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# STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 84 Edition 31 ©SS 2025

FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2025

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

\$1.00

## Most tariffs by Trump halted by trade court

BY DAVID J. LYNCH  
AND CAT ZAKRZEWSKI  
*The Washington Post*

A specialized federal court in New York on Wednesday ruled that most of President Donald Trump's tariffs — including those on Chinese goods — are illegal, upending negotiations with more than a dozen nations and creating fresh uncertainty for countless American businesses that depend upon foreign suppliers.

The decision by the little-known Court of International Trade neuters the president's signature trade initiative: the flurry of import taxes he announced on April 2 under the banner of "Liberation Day."

Those tariffs sent the value of U.S. stocks, bonds and the dollar into sharp decline, causing global investors to rethink their habitual faith in the United States and raising questions about the U.S. economic outlook.

The trade court's ruling that Trump exceeded his authority in imposing tariffs on all imported goods brought an immediate, albeit perhaps temporary, halt to his signature trade war policy.

SEE COURT ON PAGE 8

**"The ruling emphasizes that he was wrong to claim a virtually unlimited power to impose tariffs."**

Ilya Somin  
co-counsel in the case



PROJECT ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

Problems at Palau Hall barracks on Guam include exposed wires, corroded plumbing, deteriorating walls and mold that had been painted over, according to the Project on Government Oversight.

## Mold, corrosion on Guam

### Barracks conditions spark worldwide Navy housing inspections

BY ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

Major problems with Guam housing prompted the Navy secretary to open new barracks ahead of schedule and triggered a worldwide review of Navy housing conditions, according to a report released this week by a government watchdog.

Secretary of the Navy John Phelan visited Andersen Air Force Base's Palau Hall barracks during a May 1-2 trip to the U.S. territory.

He was left "appalled" and "very upset" by what he saw, including exposed electrical wires, corroded plumbing, deteriorating walls and mold that had been painted over, according to the Washington, D.C.-based Project on Government Oversight.

The barracks was housing sailors assigned to a helicopter squadron temporarily operating from Andersen, René Kladzyk, senior investigator on the report, said by email Thursday.

Phelan's visit prompted him to order new

bachelor enlisted quarters on Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz to open about a month ahead of schedule, he told the nonprofit watchdog.

The 300-room facility, initially set to open in June, was directed to begin housing service members by May 16, Marine Corps Headquarters spokeswoman Capt. Brenda Leenders told Stars and Stripes in a May 20 email.

As of May 22, 25 Marines and 48 sailors had

SEE MOLD ON PAGE 6



BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES									
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel					
Germany	\$3.590	\$4.170	\$4.532	\$3.917	Azores	..	..	\$4.390	..
Change in price	-1.3 cents	-1.6 cents	-1.4 cents	-4.9 cents	Change in price	..	..	-1.4 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.602	\$5.165	\$4.709	Turkey	..	..	\$4.182	\$4.131*
Change in price	..	-2.1 cents	-2.4 cents	-2.1 cents	Change in price	..	..	-1.4 cents	No change
U.K.	..	\$4.182	\$4.544	\$3.929	Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective May 30. The change in price is from May 23.				
Change in price	..	-1.6 cents	-1.4 cents	-4.9 cents					

PACIFIC GAS PRICES									
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel					
Japan	..	\$4.169	..	\$3.549	South Korea	\$3.259	..	\$4.199	\$3.579
Change in price	..	-1.0 cents	..	-5.0 cents	Change in price	-1.0 cents	..	-1.0 cents	-5.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.239	..	..	\$3.549	Guam	\$3.279**	\$3.859	\$4.229	..
Change in price	No change	..	..	-5.0 cents	Change in price	-2.0 cents	-2.0 cents	-1.0 cents	..
*DieselEFD **Midgrade									
Pacific prices for the week of May 30 - June 5									

EXCHANGE RATES			
Military rates			
Euro costs (May 30)	\$1.15	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8241
British pound (May 30)	\$1.28	Thailand (Baht)	32.61
Japanese yen (May 30)	102.00	Turkey (NewLira)	39.1045
South Korean won (May 30)	1083.00	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770		
Britain (Pound)	1.3492		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3819		
China (Yuan)	7.2043		
Denmark (Krone)	6.5708		
Egypt (Pound)	49.7401		
Euro	0.8810		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8395		
Hungary (Forint)	356.32		
Israel (Shekel)	3.5068		
Japan (Yen)	144.38		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3069		
Norway (Krone)	10.1489		
Philippines (Peso)	55.70		
Poland (Zloty)	3.73		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7516		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2875		
South Korea (Won)	1372.68		

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	7.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	4.50
Federal funds market rate	4.38
3-month bill	4.35
30-year bond	4.97

WEATHER OUTLOOK



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MILITARY

# DOD to slash budget for personnel moves

Proposals cut permanent change of station funds in half by fiscal 2030 and reduce frequency of relocation

**By MATTHEW ADAMS**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon on Wednesday announced defense officials are developing proposals that cut permanent change of station budgets in half by fiscal 2030, while also reducing the frequency of personnel moves.

The Defense Department spends about \$5 billion to move military personnel and their families between assignments, with moves typically occurring every two to four years.

“While these permanent change of station moves support mission requirements, the frequency can reduce quality of life for service members and their families, harm spousal employment, and disrupt functional communities, unit cohesion and long-term talent management,” Jules Hurst, who is performing the duties of the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, wrote in a memo dated May 22.

The memo calls for the development of a plan to reduce PCS “discretionary move” budgets. This includes operational travel in the United States, rotational travel overseas and training travel by 10% in fiscal 2027, 30% by 2028, 40% by 2029 and 50% by 2030.

The memo also addresses proposed modifications to the career development models for officers and noncommissioned officers to prioritize geographic stability and permit some officers and NCOs to specialize in place of gaining generalized experience across a range of functions.

The service branches are to provide information and implementation plans no later than 120 days from the date of the memo,



ETHAN STEINQUEST/Fort Campbell Public Affairs Office

Workers conduct a delivery for a military personnel move in May 2022 at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Hurst wrote. “It’s clear that it’s time for the department to look at reducing the frequency of those moves, especially if we want to maintain the momentum that we have today, both in recruiting and the retention of our service members,” Tim Dill, the acting deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told reporters Wednesday.

Some moves occur because a service member needs certain accreditation or additional training

requirements for career advancement, and some moves considered discretionary, Dill added. The Pentagon estimates about 80% of the department’s PCS moves are in the discretionary category, and 20% are mandatory.

“What we are directing the [services] to do is purely to examine potential reductions in things that would be defined as discretionary,” he said. “So, if they see that as mandatory for mission need, we’re not even asking them to come back with a plan

to reduce it. We want them to continue that course of action and do the mandatory moves.”

The announcement comes after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth last week ordered the formation of a Pentagon task force to improve the workflow behind permanent change of station moves under the Global Household Goods Contract, or GHC.

Moves under the contract began with a slow rollout more than a year ago but ramped up in earnest this year.

GHC was created because of service member complaints over the performance of the legacy system. But GHC has been plagued by late pickups and deliveries, and several U.S. senators commenced inquiries in the spring into its shortcomings.

In late April, the Army suspended the use of GHC for all moves “pending further leadership review,” the service said in an April 30 memo.

More than half of spouses are unhappy with military life, continuing a downward trend in recent years related to family frustrations over quality-of-life issues such as frequent moves and employment difficulties, according to a new Defense Department survey released May 16 to Congress.

The 2024 active-duty spouse survey, conducted roughly every two years, examined the opinions and attitudes of spouses on a range of issues. The findings showed one in three spouses would prefer that their family separate from the military. The largest source of dissatisfaction was related to permanent change of station moves.

About 49% of military spouses who experienced a PCS move said finding employment proved to be a “large” or “very large” problem, according to the survey.

Loss of income and non-reimbursable moving costs also were top concerns.

Hegseth’s memo last week also directed the government’s reimbursement rate for do-it-yourself moves be increased by 30%. The secretary said, in some cases, the reimbursements for personally procured moves were so low that service members were paying out of pocket.

## Pentagon to cut ties with contracts that outsource work

**By CAITLYN BURCHETT**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is working to cut ties with outsourced contracts with the intention of redistributing funds to service members’ needs, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced Wednesday.

“We are committed to reducing bloated bureaucracy and wasteful spending in favor of increased lethality. That is a trade-off I will take every single day — converting consultants into combat power,” Hegseth said in a video posted to his official X account.

In conjunction with the video, the Pentagon released three memos outlining a requirement to justify outsourcing jobs that

could be done by existing civilian workers, as well as the consolidation of the department’s acquisition and sustainment office.

Specifically, outsourced information technology consulting and management services will not be approved unless the Defense Department determines the contracted work cannot be done within the department. Similarly, advisory and assistance services that provide subject matter experts, policy development and organizational assessments, must be done in-house.

“While we rely on our vital industrial base to deliver cutting-edge technology and support, we must in-source more expertise and harness the unparalleled talent of our existing experts to

drive financial efficiency and operational strength. We will become lean and mean, eliminating wasteful practices and reallocating resources to fortify our strategic edge,” Hegseth wrote in one memo.

Hegseth touted \$10 billion in savings has already been identified, including a \$1 billion “managing consultant contract” for the Air Force.

“These are consultants — not frontline fighters. They are giving us PowerPoints that we need less of,” Hegseth said. “We need more actual application.”

Steven Feinberg, the deputy defense secretary, will work with each of the services to review consulting contracts, according to the memos. Feinberg and the

services will work with Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency. The DOGE team will also have access to all unclassified contracts, according to one memo.

The Pentagon has not detailed a full list of the cost-savings identified, but previously said the department was cutting a human resources software development program that had run \$280 million over budget, \$30 million for unused information technology licenses, and \$360 million in grants for emissions, diversity and artificial intelligence programs.

The funding, Hegseth said Wednesday, will be reinvested into “mission-related programs for our warfighters and their

families.”

Hegseth’s first four months leading the department have been focused on the services’ capabilities and recruiting numbers, with little mention of longstanding quality-of-life issues that service members face, including derelict barracks and limited access to food. But the Pentagon this week began shifting its attention to some of those issues, such as the permanent change of station process and what homeschool resources are available to military families.

Reducing the frequency of permanent change of station moves, which the Pentagon has identified as a source of angst among military spouses, will potentially save \$2.5 billion per year.



MILITARY

Marine subdues man trying to open jet door

**By SETH ROBSON  
AND HANA KUSUMOTO**  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — A Japanese airline has thanked a U.S. Marine for subduing a disruptive passenger who allegedly attempted to open an exit door during a flight from Tokyo to Houston on Saturday.

Sgt. Maj. Jody Armentrout, the senior enlisted adviser at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni south of Hiroshima, intervened during the incident on All Nippon Airways Flight 114.

The flight departed Tokyo's Haneda Airport around 10:49 a.m. Saturday. A passenger "tried to open a door while in flight and an-



**Sgt. Maj. Jody Armentrout at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.**

other passenger apprehended the person," an ANA spokeswoman told Stars and Stripes by phone

Thursday. Some Japanese officials speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

The Marine's actions were detailed in an interview with NBC News on Sunday.

Armentrout said he grew suspicious after observing a passenger with a backpack enter and exit multiple restrooms.

"He came out of that one and began pacing up and down the aisle, so that just threw my radar on," he told the network.

When the man began staring at an exit door, Armentrout said he got up and stood in his path.

The man then ran through the galley toward a different exit on

the other side of the aircraft.

"He grabbed a strap around the door, pulled it off, and about that time is when I took him and slammed him, put him on the ground," Armentrout said in the report. "And then there was an older gentleman sitting on that side that woke up, and he got up and kind of helped me."

Flight attendants provided zip ties that Armentrout used to restrain the man in a seat, he said.

"His eyes — you could definitely tell there was something going on," he told NBC.

The flight was diverted to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, where it landed at 4:35 a.m. that

day.

No injuries were reported, and the unruly passenger was handed over to local authorities, the airline said.

The plane later continued to George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, arriving at 12:55 p.m., approximately four hours behind schedule.

"We would like to express our gratitude to the person, who cooperated on the airplane," the ANA spokeswoman said. "Safety of customers and staff is our highest priority."

Marine Corps officials in Japan did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday.

Upgrade to Medal of Honor sought for Vietnam War Marine

**By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers have renewed an effort to award the Medal of Honor to Maj. James Capers Jr., a reconnaissance Marine who in 1967 led his nine-member team to safety despite being grievously wounded in the jungles of Vietnam.

Capers, 87, received the Silver Star in 2010 for his selfless actions, but the Medal of Honor, the nation's top military award for valor, has eluded him since the Marine Corps reviewed, declined and downgraded his nomination years ago.

His supporters, including Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., are continuing to press for an upgrade.

"Mr. James Capers, Jr. isn't just a hero, he's a living legend in every sense of the word," Norman said after reintroducing legislation this month authorizing the award elevation. "A man like Maj. Capers deserves nothing less than the Medal of Honor."

Weeks after President Donald Trump's inauguration in January, Norman and 46 other lawmakers sent a letter to Trump urging him to give the highest military decoration to Capers.

"We firmly believe that Maj. James Capers Jr. has met the stringent criteria for the Medal of



**Former Marine Corps Maj. James Capers salutes during a ceremony at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 2021.**

Honor," the letter states. "His selfless actions, leadership, courage and initiative uphold the highest traditions of the United States armed forces."

Capers, the first Black man to lead a Marine reconnaissance company and receive a battlefield commission, was on the last day of

his patrol near the village of Phu Loc in South Vietnam when his nine-man unit was ambushed.

It was April 1967 and Capers was almost a year into his deployment to Vietnam, where he conducted dozens of commando raids. The fighting this time was as intense as he had ever seen, Cap-

ers later recalled.

The attack by enemy forces, initiated by claymore mines, ripped open Capers' abdomen and broke his leg but he was undeterred, charging ahead to free his injured men from the assault.

"If I was going to die there in Vietnam, I was going to die fighting," Capers said in an interview in 2018 from his home near Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, N.C.

He directed air, artillery and mortar strikes dangerously close to his position and ordered some of his Marines to a landing zone for evacuation while continuing to face the enemy alongside two other Marines.

Capers waged battle with a rifle and grenades for nearly an hour, suffering additional bullet wounds to his legs. When the extraction helicopter arrived, Capers loaded his men and their dead war dog first and tried to jump off when the overloaded chopper struggled to lift off.

"I figured it's better to lose one man than to lose the whole team," Capers said. "Any commander worth his salt would care for his men before his self."

All nine members of Capers' unit survived the enemy ambush, each injured but alive.

In 2007, a team of Marines began seeking the Medal of Honor

for Capers' actions at Phu Loc. Norman said administrative shortcomings and delays kept Capers from receiving the award.

Capers in 2018 said he was proud to instead receive the Silver Star, the third-highest decoration for gallantry. But he acknowledged the Medal of Honor would mean more and alleviate concerns that his skin color kept him from earning the ultimate badge of bravery.

"I just ask that the system is fair," he said. "Maybe I just didn't do enough. Maybe it's just one of those things."

Capers spent 22 years in the Marine Corps and after his heroism in Vietnam became the face of the service's first recruiting campaign targeting young Black men.

Born into poverty in South Carolina during the Jim Crow era, Capers said he marveled at his Silver Star award ceremony at how far he had come.

"A Marine who grew up on a sharecropper's farm, who had no resources, who didn't get the benefit of a first-rate education," he said. "As an African American, I was proud at that time to rise to the top."

Stars and Stripes reporter Corey Dickstein contributed to this report.

Reward posted for information on death of US soldier in Honduras

**By PHILLIP WALTER  
WELLMAN**  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. Army is offering a reward of up to \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the death of 1st Lt. Marciano Angelo Parisano, a Black Hawk pilot found dead in Honduras earlier this month.

Parisano, 25, was last seen in video footage recorded in the

early hours of May 3 outside Club Santos in the Honduran city of Comayagua, according to an Army Criminal Investigation Division notice updated Tuesday.

The CID appeal for information has since been shared by the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa and others on social media in both English and Spanish.

Those with information may remain anonymous, the CID said. The agency is working with Hon-

duran law enforcement on the investigation.

Military and federal employees are eligible for the reward if their tips reflect what the CID calls "exceptional actions," meaning the information must go beyond what is typically expected in the course of their duties.

Parisano, a native of Cibolo, Texas, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 2023. He was engaged to his fiancée, Alley Sin-

gley, at the time of his death, the San Antonio Express-News reported Tuesday.

He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment and was supporting Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras at Soto Cano Air Base.

He was off base in Comayagua, a city about 5 miles to the south, when his body was found May 3, the task force said in a statement the following day.

Parisano was discovered on the banks of the Chiquito River, which runs through Comayagua, after authorities were alerted that a body had been seen in the water, Honduran newspaper El Heraldo reported at the time.

Joint Task Force Bravo supports U.S. regional security cooperation efforts in Central America, including counterdrug operations, humanitarian missions and disaster response.



MILITARY

# NATO airpower could overwhelm Russia

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. and its NATO allies in Europe would dominate the airspace in a potential conflict with Russia and enjoy a decisive battlefield advantage, a new Air Force-commissioned report says.

A future fight between NATO and Russia would diverge from the ongoing war in Ukraine in several ways, the Rand Corp. said in the report requested by U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa.

“First, and perhaps most importantly, NATO air dominance would probably upset the stagnation that defines current ground operations” in the Russia-Ukraine war, the May 22 report states.

Over the past three years, U.S. forces have drawn numerous lessons from the Ukraine fighting. Some of the biggest have to do with whether allies have fallen behind in incorporating small drones and electronic warfare techniques, which have defined the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Other vulnerabilities center on the inability of the West’s defense industrial base to keep up with Russia to churn out large amounts of ammunition. However, NATO



EMILI KOONCE/U.S. Air Force

**Airmen prepare to launch F-35A Lightning II aircraft at NATO Allied Air Command’s Ramstein Flag 2025 exercise April 4.**

has big advantages over Russia in combat power, Rand said.

Attacking Russian ground forces would likely achieve initial gains before NATO could mobilize a counterattack, but the alliance would “dominate the skies over Eastern Europe,” the report said.

Neutralizing Russia’s air defenses also would enable NATO surveillance aircraft to spot ene-

my weak points and troop movements “while attack jets relentlessly bombard command posts, logistical nodes, and maneuver formations,” it said.

The Rand war game scenario involved a Russian attack on a NATO country and a claim to some of its territory. The fighting then quickly escalates, with American and allied forces launching an at-

tack to reclaim the territory.

“A true conflict of this intensity could plausibly escalate into a nuclear war, especially if Russian forces suffer unsustainable losses or NATO actions threaten the integrity of the Russian state,” the report said.

The study put aside the nuclear wild card to examine how a conventional fight would unfold.

The findings come at a time of heightened focus about NATO’s preparedness for a potential conflict with Russia. Allied officials have warned that the Kremlin could be able to attack a NATO state within the next five years.

The situation has prompted members to ramp up defense spending and try to energize their industrial base to keep pace with Russia, which can churn out about three to four times as much ammunition as all of NATO combined on an annual basis, according to alliance officials.

Such concerns among allies are well-founded, according to Rand, which recommended the Pentagon identify priority munitions systems for rapid production in the event of conflict with Russia.

Accelerating investments in drones and counter-drone technology also is critical, the report said. Still, air control and aerial-delivered firepower “are the keys to unlocking ground maneuver on today’s transparent battlefield,” the report said.

“NATO’s potential for successful offensive operations in a war with Russia appears much greater than (that) of Russia or Ukraine in the present conflict,” it concluded.

## Hegseth cuts staff at Pentagon’s independent weapons test office

By TONY CAPACCIO  
*Bloomberg News*

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered staff cuts at the congressionally mandated Pentagon office that oversees tests of major weapons systems, to ensure they’re effective and maintainable, before billions of dollars are spent on them.

Hegseth framed the decision to scale back the Office of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation as a cost-cutting move that would save \$300 million each year.

An internal review identified redundant and nonessential functions that affect the department’s “ability to rapidly and effectively deploy the best systems to the warfighter,” he said in a memo on Wednesday.

The office will be reduced to 30 civilians and 15 on assignment from the military, Hegseth added. The rest will go to other departments or be fired.

That’s roughly half of the current staff of 94 people, according to a Pentagon statement.

The office doesn’t conduct testing but reviews the adequacy of service test plans and results. Its findings are widely read by lawmakers and the public and pro-

vide a reality check on systems’ combat effectiveness and weaknesses that the Pentagon and services are loath to acknowledge.

“The Trump administration is threatening the lives of our service members and hurting our national security,” Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement later Wednesday. “How is it ‘efficient’ to gut the office responsible for testing our equipment and making sure it’s safe for service members to use? This dangerous decision should be immediately reversed,” she said.

Most recently, the test office disputed an Army claim that its long-delayed hypersonic weapon would be ready for fielding by Sept. 30. And it has consistently provided unvarnished assessments of the F-35 jet’s underwhelming mission readiness and chronic reliability and software shortcomings.

The testing office “is the key link between an idea for a weapon and it’s being effective on any battlefield,” said Winslow Wheeler, a former Government Accountability Office weapons analyst and Senate aide. “The acquisition bureaucracy in the Pentagon and ad-

vocates in industry and Congress have long tried to defang rigorous testing and honest reporting under the false claim that it delays fielding good weapons.”

Hegseth’s action comes about a month after acting-test Director Raymond O’Toole sent a memo to the Pentagon leadership, including the Missile Defense Agency, outlining his office’s plans to oversee testing of the administration’s Golden Dome missile defense program.

According to the the Congressional Budget Office, the U.S. may have to spend as much as \$542 billion over 20 years to develop and launch space-based interceptors as part of the program. Much of the technology around such a nationwide missile-defense system remains unproven.

“Secretary Hegseth’s memo signals a fundamental misunderstanding — or rejection — of why Congress created an independent operational testing office in the first place,” said Greg Williams, a spokesman for the Project on Government Oversight, a watchdog group. “The law was designed to ensure weapons systems are evaluated outside the chain of command that develops and promotes them.”

## Unintentional gunfire reported at DMZ

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

A South Korean soldier accidentally fired a machine gun round near the border with the North on Wednesday, marking the second such incident in less than a month, according to the South’s military.

The discharge occurred around 5 p.m. at a guard post in the western section of the Demilitarized Zone, the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a text message to reporters Thursday.

The military said it immediately notified North Korean authorities and observed “no unusual activity” in response.

South Korea’s Ministry of National Defense did not respond to multiple phone calls seeking further information Thursday.

The round was fired from a K6 heavy machine gun, South Korea’s variant of the U.S. military’s M2 .50-caliber weapon, according to a report by Yonhap News Agency.

The K6 can fire up to 600 rounds per minute at a maximum range of 8,100 yards, according to the U.S. Army’s Training and Doctrine Command.

The heavily fortified DMZ, which is 2½ miles wide and

stretches about 160 miles across the Korean Peninsula, is dotted with guard posts maintained by both sides.

These posts, often concealed by dense foliage, are designed to detect and deter potential incursions.

Wednesday’s incident is the latest in a series of accidental discharges involving the K6.

On April 27, a South Korean soldier accidentally fired a single round from one of the guns at another guard post within the DMZ. That round struck a reinforced door, likely preventing it from crossing into North Korean territory, according to the military.

A similar incident occurred on Jan. 28, 2023, when a South Korean soldier fired four rounds from a KR-6 — a remotely operated variant of the K6 — near the border.

On May 2, 2020, soldiers from both Koreas exchanged gunfire across the border. While no injuries were reported, a subsequent United Nations Command found that both sides had violated the armistice agreement by firing weapons at each other. The investigation was inconclusive in determining which side initiated the exchange.



PACIFIC

US, Japan gear up for another night patrol

**By BRIAN McELHINEY AND KEISHI KOJA**  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — U.S. service members and Japanese authorities are slated to conduct a second joint overnight patrol in the wake of a series of high-profile criminal cases involving American troops.

The Japan-U.S. Joint Community Safety Patrol will take place early Saturday near Gate 2 Street, a nightlife district close to Kadena Air Base, U.S. Forces Japan said in an unsigned email statement on Wednesday.

The patrol is expected to run

from midnight to 2 a.m., Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokesman Wesley Hayes said by phone Thursday.

Roughly 60 people are expected to participate, including about 20 U.S. troops, an Okinawa city Base Policy Division spokesman said by phone Thursday.

The group will include representatives from Okinawa prefecture, Okinawa city, the Okinawa Defense Bureau and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki, who joined the first patrol April 18-19 in the same area, will not participate, but Okinawa city

Mayor Daisuke Hanashiro is expected to attend, the spokesman said.

He declined to specify which U.S. military units will take part in the patrol.

Participants will be divided into three groups to patrol various routes around Gate 2 Street, he said.

Some Japanese officials speak to the press only on condition of anonymity.

The April event was the first joint patrol of its kind on the island since 1974, according to Okinawa Prefectural Police.

It included about 30 U.S. troops,

20 Okinawa police officers and 50 local government officials and community members.

Saturday's patrol follows the first meeting of the Okinawa Community Partnership Forum, which took place May 9 at Camp Foster.

First proposed last summer, the forum brings together about 35 U.S. military and Japanese officials to coordinate public safety efforts.

Participants discussed the possibility of expanding joint patrols to other areas of the island, including the capital city of Naha, according to USFJ's email.

They also spoke about updates to the orientation briefing provided to newly arrived service members on Okinawa, the command said.

The patrols and partnership efforts follow increased public concern stemming from several cases involving U.S. service members, including one conviction for sexual assault, one pending case, and an attempted assault case.

Most recently, Marine Pfc. Austin Wedington, 27, was charged April 30 with sexually assaulting a Japanese woman and injuring another woman in March at Camp Foster.

Joint Region Marianas welcomes new commander

**By ALEX WILSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

A U.S. Navy flight officer has taken command of Guam's three major military bases and regional installations, as the island wraps up a series of significant leadership changes across its military commands.

Rear Adm. Brett Mietus took command of Joint Region Marianas on Thursday from Rear Adm. Brent DeVore during a change-of-command ceremony at Guam High School, according to a livestream of the event on the region's Facebook page.

Mietus is the third new senior leader to take the helm on Guam this month.

He joins Rear Adm. Joshua Laszky, who now leads Joint Task Force-Micronesia, and Col. Charles Cooley, the new commander of the 36th Wing.

DeVore, who took command in June 2024, is headed to San Diego to lead Expeditionary Strike Group 3. During the ceremony, he thanked his family, Guam officials

and Joint Region staff for their support during what he called a pivotal year.

"The staff that we have at Joint Region Marianas is small but mighty — supporting efforts throughout not only Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, but also all of Micronesia," he said. "Our efforts tangibly demonstrate our strength to ensure peace."

DeVore's tenure, though brief, oversaw a major expansion in construction across Guam's military footprint.

As of this week, the island has approximately 70 ongoing military building projects totaling around \$5 billion, Pacific Daily News reported Tuesday.

An additional \$2 billion has been allocated for infrastructure repairs following Typhoon Marwar, the Category 4 storm that struck Guam in 2023, DeVore told the newspaper.

Vice Adm. Scott Gray, head of Navy Installations Command, praised DeVore's work under challenging conditions.



**Rear Adm. Brett Mietus, seen here speaking at Patrol Squadron 30's headquarters on April 29, took command of Joint Region Marianas.**

"Going into this typhoon season, we can rest assured that the harbor and our assets here will remain vital and protected," he said during the change of command ceremony.

Mietus most recently served as commander of the Navy's Patrol and Reconnaissance Group based in Norfolk, Va.

There, he oversaw more than 7,000 personnel on both coasts of the United States, including units at Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida and Naval Air Station Whidbey Island in Washington.

"My mission here — our mission here — is absolutely imperative," he said during the ceremony. "That mission is to work with the people of Guam and the joint force, so that in times of peace we serve as an inspiring example of collaboration and teamwork."

In times of conflict, he added, the mission is to defend the region and project U.S. power to uphold American and allied values.

Mietus graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1992 with a degree in economics and earned a master's degree in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College in 2003, according to his official Navy biography.

Mold: Maintenance backlogs, harsh weather contributed to decline

**FROM PAGE 1**

been relocated from Palau Hall, according to the report.

The poor conditions also led to a fleetwide directive to inspect all Navy unaccompanied housing, according to a May 5 email from Vice Adm. Scott Gray to Navy leadership, cited by the watchdog group.

He described the living conditions as "clearly way outside any reasonable standard" and said they reflected a failure of leadership across multiple levels.

Gray, head of Navy Installations Command, wrote it was "baffling to discover Sailors living in these conditions," which he described as "clearly way outside any rea-

sonable standard" and lacking "any sense of ownership or responsibility by the facility operators for the welfare of the tenants."

He ordered inspections of all single-sailor housing to be completed by May 28. However, a spokesperson for Naval Installations Command told the watchdog that some regions may need more time to conduct thorough reviews.

Attached to Gray's email were photos showing issues inside Palau Hall.

One image of exposed wiring, he noted, depicted a room that had been assigned two weeks earlier.

"The scope of this disrepair includes, but is not limited to the Pa-

lau building," he wrote. "That said, Andersen Sailors reside in no less than four different buildings — none of which are acceptable by today's living standards."

An Air Force spokesperson told the watchdog the service is committed to providing safe housing but cited Guam's harsh, corrosive environment as a contributing factor to infrastructure deterioration.

"Unfortunately, in Guam, we face several environmental elements, and the harsh conditions accelerate the rate at which materials deteriorate and reduce their overall lifespan," the spokesperson said, according to the report.

A Navy officer formerly sta-

tioned on Guam told the watchdog they were not surprised by the conditions, saying: "If you're living on base, you're going to be in crappy quarters."

The officer also expressed concern that the housing inspections could amount to a box-checking exercise.

Phelan told the watchdog that years of deferred infrastructure spending had created serious maintenance backlogs.

He said he is committed to ensuring Navy housing is "acceptable."

The findings align with a September 2023 report by the Government Accountability Office, which found some U.S. military

barracks posed "serious health and safety risks," including sewage overflow, mold, mildew, and broken windows and locks.

Thursday's watchdog report also cited funding from President Donald Trump's "One, Big Beautiful Bill," which allocated \$1 billion for barracks maintenance and upgrades across all military branches, with an additional \$230 million earmarked for Marine barracks.

However, the watchdog questioned whether that funding would be sufficient. The Air Force alone, it said, faces a \$49.5 billion maintenance and repair backlog, citing service official Michael Saunders.



PACIFIC

# Great-grandson of WWII pilot visits Japan crash site

**By SETH ROBSON AND HANA KUSUMOTO**  
*Stars and Stripes*

OME, Japan — A California man recently climbed a forested mountainside in western Tokyo to honor the memory of his great-grandfather, one of five American airmen killed when their B-29 Superfortress crashed during a World War II bombing raid over Japan.

Tyler Smith, a recreation planner from San Francisco, made the journey Sunday to a stone memorial in Ome, not far from the U.S. Forces Japan headquarters at Yokota Air Base. His great-grandfather, U.S. Army Air Corps 1st Lt. Carl Smith, was the pilot of the Filthy Fay II, which was shot down on April 2, 1945.

“This is such a beautiful place,” Smith said, laying flowers at the site where others had left cans of beer as offerings.

The bomber was returning from a raid on a Nakajima aircraft factory in Tokyo when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed near what is now Yugi in Ome city. Six of the 11 crew members parachut-



**U.S. Army Air Corps 1st Lt. Carl Smith**

ed to safety; five, including Carl Smith, died in the crash.

The fallen airmen — Smith; 2nd Lt. Cecil Coats; 2nd Lt. Francis McGinty; 2nd Lt. Benjamin Stauber; and Tech Sgt. William McCormack — were initially buried by local villagers at Sokuseiji, a nearby Buddhist temple. Their remains were later returned to the United States and interred at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis.

The crash site, now covered in



PHOTOS BY AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

**Tyler Smith, a recreation planner from San Francisco, makes a pilgrimage Sunday, to a western Tokyo mountain where a B-29 Superfortress piloted by his great-grandfather went down 80 years ago.**

Japanese cypress trees, became the focus of an annual memorial ceremony in the late 1990s, after local resident Tetsuya Nomura purchased the land and built a monument to honor the crew. Nomura, who was 6 at the time of the crash, accompanied Smith on Sunday’s hike and said it was the first time a relative of a fallen airman had visited the site.

Nomura believes Carl Smith may have steered the bomber into the mountain to avoid crashing into nearby homes — a theory he shared with the younger Smith during the visit.

The B-29 was part of the 498th Bombardment Group, 73rd Bomb Wing, based on Saipan. Four of the six surviving crew members were captured and returned home after the war. The others died in captivity or shortly after capture, according to Honor States, an online archive of fallen American service members.

One, 2nd Lt. John Houghton, died from injuries after a Japanese doctor reportedly euthanized him; another, Sgt. Kenneth Petterson, was killed in an air raid after his capture, according to the archive.

Tyler Smith, who was touring Japan with stops in Tokyo and Osaka, said visiting the crash site added a personal and emotional dimension to his trip. Though he never knew his great-grandfather, he grew up hearing stories about him from relatives.

Smith said his great-grandfather was a standout athlete and a student at the College of Puget Sound, now the University of Puget Sound, in Tacoma, Wash.

“He lived near Mount Rainier — a mountain as prominent and revered as Mount Fuji,” he told Nomura.

# Cats with hooked, bent tails fill Nagasaki for good luck

*Associated Press*

NAGASAKI, Japan — In Japan, bobtail cats are considered good luck and Nagasaki is the place to find them.

They are known as “omagari neko (bent-tail cats)” or “kagi neko (hook cats)” and have their own society of admirers and even a dedicated Shinto shrine.

Their tails come in varieties including hook-shaped at the tip, curved or in a bun, explained Kazuya Hideshima, a worker at Omagari Neko Shrine and member of the Nagasaki Cat Society.

Past findings have indicated bobtails accounted for nearly 80% of the cats in Nagasaki, twice the occurrence of anywhere else in Japan.



EUGENE HOSHIKO/AP

**A stray bobtail cat rests at a park in Nagasaki, southern Japan.**

Japanese cats are believed to have come from China in the 6th century with Buddhist

monks, serving as rat hunters to protect religious scriptures on ships.

Nagasaki bobtails have their roots in the Dutch East Indies when the city was the only foreign port during Japan’s closed era in the 17th to 19th centuries.

They hunted rats to protect shipments on their way from Southeast Asia to Japan, according to Nagasaki cultural officials.

Soshin Yamamoto, a veterinarian and cat specialist, said the large population of bobtails in Nagasaki is likely the result of a genetic mutation that reproduced in a relatively isolated environment when the nation was shut up tight.

“Having bobtails is no problem for most cats living a normal life, as long as they live near humans and aren’t jumping

and running around like wild cats in a forest,” he said.

Nagasaki residents hope the cats bring in tourists and help business.

Natsuno Kani, a 50-year-old tourist from Tokyo who recently visited the bobtail shrine, said she knew Nagasaki was famous for bent-tail cats.

But Abigail Tarraso, an artist from Spain based in Takeo City in neighboring Saga prefecture, was unfamiliar with the species, which is not as popular in Spain.

“Today is the first time in Nagasaki that I have ever heard of this,” said Cindy Bi, an American who is also an artist. “I am excited to look around for them. Maybe we will see a few.”

# South Korean navy patrol plane crashes, killing all on board

*Associated Press*

SEOUL, South Korea — A South Korean navy plane crashed during a training flight on Thursday, killing all four crew members on board, the navy said.

The P-3 patrol plane took off from its base in the southeastern

city of Pohang at 1:43 p.m. and crashed due to unknown reasons, the navy said in a statement.

It said it had identified the bodies of the four crew members and was in the process of recovering them.

There were no immediate re-

ports of civilian casualties on the ground. The navy set up a task force to investigate the crash and temporarily grounded its P-3s.

An emergency office in Pohang said that rescuers and fire trucks were dispatched to the site after receiving reports from residents

that an aircraft crashed on a hill near an apartment complex and caused a fire.

Photos showed firefighters and emergency vehicles near the crash site with flames flickering as smoke engulfed trees. Fire crews sprayed water on what ap-

peared to be the aircraft debris.

In December, a Jeju Air passenger plane crashed at Muan International Airport in southern South Korea, killing all but two of the 181 people on board. It was one of the deadliest disasters in South Korea’s aviation history.



