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& PACIFIC

WEEKEND
EDITION



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Army inks \$1B deal for Switchblade attack drones

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

Weapons manufacturer AeroVironment will deliver more Switchblade-series loitering munitions to the Army over the next five years after signing an agreement worth up to nearly \$1 billion recently.

The indefinite-quantity contract doesn't specify how many Switchblades the Army will order over the next five years, but the first deliveries are expected within months, AeroVironment said in a statement Wednesday.

The Pentagon announced the \$990 million deal Tuesday in its daily contracting notice. The munitions are "capable of destroying tanks, light armored vehicles, hardened targets, defilade and personnel targets," the statement said.

AeroVironment is already delivering Switchblades to the Army under a separate contract awarded in December. The acquisitions are part of the Army's revised focus on preparing for conventional

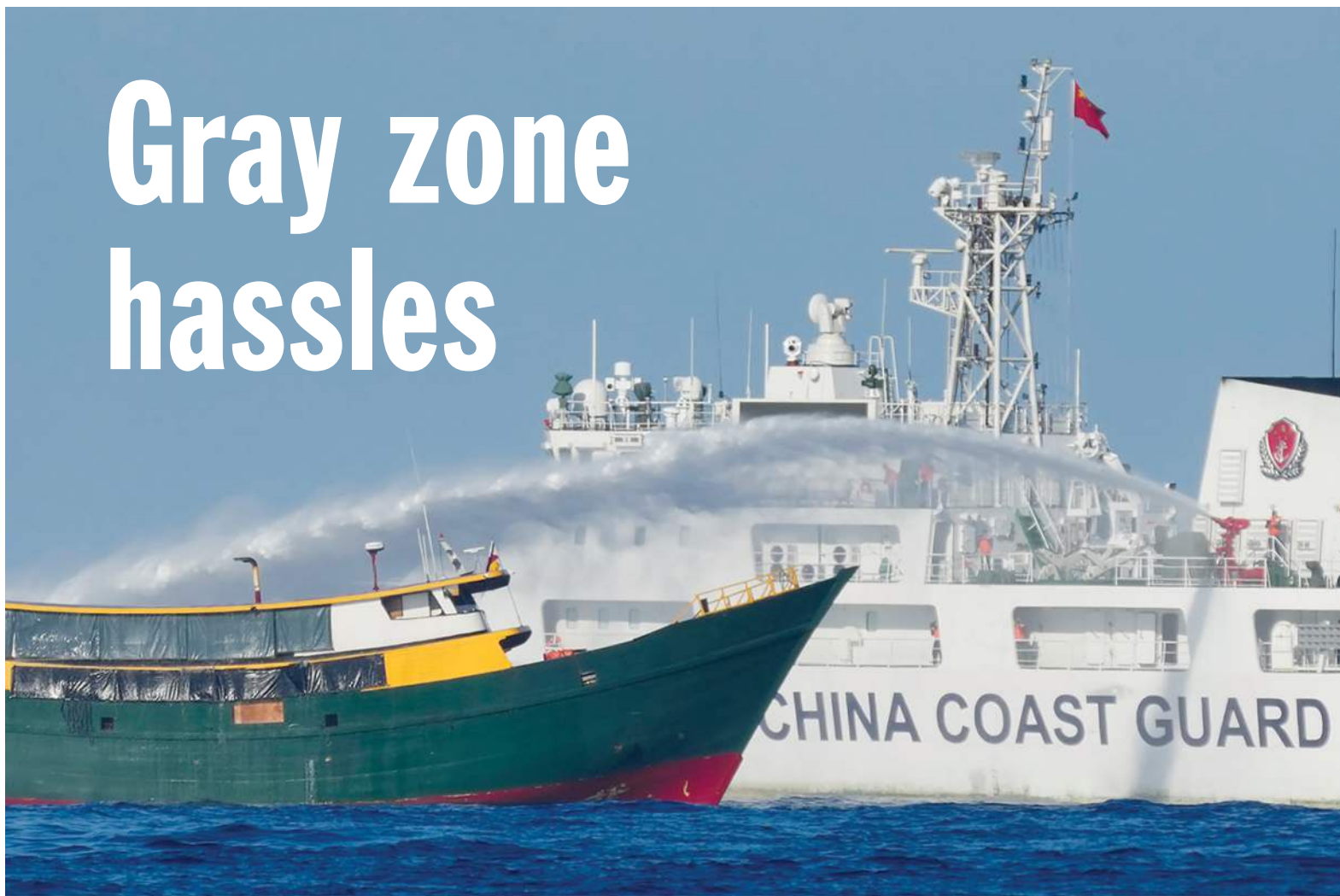
SEE DRONES ON PAGE 7



JAYE TOWNSEND/U.S. Marine Corps

A Marine fires a Switchblade 300 loitering munition at Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Aug. 14.

Gray zone hassles



AARON FAVILA/AP

Philippine resupply vessel Unaizah May 4 is hit by a Chinese coast guard water cannon blast as they tried to enter the Second Thomas Shoal in the disputed South China Sea on March 5. U.S. Indo-Pacific Command chief Adm. Samuel Paparo said Thursday that American forces are ready with a "range of options" to deal with increasing acts of aggression in the disputed South China Sea.

Admiral: US has options when dealing with South China Sea aggression

BY JIM GOMEZ
AND JOEAL CALUPITAN
Associated Press

BAGUIO, Philippines — American forces are ready with a "range of options" to deal with increasing acts of aggression in the disputed South China Sea if ordered to carry them out jointly and after consultations with treaty ally the Philippines, a U.S. admiral said Thursday.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command chief Adm. Samuel Paparo, who heads the biggest number of combat forces outside the U.S. mainland, refused to provide details of the contingency options.

Paparo's comments came when asked at a news conference what the longtime treaty allies could do to deal with China's so-called gray-zone tactics in the disputed waters.

The "gray-zone tactics" refer to types of as-

sault, like water cannon fire and the blocking and ramming of rival ships in the disputed waters, that are under the threshold of an actual armed attack and wouldn't allow the Philippines to invoke its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with the U.S. The treaty obligates either country to help the other in case of an armed external attack.

"We certainly have prepared a range of options and USINDOPACOM stands ready, if so called, after consultations in accordance with the treaty to execute those shoulder to shoulder with our ally," Paparo said.

Detailing those U.S. military options would allow "the potential adversary" to "build a countermeasure to those," he said.

Paparo held a joint news conference with

SEE GRAY ON PAGE 7



AP

In this image provided by Armed Forces of the Philippines, a Chinese coast guard holds an axe as they approach Philippine troops in the South China Sea on June 17.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Germany	\$3.722	\$4.251	\$4.610	\$4.060	Azores	..	..	\$4.460
Change in price	-6.9 cents	-6.4 cents	-5.1 cents	-3.7 cents	Change in price	..	..	-5.1 cents
Netherlands	..	\$4.613	\$4.891	\$4.718	Turkey	..	..	\$4.276 \$4.611*
Change in price	..	-8.3 cents	-8.4 cents	-8.4 cents	Change in price	..	..	-5.1 cents No change
U.K.	..	\$4.251	\$4.610	\$4.060	Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective Aug. 30. The change in price is from Aug. 23			
Change in price	..	-6.4 cents	-5.1 cents	-3.7 cents				

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Japan	..	\$4.249	..	\$3.699	South Korea	\$3.399	..	\$4.279 \$3.729
Change in price	..	-5.0 cents	..	-4.0 cents	Change in price	-7.0 cents	..	-6.0 cents -4.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.359	..	..	\$3.699	Guam	\$3.429**	\$3.949	\$4.309
Change in price	-7.0 cents	..	..	-4.0 cents	Change in price	-6.0 cents	-7.0 cents	-5.0 cents

*DieselEFD **Midgrade
Pacific prices for the week of Aug. 30 - Sept. 5

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Aug. 30)	\$1.09	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8469
British pound (Aug. 30)	\$1.29	Thailand (Baht)	34.03
Japanese yen (Aug. 30)	141.00	Turkey (NewLira)	34.0768
South Korean won (Aug. 30)	1303.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3768		
Britain (Pound)	1.3164		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3479		
China (Yuan)	7.0974		
Denmark (Krone)	6.7298		
Egypt (Pound)	48.6204		
Euro	0.9023		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7957		
Hungary (Forint)	354.48		
Israel (Shekel)	3.6679		
Japan (Yen)	145.38		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3055		
Norway (Krone)	10.4985		
Philippines (Peso)	56.17		
Poland (Zloty)	3.87		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7526		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3033		
South Korea (Won)	1334.22		

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

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.09
30-year bond	4.13

WEATHER OUTLOOK

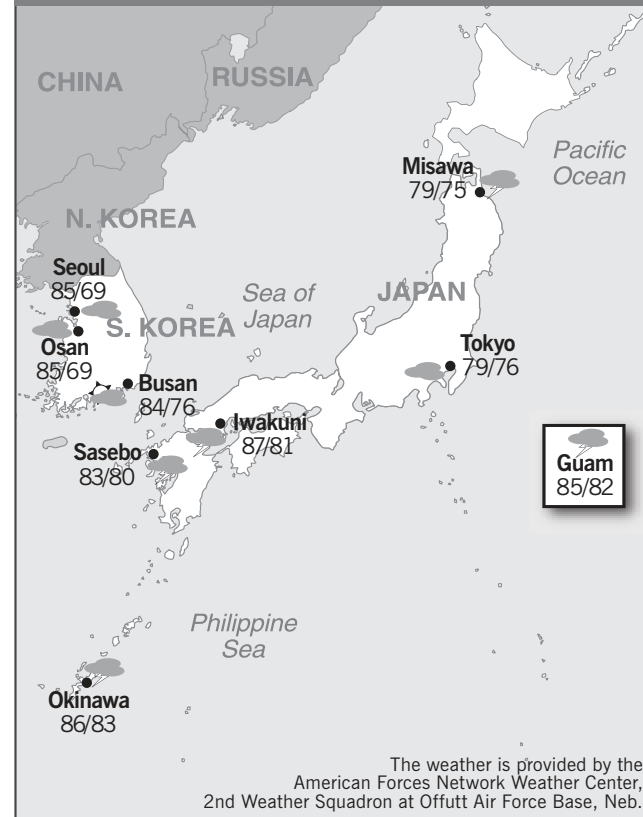
FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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STARS AND STRIPES

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MILITARY



U.S. Air Force

Archived photo of the YC-130 Hercules during its ferry flight from Burbank, Calif., to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on Aug. 23, 1954.

