read story!" Trump tweeted Saturday while retweeting a dubious account of the case.

He kept it going Tuesday with new tweets. The opening of a Cold Case against Psycho Joe Scarborough was not a Donald Trump original thought, this has been going on for years, long before I joined the chorus. ... So many unanswered & obvious questions, but I won't bring them up now! Law enforcement eventually will?" Nasty story, but from a credible source, more than 40 million Twitter followers.

There's no evidence of foul play, or an affair with the woman, and the local coroner ruled that the woman fainted from an undiagnosed heart condition and died of head trauma. Some on the web are posting a conspiracy because the coroner had left a piece of paper under a cloud, but the parent and husband of the young woman accepted the coroner's findings and want the case to stay closed.

Trump always hits back at critics, and Scarborough has called the president mentally ill, among other things. But suggesting that the talk-show host is implicated in the woman's death isn't political handball. It's a smear. Trump rightly denounces the lies spread about him in the Steele dossier, yet here he is trafficking in the same sort of story.

Rep. Adam Kinzinger, a Republican from Illinois, had it right when he tweeted on the weekend: "Completely unfounded conspiracy. Just stop. Spread ing it, stop creating paranoia. It will destroy us."

We don't write this with any expectation that Trump will stop. Perhaps he even thinks this helps him politically, though we can't imagine that. But Trump is debasing his office, and he's hurting the country in doing so.

Twitter's fact-checking plan can't be implemented fairly

The New York Post

After President Donald Trump's fevered conspiracy tweets about Joe Scarborough's former intern Lori Klausitis, her widow, T.J. Klausitis, begged the company to delete them. It was a heartbreaking plea (one that Trump himself should listen to), but CEO Jack Dorsey made the right call. The company has a free right to delete the parent's president, and the company wasn't going to take them down.

But then, later on Tuesday, Twitter decided on what is considered a compromise. It would flag Trump's tweets for "misinformation," beginning with his rants against mail-in voting.

Dorsey should have stuck to his hands-



off approach.

This isn't a free-speech issue, as Trump claimed this week. Twitter is a private company and can decide what's published on its platform. But Dorsey understands that Twitter is documenting history here. If he bans Trump, he's making a political statement — not providing the neutral forum for ideas that the company intended.

But now Dorsey walked into the trap he was trying to avoid. What will be labeled misinformation? Will liberals, too, get warning labels? Who decides? Will every user be read and reviewed, or just Trump?

Already, one sees that the "fact-checking" services of social-media giants such as Facebook are more about stifling the conversation than the truth. One day's conspiracy theory can turn into another day's investigative report, and vice versa. Most of all, it's a patronizing, liberal form of engineering — deciding that readers can't judge for themselves.

Twitter already has a robust form of "fact-checking": All the people who comment on a post, retweet a post, rebut, argue and insult. Let them handle it, Jack.

Police actions in the death of George Floyd were inexcusable

The Washington Post

Another day in the United States, another unarmed black man dead following unwarranted, inopportune, outrageous police violence. When will it end?

In Minneapolis on Monday evening, a white officer bore down with his knee on the neck of a handcuffed black man who lay sprawled on the street, rasping, "I can't breathe" and "Don't kill me." The man died a short time after.

The suspect, George Floyd, was in his 40s. He was arrested when officers responded to what they called a suspected "forgery in progress." They said the man appeared to be intoxicated and that he resisted arrest, though no evidence has been presented for either assertion.

There is plain evidence of what came next, however, from a video recorded by someone in a group of witnesses who stood a few feet away. In it, the white officer appears impassive, almost bored, as the suspect gasps for breath. He is unmoved as witnesses curse and plead with him to get off the suspect's neck, as they warn that the man's nose is bleeding, that he can't breathe, that he isn't resisting. No does the officer relent when an ambulance medic arrives and checks the man's neck for a pulse.

When, finally, the officer lifts his knee, the man appears to have lost consciousness as he is dragged onto a stretcher.

On Tuesday, that officer and three others were fired. Now the FBI is investigating the incident. Now the outrage and condem-

nation are erupting in social media. It is all painfully familiar.

Police killed 1,099 people last year in the United States, according to Mapping Police Violence. Black Americans represented 24% of those who died, nearly twice their proportion of the population.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, a Democrat, was blunt. "Being black in America should not be a death sentence," he said. "This officer failed in the most basic, human sense. What I keep coming back to is this: This man should not have died."

In a jarringly anonymous statement Tuesday, as if describing a highway pileup, the Minneapolis police said that officers at the scene "noted (the suspect) appeared to be suffering medical distress."

Incredibly, the statement made no mention of the fact that the "medical distress" occurred in the course of having the weight of an officer's body bear down on the man's neck. The title of the statement is almost risible: "Man Dies After Medical Incident During Police Interaction."

Six short years ago, Americans watched, horrified, as Eric Garner, his neck in a police officer's chokehold, pleaded again and again, "I can't breathe" on a sidewalk on Staten Island. Garner died. They watched macabre videos showing the deaths of Michael Brown, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice and other black Americans, all shot to death by police.

Perhaps the suspect in Minneapolis was intoxicated. Perhaps he did resist arrest. The officers at the scene activated their body cams; that footage should be released immediately. Even if it confirms the police account, it will do nothing to justify what occurred next. No police protocols recommend kneeling on a human being's neck until he passes out. That is a protocol for homicide, not law enforcement.

It's not corny for fans to pine for the return of baseball

The Baltimore Sun

How desperate are Americans for sports right now? The best measure yet was last Sunday's charity golf match featuring two professional players partnered with two quarterbacks, one former, one current. It was rainy. It was dull. There were technical glitches. It was full of artifice (like an actual conversation about how Peyton Manning might have chosen Tom Brady's ex-coach Bill Belichick as his caddy). And it was the highest rated golf event in the history of cable television with 6.3 million viewers at its peak. Imagine what Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods thought of that. Here's what they likely thought: Let's make some more of this easy money from America's clearly sports-starved populace.

The sudden loss of sporting events from

high school track to National Basketball Association games clearly isn't the worst consequence of the coronavirus pandemic that has left roughly 100,000 Americans dead. It isn't even the worst economic impact as tens of millions have lost their jobs and face financial hardships that participants in "The Match" can scarcely dream about. But make no mistake, it hurts. Sports is entertainment without the predetermined resolutions it dates to cavernous wrestling or so some experts on prehistory claim. It fills some basic human need and not just the physical fitness or character building of participants. There is a cultural necessity to bearing witness, as a society, to the power, grace and courage of athletes in competition. And that's not even mentioning the cool merchandise. Or the beer commercials.