NATION

Rubio: US to revoke some Chinese student visas

**By ANNIE MA AND COLLIN BINKLEY**  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday the U.S. will begin revoking the visas of some Chinese students, including those studying in “critical fields.”

China is the second-largest country of origin for international students in the United States, behind only India. In the 2023-2024 school year, more than 270,000 international students were from China, making up roughly a quarter of all foreign students in the United States.

“Under President Trump’s leadership, the U.S. State Department will work with the Department of Homeland Security to aggressively

revoke visas for Chinese students, including those with connections to the Chinese Communist Party or studying in critical fields,” Rubio wrote.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington didn’t immediately respond to a message seeking comment Wednesday night.

The action comes at a time of intensifying scrutiny of the ties between U.S. higher education and China. House Republicans this month pressed Duke University to cut its ties with a Chinese university, saying it allowed Chinese students to gain access to federally funded research at Duke.

Last year, House Republicans issued a report warning that hundreds of millions of dollars in de-

fense funding was going to research partnerships linked to the Chinese government, providing “back-door access to the very foreign adversary nation whose aggression these capabilities are necessary to protect against.”

The Department of Homeland Security raised similar issues in a letter barring international students at Harvard University last week. Secretary Kristi Noem accused Harvard of “coordinating with the Chinese Communist Party,” citing research collaborations with Chinese scholars. It also accused Harvard of training members of a Chinese paramilitary group.

The announcement came a day after Rubio halted the scheduling of new visa interviews for internation-

al students as the department prepares guidelines for increased vetting of their activity on social media.

The crack-down on visas adds to uncertainty for international students.

Together, the announcements from the State Department added to uncertainty for America’s international students, who have faced intensifying scrutiny from President Donald Trump’s administration.

University of Wisconsin student Vladyslav Plyaka was planning to visit Poland to see his mother and renew his visa, but he doesn’t know

when that will be possible now that visa appointments are suspended. He also doesn’t feel safe leaving the U.S. even when appointments resume.

“I don’t think I have enough trust in the system at this point,” said Plyaka, who came to the U.S. from Ukraine as an exchange student in high school and stayed for college. “I understand it probably is done for security measures, but I would probably just finish my education for the next two or three years and then come back to Ukraine.”

The Trump administration last week moved to block Harvard University from enrolling any international students, a decision that has been put on hold by a federal judge, pending a lawsuit.



Rubio

Court: Expert says Trump could try to impose same tariffs with other statutes

**FROM PAGE 1**

“The challenged Tariff Orders will be vacated and their operation permanently enjoined,” a three-judge panel ruled.

Futures contracts on the S&P 500 stock index jumped 1.4% on the news. But a few hours later, the Justice Department said in a federal court filing that it will appeal.

The trade court’s decision in a pair of lawsuits filed last month against the government applies to the 10% tariffs Trump imposed on all foreign products as well as the much higher levies applied to goods from several dozen nations. The president invoked a 1977 law that granted him emergency powers over the economy, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act or IEEPA.

The trade court’s ruling also freezes separate tariffs on Mexican, Canadian and Chinese goods, which Trump imposed to coerce those governments into taking action to counter human and drug trafficking. But import taxes on specific products such as automobiles, auto parts, steel and aluminum will remain in effect.

“He took a big gamble doing this under emergency powers. That gamble lost,” said Peter Harrell, a former Biden administration attorney who helped draft a brief from 148 House members supporting one of the lawsuits, which was filed by a group of 12 states.

The states, all with Democratic governors, said they suffered “direct financial harm” from the tariffs, which made imported goods used to provide public services more expensive.

The court ruling also applied to a case filed by five owner-operated businesses that said they had been harmed by the president’s inappropriate use of executive power. The businesses — V.O.S. Selections, Genova Pipe, Micro-



Kent Nishimura/Bloomberg

**President Donald Trump holds a reciprocal tariffs list in Washington, on April 2. A specialized federal court in New York on Wednesday ruled that most of Trump’s tariffs — including those on Chinese goods — are illegal, upending negotiations with more than a dozen nations.**

Kits, FishUSA and Terry Cycling — cited problems with sourcing and cash flow in the wake of the president’s April tariffs.

That case was filed by the Liberty Justice Center, a nonpartisan organization in Austin, Texas.

“It is great to see that the court unanimously ruled against this massive power grab by the President,” said Ilya Somin, co-counsel in the case and a law professor at George Mason University’s Scalia Law School. “The ruling emphasizes that he was wrong to claim a virtually unlimited power to impose tariffs, that IEEPA law doesn’t grant any such boundless authority, and that it would be unconstitutional if it did.”

The court noted that IEEPA says the president may only use his emergency powers “to deal with an unusual and extraordinary threat with respect to which a national emergency has been declared.”

Trump pointed to the merchandise trade deficit that the United States has run each year since

1975 as the “emergency” justifying his sweeping tariffs.

Wednesday’s ruling also applies to other tariffs that the president imposed on Mexico and Canada, citing an emergency over illegal migration and drug trafficking, and China for its alleged role in facilitating production of the opioid fentanyl.

The trade court rejected those tariffs, saying they failed to meet the law’s requirement that they “deal with an unusual and extraordinary threat.” Instead of addressing the president’s stated objective of curbing illicit cross-border trafficking in people and drugs, the tariffs were designed to “create leverage” to get other governments to do so, the court said.

Shortly after the decision was made public, the White House responded.

“Foreign countries’ nonreciprocal treatment of the United States has fueled America’s historic and persistent trade deficits. These deficits have created a national emergency that has decimated

American communities, left our workers behind, and weakened our defense industrial base — facts that the court did not dispute. It is not for unelected judges to decide how to properly address a national emergency. President Trump pledged to put America First, and the Administration is committed to using every lever of executive power to address this crisis and restore American Greatness,” said Kush Desai, a White House spokesman.

No other president has used IEEPA to impose tariffs, and Trump’s novel use of the authority sparked a wave of litigation. As small businesses from across the country lined up to sue, multinational corporations such as Apple opted to seek relief from the White House through private meetings and phone calls.

The government argued that the economic emergency law’s language authorizing the president to “regulate ... importation” granted him full powers over tariff rates. But the trade court disagreed, saying the law did not authorize “the President to impose whatever tariff rates he deems desirable.”

Legal experts have told The Post that the lawsuits are likely to succeed if they make it to the Supreme Court. Tim Meyer, the co-director of the Center for International and Comparative Law at Duke University Law School, said the president is “overwriting” legislation that Congress passed to levy tariffs.

“When the White House is itself touting this as the largest tax increase in American history, I think that’s going to make the justices sit back and think the Constitution gives Congress, and Congress alone, the authority to levy duties, impose tariffs and to regulate foreign commerce,” said Meyer, who clerked for Supreme

Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, a Trump nominee, when he served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit.

The ruling adds fresh uncertainty to the world of American importers and more than one dozen ongoing U.S. trade negotiations, including those with the European Union and China.

The Trump administration is certain to appeal the decision and could seek an emergency stay, which would reinstate the tariffs at least temporarily.

The president’s trade team also could try to impose the same tariffs using more traditional legal avenues, according to Simon Lester, author of the international economic law and policy blog. Relying on other provisions of trade law would take time and require the government to complete various procedural steps.

“There are other tariff statutes available, and I’m sure the Trump administration is prepared to use them,” he said.

Another challenge to the president’s tariff authority also is working its way through the courts.

Right after Trump raised U.S. import taxes to their highest level in more than a century, the New Civil Liberties Alliance, a nonprofit that has previously received financial support from conservative donor Charles Koch’s foundation, filed a lawsuit in federal court in Florida challenging Trump’s authority.

Last week, Judge T. Kent Wetherell II, a federal judge in Florida, said he agreed with the federal government’s argument that IEEPA allows the president to issue tariffs. But Wetherell transferred that case, on behalf of Simplified, a planner company that manufactures its products in China, to the trade court in New York, meaning he will not be the one to decide the matter.



## NATION

# Musk's departure from White House becomes official

By CHRIS MEGERIAN  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Elon Musk is leaving his government role as a top adviser to President Donald Trump after spearheading efforts to reduce and overhaul the federal bureaucracy.

His departure, announced Wednesday evening, marks the end of a turbulent chapter that included thousands of layoffs, the evisceration of government agencies and reams of litigation. Despite the upheaval, the billionaire entrepreneur struggled in the unfamiliar environment of Washington, and he accomplished far less than he hoped.

He dramatically reduced his target for cutting spending — from \$2 trillion to \$1 trillion to \$150 billion — and increasingly expressed frustration about resistance to his goals. Sometimes he clashed with other top members of Trump's administration, who chafed at the newcomer's efforts to reshape their departments, and he faced fierce political blowback for his efforts.

Musk's role working for Trump was always intended to be temporary, and he had recently signaled that he would be shifting his attention back to running his businesses, such as the electric automaker Tesla and the rocket company SpaceX.

But administration officials were often vague about when Musk would step back from his position spearheading the Department of Government Efficiency, known as DOGE, and he abruptly revealed that he was leaving in a



SUSAN WALSH/AP

**Musk arrives on stage to speak at a Presidential Inauguration event in Washington in January.**

post on X, his social media website.

"As my scheduled time as a Special Government Employee comes to an end, I would like to thank President @realDonaldTrump for the opportunity to reduce wasteful spending," he wrote. "The @DOGE mission will only strengthen over time as it becomes a way of life throughout the government."

A White House official, who requested anonymity to talk about the change, confirmed Musk's departure.

Musk announced his decision one day after CBS released part of an interview in which he criticized the centerpiece of Trump's legislative agenda by saying he was



ALEX BRANDON/SAP

**President Donald Trump listens as Elon Musk, with his son X Æ A-Xii, speaks in the Oval Office at the White House, on Feb. 11 in Washington.**

"disappointed" by what the president calls his "big beautiful bill."

The legislation includes a mix of tax cuts and enhanced immigration enforcement. Musk described it as a "massive spending bill" that increases the federal deficit and "undermines the work" of his Department of Government Efficiency, known as DOGE.

"I think a bill can be big or it could be beautiful," Musk said. "But I don't know if it could be both."

Trump, speaking in the Oval Office on Wednesday, defended his agenda by talking about the delicate politics involved with negotiating the legislation.

"I'm not happy about certain aspects of it, but I'm thrilled by other aspects of it," he said.

Trump also suggested that more changes could be made.

"We're going to see what happens," he said. "It's got a way to go."

Republicans recently pushed

the measure through the House and are debating it in the Senate.

Musk's concerns are shared by some Republican lawmakers. "I sympathize with Elon being discouraged," said Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson.

Speaking at a Milwaukee Press Club event on Wednesday, Johnson added that he was "pretty confident" there was enough opposition "to slow this process down until the president, our leadership, gets serious" about reducing spending. He said there was no amount of pressure Trump could put on him to change his position.

Speaker Mike Johnson has asked senators to make as few changes to the legislation as possible, saying that House Republicans reached a "very delicate balance" that could be upended with major changes. The narrowly divided House will have to vote again on final passage once the Senate alters the bill.

On Wednesday, Johnson thanked Musk for his work and

promised to pursue more spending cuts in the future, saying "the House is eager and ready to act on DOGE's findings."

The White House is sending some proposed rescissions, a mechanism used to cancel previously authorized spending, to Capitol Hill to solidify some of DOGE's cuts. A spokesperson for the Office of Management and Budget said the package will include \$1.1 billion from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting, which funds NPR and PBS, and \$8.3 billion in foreign assistance.

Musk occasionally seemed chastened by his experience working in government.

"The federal bureaucracy situation is much worse than I realized," he told The Washington Post. "I thought there were problems, but it sure is an uphill battle trying to improve things in D.C., to say the least."

He also recently said that he'll reduce his political spending, because "I think I've done enough."

## \$14B in clean energy projects canceled in the US this year

Associated Press

More than \$14 billion in clean energy investments in the U.S. have been canceled or delayed this year, according to an analysis released Thursday, as President Donald Trump's pending megabill has raised fears over the future of domestic battery, electric vehicle and solar and wind energy development.

Many companies are concerned that investments will be in jeopardy amid House Republicans' passage of a tax bill that would gut clean energy credits, nonpartisan group E2 said in its analysis of projects that it and consultancy Atlas Public Policy tracked.

The groups estimate the losses

since January have also cost 10,000 new clean energy jobs.

The tax credits, bolstered in the climate bill passed under former President Joe Biden in 2022, are crucial for boosting renewable technologies key to the clean energy transition. E2 estimates that \$132 billion in plans have been announced since the so-called Inflation Reduction Act passed, not counting the cancellations.

Last week's House bill effectively renders moot many of the law's incentives. Advocacy groups decried the potential impact that could have on the industry after the multitrillion-dollar tax breaks package passed.

"The House's plan coupled with

the administration's focus on stomping out clean energy and returning us to a country powered by coal and gas guzzlers is causing businesses to cancel plans, delay their plans and take their money and jobs to other countries instead," E2 executive director Bob Keefe said.

The Senate is now reviewing the bill with an informal July 4 deadline to get it to the president's desk.

Some of the most recent cancellations include the Kore Power battery factory in Arizona and BorgWarner's closure of two EV manufacturing sites in Michigan. Bosch suspended a \$200 million investment in a hydrogen fuel cell

factory in South Carolina, citing changes within the market over the past year in a statement.

Tariffs, inflationary pressures, nascent company struggles and low adoption rates for some technologies may also have been reasons for these companies' plans changing. For instance, the battery storage and electric vehicle sectors have seen the most impact in 2025, with the latter especially having had a difficult past few years. Several projects spurred by the IRA were also canceled prior to 2025.

Of the projects canceled this year, most — more than \$12 billion worth — came in Republican-led states and congressional districts,

the analysis said. Red districts have benefited more than blue ones from an influx of clean energy development and jobs, experts say.

Georgia and Tennessee are particularly at risk because they are highly invested in EV and battery production, said Marilyn Brown, an energy policy professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology who was not involved in the analysis.

A handful of Republican lawmakers have urged the continuation of energy tax credits, with some saying that a repeal could disrupt the American people and weaken the country's position as an energy leader.



NATION

# Court: Trump wrongly ended parole

## Decision affecting hundreds of thousands another legal setback

Associated Press

A federal judge ruled Wednesday that the Trump administration wrongly ended humanitarian parole for hundreds of thousands of people allowed to live in the United States temporarily.

The decision is another legal setback for President Donald Trump's plans for mass deportation, but it may prove temporary and its immediate impact was unclear.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani in Boston sided with people who were already admitted to the United States but were unable to renew their short-term permits. They cover parole policies that benefited Afghans, Ukrainians,

Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, Venezuelans and children from Central American countries trying to join their parents in the U.S., among others.

Talwani, who was appointed by President Barack Obama, said two orders by Department of Homeland Security officials to suspend renewals pending further review were unlikely to survive a legal challenge. One of the orders "gives no reasoned explanation" for the actions, she wrote.

"The 'pause' has now been in place for three months; the pause is, in effect, an indefinite suspension," she wrote.

The Department of Homeland Security did not immediately re-

spond to a request for comment.

A group of American citizens and immigrants earlier this year sued the Trump administration for ending the long-standing legal tool presidents have used to allow people from countries where there's war or political instability to enter and temporarily live in the U.S.

The humanitarian parole programs allowed in 875,000 migrants who have legal U.S. residents as sponsors.

Trump has been ending legal pathways for immigrants to come to the U.S. and implementing campaign promises to deport millions of people who are in the U.S. illegally.

The plaintiffs include eight immigrants who entered the U.S. legally before the Trump administration ended what it called the "broad abuse" of humanitarian parole.

They can legally stay in the U.S. until their parole expires, but the administration stopped processing their applications for asylum, visas and other requests that might allow them to remain longer.

None are identified by their real names because they fear deportation. Among them are Maksym and Maria Doe, a Ukrainian couple, and Omar Doe, who worked for more than 18 years with the U.S. military in Afghanistan.

# Judge rules government likely violated Khalil's rights

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal judge said the Trump administration's effort to deport Mahmoud Khalil because of his pro-Palestinian activism likely violates the Constitution.

In a lengthy order issued Wednesday, Judge Michael Farbiarz wrote the government's primary justification for removing Khalil — that his beliefs may pose a threat to U.S. foreign policy — could open the door to vague and arbitrary enforcement. Still, Farbiarz stopped short of ordering Khalil released from a Louisiana jail, finding his attorneys had not sufficiently responded to another

charge brought by the government: that Khalil did not properly disclose certain personal details in his permanent residency application.



Khalil

The judge said he would review additional evidence in the coming days as he continues to consider Khalil's request for release.

Attorneys for Khalil argue his detention is part of a broader attempt by the Trump administration to suppress constitutionally protected free speech. In letters sent from jail, Khalil has described his arrest as "a direct consequence of exercising my right to free speech as I advocated for a free Palestine and an end to the genocide in Gaza."

The federal government has not accused Khalil of breaking any laws. Instead, they have submitted a memo signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio arguing that Khalil's presence in the country may pose a threat to U.S. foreign policy interests.

The government has offered the same justification to detain other pro-Palestinian activists, including fellow student at Columbia, Mohsen Mahdawi; and a Georgetown University scholar, Badar Khan Suri. All three have won their custody in recent weeks as they continue to fight their cases.

In Khalil's case, the government also said he withheld information from his residency application about his involvement in a United Nations agency that resettles Palestinian refugees and a Columbia protest group.

The judge said attorneys for Khalil had not responded to those allegations, but would be permitted to address this in the future.

An attorney for Khalil, Baher Azmy, said the charges were "factually baseless."

# At graduation, Harvard stands strong

Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Harvard graduates celebrated commencement on Thursday at a pivotal time for the Ivy League school, cheering speakers who emphasized maintaining a diverse and international student body and standing up for truth in the face of attacks by the Trump administration.

Harvard's battles with Trump over funding and restrictions on teaching and admissions presented another challenge for the thousands of graduates who started college as the world was emerging from a pandemic and later grappled with student-led protests over the war in Gaza.

"We leave a campus much different than the one we entered, with Harvard at the center of a national battle of higher education in America," Thor Reimann told his fellow graduates. "Our university is certainly imperfect, but I am proud to stand today alongside our graduating class, our faculty, our president with the shared conviction that this ongoing project of veritas is one that is worth defending."

Other schools face the loss of federal funding and their ability to enroll international students if they don't agree to the Trump administration's shifting demands. But Harvard, which was founded more than a century before the nation itself, has taken the lead in defying the White House in court and is paying a heavy price.

Among the Trump administration's latest salvos was asking federal agencies to cancel about \$100 million in contracts with the university. The government already canceled more than \$2.6 billion in federal research grants, moved to cut off Harvard's enrollment of in-



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Students cheer during Harvard University's commencement ceremonies, Thursday.

ternational students and threatened its tax-exempt status.

Visa interviews for international students admitted to schools nationwide were halted on Tuesday, and Trump said Wednesday that Harvard should reduce its international enrollment from 25% to about 15%.

Sustained by a \$53 billion endowment, the nation's wealthiest university is testing whether it can be a bulwark against Trump's efforts to limit what his administration calls antisemitic activism on campus, which Harvard sees as an affront to the freedom to teach and learn nationwide.

The Trump administration has demanded that Harvard make broad leadership changes, revise its admissions policies, and audit its faculty and student body to ensure the campus is home to many viewpoints.

In response to the administration's threats, Harvard has sued to block the funding freeze and per-

suaded a federal judge to temporarily halt the ban on enrolling international students. During a hearing in Boston on Thursday, the judge extended her order blocking the ban.

Harvard President Alan Garber, who has repeatedly defended the school's actions, didn't directly touch on the Trump administration threats Thursday. But he did get a rousing applause when he referenced the university's global reach, noting that it is "just as it should be."

Several of the graduating speakers spoke more directly about the challenges facing the school and society.

Speaking in Latin, salutatorian Aidan Robert Scully delivered a speech laced with references to Trump policies.

"I say this: ... Neither powers nor princes can change the truth and deny that diversity is our strength," Scully said.

It was a sentiment echoed by

Yurong "Luanna" Jiang, a Chinese graduate who studied international development. She said she grew up believing that the "world was becoming a small village" and that she found a global community at Harvard.

"When I met my 77 classmates from 32 different countries, the countries I knew only as colorful shapes on a map turned into real people, with laughter, dreams and the perseverance to survive the long winter in Cambridge," she said of the other students in her program. "Global challenges suddenly felt personal."

Now, though, she said she wonders whether her worldview is under threat.

"We're starting to believe those who think differently, vote differently or pray differently, whether they are across the ocean or sitting right next to us, are not just wrong — we mistakenly see them as evil," she said. "But it doesn't have to be this way."



NATION

# US officials seek air traffic control system overhaul

**By JOSH FUNK**  
*Associated Press*

The problems that disrupted flights at New Jersey's largest airport this spring could be repeated anywhere across the country, so Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy is trying to sell Congress on his plan to overhaul the nation's air traffic control system that will cost "tens of billions."

Duffy provided an update Wednesday on the repairs and staffing efforts that are underway to help eliminate the problems affecting Newark Liberty International Airport, which has been running more smoothly in the past few weeks since the airlines started to cut the number of flights they operate there.

And Duffy emphasized that the Newark radar outages and air traffic control shortage are a prime example of why the antiquated system needs to be improved.

"I'm concerned that we could have more Newarks. And again, why it's so important that we actually begin this build with the money that Congress is going to send us," he said.

Duffy still wouldn't give a price tag of his expansive overhaul of the air traffic control system that he said is clearly needed after the deadly midair collision over Washington, D.C., in January that killed 67 people and all the problems affecting Newark this spring. But he said the \$12.5 billion the House included President Donald Trump's massive bill won't be enough because "it's going to be tens of billions of dollars."

Duffy has been meeting privately with lawmakers since he unveiled the plan. But he said he wants to let Congress "do the dance the way the Congress dances" to develop a plan to pay for the program.

The problems that led to hundreds of cancellations and delays at Newark do seem to have improved since the Federal Aviation Administration limited the number of flights at the airport so they could handle it with the number of controllers available. The already short-staffed air traffic control facility in Philadelphia that directs planes in and out of Newark lost five controllers to trauma leave after the first radar



RICHARD DREW/AP

**An Austrian Airlines plane taxis on a runway at Newark Liberty International Airport, in New Jersey, on May 23. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy provided an update Wednesday on the repairs and staffing efforts that are underway to help eliminate the problems affecting the airport.**

and communications outage on April 28 and another one is out on medical leave.

That left the facility with only 16 certified controllers and five supervisors. But Duffy said there are another 16 experienced controllers in training that he hopes will start to get certified between now and October.

That is an example of how the FAA remains about 3,000 short on the number of air traffic controllers it wants, so Duffy has also tried to speed up the hiring and training process while offering incentives to keep experienced controllers from retiring early.

The FAA has said that it expects to

be able to bump up the number of flights daily in Newark to 34 arrivals and 34 departures once a runway construction project is completed in mid-June. That is also about the time that some of the controllers on a 45-day trauma leave might be scheduled to return. The FAA will revisit the limits in October because it hopes to have more controllers trained by then.

The government also upgraded the software at the air traffic control facility after a second radar outage on May 9. That helped prevent a repeat problem on May 11.

The FAA is also working on the telecommunications problems.

Duffy said Verizon worked quickly to install a new fiber optic line between Philadelphia and New York over the past month, but the FAA wants to thoroughly test it out before switching over, so that likely won't be available until July.

In the meantime, Duffy said it would be a good idea for pilots to brush up on their procedures of how to handle an outage because they can happen. In addition to the problems in Newark, controllers in Denver lost their radios for a couple minutes earlier this month. Duffy said there were also several other outages affecting Newark last year that didn't get public attention.

## US economy falls 0.2% in 1st quarter; imports surge

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. economy shrank at a 0.2% annual pace from January through March, the first drop in three years, as President Donald Trump's trade wars disrupted business, the government said Thursday in a slight upgrade of its initial estimate.

First-quarter growth was brought down by a surge in imports as companies in the United States hurried to bring in foreign goods before the president imposed massive import taxes.

The January-March drop in gross domestic product — the nation's output of goods and services — reversed a 2.4% gain in the fourth quarter of 2024. Imports grew at a 42.6% pace, fastest since third-quarter 2020, and shaved more than 5 percentage points off GDP growth. Consumer spending also slowed sharply.

And federal government spending fell at a 4.6% annual pace, the biggest drop in three years.

Trade deficits reduce GDP. But that's mainly a matter of mathematics. GDP is supposed to count only what's produced domestically. So imports — which the govern-

ment counts as consumer spending in the GDP report when you buy, say, Costa Rican coffee — have to be subtracted out to keep them from artificially inflating domestic production.

The first-quarter import surge likely won't be repeated in the April-June quarter and therefore shouldn't weigh on GDP.

From January through March, business investment surged 24.4%. An increase in inventories — as businesses stocked up ahead of the tariffs — added more than 2.6 percentage points to first-quarter GDP growth.

A category within the GDP data that measures the economy's underlying strength rose at a 2.5% annual rate from January through March, down from 2.9% in the fourth quarter of 2024 but still solid. This category includes consumer spending and private investment but excludes volatile items like exports, inventories and government spending.

Thursday's report was the second of three Commerce Department estimates of first-quarter GDP. The final version arrives June 26.

## Layoffs remain low, more in US file for jobless aid amid uncertain tariff outcome

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Filings for U.S. jobless aid jumped last week but American workers broadly remain secure in their jobs despite economic uncertainty over global trade.

Jobless benefits applications rose by 14,000 to 240,000 for the week ending May 24, the Labor Department said Thursday. Analysts had forecast 226,000 new applications.

Weekly applications for jobless benefits are seen as representative of U.S. layoffs and have mostly settled in a historically healthy range between 200,000 and 250,000 since COVID-19 throttled the economy in the spring of 2020, wiping out millions of jobs.

A sense of relief swept over financial markets early Thursday after a federal court blocked President Donald Trump from imposing sweeping tariffs on imports under an emergency-powers law. Wednesday's decision threw into doubt Trump's signature economic policy that has rattled global financial markets, frustrated trade partners and raised fears about inflation inten-

sifying and the economy slumping.

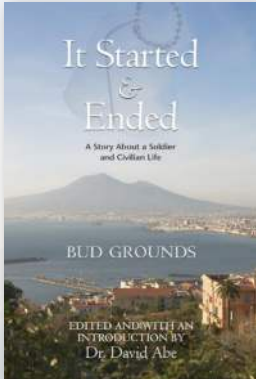
The Trump administration quickly filed notice of appeal and the Supreme Court will almost certainly be called upon to decide the issue. It remains unclear whether the White House will respond to the ruling by pausing all of its emergency power tariffs in the interim.

Trump had already paused or dialed down many of his tariff threats, but concerns lingered about a global economic slowdown upending a robust U.S. la-

bor market.

In early May, the Federal Reserve held its benchmark lending rate at 4.3% for the third straight meeting after cutting it three times at the end of last year.

Fed chair Jerome Powell said the potential for both higher unemployment and inflation are elevated, an unusual combination that complicates the central bank's dual mandate of controlling prices and keeping unemployment low. Powell said that tariffs have dampened consumer and business sentiment.



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### The Story About a Soldier and Civilian Life

An insightful and informative story of one person's journey through both civilian and military life

by Master Sergeant Bud Grounds (retired)

HARD BOOK TO PUT DOWN



WORLD

Israel authorizes more settlements in the West Bank

**By Julia Frankel and Natalie Melzer**  
*Associated Press*

JERUSALEM — Israel said Thursday it would establish 22 more Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, including the legalization of outposts already built without government authorization. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli strikes killed at least 34 people, local health officials said.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with Gaza and east Jerusalem, in the 1967 Mideast war and the Palestinians want all three territories for their future state. Most of the international community views settlements as illegal and an obstacle to resolving the decades-old conflict.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said the settlement decision “strengthens our hold on Judea and Samaria,” using the biblical term for the West Bank. He said it “anchors our historical right in the

Land of Israel, and constitutes a crushing response to Palestinian terrorism.”

He added that the construction of settlements was also “a strategic move that prevents the establishment of a Palestinian state that would endanger Israel.”

The Israeli anti-settlement watchdog Peace Now said the announcement was the most extensive move of its kind since the 1993 Oslo accords that launched the now-defunct peace process. It said the settlements, which are deep inside the territory, would “dramatically reshape the West Bank and entrench the occupation even further.”

Israel has already built well over 100 settlements across the territory that are home to some 500,000 settlers. The settlements range from small hilltop outposts to fully developed communities with apartment blocks, shopping malls, factories and parks.



ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

**Palestinians carry boxes and bags containing food and humanitarian aid packages delivered by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, on Thursday.**

The West Bank is home to 3 million Palestinians, who live under Israeli military rule with the Palestinian Authority administering population centers. The settlers have Israeli citizenship.

Peace Now said the plans call for the authorization of 12 existing outposts, the development of nine new settlements and reclassifying a neighborhood of an existing settlement as a separate one.

“The government is making clear — again and without restraint — that it prefers deepening the occupation and advancing de facto annexation over pursuing peace,” the group said.

An Israeli airstrike hit a house sheltering several families in Bureij, an urban refugee camp in central Gaza, killing 22 people, including nine women and children, according to officials at nearby Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. An AP journalist viewed the hospital records of the dead.

Strikes in northern Gaza late Wednesday and early Thursday hit a house, killing eight people, including two women and three children, and a car in Gaza City, killing four, local hospitals said.

UN official: Russia isn’t imminently turning on Ukrainian nuclear plant

*Associated Press*

VIENNA — Inspectors from the U.N. nuclear watchdog haven’t seen signs of Russia moving to immediately restart the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, an agency official said Thursday, after Greenpeace raised concerns about Moscow building power lines near the facility.

The Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the largest in Europe with six reactors and one of the world’s 10 biggest, has been a focus of concern for the International Atomic Energy Agency and the world

during the war amid fears of a potential nuclear catastrophe. The plant has been held by Russia since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, though it isn’t producing power.

The city of Zaporizhzhia, about 275 miles southeast of Kyiv, is held by Ukraine and attacks have occurred around the plant as the front line is close. The IAEA rotates staff through the facility to check the plant’s safety.

In a report Tuesday, Greenpeace said that satellite photos

showed Russia had been building “an electricity high voltage power line” in Russia-held areas of Ukraine’s Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions. An Associated Press analysis of satellite photos from Planet Labs PBC of the same area also showed the construction of power lines and pylons.

“This is some of the first hard evidence of Russian moving ahead with its dangerous and illegal plans for restarting Ukraine and Europe’s largest nuclear plant at Zaporizhzhia,” said Shaun Burnie, a nuclear specialist at

Greenpeace Ukraine.

An IAEA official said that the agency’s inspectors hadn’t seen any major changes at the Zaporizhzhia plant suggesting Russia was preparing for an imminent effort to restart it, after being asked about the Greenpeace report.

“What I can say is our teams continue to confirm there is no indication at the moment that there will be any active preparations for a restart of the plant now,” the official said on condition of anonymity to discuss the assessment.

Russia hasn’t acknowledged the

power line project. Ukraine sent a note to the IAEA and its membership on Wednesday raising concerns about the power line construction.

Zaporizhzhia’s six reactors remain fueled with uranium though they are in a so-called cold shutdown — meaning nuclear reactions have stopped. However, the plant relies on external electricity to keep its reactor cool and power other safety systems. That external power has been cut multiple times in the war, forcing the plant to rely on diesel generators on site.

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# WEEKEND



Morgan Wallen has much to say on his latest album  
**Music, Pages 28-29**



Shigeru Miyamoto  
ZACK WITTMAN/For The Washington Post

## Mario mastermind

Nintendo character’s creator reflects on the legacy that has sprung from his original 8-bit game, including multiple theme-park lands

Video games, Pages 14-15



## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

## Miyamoto, the man behind Mario

Video game creator reflects on influence of his Nintendo title

BY GENE PARK  
The Washington Post

Shigeru Miyamoto wanted to share what he calls “a little bit of a strange story” as he sat in a lavish and hushed lounge tucked in the middle of Florida’s Universal Orlando, where the third Super Nintendo World theme park area opened to the public May 22.

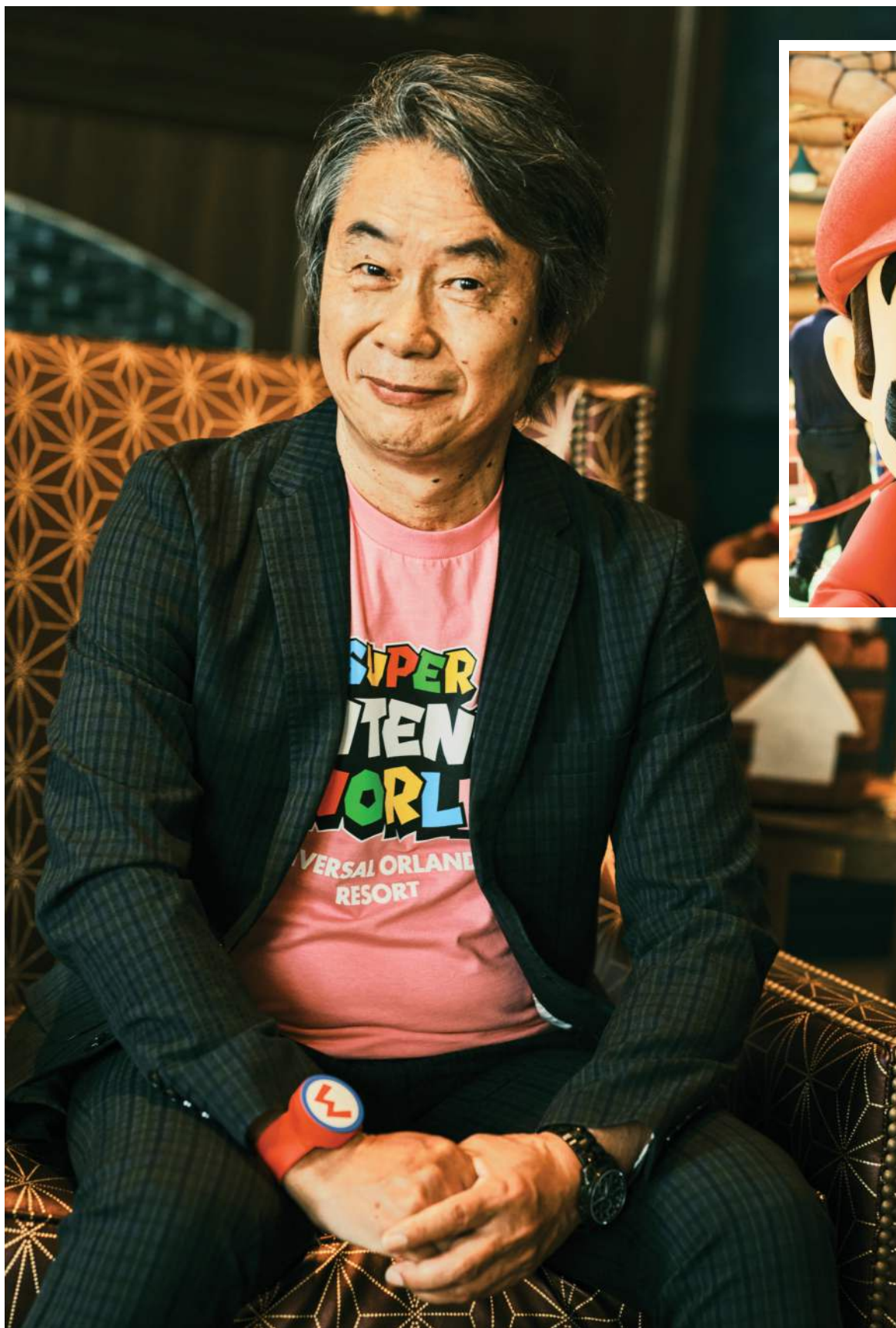
Now 72, the most influential creator in the video games art form has come a long way from his youth as an industrial design student at the Kanazawa College of Art, a tiny public school. He was a lifetime and a world away in Florida to open another theme park he helped design, but for a moment, his memory traveled back to his college days to re-discover the first time he built a world to enter and play.

“I thought I would create a toy that helps kids learn how to count,” Miyamoto told The Washington Post through an interpreter. “There’s all these pieces laid out on the table, with things like poles or cubes you would drop in. But in addition to that, what I did was then take that toy set and expand it so that you can actually walk into it. That was all part of my graduation project.