USAF celebrates 70 years of the durable, versatile C-130 Hercules

By ALEXANDER BANERJEE
Stars and Stripes

Seventy years since its first flight on Aug. 23, 1954, the C-130 Hercules has remained one of the most durable and versatile military aircraft in history. It has traversed every continent and been used by over 70 nations, and there is no sign its importance will diminish any time soon.

"It's the greatest airplane ever built, and it's stained honorably with American blood, sweat and tears," Gen. Mike Minihan, commander of Air Mobility Command, said in an Air Force news release.

The contemporary Air Force fleet counts 436 of the aircraft, with 12 different models spread across seven major commands and the Air National Guard.

Approximately 50 of the aircraft undergo maintenance each year at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, which hosted a 70th anniversary celebration for the aircraft. The base's Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex is the main hub for depot maintenance and modernization of the C-130.

The C-130 was also honored at Yokota Air Base in Japan, where the 36th Airlift Squadron and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force 401st Tactical Airlift Squadron took to the skies to commemorate the C-130's maiden voyage.

The 374th Airlift Wing in Yokota emphasized the collaborative history of the C-130 in its own news release for the celebration. "Grandfathers, fathers, mothers, daughters, sons and grandchildren have all flown this aircraft," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Sam Vincent, director of inspections for the wing.

The C-130 got its start in the aftermath of the Korean War, with U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Command realizing the force lacked medium cargo transport aircraft.

In the modern era, those roots in the Pacific are rel-



YASUO OSAKABE/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules taxi down a flightline at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Aug. 23 to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the first flight of the Lockheed Martin C-130.

evant again. The C-130 will be a key part of the Air Force's call for a reorientation toward great power competition, with a particular emphasis on agile combat employment and the Pacific.

Unlike the short-range flights that characterize operations in the Middle East, operations in the Pacific involve military hubs separated by vast expanses of ocean. Those tasked with modernizing the C-130 are considering how to improve engine power, fuel efficiency, propeller technology and weight reduction, among other things.

It is a challenge that will be welcomed by experienced hands: Robins Air Force Base has been repairing C-130 aircraft almost as long as the plane has existed, since 1964.

"Nobody else in the world does the repair and overhaul work that we do here at Robins," said Ben Stuart, 560th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron director of operations.

Shipbuilder to settle accounting fraud probe

Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. — Austal USA, an Alabama-based shipbuilder that makes vessels for the U.S. Navy, has admitted wrongdoing and agreed to pay a \$24 million fine to settle an accounting fraud investigation, the U.S. Department of Justice announced Tuesday.

From 2013 through July 2016, Austal USA conspired to mislead shareholders and investors about the company's financial condition, the department said. The company

pleaded guilty to one count of securities fraud and one count of obstruction of a federal audit.

Austal USA "engaged in a years-long scheme to illegally inflate its profits on ships the company was building for the U.S. Navy, reporting false financial results to investors, lenders, and its auditors," Nicole M. Argentieri, principal deputy assistant attorney general and head of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, said in a statement.

Austal USA LLC is a subsidiary of Australia-based Austal Limited and builds littoral combat ships for the Navy that are designed to operate in shallow coastal waters.

The Justice Department said Austal artificially lowered cost estimates, despite rising shipbuilding costs, to meet its revenue budget and projections. That had the impact of falsely overstating Austal USA's profitability on the ships and Austal Limited's earnings reported in its public financial statements.

Japanese mayor supports plan to deploy Ospreys

Iwakuni's Fukuda signs off on putting the tiltrotors at neighboring Marine Corps base

By SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

The mayor of a Japanese city, saying he was assured of the Osprey's safety, has signed off on a U.S. Navy plan to put tiltrotors at the neighboring Marine Corps base.

Iwakuni Mayor Yoshihiko Fukuda at a city meeting Wednesday accepted the Navy's plan to replace aging C-2A Greyhound transports with CMV-22 Ospreys at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, a spokesperson for the city's base affairs office said Thursday.

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

The Navy in July said it will replace squadrons of Greyhounds and F/A-18 Super Hornet fighters at MCAS Iwakuni, just south of Hiroshima, with Ospreys and F-35C Lightning II stealth fighters.

By year's end, four CMV-22s assigned to Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron 30, the service's first Osprey squadron, will take over for Fleet Logistics Squadron 30, which flies the Greyhounds, according to the Navy.

The Ospreys will move personnel and cargo to and from the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, which is due to arrive at Yokosuka Naval Base, its new homeport south of Yokohama, later this year.

"We were able to confirm that this aircraft model update will not significantly affect the living environment of the residents living around the base," Fukuda said at the meeting, according to video posted online by public broadcaster NHK.

Fukuda decided that the Osprey's presence is necessary, considering the security environment surrounding Japan, the base affairs official said.

The city concluded that noise won't increase since fewer aircraft will be flying from the air station under the modernization plan, the official said.

Japan's government informed Iwakuni officials last month of the plan to deploy the Ospreys, he said.

The city government concluded the Ospreys are safe, based on their accident record and assu-

rances from the U.S. and Japanese governments, according to a statement posted on the city's website on Aug. 22.

The Nov. 29 crash of an Air Force Special Operations Command Osprey off the coast of southern Japan killed all eight crewmembers and prompted the Navy to ground the military's 400 tiltrotors for three months. An accident investigation concluded the fatal crash resulted from a massive part failure coupled with pilot error.

The Marines were first to resume Osprey flights, followed by the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, the U.S. Navy and the Air Force.

However, the tiltrotors are not permitted to fly their full range of missions until mid-2025, Vice Adm. Carl Chebi, the head of U.S. Naval Air Systems Command, told House lawmakers in July.

Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara told reporters in Tokyo on Tuesday that he was grateful to the mayor for accepting the deployment.

Yamaguchi prefecture Gov. Tsugumasa Okamura also said he agreed with the plan on Thursday, according to Kyodo News report that day.

The Iwakuni mayor's approval points to increased acceptance by the Japanese public of military deployments, said James Brown, an international affairs expert at Temple University's Japan campus.

"Japan's increased military budget and enhanced cooperation with the United States and other security partners will require many more military drills and deployments of weaponry," he said by email Wednesday. "This process will, however, be significantly held up if the Japanese public are not onboard."

The CMV-22B brings "agility, flexibility and sustainability to effectively operate our naval forces forward in a high-end fight," Navy Lt. j.g. Sarah Merrill, a U.S. 7th Fleet spokeswoman, said by email Thursday.

The Osprey squadron's presence at MCAS Iwakuni will support America's commitment to the defense of Japan and the security and stability of the vital Indo-Pacific region, she added.

MILITARY

Duty called: The US Army answered

American soldiers win international Call of Duty military tournament

By BRIAN BOWERS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army captured bragging rights as the year's top military Call of Duty team, defeating squads from the U.S., U.K. and Canadian armed services.

While the U.S. Marine Corps' team claimed a win in the final of four matches, the soldiers' consistent play earned them the Call of Duty Endowment Bowl's glittering trophy, which was presented by Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Eric M. Smith.

The most valuable player was Army Staff Sgt. Monsef Taj, but he shared the credit.

"My teammates went crazy," Taj said, with trophy in hand. "... We had the vibes. We had the chemistry going. We were unstoppable."

Call of Duty Endowment Bowl V featured the first-person shooter's Warzone multiplayer mode. The event was also used to promote the franchise's upcoming Call of Duty: Black Ops 6.

Getting into the event had the feeling of a black op. Our three-member team received minimal information until the week of the event. We were then sworn to secrecy concerning the location, not for military operational security but for Activision's secrecy.

When we arrived at the venue — the National Building Museum in Washington — we were cleared by the gatekeepers and escorted into the immense atrium.

A Polaris all-terrain vehicle, tricked out motorcycle and showcases of military gear decorated the edges. Enormous banners hung from the ceiling. And at its core were stations for about 260 streamers from around the world

who were competing in Warzone.

When we arrived, the streamers were still going full bore — running, shooting, sliding and detonating across the Warzone map.

The event was organized by the Call of Duty Endowment, which was established in 2009 to help fund veteran employment efforts. It has helped place 125,000 vets in new jobs, according to its website.

In addition to the streaming competition and the CODE Bowl, the event provided further information about the Call of Duty Endowment Pack, coming out for Call of Duty: Black Ops 6 on Oct. 25, and information on Call of Duty: War Zone Mobile.

But the streaming and announcing eventually ended. The technical glitches were resolved. And the teams of military gamers parachuted into the streets of an Eastern European city.

The esports teams were from the U.S. Army, Air Force, Space Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, and the British Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force.

The CODE Bowl is an annual competition. Last year, the Royal Canadian Air Force joined the tournament and emerged victorious. In 2022, Britain's Royal Air Force claimed the trophy. And in 2021, Space Force won and celebrated by sending the trophy into space.

On Wednesday, each service fielded two teams, each with two service members and one big-league streamer — except for the Marines, who received assistance from country star Kane Brown.

The military esports teams are formed in several ways. The Navy's sailors are on three-year as-



PHOTOS BY BRIAN BOWERS/Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Marine Corps player tracks down an enemy in Call of Duty Endowment Bowl V in Washington.



Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Eric M. Smith, left, gets a tutorial on Call of Duty.



Members of the U.S. Coast Guard team prepare for the start of Call of Duty Endowment Bowl V at the National Building Museum in Washington.

signments to the team.

"It's our full job for three years," said Lt. Aaron Jones, a plank owner and coach of Navy's esports team.

Coast Guard members try out for one-year stints but remain in their regular jobs. Some others have a pool of players to draw from.

While excelling in different competitive video games is the teams' focus, Jones said their overriding purpose is to enhance recruiting efforts. They go to col-

leges, conventions and competitions to get the word out about their service.

Much about competitive Call of Duty would be familiar to any gamer, but competitive matches are more intense.

"It's more advanced, getting more rotations, getting more kills," said Sgt. 1st Class Randy Ojeda, who has been on the Army's team since 2019.

And being familiar with team members helps, said Coast Guard

Lt. j.g. Nazere Jones. Knowing how teammates will move and react helps them act as one.

"The more times you play with a team, you get the experience of what the realm of possibilities is," the Coast Guard's Jones said.

While recruiting might be the goal, there's one reward every team is striving for.

"It's just the bragging rights," the Coast Guard's Jones said.

Japanese chain IDs clerks who can speak other languages

By JEREMY STILLWAGNER
AND HANA KUSUMOTO

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japan's second largest convenience store chain, in a bid for more of the country's tourist trade, recently asked its employees to wear badges indicating the languages they speak.

More than 3.1 million foreign travelers visited Japan in June, 9% more than the same month in 2019 and a new monthly record, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization.

The country is also home to about 55,000 active-duty U.S. service members. Many, no doubt, stop at a convenience

store for a snack, an umbrella or to use the ATM.

Accordingly, Lawson asked its multilingual workers to display their proficiency in any of seven languages — English, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Nepali.

"This will allow foreign travelers to receive services more comfortably without feeling a language barrier," the company said in an Aug. 20 news release.

Lawson cited data from the Japan Tourism Agency that 25.06 million foreign tourists visited Japan in 2023, about 6½ times those in the previous year.

"In light of this situation, it is urgent to strengthen multilingual

support in stores that are mainly used by foreign visitors to Japan," the Lawson release said.

The text on the foreign language badges is written in the indicated language, so foreign visitors can understand.

The staff may also wear badges indicating they are studying Japanese, a company spokesman said Aug. 21.

"By clarifying the languages that store staff can speak, it will help reduce employee stress and misunderstandings and improve the working environment," said the spokesman, who declined to be named per company policy.

The Lawson program is the first of its kind among the major

convenience store chains in Japan and resulted from increase in foreign part-time employees at convenience stores, Japan Today reported Aug. 20.

Approximately 13% of Lawson employees are foreigners, according to the company release.

Around 10% of employees working for three of the major convenience store chains, Lawson, Seven-Eleven Japan Co. and FamilyMart Co., are foreign workers, according to Japan Today.

The company has no data on how many employees are wearing the badges since the practice was initiated this month, the spokesman said.



LAWSON INC.

A Lawson convenience store clerk shows off a badge identifying himself as a speaker of the Nepali language.

PACIFIC

Slow-moving Typhoon Shanshan plows into Japan

Navy, Marine bases brace for incoming storm

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — U.S. Navy and Marine Corps bases in the path of a punishing typhoon tracking across southern Japan secured ships and planes and stocked up on peanut butter Thursday.

Typhoon Shanshan passed south of Sasebo Naval Base as it stormed across Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, and continued slowly northward, according to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Shanshan at its strongest packed maximum sustained winds of nearly 90 mph with gusts over 100 mph, but by 12:30 p.m. Thursday had weakened to a Category 1-equivalent storm, according to the center.

It was moving at 7 mph, about twice as fast as the average person walks, the center said.

Thanks to two weak weather systems steering the typhoon, its path is difficult to predict, according to the center's update at noon Thursday. "The system has the potential to move erratically during a quasi-stationary period with possible loops and backtracking," the update stated.

Nearly 20 inches of rain fell on Kyushu between Wednesday and



JONATHAN SNYDER/Stars and Stripes

Lance Cpl. Gage Baird, 23, walks out of the commissary at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, on Thursday. U.S. Navy and Marine Corps bases in Japan are in the path of Typhoon Shanshan.

Thursday, The Associated Press reported. That triggered a landslide that killed one person and injured several others.

At Sasebo — homeport of the America Amphibious Ready Group about 30 miles north of Nagasaki — all nonessential operations shut down as of noon and all ships were secured in the harbor, said a base spokesman.

"It is being advertised as a very serious, strong storm and, of course, Sasebo is known to be a very safe harbor protected from storm effects, and so we are hoping that this is the case this time

around," spokesman Aki Nichols told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday. "But we are taking all the precautions we normal do."

Ships were secured by doubling and tripling storm lines and positioning them in the safest locations on berth assignments, he said.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, 22 miles southwest of Hiroshima and next in the storm's path, moved into Tropical Cyclone Condition of Readiness 2 on Thursday afternoon, meaning it expected winds of 57 mph or higher within 24 hours.

Navy spouse Sarah Kovalevich,

like many others, was at MCAS Iwakuni's commissary Thursday, stocking up on milk, eggs, bread, peanut butter and jelly ahead of the storm.

"I'll be totally honest, I was kind of like, it's not going to be that big of a deal, and then I saw more people posting it's going to be one of the biggest ones," she said.

The commissary was well stocked with milk and eggs but the shelf for sandwich bread was empty.

"I got yen out to go out to the Japanese grocery stores just in case they didn't have stuff here," Kova-

levich said.

Shanshan is expected to pass 62 miles south-southeast of Iwakuni around 4 p.m. Friday as a tropical storm, still packing 46 mph sustained winds and 58 mph gusts at its center, according to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center.

MCAS Iwakuni is closely monitoring Shanshan's progress, base spokesman 2nd Lt. Justin Weinstein told Stars and Stripes by email Thursday.

"The air station is taking standard typhoon precautions in securing aircraft and equipment and adjusting the schedules of on-base services," he said.

Information on the typhoon's strength, preparedness measures and shelter locations on and off base are available via internal communications and the MCAS Iwakuni social media channels, Weinstein added.

The base on its official Facebook page Wednesday advised residents on- and off-base to secure outside items and encouraged anyone living in flood-prone areas to use the on-base evacuation shelter.

Dozens of domestic flights connecting southwestern cities and islands will be canceled through Friday. Japan Railway suspended bullet trains and local train services Thursday on Kyushu. Similar steps may be taken on the main island of Honshu through Sunday, according to the AP.

Keep an eye on Pacific Storm Tracker on Stripes.com for frequent Shanshan updates.

Stars and Stripes reporter Dave Ornauer contributed to this report.

Command of III MEF's logistics arm changes hands on Okinawa

By BRIAN McELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

CAMP KINSER, Okinawa — Command of the support arm for the Marine Corps' rapid response force in the Indo-Pacific is now in the hands of a general on his third Okinawa tour.

Brig. Gen. Kevin Collins assumed command of the 3rd Marine Logistics Group from Brig. Gen. Adam Chalkley during a ceremony Thursday at the consolidated club on Camp Kinser, the group's headquarters. About 220 Marines, family, Japanese troops and other guests packed the club.

The group provides combat logistics support to the III Marine Expeditionary Force and other Marines in the region. This includes supply, maintenance, transportation, engineering, health services and other services for Marines during exercises and other operations.

Lt. Gen. Roger Turner, III MEF commander, highlighted Chalk-

ley's leadership through the latest phase of the Corps' Force Design plan.

"I think everybody knows that this MLG has really been one of the centerpieces of the Marine Corps' Force Design as we started to morph what we were doing as a service to what we're going to do going forward," he said at the ceremony. "And this is really the centerpiece of that, and your leadership of that change has been difficult and hard, and I just appreciate the way you've approached it."

During Chalkley's tenure, the logistic group's Marines began testing a 3D-printing unit in shipping containers made to drop into austere locations like jungles to fill supply line gaps. The testing is part of the Force Design plan for rapid movement and reduced demand on supply lines.

Collins said he plans to lead the group through continuing changes in the security situation on Okinawa

and in the Pacific. He was last stationed on the island six years ago, he said at the ceremony.

"I think III MEF has evolved fairly rapidly, fairly significantly, not just in the capability that we possess, but how we apply that capability, how we fight as a MEF," he said. "And I look forward to continuing that work that Adam started with Force Design, [the Defense Policy Review Initiative] and all those things to evolve the [logistics combat element] of the MEF."

The Defense Policy Review Initiative, an agreement by the U.S. and Japan to relocate some Marine assets from Okinawa to Guam, includes Japan paying \$3 billion of the estimated \$8.6 billion cost to build Camp Blaz and its surrounding infrastructure on Guam.

Collins most recently served as deputy director for operations at the National Joint Operations In-



BRIAN McELHINEY/Stars and Stripes

Brig. Gen. Kevin Collins, the 3rd Marine Logistics Group's new commander, speaks during his change-of-command ceremony at Camp Kinser, Okinawa, on Thursday.

telligence Center, Operations Team Three, J-3, Joint Staff at the Pentagon. He's also served as deputy commander of Marine Corps Forces South.

He enlisted in 1990 and commissioned in 1995. He is a combat veteran of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, according to his official

biography. His previous Okinawa experience includes assistant chief of staff with the 3rd Marine Division, and as a company grade officer with 3rd Force Service Support Group.

Chalkley heads to Washington, D.C., to serve as inspector general of the Marine Corps.

MILITARY

‘These are two totally different benefits’

100K vets who qualified for VA disability benefits must repay separation bonuses

BY LINDA F. HERSEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Roughly 100,000 veterans who received bonuses to separate from the military early have been forced to return the money in the last 10 years because they were also receiving disability benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, according to agency officials.