A chummy outing on the links is a poor substitute. But you know what might do wonders for the country's psyche right about now? A return of the national pastime. We need baseball right now. It's the perfect sport for COVID-19. It's got a lot of social distancing (just look at the whole concept of not touching) and it's got an advertisement for CDC guidelines). It takes place in wide open spaces. There is a minimum of physical contact and participants even wear gloves. Throw in face masks and you likely could not have designed a better game for the times (aside from golf or perhaps tennis if players agreed never to touch the ball).

And while you can probably make the case for other sports where participants stand apart (javelin throwing comes immediately to mind), there is something especially reassuring about a quintessentially American game. Or, as the James Earl Jones character in what is easily the country's most famous commercial for an erage player salary is \$4 million per year, explained: "The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game: it's a part of our lives. It's a part of you. It's a part of that once was good and that could be again."

Yes, well, whatever "Field of Dreams." The point is that we need a comfort sport like we need comfort food, and baseball is top of the menu. It doesn't require packing the stands. Playing games to empty stadiums might make the most sense, at least until safe attendance is possible. Baltimore knows about empty stands. The Orioles pulled that feat against the White Sox in 2015 during the Freddie Gray unrest. The good news is that Major League Baseball wants to restart the season that ended abruptly in spring training. The bad news is that there's no sign that negotiations between the owners (let's call them the billionaires) and the players (millionaires) have yet produced an agreement for the benefit of us thousands. Not surprisingly, money is considered the problem issue.

So to those folks and their teams of lawyers and negotiators, their publicists and business managers, we say this: Pretty, pretty please, would you consider the plight of all your fans who desperately want to hear the crack of the bat and the thump of a baseball in a catcher's glove? To make it happen, you're going to have to take a pay cut. The loss of ticket and concession sales changes the financial equation, obviously. But how about both sides not making a ton of money while so many people are suffering? Let's make some more of this? This may be the week to ink a deal, players and owners. Let's get it done, perhaps donate a hefty share of profits to charity, and let's play ball. The country needs you. James Earl Jones needs you. And all those baseball fans who are stuck watching the Korean Baseball Organization on ESPN? Let's just say the Samsung Lions are no Baltimore Orioles. They need you, too.

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Title IX hampers cost-cutting measures

Schools mulling eliminating certain sports must be compliant with law

By **AARON BEARD**
Associated Press

Financially challenged schools considering cutting sports in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic are making difficult decisions of who gets to keep playing and who doesn't.

The choices aren't just about money when they involve women's sports. And while Title IX doesn't prevent women's sports from being eliminated, the federal law is a huge part of the conversations.

"I wouldn't that say women's sports are more at risk," said attorney Timothy J. O'Brien, who is based in Maine with a practice focused on employment and college sports law. "I would say that all sports in an economic downturn will be scrutinized. But it should be done in a fair and equitable manner so at the end of the day the institution is compliant with Title IX."

The civil rights law, which applies to each gender, is credited with expanding women's opportunities and participation in sports.

With the shutdown of college and professional sports in March amid the pandemic, it's unclear how many schools will be able to have sports on reopened campuses this fall. Some — including Appalachian State, Cincinnati, East Carolina, Furman and Old Dominion — have already cut nonrevenue sports programs, but any move must ensure equitable treatment of remaining men's and women's athletics programs to comply with Title IX.

Established in 1972, Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving federal funds, such as student financial aid. It applies to sports by ensuring men and women have equitable participation opportunities, as well as access to scholarships.

While schools are facing financial hardships, Boston-based attorney Janet P. Judge said that fact doesn't nullify Title IX responsibilities.

"Title IX still applies," said Judge, who focuses on sports and civil rights law. "It's a federal law that still applies. It's not suspended because there are financial challenges for the institutions."

Schools are reviewing guidelines with college athletics faculty — including big-budget programs that rely on football as the revenue driver through lucrative TV deals and the ability to fund lower-profile sports. There was also the hit from the cancellation of the NCAA Tournament, which meant far less money distributed to Division I schools.

O'Brien, who joined Judge in co-authoring the NCAA gender equity manual, said schools are "keenly aware" that decisions can't be based solely on which programs cost the most money with the least return. "That's because any decision to cut sports can affect the 'delicate balancing act' in complying with Title IX when it comes to the school's gender breakdown of athletes and sports," he said.

Still, it doesn't mandate schools offer men's and women's programs that are mirror images. As an example, NCAA guidelines require Football Bowl Subdivision schools to sponsor at least 16 varsity sports with a minimum of six for men or mixed-gender teams,



RICK OSENTOSKI/AP

Bowling Green's Neil Lambert bats during a team's game against Kent State on May 10, 2019 in Bowling Green, Ohio. Bowling Green recently announced that it is dropping baseball.

and eight for women.

O'Brien said compliance can be measured in multiple ways, including whether the overall sports program's gender breakdown is proportionate to that of the general student body.

"That's really the focal point of the analysis: what's left, not what was eliminated," O'Brien said.

Like O'Brien, Judge does not believe women's programs are at more risk because it "would be difficult" for schools to comply with Title IX while widely cutting women's sports. So far, they're right; more men's programs (16) have been cut than women's (four) in Division I as of Tuesday, according to a count by The Associated Press.

Old Dominion said in early April it would discontinue wrestling, saving about \$1 million. The school said that decision followed a six-month outside study of its athletics program that included Title IX compliance considerations, with athletics director Camden Wood Selig saying the decision to cut a sport

"became even more clear" with the pandemic.

Later that month, Cincinnati eliminated a men's soccer program in existence since 1973.

In May, Florida International dissolved its men's indoor track and field program. Akron eliminated three sports — men's cross country, men's golf and women's tennis — to save \$4.4 million. Bowling Green followed with the shutdown of baseball to reduce the athletics department's operating budget by \$2 million.

Last week, Furman cut baseball and men's lacrosse, while East Carolina eliminated four sports — men's and women's swimming and diving, men's and women's tennis — in a plan to save \$4.9 million.

And Tuesday, Appalachian State cut men's soccer, men's tennis and men's indoor track and field in a plan to reduce the budget by \$5 million for the 2021 fiscal year.

There are other financial considerations, too.

Wake Forest athletics direc-

tor John Currie noted that non-revenue sports frequently have athletes on partial scholarships, meaning a team roster could have the equivalent of numerous athletes paying full tuition. So cutting a sport might reduce expenses for an athletics department yet cause a net revenue loss for a school more broadly.

It's just one example, he said, of detailed evaluations any school must make while also fulfilling its Title IX requirements.