“Fast forward to now, looking at the 8-bit game and seeing this world that we’ve been able to branch out, I really see a little bit of synchronicity in that experience. I find myself thinking that I’m doing the same thing. ... I really feel like my interests are still fundamentally the same.”

Miyamoto created the original Mario, Donkey Kong and Legend of Zelda games, the foundations of the 135-year-old Nintendo’s rebirth as a video game company. Nintendo and “Super Mario Bros.” are often cited for rejuvenating the industry after the video game crash of 1983, when the nascent industry imploded after a flood of poor-quality products. His attention to quality control and play formed the nucleus of countless video game genres and lifted the industry out of recession and into one of the planet’s dominant entertainment mediums.

His imprint on the medium is immeasurable. In 1998, he was the first person inducted into the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame. In France, he was honored as a Knight of Arts and Letters. In



ZACK WITTMAN/For The Washington Post

**Shigeru Miyamoto, a top executive at Nintendo and creator of Mario, The Legend of Zelda and Donkey Kong, attends opening week of Universal’s new theme park, Epic Universe, this month in Orlando, Fla.**

Spain, he is the first video game creator honored with the Princess of Asturias Award. In 2019, he was the first game creator to receive Japan’s Person of Cultural Merit award.

Now he is one of the few people to have theme parks built from his creations. Just as one could walk around the Jurassic Park world of Orlando and hear John Williams’ iconic score, Super Nintendo World echoes with the indelible jazz pieces of Koji Kondo’s Mario themes.

Even the bathrooms play the water-level waltz of the classic games.

“I don’t think in a million years when he was sketching out Donkey Kong and Mario ... that he would’ve ever imagined they would be a centerpiece of a major international theme park,” said Roger DiLuigi, a 35-year-old content creator from Los Angeles with more than 550,000 subscribers on his Nintendo-focused RogersBase YouTube channel. The lifelong Nintendo fan was

among hundreds of influencers and creators invited to cover and promote the Orlando Epic Universe launch. “And yet here we are.”

### Game’s expansion to new mediums

Today as an executive and representative director, Miyamoto’s fingerprints are most evident in Nintendo’s expansion to other mediums, including the Super Nintendo World theme parks, the billion-dollar box office block-



**A Mario-costumed character is one of those who interacts with Super Nintendo World guests.**

buster Mario movie released in 2023 and the recently opened Nintendo Museum in Kyoto.

Nintendo’s origins in the U.S. began with a lawsuit by Universal City Studios. In 1982, the media conglomerate sued Nintendo over Miyamoto’s first hit game “Donkey Kong,” claiming infringement on the King Kong property. Nintendo hired veteran Washington, D.C.-based civil rights attorney John Kirby and won the case. Nintendo would honor Kirby, who died in 2019, by naming a character after him as thanks for helping the company regain foothold in the U.S. market.

Nintendo and Universal Studios announced their plans to partner in creating theme parks in 2015, with the first park opening in Japan in 2021. Universal’s Epic Universe in Orlando, including Super Nintendo World featuring the Mario brand, is the first in the U.S. to include an expansion for Donkey Kong Country.

“The world really does work in mysterious ways,” Miyamoto exclaimed, laughing. “It was really fun to be able to jokingly talk about what if we put Donkey Kong on the other side of King Kong in City Walk!”

Nintendo’s decision to fight the lawsuit was seen as a sign that the company, and video games as a medium, had arrived. Miyamoto keenly remembers when people would look down their noses at video games.

“When I first created Mario, it

**SEE MARIO ON PAGE 15**



# WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

## Mario: Family play was a goal of game’s creator

FROM PAGE 14

was a time where Mom or Dad might look at their kids playing a video game and be worried, concerned about what’s going to happen,” he said. “I was expecting there will come a time when even the parent will have experience playing video games. That was something I was hoping to see. Now I’m over 70 years old, and we’re finally at a time where multigenerational families all have this common shared experience of having played video games. It’s really great to see that come to realization.”

His dream is fully realized. Millennial parents teaching their children the history of characters like Princess Peach or the villainous Bowser are as plentiful as the power-up blocks and green warp pipes that populate the park. Children squeal in delight riding through the immersive Donkey Kong mine cart ride that includes fake jumps and scares, much like the game it’s based on, Donkey Kong Country. Little girls crowd around to talk to Princess Peach with her wide set of recorded responses.

Robert Martinez Jr., the 43-year-old executive chef at the park’s Toadstool Cafe restaurant, understands the generational love of Nintendo. He’s a 25-year veteran of Universal Orlando, a job passed on from his chef father who worked at the park.

“It’s surreal to see myself as a young kid with my Nintendo, blowing the cartridges as we all did back in the day, to being here. Nintendo as a brand touches so many generations,” Martinez said. “It’s something I can share with my kids today. In many cases, you probably know the IP way more than your kid.”

### Game creator’s sense of play permeates park

Miyamoto hasn’t misplaced his youthful sense of play. During a photo shoot for The Post, Miyamoto struggled to offer a “business” face when posing. He couldn’t help but crack cherubic smiles as he posed with his fists up like Mario.

That playfulness translates throughout the park, which Miyamoto helped design. Each visitor receives wristbands that keep score of activities and secrets discovered, including coins collected by punching blocks.

“I created this theme park with the hope that people will be able to experience Nintendo characters with their entire body,” he said. “There was a time where I was thinking, ‘I wish we could create an interactive experience where people can roll around and hang out.’ ”

Nintendo is a famously stubborn company. It started in the 19th century as a producer of playing cards and later as a toy company. Miyamoto’s work transformed its focus to video games and consoles, a formula it has strictly followed until recent years. It is the only major platform holder that does not publish its games in competing platforms, unlike PlayStation and Microsoft’s Xbox, which now both publish games on Nintendo’s Switch consoles. That strategy has helped keep Nintendo unusually profitable.

So for years, Nintendo was precious with its intellectual property, keeping Mario and crew away from multimedia projects, outside of the first attempt at a Mario movie, which was a notorious box-office bomb.

“Our thinking was that we don’t use characters in media other than games so we’re not limited or restricted when we create the next game,” he said. That freedom encouraged creativity: depicting Mario flying with a raccoon tail in Super Mario 3, or, in the following game, riding the dinosaur Yoshi.

“Over the decades, that thinking has changed inside of me, in that I’ve come to realize there are limits to the reach that these Nintendo characters can have when we are just focusing on games,” Miyamoto said. “For example, there are countries where maybe there aren’t games available. It really translated into being able to expand through different media.”

Miyamoto said he guided Universal on creating a more interactive experience that’s approachable and family friendly, while keeping the spirit of his games. The puzzle series Pikmin, which began in 2001, is one of the last properties Miyamoto helped create, and it remains among his most beloved. The plantlike Pikmin creatures are meant to be ethereal and spiritual, and it was Miyamoto’s idea to place them all over the park as part of a hide-and-seek game.

“Pikmin have this unique quality in that they can be right next to you as we speak,” Miyamoto said. “They can, at least in my mind, interact and mingle with any kind of IP.”

The magnitude of Nintendo and Universal’s achievement only hit Miyamoto when he walked out of the warp pipe and saw the park envelop him. It’s the real-world equivalent of hero Link stepping out into the world of Hyrule in the groundbreaking 2017 Nintendo Switch game, The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild.



PHOTOS BY ZACK WITTMAN/For The Washington Post

The “overworld” of Super Nintendo World, the video game-based section of Epic Universe in Orlando, Fla.



Influencers and journalists explore the park. Orlando has the first Donkey Kong Country park in the United States.



The Toadstool Cafe, exterior above, offers Mario-themed food, such as the Mt. Beanpole Cake pictured below.



Super Nintendo World guests hold up souvenir Donkey Kong cups.

“I’ve been obviously looking at everything from the schematic and planning stage,” he said. “When it comes to finally taking the blocks we so painstakingly created and stacking those up, re-creating Mt. Beanpole, adding the moving Piranha Plants or Goombas and having them all synchronized together ... and then walking out of Peach Castle and looking ahead at the world, that was when I found myself thinking, ‘Wow.’ ”

### Making sure primary mission is entertainment

Despite Nintendo’s expansion into other mediums, Miyamoto said it’s important for the firm’s employees to remember that they are entertainers. It’s why he helped open the Nintendo Museum in Kyoto, not just as a visitor attraction but as a document to inspire employees.

“I wanted to make sure it’s clear Nintendo isn’t trying to

compete with competitors as a game company, but as an entertainment company, looking for new technologies, to expand and create new experiences,” he said.

Miyamoto said when it comes to his legacy, he’s not sure if “satisfaction” is the right word. His first dream was to become a manga artist and storyteller.

“Through manga, I wanted to create a unique world. Obviously I didn’t become a manga artist,” he said. “But I can’t help but feel very fortunate that through my involvement with creating games, I’ve been able to expand that process to something like the theme park you see today.”

It wasn’t the road Miyamoto started on, but as he mused earlier, the world really does work in mysterious ways.



# WEEKEND: MOVIES



SONY PICTURES/AP

Ben Wang stars as the “Karate Kid” franchise’s first Asian American star in “Legends,” now playing in select on-base theaters.

# ‘Anyone can be the Karate Kid’

‘Legends’ Wang says it’s a ‘privilege’ to be 1st Asian American lead in franchise that has struggled with representation

BY TERRY TANG  
Associated Press

It didn’t occur to Ben Wang right away that in taking on “Karate Kid: Legends,” he’d be the franchise’s first Asian American “Kid.” And that gives him a lot of optimism.

“At first I didn’t even think about that,” Wang told The Associated Press. “That feels like a very cool and actually privileged position that I get to be in.”

His casting happened, he said, in “a world where that’s normal enough.”

“Karate Kid: Legends,” now in select on-base theaters, unites OG Ralph Macchio’s Daniel and Jackie Chan’s Mr. Han from the 2010 movie to help Wang’s Li Fong win a New York City karate competition.

In the original “Karate Kid” movie, which came out more than 40 years ago, Pat Morita was the only main Asian American cast member even though it takes place in California’s San Fernando Valley. His beloved Mr. Miyagi helped underdog Daniel wax on and wax off against white karate bullies. That arc has been replicated and flipped in sequels and offshoots ever since. The overall lack of Asian and Asian American representation all these years has been a lingering point of contention for some.

Jeff Yang, author of “The Golden Screen: The Movies

That Made Asian America,” said he knows plenty of Asian Americans who find most of the Miyagi-verse entertaining. At the same time, even the recent Netflix “Cobra Kai” series hardly had any young Asian American main characters. That lost opportunity felt like a “loose, nagging tooth,” he said.

“It’s always been a situation where the ancient or legendary martial arts master is transferring his skills not just to another generation, but into another community,” Jeff Yang said. “In a way, that feels like for me as an Asian American, it turns it into a guilty pleasure.”

The Asians who were there were “either sidekicks or villains,” he added.

## When the first ‘Karate Kid’ film hit

In Asia, there’s a long cinematic history of elite martial artists-turned-actors ranging from icon Bruce Lee to Chan and Jet Li. But in Hollywood, Asian characters who did perform karate or kung fu often weren’t written three-dimensionally. Most of the stars who could shine for acting and on-screen fighting weren’t Asian.

“In a way that’s understandable,” Yang said. “Martial arts is one of the things that was brought to the United States by soldiers who had been stationed in Asia, learned the practice, embraced the lifestyle and the discipline.”

By the 1970s and ’80s, karate dojos were becoming

popular all over the U.S. in cities and suburbs. So “The Karate Kid” debuted at just the right time.

Ken Nagayama, a martial arts grand master who runs a school in the Valley, was an instructor at a North Hollywood dojo used for scenes in the original film. He recalls meeting Morita. But he wasn’t thinking about casting. He was impressed by how much interest in karate shot up because of one movie.

“When that came out, so many people were interested in taking a class, especially younger kids,” said Nagayama, who plans to watch “Legends” with his students. He had “a whole mix” of students of all races signing up.

Steven Ho, a stunt coordinator and martial artist who lives in Los Angeles and has appeared multiple times on Conan O’Brien’s talk shows, remembers Morita, Macchio and William Zabka watching tournaments he competed in to prepare for the first movie. He was such a fan of Morita that he never thought about how there were no other Asian actors.

“Pat Morita, to me, he was the lead,” Ho said. “Also, if that were the only martial arts film out there, then yeah, it would be odd and I would be disappointed. But you gotta remember, the ’80s and ’90s, we were living in the golden age of Jet Li, Jackie Chan, films that featured ... more

SEE ASIAN ON PAGE 17



WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEW

Asian: Media and culture have made big strides since 1984 movie

FROM PAGE 16

authentic martial artists.”  
It’s a full-circle moment that Chan is one of the mentors in this new flick. Wang is still in disbelief that he got to do combat choreography with the superstar.  
“He’s the guy you think he is,” Wang said with a grin. “He doesn’t turn it off when he’s not on set.”

Martial arts movies made for new generations

Ho happily points out that “Karate Kid: Legends” is reinforcing how his 12-year-old twin sons are growing up without the negative Asian stereotypes that he had. He’d rather a story have no Asians if the characters are going to be the butt of the joke. That history of stereotyping of Asian men is why he initially declined appearing on O’Brien’s show.

“I thought, ‘Oh, he’s a tall guy. I’m a short, Asian guy. They’re just going to goof on me. They’re going to go off on me,’ so I said, ‘You know, I’m gonna be out of town,’” Ho said.

Fortunately, the segments, which have earned millions of YouTube views, were crafted so Ho was the straight man to O’Brien’s buffoonery.

Twins Jonny and Ollie, in fact, are real-life karate kids. The boys, known as the “Twinjas,” know karate, mixed martial arts and other disciplines. They count Lee’s daughter, Shannon, as a friend. They’ve appeared on “America’s Got Talent,” “Obi-Wan Kenobi” and have taught moves to Kevin Hart and Snoop Dogg. They love “Cobra Kai” for the drama and want to see “Legends” for Chan. They have since been introduced to the movie that started it all.

Ollie’s favorite character was Miyagi. “I think that in the first Karate Kids, how the teacher was Asian, I think being a teacher is better than being a student,” he said.

Jonny says not every show or movie in this genre has to have an Asian lead, but when there is one, he takes note.

“I think that there’s definitely a lot of other movies and shows that have Asian leads, like Simu Liu, the first Asian superhero,” Jonny said, referring to Marvel’s “Shang-Chi.” “It’s very significant.”

The Twinjas, who are working on a children’s fiction book that’s part mystery and part action, are not shy about voicing their own desire for “any opportunities that come our way, we’d love to take, especially for acting and using our martial arts skills,” Ollie said.

Perhaps they’ll get some inspiration from seeing Wang in “Legends.” Wang considers it a “point of pride” if young Asian American children view him as a benchmark so they can see themselves as the hero.

“The word I keep going back to is it’s a privilege,” Wang said. “What I love about this series is ... there’s this idea anyone can be the ‘Karate Kid.’”



SONY PICTURES/AP photos

In “Karate Kid: Legends,” martial arts legends Shifu (Jackie Chan) and Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) unite to train Li Fong (Ben Wang) in both kung fu and karate for an MMA tournament in New York.

Two branches, one weak trunk

‘Karate Kid: Legends’ a pleasant experience, but fails to reconcile competing storylines

BY KATIE WALSH  
Tribune News Service

The problem with “Karate Kid: Legends” is right there in the title: “legends,” as in multiple. Many beloved “Karate Kid” characters and icons of millennial sports movies enter the ring, but in the ensuing melee, no one emerges victorious.

Written by Rob Lieber and directed by Jonathan Entwistle, “Karate Kid: Legends” is another revamp of the franchise, which now boasts four movies from the 1980s and ’90s, an animated series, a 2010 remake starring Jaden Smith and Jackie Chan and a long-running Netflix spinoff series, “Cobra Kai,” following the original characters, now adults. This new film is a “lega-sequel,” if you will, combining characters from the original film and recent remake, with a new setting: the Big Apple.

The saying “two branches, one tree” is oft-repeated throughout the film to explain the two different kinds of martial arts training (karate and kung fu) that come together to shape our new young fighter, Li Fong (Ben Wang). But “Karate Kid: Legends” doesn’t have a strong, steady trunk to support these separate offshoots. Instead, it’s two movies, at war with each other, fists and feet flying in a whirlwind.

In one corner, and comprising the first half of the film, you have a surprisingly fun and refreshing twist on “Karate Kid,” in which the martial arts student becomes the teacher.

Young Li, grieving the death of his kung fu champ older brother, is yanked out of kung fu school in Beijing (where he’s trained by Chan’s Shifu) by his mother (Ming-Na Wen) and uprooted to New York City.



In the film, Victor (Joshua Jackson), left, a former boxer, also enlists Li (Wang) as his trainer. Victor has run afoul of a loan shark who runs an MMA gym.

There, Li befriends Mia (Sadie Stanley) and her father Victor (Joshua Jackson), who run a pizza joint and have run afoul of a loan shark, O’Shea (Tim Rozon), who also happens to run a mixed martial arts gym. Victor, a former boxer, has entered into a prize fight hoping to win the purse, and enlists Li as his new trainer, who agrees because he believes training Victor won’t break his “no fighting” promise to his mother.

Now, a “The Fighter”-style movie starring ’90s kids sports movie icon Jackson (“The Mighty Ducks”) would be a great film on its own, and the kung fu student trainer spin gives it a fun twist. Alas, this is a “Karate Kid” movie that promises “legends,” so the pizza shop boxing training movie is quickly dispatched in favor of Shifu and Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) descending on New York from Beijing and Los Angeles to train Li to fight in the five boroughs tournament against

sadistic MMA fighter Conor (Aramis Knight).

The movie is so divided in its storytelling aims that there’s a sequence where Li’s tournament rounds and training are spliced in with moments of character and story development, connected by frantically fast drone shots that zip over the city. The pacing of this film is at breakneck speed; it feels like watching a movie on fast forward at times. Much of the story work is executed during rapid-fire montages, and uses familiar archetypes and stereotypes in order to sketch out the basic narrative. The frenetic fight sequences are so fast and fluid, ramping between slow-motion and fast-motion that your eye can hardly land anywhere, or even appreciate the choreography.

Despite being two movies smashed together, tortuously twisted in order to get all these legends at one tournament, “Karate Kid: Legends” isn’t an unpleasant experience, largely due to the charms of star Wang, who has a bashfully appealing presence that belies his seriously lethal martial arts skills. He has a sparkling chemistry with Stanley and Jackson, further emphasizing that the filmmakers should have stuck with that one story, rather than falling back on the old karate kid tropes we know so well.

Alas, it seems originality was not the goal with “Karate Kids: Legends,” even if those hints of newness are the most interesting part of the movie.

Legends never die, as they say, for better or for worse, and in the case of this film, it’s for worse.

“Karate Kid: Legends” is rated PG-13 for martial arts violence and some language. Running time: 94 minutes. Now playing at select on-base theaters.



## WEEKEND: MOVIES

## A true portrait of Pee-wee the artist

Documentary director finds a way to present Paul Reubens' story as a genuine collaboration

BY LINDSEY BAHR  
Associated Press

**P**aul Reubens did not tell his director that he was dying.

On July 31, 2023, the news of Reubens' death came as a shock to documentary filmmaker Matt Wolf, who had spent a year trying to convince him to make the ambitious two-part documentary "Pee-wee as Himself," now streaming on HBO Max, and over 40 hours interviewing him on camera.

But in 2023, the project was in danger of falling apart: The two had been at an impasse for a while over the issue of creative control and they'd finally found a way forward.

He had one last interview scheduled, set for the first week of August. Then the texts started coming in. Wolf sat there shaking.

They'd spoken about everything — Reubens' childhood, his complicated relationship with fame, his ambitions, his commitment to his alter-ego Pee-wee Herman, his sexuality, his arrest — except the fact that he'd been battling cancer for the past six years. But after the initial shock, a renewed purpose set in.

"I went to work the day after Paul died. I started to read the 1,500-page transcript of our interview through the night and was struck by the significance and meaning that came by understanding that he was privately contemplating mortality," Wolf said.

"I was aware that this was an extraordinary situation that was part of the story of the film and that the stakes were the highest I had ever experienced."

For the next year, Wolf would wake up and say to himself, "You cannot drop the ball. Rise to the occasion." It was, he said, "the most challenging and involved and emotional process of filmmaking that I've ever gone through and maybe that I'll ever go through again."



HBO Max/AP

Paul Reubens as Pee-wee Herman in a scene from the documentary "Pee-Wee as Himself."

### The most resistant interview subject

Reubens wanted to direct his own documentary. He'd always prized creative control and couldn't fathom why he would cede it in telling his own story for the first time. But everyone around him seemed to think that was a bad idea. It would take over a year of getting to know Wolf, whose film credits include documentaries about cellist Arthur Russell and news archivist Marion Stokes, to consider letting go.

Even after Reubens had agreed to let Wolf direct the project, he continued to push back and resist at times. Early on, they decided to record their phone conversations as well, recognizing that their dynamic illuminated something true about Reubens.

"Right away, Paul was sort of rebelling against the process, blowing off steam, procrastinating, teasing me, sometimes being adversarial, but in a funny, wink-wink way," Wolf said. "I was frustrated. I thought, how am I ever going to get through this? This is the most resistant interview subject I've ever encountered. Then I realized this is actually a pretty significant form of portraiture. This is showing Paul's discomfort and uncertainty about really showing and sharing himself."

The result is a collaboration, Wolf said, but one in which he also had editorial control. It wasn't going to be a hit piece, but it wasn't going to be a puff piece, either.

### Setting the record straight, and coming out

Wolf, 43, was part of the generation of kids who grew up with the children's television series "Pee-wee's Playhouse." It was, he said, the first time he'd felt viscerally moved by a work of art.

Still, he wasn't approaching the project as a fan. He was coming as a filmmaker who makes documentaries about gay artists and unconventional visionaries who "beg for reappraisal." Unlike most of his subjects, however, Reubens was an icon and a cult figure.

"I was determined not to make a film that fell into the traps of the celebrity biopic with platitudes from other famous people and manufactured self-reflection," Wolf said. "I wanted to make portrait of an artist."

Much of the film focuses on the prehistory of Pee-wee, showing how his childhood, his artistic awakening, his early improv days and his "Saturday Night Live" rejection would converge into the commitment to this alter ego.

Part of that involved engaging with Reubens' sexuality in a direct way. In the film, Reubens speaks about living openly as a gay man, and then going back in the closet.

"He had always intended to come out but was very ambivalent about that," Wolf said. "And I saw myself as a younger gay person who could help somebody achieve that and also to give a sense of nuance and depth to his artistry that one could appre-

ciate, and to understand the personal sacrifices that were required for him to do that."

### A portrait of the artist, not the headlines

Reubens' career was derailed when he was arrested for indecent exposure in an adult movie theater in 1991. He was assessed only a small fine, but the damage to his career was incalculable. In 2001, he was arrested and charged with misdemeanor possession of child pornography, which was reduced to an obscenity charge with probation. These are covered in the documentary's second part.

"He wanted to set the record straight, particularly about the unfortunate footnotes of his arrest, which to some extent have overshadowed his artistic accomplishments," Wolf said. "That to me felt like the easy part and also the least interesting part of the film."

"Pee-wee as Himself" premiered earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival, where Wolf got to see emotional responses from audiences, no matter if they came to it as fans or out of some curiosity around the controversies. That emotional intensity was what he hoped they'd feel.

"I wanted to make a film with a big range of emotions, from joy and delight to tragedy and sorrow," Wolf said. "Paul contains that big spectrum of feelings. And I wanted the viewer to feel it, to have a lasting connection to him. When a film can affect you emotionally, it becomes unforgettable."



WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

The character behind Pee-wee

Documentary ‘Pee-wee as Himself’ gives Reubens space to show who he really was

BY JAKE COYLE  
*Associated Press*

Some bio documentaries are carried mostly by the reflective, archival footage that send you back to the subject’s heyday. But in Matt Wolf’s “Pee-wee as Himself” — as wonderful as much of the archival stuff is — nothing is more compelling than when Paul Reubens is simply himself.

Before his death from cancer in 2023, Reubens sat for 40 hours of interviews with Wolf. His cooperation is clearly uncertain and sometimes strained in the film — he stopped participating for a year before talking about his infamous 2001 arrest — and his doubts on the project linger throughout. Reubens would rather be directing it himself, he says more than once. The man many know as Pee-wee Herman is used to controlling his own image, and he has good reason for being skeptical of others doing so. Talking heads have gotten a bad rap in documentaries in recent years, but in “Pee-wee as Himself,” nothing is more compelling than Paul Reubens simply sitting before the camera, looking back at us. Pee-wee may be iconic, but

Paul Reubens is hysterical. And Wolf’s film, with that winking title, makes for a revealing portrait of a performer who so often put persona in front of personhood. In that way, “Pee-wee as Himself,” a two-part documentary on HBO Max, is moving as the posthumous unmasking of a man you can’t help but wish we had known better. Reubens was a product of TV. He grew up transformed by shows like “Howdy Doody,” “The Mickey Mouse Club” and, later, “I Love Lucy.” “I wanted to jump into my TV and live in that world,” he says. Part of the delight of the first half of Wolf’s film is watching the wide range of inspirations — the circus culture of Sarasota, Fla., where his family moved to; Andy Warhol; performance art — coalesce into a singular creation like Pee-wee. That name, he says, came from a tiny harmonica that said “Pee-wee” on it, and a kid named Herman he once knew. “It was a whole bunch of things that had never really connected, connecting,” says Reubens. Wolf carefully traces the birth of Reubens’ alter ego through the Groundlings in Los Angeles, on stage at the Roxy and then out into the world, on “The Gong Show,” on Letterman, in the 1985



HBO Max/AP

Paul Reubens, pictured, sat for 40 hours of interviews with filmmaker Matt Wolf for “Pee-Wee as Himself.”

Tim Burton-directed “Pee-wee’s Big Adventure” and, ultimately, on “Pee-wee’s Playhouse.” “I felt in a way I was bringing the character out into the wild,” he recalls. “I just stayed in character all day.” That came with obvious sacrifices. For the sake of his career, Reubens stayed closeted as a gay man. He grew intensely private and seldom appeared in public not in character. Reubens also jettisoned some of his close collaborators, like Phil Hartman, as his fame grew. There’s tragedy, both self-inflicted and not, in Reubens’ increasing isolation. When Reubens was arrested in 1991 and charged with indecent exposure, Reubens’ carefully guarded persona came crashing down. The scandal was worse

because people knew only Pee-wee and not Reubens. There was also injustice in the whole affair, particularly the 2002 arrest that followed on charges of child pornography that were later dropped. In both cases, homophobia played a role. When Reubens does get around to talking about it, he resists painting himself as a victim. Wolf, the director of films like “Recorder,” about Marion Stokes, who recorded television all day long for 30 years, and “Spaceship Earth,” about the quirky 1991 Biosphere 2 experiment, is better known as a talented documentarian of visual archives than as an compelling interviewer of celebrities. “Pee-wee as Himself” would have probably benefited from

less one-sided interplay between subject and filmmaker. But Wolf’s time was also limited with Reubens, and just getting this much from him is clearly an accomplishment. Above all, Reubens says he’s doing the film to clear a few things up. In the end, the full portrait of Reubens — including all his playful, self-deprecating charm in front of the camera — add up to a much-needed retort to some of the misunderstandings about Reubens. The day before he died, Reubens called Wolf to say one last thing: “I wanted to let people know who I really was and see how painful it was to be labeled as something I wasn’t.” “Pee-wee as Himself” is unrated. Running time: 205 minutes. Now streaming on HBO Max.

‘The Last Rodeo’ a serviceable melodrama saved by the bull riding

BY ANN HORNADAY  
*The Washington Post*

“The Last Rodeo,” a contemporary family drama set in the world of Professional Bull Riders, has its weaknesses, but it earned bonus points with this reviewer for name-checking Bodacious, a legendary 1,900-pound competitor that challenged (and severely injured) the best riders on the circuit in the 1990s. As a character says in this homage to a thrilling, occasionally bone-crushing sport, “What a bull.” The vicarious tension and excitement of the PBR league is the best part of “The Last Rodeo,” which stars Neal McDonough as Joe Wainwright, a retired rider who decides to return for one last ride to pay for lifesaving surgery for an ailing loved one. Director Jon Avnet, who co-wrote the script with McDonough, films the bull-riding sequences with impressive immediacy, using everything from GoPro to slo-mo to capture what it’s like to sit atop a bucking hulk of sinew and muscle for the longest eight seconds of one’s life. PBR fans will be doubly gratified by the cameo appearances of some popular present-day PBR stars, including Daylon Swearingen, Ezekiel Mitchell, Dakota Lewis and Eli Vastbinder. It takes around 45 minutes for “The Last Rodeo” to get to Tulsa, where Joe intends to enter the PBR Legends Championship; before that, the movie engages in setting up the stakes with ploddingly familiar contours. As man-



Angel Studios

In “The Last Rodeo,” a retired rider returns to earn money to pay for lifesaving surgery for a loved one. nered and obvious as the dialogue can be, especially when characters are delivering expository speeches about what happened several years ago, it’s helped considerably by some warm, appealing performances. Christopher McDonald brings a welcome glint of mischief as an always-hustling PBR official who sees a commercial payday in the novelty of an old geezer returning to the chute; Sarah Jones is admirably understated as Joe’s daughter Sally, delivering a convincingly brisk portrayal

of a single mother with no time for nonsense. McDonough, best known for his recent appearance in “Tulsa King,” possesses the blue-eyed, square-jawed handsomeness of a classic movie cowboy; here, he channels Clint Eastwood as the ultimate Quiet Man With a Past whose emotional reserve breaks only when he’s punching a Ford F-350 in taciturn frustration. The stoicism feels both forced and dramatically inert until he reconnects with Charlie, his best friend and former bull-fighter (think of a corner man in a boxing ring), to bring him along on the adventure. Played with enormous heart and humor by Mykelti Williamson, Charlie injects much-needed brio into a story that, without him, threatens to sink into stale, you-must-pay-the-rent histrionics. “The Last Rodeo” is a melodrama and, like all melodramas, depends on a recognizable formula to please the fans: in this case, all the sentimentalism and contrivances inherent to the form, including the usual setbacks — fatal illnesses, maybe-crippling injuries, bar fights, a bout of heavy weather — and third-act revelations. The pacing, especially in the first hour, can be tediously starchy. But the film is disarming in its forthright sincerity, and as long as it’s in the pavilion where raging bulls turn men into human yard darts, it’s viscerally effective. “The Last Rodeo” may not be bodacious, but it’s a satisfying ride. “The Last Rodeo” is rated PG for thematic elements, mild profanity and violence. Running time: 118 minutes. Now playing at select on-base theaters.



WEEKEND: TRAVEL

The City of Light shines in summer

Few cities can even come close to Paris when it comes to cultural, artistic and historic heritage. And few residents are as confident as Parisians in their expertise in good living. While that uniquely French joie de vivre can be enjoyed throughout the year, Paris kicks it into high gear in summer.

An old travel mantra tells you to avoid Paris in summer, when its citizens traditionally go on vacation. Sure, it's hard to schedule an appointment with a dentist or accountant ... but when you're on vacation, who cares? It's the tourists' Paris that the tourist is looking for — and the Paris I'm after is in full swing in July and August.

For the benefit of Parisians who do stay in town — and the countless tourists who visit through the summer — France's ministry of culture sponsors plenty of action, including an entertaining Summer Festival for three weeks in July. Its diverse programs — dance, theater, concerts, acrobatics and installations — take place all around the city, and many are outdoors and free.

Parisians have a habit of spilling onto the river's bridges and embankments to enjoy the early-evening hours. It's the perfect time to share a simple picnic with friends. Join in — for the cost of groceries

and a bottle of wine, you can enjoy a gourmet spread with ambiance that no restaurant can touch.

If you'd rather toss a ball around than ponder the river's reflections, head to the one-mile stretch of the Right Bank (just north of Ile de la Cité) where the city government trucks in potted palm trees, hammocks and lounge chairs to create colorful urban "beaches" in July and August. With climbing walls, "beach" cafés, stylish swimsuits on parade, volleyball courts and trampolines, it's an ideal place to see Paris at play — and to play along.

July is also enlivened by two big events — first on the 14th, the country's national holiday, when Bastille Day is celebrated in towns big and small all over France. And Paris goes all out: There's a big parade down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, concerts galore and fireworks lighting up the sky over the Eiffel Tower. Later in July, the Tour de France culminates in the center of Paris, with cyclists crossing the finish line, with much fanfare, on the Champs-Élysées.

Summer also means sightseeing after



Rick Steves



CAROL RIES/Rick Steves' Europe

Parisians make good use of their handsome parks in the summer months.

dark: Some sights and museums — such as the Eiffel Tower — keep longer hours, and others host special summer-only events. In nearby Versailles, summer Saturday nights offer a cool array of gushing fountains, lighted displays and fireworks. King Louis XIV had his engineers literally reroute a river to fuel his fountains and feed his plants. Even by today's standards, the fountains are impressive.

Paris' many lovely parks work overtime in summer as playgrounds for all ages. The sprawling Esplanade des Invalides is just right for afternoon lawn bowling (boules). Puppet shows, pony rides, rental toy sailboats and a merry-go-round enliven the Luxembourg Garden. A temporary amusement park pops up at the Tuileries

Garden, complete with a huge Ferris wheel. An open-air cinema at Parc de la Villette screens films in their original language with French subtitles on many summer nights (no charge if you sit on your own blanket).

I like seeing the City of Light after dark, lacing together the iconic floodlight sights on a self-guided taxi tour, or on a boat cruise — or even by bike. While Paris is enthusiastically bike-friendly, for tourists, the easiest option is to join a bike tour (try Fat Tire Bikes). Seeing the Eiffel Tower sparkle in the night sky is an unforgettable way to cap any Parisian day.

This article is used with the permission of Rick Steves' Europe (www.ricksteves.com). Rick Steves writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio and organizes European tours.

Lovers of classic cars should make tracks to these events

The sight of dozens of lovingly restored vehicles parked near a palace or cobblestoned city square can bring on a sense of nostalgia for times one never had the chance to experience. Rallies, motorsport festivals and other types of meet-ups give fans of classic automobiles ample opportunity to admire fascinating machinery in top condition.