The bonuses collected by the VA total more than \$2.5 billion and the numbers could increase drastically as more veterans apply for compensation through a law passed two years ago to provide benefits for those suffering from illnesses caused by toxic exposure, including burn pits.

“More veterans are filing new claims after many years,” said Marquis Barefield, assistant national legislative director of Disabled American Veterans. “I just heard from a 75-year-old disability veteran who filed a new claim. The VA went into his record and found they had never collected separation pay when he originally qualified for disability 30 years ago.”

A federal law stops the VA from paying monthly disability compensation to veterans who accepted separation benefits to exit the military voluntarily when the military services drew down troop strength, agency officials said. The monthly disability compensation that a former service member was approved to receive is instead applied to repaying the bonus amount, which can be tens of thousands of dollars in some cases.

“The VA calls this double-dipping,” said 63-year-old former Army Sgt. Vernon Reffitt, whose monthly VA disability compensation for a leg injury recently went from \$171 per month to zero.

The VA and veterans advocacy groups said they are fielding more questions and complaints about the rule because a recent spike in claims for disability by veterans is triggering a review of veterans’ records.

In fiscal 2023, the VA recouped separation pay from more than 9,200 veterans, compared to 6,600 in fiscal 2013, according to the VA.

The DAV and other veterans groups said they oppose the VA using a veteran’s disability compensation to pay down a special separation bonus. The lump-sum separation payment is not based on or due to disabilities incurred in service, DAV said.

“Withholding a veteran’s VA disability compensation due to an unrelated military separation benefit must end,” Barefield said. “These are two totally different



Courtesy of John Colage

Navy veteran John Colage left the military in 1992 after 13 years of service.

benefits and should be treated as such.”

John Colage of Indiana, a Navy veteran, is making that argument in a federal court. Colage, 62, who is representing himself in the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, is trying to stop the VA from taking back a \$29,000 taxable bonus that he received in 1992.

The federal court gave the VA until Sept. 16 to respond to Colage’s brief that states the VA acted incorrectly when it began in February to withhold his monthly disability checks as repayment of his incentive bonus.

Colage said he believes the VA has “convoluted the law” and is applying it incorrectly to justify collecting special separation bonuses from disabled veterans.

“The simplest way to state this is that we veterans are being held to a legal standard for people who later receive retirement pay, when we should be held to the legal standard for disability compensation,” he said.

The loss of the bonus can come as a surprise to a veteran who qualifies for VA compensation many years after receiving separation pay, according to the Rand Corp., a nonprofit that conducts research on veterans issues.

“Separation pay can be thousands of dollars, so it can take years to fully recoup. In the meantime, veterans with disabilities do not receive disability compensation from VA,” according to Rand.

The armed services have a history of offering special separation bonuses to reduce troop numbers, and the VA is required by law to recoup the lump-sum payments, according to Rand.

Colage, who was a petty officer first class, said he chose to leave the military after 13 years and forgo retirement pay that is typically awarded after 20 years of service.

“I can’t stomach what the VA is doing to me and to my family,” he said. “This lawsuit should shame the VA. I have repeatedly asked for consideration on how this hurts me



Courtesy of Shane Collins

Shane Collins, a 41-year-old widower with two children, left the Marine Corps in 2014 after 14 years of service. But Collins, who is 100% disabled, said he was unable to collect disability payments for three years until he had repaid a \$30,000 separation bonus that he was awarded upon leaving the military early.

financially. The VA said I was wrongfully enriched by taking a separation bonus and now receiving disability.”

In 1989, Colage was aboard the USS Iowa when a gun turret on the now-retired battleship exploded during a naval exercise and killed 47 people. He left the military three years later. Colage was in good standing with the Navy and accepted a special separation bonus in lieu of longer service and a pension. He said receiving the bonus plus disability compensation is called “concurrency,” which is not permitted. But Colage said he received his bonus in 1992 and began collecting disability compensation in 2017.

“I hardly see how that is concurrent,” he said.

Reffitt, who lives in Twin Oaks, Ga., said he received a one-time taxable payout of \$38,000 in 1992 to end his military career early.

“When I left the military, the Army offered the payment as an early retirement,” he said.

Reffitt, who hauls scrap metal for a living, said he figures he will be paying back the money for the rest of his life.

“This is a part of the normal, legally required process during completion of the initial [disability] claim application,” said Terrence Hayes, the VA press secretary. Veterans completing forms for disability compensation are asked whether they received a separation bonus and the amount, Hayes said. The money is automatically deducted in installment payments from monthly disability compensation. More veterans are getting collection notices now because fiscal 2023 was a record-breaking year for disability claims, according to the VA.

More than 2 million claims for compensation were filed, up 40% from 2022, since the Sergeant First

Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act, or PACT Act, was signed into law in 2022.

Reffitt received a notice two months ago from the VA about the collection after he applied for additional disability compensation for burn pit exposure under the PACT Act. Reffitt, who has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, said his new health claim was rejected. But the VA did inform him that it was docking his monthly disability checks until his \$38,000 separation bonus was fully repaid.

“I started my service career in the ROTC at 17, while I was still in high school. My goal was to retire from the military. But the offer of separation pay sounded good 30 years ago,” he said. “They called this an early retirement, and my family was tired of the deployments. If I had not gotten the offer, I would have stayed 20 years for the pension.”

Reps. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., and Gus Bilirakis, R-Fla., sponsored a bill in 2023 that would eliminate the requirement for VA to recoup separation pay for veterans who later receive disability compensation.

Gallego said the change is important because banning veterans from collecting their monthly disability compensation over prior acceptance of separation pay that often is decades old is “shameful” and “slaps thousands of veterans with unconscionable financial penalties.”

The bill was referred to the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs subpanel on disability assistance and memorial affairs but has yet to be considered by the group.

The DAV and other veterans organizations, which support the legislation, are not hopeful about the outcome. Barefield said veterans’

bills that come with a cost—or loss of revenue—are getting pushback and often not advancing to approval this congressional session.

“This was money I felt I had earned,” said Shane Collins of Idaho, who left the Marine Corps in 2014 because of a knee injury that kept him from re-enlisting.

Collins was on active duty from 2001-05 with a deployment to Iraq before entering the Marine Corps Reserve from 2005-06. He then returned to active duty for eight years, serving in Marine Corps communications at the Pentagon.

But upon qualifying for VA disability when he was discharged in 2014, he said he learned a \$30,000 separation payment that he had accepted would be recouped.

Collins, a 41-year-old widower with two children, said he did not receive disability payments for three years until the debt was fully repaid.

“There was nothing I could do about it,” he said.

Colage is 100% disabled now due to a service-connected spine injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental health condition caused by witnessing traumatic events.

He is considered unemployable by the VA, which means he cannot hold a job because of service-connected disabilities.

“I don’t live extravagantly,” said Colage, who remarried after his first wife died of leukemia in 2014. He and his second wife have four children, including a 12-year-old daughter with autism and a 9-year-old son who is deaf.

Colage said he will lose \$400 a month in disability compensation, which should resume in five years.

“That’s a utility payment or car payment,” he said. “It’s an extra strain on the family. There’s zero for vets to get relief from this or to wipe the debt clean.”

MILITARY

Gray: Chief says Philippines can still defend itself

FROM PAGE 1

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., after both led an annual meeting in the northern Philippine mountain city of Baguio to discuss security challenges and military plans. They include the Balikatan — Tagalog for shoulder to shoulder — the treaty allies' largest combat exercises, which in April involved more than 16,000 American and Filipino forces and were partly staged in the South China Sea.

In response to a question, Paparo repeated that the U.S. military is open, after treaty consultations with the Philippines, to escorting Philippine ships in the South China Sea amid a spike in hostilities between Beijing and Manila in the disputed waters. Such a prospect would risk putting U.S. Navy ships in direct collisions with those of China.

Washington and Beijing have been on a collision course over China's increasingly assertive actions to defend its territorial claims in the South China Sea, and Beijing's stated goal of annexing Taiwan, by force if necessary.

Brawner said the Philippines could still fend for itself in the disputed waters, where hostilities with the Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships have alarmingly spiked since last year.

"If we exhaust all the options and nothing works, then that's the time we can ask for help," Brawner told reporters.

When Filipino forces in the disputed waters "are at the verge of dying," because food supplies were being blocked by Chinese forces, "then that's the time that we are going to seek the help of the United States," Brawner said, but

added that "we still have a lot of options."

During combat exercises by U.S. and Philippine forces in April, the U.S. military transported a mid-range missile system to the northern Philippines, angering China, which warned that the missile system can trigger a regional arms race and endanger regional stability. Beijing demanded that the U.S. missile system, which can threaten mainland China, be pulled out of the Philippines.

Paparo and Brawner refused to say on Thursday if and when the missile system would be flown out of the Philippines. Brawner thanked the U.S. military for transporting the high-tech weaponry to the country, saying Filipino forces were being exposed to advance defense equipment that the Philippine military plan to acquire in the future.

"Just like what we did with the Stingers and with the Javelins, we start training already even if we don't have them yet in our inventory," Brawner said.

China has angered the Philippines by repeatedly harassing its navy and coast guard ships with powerful water cannons, a military-grade laser, blocking movements and other dangerous maneuvers in the high seas near two disputed South China Sea shoals. They have led to minor collisions that have injured several Filipino navy personnel and damaged supply boats.

China has accused the Philippines of setting off the hostilities in the disputed waters by encroaching in what it says are its offshore territories, demarcated by 10 dashes on a map.

It says the Chinese coast guard and navy have been forced to take action to expel Philippine coast



AARON FAVILA/AP

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command chief Adm. Samuel Paparo, left, and Philippines military chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., shake hands after a press conference on the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board held at the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio, northern Philippines on Thursday.