Meeting that threshold is not optional, though Currie noted a harsh reality: "Not every school can be everything to everybody."

"Allocation of resources is among the most difficult decisions that leaders have to make, and the prioritization of how they're going to allocate those resources," Currie said. "Because there's lots of great things we could do. We can't do everything, if we want to do things in an excellent fashion."

AP sports writer Eric Olson in Omaha, Neb., contributed to this report.

Wizards' Wall says he's ready to go

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Washington Wizards point guard John Wall declared himself fully recovered after two operations that sidelined him for the past 1½ years and said he is "itching" to get back on the court next season.

Speaking on a video call Tuesday to discuss his "202 Assist" program to help pay rent for people in the nation's capital affected by the coronavirus pandemic, Wall said he is "still taking my time at the rehab" and working to get himself "in the best shape possible."

"I'm 110%," the five-time All-Star said. "I'm healthy."

He had not played in an NBA game since December 2018. Surgery for bone spurs in his left heel ended that season, while he

was working his way back from that, he tore his left Achilles tendon and needed another operation in 2019.

That held Wall out for all of the current season, which was suspended in March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"I'm itching to get back out there," he said Tuesday.

When play was halted, the Wizards were 24-40 and ninth in the Eastern Conference, 5½ games behind the team in the last playoff spot, the Orlando Magic. Wall's back-court mate, shooting guard Bradley Beal, was second in the league in scoring at 30.5 points per game.

"I'm just focused on getting back out there and watching how Brad has developed, how our team has developed," Wall said. "How we have made changes in the organization to prepare ourselves for next season and see what we can do."

He thinks NBA Commissioner Adam Silver will put the safety of players and their families first when deciding whether and how to resume this season.

If that can't be assured, Wall said, "I think they'll stop the season and prepare for next year."

The Wizards' practice facility is closed because of lockdown measures, so Wall has been working out at home. He uses an app the Wizards gave players with information about weightlifting, rides his bike and works on shooting and ballhandling at a half-court he has at his house.

"I understand how quickly this game can be taken away from you," Wall said. "I try to play through all injuries, because I feel like, 'If it ain't broke, go play.' For me, if you take all the money away, I'm still going to play the game the same way I do, because that's how much I love it."



NICK WASS/AP

Wizards guard John Wall says he is "110%" healthy after missing the past 1½ years with two major injuries.

BEST SPORTS MOVIES

No. 1: 'Hoosiers'

Backstory was no miracle for Muncie Central

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

About the film

The 1954 Indiana high school basketball tournament remains so vivid in Leon Agullana's memory it's as if he never left Muncie Central.

He can rattle off the magical, same-day sweep of top-ranked Fort Wayne North and second-ranked Mississinewa that set up the Bearcats' chance at a fifth state championship. He can recall spending four days that next week preparing to face Terre Haute Germantown, only to see the previous season's state runner-up lose to tiny Milan High.

Agullana also remembers this about the storied title game that followed: grabbing the final inbound pass, peeking at the clock and angrily heaving a three-quarters court shot as far as he could, knowing he could never change the script of *The Milan Miracle*.

"I saw the zeros, so I knew it was no good," he said. "So, really, I was just throwing it. What I really wanted to do was throw it out of Hinkle Fieldhouse."

The story of Milan's thrilling run to the Indiana state title is of course the story told in "Hoosiers," voted the No. 1 sports movie of all time by the sports staff of *The Associated Press*.

Instead of the Milan High Indians winning it all in 1954 against Muncie Central, it's the fictional Hickory Huskers beating mighty South Bend Central in 1952. The hero of the last-moment shot is Jimmy Chitwood on film, Bobby Plump in real life. The famous

Year: 1986
Screenwriter: Angelo Pizzo
Director: David Anspaugh
Starring: Gene Hackman, Dennis Hopper, Barbara Hershey
Plot: A coach with a shaky past (Hackman) and his assistant who's a drunk (Hopper) take a small-town high school basketball team in 1950s Indiana to the state tournament.

Iconic line: "I think you'll find it's the exact same measurements as our gym back in Hickory." — Coach Norman Dale (Hackman)

Oscars: 2 nominations
— Associated Press

fieldhouse was the scene for both.

The stirring and universal theme of a champion underdog is as old as David and Goliath and it's likely why the 1986 film was the winner in the AP vote. Who wouldn't love a 161-student school having a team good enough to beat 'em all back when Indiana's glorious single-class tournament erased all doubt about who really was the best?

Well, back in Muncie, Agullana and his teammates had to cope with the result.

They boarded a bus outside Hinkle and made the 55-mile trek home in near silence. At Muncie Fieldhouse, one of the state's largest high school gyms, they were greeted by a full house that had been eager to celebrate.

Muncie Central's fans weren't just disappointed. Some were bitter and others still haven't ac-



TOM STRICKLAND/AP

Actor Gene Hackman gives fictional Hickory High basketball players instructions during filming of the final game of the movie "Hoosiers" at Hinkle Fieldhouse on the Butler University campus in Indianapolis.



ROBERT SCHEER, THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR/AP

Bobby Plump, of Milan, Ind., is shown in 2003 with his 1954 Indiana State basketball championship jacket, and the hoop that his father made for him and his two brothers to practice on when they were a children. The jacket and hoop are on display at the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis.

cepted — or forgiven — Plump for producing the defining moment of a dominant, historic decade of Bearcats basketball.

"They were unknown to us but not to everybody," said Joe Beck, a 1956 Central graduate who was at Hinkle that fateful day thanks to winning a ticket lottery. "They had destiny written all over them. ... It just didn't work out. We got outcoached."

There were two high schools in Muncie back then and Central represented the city's working class. The Bearcats captured their first state title in 1928, courtesy of Charles Secrist's last-second heave from beyond midcourt to beat John Wooden's Martinsville team. The school board spent 15 years paying off the debt from the massive fieldhouse that opened in December 1928. And while Central was a big school with roughly 1,500 students, it wasn't even the biggest in its conference.

Central had become a basketball powerhouse by the 1950s. It won state titles in 1951 and 1952 and entered the 1953-54 season with the billing of "tallest team in Indiana history," a favorite to win it all. Five regular-season losses put that status in jeopardy but reaching the final had most thinking another title was likely.

Up until Plump delivered the dagger, darting to the basket and then pulling up from 15 feet with 3 seconds left for the winner. Final: Milan 32, Muncie Central 30.

"I knew nothing about their history," recalled Plump, who has a restaurant in Indianapolis called "Plump's Last Shot." "We were just a bunch of naive kids having fun playing basketball. We knew it was a big deal to win the state tournament, of course, but we didn't realize the significance or that (win) at the time."