**Wiesbaden, Germany:** U.S. Air Force pilots had a hand in the founding of the Hesse Motor Sports Club, established in Wiesbaden in 1954 and quickly embraced by local motorsport enthusiasts. The club is the organizing force behind the HMSC Oldtimer Rally Wiesbaden, set to unfold Saturday and Sunday. When the participants aren't driving through the lush green hills of the Taunus, their cars will be parked in front of the city's Kurhaus. On Saturday, the cars will begin arriving at 2:30 p.m. The presentation of the participating autos, known as the Concours d'Elegance, begins at 10 a.m. on Sunday. Admission is free. Online: [hmsc.de/oldtimer-rallye-wiesbaden](http://hmsc.de/oldtimer-rallye-wiesbaden)

**Brescia, Italy:** Today's Mille Miglia Storica, a renowned rally for classic vehicles, traces its history to 1927, when it was first held as an endurance road race. The event was discontinued in 1957, in part due to a great number of fatalities of both drivers and spectators over the years. Since 1977, the event has been revived in the form of a mobile auto parade exclusively for cars built prior to 1957. The Mille Miglia route starts and finishes in Brescia while passing through Rome and other historic cities. Iconic manufacturers including Aston Martin, Ferrari, Maserati, Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz and Alfa Romeo are typically well represented. The race's 2025 edition runs from June 17-21. In Brescia, visitors can soak in the atmosphere of the Mille Miglia Villaggio, a space offering exhibitions, shops and stalls, food stands and activities related to the event. Online: [1000miglia.it/en](http://1000miglia.it/en)



Karen Bradbury



iStock

**The historic Mille Miglia Storica, starting and ending in Brescia, Italy, is more of a parade than a race these days, but it still attracts classic cars. The event is June 17-21.**

**Baden-Baden, Germany:** The International Classic Car Meeting transforms the gardens of a stunning spa town into an open-air museum for vintage vehicles. From July 11-13, visitors can get up close and personal with some 350 vintage cars representing more than 100 years of automotive history. A highlight of this year's edition is an Audi exhibition celebrating 100 years of the brand's presence in Baden-Baden. The Concours d'Élégance sees trophies awarded to the most stunning autos, alongside those accompanied by drivers in period costume or bedecked with flowers. The awards ceremony following the parade on Sunday afternoon marks the conclusion and climax of the vintage car gathering. Adult entry costs 9 euros on July 11 and 14 euros on July 12-13. Children 7 and under enter for free. Online: [oldtimer-meeting.de](http://oldtimer-meeting.de)

**Tegernsee, Germany:** Some of the world's most prominent vintage auto collectors turn out to display their beloved vehicles against the backdrop of a lake surrounded

by alpine peaks. The restaurant complex Gut Kaltenbrunn plays host to the Concours of Elegance Germany July 25-26, where some 50 of the world's finest classic and luxury cars will be on display. Beyond the cars, guests can peruse market stalls and take in exhibitions. Adult admission costs 98 euros on July 25 and 75 euros on July 26. Online: [concoursforelegancegermany.com](http://concoursforelegancegermany.com)

**Ely, England:** The annual Classic Car Rally is set to take place at the Old Palace Green, directly opposite the west door of Ely's historic cathedral, on Aug. 2. From 10 a.m.-4 p.m., visitors can check out dozens of vehicles from both British and international makers spanning 80 years of automotive history. The cost of entry is free; donations support local charities. Online: [cdccc.org.uk/ely-show](http://cdccc.org.uk/ely-show)

**Schwetzingen, Germany:** One of the country's most prestigious events for classic autos, The International Concours d'Elegance Automobile takes place amid the gardens of the Schwetzingen Palace. More than 180 of some of the world's rarest and most beautiful automobiles, built between 1890 and 1990, will be on display Sept. 5-7. The scene will include market stalls, an art exhibition, fashion show, live music and more. This year's Concours of U.S. classic cars shines a spotlight on Ford Thunderbirds. Normal admission fees to the grounds of the Palace apply. Online: [concours-delegance.de](http://concours-delegance.de)

**Chichester, West Sussex, England:** The Goodwood Revival is a three-day motoring festival held annually at the Goodwood Circuit for the types of racing cars and motorcycles that would have competed during the circuit's heyday — 1948-1966. In addition to the racing action, visitors can enjoy a best-dressed competition, track parades, an exhibition of old airplanes, meet and greets with famous drivers and more. This year's event is slated for Sept. 12-14. Adult admission to the site goes for 80 UK pounds; access to the grandstands costs an additional 57 pounds and up. Online: [goodwood.com/motorsport/goodwood-revival](http://goodwood.com/motorsport/goodwood-revival)



WEEKEND: TRAVEL

By NATALIE B. COMPTON  
*The Washington Post*

Americans are bracing for an expensive summer, and travelers are adjusting their vacations accordingly. Over the past couple months, travel planner Melanie Rodriguez has had multiple clients cancel trips because of budget concerns.

Maybe a “White Lotus” Sicily kind of trip is out, but “there are ways to still travel to Europe if you want to be more budget conscious,” said Kelly Greer, a travel agent in Pittsburgh.

Instead of France, Greece or Italy — which will be particularly crowded this summer thanks to the Jubilee year, the new pope and the country’s enduring popularity — travel planners are recommending trips to the Continent’s lesser-appreciated countries. These are the types of places where your money will go further and you’ll find fewer tourists.

Here are four countries where you can get more bang for your American buck:

Poland

Castles, UNESCO biosphere reserves, milk bars: Poland is a favorite for Greer’s clients for its many charms and affordability.

According to Kayak, the average price of a double room in Poland is \$115 per night, compared with \$318 in Italy, \$243 in France and \$368 in Switzerland.

“You could go up north to the Baltic Sea and there’s beautiful coastline, there’s mountains, there’s history,” Greer said. “You name it, you can find it. And it’s very kid-friendly.”

Greer often pairs a trip to Poland with nearby countries such as Austria, Hungary and Germany.

Albania

For a similar vibe to Croatia, Italy or Greece, Rodriguez recommends summer in Albania, where Kayak says the average price of a double room is \$96 per night.

“You’re getting the medieval history, you have that Mediterranean food, the beaches, and you’re getting it at a third of the cost,” Rodriguez said. “You can do a full seven nights in Albania for under \$2,000 a person before flights.”

Albania may be under the radar for many Americans, but Fort Lauderdale-based travel planner Jamie D’Aria does not expect it to stay that way for long. Travelers can expect beaches with crystal-clear water, dramatic coastlines, vibrant cities and an idyllic countryside. Don’t miss the city of Shkoder, where you can experience what Rodriguez calls “your royal moment at the castle,” or Dhermi for a quiet beach stay.

Rodriguez usually rounds out the trip with time in Montenegro, another affordable up-and-coming Mediterranean destination. To get the best value in either country, she says, steer clear of port cities

Inexpensive East

This summer, travel to these European countries where money goes further, other tourists are fewer



Luxury travel adviser Lainey Melnick says places like Bulgaria surprise and delight and have the essence of old Europe, without the price tag of Western Europe. Shown above, the old town of Tsarevets in the historical city of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria.



The fairy tale-like alpine Lake Bled (Blejsko jezero) in Slovenia was a popular vacation spot in the 1800s. There you can take a boat ride in a pletna.



iStock photos

Poland is a favorite because of its affordability and charms: castles, UNESCO biosphere reserves and milk bars. Shown above: Wislouchie fortress in Gdansk.

with cruise traffic, where prices can be higher.

Bulgaria

As a luxury travel adviser, Lainey Melnick says she is always looking for destinations that surprise and delight, “and Bulgaria does just that, without the price tag of Western Europe,” she said.

Bulgaria has the essence of old Europe — Roman ruins, spectacular churches and walkable cities — plus sunny beaches along the Black Sea. According to Kayak, the average price of a double room is \$125 per night, and you can find five-star hotels for \$215 per night.

Continue your trip north to Romania, which Melnick calls both “incredibly affordable” and “one of Europe’s best-kept secrets,” and then head to Latvia, “an elegant, peaceful destination that’s ideal for travelers who want authenticity without the high cost.”

Slovenia

Between its Alpine beauty and Adriatic coastline, Slovenia is another easy swap for Mediterranean hot spots for Greer.

“It’s very nature-focused — Lake Bled is incredible — it’s very similar to Croatia, but it’s much smaller and easier to navigate,” she said. “And it’s definitely a lower price point.”

Pennsylvania travel planner Heather Wassel estimates that by picking Slovenia over other popular European destinations, travelers can save 30% on hotels and tours. The average price of a double room is \$153 per night, compared with Croatia’s \$179 or Greece’s \$243, according to Kayak.

Wassel’s Slovenia highlights include Lake Bled, a “fairy-tale location” that was a popular vacation spot in the 1800s (take a boat ride in a pletna, Slovenia’s answer to the gondola). She also touts the capital, Ljubljana, with its picturesque castle, Central Market and bounty of beautiful bridges; the Julian Alps (if you can handle hairpin turns) for Alpine lakes and a crash course in World War I history; and Istria, a wine region shared with Croatia and Italy.

Honorable mention: Germany

With one of the highest gross domestic products (GDPs) in the world, Germany might not immediately come to mind as an affordable travel destination. But when I was shopping for flights this summer, the country offered some of the cheapest airfare from the United States that I could find. Then a friend came back from a trip to Berlin and raved about how affordable the international art hub seemed compared with Paris and London.

Average hotel prices in Germany (\$160 per night for a double room) are not as low as those in the countries above, but they are much cheaper than in other prominent European countries.

Sandra Weinacht, travel planner and co-owner of Inside Europe Travel Experiences, told me her homeland is “often overlooked and underestimated” compared with the Continent’s hot spots, particularly because it is a “clear winner for budget travel.” While prices are seriously inflated around Oktoberfest, summer is far more reasonable, and you can even find beer festivals. Weinacht recommends visiting the city of Würzburg during the Kiliani Beer Festival, which is celebrating its 1,000-year anniversary and will run from July 4-20.



# WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



## Heaps of fun

Former mining waste transformed into skiable slopes at Monte Kaolino amusement park in Bavaria's Hirschau

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

**G**ermans have a reputation for ingenuity, so I wasn't surprised when I learned that a mountain of mining waste in Bavaria had been transformed into a first-class recreational experience.

Monte Kaolino is an amusement park in the picturesque town of Hirschau, approximately 12 miles south of Tower Barracks in Grafenwoehr.

I decided to visit with my wife and kids after seeing a German friend's photos of the attractions.

The park offers a 400-foot sand skiing and snowboarding trail, a go-kart-like roller coaster, a water park, a high-rope course, 3D archery and more.

The "mountain" was built over decades, beginning in 1833, from quartz sand that was left over from nearby kaolin mining, according to the park's website. Kaolin is a soft white clay used in an array of products from paper to porcelain. We arrived at midday on a sunny, brisk Sunday in early May. As we approached, we saw camping cars and cabins for rent. The outdoor pools had just opened for the season, but it was still a bit too chilly for swimming.

We proceeded to the hulking hill, where we watched a steady stream of skiers and snowboarders carve through the coarse sand in T-shirts and shorts.

For those who don't want to use the lift, a second hill of equal size is open to climb on foot.

None of us ski, so we hiked up the hill. We paused several times as we climbed; our calves burned and we slid back a foot for every few steps of progress.

My oldest son and I had a blast running down the steep slope at ludicrous speed. He had to shake sand out of his hair after

### On the QT

**Address:** Wolfgang Drossbach Strasse 114, Hirschau, Germany  
**Hours:** Thursday and Friday, 2-6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Open until the end of the autumn holidays. The park may close certain attractions due to inclement weather.  
**Prices:** A roundtrip lift ticket is 3.50 euros for children, 4 euros for adults. One-hour access to the lift and equipment rental costs 25 euros for children, 30 euros for adults.  
**Information:** [www.montekaolino-hirschau.de](http://www.montekaolino-hirschau.de)

Matthew M. Burke

crumpling in a heap halfway down and sliding 10 feet. After climbing the hill, we decided to ride the Monte Coaster, which looks like a go-kart on a small train track that wraps around the mountain from its peak.

We giggled with delight as we sat in the two-person kart and looked down through the trees. It wasn't as terrifying as it seemed, however, as we could slow ourselves using the handbrake.

After that, we stopped for ice cream sandwiches and coffee at the Monte Kaolino restaurant before heading to the miniature golf course to end our day.

The 18-hole course was small and relatively simple compared with some of the tourist courses back in my native Cape Cod, but it was highly satisfying. This one used rocks to expertly cut angles and create slopes that misdirected the ball, with several tunnels to shoot through.

While my 6-year-old ran off to find some mischief, my 9-year-old and I locked into a competitive father-son duel, in which I was barely victorious.

I escaped Monte Kaolino with my ego intact, and we all had smiles plastered across our faces.

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PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

**Top:** Genki Burke, 9, races down a 400-foot hill of sand May 11 in Hirschau, Germany. **Above:** Monte Kaolino, seen from its sand hiking hill, is an amusement park in Bavaria.



Monte Kaolino's miniature golf course in Hirschau is small but challenging.



The lift at Monte Kaolino transports visitors to the top of its 400-foot sand hill.



WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Roman-style slices come to Vicenza

Bacaro della Pizza bucks local eatery trend with simple, casual single-serving options

BY REBECCA HOLLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*  
It's hard to complain about the food in Vicenza, home to Michelin-starred restaurants, amazing trattorias, Naples-style pizza spots and even decent sushi.

But until recently, something was missing: Roman-style take-away pizza.

It may sound like a niche craving, but sometimes you don't want a whole pie — just a square slice (or three), cut in front of you, to enjoy on the go or with a small glass of wine and good conversation.

Pizza "al taglio," or by the slice, is a street food staple in the capital and ubiquitous throughout much of Italy. Yet in Vicenza, options are scarce. Only a couple of places outside the city center previously offered this style, and honestly, they're mediocre.

That changed with the opening of Bacaro della Pizza, the latest venture from the team behind Fattore F, the science-meets-art pizza restaurant next door known for its tasting menu.

"Bacaro della Pizza was born to create a new idea of aperitif and more, combining the tradition of the Venetian Bacaro and the mastery in white art of Fattore F," the menu states.

A bacaro is a small, casual Venetian tavern serving glasses of wine and snacks. This bacaro offers pizza slices, charcuterie, a couple of craft beers on tap, a local wine list, spritzes and coffee.

The menu features toketin, a sourdough pizza stuffed with seasonal Venetian ingredients like cod or asparagus.

Pizza in pala, made with highly



Bacaro della Pizza

**Address:** Contrà Jacopo cà Bianca 22 Vicenza, Italy  
**Hours:** Monday and Wednesday–Saturday: 12 p.m. to midnight; Sunday: 12-3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.-midnight; closed Tuesdays  
**Information:** Phone: 04441235141; Online: bacarodellapizza.com

Rebecca Holland

hydrated dough for an airy, honeycomb texture, comes as a classic Margherita or with seasonal toppings.

But the star is the Romana, a sourdough and semi-whole wheat pizza cut to order. Toppings change frequently, but a recent favorite featured sweet onions, peppers and spicy sausage.

The first time I stopped in, I was transported back to my years living in Rome, eating this kind of pizza almost every day. Pure joy.

Bacaro della Pizza is one of the few pizza spots in Vicenza open for both lunch and aperitivo, ideal for families and anyone looking for an earlier meal. It's also a worthy takeout option, since this style of pizza is less prone to the soggy middle of a Naples-style pizza left to sit for too long.

The restaurant is compact, but turnover is quick. Whatever Bacaro della Pizza lacks in seating, it more than makes up for in taste.

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PHOTOS BY REBECCA HOLLAND/Stars and Stripes

Bacaro della Pizza in Vicenza, Italy, serves pizza "al taglio," or by the slice, making it a rarity in the city.



Spritzes, house wine, beer and selections from a small specialty wine list can be added to orders at Bacaro della Pizza.



Bacaro della Pizza sits on a quiet corner in Vicenza. It has limited indoor seating and a small patio.

Grilled cheese and salad make a quick weeknight meal possible

BY LINDA GASSENHEIMER  
*Tribune News Service*

At a recent event in Miami catered by Michael Meltzer, the owner of Michael's Catering, a variety of buffet tables showcased an array of delicious dishes. To my surprise, the longest line was at the table serving grilled cheese sandwiches.

Curious, I asked Michael about this unexpected favorite, and he shared that, no matter what the event, these sandwiches are always the star of the show.

I asked him for his special recipe and adapted it for use at home.

One of the key secrets he explained is ensuring the bread is perfectly toasted — never burned — and that the cheese is melted, creating a balance of crispness and gooey goodness.

Grilled Cheese Sandwich Supper

Ingredients

- 4 slices whole wheat bread
- Olive oil spray
- 3 ounces sliced mild brie cheese
- 2 tablespoons fig spread or jam
- ½ cup very thinly sliced apple
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 cups washed, ready-to-eat spinach leaves
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons low-fat salad dressing

Directions

Place the bread slices on a counter. Spray slices with olive oil spray. Heat a large skillet with olive oil spray. Add the four slices and cook about 1 to 2 minutes to slightly toast the slices. Turn the burner



LINDA GASSENHEIMER/TNS

One of the key secrets to a perfect grilled cheese sandwich is ensuring that the bread is perfectly toasted — never burned — and that the cheese is melted, balancing crispness and gooey goodness.

off. Remove the slices from the skillet and place on the counter, toasted side up. Move the skillet away from the heat.

Divide the cheese slices between 2 toasted slices. Spoon 1 tablespoon of fig jam over each cheese slice. Add the apple slices on top of the fig jam.

To make the sandwich, place the remaining 2 toasted slices over the apples, toasted side inside. Reheat the skillet over low heat and add the butter. When the butter sizzles, add the sandwiches.

Cover skillet with a lid and cook 2 minutes. Check to see that the bread is crisp, not turning black. Turn the sandwiches over and cover the skillet with the lid. Cook 2 more minutes.

Meanwhile, divide the spinach leaves between 2 dinner plates and add the cherry tomatoes. Drizzle dressing on top. When ready, put the sandwiches on the dinner plates and cut them in half.



# WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



The Palawan Special Battalion World War II Memorial Museum features a large collection of Jeeps.



The museum includes a large display of historic firearms.

## On the QT

**Directions:** The Palawan Special Battalion World War II Memorial Museum is at 506 Rizal Ave., Puerto Princesa, Palawan, Philippines, near the southeast corner of Puerto Princesa International Airport. It's 10-minute drive from the terminal.  
**Times:** Open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., every day except Sunday.  
**Costs:** Fifty pesos (less than \$1) for adults; seniors, 30 pesos; children, free.  
**Food:** The museum is a 10-minute bicycle taxi ride from the SM City Mall, which has numerous restaurants.  
**Information:** 63-917-326-4342

Seth Robson

# Honoring the ‘Fighting 1,000’ of WWII



The Palawan Special Battalion World War II Memorial Museum in Puerto Princesa, Philippines, includes an exhibit of traditional Filipino fighting gear.

Philippine museum on Palawan displays large collection of weapons, photographs, uniforms, vehicles and more

By SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

A museum in Puerto Princesa, the largest city on the Philippines' westernmost island province, boasts an impressive collection of weapons, photographs, uniforms, vehicles and other relics of World War II.

The Palawan Special Battalion World War II Memorial Museum includes a half-dozen displays in a large shed near Puerto Princesa International Airport and Antonio Bautista Air Base.

The base, built by American prisoners of war between 1942 and 1944, is one of nine sites approved for shared use with U.S. forces under the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

The museum, which opened in 2011, was created by Higinio "Buddy" Clark Mendoza, son of a former Palawan war veteran.

A helmet and flagpole near the entrance honors the "Palawan Fighting 1,000" — guerrillas and members of the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East.

The largest items in the collection are part of a fleet of Jeeps, including a pair of "MacArthur" vehicles — survivors of World War II, according to museum signage.

One room is full of Japanese artifacts such as Rising Sun flags, a mannequin dressed in a 1940s-era uniform and various weapons, including samurai swords.

The America room includes more weapons, medals and photographs of veterans.

Another part of the facility is devoted to other nations involved in World War II, including Australia, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union and Nationalist China.

There's a display of an ancient Filipino warrior armed with knives as well as a collection of very old pistols.

The museum includes modern military uniforms of the sort worn by American and Filipino troops at annual Balikatan —

shoulder to shoulder — exercises.

The most important part of the collection, according to volunteers working there, is an area that honors the Palawan Special Battalion. The display includes more weapons and the names of those who served in the battalion, formed from guerrilla groups on the island after Japanese forces landed there in 1942.

The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, tasked the guerrillas with collecting intelligence and reorganized them as a rifle battalion in 1943. The guerrillas helped shelter survivors of a Dec. 14, 1944, massacre of 140 American prisoners of war by their Japanese guards at Plaza Cuartel, not far from the museum.

The Americans, wrote British journalist Brian MacArthur in "Surviving the Sword — Prisoners of the Japanese in the Far East 1942-45," were "herded into air-raid shelters, doused with petrol, and set alight. When they tried to escape they were gunned down or killed with clubs and bayonets."

A few survivors swam three miles across Puerto Princesa Bay to Iwahig, site of a "prison without walls" erected in 1904 by the American colonizers and still a prison compound today.

One of them, Army Pfc. Eugene Nielsen, was shot twice but reached the far shore and stumbled through a swamp, according to a July 22, 2022, article posted by the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

Nielsen came across a Filipino wielding a bolo knife who gave him water.

"You have friends here," the man said and led him to a jungle hideout used by the Palawan Special Battalion and sheltering other escaped prisoners, according to the article.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY JUAN KING/Stars and Stripes

Krispy Kreme Japan and Bandai Namco Entertainment are celebrating the 1980 debut of Pac-Man.

Chomp 'em while you can

Krispy Kreme Japan pays playful tribute to Pac-Man's 45th birthday

**BY JUAN KING**  
*Stars and Stripes*

To mark the 45th anniversary of the classic arcade game Pac-Man, Krispy Kreme Japan has partnered with Bandai Namco Entertainment to offer a limited-time lineup of doughnuts inspired by the beloved character and his ghostly foes.

The collaboration — the first between the global doughnut chain and the video game publisher — pays tribute to the 1980 debut of Pac-Man, which celebrated its official birthday on May 22. The doughnuts are available at Krispy Kreme locations across Japan while supplies last.

The special promotion invites customers to experience “the retro pop world of the game” through three new doughnut varieties, each drawing inspiration from elements of the iconic maze-chase game, according to Krispy Kreme Japan’s website.

I sampled the Pac-Man Half-Dozen — a six-doughnut set priced at 1,825 yen (about \$12.65). Packaged in a Pac-Man maze-themed box, the set includes three specialty doughnuts alongside two original glazed and a chocolate-iced doughnut with sprinkles.

One of the special flavors, Pac-Man Custard Sprinkles, is a variation on the brand’s signature glazed doughnut, topped with yellow custard, colorful candy power pellets and a wafer shaped like the titular character mid-chomp. The sweet combination evokes the game’s power-up moments.

Ghost Chocolate features a dark chocolate icing and choco-



Even the Krispy Kreme box reflects the limited-time Pac-Man theme.



Blinky, Pinky, Inky and Clyde search for Pac-Man atop this limited-time doughnut.

late filling. A wafer printed with the Ghost Gang — Blinky, Pinky, Inky and Clyde — is laid atop a maze-like design. This flavor proved richer than expected and emerged as my personal favorite.

The third offering, Power Strawberry, is styled after the game’s strawberry power-up. Coated in strawberry icing and topped with green “leaves” and sugar sprinkles, its strawberry cream filling balances sweetness with a hint of tartness.

Individual Pac-Man doughnuts are priced at 410 yen. Customers who purchase the half-dozen set are eligible to draw a ticket for a chance to win one of seven collectible stickers. A winning ticket



Pac-Man Doughnuts

**Location:** Available at Krispy Kreme locations throughout Japan.  
**Hours:** Vary by location.  
**Prices:** A three-piece box of Pac-Man doughnuts costs 1,177 yen. A half-dozen is 1,825 yen. Individual Pac-Man doughnuts are 410 yen.  
**Dress:** Casual  
**Information:** Online: krispykreme.jp

Juan King

earns the recipient an additional original glazed doughnut — a prize I drew during my visit.

Beyond the doughnuts, fans can continue their celebration at Shibuya’s Cine Tower in Tokyo, recognized as the birthplace of Pac-Man. There, diners will find Pac-Man décor and a nostalgic nod to the game’s cultural legacy.

Enthusiasts may want to visit soon — these doughnuts are available only for a short time.

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Pasta salad with salmon and dill has retro vibes

**BY ELLIE KRIEGER**  
*The Washington Post*

The expansive salad bar at the Log Jam Restaurant in Lake George, N.Y., which I visited recently, made me feel like a time traveler. It shuttled me back to the all-you-can-eat spreads that mesmerized me as a kid at the “fancy” restaurants my parents would occasionally take us to. I haven’t seen one like it in decades.

Spanning the width of the main dining room is a salad bar you could easily make a meal out of, with soup; slice-your-own bread from a selection of warm loaves; a colorful variety of leafy greens and chopped, fresh vegetables; and olives, cheeses and every type of dressing you could imagine.

It’s also stocked with several prepared salads that have delightful retro ladies’ luncheon vibes: potato salad, pea and onion salad, chicken salad and a pasta salad with tuna.

It was heaven, and I can’t wait to return.

Until I do, my version of their pasta salad will tide me over. It’s made with the same shell-shaped



Tom McCorkle/For The Washington Post  
**Pasta Salad With Salmon and Dill is worthy of a fine salad bar.**

pasta, which acts like little cups, catching the rest of the ingredients. I switched to canned salmon instead of tuna, stirring it with some of the dressing first to create a smooth-ish mixture, much like one you’d use on a sandwich.

Like the restaurant’s, the dressing is a rich, mayo-based one, but is spiked with Greek yogurt for lightness and tang, and is seasoned with mustard, lemon and a generous helping of fresh dill.

Once assembled, it makes for a nostalgic, filling meal — much like the one at the salad bar that inspired it.

Pasta Salad With Salmon and Dill

4 servings (makes 7 cups salad)

Active time: 30 minutes; Total time: 1 hour

In this satisfying, main-course salad, pasta shells are tossed with salmon, celery and onion in a creamy, dill-flecked dressing. A combination of yogurt and mayonnaise gives the dressing ample richness while keeping it more healthful.

The shell-shaped pasta is ideal because of the way it catches the ingredients, but any short pasta variety will work.

Served on a bed of tender lettuce, it’s a dish with a retro vibe that feels just right today.

Make ahead: The pasta needs to be cooked and chilled at least 30 minutes and up to 3 days before making the salad.

Storage: Refrigerate the salad for up to 2 days. Before eating, let sit on the counter for about 20 minutes to take the chill off.

**Ingredients**  
*1/8 teaspoon fine salt, plus more as needed*

*8 ounces small or medium dried pasta shells*

*1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt (any fat level)*

*1/3 cup mayonnaise*

*1/4 cup chopped fresh dill, plus fronds for serving*

*1 tablespoon Dijon mustard*

*1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest (from 1 lemon)*

*1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice*

*(from the same lemon)*  
*1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper*

*2 (5- to 6-ounce) cans or pouches skinless, boneless salmon, drained*

*1 cup chopped celery (1 to 2 ribs)*

*1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion*  
*Romaine or baby gem lettuce, for serving*

**Directions**

Bring a medium (4-quart) pot of water to a boil over high heat. Season the water with salt, if desired, and cook the pasta according to the package directions until al dente.

Drain the pasta thoroughly and refrigerate until it cools completely, at least 30 minutes, or until needed.

In a medium bowl, stir together the yogurt, mayonnaise, dill, mustard, lemon zest and juice, the 1/8 teaspoon of the salt and the pepper until combined.

In a large bowl, use a fork to break up the salmon into chunks. Add about half of the dressing and stir to coat. Add the celery, onion, the cooled pasta and the remaining dressing, and gently toss to combine.

Place about 6 leaves of the lettuce onto each serving plate, or arrange them all on one big serving platter.

Mound the pasta salad on top, garnish with dill fronds and serve.



WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

Added processing power

Autistic Translator aims to help make sense of social mishaps

**BY ANDREA JIMÉNEZ**  
*The Washington Post*  
 Theron Pierce has never held a job long enough to get promoted and struggles to connect with people at work. Ten months into a gig teaching cello lessons at an after-school program in Canada, Pierce felt like they were thriving in the job.

Then a layoff notice came. Embarrassed and hurt, 34-year-old Pierce, who has autism, said they struggled to understand why they'd been let go. So they turned to the Autistic Translator, an artificial intelligence tool that allows users to type in a situation they are trying to understand, and get its unspoken nuances.

After describing their situation, the translator generated a response: In bullet points, the AI told Pierce how their persistent questions and search for feedback was interpreted by their supervisors as incompetence. "It was kind of eye-opening for me," Pierce said. Reading feedback from an AI devoid of any human expression or emotion made the information easier to process, Pierce said.

More than 2% of adults, or over 5 million people, have been diagnosed with autism in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and medical and research experts say they typically struggle to grasp unspoken rules and guidelines, resulting in confusing or awkward social interactions.

AI tools like the Autistic Translator or Goblin Tools claim to help people like Pierce better

understand social situations. Some autism researchers have found reasons to be optimistic about AI's value, saying it can be a great companion to other therapeutic tools. But many experts and users agree that these AI tools — helpful as they are — still need a lot of work.

Autistic Translator and similar tools are especially helpful for people with autism because those people generally think in terms of rules, said Elizabeth Laugeson, clinical professor and director of UCLA's Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills, who works with autistic individuals to develop social skills and maintain relationships. The tools can help users confirm their comprehension of an interaction or event.

But Laugeson remains cautious about AI's use beyond general yes or no prompts. That's because AI doesn't understand the social nuances, context or conversational patterns needed to provide accurate and helpful responses.

"If we have an overreliance on an AI to navigate the social situation, then we might also be discouraging things like self-advocacy or personalized support ... which we know are really critical for their growth and for independence," Laugeson said.

Autistic Translator was built using advice from therapists, and the bot generates answers based on published scientific research and responses in online forums about autism. Its founder, Michael Daniel, who is autistic and has attention-deficit/hyperac-

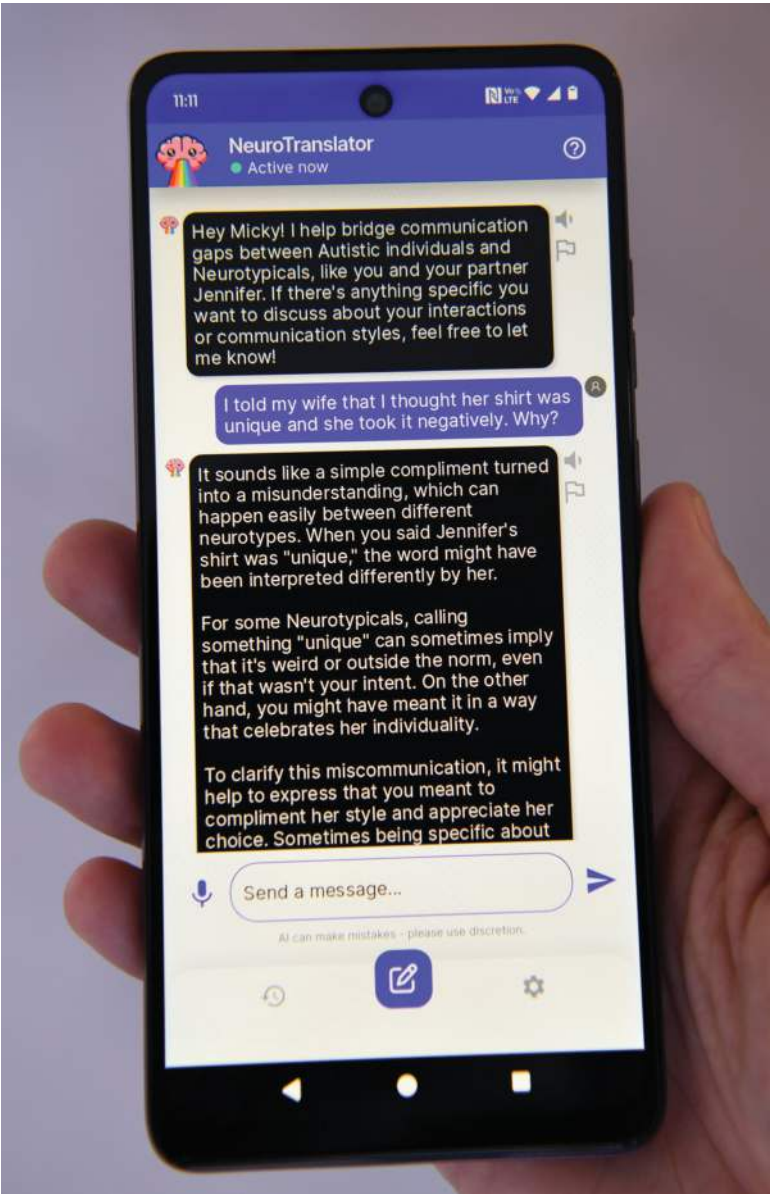
tivity disorder (ADHD), says its instant responses make the AI chatbot helpful and popular among users.

"I found it really took the emotional sting out of the situation and helped process through those things much faster than I normally would've," Daniel said.

The 34-year-old created Autistic Translator from his home in Newcastle, Australia, after losing his job in August. Daniel, who also has a daughter with autism and a son with ADHD, said living in a home with different neurotypes made communicating hard. If he could use AI to communicate at work, he could use it to do the same at home, he thought. Daniel released the AI tool to the public via a Reddit post, garnering thousands of positive interactions overnight.

Using his background as a data analyst, Daniel built the translator using OpenAI's ChatGPT models. Today, he says it has been downloaded more than 3,000 times, and it costs \$4 to \$12 a month depending on the tier. Since then, Daniel made the service into an app called NeuroTranslator and expanded its translation capabilities to users with ADHD.

There are other tools that claim to help neurodiverse people. Bram De Buyser created Goblin Tools, a website that offers eight different AI chatbot tools geared for all neurotypes. Users can ask questions or put down their scrambled thoughts into different AI tools to mitigate jobs such as creating to-do lists, mapping out tasks and weighing



An example of a question and response from Autistic Translator, an AI chatbot that generates answers based on published scientific research and responses in online forums about autism.

pros and cons. While Goblin Tools doesn't translate social situations, tools like "The Formalizer" help users convey their thoughts in the way they want them to come across to avoid miscommunication. AI tools are particularly popular among people on the autism

spectrum because unlike humans, AI never gets tired of answering questions, De Buyser said in an interview. "They don't tire, they don't get frustrated, and they don't judge the user for asking anything that a neurotypical might consider weird or out of place," he said.

Portable television makes on-the-go entertainment a snap

**BY GREGG ELLMAN**  
*Tribune News Service*  
 If there is just one gift you want to get your dad for Father's Day, it's the Skyworth Companion Portable 24P100 TV. And yes, I said portable. Dad can watch in the garage, on the sofa, in the yard for outdoor movie nights, camping, while grilling — wherever he wants on-the-go entertainment.

Everything is built in, so there is no cable box or satellite dish to lug around. It connects to your Wi-Fi for instant streaming and ultimate portability. The Skyworth 24P100 TV (\$399) has a 24-inch diagonal widescreen, a built-in Chromecast to receive the Google TV smart platform, dual-band Wi-Fi (2.4GHz and 5GHz) and Bluetooth 5.0.

A rechargeable lithium-ion battery inside provides three hours of playtime and can run off AC power with the included cord. The 24-inch LCD with LED backlight matte anti-glare display is great for watching inside or out. It has a 1920-by-1080 screen resolution, and audio comes from a pair of front-facing 8-watt speakers with Dolby Audio.

Ports on the side include AC power in, HDMI, 3.5 mm, optical audio out and USB-A. A carrying handle is built into the top, and a protective case with a shoulder strap



With the Skyworth Companion Portable 24P100 TV, everything you need to access programming is built in.

and carrying handle is available for \$79.99. Google Assistant Voice Control is also supported.

Setup is simple. Enter your Google information and streaming passwords, and you're ready for viewing. During my test of the unit, it did run unplugged for three hours, but if you have an AC outlet nearby or a portable power pack, using it will grant peace of mind.

My ideal use for the Skyworth portable TV was outside. With a peak brightness of 250 nits, it worked great in the shade. If you have Bluetooth speakers, you can connect them to spread out the audio.

Skyworth is offering a Father's Day promotion on Amazon from June 6-8 for \$299.99, reduced from the regular price of \$399. Online: [tinyurl.com/4sh5nhr8](https://tinyurl.com/4sh5nhr8)

To help Dad with his building projects, the Zircon Studensor HD70 is the essential stud finder. Finding a stud can be one of the most frustrating aspects of any project that requires something to be mounted on a wall.

In seconds, in a single pass, the Studensor HD70 locates both the edges and centers of wood or metal studs. It has a pair of scan modes; one will scan drywall up to 3/4 of an inch thick, and with the DeepScan mode, it reads through two layers. It will also alert users to live, unshielded AC wiring up to 2 inches deep.

Once the center of the stud is located, you'll get an audio alert, and the finder's SpotLite Pointer displays an arrow-shaped beam on the center spot. An illuminated V-marker groove built into the device makes it easy to mark the place. A 9-volt battery supplies power.

Online: [zircon.com](https://www.zircon.com)



WEEKEND: BOOK REVIEWS

Russo explores intersection between life, art

ROB MERRILL  
Associated Press

Richard Russo, whose “Fool” trilogy is beloved for the characters he created to populate a fictional upstate New York town, freely admits he’s always pulled from his real life to write his novels. “I was born in exactly the right place at exactly the right time,” he writes in one of 12 essays that make up his slim new volume “Life and Art.”

Russo scholars — there must be some in American literature departments somewhere, right? — will devour this book. Russo writes lovingly of both his father and mother, draws explicit connections between his characters and people from his real life, takes a road trip back to his hometown Gloversville and even throws in an homage to the late

Paul Newman, whose portrayal of Sully in his “Nobody’s Fool” helped Russo’s work find an audience well beyond readers.