Chinese leader meets US official as the two powers try to avoid conflict

BY KEN MORITSUGU
AND HUIZHONG WU
Associated Press

BEIJING — Chinese leader Xi Jinping met with U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Thursday as the latter wound up a three-day visit with the stated aim of keeping communications open in a relationship that has become increasingly tense in recent years.

Sullivan, on his first trip to China as the main adviser to President Joe Biden on national security issues, earlier met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and a top general from the Central Military Commission.

Starting with a trade war that dates back to 2018, China and

the United States have grown at odds over a range of issues, from global security, such as China's claims over the South China Sea, to industrial policy on electric vehicle and solar panel manufacturing. Sullivan's trip this week is meant to keep the tensions from spiraling into conflict.

"We believe that competition with China does not have to lead to conflict or confrontation. The key is responsible management through diplomacy," he told reporters at a news conference shortly before leaving Beijing.

Both governments are eager to keep relations on an even keel ahead of a change in the

U.S. presidency in January. They said they remain committed to managing the relationship, following up on a meeting between Xi and Biden in San Francisco last November.

"While great changes have taken place in the two countries and in China-U.S. relations, China's commitment to the goal of a stable, healthy and sustainable China-U.S. relationship remains unchanged," Xi said.

"President Biden is committed to responsibly managing this consequential relationship to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict or confrontation, and to work together where our interests align," Sullivan said.

guard and other vessels from those areas.

The Philippines has repeatedly

cited a 2016 international arbitration ruling based on the U.N. Convention of the Law of the Sea that

invalidated China's claim over virtually the entire South China Sea on historical grounds.

Drones: Switchblades can be used for reconnaissance or as a missile

FROM PAGE 1

warfare. Both deals are in response to a requirement formalized in 2022 to equip infantry battalions with "lethal, man-portable loitering munition systems."

Switchblades often are referred to as suicide drones because of their ability to fly above targets before crashing into them and exploding. They function as both a reconnaissance drone and a missile.

The Switchblade 600, the most

advanced variant, has high-precision optics and an anti-armor warhead and can loiter in the air for more than 40 minutes, according to AeroVironment. It's also said to have a range of about 25 miles and weigh about 65 pounds.

The Switchblade 300, meanwhile, has a range of about 12 miles, can loiter for about 20 minutes and weighs just 7 pounds.

Neither the AeroVironment nor the Defense Department statement specified which Switchblade variants are included under the

latest contract. However, online news site The War Zone reported that both types are included in the deal.

The U.S. military has been acquiring Switchblade 300s for years, especially for use by special operations forces.

Hundreds of 300s also were sent by the U.S. to Ukraine as part of an arms package after Russia's 2022 invasion. Meanwhile, Russia has used Iranian-made and designed one-way attack drones frequently in its strikes on Ukraine.



AEROVIRONMENT INC./TNS

AeroVironment Switchblade-600

NATION

How a Trump visit sparked turmoil at Arlington

Campaign staff breaks rules, brings cameras during trip to mark bombing

BY ISAAC ARNSDORF,
JOSH DAWSEY
AND DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

Earlier this month, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's campaign contacted military officials about visiting Arlington National Cemetery to mark the third anniversary of the Islamic State bombing that killed 13 U.S. service members during the evacuation from Afghanistan.

Federal law prohibits election-related activities at military cemeteries, and Arlington is the most prestigious and sacred of all. Pentagon officials were deeply concerned about the former president turning the visit into a campaign stop, but they also didn't want to block him from coming, according to Defense Department officials and internal messages reviewed by *The Washington Post*.

Officials said they wanted to respect the wishes of grieving family members who wanted Trump there, but at the same time were wary of Trump's record of politicizing the military. So they laid out ground rules they hoped would wall off politics from the final resting place of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

Instead, they got sucked into exactly the kind of crisis they were hoping to avoid.

A cemetery employee tried to enforce the rules as provided to her by blocking Trump's team from bringing cameras to the graves of U.S. service members killed in recent years, according to a senior defense official and another person briefed on the incident. A larger male campaign aide insisted the camera was allowed and pushed past the cemetery employee, leaving her shocked.

Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung responded to the first report of the altercation, from NPR on Tuesday, by accusing, without evidence, the employee of "suffering from a mental health episode." Defense officials said that the employee was trying to do her job and that the claim of a mental health episode was false. On Wednesday Cheung said the employee "initiated physical contact that was unwarranted and unnecessary."

Cheung also said the campaign would release footage to support his claim but has not. The campaign did, however, post a TikTok of the event on Wednesday — exactly what military officials tried to prevent. The use of the footage marked a flagrant violation of the law against partisan actions at military cemeteries, defense officials said.

"I just haven't seen anything this disgusting," said Paul Eaton, a retired Army general and adviser to the liberal group VoteVets whose father's remains are interred at Arlington. "It is completely inappropriate to do any kind of political activity on a federal installation, and it is immoral in my terms to conduct any kind of self-serving activity on a cemetery with the graves of our fallen."

Defense officials were concerned about the event Monday because Republicans have frequently used the bombing, a low point of the Biden administration, as a political cudgel. In advance of the event, cemetery officials told Trump's team that he could come in his personal capacity and bring personal aides, but not campaign staff. Campaign advisers went anyway.

No hats, signs or banners were allowed, according to military officials. No speeches. Reporters and photographers could follow Trump for a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns, but not to the 14-acre plot where veterans from recent wars are buried, known as Section 60. The media was kept away, unable to see the altercation — or anything else, for that matter — during that part of his visit.

The first part went according to plan. With full media coverage, Trump and two Marines injured in the bombing, Tyler Vargas-Andrews and Kelsee Lainhart, laid a wreath at the tomb, a monument dedicated to deceased U.S. troops whose remains have not been identified or recovered. The press then returned to a holding area, specifically instructed that reporters and cameras would not accompany Trump and bereaved families to Section 60.

But Trump officials said they did not view the campaign's own photographer and videographer as subject to the same restrictions, so they continued on to Section 60. Their arrival there prompted the standoff with the cemetery employee over the rules. The identity of the Trump aide involved was not known Wednesday.

The incident has raised concerns about the safety of Arlington staff members, the senior defense official said, with vitriol aimed at them initially on Monday by liberals, after the news coverage of Trump at the cemetery was published. That has given way to language from conservatives that also is "concerning."

"If the campaign feels the need to defend their team's actions — which include bullying and physically pushing out of the way a long-



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Bill Barnett, left, grandfather of Darin Taylor Hoover, and Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in honor of Staff Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover at Arlington National Cemetery, on Monday in Arlington, Va.

time public servant and member of the team at Arlington working to protect the sanctity of the sacred spaces — then that's on them," one defense official said. "The rules were made clear to participants, and these two chose to disregard those rules. End of story."

A brief report of the incident was filed with security personnel overseeing the cemetery, the senior defense official said.

On Thursday, an Army spokesman told *The Associated Press* that an Arlington National Cemetery official was "abruptly pushed aside" during an altercation Monday with Trump's staff but declined to press charges.

"This employee acted with professionalism and avoided further disruption," the statement said. The incident was reported to the police, but the employee decided not to press charges. The Army said it considered the matter closed.

Co-campaign manager Chris LaCivita, who was present Monday along with other campaign employees, in a statement called the cemetery employee "a despicable individual" who "does not deserve to represent the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery." LaCivita posted video on X on Monday of Trump laying flowers at the grave of Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss, a soldier killed in the explosion, and speaking to his family on the phone.

In addition to the campaign's TikTok video, Trump posed for photos on Monday at the graveside of Marine Sgt. Nicole Gee with her family, including one where he is giving a thumbs-up gesture and others are smiling. Eaton called the gesture "appalling."

The campaign also defended itself with a joint statement from the two injured Marines who ap-

peared with Trump and the families of some of the service members killed, saying they wanted Trump and his cameras there.

Darin Hoover, whose son, Staff Sgt. Darin "Taylor" Hoover, died in the bombing, reaffirmed that in an interview Wednesday.

"We invited him. He didn't come to us," Hoover said. "He has shown nothing but sincerity to all of us and for what happened to our children, and for anybody else to try to take that away from the ceremony — both at the wreath-laying and at the graveside — is unconscionable."

Hoover and some of the other grieving families also participated in the Republican National Convention and said Biden has not granted multiple requests to meet with him. They have grown closer to Trump over the years after bad interactions with Biden, who has offended some Gold Star families by discussing the death of his son Beau, who died of brain cancer after returning from serving in Iraq, in a meeting with them.

Other veterans and bereaved families viewed Trump's visit as disrespectful to a sacred space that also belongs to them and to the nation. Section 60 is a place where young widows can be seen trimming grass with hand scissors, sharing comfort with other Gold Star families, and decorating graves with flowers and beads. Visitors have long taken graveside photographs there, and sitting presidents have visited before, but not as part of campaign events.

"That's not the time or place for it," said Karen Meredith, a VoteVets board member whose son, 1st Lt. Ken Ballard, is buried in the second row of Section 60. "They had to bully themselves into this thing. The lack of respect for the rules or the norms or the laws at

Arlington — there's just no respect."

Trump has repeatedly defied restrictions on using federal property for campaign purposes by staging a political speech at Mount Rushmore, participating in a television interview inside the Lincoln Memorial, and holding the 2020 Republican National Convention at the White House itself.

As president, he pushed unsuccessfully for a European-style military parade down Pennsylvania Avenue.

At the same time, Trump has repeatedly badmouthed the sacrifices of American service members. In 2015, he mocked the late Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., for his time as a prisoner of war ("I like people who weren't captured"), and earlier this month said the civilian Presidential Medal of Freedom was "much better" than the military Medal of Honor because those who received the latter were "either in very bad shape because they've been hit so many times by bullets, or they're dead."