In the years since, the former players have forged a unique bond. After Beck took Plump to



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Leon Agullana, a member of the 1954 Muncie Central High School basketball team that lost to Milan High School in the Indiana state final, is now friends with Bobby Plump.

Central's memorabilia room and showed him an authentic jacket from "Hoosiers" — and the autographed ball from Plump — the former Milan player joined the Central alumni association and still pays his \$10 annual dues.

Beck and Plump also teamed up to campaign against multi-class basketball in the late 1990s; the 1997 tournament was the last of the single-class format. When a tornado severely damaged the area in November 2017, flooding Central's basketball court, Beck again called Plump.

"I told Bobby that the memorabilia room was completely untouched," Beck said. "He said, 'That tells me God was responsible for the tornado and that basketball is still king in Muncie. And it makes me wonder how we beat you in the first place.'"

After \$1.8 million in repairs, the 91-year-old fieldhouse reopened in December.

The 1954 Milan Museum also contains a Central section, and even the reunions have taken on "Hoosiers" themes. When the Bearcats held a 40th anniversary celebration of the game, one year early because former coach Jay McCreary was ill, players from both teams participated.

"One of the guys from Milan came up and said, 'Who in the world could ever have imagined we would be here with a team that now wants to celebrate their defeat?'" Beck said. "It was a great line and it was absolutely the truth."

Muncie Central won the state championship in 1963 and went on to win three more titles for an unprecedented eight single-class crowns. Plump and Agullana have become friends and they sometimes reminisce about that famous ending — and the one that could have been.

"I walked into his office and the secretary said 'Can I help you?'" Agullana said, describing his first meeting with Plump years later. "I walked past her and I just stood there in front of him. He said 'Can I help you?' and I just stood there."

"He got kind of nervous and then he said, 'What do you want?' I said, 'I want to foul you on your last shot.'"

Editor's note: Recently, the Associated Press revealed its Top 25 of sports movies, as voted on by 70 writers and editors around the world. After compiling the list, the AP assigned writers to present stories examining the Top 10 from unique perspectives. This is the 10th in the series, a look at the impact of the film that finished No. 1, "Hoosiers."

HIGH SCHOOL/MLB



ALISON LECLAIR/Stars and Stripes

Ramstein senior Shannon McCray at her signing ceremony this month. McCray has signed to play basketball at Southern Maine College.



ALISON LECLAIR/Stars and Stripes

Ramstein senior Jason Jones Jr. celebrates his decision to play basketball at Austin College in Sherman, Texas.

DODEA Europe athletes celebrate moving on to college sports teams

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

Student-athletes from DODEA Europe are moving on from coronavirus-affected senior years and looking forward to promising careers at the collegiate level.

DODEA Europe canceled its 2020 spring season in response to the pandemic, costing senior soccer, baseball, softball, and track and field athletes their final prep season and one last opportunity to impress. Still, spring-focused stars are well represented among the DODEA Europe athletes extending their sports careers beyond high school.

Aviano

The Saints will send a student-athlete from each category of spring sports on to college.

Nick Smith, the leader of Aviano's breakthrough 2019 championship baseball team is headed to Division III Waynesburg University in Pennsylvania. Athletes at Division III schools sign a non-binding, celebratory signing form. Smith was an All-Europe mainstay in baseball and also represented Aviano in football, volleyball and wrestling.

On the soccer pitch, Saints senior Danielle Kandle will continue her career at Mars Hill University, an NCAA Division II school in Mars Hill, N.C. Kandle was a 2019 All-Europe selection, leading the Saints to a strong third-place finish at the European tournament.

Saints track star Donovan Robinson, Europe's 2019 runner-up in the 100-meter dash and long jump, will compete for NCAA Division II program Tiffin University in Tiffin, Ohio.

Vicenza

Cougars pitching ace Chenoa Gragg will continue her softball career at Division III program Averett University in Danville, Va.

Gragg was selected as the Stars and Stripes softball Athlete of the Year in 2019 after striking out



COURTESY OF TINA KANDLE/Stars and Stripes

Aviano seniors Danielle Kandle, left, and Donovan Robinson sign their letters-of-intent. Kandle will play girls soccer at Mars Hill University in North Carolina, while Robinson will compete in track and field at Tiffin University in Ohio.

119 hitters in 61 innings and hitting .415 with 22 RBIs.

Ramstein

The Royals will send six seniors across three sports to college programs.

All-Europe hoops stars Shannon McCray and Jason Jones Jr. will continue their basketball careers at NCAA Division III programs. McCray is headed for Southern Maine College in Portland, Maine, while Jones will play for Austin College in Sherman, Texas.

Two Ramstein boys soccer players are bound for NCAA programs in Massachusetts. Conner Mackie, also a DODEA Europe wrestling champion, will play at Division II Assumption College in Worcester. Matthew Reismann, who also served as the Royals' football placekicker, is headed for Division III Elms College in Chicago.

Two other Ramstein seniors are headed for NAIA athletic programs. Royals volleyball

star Tamiya Bruce will move on to Montreat College in Montreat, N.C. Delaney Purtee, who competed for German club SV Kottweiler-Schwanden, will play women's soccer at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas.

Stuttgart

Panthers baseball star Jack Harris is bound for Randolph-Macon College, an NCAA Division III program in Ashland, Va.

A dominant pitcher and all-around standout, Harris earned first-team All-Europe honors in the spring of 2019, leading the Panthers to a berth in the Division I European championship.

SHAPE

Samantha Macalintal will graduate from the Spartans cheer squad to the football and basketball cheer team at Division III University of West Florida in Pensacola.

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Sources: Players want more games, not more pay cuts

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball players appeared likely to propose more regular-season games this year while holding to their demand for full prorated salaries, people familiar with their deliberations told The Associated Press.

Washington pitcher Max Scherzer, among eight players on the union's executive subcommittee, issued a statement late Wednesday night calling management's proposal for more salary cuts a non-starter.

A day after Major League Baseball proposed a sliding scale of salary slashing for a pandemic-delayed season with an 82-game schedule in ballparks without fans, the union held a conference call Wednesday that included its executive board, player representatives and alternate player representatives, the people said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because no details were announced.

Scherzer, among the sport's highest-paid players, confirmed the call without divulging who was on it.

"After discussing the latest developments with the rest of the players there's no need to engage with MLB in any further compensation reductions," he said in a statement posted to Twitter. "We have previously negotiated a pay cut in the version of prorated salaries, and there's no justification to accept a 2nd pay cut based upon the current information the union has received."