The 12 essays here are divided into the two parts noted in the title. “Life” is more memoir, with Russo sharing what he did during the COVID-19 pandemic, among many other things.

“I’d been waiting for more than a decade ... for somebody to tell me to go home and stay there, and somebody finally had.”

The first half is stuffed with stories about his mother and father, anchored by “Marriage Story,” which reveals the illnesses they both suffered (gambling and alcoholism for Dad, anxiety for Mom) and how the dream life his mother envisioned after her husband survived World War II

never materialized (“She and my father stalled.”).

But Russo doesn’t write to assign blame. At age 75 and with both parents buried, he takes a more thoughtful approach in these essays. Not yet a teenager when Dad left, he realizes now that Mom was just doing what he does for a living as a storyteller — controlling the narrative.

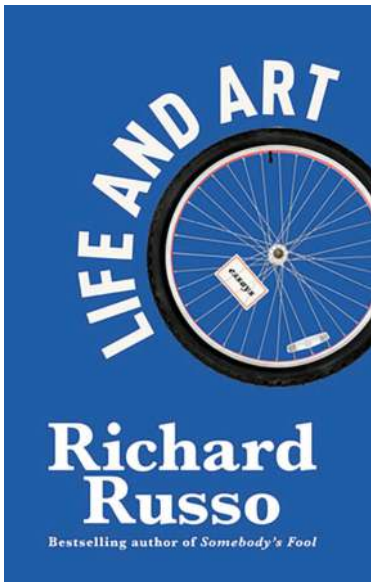
Aspiring writers should appreciate the advice Russo doles out in these pages. He credits his childhood and the people who loved him as his “greatest strength” — “Like Faulkner, I’d been gifted the perfect lens through which to view America” — and tells would-be authors, “No matter how gifted you are, or how hardworking, you’re never going to be any good until you know who and what you love,

because until then you won’t know who you are.”

The second half of the collection — “Art” — is a more acquired taste, with an essay about writing movies and TV shows vs. books, as well as a rather odd one that finds life lessons in the 1969 film “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,” starring Newman and Robert Redford.

There’s another that heaps praise on the specific word choices contained in the lyrics to the 1972 Townes Van Zandt song “Pancho and Lefty,” and another that finds echoes of society’s reaction to George Floyd’s murder in a scene from “The Maltese Falcon.”

Considered all together, readers can judge if the essays, like the collection’s title, truly inform each other, or if it’s enough to



simply enjoy these snippets before Russo graces the world with another novel.

Steve Martin Writes the Written Word

Steve Martin

Whether you first knew him as one of the “Two Wild and Crazy Guys” on “Saturday Night Live” or as an investigating podcaster on Hulu’s “Only Murders in the Building,” chances are you’ve seen Martin’s comedic talent on screen.

But what younger audiences may not appreciate is Martin’s depth as a humor writer, with a canon of written work that stretches back just as many decades.

“Steve Martin Writes the Written Word” is an aptly-named collection and excellent introduction to the comedian’s best writings, including some new material.

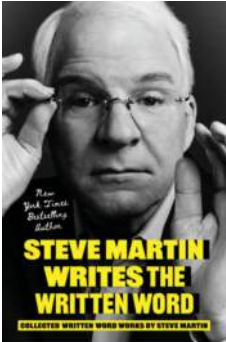
The book showcases Martin’s versatility as a writer, especially by including his debut 2000 novella “Shopgirl.” In that book, Martin uses a subdued sense of humor to describe the heartbreak and loneliness his characters experience no matter their age.

The book also includes previously published selections from his writing for The New Yorker’s “Shouts & Murmurs” column. It’s fitting that Martin’s best shorter works in this collection focus on writing and the written word, including a piece written from the perspective of words themselves.

In another piece, he makes the list of 100 greatest books he read laugh-out-loud funny with fake titles such as “Omelet: Olga — Mnemonic Devices for Remembering Waitress’ Names” and “Marijuana! Totally Harmless (can’t remember author).”

Some of the pieces may not resonate with younger audiences, including a piece titled “The Y3K Bug” that plays off of the Y2K hysteria that led up to 2000. But the collection as a whole explains the enduring success of Martin’s humor.

— Andrew DeMillo/AP



Return to Sender

Craig Johnson

The longest mail route in the U.S. runs more than 300 miles through Wyoming’s unforgiving Red Desert, and Blair McGowan, the delivery person, has gone missing.

Her disappearance is odd, not just because McGowan has always been reliable but because her personal delivery vehicle, a 1968 International Travelall that looks like a hearse and has a quarter of a million miles on it, was left behind.

Authorities in Sweetwater County haven’t made any progress, so Mike Thurman, the postal inspector, asks Walt Longmire, the county sheriff, to find her. The desert is way out of Longmire’s jurisdiction, but Thurman is family on the sheriff’s wife’s side, so he agrees.

So begins Johnson’s 22nd installment in a series that inspired a TV show that ran for six seasons on A&E and Netflix.

Given the size of the desert and the length of time McGowan has been missing, Longmire puts his chances of finding her alive as “not likely.” Going undercover as a postal worker, which fools nobody, he and his dog named Dog head off in the ancient Travelall along the delivery route.

Johnson is known for creating memorable characters, and perhaps the most memorable this time is Dog, a German Shepherd-Saint Bernard mix who is as smart and loyal as they come. The Travelall emerges as something of a character in its own right, with its quirks and an odd body shape plastered with stickers.

Eventually, Longmire discovers McGowan in the clutches of a religious cult, shoots it out with its gun-toting members and commits several remarkable acts of heroism.

Johnson’s plot is suspenseful and fast-moving, the prose is tight and the landscape is vividly drawn.

— Bruce DeSilva/AP



Fatherhood

Augustine Sedgewick

The painter Norman Rockwell was known for his depictions of calm, domestic life in America, but his home life was nowhere near as idyllic as those portraits.

In the beginning of “Fatherhood: A History of Love and Power,” Sedgewick recounts the troubles that Rockwell faced at home. The artist complained about his wife’s drinking and her criticism, and once told one of his sons that he would kill himself if not for his boys.

Rockwell’s misery kicks off Sedgewick’s wide-ranging history of fatherhood, which he calls a “succession of identity crises spanning thousands of years.”

Sedgewick’s book doesn’t offer a clear answer on what it means to be a father, but he offers a series of enlightening stories about how several famous figures have approached fatherhood. It’s a motley assortment of dads, ranging from Plato to Bob Dylan.

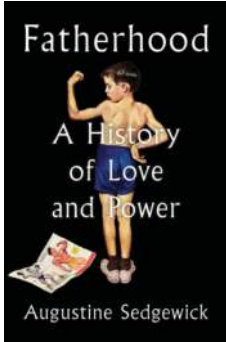
The profiles, at times, feel disjointed, but that doesn’t make the details Sedgewick unearths about how the approach to fatherhood changed over the years any less interesting.

The book shows how naturalist Charles Darwin’s close relationship with his sons helped shaped his research on natural selection. And how Dylan rewrote his happy childhood in Hibbing, Minn., as he gained fame and reinvented his story to fit his image.

“Dylan understood, arguably before anyone else, one of the defining emotional truths of rock ‘n’ roll: a perfectly nice home can sometimes be the worst kind of all,” Sedgewick writes.

Sedgewick’s book shouldn’t be viewed as a guide for fathers or families, but it is a timely read for a point when family roles continue to evolve and be challenged.

— Andrew DeMillo/AP



Never Flinch

Stephen King

The prolific author’s favorite private investigator returns in the sixth novel by King featuring Holly Gibney, whom readers first met in the Bill Hodges trilogy (“Mr. Mercedes,” “Finders Keepers,” “End of Watch”) and who then helped solved the murders at the heart of “The Outsider” and “Holly.”

Here, Holly cracks two more cases, one as the lead security escort for a polarizing author touring the nation to talk about women’s reproductive freedom, and the other back home in Ohio, as a serial killer preys on jurors following a miscarriage of justice.

The biggest connection between the two cases is classic King — the killers have dead daddy issues. We meet them both relatively early in the plot and spend time inside their heads, though the true identity of one of them is a mystery until closer to the end. One of the murderers supplies the novel’s title, recalling how his abusive and overbearing father berated him to “push through to the bitter end. No flinching, no turning away.”

Even with two killers talking to themselves, Holly is still the star of the book. She continues to “attract weirdos the way a magnet attracts iron filings,” is how Holly’s friend Barbara puts it. More often than not, Holly’s obsessive compulsive disorder helps her “think around corners,” as one of the story’s detectives says.

King also brings back Barbara’s brother, Jerome, and introduces some dynamic new characters, including Sista Bessie, a soul singer whose comeback concert serves as the nexus for the convergence of the novel’s two storylines. When they do, readers will enjoy the very Kingly ending. It’s not quite the pigs’ blood from “Carrie,” but it’s satisfying.

— Rob Merrill/AP





# WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEW



Spidey Smith

Country music superstar Morgan Wallen gives listeners a lot to sift through on his 37-track new album “I’m the Problem,” which clocks in at just shy of two hours.

## Morgan Wallen’s latest album is stubbornly long. Live with it.

By Chris Richards  
*The Washington Post*

We all have our bad days. Morgan Wallen’s just get more publicity. Like in late March when he abruptly walked off the set of “Saturday Night Live,” made haste to his private jet and posted from the tarmac to social media, “Get me to God’s country.” Or that fateful night last year in downtown Nashville where Wallen got so sozzled he started chucking patio furniture off a rooftop bar. Are these the true spoils of fame? An entitlement to the tantrums that the rest of us, perpetually mired in our plebeian frustration and fatigue, can only dream about?

So long as country music remains committed to upholding notions of authenticity — whatever that could possibly mean in this age of fraud and grift — there won’t

be any separating the art from the artist in Nashville, which necessitates an abundance of forgiving and forgetting. Wallen has shown us exactly how it works. In 2021, he was caught on camera using a racial slur, then went on to become that year’s top-selling country artist. His sprawling new album, smirkingly titled “I’m the Problem,” is expected to perform just as well, confirming the 32-year-old Tennessee native as the biggest Nashville star shining over God’s country, my country, your country and everywhere else.

There’s a lot to sort through on this record — contrition, doubling down, bitterness, abandon — and across 37 tracks, clocking in just shy of two hours, Wallen’s self-awareness drifts in and out of focus. It’s as if he’s living through these songs in real time. For better or for worse, so are we. But whereas Wallen’s previous efforts — 2023’s “One Thing at a Time” and

2021’s “Dangerous: The Double Album” — felt overconfident and overlong, “I’m the Problem” nearly earns its girth. This guy used to sound like Sisyphus pushing his ball of contradictions up the hill. Now it’s like the boulder has grown into something planet-size, and its gravity demands to be obeyed.

To better understand these changing laws of physics, cue up “TN,” a surging, mid-tempo lament that finds Wallen missing a lover who’s up and left Tennessee, forcing our narrator to weigh his loneliness against the attributes of a home he refuses to leave:

*“It’s still got the JD in a Dixie,  
and the UT on the TV,  
and that Smokey Mountain smoke I’m  
breathing,  
but I’d bet my last Rocky Top dollar that  
she’s in  
CO, or CA, or back home in GA,*



### Morgan Wallen

I’m the Problem (Big Loud/Mercury/Republic)

*anyplace she won’t see me.  
Now the one thing I’s needing  
is the only damn thing I couldn’t keep in  
TN.”*

There’s just so much to love in that hook. The internal rhyme. The hopscotch phrasing. The alphabet soupiness. That aching voice doing those lyrical somersaults. Just because his heart is broken doesn’t mean he can’t have fun playing with the pieces, right? Wallen unfurls similar rhyme schemes on “Don’t We,” another cut co-written by Ashley Gorley, a Music Row hitmaker whose fluency in hip-hop is enough to make you wonder

SEE WALLEN ON PAGE 29



# WEEKEND: MUSIC

## REVIEW

### PinkPantheress

Fancy That (300 Entertainment/Warner Music)



For the curious and ultra-trendy, Charli xcx’s neon, vomit-green party banger “BRAT” was more than an album; it inspired the cultural moment of “BRAT summer.” While internet-pop sensation PinkPantheress’ style is quite different, it seems her sophomore mixtape is coming out just in time for a “Fancy That” season of her own.

Gen Z immediately flocked to 24-year-old British singer-songwriter PinkPantheress’ “Fancy That” singles on TikTok, the platform on which she’s come up significantly in the past few years, with earlier hits like the U.K. garage “Break it Off” and “Boy’s a Liar PT. 2,” featuring New York rapper Ice Spice.

A producer first and foremost, PinkPantheress launched with those viral songs — her sweet soprano carrying addictive choruses that resonate.

Across “Fancy That,” with grounded but baby-soft vocals, PinkPantheress’ signature sound is reminiscent of ’90s British electronic music as pulsing club beats layer over dreamy synths, melding U.K. garage with bedroom hyperpop.

The mixtape is a leveling up for an artist indulging in the flirty fun of liking someone whom you shouldn’t. That’s clear from the opener “Illegal,” with its bold synths and bolder lyrics.

“My name is Pink and I’m really glad to meet you / You’re recommended to me by some people / Hey, ouuuuu, is this illegal?” she sings.

Despite the throes of forbidden, complicated or even unrequited love, there’s a lightheartedness to her new tracks, and listeners won’t find a single sappy ballad across the album.

It’s an on-and-off romance, as she puts her foot down in next track, the fun and layered “Girl Like Me.” “I’m not a fan of the way we’re moving,” she sings. “No explanation for why we do this.”

She explores themes of infatuation and obsession in energetic album highlights “Tonight” and “Stateside,” pining after famous musicians and American boys. Both feature catchy and bouncy production, a simple choice but oh so danceable.

“Never met a British girl, you say? No one treats me this way / Are all boys out here the same?” she teases in the latter.

The final dance track “Romeo” is a whirlwind of violins, evoking the feeling of butterflies in the stomach or racing pulses.

Only nine songs long, “Fancy That” is fun, uncomplicated and anything but overdone. It’s a successful step forward.

— Kiana Doyle  
Associated Press

# Wallen: Singer’s reputation tends to dominate the narrative

## FROM PAGE 28

whether he or Wallen have ever heard Cam’ron rap about “drinking sake on a Suzuki, we in Osaka Bay.” Regardless, of the 49 songwriters Wallen hired to work on this behemoth, Gorley scores highest for getting the singer to spit his lines like stones skipping across water.

And while Wallen is singing as nimbly as ever, his narration tends to sink into his bad rep, dodging responsibilities, shifting blame. A steel guitar lick whistles around like cold wind on the album’s curtain-raising title track, with Wallen seething, “If I’m the problem, well, you might be the reason.” On the perversely up-tempo “Kick Myself,” he talks about trying to clean up, but ultimately decides to give up: “Maybe that’d work if I was someone else.” On the markedly gentler “Superman,” he does

some higher-altitude stock-taking, imagining his mistakes through the eyes of his child: “Superman’s still just a man, sometimes.”

There’s no discernible arc to all these ups and downs, but instead of feeling erratic or careless, “I’m the Problem” feels lifelike. By the time Wallen reaches the last song, a gorgeous paranoiac ballad titled “I’m a Little Crazy,” he’s making his instability sound entirely reasonable: “The only thing keeping these tracks on the train: knowing I’m a little crazy but the world’s insane.”

In other words, existence is vast, and cruel, and it isn’t stopping, so neither is this music. When you have this kind of talent for turning bad days into good songs, you might do everything in your power to make sure both keep coming.

# Healing, embrace of new life shaped Morris’ ‘Dreamsicle’

By GARY GERARD HAMILTON  
*Associated Press*

When country star Maren Morris would voice support for the LGBTQ community, including publicly clashing with Jason Aldean’s wife over gender-affirming care for transgender youth, she thought she was doing it as an ally. She didn’t realize it at the time, but she was also speaking up for herself, too.

“I just maybe, internally, hadn’t had the bravery to go there in myself, and say the words out loud,” said Morris, who recently came out as bisexual. “When you spend the majority of your life in straight relationships and you haven’t explored that part of yourself ... is now the right time for me to tell everyone while I’m married that like, ‘Hi, I’m also attracted to women?’”

The Grammy winner, who’s also stood in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter social justice movement and immigrants, has experienced drastic life changes throughout the past year, including a divorce with fellow singer-songwriter Ryan Hurd. These learning curves shaped “Dreamsicle,” her fourth studio album, out now.

“There’s a freedom that I’ve found in this album that’s a new version of what I thought I had,” Morris explained. “It’s just more wise and lived-in. And maybe part of that’s just, like, being in your 30s — you just don’t care as much.”

Following 2022’s “Humble Quest,” the 35-year-old singer-songwriter crafted 14 tracks filled with an eclectic, yet cohesive mix of traditional country, pop, soft-rock and dreamy bluegrass vibes. It continues the free-flowing, unconfined mix of sounds “The Bones” singer is known for. Production includes superstar pop producer Jack Antonoff, John Ryan, Laura Veltz and The Monsters & Strangerz production team, with Morris credited as a writer on every song.

“I was writing all through all of those personal losses and evolutions. ... I was really just avoiding going home, and I would stay in my sessions late, and also write on days that I probably should have just taken a nap or gone to see my therapist,” Morris said. “There were moments where I’m singing on some of these songs where I don’t even remember doing the vocal because I was just in such a state of loss and grief.”



GARY GERARD HAMILTON/AP

Maren Morris poses for a portrait on May 7 in New York. Her latest album, “Dreamsicle,” reflects multiple life changes in the 35-year-old singer-songwriter’s life during the past few years.

Standout moments include the beautiful Americana-esque “grand bouquet” where Morris sings, “been so busy praying for my grand bouquet / not noticing you gave me a new flower every day.” There are also her staple poppy songs like “cry in the car” that attempt to mask the pain and frustration of heartbreak behind upbeat tempos.

But it’s not all doom and gloom; “The Middle” vocalist explores new themes, like on the previously released singles “bed no breakfast,” and “push me over,” which she wrote with the electro-pop band MUNA.

“I went on a date with a woman for the first time, and I was just, like, I want to write about this,” she said, noting she felt safe exploring the topic with the queer-identifying band.

While she says each song represents some facet of this new era, the title track provides the fullest picture.

“It was the first song for one of my albums that I wrote alone, and I don’t often do that,” said Morris, who added that “Dream-

sicle” came to her one night as a 3 a.m. realization that change was necessary. “Everything that I thought was going to be permanent in my life, like in some form or fashion, either ended or evolved into something completely different.”

Morris is prepping for her global tour in July, with more than 40 dates mixing headlining shows and festival appearances.

Since coming out, she emphasizes she’s received an abundance of love throughout Nashville, and has been overwhelmed by the support in the country music space that some have criticized as intolerant.

More importantly, she hopes fans understand “Dreamsicle” is not a “divorce record,” but a celebratory album of healing.

“It deals with grief. It deals with the friends that helped patch you back together,” Morris said. “It’s important to show and to prove to myself that I can process and heal from this. ... If I can do it, ... someone will hear it and feel like they can get through that day that they’re in.”



## WEEKEND: TELEVISION



RODRIGO ABD/AP

Human rights activists stage a performance May 13 calling for continued efforts to locate children disappeared during Argentina's military dictatorship (1976-1983), including family members of sci-fi comic author Héctor Oesterheld, whose work inspired the Netflix series "The Eternaut," in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

# 'The Eternaut' 'not just a sci-fi story'

Netflix series based on Argentine comic goes global, along with its source material, because of its universality

BY ISABEL DEBRE  
Associated Press

A group of friends gather to play cards in their host's cozy home when the power cuts. Cell-phones die. An eerie snow falls all over the city, killing everyone it touches. The friends struggle to survive, their panic replaced by a growing awareness that humanity itself is at stake.

This is the premise of "The Eternaut," a chilling dystopian drama out of Argentina that premiered its first season on Netflix on April 30. The six-episode, Spanish-language series with its mix of sci-fi elements and focus on human resilience has struck a universal nerve, rocketing to No. 1 among Netflix's most streamed non-English-language TV shows within days.

Netflix already renewed the show for a second season, with filming scheduled to start next year.

But "The Eternaut" has touched on something deeper in Argentina, where legendary comic-strip writer Héctor Germán Oesterheld penned the original graphic novel in 1957 — two decades before he was "disappeared" by Argentina's

military dictatorship, along with all four of his daughters.

Abroad, publishers are scrambling to keep pace with renewed interest in the source material. The Seattle-based Fantagraphics Books said it would reissue an out-of-print English translation due to the surge in U.S. demand.

At home, the TV adaptation has reopened historical wounds and found unexpected resonance at a moment of heightened anxiety about the state of Argentine society under far-right President Javier Milei.

"The boom of 'The Eternaut' has created a cultural and social event beyond the series," said Martín Oesterheld, the writer's grandson and a creative consultant and executive producer on the show. "It fills our hearts. It brings us pride."

## An alien invasion hits home

For years, the surviving Oesterhelds resisted offers from Hollywood to adapt the cult classic, wary of the industry's seemingly irresistible urge to destroy New York City and other Western centers in apocalyptic dramas.

To honor his grandfather's creation, Martín Oesterheld said the show had to be filmed in Spanish, with an Argentine cast and set in Buenos Aires.

"What he did was to do away with the representations of science fiction that we know in Europe and the United States," Martín Oesterheld said of his grandfather. "He told it on our own terms, through things that we recognize."

Netflix, pushing to expand beyond its saturated U.S. market into previously untapped regions like Latin America, was a natural fit, he said. The streaming giant wouldn't disclose its budget, but said the special effect-laden show took four years of pre- and postproduction, involved 2,900 people and pumped \$34 million into Argentina's economy.

In the show, aliens wreak predictable mayhem on an unpredictable cityscape — wide boulevards, neoclassical buildings, antique pizza halls and grimy suburbs — lending the show a shiver of curious power for Argentines who had never seen their city eviscerated on screen.

The protagonists don't play poker but truco, a popular Argentine trick card

game. They sip from gourds of maté, the signature Argentine drink made from yerba leaves. The snowfall is uncanny, and not just because it kills on contact. Buenos Aires has only seen snow twice in the last century.

"From truco in scene one, which couldn't be more Argentine, we see that 'The Eternaut' is playing with these contrasts — life and death, light and darkness, the familiar versus the alien," said Martín Hadis, an Argentine researcher specializing in science fiction. "It's not just a sci-fi story. It's a modern myth. That's what makes it so universal."

In updating the story to present-day Argentina, the show brings the nation's disastrous 1982 war with Britain over Las Malvinas, or the Falkland Islands, into the backstory of its hero, Juan Salvo, played by renowned actor Ricardo Darín.

Salvo, a protective father and courageous ex-soldier who emerges to lead the group of survivors, is haunted by the rout of his comrades sent by Argentina's dictatorship to retake the South Atlantic is-

SEE COMIC ON PAGE 31



WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Levity when things get heavy

For ‘The Last of Us’ cast, music was a through line on- and off-screen

BY TRACY BROWN AND MAIRA GARCIA  
*Los Angeles Times*

Throughout HBO’s postapocalyptic series “The Last of Us,” music plays a role in setting the mood for moments big and small, heartfelt and heart-wrenching. It’s not unlike the video game, which was hailed for its original soundtrack by Gustavo Santaolalla (who is also a composer on the show), and for the pop music covers that helped to elevate the narrative.

In the sixth episode of Season 2 of “The Last of Us,” titled “The Price,” there’s a callback to a scene from the game that fans have been waiting for: Joel (Pedro Pascal) performs a stripped-down version of Pearl Jam’s “Future Days” for Ellie (Bella Ramsey). The song captures the themes of loss and losing yourself but also of moving forward together. And it’s not the only instance of a pop song showcasing characters’ emotions — in “Day One,” the fourth episode of Season 2, Ellie performs an acoustic cover of A-ha’s “Take on Me” as Dina (Isabela Merced) walks in and gently persuades her to continue playing the tender rendition. It’s another adaptation from the video game that signals the kindling of the relationship between Ellie and Dina.

“Bella is playing the guitar in the scene where Ellie plays the guitar and sings ‘Take on Me’ to Dina. That’s Bella. No tricks,” said Craig Mazin, co-creator of “The Last of Us,” in an interview earlier this year.

For Neil Druckmann, co-creator of the series and the video game franchise, he knew that when Ramsey was cast, the actor’s musical abilities would be an asset for future installments.

“I remember seeing a video of them playing and singing and talking to Craig and being like, ‘Oh, they’re ready to go for if we get to Season 2,’” he said.

Ramsey, however, isn’t alone in their musical abilities. Over the course of the season in interviews with the cast and creators of the series, it became clear that music was a shared passion that bonded them on and off screen. Here, we collect some of their thoughts on music and performing together:

Ramsey on the joy of making music

For Ramsey, music has been another creative outlet that brings them joy.

In an interview before the launch of Season 2, Ramsey would only tease the possibility of Ellie picking up a guitar like in the game but did share that making music is something they were doing “quietly at the moment.”

“Up until recently, I’ve been very embarrassed by music and not very confident in it at all, my own music,” Ramsey told The Times. But “through the producers that I’ve been working with [and] an amazing music manager, Tom, I feel really excited about it now.”

While Ramsey isn’t quite sure when they’ll be releasing any of their own music — they headed directly into production of an indie film following “The Last of Us” press tour — they said that when they do, it will “probably [be] in a sneaky way.”

“Making music has sort of given me the same feelings of like joy and satisfaction that being on set gives me,” Ramsey said.

Jam sessions on set, from Radiohead to Twenty Trucks

If you follow Gabriel Luna on Instagram, many of the stories and posts he’s published over the course of the second season have featured him performing on red carpets or with his castmates, jamming during downtime on the set of the show. (While in London for one of the show’s premieres, he “bought a guitar because my hands were just itching.”)

In an interview tied to the third episode, he spoke about the mutual admiration between the actors in the cast:

“There’s real love there, even among the people who are on-screen nemeses, mortal enemies. I think that’s what makes it safe to hate each other, to seek each other’s demise [on-screen].”

That love is evident in those jam sessions, which have included covers of The Cranberries and Radiohead. But a video featuring him strumming a guitar with his young castmate Ezra Agbonkhese, who plays Tommy’s son Benjamin, is one of the sweetest. Agbonkhese and Luna duet to “Off Road Racing Truck” by Twenty Trucks, which you guessed it, is about racing trucks.



HBO/TNS

Bella Ramsey plays the guitar in a scene from Season 2 of “The Last of Us.” In the fourth episode, Ellie (Ramsey) performs an acoustic cover of A-ha’s “Take on Me.”

Mazino on trading songs ‘like Pokémon’

According to Young Mazino, guitars were a lifesaver on the set of “The Last of Us.”

“We all brought a guitar without even telling each other so there was always a guitar on set,” Mazino told The Times in advance of the show’s fifth episode. “Bella, Isabella, Gabriel ... Somebody would be playing some tune or a song, and if we knew it, we join in [or] we learn it.”

The world of the series is plenty bleak with the ever-present threat of the fungal infection that turns human hosts into ravenous, zombie-like creatures. In Season 2, Mazino’s character Jesse had to track his closest friends, who are on a quest for vengeance, into a war zone. He explained that everybody’s love of music and “trad[ing] songs like Pokémon” helped provide some needed levity during marathon shooting days where things tended to get heavy.

“Isabella and Bella would randomly break out into an a cappella somewhere,” Mazino said. “I could just hear their angelic voices in the mix while I’m brooding in a corner getting ready.”

Comic: At home, plot resonates with viewers under President Milei’s leadership

FROM PAGE 30

lands. The defeat killed 649 Argentine soldiers, many of them untrained conscripts.

“The conflict in Las Malvinas is not closed; it’s still a bloody wound,” Darín told The Associated Press. “It’s bringing the subject back to the table. That has moved a lot of people.”

Argentine underdogs

Faced with catastrophe, the protagonists rely on their own ingenuity, and on each other, to survive.

What comes through, the creators say, is the Argentine saying “atado con alambre” — roughly, “held together with wire” — used to describe the inventive nature of those who do much with little in a nation that has suffered through decades of military rule and economic crises.

“It says a lot about being Argentine — taking whatever you have at your disposal and pushing your limitations,” Martín Oesterheld said. He was referring not only to the plot but also to the production at a time when Milei has waged war on Argentina’s bloated state and slashed funding to

cultural programs like the National Film Institute.

“As our culture is being defunded, we’re taking this Argentine product to the world,” he said.

Against this backdrop, the show’s message of solidarity has gained an urgent new meaning, with those outraged over Milei’s libertarian ideology transforming the series’ motto, “No one gets through it alone,” into a rallying cry.

The slogan was scrawled on signs at protests by retirees demonstrating against the government’s sharp cuts to their pensions this month. To protect against police tear gas, some traded bandannas for the gas masks used in the show to shield against toxic snowfall.

“There is a general policy these days that the state shouldn’t take care of its citizens, which relates to individual freedom,” Darín said. “But there are many cases where, if the state disappears completely, people are left to drift as if they were shipwrecked.”

A search reignited

As the Netflix series exploded out of the

gate, missing-persons flyers for Héctor Oesterheld, his daughters and potential grandchildren popped up on billboards for “The Eternaut” all over Buenos Aires, a reminder of the real-life horror story behind the pulp adventure.

By the time the military junta came to power in 1976, Oesterheld, 58, had become known as a committed leftist, his four daughters, ranging in age from 19 to 25, had joined a far-left guerrilla group and the whole family had turned into a target of Latin America’s deadliest dictatorship.

Two of Oesterheld’s daughters were pregnant at the time of their kidnapping. To this day, no one knows what happened to their unborn children, but they are believed to be among the estimated 500 newborns snatched from their parents and handed over to childless military officers, their true identities erased.

The three surviving members of the Oesterheld family have never stopped searching. Martín Oesterheld’s grandmother, Elsa, who raised him after his mother was killed, banded together with other women dedicated to finding their missing grandchildren. They became

known as the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

Seizing on national interest in the TV series, the Grandmothers this month issued public appeals for help finding the disappeared grandchildren.

The response was overwhelming. “It was incredible; it went viral,” said Esteban Herrera, who works with the Grandmothers and is still searching for his own missing sibling. “Since it’s a science fiction series on a platform like Netflix, we’re reaching homes that the Grandmothers perhaps hadn’t before.”

The outpouring of emails and calls raised more questions than answers. Reaching out were hundreds of Argentine viewers newly determined to find their own disappeared relatives or suddenly skeptical about the legality of their own adoptions.

“‘The Eternaut’ is a living memory, a classic that has been passed down from generation to generation,” Martín Oesterheld said. “For it to be embraced by so many people in this way ... there is no greater social commentary.”



## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS



RICHARD DREW/AP

Whitney Chapman, foreground center, conducts a chair yoga class March 28 at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan, in New York.

# Chair yoga: not just for geriatrics

Sitting down to perform poses, using the object as a prop beneficial for everyone from desk workers to people with injuries

BY LEANNE ITALIE  
Associated Press

**M**arian Rivman is pushing 80. Harriet Luria is a proud 83. In this trio, Carol Leister is the baby at 62. Together, they have decades of experience with yoga. Only now, it involves a chair.

Chair yoga adapts traditional yoga poses for older people and others with physical challenges, but the three devotees said after a recent class that doesn't mean it's not a quality workout. As older adults have become more active, chair yoga has grown in popularity.

"You're stretching your whole body," Rivman offered. "What you can do in the chair is a little bit more forgiving on the knees and on the hips. So as you age, it allows you to get into positions that you were doing before without hurting yourself."

Sitting down to exercise, or standing while holding onto a chair to perform some poses, may not sound like a workout, but Rivman, Luria, Leister and practitioners everywhere see a world of benefits.

"I took it up because I have osteoporosis and the chair yoga is much easier," Luria said. "You don't have to worry as much about falling and breaking anything. It's not as difficult as I thought it would be, but it's not easy. And you really do use your muscles. It's an excellent workout."

## Yoga with a chair isn't just for older people

Chair yoga is clearly marketed to older women, who made up the class where the three yoga friends got together at the Marlene Meyerson JCC on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. But the practice also has a lot to offer others, said their instructor, Whitney Chapman.

Desk workers can squeeze in 15 minutes of chair yoga, for instance. Many companies offer it as a way to cut down on stress and improve overall health. And people

recovering from surgery or injuries may not be ready to get down on a yoga mat, but they can stretch in a chair.

"I've known these ladies probably 18 to 20 years. And the very first time in a yoga class that I brought in the chair, all of my students said I don't want geriatric yoga. I'm not an old person," Chapman said. "And then they saw that having a chair is just as good as a yoga strap, a yoga block. It's another prop that's going to help you do what you want to do. So it's not necessarily because you're older, but that it can be helpful. And it doesn't mean you're geriatric just because you're sitting in a chair."

The benefits are many, Chapman said: improved flexibility, strength, balance. And there's the overall emotional well-being that yoga practitioners in general report. It's particularly useful for people with mobility issues or chronic ailments like arthritis or back pain. Chapman also teaches yoga to cancer and Parkinson's disease patients.

In addition to restorative and other benefits, the practice of chair yoga can help improve posture for people of all ages and abilities, and help older people prevent falls.

## A physical practice that can last a lifetime

Leister recently retired.

"I've been looking for all different kinds of exercises to do and this is one of them," she said. "This is the one that I could see doing for the rest of my life, where some that are a little more strenuous I may not be able to do in the future."

Traditional yoga originated more than 5,000 years ago in India. Many of the poses used today are also that old. It can be as much spiritual as physical, and that also goes for its chair descendant. The precise movements are tied to deliberate, cleansing breath work.

Rivman has been doing yoga for about 50 years.

"Once you start and you get what it does for your body, you don't want to give it up. And if there's a way that you

can keep doing it and keep doing it safely, that's a choice you're going to make," she said.

## Yoga by the numbers, including chair yoga

The practice of yoga, including chair yoga, has been on the rise in the U.S. over the past 20 years. In 2022, the percentage of adults age 18 and older who practiced yoga in the past 12 months was 16.9%, with percentages highest among women ages 18-44, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Women are more than twice as likely as men to practice yoga, the data showed. The percentage of adults who practiced yoga to treat or manage pain decreased with increasing family income.

The CDC didn't break out chair yoga for analysis but recommends that adults 65 and older focus on activities that improve balance and strength. That, the health agency said, can be achieved through various exercises, including chair yoga.

## Why don't more men do yoga?

Chapman and her students have thoughts on why more men don't practice yoga. Traditionally, Chapman said, the practice was reserved for men, but as yoga became more westernized, women took over.

"Women tend to be more group-oriented. I would love to see more men in class. I do have a few. I don't know if they're intimidated, but you know, it's a great way to meet women if everybody's single," she said with a chuckle.

Luria theorizes that fewer men are drawn to yoga because it's not a competitive sport.

"You're really working at your own level," she said. "Take out the competition and it's not their thing."

These chair yoga practitioners have lots of advice. Rivman summed it up best: "Get into a chair and do some yoga. You don't have to stand on your head, but you have to move. You're never too old to start."



WEEKEND: FAMILY



From left, Roy Nickelson, Sarah Presley and María-Elena Montero, president of DC Bird Alliance, listen to bird calls during a recent event at a botanical garden in the Maryland suburbs.

Songs, chirps, socialization

Apps, outdoor events encourage the visually impaired to get into birding

By DANA HEDGPETH  
The Washington Post

Maityrea Shah heard the bird’s distinctive chirp in a nearby tree at a botanical garden in the Maryland suburbs. But he’s blind and couldn’t see it. With his arm stretched upward, he held his iPhone up to try to capture the sound as an app identified the bird.

“It’s a cedar waxwing,” the 27-year-old told his fellow blind birders as they walked on a paved path at Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Md.

Shah, who lost his sight in a childhood injury, was one of 11 blind people who tracked and identified more than two dozen bird species earlier this month as part of an inaugural, nationwide effort to get those who are blind or visually impaired into birding. The daylong, blind birder bird-a-thon drew more than 200 participants who counted 200 species at parks, gardens and backyards in 34 states, including California, Florida, Idaho, Texas, Montana, Pennsylvania and New York.

“I loved it,” Shah, a lawyer who lives near Northwest Washington, said about his two hours of birding. “I’ve never done this before and to be able to differentiate the birds based on their sound and identify them was big. I always thought birding was about seeing or watching birds, but I realized it’s also about listening to birds.”