Trump's former aides have said he similarly disparaged service members in private, which he denies. Retired Gen. Mark A. Milley, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Trump responded to appearing with a wounded veteran by saying, "No one wants to see that."

"He never understood why would you do anything that doesn't benefit you," one former senior Trump White House official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe a private interaction. "I remember talking to him about death and sacrifice for the country, and it was like talking Greek to him. That's why it's the height of hypocrisy he's there laying a wreath, given his general feelings about veterans."

NATION

Growing support among Latinos may help Trump

By SEAN COLLINS WALSH
The Philadelphia Inquirer

READING, Pa. — Reading is a postindustrial city that has become more than two-thirds Latino. That demographic shift hasn't changed the city's partisanship drastically, with Democrats maintaining dominance.

But an Inquirer analysis of 2020 election results reveals that former President Donald Trump made inroads with Latino voters in Reading and other small cities with growing Latino populations.

This year, the question is whether Trump can continue that trend, or if he already reached his high-water mark. How Pennsylvania's Latino residents vote in November will be key in determining whether Trump or Harris wins Pennsylvania — and the White House.

President Joe Biden carried Reading with 72% of the vote in 2020. But Trump improved from his 2016 performance, when Hillary Clinton won 78%. In 42 of Reading's 44 precincts, Donald Trump earned more votes than he did in 2016, according to an Inquirer analysis of election results. And in 38 precincts, Biden earned fewer votes than Clinton.

Reading isn't alone. Latino populations have grown in the last three decades in a string of cities along the "222 corridor," named for the stretch of U.S. 222

that includes Allentown, Hazleton, Reading, and Lancaster. In every one of those cities, the Republican vote grew in 2020.

The GOP's potential with Latino voters in the Trump era also hinges on a central question: How can a party dedicated to the fortunes of one highly divisive man who insults immigrants also become more welcoming?

Republican Berks County Commissioner Michael Rivera said Trump can gain more ground among Latino voters but noted, "The messaging is important."

"Going back to the economy, and a message of saying, you know what, everyone is important," he said. "It's not whether you're white, you're Black, you're Hispanic. Everyone is important. Again, we're a nation of immigrants. And I believe that message has to be a message of inclusivity."

Sylvia Aviles, a 71-year-old naturalized citizen, said she thinks some Latinos who support Trump are attracted to the way he projects wealth.

"It seems that they see the dollar sign on his face," she said, "and because of that they think that they're going to be better off with him than anybody else."

Earlier this month, signs hung in the windows of one Reading house declaring, "Latinos for

Trump" and "DISHONESTY or DEMENTIA?"

When the door opened, Rafaela Gomez emerged wearing a bright red dress printed with the iconic image of Trump raising his fist after surviving an assassination attempt in Butler, Pa.

Gomez, 44, was born in the Dominican Republic and works as a detailer for a car-rental company. She knows her enthusiasm for Trump makes her an outlier in the neighborhood — a Democratic state representative lives next door — but she wants to show it's possible to be Latino and support the former president.

"I know that they view it the way my mom views it, like the Democrats are here to help the immigrants, and it's really not [the case] because they make all the promises but they don't comply," she said. "It's not right with the open borders because we have a lot of corrupt [people] coming into our country. And that's the reason we have a border policy, so they can go through the right way like the way I did."

It's far from clear that Trump will be able to continue the momentum he gained with Latino voters in 2020. Gomez said she believes some Latinos secretly support Trump but don't admit it, and she is hopeful he'll win Pennsylvania.



RICK SCUTERI/AP

Former President Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event in front of the U.S.-Mexico border, Aug 22, in Sierra Vista, Ariz.

But she said she hasn't felt a groundswell of support for the former president in her neighborhood.

"I feel like I'm the only Trump supporter in Reading," she said.

Rivera, a Berks County commissioner, is one of the most prominent Latino Republicans in the Reading area. But after the 2020 election, the local GOP wanted him gone.

Rivera, who calls himself Dutch-a-rican because his father is Puerto Rican and his mother has Pennsylvania Dutch roots,

refused to repeat Trump's baseless claim that the election was stolen. He faced a more conservative primary opponent when he ran for reelection last year, but held onto his seat.

Asked if he thought Trump's messaging this year was effective in reaching Latino voters, Rivera demurred.

"To be honest, I haven't been following it much. I have been involved in what I have to get done in office," he said, "so you know, I haven't seen him much on TV, to be honest with you."

'Crisis pregnancy centers' sue Mass. for targeting their practice

By STEVE LEBLANC
Associated Press

BOSTON — Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey launched a \$1 million taxpayer-funded initiative in June designed to discourage people from seeking help from "crisis pregnancy centers" that are typically religiously affiliated and counsel clients against having abortions.

The campaign includes ads on social media, billboards, radio and buses warning people to avoid the centers — which the administration dubbed "anti-abortion" — saying they're not to be trusted for comprehensive reproductive health care.

Center operators are pushing back, teaming with a national conservative law firm to challenge the campaign, saying it infringes on their constitutional rights. The Washington-based American Center for Law and Justice filed a lawsuit earlier this month in federal court on behalf of Your Options Medical, which operates



STEVE LEBLANC/AP

A sign deterring people from going to "anti-abortion centers" is shown in Boston on July 17.

four anti-abortion pregnancy clinics in the eastern part of the state.

The lawsuit names Healey; state Department of Public Health Commissioner Robert Goldstein; and Rebecca Hart Holder, execu-

tive director of the Reproductive Equity Now Foundation, a non-profit focused on educating the public about equitable access to reproductive health care.

The suit alleges the state initiative amounts to an unconstitutional violation of free speech and of equal protection rights for those who run the pregnancy crisis centers. The plaintiffs also argue that the state is subjecting them to religious discrimination.

"This campaign involves selective law enforcement prosecution, public threats, and even a state-sponsored advertising campaign with a singular goal — to deprive YOM, and groups like it, of their First Amendment rights to voice freely their religious and political viewpoints regarding the sanctity of human life in the context of the highly controversial issue of abortion," the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit also says the state has partnered with "a pro-abortion group" — the Reproductive Equity Now Foundation — to dis-

credit and dismantle every "crisis pregnancy center" in the state. The state's ad campaign was created by the Department of Public Health and the Reproductive Equity Now Foundation.

Healey said the lawsuit won't dissuade the state.

"We are going to continue to stand strong for reproductive freedom here in Massachusetts," Healey, a Democrat and the state's former attorney general, said this week.

Your Options Medical has been licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health since 1999, and in addition to its brick-and-mortar clinics, YOM owns and operates the only "pro-life mobile medical unit" in the state, according to the group's lawyers.

There are more than 30 anti-abortion pregnancy centers in the state. The Healey administration has described its effort to warn residents about them as the "first-in-the-nation public education

campaign highlighting the dangers and potential harm of anti-abortion centers."

Those harms include what the state describes as the centers suggesting they offer abortion-related care without providing abortions; delaying health care until it's too late for an abortion; and relying on untrained staff or volunteers who may not be required to follow codes of ethics or keep patient records private.

The centers have called the allegations false.

State officials set up a separate website to help residents access reproductive health care. The Reproductive Equity Now Foundation has also designed an online map to alert those in need of abortions to what the organization describes as "fake abortion clinics."

The lawsuit asks the court to order the state and others involved in the ads to stop any public campaign which they said falsely accuses YOM of misconduct or being a public safety threat.

NATION

Justices rebuff plea to restore student debt plan

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Wednesday kept on hold the latest multibillion-dollar plan from the Biden administration that would have lowered payments for millions of borrowers, while lawsuits make their way through lower courts.

The justices rejected an administration request to put most of it back into effect. It was blocked by the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In an unsigned order, the court said it expects the appeals court to issue a fuller decision on the plan "with appropriate dispatch."

The Education Department is

seeking to provide a faster path to loan cancellation, and reduce monthly income-based repayments from 10% to 5% of a borrower's discretionary income. The plan also wouldn't require borrowers to make payments if they earn less than 225% of the federal poverty line — \$32,800 a year for a single person.

Last year, the Supreme Court's conservative majority rejected an earlier plan that would have wiped away more than \$400 billion in student loan debt.

Cost estimates of the new SAVE plan vary. The Republican-led states challenging the plan peg the cost at \$475 billion over 10 years.

The administration cites a Congressional Budget Office estimate of \$276 billion.

Two separate legal challenges to the SAVE plan have been making their way through federal courts. In June, judges in Kansas and Missouri issued separate rulings that blocked much of the administration's plan. Debt that already had been forgiven under the plan was unaffected.

The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued a ruling that allowed the department to proceed with a provision allowing for lower monthly payments. Republican-led states had asked the high court to undo that ruling.

But after the 8th Circuit blocked the entire plan, the states had no need for the Supreme Court to intervene, the justices noted in a separate order issued Wednesday.

The Justice Department had suggested the Supreme Court could take up the legal fight over the new plan now, as it did with the earlier debt forgiveness plan. But the justices declined to do so.

"This is a recipe for chaos across the student loan system," said Mike Pierce, executive director of the Student Borrower Protection Center, an advocacy group.

"No court has decided on the merits here, but despite all of that borrowers are left in this limbo

state where their rights don't exist for them," Pierce said.

Eight million people were already enrolled in the SAVE program when it was paused by the lower court, and more than 10 million more are looking for ways to afford monthly payments, he said.

Sheng Li, litigation counsel with the New Civil Liberties Alliance, a legal group funded by conservative donors, applauded the order. "There was no basis to lift the injunction because the Department of Education's newest loan-cancellation program is just as unlawful as the one the Court struck down a year ago," he said in a statement.



This image, created from a SpaceX video, shows the moment when the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket's first-stage fell over in flames after landing on a platform offshore, on Wednesday, in the Atlantic Ocean.