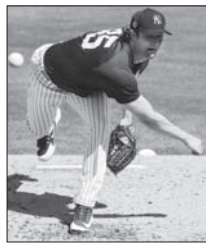
"I'm glad to hear other players voicing the same viewpoint," he added, "and believe MLB's economic strategy would completely change if all documentation were to become public information."

It was unclear when the union will respond to MLB's plan, the people said.

Stars Mike Trout and Gerrit Cole would lose the most under MLB's plan, about 77% of the \$36 million each they were set to be paid this season. In all, there are 133 players whose contracts call for salaries of \$10 million or more, not including shares of signing bonuses.

A big league earning \$1 million or less would keep at least 43% of his salary under the six-tier scale. That includes a share of \$200 million earmarked for players that is contingent on the post-season being completed. About 460 of approximately 900 players on rosters and injured lists when spring training was stopped in mid-March due to the new coronavirus make \$1 million or less.

Trout and Cole would be cut to



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

New York Yankees pitcher Gerrit Cole, under the owners' economic plan, would lose about 77% of the \$36 million he was set to be paid this season.

about \$8 million each. Colorado's Nolan Arenado would drop from \$35 million to \$7.84 million.

"Interesting strategy of making the best most marketable players potentially look like the bad guys," Milwaukee pitcher Brett Anderson tweeted.

The players' association called the proposal "extremely disappointing." The union has argued players already accepted a cut to prorated shares of their salaries in a March 26 agreement and should not have to bargain again.

MLB would like to start the season around the Fourth of July in empty ballparks and proposed an 82-game regular season. It claims teams would lose billions of dollars by playing with no ticket money and gate-related revenue.

Union head Tony Clark has not commented publicly on MLB's proposal and has said very little publicly since late March. Agent Scott Boras has repeatedly criticized MLB for proposing more salary reductions and has questioned the accuracy of management's financial claims.

"Hearing a LOT of rumors about a certain player agent meddling in MLBPA affairs," Cincinnati pitcher Trevor Bauer tweeted Wednesday. "If true — and at this point, these are only rumors — I have one thing to say... Scott Boras, rep your clients however you want to, but keep your damn personal agenda out of union business."

Boras declined to comment on Bauer's remarks.

"Working together to manage the public health issue has brought great solidarity among the players," Boras said earlier in the day. "They are a strong united front and resolute in their support of the MLBPA."

NHL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

NHL monitoring situation before selecting sites

Several arenas meet qualifications

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

Concerns about Canadian coronavirus restrictions could push hockey south of the 49th parallel into the U.S. this summer.

Seven of the 10 locations the NHL has zeroed in on to hold playoff games if it resumes are American cities not restricted by Canada's 14-day mandatory quarantine upon arrival. As 24 teams figure out how to squeeze an expanded roster and limited personnel into one of two "hub" cities, the Vancouver Canucks are even considering relocating training camp to the U.S. if the situation doesn't change in the coming weeks.

"It's something that we're thinking about, but also, too, we just want to give it a few more days just to see if something is going to change," Vancouver general manager Jim Benning said Wednesday. "The perfect scenario we'd like to use our facilities. We're probably going to have 30, 32 guys here and we have great facilities for our players, so we would like to do that first and foremost. But we've talked about moving it off site."

The Canucks are in the same boat as the NHL, which is in no rush to choose among the 10 finalists: Las Vegas, Columbus, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Dallas,

Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton. It will in the next few weeks select two or three to host Eastern and Western Conference brackets and then the Stanley Cup Final by factoring in government regulations, the frequency of COVID-19 in the community and availability of testing.

"We want to just be in a position to, in real time, have lots of options once we understand what the state of play is at the time we need to make the decision," Commissioner Gary Bettman said. "We could pick one or two locations, but that might, if we made the decision today, not turn out to be as good a decision as one that we make three, four weeks from now because things are continuing to evolve in all of the places that we play."

The league told GMs on Tuesday to plan for a roster of 28 skaters and unlimited goaltenders for training camps that won't begin before early July and games without fans several weeks later. Each team will have a personnel cap of 50 in the city where games are played, though the Montreal Canadiens could be without one of their top players.

Montreal GM Marc Bergevin said forward Max Domi, who is high risk because he has Type 1 diabetes, will not play if doctors deem it to be unsafe.

‘We want to just be in a position to, in real time, have lots of options.’

Gary Bettman
NHL commissioner



L.E. Baskow/AP

New York Rangers fans arrive at T-Mobile Arena for a game between the Rangers and the Vegas Golden Knights on Jan. 7, 2018 in Las Vegas. T-Mobile Arena is one of the possible locations the NHL has zeroed in on to host playoff games if it can return amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Before the NHL commits to where games could be held, officials are planning for multiple scenarios. Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly is engaged in regular dialogue with the U.S. and Canadian governments and medical experts to determine what the health and safety landscape might look like this summer.

"That doesn't mean we get to look for any type of exception or any type of favoritism," said Toronto Maple Leafs captain John Tavares, who's on the Return to Play committee. "I think we just want to continue to follow the guidelines that are set out for us and do the best that we can. Hopefully things improve to a point where those things could be possibly loosened up, not just for us but for all of society."

Because testing is lagging in Ontario and British Columbia's government isn't expected to make exceptions for the NHL, Edmonton could be Canada's best hope. Oilers GM Ken Holland said with an attached practice rink and hotel and nearby restaur-

ants, "Edmonton checks off in my opinion all the boxes."

Except that Daly said Canada's 14-day quarantine would be a nonstarter. The NHL is already facing what Winnipeg forward Andrew Copp called a "time crunch" to fit in effectively five rounds of playoffs, and if the focus shifts solely on U.S. locations, Las Vegas and Columbus appear to be the front-runners.

Beyond the abundance of hotels and the sparkling new rink the Las Vegas Strip can offer, the arena district in Columbus could serve as an effective bubble for the NHL.

"Whether it's from the building or the facilities surrounding the building to accommodate hotel rooms, meals — whatever it needs to be, we've covered it," Blue Jackets GM Jarmo Kekalainen said. "Also, the state of Ohio is in pretty good shape as far as flattening the curve and providing a safe environment that way. The transportation is easy if needed between facilities in Columbus, and we have a lot of

rink facilities that we can use for the amount of teams that would be in the tournament."

There wouldn't be much of a home-ice advantage without fans, and the league is considering moving the "home" team to the other city.

But that isn't stopping NHL executives from pitching the ability to host playoff games.