Six months in the making, the idea for the blind birder bird-a-thon came from Martha Steele, 73, who lives outside Boston. An avid birder for 35 years, Steele had to adapt how she birded over the years because of Usher syndrome, a rare genetic condition that caused progressive hearing and vision loss. Steele said she wanted to help introduce birding to blind or visually impaired people who may not have considered the hobby or felt shut out of it.

“People think they have to see to bird,” Steele said. “The word ‘birdwatcher’ implies you have to see to do it. People who are blind would say, ‘I can’t see, so I

can’t bird.’ But that’s one of the things we’re trying to change. You can identify birds by their song.”

Although there’s an unknown number of blind birders in the United States, some birding experts estimate that there are likely only a few hundred.

For experienced blind birders, the events are a chance to introduce friends — both sighted and blind — to the hobby.

Sarah Presley, 57, who is blind and works as an accessibility specialist at a federal agency, said she’s always “loved to hear birds” and had dabbled in birdwatching a few years ago but wanted to learn more.

“Everybody else can look at a bird and see a picture and identify it, but that’s not something I can do,” Presley said. “I can hear them but I can’t see them. This is something I want to get more into so I can learn to identify the birds I hear around me.”

Birding has grown in popularity in recent years, experts said, because of people spending more time at home during the pandemic, a desire to be outdoors and technology that has made it easier to identify birds.

For people who are blind, apps that help identify birds are a “game changer,” Presley said. The free Merlin Bird ID app identifies birds from uploaded photos, the sounds of bird calls or descriptions of their markings, color, behavior and size. For those who are blind or visually impaired, the app provides a sense of independence.

The event in Maryland wasn’t just about birds: It was also about enjoying nature around others with similar challenges.

As the group walked, María-Elena Montero, president of the DC Bird Alliance, reminded them “if you hear something, stop and feel it. Imagine what that bird might be saying.”

One blind birder said, “it sounds like it’s saying teakettle, teakettle.”

Montero responded, “Whatever you hear that sears into your brain, remember it.”

“People think they have to see to bird. The word ‘birdwatcher’ implies you have to see to do it. People who are blind would say, ‘I can’t see, so I can’t bird.’ But that’s one of the things we’re trying to change. You can identify birds by their song.”

Martha Steele  
Bird-a-thon activist

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Patience on automatic while parked in lounge

“Should I have Oreos with my cappuccino?” I considered, settling into the well-appointed auto dealership lobby while my car was being serviced. I had several hours to wait, possibly the whole day, while they figured out my used Audi’s latest issues, so I made myself comfortable.

Deciding against cookies and opting for the fruit salad I’d brought in my lunchbox, I made a mental note to sample (line my pockets with) the many free snacks and drinks generously offered to waiting customers later that afternoon.

My delighted eyes spotted Chex Mix, Rice Krispies Treats, Oreos, Lorna Doone shortbread cookies, Fig Newtons, Nutri-Grain Bars, Quaker Oatmeal packets, Coke and Pepsi, apple and orange juice, ice and hot water dispensers, a variety of fancy teas and a high-tech digital touch-screen coffee machine from which flowed 14 delectable coffee concoctions.

With the first of many cappuccinos in hand, I found a chrome and wood stool at a modern high-top table, planning to relocate to a faux leather lounge chair in the afternoon. “I should work here more often,” I thought, as I spread out my electronics, paperwork, lunchbox and other belongings.

High-end auto dealership waiting room snacks are a relatively new perk in my life — I’d bought a used Audi when my Toyota minivan gave up after 250,000 miles — but as a military spouse who had spent nearly three decades dealing with my husband’s Navy travel and deployment schedule, I was accustomed to spending time in waiting rooms.

“I’m sorry there are no loaners available. Is your ride coming or will you be Ubering?” Rob the agent had asked when I arrived at the Audi service center that morning.

“Oh, no,” I said with a chuckle, pointing to the three stuffed bags I’d lugged with me. “I brought my laptop to do some writing, a cozy fleece jacket and my lunch. Take as long as you need. Just don’t disturb me during nap time,” I joked, secretly serious.

The pouring rain outside further softened the ’70s soft rock emanating from the sound system, and as I logged onto the free Wi-Fi, my mind drifted back to the many waiting rooms of yesteryear.

When we were stationed in Norfolk and our son was developmentally delayed from ages 3 to 10, I spent so many weekdays in occupational, speech and physical therapists’ waiting rooms, I mastered Highlights Magazine Hidden Pictures puzzles and balancing my checkbook to the cent.

When my first minivan — a hunter-green Plymouth voyager so littered with ancient McDonald’s fries, gummy bears, spent Go-Gurt tubes and sticky Capri Sun straws, it should have been condemned by the health department — was on the fritz, I used the cheapest Virginia Beach mechanic I could find. Not only were there no loaner cars, the “waiting room” was a hard chair just inside the grubby door of the establishment, and the only amenities were a filthy Mr. Coffee machine perched on a greasy 55-gallon drum and a bathroom that hadn’t been cleaned since the Carter administration. So, instead of waiting, I hoofed it down the dangerous shoulder of Route 246 in search of strip malls.

When we were stationed in Mayport, Fla., and all three of our children were in braces at the same time, I had a favorite seat in the orthodontist’s waiting room.

Seeming eons were also spent filing nails while waiting on kids’ piano lessons, tearing recipes out of women’s magazines in dentists’ offices and sweating on steamy poolside benches during swim lessons at the Y.

“These cappuccinos are delicious,” an Audi waiting room companion whispered to me during my fourth hour.

“Right? So creamy!” I responded with shared joy over finding this secret paradise. And as I nibbled the foamy end of my dunked Oreo, I realized — we may wait forever for Samuel Beckett’s elusive Godot, but I had certainly arrived.



WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

HALVING THE LAST WORD  
 BY GARRETT CHALFIN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Garrett Chalfin is a second-year student at the University of Chicago, studying philosophy and economics. He says he has made many friends in college through crosswords — including, most notably, his girlfriend. “Before the first day of college, she contacted me because she wanted to hear more about my puzzle-making. We’ve been together ever since.” — W. S.

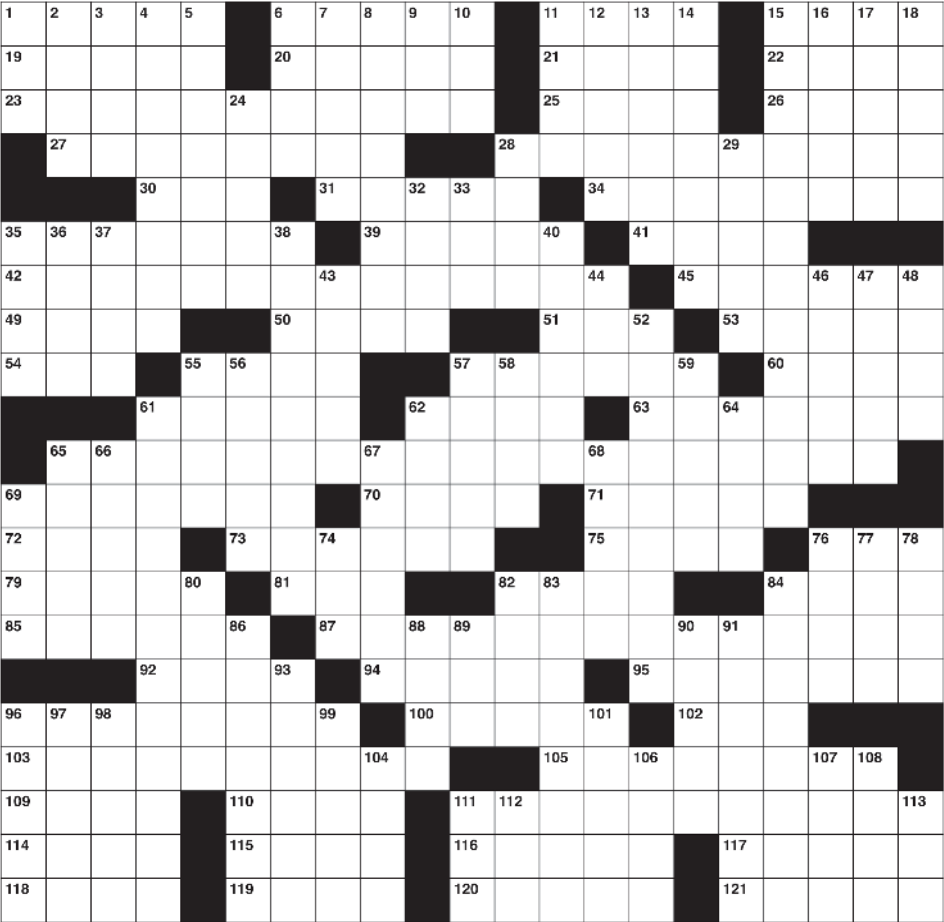
- ACROSS

1 Verso’s counterpart  
 6 Alternative to an onion bagel  
 11 Jai \_\_\_\_  
 15 Where the Pilgrims first landed in the New World  
 19 Skating gold medalist Oksana  
 20 Host  
 21 Quick look  
 22 Has a tab open, say  
 23 Hip-hop’s “Puba” and “Daddy I.U.”?  
 25 Station near Madison Square Garden, for short  
 26 Fleet  
 27 Hung around  
 28 Remove from the Champagne bucket?  
 30 “Just kidding!”  
 31 Feeling rash?  
 34 Hip-hop artist with the 2019 hit “My Type”  
 35 Crisis involving cartels  
 39 Goes “Vroom!”  
 41 Royal title  
 42 Casting a total brat in the school play?  
 45 Some govt. securities  
 49 \_\_\_\_-tempered  
 50 “Super cool!”  
 51 Get ready to take a shot  
 53 Ship propeller
- 100 Function in the role of

102 Monk’s title  
 103 Be crazy about Chicago trains with broken A.C.s?  
 105 Much in quantity  
 109 Baseball family name  
 110 Actor Jared  
 111 Metric in a competitive family business?  
 114 Prince, e.g.  
 115 In \_\_\_\_ parentis  
 116 Blow  
 117 Designer Hilfiger  
 118 Lays turf on  
 119 Little twerp  
 120 Trunk  
 121 Head of Slytherin House in the Harry Potter books
- DOWN

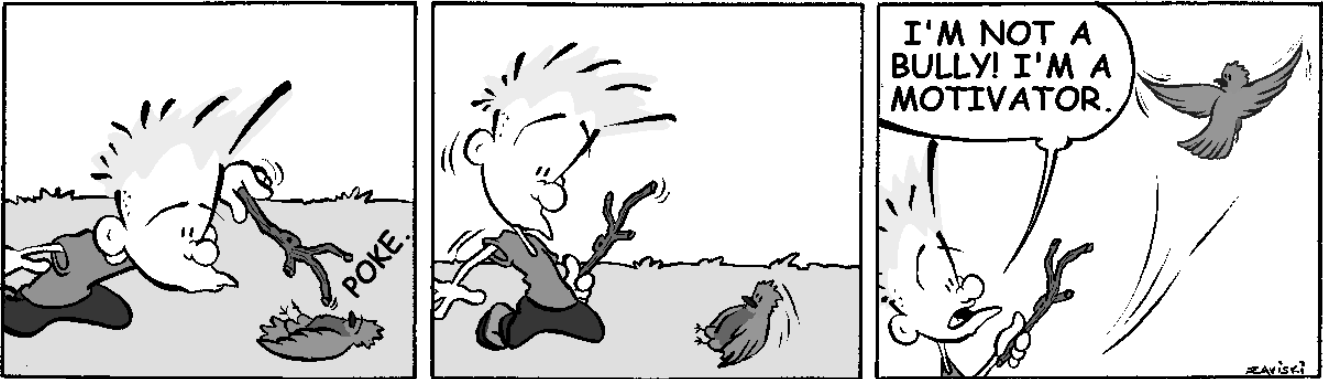
1 Subject of the 2018 biopic “On the Basis of Sex,” familiarly  
 2 Noble title  
 3 “Ci vediamo in giro!”  
 4 Getting ready to listen  
 5 Historic district of a city  
 6 Gnarly problem, so to speak  
 7 Architect of Hong Kong’s Bank of China Tower  
 8 Certain hallucinatory experience  
 9 Directed  
 10 Last word of James Joyce’s “Ulysses”  
 11 Dad, in Korean
- 12 Ingredients in some potato soups

13 Son of Aphrodite  
 14 “You don’t have to tell me”  
 15 Time for a pick-me-up, humorously  
 16 Lie ahead  
 17 Joe of “Home Alone”  
 18 First name in perfumes  
 24 Label anew  
 28 Banks from Los Angeles  
 29 Maidenhair and others  
 32 Common dog command  
 33 Chance  
 35 Hit up on Instagram, informally  
 36 Overnight party with light shows and “cuddle puddles”  
 37 Luau strings  
 38 Rock group with the 1992 hit “Creep”  
 40 Harum-\_\_\_\_ (reckless)  
 43 Untrue  
 44 Notaro of comedy  
 46 Drag-and-drop disposal icon  
 47 Start of a counting rhyme  
 48 Hit with a smack  
 52 Time in a Shakespeare title  
 55 Former Israeli P.M. Olmert  
 56 Platform for Safari and FaceTime  
 57 Borderline  
 58 “Need You Tonight” band, 1987



- 59 Leave alone  
 61 Arbiters of taste  
 62 Polite term of address  
 64 Stamp on an invoice  
 65 Implied  
 66 Valerie Harper title role  
 67 One of three immortal elders in “A Wrinkle in Time”  
 68 Dickens’s \_\_\_\_ Heep  
 69 Bouts
- 74 Tree whose name sounds like a pronoun  
 76 Word with history or hygiene  
 77 Shut up  
 78 Threw out of a contest, informally  
 80 Philosopher’s pursuit  
 82 Exam with an argumentative writing section, in brief  
 83 “You know, I can’t quite remember”
- 84 “Oh geez, the answer was staring me in the face!”  
 86 Goes through screen after screen  
 88 “Sadly . . .”  
 89 Special attention, for short  
 90 Made nice  
 91 Wading birds  
 93 Publicly bash  
 96 Doldrums  
 97 Lumberjacks’ competition
- 98 Walk around, maybe  
 99 Where one might pick up litter  
 101 Oozes  
 104 Bungle  
 106 About  
 107 West Point inst.  
 108 Fanfare  
 111 Like a diamond in a ring  
 112 Queer identity, in brief  
 113 12/31

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



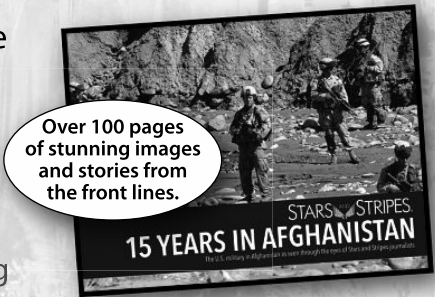
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FACES

# Dolly Parton leaning on her faith

Celebrity icon also putting energy into new projects after death of husband

By GARY GERARD HAMILTON  
*Associated Press*

Dolly Parton's angelic voice floated throughout her first gospel album in 1971 with songs like "I Believe," "Lord Hold My Hand" and the album's title track, "Golden Streets of Glory." The entertainment icon says the same steadfast faith that inspired those hymns have anchored her throughout her grief following the death her husband, Carl Dean.

"I am a person of faith, and I truly believe that I'm going to see him again someday. And I see him every day in my memories and in my heart, and in all the things that we used to do and all the things that we've built together," Parton said. "You just kind of have to learn to kind of make new plans — but that's the hardest part."

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame honoree reflected on her marriage of nearly 60 years while promoting her new single-serve Southern-inspired frozen meals, following her popular Duncan Hines baking mixes, via a collaboration with U.S.-based Conagra Brands. Dean, who avoided the spotlight and inspired her timeless hit "Jolene," as well as her 2023 "Rockstar" album, died in March at 82.

"I really feel his presence," said the 10-time Grammy winner. "I just try to go on, because I know I have to. And he was ill for quite a while, and part of me was at peace



Dolly Parton, shown performing in 2023, says her upcoming projects include a book and a musical about her life.

that he was at peace and not suffering anymore. But that still doesn't make up for the loss and the loneliness of it."

The 79-year-old recording artist spoke with The Associated Press about her perspective on life without her husband and her entrepreneurial spirit. The conversation has been edited.

**Associated Press: It seems like the entire world was thinking of you following your loss. Has your perspective changed of what you hope to accomplish after losing your husband?**

**Parton:** No, I just think that I've always had dreams and I'm always working. My husband understood that. Carl knew that better than anybody and he was all about it. He was very proud of me. ... So when I did lose him, I just

thought, well, I'm going to take all of that energy, and I'm just going to put that back into other things, and I'll keep him ever-present in everything that I do.

**You have so many business ventures and philanthropic work. Where did your entrepreneurial acumen begin?**

I just think that if you're successful, if you are lucky enough to see your dreams come true, you need to make new dreams out of your other dreams. Because it's like a tree with lots of limbs and leaves, so every dream, you can kind of branch off — if you'll pardon the expression — and do other things. And I like the business end of things. I like seeing things happen, and I love making things happen. So, my mind just naturally works that way.

**You have Duncan Hines cake mixes and now, your single-serve frozen meals. What other projects are you working on?**

I have a new book coming out ... this one is called 'Star of the Show,' which is actually a song I wrote years ago. But it's about my life on the road and my life on stage — all the behind the scenes and all the people that I've met, and all of the things that happen when you're traveling like that as I have for all of these years.

So, that, and then I have my life story as a musical. It's called 'Dolly: An Original Musical.' And I've written a lot of original songs for it. Of course, it'll have the big hits that are woven into the story. And it's just about my life, from the time I was little until up through now. ... We take it to New York to open on Broadway next year.

**How are you celebrating the 40th anniversary of your Dollywood theme park?**

One of the things they did for the 40th anniversary was put a big sign up on the hill there above Dollywood that says 'Dollywood' like the Hollywood sign. ... Years ago, when I thought, 'Well, someday I'm going to have my own theme park and I'm gonna change that H to a D and have Dollywood.' So, they finally, after 40 years, put that sign up, even though I've talked about it for years.

So, we've got a lot of wonderful things planned for the whole season that's celebrating the 40th anniversary.

It seems just like a few years back, but it's like everything else: I was with Carl for 60 years, and Dollywood's 40 years old. And that's just hard to believe because I'm only 27 (laughs).



TASSANEE VEJONGSA/AP  
**"Abbott Elementary" actor Quinta Brunson receives a key to the city May 28 in a ceremony dedicating a mural at Brunson's alma mater, Andrew Hamilton School, in Philadelphia.**

## Philadelphia honors Brunson with key, mural

Philadelphia's mayor honored actor and producer Quinta Brunson with a key to the city Wednesday in a ceremony dedicating a separate mural at Brunson's alma mater, which was the inspiration for her television show "Abbott Elementary."

The producer, writer and comedian gazed at the shiny key handed to her by Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker and quipped: "Wow! I want to ask the question on everybody's mind: What does it open?"

Brunson used the ceremony held at Andrew Hamilton School to celebrate the power of public education, public schoolteachers and music and arts education. Her parents and siblings were in attendance, along with Joyce Abbott, the teacher who inspired the name of the show's fictional school, and other teachers and classmates.

The mural, titled Blooming Features, was created by artist Athena Scott with input from Brunson and Hamilton students and staff. Its brightly colored depictions of real people from the school wrap around the outside of the school's red brick facade.

Brunson described taking inspiration from the murals painted along her subway route as a kid, especially when she saw one of her own teachers featured. She said she hopes this mural has the same effect.

## Other news

■ Guitarist and singer Rick Derringer, who shot to fame at 17 when his band The McCoys recorded "Hang On Sloopy," had a hit with "Rock and Roll, Hoochie Koo" and earned a Grammy Award for producing "Weird Al" Yankovic's debut album, died Monday in Ormond Beach, Fla. He was 77. No cause of death was announced. Derringer's decades in the music industry spanned teen stardom, session work for bands like Steely Dan, supplying the guitar solo on Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart" and producing for Cyndi Lauper.

From The Associated Press

# BET Awards to honor Franklin, Carey, Snoop Dogg, Foxx

By JONATHAN LANDRUM, JR.  
*Associated Press*

The BET Awards will celebrate its 25th anniversary by honoring four legendary performers — Mariah Carey, Snoop Dogg, Jamie Foxx and Kirk Franklin.

Carey, Snoop, Foxx and Franklin will receive the Ultimate Icon Award at next month's awards show, where Kendrick Lamar is the leading nominee.

BET says the Ultimate Icon recipients were selected due to their impact on entertainment as well as their community impact and advocacy.

Here's more to know about the show: Lamar earned 10 nominations this month, including an album of the year for his highly-acclaimed project "GNX." His ubiquitous diss track "Not Like Us," emanating from the Drake feud, received nominations for video of the year and viewer's choice award.

The rap megastar made waves with his Grammy triumph, winning song and record of the year for "Not Like Us." He followed up with



Kirk Franklin, shown performing June 30 at the 2024 BET Awards, will be an Ultimate Icon recipient at the show next month.

a groundbreaking halftime show, becoming the first solo hip-hop performer to headline the coveted slot. He is currently on the Grand National Tour with SZA.

Doechii, Drake, Future and GloRilla tied for the second-most nominations with six. Metro Boomin pulled in five nods, while SZA and The



AP photos  
**From left: Mariah Carey, Snoop Dogg and Jamie Foxx will also be honored.**

Weeknd each scored four.

Rap icon Lil Wayne, rapper GloRilla and singer Teyana Taylor will hit the BET Awards stage. The lineup of performers also includes rapper Playboi Carti and singer Leon Thomas.

Comedian-actor Kevin Hart is expected to bring a lot of humor as host of the awards show, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

The BET Awards will offer tributes to former hosts and performances, including the network's once-flagship show "106 & Park."

The awards will air live on June 9 from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Hotel tax signed into law to combat climate change

**H**ONOLULU — Hawaii’s governor signed legislation Tuesday that boosts a tax imposed on hotel room and vacation rental stays in order to raise money to address eroding shorelines, wildfires and other consequences of climate change.

The signing, which comes nearly two years after a Maui wildfire killed 102 people and wiped out almost all of Lahaina town, marks the nation’s first such levy to help cope with a warming planet.

Officials estimate the tax will generate nearly \$100 million annually. The money will be used for projects like replenishing sand on eroding Waikiki beaches, promoting the use of hurricane clips to secure roofs during powerful storms and clearing flammable invasive grasses like those that fueled Lahaina’s wildfire.

Gov. Josh Green, speaking at a bill signing ceremony, said Hawaii needs to build more firebreaks and pay a fire marshal, a new position created after Lahaina that Green expects to be staffed within the next two months. The measure adds an additional 0.75% to the daily room rate tax starting Jan. 1. Green said this amounts to an extra \$3 tax on a \$400 hotel room rate.

## Man indicted after incident with M-60 A-3 Army tank

**FL** TAMPA — A Minnesota man convicted of making violent threats tried to set a U.S. Army tank on fire on Valentine’s Day with a “Molotov cocktail,” federal prosecutors in Central Florida said.

Now Trang Johnny Nha Phan, 25, has been indicted, according to a Tuesday news release from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Florida. He faces one count of attempted arson of federal property, one count of possessing a Molotov cocktail as a convicted felon and one count of “using a firearm” in furtherance of a crime of violence, his indictment shows.

Phan pleaded not guilty to the charges in Tampa federal court on May 16, according to court records.

When Phan tried to ignite what prosecutors said was a memorial M-60 A-3 Army tank on Feb. 14, he had been convicted of prior offenses: “threats of violence and possessing three grams or more of heroin.” Prosecutors didn’t mention where the arson attempt occurred.

In Phan’s indictment, prosecutors wrote the tank he’s accused of trying to burn is owned by the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command, which is headquartered in Michigan.

**Sen. Tuberville announces 2026 bid for governor**

**AL** AUBURN — Republican U.S. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, who entered politics after a successful career as a head football coach at Auburn and three other major college programs, announced Tuesday that he is running



JEFF CHIU/AP

## San Francisco treat

People ride a Cable Car on Hyde Street as Alcatraz Island looms in the distance in San Francisco, on Tuesday.

for governor of Alabama next year.

“Today, I will announce that I will be the future governor of the great state of Alabama,” Tuberville said on “The Will Cain Show” on Fox News.

“I’m a football coach. I’m a leader. I’m a builder. I’m a recruiter, and we’re going to grow Alabama,” Tuberville said, pledging to improve education and bring manufacturing to the state while stopping illegal immigration.

Republican Gov. Kay Ivey is term-limited.

**Billionaire’s mansion is scene of violent break-in**

**CA** LOS ANGELES — A woman was left in a coma after a chaotic incident at the Montecito mansion of Beanie Babies billionaire Ty Warner last week that officials said involved a violent break-in and an attempted kidnapping.

Warner, the creator of Beanie Babies—the stuffed toys that became a huge fad in the late 1990s — was home at the time of the midday attack, according to a criminal complaint, but he was not hurt. The injured woman, identified in the complaint as L. Malek-Aslanian, was left in a coma after a serious brain injury.

Warner is known as a reclusive executive who expanded his business empire from toys to luxury hotels in the early 2000s.

Russell Maxwell Phay, 42, was arrested in the May 21 attack after a

standoff with law enforcement that ended when he jumped from a second-floor window of the mansion and was arrested, according to a news release from the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office.

**Mayor seeks a spark amid loss of federal jobs**

**DC** WASHINGTON — With the nation’s capital facing a pair of overlapping budget crises, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser has unveiled a budget proposal that bets heavily on business-friendly policies designed to boost investment and move the city away from dependence on a dwindling number of federal jobs.

In the short term, Bowser has been scrambling to fill an immediate budget shortfall that was essentially created by Congress. She announced Tuesday that her team had managed to navigate that sudden deficit without the mass layoffs that had been originally feared.

In the longer term, her government faces an estimated \$1 billion shortfall over the next three years created by President Donald Trump’s ongoing campaign to radically shrink the federal workforce. The city’s chief financial officer has estimated that 40,000 jobs for District of Columbia residents will ultimately be lost.

The more immediate budget crisis started in March when the House of Representatives approved a federal government funding bill with an obscure change that forces the

District government to revert to its 2024 budget parameters — effectively cutting \$1.1 billion from its previously balanced budget midway through the financial year. The Senate approved that bill, but also immediately approved a simple fix that would make the D.C. budget whole again. That fix has languished in the House for two months without a vote.

**Administration sues state board over voter records**

**NC** RALEIGH — The Trump administration accused North Carolina’s election board on Tuesday of violating federal law by failing to ensure voter registration records of some applicants contained identifying numbers.

The Justice Department sued in federal court also asking a judge to force board officials to create a prompt method to obtain such numbers.

The department alleges that the state and the board aren’t complying with the 2002 Help America Vote Act after board officials provided a statewide voter registration form that didn’t make clear an applicant must provide either a driver’s license number or the last four digits of a Social Security number. If an applicant lacks neither, the state must assign the person another unique number.

A previous edition of the state board, in which Democrats held a majority, acknowledged the problem in late 2023 after a voter com-

plained. The board updated the form but declined to contact people who had registered to vote since 2004 in time for the 2024 elections so they could fill in the missing numbers.

**Groundwater deal stalls as session nears end**

**AZ** PHOENIX — Arizona’s governor and the GOP-controlled Legislature are at odds over regulating groundwater pumping in the state’s rural areas — and time is running out.

Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs stood with local Republican leaders at the start of this year’s session, optimistic that Republicans in the Legislature would embrace her proposal to create rural groundwater management areas. But talks have stalled and frustration has mounted as both sides try to find a solution to conserve water that’s increasingly becoming more scarce amid a prolonged drought.

Negotiators have not met since early April, Hobbs’ office said. Around the same time, Republicans and some interest groups grew frustrated with a separate proposal by the Arizona Department of Water Resources to slash overdraft in the Willcox Basin by a percentage that is “unattainable,” said Sen. Tim Dunn, one of the Republican negotiators. Overdraft refers to when groundwater extraction exceeds what is being replenished.





**FROM THE HOME FRONT TO  
THE FRONT LINES**

**THE EXCHANGE IS A FORCE MULTIPLIER FOR WARFIGHTER AND FAMILY READINESS**

Delivering the  
best tastes  
of home to  
deployed troops

Providing career  
opportunities  
for Veterans and  
military families

Supporting  
critical  
Quality-of-Life  
programs



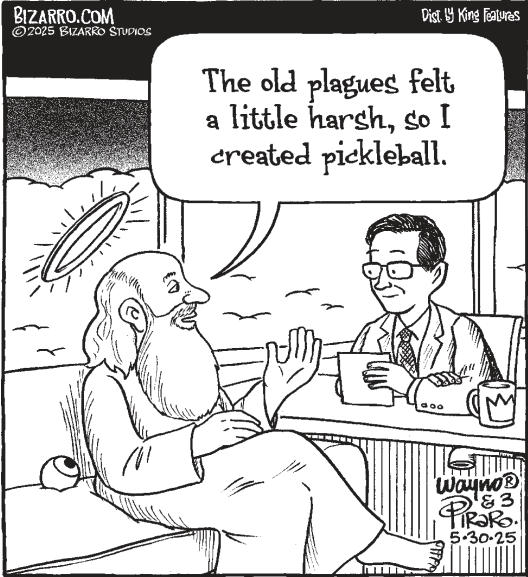
**EXCHANGE**



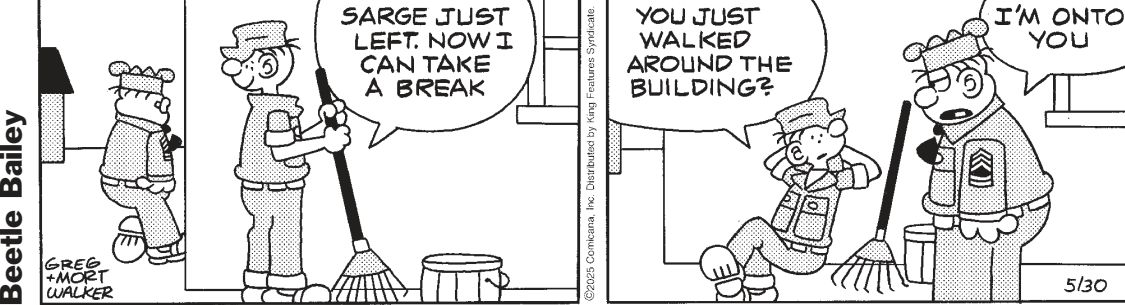
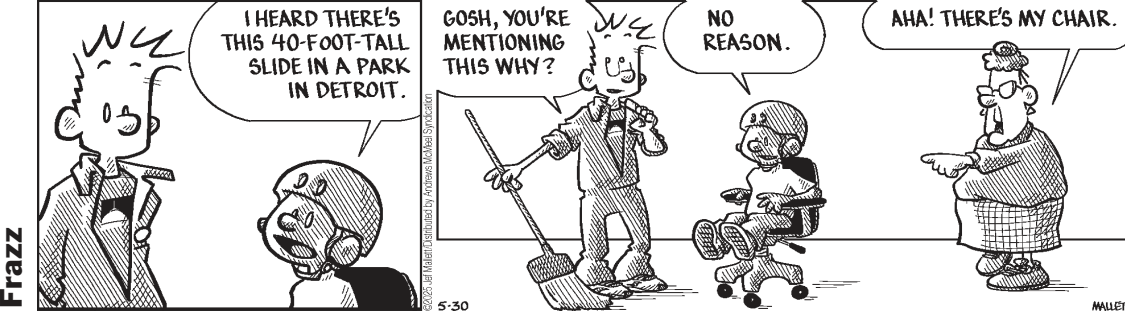
**Scan to learn more about how 100% of Exchange  
earnings support Warfighters and their families**



Bizarro



Loose Parts



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			23				24				
25			26		27		28					
29				30			31			32	33	34
			35			36			37			
38	39	40				41		42		43		
44					45			46				
47				48				49			50	51
52				53				54				
55				56				57				

- ACROSS
- DOWN
- 22 "What-evs"
- 24 Priest's garment
- 26 Chinese food assortment
- 28 Uproar
- 30 Perch
- 32 Ohio neighbor
- 33 Very long time
- 34 Cagers' gp.
- 36 Soldier's ID
- 38 Macadamized
- 39 Bygone Olds
- 40 Tiresome types
- 42 "Morning Joe" network
- 45 Last of the Stuarts
- 46 Crystal gazer
- 48 "Alley —"
- 50 Gun the engine
- 51 Away from NNW
- 1 Early calculators
- 6 Abolish
- 9 Roman 1101
- 12 Column style
- 13 Sch. URL ender
- 14 Jungfrau, e.g.
- 15 Justice Samuel —
- 16 Florida neighbor
- 18 Colorful flower
- 20 Diamond heads?
- 21 "I love," to Ovid
- 23 Do wrong
- 24 Gather
- 25 Flex
- 27 Painter Frida
- 29 Long recliner
- 31 Conan of late-night TV
- 35 Bungle
- 37 Elitist
- 38 Brewer Frederick
- 41 Resistance unit
- 43 "CSI" evidence
- 44 Matty of baseball
- 45 Tennis great Andre
- 47 New Hampshire neighbor
- 49 Draws close
- 52 Before
- 53 "— Clear Day"
- 54 "Seinfeld" character Elaine
- 55 Two, in Toledo
- 56 Violin tuner
- 57 Long for
- 1 Nabokov novel
- 2 La Paz's country (abbr.)
- 3 Utah neighbor — Field
- 4 New York's —
- 5 Computer symbols
- 6 Capital of Saskatchewan
- 7 Concept
- 8 Pair
- 9 Molten rock
- 10 Film excerpts
- 11 Bridge call
- 17 Tabloid fodder
- 19 Puma alternatives
- 21 Jackson 5 hit song

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

5-30 CRYPTOQUIP

B N B F A X E    A N S P U    B F I I A D

Y X E P X T L    Z M P U M    B D N B A D    Z N E J

N T    C F E P T S    U P Y P A    U N F E L

U X R D R:    R F D - C N J F.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: HOW DID THE ONCE-RESPECTED FELLOW FEEL WHEN HE STARTED LOSING HIS PRESTIGE? UN-STATUS-FIED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals Z



Bizarro



Loose Parts



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				23			
24				25		26		27				
			28		29		30					
31	32	33				34		35		36	37	38
39					40		41		42			
43				44				45		46		
47			48				49		50			
51							52					
	53						54					

- ACROSS
- 52 Well-behaved kids
- 53 Venice waterway
- 54 Exposes
- 21 Barking sounds
- 23 Abe Lincoln feature
- 25 6 on a phone
- 27 Society newbie
- 29 Number type
- 31 Wimbledon surface
- 32 Serving as a symbol
- 33 Yuletide refrain
- 34 Weir
- 36 "Hooray!"
- 37 Profits
- 38 Glowing signs
- 41 Muslim woman's garment
- 44 "Livin' La Vida —"
- 45 Sushi fish
- 48 Brooch
- 50 Ball club VIP
- DOWN
- 1 Spanish wool
- 2 Redacted
- 3 "— Kapital"
- 4 Mtn. stats
- 5 Exams for future attys.
- 6 Grape variety
- 7 Out of control
- 8 Dog doc
- 9 "Sense and Sensibility" heroine
- 10 Bring to mind
- 11 Mamas' mates
- 13 Irritable
- 17 Inventory rapper
- 19 "Stillmatic"
- 20 From the start
- 22 "Hamilton" actress Phillipa
- 23 Piece of hardware
- 24 Sin city
- 26 Hospital staffer
- 28 Plastic — Band
- 30 Narc's agcy.
- 31 Frank of the New York Giants
- 35 "Cuts Like a Knife" singer Adams
- 39 Early TVs
- 40 Doo follower
- 42 Seedy beer joint
- 43 MSN rival
- 44 Maximum
- 46 Kung — chicken
- 47 Easily attachable
- 49 Get involved quickly
- 51 Sand substance