FAA grounds SpaceX after rocket falls over in flames after landing

Associated Press

SpaceX launches are on hold after a booster rocket toppled over in flames while landing Wednesday.

The Federal Aviation Administration grounded the company's Falcon 9 rockets and ordered an investigation following the pre-dawn accident off the Florida coast. No injuries or public damage were reported.

It's too early to know how much impact this will have on SpaceX's upcoming crew flights, one private and the other for NASA. A billionaire's chartered flight was delayed just a few hours earlier because of a poor weather fore-

cast.

The rocket blasted off from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station and got all 21 Starlink internet satellites to orbit. But the first-stage booster fell over in a fireball moments after landing on an ocean platform, the first such accident in years. It was the 23rd time this particular booster had launched, a recycling record for SpaceX.

The FAA said it must approve SpaceX's accident findings and corrective action before the company can resume Falcon 9 launches. A launch from California with more Starlinks was immediately called off following the accident.

SpaceX's Jon Edwards, a vice president, said the company is working "ASAP" to understand what went wrong.

"Losing a booster is always sad. Each one of them has a unique history and character. Thankfully this doesn't happen often," Edwards posted on X.

Besides the private spaceflight awaiting liftoff from Florida's Kennedy Space Center, SpaceX is due to launch a pair of astronauts for NASA late next month. Two seats will be set aside for the two astronauts who launched in June aboard Boeing's new Starliner capsule, deemed unsafe by NASA for their return.

Ex-politician convicted in killing of journalist

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A Democratic former politician was found guilty of murder on Wednesday by a Nevada jury that decided he'll serve 20 years to life in prison for killing an investigative journalist who wrote articles critical of his conduct in office two years ago.

Robert Telles hung his head as his verdict was read in Clark County District Court. Jurors deliberated for nearly 12 hours over three days before their unanimous vote that he ambushed and attacked Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German outside German's home.

Telles' defense attorney, Robert Draskovich, told reporters outside court that his client plans to appeal.

Telles, 47, was returned in custody to jail, where he has been held without bail since his arrest several days after German's body was



Telles

found during Labor Day weekend 2022. His sentencing was scheduled for Oct. 16.

Jessica Coleman, a county employee, was among several co-workers who urged German in 2022 to investigate Telles' conduct heading the office of unclaimed estate and probate property cases. She sobbed after the verdict was read.

"Finally. Finally," Coleman said after sitting with other co-workers through trial, which started Aug. 12. "Finally the system is working."

Telles, an attorney, practiced civil law before he was elected in 2018. He lost his primary for a second term after German's stories were published in May and June 2022.

Congresswomen press FDA on hair product ban delays

Associated Press

Two U.S. House members who first pushed the Food and Drug Administration in 2023 to investigate the health risks of hair straighteners used primarily by Black women are now asking the agency why it has twice delayed its target date to propose a ban on products containing formaldehyde, which studies link to increased rates of cancer.

Democratic Reps. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Shontel Brown of Ohio pressed the FDA in a letter to finalize the proposed rule for banning certain salon-grade and at-home hair straighteners. Rep. Nydia Velazquez of New York joined Pressley and Brown in spearheading the letter, which was dated Tuesday.

The FDA gave notice of a possible rule in 2023 with an initial target date to release the proposal in April. That was then moved to July before jumping to September.

The letter from Pressley, Brown and Velazquez — all of whom are up for re-election this year — asks FDA Commissioner Robert Califf to provide specific reasons for the delay.

When asked about the letter, an FDA spokesperson told the AP that agency officials would respond directly to lawmakers. Last month, the agency said the proposed ban was still among its top priorities and in the rulemaking process, but couldn't comment to the AP on the timing or content of the proposal.

WORLD



ANSAR ALLAH MEDIA OFFICE/AP

Explosions strike the Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion in the Red Sea after Yemen's Houthi rebels boarded and set explosives on the tanker, which was earlier abandoned after an attack.

Houthi video shows rebels placed bombs on oil tanker in Red Sea

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Yemen's Houthi rebels released footage on Thursday showing their fighters boarded and placed explosives on a Greek-flagged tanker, setting off blasts that put the Red Sea at risk of a major oil spill. The vessel was abandoned earlier, after the Houthis repeatedly attacked it.

In the video, the Iran-backed Houthis chant their motto as the bombs detonated aboard the oil tanker Sounion: "God is the greatest; death to America; death to Israel; curse the Jews; victory to Islam."

The blasts capped the most-serious attack in weeks by the Houthis in their campaign disrupting the \$1 trillion in goods that pass through the Red Sea each year over the Israel-Hamas war in

the Gaza Strip, as well as halting some aid shipments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and Yemen.

The Sounion carried some 1 million barrels of oil when the Houthis initially attacked it on Aug. 21 with small arms fire, projectiles and a drone boat. A French destroyer operating as part of the European Union's Operation Aspidos rescued the Sounion's crew of 25 Filipinos and Russians, as well as four private security personnel, after they abandoned the vessel and took them to nearby Djibouti.

The footage released Thursday shows masked Houthi fighters carrying Kalashnikov-style rifles boarding the Sounion after it was abandoned. The bridge appeared ransacked. Fighters then rigged explosives over hatches on its deck leading to the oil tankers be-

low. At least six simultaneous blasts could be seen in the footage.

The Houthi-controlled SABA news agency described al-Houthi as saying the Sounion attack shows America "is lying in its claims regarding any deterrence of Yemeni operations supporting Palestine."

"The effectiveness of our operations and their control of the situation is acknowledged by the enemies," al-Houthi said.

Western countries and the United Nations have warned any oil spill from the Sounion could devastate the coral reefs and wildlife that call the Red Sea home. The U.S. State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment over the new Houthi footage. However, the EU's naval force in the region says it has yet to see any oil spill from the Sounion.

Israel kills prominent militant in raid

Associated Press

TULKAREM, West Bank — The Israeli military said it killed five more militants, including a local commander, early Thursday in the West Bank as it pressed ahead with what appeared to be the deadliest military operation in the occupied territory since the start of the war in Gaza.

Israel says the simultaneous raids across the northern West Bank — which have killed a total of 16 people, nearly all militants, since late Tuesday — are aimed at preventing attacks. The Palestinians see them as a widening of the Israel-Hamas war aimed at perpetuating Israel's decades-long military rule over the territory.

The Islamic Jihad militant group confirmed that Mohammed Jaber, known as Abu Shujaa, was killed during a raid in the city of Tulkarem.

He became a hero for many Palestinians earlier in the year when he was reported killed in an Israeli operation, only to make a surprise appearance at the funeral of other militants, where he was hoisted onto the shoulders of

a cheering crowd.

The military said he was killed Thursday along with four other militants in a shootout with Israeli forces after the five had hidden inside a mosque. It said Abu Shujaa was linked to numerous attacks on Israelis, including a deadly shooting in June, and was planning more.

The army also said another militant was arrested in the operation in Tulkarem, and that a member of Israel's paramilitary Border Police was lightly wounded.

Israel launched a large-scale operation in the West Bank overnight into Wednesday.

Hamas said 10 of its fighters were killed in different locations, and the Palestinian Health Ministry reported an 11th death, without saying whether he was a fighter or a civilian.

The secretary-general of the United Nations, António Guterres, called for an immediate halt to the deadly raids, asking Israel's government to comply with its obligations under international law and take measures to protect civilians.

"These dangerous developments are fueling an already explosive situation in the occupied West Bank and further undermining the Palestinian Authority," he said in a statement from his spokesman Stéphane Dujarric.

The overall toll of 16 killed in less than two days would make it the deadliest Israeli operation in the West Bank since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack out of Gaza ignited the war there.

The Palestinian Health Ministry says over 650 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the war.

Most appear to have been militants killed in gunbattles during Israeli operations like the one this week, but civilian bystanders and rock-throwing protesters have also been killed, and the territory saw a surge of Jewish settler violence. Israel says the operations are required to prevent attacks on its citizens, which have also risen since the start of the war.

Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war, and the Palestinians want all three territories for their future state.

Ukraine's military says one of its F-16s has crashed

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — One of the handful of F-16 warplanes that Ukraine has received from its Western partners to help fight Russia's invasion has crashed, Ukraine's air force said Thursday.

The fighter jet went down on Monday, when Russia launched a major missile and drone barrage at Ukraine, a military statement posted on Facebook said. Four of those Russian missiles were shot down by F-16s, the statement said.

The crash was the first reported loss of an F-16 in Ukraine, where they arrived at the end of last month. At least six of the warplanes are believed to have been delivered.

The Defense Ministry has opened the investigation into the crash.

Earlier Thursday, Russia conducted a heavy aerial attack on Ukraine for the third time in four days, again launching missiles and scores of drones that mostly were intercepted, Ukraine's air force said.

Russian forces fired five missiles and 74 Shahed drones at Ukrainian targets, an air force statement said. Air defenses stopped two missiles and 60 drones, and 14 other drones presumably fell before reaching their target, it said.

Authorities in the capital, Kyiv,

said debris of destroyed drones fell in three districts of the city, causing minor damage to civilian infrastructure but no injuries.

Russia's relentless and unnerving long-range strikes on civilian areas have been a feature of the war since it invaded its neighbor in February 2022.

Ukrainian officials have recently become more vocal in their long-standing insistence that Western countries supporting their war effort should scrap restrictions on what Ukraine is allowed to target inside Russia with long-range weapons they have provided.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy renewed his pleas for Western allies to untie his hands in deciding what to strike on Russian soil.

"All our partners should be more active — much more active — in countering Russian terror," Zelenskyy said late Wednesday. "We continue to insist that their determination now — lifting the restrictions on long-range strikes for Ukraine now — will help us to end the war as soon as possible in a fair way for Ukraine and the world as a whole."