"We have a state-of-the-art facility in Cranberry, the Lemieux Center, and the medical center attached and we have plenty of hotels and everything like that," Pittsburgh Penguins GM Jim Rutherford said. "We meet the criteria but we understand there's other cities that do, also."

The two biggest surprises on the NHL's list were Chicago and Los Angeles. The Blackhawks and Kings each said they were honored to be considered.

But not being a coronavirus hotspot and having a surplus of testing are key elements to the decision.

AP sports writers Will Graves and Mitch Scharf contributed to this report.



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Arizona State head coach Bobby Hurley sent an email to athletic director Ray Anderson last season alleging Anderson minimized sexual harassment allegations by the wives of three athletic staff members against booster Bart Wear.

Report: Hurley says Arizona State AD minimized scandal

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Arizona State men's basketball coach Bobby Hurley sent an email to Ray Anderson last season alleging the Arizona State athletic director minimized sexual harassment allegations by the wives of three athletic staff members against a school booster.

In the email obtained by Yahoo Sports, Hurley accused Anderson on Dec. 8 of disregarding the safety of and showing no sensitivity toward the women.

"I feel like I've been lied to," Hurley wrote.

Hurley also accused Anderson of coming up with a numeric scale to judge the harassment claims by the women, including Hurley's wife, Leslie.

"You have chosen to create your own nu-

meric scale on what sexual assault mean(s) which is disturbing," Hurley wrote.

Anderson responded by telling Hurley his email includes false and baseless allegations.

"Your approach here is puzzling," Anderson wrote.

Arizona State previously had an outside investigation conducted that determined booster Bart Wear subjected the three women to unwelcome comments and physical contact. In February, the school acknowledged to Yahoo that the situation could have been handled more quickly after waiting months to investigate.

The school canceled Wear's season tickets and warned him security may remove him from the premises if he attends any future Arizona State events.

GOLF/COMBAT SPORTS

European Tour to return with British Masters

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

The European Tour plans to resume its season the last full weekend in July with six tournaments in England and Wales that will include COVID-19 testing and depend on the U.K. lifting its quarantine restrictions.

It would start July 22 with the British Masters, hosted by Lee Westwood. The next five in the "U.K. Swing" are new

tournaments the European Tour will pay for out of its tournament development fund. Three will be at former Ryder Cup venues — two at Celtic Manor in Wales, one at The Belfry in England.

The purse at each new event is 1 million euros. The tour said it will add 500,000 euros for the U.K. Swing

charities — half for the markets they play, half for the top 10 players from a "mini money list" to decide.

No spectators will be allowed at least for the U.K. swing.

"There is no question that we're back," Keith Pelley, the tour's chief executive, said in a conference call Thursday.

The European Tour also set dates for four Rolex Series events — the Scottish Open and BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth in October, the Nedbank Challenge in South Africa and the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai in December.

Pelley expects the rest of the schedule — with hopes for 24 events — to be announced later.

He said the U.K. Swing depends largely on lifting the 14-day quarantine for players arriving from other countries. The PGA Championship in San Francisco is scheduled for Aug. 6-9. If the quarantine is not lifted, top European Tour players would have to choose between a major and four European Tour events with minimal prize money.

"Hotels need to be in operation and the quarantine needs to be lifted to continue with these events," Pelley said.

He said he was encouraged and optimistic that will be the case, based on numerous conversations with government officials.

"We wouldn't be announcing these events without having had significant dialogue with the UK government," Pel-



MATT DUNHAM/AP

A rainbow is seen over the course as Rory McIlroy, center, hits a putt on the 14th green of the 2010 Ryder Cup tournament at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, Wales. The European Tour plans to resume its season with six tournaments in England and Wales, beginning July 22 with the British Masters. Three will be at former Ryder Cup venues — including two at Celtic Manor.

ley said. "They know about the announcements. They're worked feverishly with us."

The tour returns under an initiative called "Golf for Good," which Pelley said will underpin the rest of 2020. The key points are the charitable contributions — 50,000 euros to the five venues and 250,000 euros for the leading 10 players from a money list of the U.K. Swing.

He recalled a conversation with one European Tour partner in which Pelley said, "This might not be the biggest event that you have ever done in terms of crowds and hospitality, but it will be the most important event, and it should be the most emotional event."

The European Tour was last played March 8 at the Qatar Masters. Eight tour-

naments have been canceled, including a World Golf Championship in Texas and the British Open. Nine others have been postponed, and officials across several tours worldwide have been trying to piece together the season.

The majors set the framework with the PGA Championship going to Aug. 6-9, the U.S. Open planned for Sept. 17-20 in New York and the Masters moving to Nov. 12-15.

Pelley did not take any questions on the Ryder Cup — with or without fans — except to say it remains on the schedule for Sept. 25-27 in Wisconsin.

The Scottish Open, originally planned for July, moves to Oct. 8-11 and precedes the European Tour's flagship event, the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth.

He said other events, such as the Irish Open and other key stops in continental Europe, were close to being announced. Pelley was quick to point out the tour's strength — a worldwide tour — has become an obstacle from having to work with so many different governments and their regulations for the pandemic.

"Moving 30 events with one in its place (Dunhill Championship in Scotland on Oct. 1-4) has been challenging," he said.

Andrew Murray, the tour's chief medical officer, says testing will include an antigen test for the coronavirus when players arrive, along with daily thermal readings and questionnaires about their health.

No media will be allowed at tournaments for the U.K. Swing, and the tour expects no more than 500 people on site.

Vegas: Partial blueprint for safety rules established by UFC events in Florida

FROM BACK PAGE

safety protocols on Wednesday to accompany the return of combat sports to their hometown. The UFC and Top Rank have worked closely with the commission in recent weeks to create the protocols, according to Bob Bennett, the commission's executive director.

"Throughout this process, we've been working hand in glove with the UFC," Bennett said. "I'm aware of their operations plan, and everything is moving forward based on their operations plan and our protocols."

The UFC established a partial blueprint for the safety rules when it staged three shows in



JOHN RAOU/AP

A worker wearing a mask wipes down padding on the octagon during UFC 249 on May 9 in Jacksonville, Fla.

Jacksonville, Fla., earlier this month while waiting to get approval from the Nevada commission to return to its hometown.

The Nevada commission's safety protocols include immediate testing and mandated quarantine at a hotel upon all participants' arrival in Las Vegas, followed by another test and isolation period before the events.

The UFC is expected to stage several domestic cards in Las Vegas over the upcoming weeks, and President Dana White still intends to hold other shows on a private island for fighters not based in the U.S.