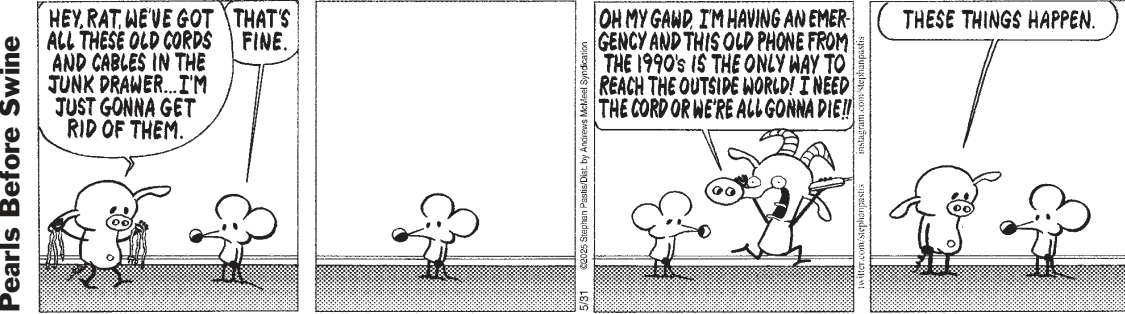
Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	B	A	C	I		R	I	D		M	C	I
D	O	R	I	C		E	D	U		A	L	P
A	L	I	T	O		G	E	O	R	G	I	A
			Z	I	N	N	I	A		U	M	P
A	M	O		S	I	N		A	M	A	S	S
B	E	N	D		K	A	H	L	O			
C	H	A	I	S	E		O	B	R	I	E	N
			M	I	S	D	O		S	N	O	B
P	A	B	S	T		O	H	M		D	N	A
A	L	O	U		A	G	A	S	S	I		
V	E	R	M	O	N	T			N	E	A	R
E	R	E		O	N	A			B	E	N	E
D	O	S		P	E	G			C	R	A	V

Frazz



Pearls Before Swine



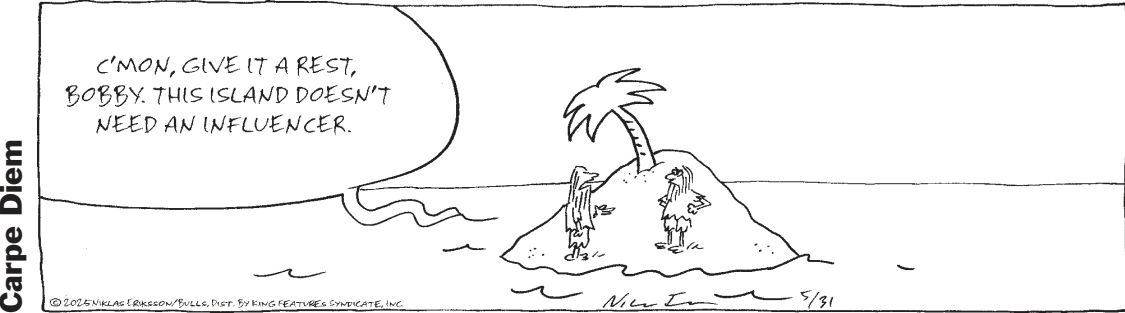
Non Sequitur



Wumo



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



5-31

CRYPTOQUIP

RA EYD TMWJ BA M KSMOD'V  
VDME HDEV NDEQNODI EB  
REV QKNRHYE KBVRERBO, YMV  
RE TDDO IRVROWSRODI?  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: POPULAR LOGIC  
PUZZLE VARIANT WHICH PEOPLE WORK ON  
DURING CIVIL COURT CASES: SUE-DOKU.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals D





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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) published daily (except Saturday, Sunday, 25 December and 1 January) for 50 cents (Monday through Thursday) and one dollar on Friday by Stars and Stripes Pacific, OPC 706 BOX 7, APO AP 96301-9001. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, OPC 706 BOX 7, AP 96301-9001.  
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OPINION

Way to end Gaza war has been clear for nearly a year

**BY DAVID IGNATIUS**  
*The Washington Post*  
On Wednesday, the 600th day of the Gaza war, Israel faced an astonishing rebuke, not from its enemies but perhaps its closest Arab friend: The United Arab Emirates summoned the Israeli ambassador in Abu Dhabi to protest “deplorable and offensive” attacks on Palestinians by extremists in Israel. That’s a measure of how isolated Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government has become — that the country that first embraced the Abraham Accords is publicly signaling that it’s fed up. What triggered the UAE diplomatic rebuff was an incident on Monday in which extreme Israeli nationalists chanted slogans and attacked Palestinians in the courtyard of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The world is running out of patience with Netanyahu as the war in Gaza drags on. Britain, France and Canada last week condemned “egregious actions” by Israel in its renewed military offensive in Gaza. A top United Nations official on Wednesday denounced an Israeli takeover of humanitarian assistance for Palestinians as “an assault on their human dignity.” Netanyahu is being savaged in Israel, too. Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert this week accused Netanyahu’s government of war crimes. In an op-ed in Haaretz, he wrote: “The government of Israel is currently waging a war without purpose, without goals or clear planning and with no chances of success.” But Netanyahu’s most serious problem might be in the White House. President Donald Trump is peeved that the fighting in Gaza has dragged on. Perhaps more important, he is openly resisting a rumored Israeli plan

to strike Iran. When a reporter asked Wednesday whether he had warned Netanyahu against such an attack while a White House emissary is trying to negotiate a diplomatic deal to cap Iran’s nuclear program, Trump answered, “I would like to be honest: Yes, I did.” Let’s agree that Netanyahu faces a ruthless terrorist enemy in Hamas and its champion, Iran. And let’s pause to remember the way Israelis were butchered on Oct. 7, 2023, as Hamas attacked across the Gaza fence. But that doesn’t change the obligation for Israel to end this war, for its own sake as well as to spare additional Palestinian civilian deaths. What’s agonizing is that Israeli military and intelligence leaders were ready to settle this conflict nearly a year ago. Working with U.S. and Emirati officials, they developed a plan for security “bubbles” that would contain the violence, starting in northern Gaza and moving south, backed by an international peacekeeping force that would include troops from European and moderate Arab countries. In place of Hamas, a Palestinian government, backed by a reformed Palestinian Authority, would take political control. This wasn’t a pipe dream. Officials worked out a detailed road map. They began planning to train the Palestinian security force that would replace Hamas. This was, as golfers like to say, “a makeable putt.” But Netanyahu said no. His right-wing coalition partners demanded “total victory,” even though they couldn’t define just what that meant. The UAE and Saudi Arabia, which had agreed to provide troops and money for Gaza security, got tired of waiting. Postwar planning went into reverse when Trump arrived in the White House and

talked about forcibly removing Palestinians and an American takeover of Gaza. But that idea fizzled. Netanyahu was left with a problem he didn’t know how to answer except with more military force. So, in March, after a two-month ceasefire, he resumed the war. Hamas, still strutting for the cameras even though it had been gutted militarily, made it easy for him. The Israeli-Palestinian dispute might seem intractable, but ending this conflict would be relatively easy. I’m told that Israeli military officials keep working on “day after” plans, honing details as recently as this week. But they have had no political support from Netanyahu. “The ‘exit ramp’ has been staring us in the face for a long time,” argues Robert Satloff, director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. It’s a mix of Arab states and Gaza Palestinians, operating under a Palestinian Authority umbrella, he explains. “It is messy, with overlapping responsibilities and lots of dotted lines. But it checks all the boxes to enable the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation to get off the ground.” Beyond its awful cost in Palestinian lives, this war has damaged Israel. And I don’t simply mean the country’s international reputation, but its heart and soul. What began as a righteous war of retaliation for unspeakable atrocities has become, as Olmert accurately put it, “a war without purpose.” That kind of struggle bends back on itself, eating away at even the strongest, proudest nation. Diplomats are needed to resolve most wars. In this case, however, I’d be happy to settle for a real estate developer — like Trump or his special envoy Steve Witkoff. The settlement terms have been obvious for a year. It’s time to close this deal and end the Gaza tragedy.

Tax bill is GOP’s chance to shape the next generation

**BY SEN. TED CRUZ**  
*Special to The Washington Post*  
Last month, Republican senators gathered in the Library of Congress to have an extended discussion and strategy session about the budget reconciliation process that is dominating conversations in Washington. I asked my colleagues two specific questions: In all of this massive bill, what will be its biggest legacy? What bold, transformational policies can we champion that will impact the next generation of Americans? With Republicans in control of the White House, the Senate and the House, it’s clear that this year’s bill is our best opportunity to rally behind a strong conservative agenda that puts families first. By giving our children the opportunity to invest in our capitalist system and choose the educational path that best fits their needs, we are equipping them with the two strongest tools for success. That’s why I’m pushing my colleagues to include two major proposals in this year’s budget reconciliation package that I believe do exactly that. First, I’ve introduced legislation that would create a private investment account for every newborn child in America and seed it with the first \$1,000. Each year, family, friends or employers would be able to contribute up to \$5,000 to this tax-advantaged account. Those accounts would be invested in exchange-traded funds or mutual funds based on the S&P 500. The accounts would do two things. First,

children across America would experience the miracle of compounded growth. A child born this year who has the initial \$1,000, plus \$5,000 invested annually, would — at a historical average growth rate of 7% — have about \$170,000 invested by age 18. By 35, the account would be worth \$700,000. That powerful wealth accumulation would be utterly transformational for our next generation of children. Every child would also now be a shareholder in America’s major businesses. All of us have seen the sad statistics about how many young people distrust capitalism or support socialism. This policy would create a whole generation of capitalists. When a teenager opens her app and sees her investment account, she would see that she owns, say, \$50 in Apple, \$75 in Boeing, and \$35 in McDonald’s. Those wouldn’t simply be big, scary corporations — she’d be one of their owners. Moreover, a large coalition of business leaders — led by tech entrepreneur Brad Gerstner and Dell CEO Michael Dell — have committed to contribute or match contributions for their employees’ children. These are 401(k)s for kids. And philanthropists like Dell have also stated that they intend to give millions to help low-income kids grow their accounts. If enacted, this policy would ensure that every American has skin in the game — it is a generational investment in America’s youth, and I believe it will fundamentally rebuild their faith in American capitalism. Equally important for success is education

and ensuring that every American child has the right to choose their educational path. That’s why the second policy we should include in the One Big Beautiful Bill is to get the federal government behind school choice. We should give federal tax credits, dollar for dollar, for contributions to scholarship-granting organizations in the states and open up \$10 billion annually in new scholarships that allow children and parents to be able to choose the K-12 school that best meets their needs. School choice is the civil rights issue of the 21st century. Every child in America deserves access to a quality education, regardless of their ZIP code, their race or their parents’ income. Parents should be empowered to decide what education is best for their child. In his first term, President Donald Trump in his State of the Union address urged Congress to pass my legislation, the Universal School Choice Act. However, to do so we needed Democratic support in the Senate, and no Democrat was willing to stand up to the teachers unions. Now, under the reconciliation rules, we can finally pass the bill with our 53 Republican senators. And Democrats cannot block it. Versions of both of these ideas are included in the House reconciliation bill. But there will be a battle to keep them and to get them through the Senate. We must get them to the president’s desk. Nothing else in the bill would leave as significant a legacy.

Ted Cruz, a Republican, is a U.S. senator from Texas.



# SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE

## DEALS

**Wednesday’s transactions**

**BASEBALL**  
**Major League Baseball**  
**American League**

**ATHLETICS** — Optioned RHP Michel Otañez to Las Vegas (PCL). Activated LHP Sean Newcomb. Optioned 1B Andrés Chaparro to Rochester (IL).

**BALTIMORE ORIOLES** — Selected the contract of RHP Matt Bowman from Norfolk (IL). Optioned RHP Yaramil Hiraldo to Norfolk.

**CLEVELAND GUARDIANS** — Recalled RHP Andrew Walters from Columbus (IL). Optioned RHP Nic Enright to Columbus.

**KANSAS CITY ROYALS** — Selected the contract of RHP Andrew Hoffmann from Omaha (IL). Optioned LHP Evan Sisk to Omaha. Released RF Hunter Renfroe.

**LOS ANGELES ANGELS** — Reinstated RHP Robert Stephenson from the 60-day IL. Designated SS Tim Anderson for assignment. Designated C Chuckie Robinson for assignment. Agreed to terms with RHP Shaun Anderson on a minor league contract. Selected the contract of SS Scott Kingery from Salt Lake (PCL). Optioned LHP Jake Eder to Salt Lake.

**MINNESOTA TWINS** — Agreed to terms with OF Blaze O’Saben on a minor league contract. Agreed to terms with 3B Caleb McNeely on a minor league contract.

**SEATTLE MARINERS** — Optioned RHP Logan Evans to Tacoma (PCL). Reinstated RHP Jackson Kowar from the 60-day IL.

**TAMPA BAY RAYS** — Activated C Matt Thaiss. Designated C Ben Rortvedt for assignment. Agreed to terms with RHP Kyle Gibson on a minor league contract. Sent RF Travis Jankowski to Durham (IL) on a rehab assignment.

**TEXAS RANGERS** — Reinstated SS Corey Seager from the 10-day IL. Optioned INF Blaine Crim to Round Rock (PCL).

**TORONTO BLUE JAYS** — Sent 2B Andrés Giménez to Dunedin (FSL) on a rehab assignment.

**National League**

**ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS** — Agreed to terms with RHP Logan Mercado on a minor league contract.

**CINCINNATI REDS** — Agreed to terms with 2B Peyton Holt on a minor league contract.

**COLORADO ROCKIES** — Agreed to terms with SS Orlando Arcia on a contract. Optioned SS Aaron Schunk to Albuquerque (PCL). Agreed to terms with 2B Owen Miller on a minor league contract.

**MILWAUKEE BREWERS** — Sent RHP Brandon Woodruff to Wisconsin (ML) on a rehab assignment.

**NEW YORK METS** — Sent LF José Azocar outright to Syracuse (IL).

**PITTSBURGH PIRATES** — Reinstated UTL Endy Rodriguez from the 10-day IL. Placed C Joey Bart on the 7-day IL.

**SAN DIEGO PADRES** — Recalled LHP Kyle Hart from El Paso (PCL). Optioned LHP Omar Cruz to El Paso. Sent RHP Matt Waldron to El Paso on a rehab assignment.

**WASHINGTON NATIONALS** — Reinstated 1B Andrés Chaparro from the 10-day IL.

**FOOTBALL**  
**National Football League**

**BALTIMORE RAVENS** — Signed S Malaki Starks to a rookie contract.

**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS** — Announced the retirement of C David Andrews.

**SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** — Signed LB Chazz Surratt and P Thomas Morstead to one-year contracts. Waived LB DeShaun White. Released P Mitch Wishnowsky. Hired Ethan Waugh as a personnel executive.

**HOCKEY**  
**National Hockey League**

**SEATTLE KRAKEN** — Signed C/RW John Hayden to a two-year contract.

**UTAH MAMMOTH** — Signed D Dmitri Simashev and RW Daniil But to three-year, entry-level contracts.

**SOCCER**  
**Major League Soccer**

**MINNESOTA UNITED FC** — Signed F Daris Randall to a short-term agreement contract.

## AP SPORTLIGHT

**May 30**

**1971** — Willie Mays hits his 638th HR, sets NL record of 1,950 runs scored.

**1986** — Barry Bonds makes his MLB debut for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

**1987** — Mike Tyson beats Pinklon Thomas by TKO in round 6 in Las Vegas to retain WBC/WBA heavyweight boxing titles.

**1993** — Emerson Fittipaldi wins his second Indianapolis 500, by 2.8 seconds. Fittipaldi takes the lead on lap 185 and holds on, outfoxing Formula One champion Nigel Mansell and runner-up Arie Luyendyk.

**2009** — Travis Tucker hits an RBI single with one out in the top of the 25th inning to give Texas a 3-2 victory over Boston College in the longest NCAA baseball game.

**2011** — Jim Tressel, who guided Ohio State to its first national title in 34 years, resigns amid NCAA violations from a tattoo-parlor scandal that sullied the image of one of the country’s top football programs.

**2012** — Roger Federer breaks Jimmy Connors’ Open era record of 233 Grand Slam match wins by beating Adrian Ungur 6-3, 6-2, 6-7 (6), 6-3 in the second round of the French Open. Federer, who owns a record 16 major championships, is 234-35 at tennis’ top four tournaments. Connors was 233-49. The Open era began in 1968.

## PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA				
Eastern Conference				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	4	0	1.000	—
Atlanta	4	2	.667	1
Washington	3	3	.500	2
Indiana	2	3	.400	2½
Connecticut	0	5	.000	4½
Chicago	0	4	.000	4

Western Conference				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	5	0	1.000	—
Phoenix	4	1	.800	1
Seattle	3	2	.600	2
Golden State	2	2	.500	2½
Las Vegas	2	2	.500	2½
Los Angeles	2	4	.333	3½
Dallas	1	4	.200	4

**Tuesday’s games**

New York 95, Golden State 67  
Dallas 109, Connecticut 87  
Minnesota 82, Seattle 77  
Phoenix 94, Chicago 89  
Atlanta 88, Los Angeles 82

**Wednesday’s game**

Washington 83, Indiana 77

**Thursday’s games**

Golden State at New York  
Dallas at Chicago

**Friday’s games**

Connecticut at Indiana  
New York at Washington  
Atlanta at Seattle  
Los Angeles at Las Vegas  
Minnesota at Phoenix

**Saturday’s game**

Chicago at Dallas

**Sunday’s games**

Connecticut at New York  
Las Vegas at Seattle  
Phoenix at Los Angeles  
Minnesota at Golden State

## COLLEGE SOFTBALL

**Division I World Series**

**At Oklahoma City**  
**Double Elimination**  
**Thursday, May 29**

**Game 1:** Texas (51-11) vs. Florida (48-15)  
**Game 2:** Oklahoma (50-7) vs. Tennessee (45-15)  
**Game 3:** Texas Tech (50-12) vs. Mississippi (42-19)  
**Game 4:** UCLA (54-11) vs. Oregon (53-8)

**Friday, May 30**

**Game 5:** Game 1 loser vs. Game 2 loser  
**Game 6:** Game 3 loser vs. Game 4 loser

**Saturday, May 31**

**Game 7:** Game 1 winner vs. Game 2 winner  
**Game 8:** Game 3 winner vs. Game 4 winner

**Sunday, June 1**

**Game 9:** Game 5 winner vs. Game 8 loser  
**Game 10:** Game 6 winner vs. Game 7 loser

**Monday, June 2**

**Game 11:** Game 7 winner vs. Game 9 winner  
**x-Game 12:** Game 7 winner vs. Game 9 winner  
**Game 13:** Game 8 winner vs. Game 10 winner  
**x-Game 14:** Game 8 winner vs. Game 10 winner

**Championship Series**  
**(Best-of-3)**  
**June 4-6**

Game 12 winner vs. Game 14 winner

## PRO SOCCER

MLS						
Eastern Conference						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	10	3	3	33	32	18
Cincinnati	9	4	3	30	24	22
Nashville	8	4	4	28	28	19
Columbus	7	2	7	28	26	19
Orlando City	7	3	6	27	30	19
Inter Miami CF	7	3	5	26	31	26
New York	7	6	3	24	26	19
NYC FC	7	6	3	24	18	18
Charlotte FC	7	8	1	22	26	27
New England	5	4	5	20	16	14
Chicago	5	5	4	19	25	27
Atlanta	4	7	5	17	21	28
D.C. United	3	7	6	15	14	28
Toronto FC	3	9	4	13	18	22
CF Montréal	1	10	5	8	12	29

Western Conference						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	9	1	5	32	27	12
San Diego FC	8	5	3	27	27	18
Minn. United	7	3	6	27	23	14
Seattle	7	4	5	26	23	19
Portland	7	4	5	26	25	22
LAFC	6	4	5	23	27	22
San Jose	6	6	4	22	33	26
Colorado	6	6	4	22	18	22
Houston	5	6	5	20	21	22
Austin FC	5	6	5	20	11	18
FC Dallas	4	6	5	17	18	26
Real Salt Lake	4	9	3	15	16	23
Sporting KC	3	8	4	13	22	27
St Louis City	2	8	5	11	11	20
LA Galaxy	0	12	4	4	13	36

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Wednesday’s games**

Atlanta 3, Orlando City 2  
FC Dallas 3, Cincinnati 3, tie  
New England 1, D.C. United 1, tie  
Miami 4, CF Montréal 2  
New York 4, Charlotte FC 2  
Houston 3, New York City FC 0  
Philadelphia 2, Toronto FC 1  
Nashville 2, Columbus 2, tie  
Seattle 1, San Diego FC 0  
Real Salt Lake 1, Austin FC 1, tie  
San Jose 1, LA Galaxy 0  
Sporting Kansas City at Los Angeles FC ppd.

Portland 2, Colorado 1  
Minnesota 0, Vancouver 0, tie

**Saturday’s games**

San Jose at St Louis City  
New York City FC at Nashville  
D.C. United at Cincinnati  
Columbus at Miami  
New England at CF Montréal  
Atlanta at New York  
Chicago at Orlando City  
Charlotte FC at Toronto FC  
Philadelphia at FC Dallas  
Sporting Kansas City at Houston  
Portland at Vancouver  
Real Salt Lake at LA Galaxy  
Colorado at Los Angeles FC ppd.  
Austin FC at San Diego FC

**Sunday’s game**

Minnesota at Seattle

**Saturday, June 7**

Chicago at D.C. United  
Austin FC at Colorado

**Sunday, June 8**

St Louis City at Portland  
Seattle at Vancouver  
Sporting Kansas City at Los Angeles FC

NWSL						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Kansas City	8	2	0	24	22	7
San Diego	6	2	2	20	21	12
Orlando	6	3	1	19	18	8
Washington	6	3	1	19	18	16
Portland	4	2	4	16	16	11
Seattle	4	4	2	14	9	9
Angel City	4	4	2	14	17	19
Louisville	4	4	2	14	12	16
Gotham FC	3	4	3	12	12	10
North Carolina	3	4	3	12	13	15
Bay FC	3	4	3	12	12	14
Houston	3	5	2	11	10	16
Utah Royals FC	1	7	2	5	8	19
Chicago	1	8	1	4	6	22

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Friday, June 6**

Utah Royals FC at Louisville  
Seattle at San Diego

**Saturday, June 7**

Kansas City at Gotham FC  
Houston at Orlando  
Portland at Bay FC  
Chicago at Angel City

**Sunday, June 8**

North Carolina at Washington

# Future of sports on agenda for SEC

By EDDIE PELLSS  
*Associated Press*

MIRAMAR BEACH, Fla. — Nothing less than the future of college sports is being hashed out this week in conference rooms spread throughout a sprawling seaside resort in Florida.

These are the Southeastern Conference’s annual spring meetings — a gathering of school presidents, athletic directors and coaches. It might be argued that the 2025 affair carries more weight than it ever has.

Among the topics are the future of the College Football Playoff, the SEC’s own schedule, the transfer portal and the NCAA itself. All are influenced by the fate of a multibillion-dollar lawsuit settlement that hovers over almost every corner of college athletics.

As a reminder of what’s at stake, a handful of football coaches detailed the uncertainties they faced with the start of practice closing in, one of which is still not knowing how many players they’ll be able to suit up for the upcoming season.

“It’s challenging when you’re trying to figure out what you can do for football camp on July 30th, when we really don’t have much of a resolution of what that’s going to look like,” Texas A&M coach Mike Elko said.

Some of the topics being discussed this week and the SEC’s role in sorting them out:

## College Football Playoff

The SEC and Big Ten will decide whether to expand the CFP from 12 to 14 or 16 teams, and will ultimately have the final say on how many automatic bids they and other conferences will receive. Among the proposals is one in which those two conferences would receive four automatic bids, and another that allots one automatic bid to five conferences and 11 at-large slots.

“The best system with 16 should be the 16 best,” said Ole Miss coach Lane Kiffin, a critic of the system last year when his team was left out of the first 12-team field. “I don’t know exactly how that’s figured out”

The Big 12 and Atlantic Coast conferences, which are the other two members of the Power Four, will be able to offer their input — but that’s all it is — along with the rest of the smaller conferences who are involved in the CFP.

Asked about the relationship with his fellow commissioners, the SEC’s Greg Sankey relayed a recent conversation he had with one of his predecessors, Roy Kramer, who had his share of contentious arguments with leaders of other conferences.

“He said, ‘We’d walk out of some of those rooms, and we weren’t go-



JEFFREY McWHORTER/AP

**SEC commissioner Greg Sankey leads the meetings that will likely determine the future of college football and other sports.**

ing to talk to each other for a year. We hated each other, but we always figured a way out,” Sankey said. “I take great comfort in that. And I take the responsibility to figure that out.”

At stake is not only what the six seasons starting in 2026 will look like, but — if the SEC and Big Ten create an unrepairable rift with the other Power Four leagues — what college football might become once ESPN’s \$7.8 billion contract to televise the games ends after the 2031 season.

The SEC’s decision on a possible shift from a conference title game to a series of “play-in” games for newly created automatic qualifying spots are also related to the CFP’s next format.

## The transfer portal

If only there weren’t that little problem of the “student” in “student-athlete,” some of the decisions about the transfer portal would be so much simpler.

Because schools try to sync the timing of the window when players can leave one school for another with the academic calendar, football finds itself having to choose between a window that opens during the playoff or one that opens in the spring and predates the fall semester.

The playoff option might be more convenient for some coaches, who could build their roster and do off-season workouts with those players from January through the spring. But that could lead to a repeat of some of the awkward moves from last season, with players on teams contending for a title leaving for better offers.

“It’s really hard to be playing in a championship setting and have to be dealing with that,” Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. “When I brought that up as a complaint or a problem, it was told to me, ‘There’s no crying from a yacht.’”



COLLEGE BASEBALL

Things to know entering regionals

BY ERIC OLSON  
*Associated Press*

OMAHA, Neb. — The NCAA baseball tournament opens Friday with play in 16 double-elimination regionals.

Regional winners advance to best-of-three super regionals next week, and the final eight go to the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska, beginning June 13.

Who's hot

Northeastern's 27-game win streak is the longest in Division I since Fairfield rolled off 28 straight in 2021. The Huskies (48-9) are making their fourth NCAA appearance since 2018 under Mike Glavine, younger brother of Baseball Hall of Fame member Tom Glavine. The Huskies are the No. 2 regional seed in Tallahassee, Florida, and open against Mississippi State.

No. 13 national seed Coastal Carolina (48-11) brings an 18-game streak into its home regional. The Chanticleers swept the Sun Belt regular-season and tournament titles under Kevin Schnall, who took over for longtime coach Gary Gilmore this year. They open against Fairfield.

Columbia (29-17) has won nine in a row and 16 of 17. The Ivy League champions are a No. 4 regional seed and meet No. 16 national seed Southern Mississippi.

Who's not

Arizona State (35-22) and Kentucky (29-24) each have lost four straight.

The Sun Devils are batting .266 with a total of 12 runs and two homers over their past four and are coming off a 2-0 loss to BYU in the Big 12 Tournament.

The Wildcats lost their final regular-season series against No. 1 national seed Vanderbilt by a total of four runs and then lost 5-1 to Oklahoma in the SEC Tournament.

Still waiting

East Carolina (33-25), which received the American Athletic's automatic bid by winning the conference tournament as a No. 6 seed, has never reached the College World Series in 34 previous NCAA Tournament appearances, the longest streak of its kind. The Pirates are in the field for the ninth time in 10 years.

Clemson (44-16) has never won a national championship, or finished as runner-up, in 46 previous appearances.

The curse of the No. 1 national seed was finally broken last year when Tennessee won the national championship. Before that, the only No. 1 to win it all was Miami in 1999.

Welcome to the party

Big South Tournament cham-



GREG M. COOPER/AP

Northeastern third baseman Justin Bosland, left, and first baseman Will Fosberg, center, welcome outfielder Alex Lane to home plate after hitting a two-run homer against Merrimack on March 18, in Boston. The Huskies enter the NCAA regionals with 48-9 record and a 27-game winning streak



PHELAN M. EBENHACK/AP

Scott Campbell has helped USC Upstate earn its first NCAA tournament. He is 17th in the nation in batting average for a team that is second in the nation in runs scored with 9.7 per game.

pion USC Upstate, a full Division I member since 2011, is making its tournament debut. The Spartans are second in the nation in scoring at 9.7 runs per game, and Johnny Sweeney is third in RBIs (81) and Scott Campbell is 17th in batting average (.400). They open at No. 11 national seed Clemson, just over an hour southwest of their Spartanburg, South Carolina, campus.

Toughest regional

The Oxford Regional, hosted by Mississippi, gets the nod.

The Rebels earned the No. 10 national seed after winning three games in the SEC Tournament to reach the final, where it lost 3-2 to Vanderbilt. They expect to get back No. 3 starter Mason Nichols and right fielder Ryan Moerman from injury.

Their opponent, Murray State (39-13), is in the tournament for the first time since 2003 after winning the Missouri Valley Tournament. The Racers had a three-run

lead against the Rebels in Oxford on March 5 before losing 8-7 in 10 innings.

Georgia Tech (40-17), the No. 2 regional seed, is the first ACC regular-season champion since 1999 to not host. The Yellow Jackets are matched against Western Kentucky (46-12), which set a school record for wins and has the Conference USA player and newcomer of the year in Ryan Wideman and pitcher of the year in Drew Whalen.

No guarantees

Regional hosts have advanced to super regionals 66.8% of the time (267 of 400) since the tournament went to its current format in 1999. Last year, 10 hosts won regionals.

The fewest hosts to advance were seven in 2007 and 2014, eight in 2018 and nine in 2017 and 2023.

Feeling a draft

Eleven projected first-round picks in the Major League Baseball amateur draft are in the tournament, including four of the top six, according to MLB.com analyst Jim Callis.

Heading the group are three left-handed pitchers: Tennessee's Liam Doyle (2), LSU's Kade Anderson (3) and Florida State's Jamie Arnold (5).

Next are Oregon State SS Aiva Arquette (6), Oklahoma RHP Kyson Witherspoon (11), North Carolina C Luke Stevenson (16), Tennessee 2B Gavin Kilen (18), Wake Forest SS Marek Houston (19), Arizona OF Brendan Summerhill (20), Auburn OF-C Ike Irish (21) and Southern Mississippi RHP J.B. Middleton (22).

Duck's dingers

Oregon center fielder and lead-off man Mason Neville is first in the nation in homers with a school-record 26, and 42 of his 61 hits have gone for extra bases. But Neville enters regionals just 2 for his last 27, and he has gone a season-high five straight games without a homer.

Who is this guy?

The best player you've probably never heard of is Northeastern left-handed pitcher Will Jones. The 6-foot-5, 215-pound graduate student is second in the nation with a 1.82 ERA and third in wins with an 11-0 record. He has been part of five of the Huskies' nation-leading 17 shutouts.

Jones had Tommy John surgery when he was in high school in Southamptton, Massachusetts, and didn't throw a pitch his first two seasons with the Huskies. He threw in 48 innings in 21 appearances, including two starts, in 2023 and '24. He has pitched 69% innings this season with 72 strikeouts, and his 11 wins are a school record.



JOHN AMIS/AP

Outfielders Jonathan Hogart, left, and Dustin Mercer have helped Murray State reached the tournament for the first time since 2003. The Racers are part of the toughest regional in Oxford.

Scoreboard

Division I regionals	
Double Elimination; x-if necessary Friday, May 30	
Athens Regional Athens, Ga.	
Game 1	Georgia (42-15) vs. Binghamton (29-24)
Game 2	Oklahoma St. (28-23) vs. Duke (37-19)
Auburn Regional Auburn, Ala.	
Game 1	Stetson (40-20) vs. NC State (33-19)
Game 2	Auburn (38-18) vs. CCSU (31-15)
Austin Regional Austin, Texas	
Game 1	Texas (42-12) vs. Houston Christian (32-23)
Game 2	Kansas St. (31-24) vs. UTSA (44-13)
Baton Rouge Regional Baton Rouge, La.	
Game 1	LSU (43-14) vs. UALR (24-32)
Game 2	Rhode Island (38-20) vs. Dallas Baptist (40-16)
Chapel Hill Regional Chapel Hill, N.C.	
Game 1	North Carolina (42-12) vs. Holy Cross (31-25)
Game 2	Nebraska (32-27) vs. Oklahoma (35-20)
Clemson Regional Clemson, S.C.	
Game 1	Kentucky (29-24) vs. West Virginia (41-14)
Game 2	Clemson (44-16) vs. SC-Upstate (36-23)
Conway Regional Conway, S.C.	
Game 1	East Carolina (33-25) vs. Florida (38-20)
Game 2	Coastal Carolina (48-11) vs. Fairfield (39-17)
Corvallis Regional Corvallis, Ore.	
Game 1	Southern Cal (35-21) vs. TCU (39-18)
Game 2	Oregon St. (41-12-1) vs. Saint Mary's (Cal) (34-24)
Eugene Regional Eugene, Ore.	
Game 1	Cal Poly (41-17) vs. Arizona (39-18)
Game 2	Oregon (42-14) vs. Utah Valley (32-27)
Fayetteville Regional Fayetteville, Ark.	
Game 1	Arkansas (43-13) vs. N. Dakota St. (20-32)
Game 2	Creighton (41-14) vs. Kansas (43-15)
Hattiesburg Regional Hattiesburg, Miss.	
Game 1	Miami (31-24) vs. Alabama (41-16)
Game 2	Southern Miss. (44-14) vs. Columbia (29-17)
Knoxville Regional Knoxville, Tenn.	
Game 1	Cincinnati (32-24) vs. Wake Forest (36-20)
Game 2	Tennessee (43-16) vs. Miami (Ohio) (35-21)
Los Angeles Regional Los Angeles	
Game 1	UCLA (42-16) vs. Fresno St. (31-27)
Game 2	Arizona St. (35-22) vs. UC Irvine (41-15)
Nashville Regional Nashville, Tenn.	
Game 1	ETSU (41-15) vs. Louisville (35-21)
Game 2	Vanderbilt (42-16) vs. Wright St. (38-19)
Oxford Regional Oxford, Miss.	
Game 1	W. Kentucky (46-12) vs. Georgia Tech (40-17)
Game 2	Mississippi (40-19) vs. Murray St. (39-13)
Tallahassee Regional Tallahassee, Fla.	
Game 1	Florida St. (38-14) vs. Bethune-Cookman (37-21)
Game 2	Mississippi St. (34-21) vs. Northeastern (48-9)

Geography lesson

California has six teams in regionals, most among the 25 states represented in the tournament.

Cal Poly, Fresno State, Southern California, UC Irvine, UCLA and Saint Mary's are the Golden State schools that earned bids.

Florida, North Carolina and Texas each has five teams in the tournament and Kentucky has four.



NFL



Nick Wass/AP

Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels is coming off a milestone debut season in which he was named offensive rookie of the year and helped lead Washington to within a win of a Super Bowl appearance.

# Commanders’ Daniels bulks up following rookie season

BY STEPHEN WHYNO  
*Associated Press*

ASHBURN, Va. — Jayden Daniels evades the topic as if he’s an oncoming pass rusher and ducks away from the questions as if he’s avoiding a sack.

It sure looks as if the Washington Commanders’ franchise quarterback has bulked up, adding some muscle after his AP Offensive Rookie of the Year season. He just won’t say how much and insists it was not a particular mission of his.

“That’s up for grabs — I don’t know,” Daniels said Wednesday after an offseason practice session. “I was just working out. It wasn’t about this amount or much. Just go out there, have a plan and naturally just put on weight.”

Daniels is happy to let others talk about his weight, and that extends to his teammates and coaches. They notice, chalking it up to him being a competitor looking to gain another edge.

Kliff Kingsbury, back for a second season as offensive coordinator, has not seen what Daniels is lifting but observes the 24-year-old looking a little thicker.

“He’s still pretty lean, but he’s definitely worked really hard at his fitness and the weight room,” Kingsbury said. “He knows what he has to do to protect himself and where he feels comfortable playing. But the arm strength: He looks better, and you can tell he’s stronger. There’s no doubt.”

That wasn’t a message from the coaching staff coming off Daniels leading the way in the Commanders exceeding all expectations to make the playoffs and go on an improbable run to the NFC championship game. Kingsbury wanted Daniels to get some rest rather than rush into preparing for his second professional season.

Easier said than done. A year since being the second pick in the draft and going through an entirely new process, Daniels took some time to reflect and adjusted his priorities.

“You just have so much time and freedom to kind of do what you want,” Daniels said. “It was difficult trying to navigate that, but you lean on people closest to you and obviously you’ve got to keep the end goal in mind. You’re trying to get better each and every

day, and you’re trying to progress each and every season, each and every month and snap.”

Part of getting better was absolutely getting some more upper-body heft — especially given Daniels’ penchant to escape the pocket and run for big gains and given reigning Super Bowl champion Philadelphia, Dallas and the New York Giants have no shortage of bruising defenders ready to hit him.

“Put on a little muscle, huh?” center Tyler Biadasz said. “For sure. He said what he was going to do, and he did it.”

Daniels upon arriving in Washington developed the reputation as a player who arrives early to the team facility and stays late. No one around the Commanders anticipates that will change now that he may be a few pounds heavier.

“I haven’t gotten like side by side in the mirror or anything, but he’s doing great,” coach Dan Quinn said. “You can sense when people are going for it, and he’s certainly one that is. ... There is no flinch in Jayden Daniels. He is as focused and relentless as you could (be) about getting better.”

# Pickett: Browns’ QB battle not contentious

By JOE REEDY  
*Associated Press*

BEREA, Ohio — Kenny Pickett realizes that almost all the offseason attention devoted to the Cleveland Browns is on the quarterback competition.

Pickett wants to make one thing abundantly clear, though — even though it is a competition, things haven’t gotten heated inside the quarterback room.

“I think the outside world makes it a lot bigger than it is. Of course, we’re all competing, but you become friends with everybody,” Pickett said Wednesday after the Browns completed their second day of organized team activities.

“I think it’s a great media headline, but when you get in the building in a quarterback room and at least all the ones I’ve been in, you really become friends with these guys, and we’re just pushing each other.”

Pickett and Joe Flacco got the majority of the snaps with the veterans. Third-round pick Dillon Gabriel got one series of 11-on-11 drills on the main field, while fifth-round selection Shedeur Sanders had none.

since their return in 1999.

Even though Flacco said this is the first quarterback competition of this magnitude he has experienced since being a sophomore in high school in Audubon, N.J., he isn’t focused too much on it at this stage of the offseason.

“I’m just going out there and doing what I do, and everything else is kind of out of my control. So all I can do is go out there and play football and that’s what I’m doing,” Flacco said.

Cleveland acquired Pickett in a trade with the Eagles when the league year opened in March. Pickett started one game last season for the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia while backing up Jalen Hurts. He was 14-10 as a starter in two years with the Steelers after being Pittsburgh’s first-round pick in 2022.

Pickett admitted that there are more similarities between the Eagles’ and Browns’ offenses than most people realize. The biggest thing he has focused on is getting up to speed with the terminology.

“I think it has gone well. They’re doing a great job of getting everyone reps to get experience with the offense and get a feel for everybody,” he said.

Pickett and Flacco both have developed a good rapport with Jerry Jeudy. The sixth-year wide receiver had one of the day’s best catches on a deep route from Flacco on one of the first plays during 11-on-11 drills.

“It’s been good. I don’t think there were many dropped balls,” Jeudy said. “So quarterbacks were putting balls right on the money and receivers were making plays. We’re going to keep doing that.”

Gabriel had a pass tipped at the line of scrimmage and picked off by first-round pick Mason Graham. Both Gabriel and Sanders fared well in 7-on-7 drills against rookies.



Phil Long/AP

Cleveland Browns quarterback Joe Flacco throws as Kenny Pickett watches during a practice session Wednesday in Berea, Ohio.



MLB

# Yankees streaking into WS rematch

**By MIKE DiGIOVANNA**  
*Associated Press*

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Aaron Judge and the New York Yankees will have a good head of steam as they bus 30 miles up the 5 Freeway for their World Series rematch against the Los Angeles Dodgers this weekend.

New York's 1-0 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Wednesday night gave the AL East leaders 16 wins in 20 games.

Clarke Schmidt continued a six-week stretch of superb starting pitching with six shutout innings, and Anthony Volpe drove in the only run with a first-inning sacrifice fly as the Yankees (35-20) completed a three-game sweep and sent the Angels (25-30) to their fifth straight loss.

A Yankees rotation that lost ace Gerrit Cole to season-ending elbow surgery and has two other starters — Luis Gil and Marcus Stroman — on the injured list has a major league-best 2.54 ERA over the last 40 games and has limited opponents to one run or less in 22 of those starts.

Left-hander Ryan Yarbrough allowed one run and two hits in six innings of Monday night's 5-1 win over the Angels, left-hander Carlos Rodon gave up five hits in seven scoreless innings of Tuesday's 3-2 win, and Schmidt, a right-hander, gave up four hits in his six shutout innings Wednesday night.

Left-hander Max Fried, who is 7-0 with a 1.29 ERA in 11 starts, will pitch Friday night's series opener against the Dodgers, and right-hander Will Warren, who is 3-2 with a 4.09 ERA in 11 starts, is scheduled to pitch Saturday.

The NL West-leading Dodgers (34-22) have three frontline starters — Blake Snell, Tyler Glasnow and Roki Sasaki — and four high-



**New York Yankees' Aaron Judge (99) and left fielder Jasson Domínguez, right, celebrating a win. Judge currently leads the AL in batting.**

leverage relievers — Blake Treinen, Evan Phillips, Michael Kopech and Kirby Yates — on the injured list. But they still have plenty of star power, with Shohei Ohtani, Mookie Betts and Freddie Freeman, who have combined to win five MVP awards, plus Teoscar Hernández and Will Smith at the top of their lineup.

“Yeah, it will feel big,” Yankees manager Aaron Boone said of the matchup. “Now, we won’t go in treating it any differently, but we played the Subway Series (against the New York Mets) last week, and there was a lot of hype for that. I think these are good things for our guys to play in and experience.”

The series will feature two of the best players in baseball in Judge and Ohtani, both coming off an MVP season.

Judge, who has won two American League MVPs, leads the AL

in batting average (.391), on-base percentage (.488), slugging percentage (.739), OPS (1.227) and hits (81). He is tied for third in the majors in home runs (18) and ranks fourth in RBIs (47).

Ohtani, who has won three MVPs — his first two with the Angels in 2021 and 2023 — leads the major leagues with 20 homers and 59 runs and ranks third in OPS (1.042). He produced baseball's first 50-50 season with 54 homers and 59 stolen bases in 2024.

The two-way star, who has a 38-19 record and 3.01 ERA in 86 starts over five seasons but did not pitch while recovering from Tommy John surgery in 2024, is also on track to return to the mound sometime after the All-Star break.

“I think Judge has been the best hitter in the sport now for a number of years, but what Shohei does with his speed and, when he’s

healthy, being an ace on the mound, and his ability to swing the bat ... we haven’t seen that,” Boone said.

“Ohtani, when you add in the pitching element, is just so unique, like nothing we’ve ever seen in this game.”

Freeman, the Dodgers first baseman, hit four homers, including a walk-off grand slam in the 10th inning of Game 1, and drove in 12 runs to earn World Series MVP honors last October.

Freeman’s two-run single also keyed a five-run rally in the fifth inning that helped the Dodgers overcome a 5-0 deficit in their series-clinching 7-6 victory in Game 5 at Yankee Stadium.

The Dodgers held Ohtani to two hits in 19 at-bats (.105) and no RBIs in the World Series, but he played the final three games with a dislocated left shoulder that was surgically repaired after the season.

“You have to execute (pitches) at a high level against him, or we’re backing up bases or getting a new ball,” Boone said. “We did a pretty good job against him in the World Series last year, but he’s also hit some big homers against us.”

The Yankees will have a Dodgers nemesis that they didn’t have last October in veteran first baseman Paul Goldschmidt, who signed a one-year, \$12.5 million deal last winter and is batting .347 with an .899 OPS, five homers and 27 RBIs in his first 55 games with the Yankees. A former Diamondbacks and Cardinals slugger, Goldschmidt has a .283 average, .872 OPS, 35 homers and 109 RBIs in 163 career games against the Dodgers and a .308 average, .928 OPS, 19 homers and 50 RBIs in 77 games in Dodger Stadium.

# Met’s Soto slips deeper with another hitless game

**By JERRY BEACH**  
*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Juan Soto’s numbers are getting ugly.

The slumping New York Mets slugger went hitless again Wednesday and failed to get the ball out of the infield in a 9-4 loss to the Chicago White Sox.

After signing a record \$765 million contract in December as a free agent, Soto is batting a measly .224 with eight homers and 25 RBIs in 55 games during a turbulent first season with the Mets.

The four-time All-Star and five-time Silver Slugger winner was 0 for 4 with a walk and a strikeout Wednesday in a dreary performance that matched the weather. He was booed by a sparse crowd at Citi Field, where only a few thousand fans were on hand for a hastily rescheduled game.

Soto is 0-for-16 since lacing a



**New York’s Juan Soto reacts to striking out in the fifth inning against Chicago on Wednesday.**

two-run double off the right-center fence Saturday in a 5-2 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers. And nothing seems to be going his way: He lost a hit on a chaotic play Tuesday night when he was called out for passing teammate Brandon Nimmo on the basepaths.

Mets manager Carlos Mendoza

expressed faith in Soto both before and after Wednesday’s loss.

“Today was one of those days where he didn’t hit the ball hard, but I thought his foundation — his lower half — was in a better position,” Mendoza said.

Soto’s batting average has dipped 61 points below his career mark entering the season. He hasn’t homered since May 9, a span of 75 plate appearances, and he has just seven hits in his last 59 at-bats (.119).

With runners in scoring position this year, he’s batting .130 (6-for-46) with a homer and 16 RBIs.

That after racking up 41 home runs, 109 RBIs and a .989 OPS with the crosstown New York Yankees last season, when he helped them reach the World Series and finished third in AL MVP voting.

Soto has been particularly cold

since May 16, when he got booed incessantly in his return to Yankee Stadium. He seemed to take the harsh reception in stride by doffing his helmet to the crowd prior to his first at-bat, but Soto is hitting only .114 (5 for 44) with one extra-base hit since.

Most advanced metrics suggest Soto is hitting into hard luck.

He ranks among the 90th percentile in several categories at Baseball Savant, though his bat speed ranks in the 73rd percentile, down from the 94th percentile last season.

Soto made three outs on balls hit at least 99 mph in Tuesday night’s 6-4 win over the White Sox.

“Yesterday was a perfect example of his season so far: 0-for-4 with three balls (almost) 100 mph,” Mendoza said with a chuckle Wednesday morning. “Hard to explain. But it’s baseball.

## Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	35	20	.636	—
Tampa Bay	28	27	.509	7
Toronto	27	28	.491	8
Boston	27	31	.466	9½
Baltimore	19	36	.345	16

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	37	20	.649	—
Cleveland	30	25	.545	6
Minnesota	30	25	.545	6
Kansas City	30	27	.526	7
Chicago	18	38	.321	18½

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	30	24	.556	—
Houston	30	25	.545	½
Texas	27	30	.474	4½
Los Angeles	25	30	.455	5½
Athletics	23	33	.411	8

National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	35	19	.648	—
New York	34	22	.607	2
Atlanta	25	28	.472	9½
Washington	25	30	.455	10½
Miami	22	32	.407	13

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	35	21	.625	—
St. Louis	32	24	.571	3
Milwaukee	29	28	.509	6½
Cincinnati	28	29	.491	7½
Pittsburgh	21	36	.368	14½

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	34	22	.607	—
San Diego	31	23	.574	2
San Francisco	31	25	.554	3
Arizona	27	29	.482	7
Colorado	9	47	.161	25

Wednesday's games	
Tampa Bay 5, Minnesota 0	Cleveland 7, L.A. Dodgers 4
Detroit 4, San Francisco 3	Milwaukee 6, Boston 5, 10 innings
Chicago White Sox 9, N.Y. Mets 4	Houston 5, Athletics 3
St. Louis 6, Baltimore 4	Kansas City 3, Cincinnati 2
Toronto 2, Texas 0	Washington 9, Seattle 0
N.Y. Yankees 1, L.A. Angels 0	Pittsburgh 10, Arizona 1
Miami 10, San Diego 8	Chicago Cubs 2, Colorado 1
Atlanta at Philadelphia, ppd.	
Thursday's games	
Athletics at Toronto	Tampa Bay at Houston
Washington at Seattle	Atlanta at Philadelphia, 2
Friday's games	
Chicago White Sox (Burke 3-5) at Baltimore (Eflin 3-2)	Athletics (Springs 5-3) at Toronto (Bassitt 4-3)
L.A. Angels (Soriano 3-5) at Cleveland (Ortiz 2-5)	Boston (Giolito 1-1) at Atlanta (Holmes 3-3)
St. Louis (Liberatore 3-3) at Texas (Leiter 3-2)	Detroit (Mize 6-1) at Kansas City (Lugo 3-4)
Tampa Bay (Pepiot 3-5) at Houston (Valdez 4-4)	Minnesota (Matthews 0-1) at Seattle (Woo 5-2)
N.Y. Yankees (Fried 7-0) at L.A. Dodgers (Gonsolin 2-1)	Cincinnati (Abbott 4-0) at Chicago Cubs (Rea 3-1)
Milwaukee (Priester 1-2) at Philadelphia (Walker 2-3)	Colorado (Freeland 0-7) at N.Y. Mets (Peterson 3-2)
San Francisco (Harrison 0-1) at Miami (Quantrill 3-4)	Pittsburgh (Keller 1-6) at San Diego (Pivetta 5-2)
Washington (Irvin 4-1) at Arizona (Kelly 5-2)	
Saturday's games	
Athletics at Toronto	Chicago White Sox at Baltimore
St. Louis at Texas	Boston at Atlanta
Detroit at Kansas City	L.A. Angels at Cleveland
Tampa Bay at Houston	Minnesota at Seattle
N.Y. Yankees at L.A. Dodgers	Cincinnati at Chicago Cubs
Milwaukee at Philadelphia	Colorado at N.Y. Mets
San Francisco at Miami	Pittsburgh at San Diego
Washington at Arizona	



# FRENCH OPEN

## Scoreboard

Thursday
At Stade Roland Garros Paris
Purse: Euro 20,509,000
Surface: Red clay
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Second Round
Jiri Lehecka, Czechia, def. Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (26), Spain, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.
Alexander Bublik, Kazakhstan, def. Alex de Minaur (9), Australia, 2-6, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2.
Henrique Rocha, Portugal, def. Jakub Mensik (19), Czechia, 2-6, 1-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.
Arthur Fils (14), France, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 7-6 (3), 7-6 (4), 2-6, 0-6, 6-4.
Alexander Zverev (3), Germany, def. Jesper De Jong, Netherlands, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-3.
Jannik Sinner (1), Italy, def. Richard Gasquet, France, 6-3, 6-0, 6-4.
Andrey Rublev (17), Russia, def. Adam Walton, Australia, 7-6 (1), 6-1, 7-6 (5).
Tallon Griekspoor, Netherlands, def. Gabriel Diallo, Canada, 7-5, 7-6 (3), 1-6, 6-3.
Flavio Cobolli, Italy, def. Matteo Arnaldi, Italy, 6-3, 6-3, 6-7 (6), 6-1.
Cameron Norrie, Britain, def. Federico Agustin Gomez, Argentina, 7-6 (7), 6-2, 6-1.
Joao Fonseca, Brazil, def. Pierre-Hugues Herbert, France, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4), 6-4.
Women's Singles
Second Round
Mirra Andreeva (6), Russia, def. Ashlyn Krueger, United States, 6-3, 6-4.
Marie Bouzkova, Czechia, def. Sonay Kartal, Britain, 6-1, 6-4.
Marketa Vondrousova, Czechia, def. Magdalena Frech (25), Poland, 6-0, 4-6, 6-3.
Hailey Baptiste, United States, def. Nao Hibino, Japan, 6-3, 6-2.
Jessica Pegula (3), United States, def. Ann Li, United States, 6-3, 7-6 (3).
Ekaterina Alexandrova (20), Russia, def. Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Italy, 6-1, 6-3.
Veronika Kudermetova, Russia, def. Barbora Krejickova (15), Czechia, 6-0, 6-3.
Yulia Putintseva (32), Kazakhstan, def. Joanna Garland, Taiwan, 7-6 (5), 6-3.
Jessica Bouzas Maneiro, Spain, def. Robin Montgomery, United States, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5.
Coco Gauff (2), United States, def. Tereza Valentova, Czechia, 6-2, 6-4.
Madison Keys (7), United States, def. Katie Boulter, Britain, 6-1, 6-3.
Lois Boisson, France, def. Anhelina Kalinina, Ukraine, 6-1, 6-2.
Paula Badosa (10), Spain, def. Elena-Gabriela Ruse, Romania, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.

# Gauff uses breaks to pull out a win

**BY HOWARD FENDRICH**  
*Associated Press*

PARIS — Coco Gauff kept getting herself in some trouble with shaky serving in the French Open's second round, and she kept putting herself back in position to win by breaking right back Thursday.

The second-seeded Gauff, pursuing her first title at Roland-Garros, eliminated 172nd-ranked qualifier Tereza Valentova of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-4 in 75 minutes on a partly cloudy, warm afternoon in Court Suzanne-Lenglen.

Amid a soundtrack of sirens from nearby streets and roars from nearby courts, 2023 U.S. Open champion Gauff only managed to produce 11 winners, five fewer than her far-less-experienced opponent. She also finished with 23 unforced errors, a total that included a half-dozen double-faults.

Against Valentova, an 18-year-old who won the junior title at the French Open last year and was competing in the main draw at a major tournament for the first time, Gauff got broken five times. Four of those came in the second set — and each time, the 21-year-old Floridian managed to immedi-

ately rebound to claim Valentova's very next service game.

"There is a sense of urgency after getting broken, for sure. You don't want to get too far behind. You don't want to get two breaks down. You can live with one break. But she's definitely got to serve better and do a better job of holding as the tournament progresses," said Gauff's father, Corey. "She's probably been one of the best returners of serve on the tour the last two to three months. But that's not what you want. You want to hold first, for sure. It's not really a break until you hold."

On Saturday, 2022 runner-up Gauff will try to reach the fourth round in Paris for the fifth consecutive appearance, facing another Czech player, Marie Bouzkova.

Other winners in the women's bracket included No. 3 Jessica Pegula, who was the runner-up at last year's U.S. Open, 18-year-old Mirra Andreeva, and 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova, who reached the 2019 final at Roland-Garros.

Vondrousova, who is unseeded this year, eliminated No. 25 Magdalena Frech 6-0, 4-6, 6-3 on Court 6 and then went to sit in the stands to watch Gauff vs. Valentova.

In men's play, No. 1 Jannik Sin-



CHRISTOPHE ENA/AP  
**Coco Gauff celebrates winning against Tereza Valentova following their second-round match of the French Open on Thursday.**

ner ended the career of 38-year-old Richard Gasquet by beating the Frenchman 6-3, 6-0, 6-4. No. 3 Alexander Zverev and No. 14 Ar-

thur Fils won, while 24-time major champion Novak Djokovic was in late action against Corentin Moutet of France.

# In 'rat race,' playing through pain is pretty common

**BY HOWARD FENDRICH**  
*Associated Press*

PARIS — Casper Ruud is hardly an up-and-comer simply trying to make his way — and a living — in professional tennis. He's a three-time Grand Slam finalist, ranked No. 8, the owner of more clay-court victories than any other man since 2020 and someone who's earned nearly \$25 million in prize money.

And yet Ruud felt the need to play through pain for the better part of two months, right up until the moment the left knee that's been swollen from a build-up of fluid, that's prompted him to pop pills, that's ached every time he slides into an open-stance backhand, became too problematic during a French Open second-round match. He didn't stop, but he did drop 13 of the last 14 games in a loss Wednesday.

Afterward, the 26-year-old Norwegian voiced concerns, also expressed this week by other players, that there is an overwhelming sense of obligation to take the court as often as possible, no matter one's health, thanks to a schedule and a system Ruud called a "rat race."

"You feel like you lose a lot if you don't show up and play, both economically, point-wise, ranking-wise and opportunity-wise," Ruud said, noting that skipping one mandatory event brings a 25%



LINDSEY WASSON/AP  
**Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, left, looks on as Damir Dzumhur tries to get up after falling during their second-round match on Wednesday.**

cut to a year-end bonus on the men's tour. "You're kind of forcing players to show up injured or sick."

Caroline Garcia, a 2022 U.S. Open semifinalist who announced this is her last season as a pro, wrote in a social media post that she relied on a steady diet of anti-

inflammatories, corticoid injections and plasma treatments to deal with a bum shoulder.

The 31-year-old from France wondered aloud: "Is it truly worth pushing our bodies to such extremes?" She spoke in Paris about the stresses of trying to maintain one's ranking and "the responsi-

bility" of performing for one's entourage.

"I can feel what she feels," said Alexander Zverev, a three-time major runner-up. "The thing is, with us tennis players, it's a 1-on-1 sport, so we get the blame all the time, right?"

Ajla Tomljanovic, who handed Serena Williams the last loss of her career, summed it up this way: "I don't think playing with pain is smart, but I've done it before. Sometimes it was rewarded, and sometimes it wasn't."

Emma Raducanu, the 2021 U.S. Open champion, said she kept entering tournaments a couple of seasons ago despite problems in both wrists that required surgery.

People around her at the time, Raducanu said, "were telling me I wasn't tough enough, like I need to just work through it, like it's normal I'm feeling fatigued because I'm training so much. When in reality, I knew there was pain, and I knew it kind of felt more than just soreness. So I wish I would have listened to myself sooner."

Australian Open champion Madison Keys said Garcia's post resonated.

"She's right. At some point, you just have to say, 'I'm done.' And like she said, it's something that we learn from a really young age," Keys said. "Everyone applauds (NBA star Michael) Jordan for playing with the flu ... and some-

how it was a better achievement because he pushed through it. Obviously, it was incredible that he was able to do that while ill, but I don't think you always need to."

On Wednesday, Tommy Paul, an American seeded 12th in Paris, wasn't quite sure what was wrong in his lower abdominal area, but he knew it didn't feel right during his second-round match. He was visited by a trainer, who couldn't do much to help. Paul played on, wound up winning in five sets, and planned to get an MRI exam Thursday.

"I'm going back out to play," Paul said, "for sure."

In another match, Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia tumbled to the clay, hurting his knee. Dzumhur, too, continued, won to set up a showdown with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz, and declared: "If it's just a bruise — if I cannot make it worse — then I can play."

Tennis is a non-contact sport, of course, so the perils are not the same as in professional team sports leagues like the NFL. Still, Ruud estimated something is physically wrong with him in more than half his matches — "whether that's just a small blister under your foot or maybe a little soreness in your stomach, rib, back, knee, whatever."

"Every part of my body," he said, "has felt some kind of pain."



# NHL PLAYOFFS

## Trust: Barkov has been key part of long overhaul for years with Panthers

FROM PAGE 48

ference finals — get there, it'll be the 11th title-round rematch in the Stanley Cup era and the first since Pittsburgh and Detroit played for the trophy in 2008 and 2009.

If Dallas gets there, it'll pit Panthers coach Paul Maurice against Stars coach Peter DeBoer, his former assistant in the Ontario Hockey League and one of his closest friends. It'll also be the first times Florida and Dallas play each other in the United States this season; their two matchups this year were in Finland back in November, the Panthers winning both.

"The most important step is ahead of us," goalie Sergei Bobrovsky said.

The Panthers are the ninth franchise in NHL history to make the Stanley Cup Final in at least three consecutive seasons. Barkov became the first Finnish captain to get the honor of having the inaugural hoist of the Cup when Florida won the title last year, and he was there through a lot of lean years for the Panthers. Forget the Cup final; Florida couldn't make the playoffs for much of its history.

That seems so long ago now. No team has played more postseason games in the last four years than the Panthers, and there's at least four more games this season left to go.

"I think it was a long time coming," Barkov said. "Obviously, there's been a lot of work put in by this organization to become better and reach the level where we want to win Stanley Cups, we want compete for Stanley Cups every single

### Scoreboard

**Conference Finals**  
**Best-of-7; x-if necessary**  
**EASTERN CONFERENCE**  
Florida 4, Carolina 1

Florida 5, Carolina 2  
Florida 5, Carolina 0  
Florida 6, Carolina 2  
Carolina 3, Florida 0  
**Wednesday:** at Carolina  
**WESTERN CONFERENCE**  
Edmonton 3, Dallas 1

Dallas 6, Edmonton 3  
Edmonton 3, Dallas 0  
Edmonton 6, Dallas 1  
Edmonton 4, Dallas 1  
**Thursday:** at Dallas  
**x-Saturday:** at Edmonton  
**x-Monday:** at Dallas

year. There are 31 other teams in the league and it's hard every single year. They want to do that too, so it's not easy. But we've managed to do it three years in a row, which is, I think, an incredible achievement so far."

Aaron Ekblad is in his 11th season as a Panther — one behind Barkov — and he remembers those tough times. Florida once missed the playoffs by a point during their tenure; some years, they missed by five or six wins. They weren't terrible. They just weren't that good.

But Ekblad remembers why he always remained steadfast in the belief that the franchise would get to this point.

"We've always had Sasha Barkov," Ekblad said. "So there was always hope, especially in those down years. We always had Barky to lead the way."

Barkov led then. He led now. And another trip to the final awaits.



Florida Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov clears the puck past the Carolina Hurricanes' Jaccob Slavin during the first period of Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals in Raleigh, N.C., on Wednesday.



Carolina's Sebastian Aho reacts to the Hurricanes' elimination loss to the Florida Panthers following Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals in Raleigh, N.C., on Wednesday.

## For 2nd straight year, Canes lament falling in large hole

BY AARON BEARD  
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — For the second straight year, the Carolina Hurricanes failed to win a game in their last postseason series until on the edge of elimination.

This time, it ended their season in another Eastern Conference final — the stage proving to be a roadblock in their multiyear Stanley Cup push.

Carolina fell 5-3 to Florida on Wednesday night in Game 5, sending the Panthers back to the sport's final stage for the third straight year while ending the Hurricanes' latest lengthy playoff grind short of the ultimate goal.

And it ended in a similar fashion to the previous year: with Carolina losing the first three games of a series, spending multiple games trying to dig out of that massive hole and then losing a two-goal lead at home in the game that ultimately ended their season.

"I think essentially we lost in the first few games," Hurricanes captain Jordan Staal said. "You can't start a series like that and expect a better outcome."

A year ago, it was an 0-3 series deficit to the Presidents' Trophy-winning New York Rangers in the second round. Carolina regrouped to win two elimination games and carried a 3-1 lead into the third period of a Game 6 at home, only to see the Rangers surge back behind Chris Kreider's hat trick in the final 20 minutes in a 5-3 victory.

This time, it was an 0-3 series

deficit to the the reigning Stanley Cup champions, a tested and deep team unafraid to play and surpass the Hurricanes' aggressive forechecking approach. And it ended with a matching final score.

"We knew it was going to be a big task to try to beat them," said Carolina's Sebastian Aho, who had two first-period goals Wednesday that put the Hurricanes ahead. "We truly believe we have what it takes, but obviously we fell short yet again."

By the final horn, Carolina's lamentations went back to losing the first two games at home, the second being a 5-0 blowout in which Florida was shockingly dominant and the Hurricanes' normally rowdy fans were left to frustratedly chant "Shoot the puck! Shoot the puck!"

"Those first two games you'd probably want back, but it's too little, too late," said Seth Jarvis, who had a tying goal midway through the third period before the Panthers made their go-ahead move on Carter Verhaeghe's score. "And that's kind of the result of it."

By Game 3, Carolina had seen a 1-1 game entering the third mush-room into a 6-2 loss for its 15th straight loss in a conference final going back to sweeps in 2009, 2019 and the 2023 one against this Florida team. The Hurricanes regrouped to win Game 4 on the road and avert another sweep, but they faced a long climb to accomplish the improbable.

Carolina jumped to a 2-0 lead with Aho twice putting Panthers

giveaways in the neutral zone into the net behind Sergei Bobrovsky. But the Florida flurry of three goals on consecutive second-period shots — two coming in a 30-second span — erased that deficit and silenced a roaring crowd giddy by the Hurricanes' start.

While Carolina responded with Seth Jarvis' tying goal midway through the third, the dynamic of the game had completely changed after a flurry coach Rod Brind'Amour called "a backbreaker."

"You could just feel us — it's just natural, the building, everything, it kind of sucked a little bit of life out of us," Brind'Amour said.

The Hurricanes' five-week playoff push had included five-game series wins against the New Jersey Devils and Washington Capitals, the latter being this year's top seed in the Eastern Conference. Yet Carolina went from going 5-0 at home in those two series to losing all three home games against the Panthers.

The Hurricanes have won at least one postseason series in their current run of seven straight playoff appearances, though three have now ended in the Eastern final.

"We've had slow starts in the series, when it gets to the top four teams, they're great teams, and having a slow start is never great," Staal said.

"Obviously we always believe in the group when we get here and coming up short is never easy, and it doesn't get any easier. We'll just try to get better and try again."



NBA PLAYOFFS/NHL PLAYOFFS

SGA stars again as Thunder win, advance to Finals

BY CLIFF BRUNT  
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Thunder tried their best to balance the euphoria of the moment with the fact that they haven't completed their mission.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 34 points, and Oklahoma City routed the Minnesota Timberwolves 124-94 on Wednesday night to win the Western Conference finals series 4-1 and advance to the NBA Finals for the first time since 2012.

After the win, the league MVP was measured in his excitement. The Thunder will play the Indiana Pacers or New York Knicks in the finals. Indiana leads the Eastern Conference finals series 3-1 with Game 5 to be played in New York City on Thursday.

"We've got a lot of growing to do," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "We've got a lot of work to do to get to our ultimate goal, and this is not it, so that's all that I'm focused on."

Still, the young OKC players had some of their usual fun. During a postgame interview, coach Mark Daigneault began complimenting his young squad.

"These guys are uncommon. They do everything right. They're high character."

Several players then started draping towels over Daigneault, as they often do to local sideline reporter Nick Gallo during postgame interview sessions.

NBA scoreboard

Conference Finals

Best-of-7; x-if necessary  
EASTERN CONFERENCE  
Indiana 3, New York 1

Indiana 138, New York 135, OT  
Indiana 114, New York 109  
New York 106, Indiana 100  
Indiana 130, New York 121  
Thursday: at New York  
x-Saturday: at Indiana  
x-Monday: at New York

WESTERN CONFERENCE  
Oklahoma City 4, Minnesota 1

Oklahoma City 114, Minnesota 88  
Oklahoma City 118, Minnesota 103  
Minnesota 143, Oklahoma City 101  
Oklahoma City 128, Minnesota 126  
Wednesday: Oklahoma City 124, Minnesota 94

"They're idiots," Daigneault said without breaking focus.

Chet Holmgren had 22 points, seven rebounds and three blocks, and Jalen Williams added 19 points and eight rebounds for the Thunder.

A fanbase that had suffered through losing Kevin Durant in free agency in 2016 and a rebuild that had the team near the bottom of the league's standings just four years ago let loose in the fourth quarter when Oklahoma City sat its starters with 5:14 remaining and a 108-74 lead.

Julius Randle scored 24 points and Anthony Edwards added 19 for the Timberwolves, who shot just 41.2% from the field and committed 21 turnovers.

It was a tough loss for Minnesota point guard Mike Conley. The



KYLE PHILLIPS/AP

Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, middle, celebrates with teammates after beating the Minnesota Timberwolves in Game 5 of the Western Conference finals Wednesday in Oklahoma City.

37-year-old point guard said these opportunities are rare.

"It's going to take a while just to kind of dissect what we just did and what we weren't able to accomplish," he said. "But at the same time, I'm proud of my team, proud of these guys, man. They really fought. Not just for me, but for the whole team."

The Thunder opened the game on an 11-3 run and extended the advantage throughout the first quarter. Cason Wallace drained a 3-pointer as the first quarter expired to put OKC up 26-9 at the end of the period. The game was never close after that.

"We just struggled to find a rhythm," T-wolves coach Chris Finch said. "Everyone was kind of trying to do it all by themselves. We lost our connectivity. But all



NATE BILLINGS/AP

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander dunks as part of his 34-point performance.

credit to the Thunder. They certainly deserve this. They played outstanding. And we came up short in a lot of ways."

"They're a really good team," Edwards added. "Everyone here knows it. It's no surprise to nobody here that this team is pretty good."

Coaches opt to sit out player handshakes after East final

BY TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

Florida coach Paul Maurice did not shake hands with Carolina when the Eastern Conference final ended. And he asked Hurricanes coach Rod Brind'Amour not to shake hands with the Panthers, either.

It wasn't out of disrespect.

Quite the contrary, really.

The handshake line at the end of a playoff series is one of hockey's sacred traditions, no matter how physical the series was before one team eventually prevailed. And Maurice thinks the handshakes are part of what makes the game great to hockey fans, and he's all for it happening.

Maurice has just said repeatedly throughout this postseason that he thinks the coaches shouldn't be part of it — reiterating that after



CHRIS SEWARD/AP

Florida Panthers and Carolina Hurricanes players shake hands at the end of Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals Wednesday in Raleigh, N.C.

Florida eliminated Carolina on Wednesday night, even going as far as convincing Brind'Amour to

sit it out himself. In that moment, Maurice said, nothing should take the attention off the players on the

two teams that just played a series.

"I don't believe that the coaches should shake players' hands at the end," Maurice said. "There's this long list of people in suits and track suits. We had like 400 people on the ice. They're all really important to our group. But not one of them was in the game."

So just as he did after the Round 2 win over Toronto, Maurice and his staff shook hands with Brind'Amour and other members of the Hurricanes staff. That happened near the benches, while the players partook in the traditional handshake line down the center of the ice.

Maurice said several weeks ago that he isn't sure when the post-round handshake expanded to include coaches, and figures some-one years ago did it just to either be seen or grab some television

time. He said when he started coaching, people in the suits weren't in those handshake moments.

This season, Maurice has been trying to amend the tradition. And he thanked Brind'Amour for taking a risk, as Maurice said, in agreeing with him.

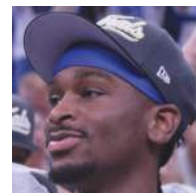
"There's something for me visually, with the camera on just the men who played, blocked shots, fought for each other, it's end of one's season, it's excitement for the other," Maurice said. "The last thing that a player on the Carolina Hurricanes deserves is 50 more guys in suits, they have no idea who they are and that's not a negative. There's something really kind of beautiful about just the camera on those men who played shaking hands. And we should respect that."



# SPORTS

## One more test

Thunder advance to Finals behind SGA's 34-point game » **NBA playoffs, Page 47**



KARL B. DEBLAKER/AP

Florida Panthers captain Aleksander Barkov skates over to accept the Prince of Wales Trophy following Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals against the Carolina Hurricanes in Raleigh, N.C., on Wednesday.

### NHL PLAYOFFS

# In Barkov they trust

## Led by captain, Panthers back in Stanley Cup Final

BY TIM REYNOLDS  
*Associated Press*

The entire play took eight seconds, and basically summed up why the Florida Panthers have enormous, nonstop belief in Aleksander Barkov.

Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals was tied at 3 in the third period. Barkov picked up the puck in the right corner. He skated around the end boards, as Carolina Hurricanes defenseman Dmitry Orlov tried to use his entire 214-pound frame to move Barkov one direction or the other. Orlov had no chance.

Barkov stopped on a dime, turned around, ducked back toward the net and slid the puck to a place that only the Panthers' Carter Verhaeghe could reach. Verhaeghe turned that pass into the winner, and with that, Florida was headed back to its third consecutive Stanley Cup Final.

In Barky they trusted. Again.

"Such a great player," Verhaeghe said. "It was such a great play by him. It was all him."

The funny part is that Barkov would hate hearing such praise, and he surely would never say anything like that about himself. He is a most unassuming superstar, someone who doesn't care about the spotlight, someone who was legitimately surprised when fans recognized him last year at a Florida Atlantic basketball game in Boca Raton — about 20 minutes north of where the Panthers play their home games.

But he is Florida's best player. And he has led the defending Stanley Cup champions back to the title round for a third consecutive season.

"He's one of the best in the world at that, if not the best," Panthers forward Sam Reinhart said. "He's got so much strength. Big players make big plays at the biggest moments when you need them, and he's certainly the leader of this team."

Florida moves on to face either Edmonton or Dallas in the Stanley Cup Final. There will be intrigue either way.

If the Oilers — who lead the Stars 3-1 in the Western Con-

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# SEC meetings could impact all college sports » Page 41