White said the events in Jacksonville included more than 1,110

processed tests for COVID-19. Veteran fighter Jacare Souza and two of his cornermen tested positive before the first event in Florida, but no other positive tests were reported.

The UFC show Saturday will be headlined by former welterweight champion Tyron Woodley facing Gilbert Burns.

The main event of UFC 250 on June 6 features dominant two-division champion Amanda Nunes defending her featherweight belt against Canadian challenger Felicia Spencer. UFC 250 initially was scheduled for May 9 in Nunes' native Brazil, but was postponed and eventually moved.

NFL

Fitzpatrick says schedule could benefit Steelers

By WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Minkah Fitzpatrick is missing the somewhat leisurely pace of the NFL's organized team activities, when free time in the evenings allows teammates to develop the chemistry the Steelers safety considers critical to success.

"You're learning about each other and how each other think and life outside of football," Fitzpatrick said Tuesday.

Not so much this season, at least not in the way Fitzpatrick is used to. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Fitzpatrick to work out on his own. It's limited his interactions with other members of one of the league's top secondaries to group chats and virtual conference calls. It's not ideal, but these aren't ideal times.

While Fitzpatrick is preparing as if the Steelers will report to St. Vincent College for the 55th straight summer for training camp in July, that's more pragmatism than optimism. The way the third-year All-Pro figures it, if he's ready for the grind of camp then he'll be overly prepared if camp is scrapped or the preseason is altered in response to the coronavirus.

If the NFL does tinker with the schedule, Pittsburgh might be one of the least impacted clubs in the league. The Steelers return 10 of 11 starters to a unit that finished fifth last season — and was the primary reason Pittsburgh hung around the playoff picture until late December despite losing quarterback Ben Roethlisberger

to a right elbow injury at halftime of Week 2.

"We have some young faces and new faces, (but) some teams, half their roster, half their secondary or half their linebackers are gone," Fitzpatrick said. "(A shortened preseason) will definitely give us an advantage because we all have a year (together) under our belt or more than that. I think it's more of an advantage."

Fitzpatrick has been keeping an eye on Roethlisberger's recovery from elbow surgery. So have the Steelers, who spent free agency and the draft trying to provide more punch to an offense that faltered late in the season in Roethlisberger's absence.

Pittsburgh signed tight end Eric Ebron and used its first draft pick on Notre Dame wide receiver Chase Claypool, leaving a defense that led the league in sacks largely untouched. The message couldn't be more clear: The Steelers anticipate Roethlisberger returning to form and the team returning to the playoffs following a two-year absence. So does Fitzpatrick.

"I expect him to be Ben Roethlisberger," Fitzpatrick said. "He's a great leader and a great man ... He has a lot of experience and wisdom to share. I think he's going to keep being himself. He's going to go out there and compete and challenge myself as a defensive player."

It's a challenge Fitzpatrick figures he and the rest of a defense that produced four Pro Bowlers will be ready to answer whenever the Steelers are given the go-ahead to get together.



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Pittsburgh Steelers All-Pro safety Minkah Fitzpatrick isn't sure when he'll get a chance to be around his teammates again. In a weird way though, the potentially chaotic schedule that lies ahead for the NFL could be a boon to the Steelers, who bring back 10 starters on a defense that finished fifth in the league last season.



GERALD HERBERT/AP

The Los Angeles Rams' Nickell Robey-Coleman breaks up a pass intended for the New Orleans Saints' Tommylee Lewis during the NFC championship game in New Orleans on Jan. 20, 2019. The missed interference call led to NFL pass interference review rules last season that will likely now be rescinded.

Commentary

NFL missed the call with pass interference reviews

By BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

Remember back to the NFC championship game in the 2018 season. Deep in the fourth quarter at the Superdome.

And the missed call — one of the worst officiating gaffes in pro football memory.

Not only did it likely prevent the New Orleans Saints from winning the conference title, and perhaps beating New England in the Super Bowl, but the embarrassment of the lack of yellow flags on the play sent the NFL into crisis mode.

What the league came up with was a one-year trial in which pass interference calls could be reviewed in the video replay system; it was hailed as major step to aid officiating.

But the NFL blew it, and on Thursday, barring a turnaround, the rule will disappear.

"We passed that rule for one year," says Falcons President Rich McKay, the longtime co-chairman of the powerful competition committee. "Forever prior to that time, we were really nervous about having a review of something that is a subjective foul."

"We always had a fear that if we do that, you're necessarily going to have complete disagreement about whether a play should be reversed or not reversed. It's not black and white, it's gray. On all other reviews, there are objective markers. Did his foot touch the white line? Did the ball cross the plane? Those are objective markers, not subjective markers."

Early last season, virtually



PHELAN M. EDELMAN/AP

NFL officiating chief Al Riveron was tasked with interpreting a pass interference review rule that was too complicated.

every challenge on interference was denied. Some coaches became reticent to even bother.

Later, officials seemed to open up their consideration of the challenges. But there was little to no consistency to their decisions.

Mike Pereira, who oversaw league officiating for more than a decade and now is an analyst for Fox, believes the system set up was doomed for failure.

"It is the toughest call to make; I think replay proved that last year," Pereira told SiriusXM Radio. "Is it offense, is it defense, and it was that simple — that is the way I used to teach it in the NFL. Block/charge. If it is a charge in the NBA or in college basketball, it is offense (at fault). When it comes to football, if it is a block it becomes a defensive foul. And it is really the simplest way to look at it when you are talking about collisions. Not push-offs,

but collisions."

Unfortunately, Pereira believes, the NFL expanded what it was examining in replays.

"I think the real case was the fact they used a different standard in replay than they did on the field, and that was where everybody got lost," he said. "They wanted to adopt a rule that basically addressed the one play that happened in the Saints-Rams game, and basically only get involved if it reached that level, which was like a huge, huge miss."

"Poor (NFL officiating chief) Al Riveron is trying to decide is this big enough or is it not big enough? I can put myself in his seat. 'Yep this is interference, but is it big enough for me to get involved? That was the downfall of the rule.'"

Few would argue that the league has far too many rules and tangents to those rules. When the NFL simplifies things, such as with the hotly debated "catch rule," it eventually reaches something logical.

What it came up with after the Rams-Saints fiasco was, it turns out, no help at all.

"I did not feel like it worked," McKay said. "We put New York in some really tough, tough spots. Whatever New York did, someone was going to criticize it on the other side. It was a no-win situation. That had always been the fear and was why we were scared — or I should say hesitant — to make those fouls subject to review. We didn't make a recommendation to have a continuation of that after the one-year trial, so the rule dies on its own accord."

NFL



MIKE MCCARN, ABOVE, AND BRUCE KLUCKHOHN, BELOW/AP

Above: Quarterback Cam Newton missed all but two games with the Carolina Panthers last season because of a foot injury and was released in March after Carolina failed to find a trade partner. Below: Defensive end Everson Griffen exercised his option to void the remaining three years of his deal with the Minnesota Vikings.



Big names remain

Offseason shopping ongoing despite season's uncertainty

By DENNIS WASZAK JR.
Associated Press

Offseason shopping is still in full swing in the NFL. Even with the status of the upcoming season uncertain because of the coronavirus pandemic, teams continue to tinker with their rosters by adding players they hope will help them win — whenever or if they actually play.

Virtual workouts are being held all around the league, with some facilities beginning to reopen but still closed to coaches and players. General managers work the phones and chat with agents and unsigned players through video conference calls.

During the last few weeks, Joe Flacco (Jets), Carlos Hyde (Seahawks), Frank Gore (Jets), Ty Montgomery (Saints), D.J. Fluker (Ravens) and Prince Amukamara (Raiders) have found new homes.

Other big names remain unsigned and could end up filling major needs for someone. Here's a look at some still waiting to find the right fit — or, in some cases, for quarantine restrictions to be lifted so they can make in-person visits before they or the teams make a decision:

Cam Newton, QB

The former Panthers star missed all but two games last season because of a foot injury and was released in March after Carolina failed to find a trade partner. Newton is 31 and five years removed from his NFL MVP season. He's been posting workout videos on Instagram to show he's now healthy. Where he eventually ends up — likely as a backup, at least at first — remains an intriguing story line of the offseason.

Jadeveon Clowney, DE

Many believed Clowney would be snatched up quickly by a team desperate for a pass-rushing presence. And for big-time bucks. Instead, the 2014 No. 1 overall draft pick is still unsigned two months later and potentially looking at a one-year, prove-it deal. A return to Seattle isn't out of the question.

Larry Warford, G

After making the last three Pro Bowls, Warford was cut by New Orleans earlier this month; the Saints drafted Cesar Ruiz in the first round as his obvious successor at right guard. New Orleans also saved \$7 million on the salary cap by releasing Warford. He immediately became the most enticing offensive lineman on the market, and will likely find a starting spot.

Everson Griffen, DE

Minnesota's four-time Pro Bowl pick has 74 ½ career sacks, including 26 ½ the past three seasons, but he exercised his option to void the remaining three years on his contract. Griffen is reportedly being patient and waiting until he can take in-person visits. He's 32, but showed last season he has plenty left.

Logan Ryan, CB

Ryan, 29, played his first four NFL seasons with New England, helping the Patriots win two Super Bowls before signing a three-year, \$30 million contract that included \$12 million guaranteed with Tennessee in 2017. He set career highs with 105 total tackles, 18 passes defended and 4 ½ sacks to go along with four interceptions last season, but Tennessee chose to move on.

Eric Reid, S

Reid was released in March after two seasons in Carolina, despite posting career highs with 124 total tackles and four sacks. He signed a three-year, \$22 million contract extension before last season, but the new-look Panthers saved \$8 million on the cap this year.

Jason Peters, LT

The big man wants to keep going. Peters turned 38 in January and reportedly has told friends he has his sights on playing into his 40s. He had arthroscopic knee surgery that caused



DANIEL GLUSKOTER/AP

A return to Seattle isn't out of the question for defensive end Jadeveon Clowney, who would likely sign a one-year deal.

him to miss three games in the middle of 2019, but bounced back and was his usual solid rest of the way.

Darqueze Dennard, CB

It appeared Dennard had a new home early in free agency when he signed with Jacksonville, but the three-year, \$13.5 million deal fell through. The former Bengals slot cornerback, a 2014 first-round pick, never really lived up to his lofty draft status in Cincinnati. He was limited to nine games last season after having offseason knee surgery.

Kelvin Beachum, LT

Arguably the Jets' most consistently solid offensive lineman during his three seasons in New York, Beachum, who turns 31 next month, has seen a complete overhaul on the O-line by GM Joe Douglas. Beachum's fate with the Jets was sealed after they drafted Louisville left tackle Mekhi Becton with the No. 11 overall pick. He's still a more-than-serviceable starter.

Devonta Freeman, RB

Freeman, one of the NFL's most productive backs during the 2015 and '16 seasons, rushed for 11 touchdowns and more than 1,000 yards each year. He hasn't been quite the same player since, with various injuries limiting him to two games in 2018 and only 656 yards rushing and two TDs in 14 games last year. Atlanta released him in March, and there are reports he might be willing to sit out this season or even retire if no team meets his hefty contract request.

Other notables

CB Eli Apple, QB Blake Bortles, DT Mike Daniels, DT Marcell Dareus, K Stephen Gostkowski, DT Damon Harrison, S Tony Jefferson, S Reshad Jones, CB Dre Kirkpatrick, RB LeSean McCoy, LB Clay Matthews, RB Lamar Miller, LB Cameron Wake and TE Delta Walker.

SPORTS



Pay for play

MLB players seek more games, fewer salary reductions » **Page 51**

COMBAT SPORTS



Back in business

Boxing, UFC set for Las Vegas return

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

Mixed martial arts and boxing are back in business in Nevada.

The Nevada Athletic Commission unanimously agreed Wednesday to allow two UFC events and two Top Rank boxing shows in Las Vegas over the next two weeks.

The decision ends the moratorium on combat sports that has been in place in Nevada since March 14, when the commission stopped competition amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The UFC immediately confirmed its plans to

stage a show without fans in attendance Saturday night at the UFC Apex arena on its expansive corporate complex in Las Vegas, followed by the UFC 250 pay-per-view show at the same place June 6.

Top Rank is expected to hold fan-free boxing shows at the MGM Grand on June 9 and June 11.

Citing the importance of sports to the state's economy and morale, Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak announced Tuesday night that sporting events could return if promoters followed health rules approved by the appropriate authorities.

The commission approved stringent coronavirus

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Top: Former welterweight champ Tyron Woodley, pictured, will face Gilbert Burns on Saturday at UFC Fight Night in Las Vegas after the Nevada Athletic Commission voted to end the moratorium on combat sports in the state Wednesday. **Right:** Boxing promoter Bob Arum will stage a pair of fan-free fight events at the MGM Grand on June 9 and June 11.

PHOTOS BY JULIO CORTEZ, TOP, AND NICK WASS, RIGHT / AP

Big-name NFL free agents remain on market » **Page 55**

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