The European Union's top diplomat on Thursday backed Zelenskyy's push for international backers to end their limits.



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WORLD

Germany's far right predicted to make big gains in elections

Los Angeles Times

It's become a painful pattern for Germany's political mainstream: Once again, a far-right party that for many evokes the country's Nazi past is poised for an unprecedented show of electoral strength.

The populist-nationalist Alternative for Germany, or AfD — which in a little over a decade has gone from a stridently anti-immigrant fringe movement to a growing force in local and national politics — is forecast to perform strongly or even place first in two state elections Sunday in the former East Germany. A third vote in another eastern state is set later in September.

If the AfD takes the largest vote share in any of the balloting, as public opinion polling suggests is likely, it would mark the first such triumph at the state level for a German far-right party since World War II.

"It's definitely a dramatic shift," said Constantin Wurthmann, a professor of comparative politics at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, referring to the expected trouncing of parties aligned with the governing coalition of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Analysts say the AfD is likely to benefit from both the location and timing of the votes. All three states — Saxony and Thuringia, which vote Sunday, and the rural state of Brandenburg, surrounding Berlin, where balloting will be held Sept. 22 — lie in the eastern heartland, where the party enjoys its greatest support.



MARKUS SCHREIBER/AP

An election campaign poster of the far-right Alternative for Germany, AfD, promising "summer, sun, remigration" is displayed at a lamp post in Erfurt, Germany, this month.

And just nine days before the first of those votes, tensions over immigration spiked sharply over a grisly stabbing spree in which a Syrian man has been charged.

Depending on the outcome, the trio of votes could be the AfD's second big jolt to the German political establishment this year. The party, which is under monitoring by the country's domestic intelligence agency for suspected extremism and anti-democratic leanings, surged to a second-place finish in the country's European Parliament vote in June.

UK mulls banning smoking, potentially outside pubs

Associated Press

LONDON — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer confirmed Thursday that his government is looking at introducing tougher anti-smoking measures, which could potentially see a ban on smoking in outdoor spaces, including at pubs and restaurants.

His confirmation came after a report in the Sun newspaper that the government was mulling a smoking ban in pub gardens and outdoor restaurants, as well as outside facilities such as hospitals, universities and sports grounds. The prospect was widely criticized by hospitality bosses, who said it would be an overreach of the state and another potential blow to their finances.

Smoking in the U.K. has been banned inside pubs, restaurants and most workplaces since 2007. Still, smoking-related illnesses remain a drain on the National Health Service, costing it over 2.5 billion pounds a year in England alone, according to figures from the NHS.

"My starting point on this is to remind everybody that over 80,000 people lose their lives every year be-

cause of smoking," Starmer said in Paris while visiting French President Emmanuel Macron. "So, yes, we are going to take decisions in this space, more details will be revealed, but this is a preventable series of deaths and we've got to take action to reduce the burden on the NHS and the taxpayer."

Starmer's Labour government, which was elected in July, has already said it will reintroduce the former Conservative administration's legislation to outlaw the sale of tobacco to anyone born on or after January 2009. Under that plan, which didn't become law because the election was called early, the legal age that people in England can buy cigarettes will be raised by one year, every year until it is eventually illegal for the whole population.

The number of people who smoke in the U.K. has declined by two-thirds since the 1970s, but some 6.4 million people in the country — or about 13% of the population — still smoke, according to official figures. In 2007, the legal age of sale for tobacco was raised from 16 to 18 alongside the smoking ban indoors.

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The Daily Guide to Navigating The Military Business Market

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WEEKEND



'Only Murders in the Building'
Television, Page 31



Enjoying the ride

On her new album, 'Whirlwind,' reigning CMA and ACM Entertainer of the Year Lainey Wilson processes sudden stardom with songs that relate to the rest of us

Music, Page 28

BBR Music Group-BMG Nashville

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

Unspeakably dear

How to save and protect the voicemails that you never want to disappear, on any type of phone

BY CHRIS VELAZCO
The Washington Post

If you're anything like me, your voicemail is mostly mundane. A few work-related messages you need to follow up on. A couple of spammy robo diatribes. Maybe some snippets of silence from numbers you've never heard of.

But voicemail can be much more than just a record of messages missed. To some, it's a reminder of better times. For others, a chronicle of fleeting moments and changing interests. And for Ian Boudreau, a games journalist from Binghamton, N.Y., voicemail was his link to the past.

After a visit with his parents in 2019, Boudreau's mother, Alanna, had called — he doesn't remember the phone ringing — and left him a roughly minutelong voicemail. Just weeks after, she was gone, and Boudreau kept that voicemail on his phone until this year, when it randomly disappeared.

"She just wanted to say it was great to see me, and she was always very effusive when she would say, 'I love you,' and, 'I can't wait to come see you again,'" he said. "After she passed, [the voicemail] was like a doorway into how she was."

Boudreau suspects that his phone's T-Mobile Visual Voicemail app was to blame. After noticing some flakiness, he reinstalled the app and felt a "horrible sinking feeling" when he discovered the voicemail was gone. And although the thought of saving her last message more permanently had crossed his mind, he just hadn't gotten around to it.

He isn't alone. Voicemails can go missing for many other reasons, too, such as accidental erasure or switching wireless providers, and stories such as Boudreau's are unfortunately too common.

If you're one of the many people who have treasured voicemails locked away on your phone, please: Take a few moments to save them elsewhere, just in case. Here's how to do it:

On an iPhone

- Open the Phone app and tap voicemail.
- Find the voicemail you want to save and click it.
- Tap the square share icon in the top-right corner.
- Send a copy of the recording via email, AirDrop, iCloud Drive upload — whatever you prefer.

On an Android phone

- Open the Phone app and select your voicemail. If your phone has a separate voicemail app, open that instead.
- Find the voicemail you want to preserve and tap it.
- Tap the share icon, which looks like three dots connected by two lines.
- Send a copy of the recording via email, Google Drive — whatever you prefer.

Note: Because Android phone makers customize their devices differently, the process for yours may vary from these instructions.

On a basic phone

The software running on more basic devices, such as flip phones and the rugged devices that often get used on job sites, doesn't allow you to easily share those audio files. The same is true of smartphones that don't have a visual voicemail feature. If you dial in and listen to your messages, saving them somewhere more secure is a little trickier — but far from impossible.

The easy way: Turn on your speaker-



iStock

Among the various reasons voicemails can go missing: app deletion, accidental erasure or switching wireless providers. Thankfully, most phones make it easy to save them.

phone, play the voicemail and record it on another device. Many smartphones or tablets have built-in voice memo or recorder apps that you can use for free, should you have access to one of these devices.

As for laptops, they almost certainly have a built-in microphone — you just need the right software. We recommend using the free app Audacity for Windows or Mac's built-in QuickTime Player to record the audio.

This method will do in a pinch, and it's certainly better than nothing. But if you want to capture those voicemails in the best quality possible, you'll need some extra equipment.

The most important bit you'll need is a cable to connect your old phone and your computer. Depending on your phone's age, you may need a cable with a smaller 2.5mm end to fit into the tiny headset jacks used by classic flip phones and the like. The other end should look like a standard headphone connector — plug that into the jack on your computer with the small microphone icon or pink trim.

Now, about that software: fire up your

recording app of choice and pick your phone as the "input" — it will probably be referred to as an external microphone, and it may take some trial and error to find it.

In Audacity, your phone (possibly with a different name!) should appear in the drop-down menu next to the microphone icon. If you're using QuickTime on a Mac, click File, then New Audio Recording, then click the small down-facing arrow icon next to the record button and select your phone.

Finally, start the recording by clicking the big red button in your app of choice, then press play on the voicemail on your phone. If everything came together correctly, you'll now have a high-quality copy of your precious voice message.

Once you've recorded the voicemail on the device of your choice, save it (sometimes this happens automatically) and put it somewhere for safekeeping. No matter how you save a copy of those voicemails, we recommend putting them in more than one place — say, your computer, an external drive and in cloud storage — just to be safe.

Versatile portable charger can take on 4 devices at once

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Chargeasap's new Zeus 280W USB-C GaN portable charging adapter is one of the most powerful and versatile types and boasts some unique features. The 3.5-by-2.16-by-1.73-inch charger is marketed as the world's first and smallest 280-watt wall charger. The Zeus charger harnesses the power of Navitas GaNFast NV6127 Power IC technology, with four of the industry-leading chips in each unit.

With that much power, it can do the job of four individual chargers. Foldable AC prongs fit into a standard AC wall outlet. On the other side is an OLED screen, one of the features that makes this charger unique. It displays real-time information, including what ports are being used for charging and the amount of amps and volts. Under the display are four charging ports: 3 USB-C and a USB-A for your charging cables.

The USB-C1 and USB-C2 ports have a maximum output of 140 watts each; the USB-C3 port has up to 100 watts, and the single USB-A has up to 65 watts. The Zeus 280W USB-C GaN charger can charge two USB-C ports, delivering up to 140 watts each.

With GaN charging technology, there are many safety



CHARGEASAP/TNS

The Chargeasap Zeus 280W is designed for domestic use but is also set up for global travel.

features, including overcurrent, overvoltage, overtemperature, short-circuit protection and proper power distribution. The Chargeasap site and the user manual include a power distribution chart for using the ports in different combinations.

I threw all I had at this charger, plugging in my 13-inch MacBook Pro, iPhone 15 Pro Max, iPad Pro 11-inch and my wife's iPhone SE. Just for kicks, I added a dual USB-A cable with an Apple Watch and Apple Lightning ports (on the same cable), and it actually charged five devices at once. I will add that this is not recommended; Chargeasap states that the maximum is four devices.

Its laptop-first power distribution prioritizes C1 and C2 ports at 140 watts, guaranteeing your laptop is charged at maximum speed.

With the fold-out charging tip, the charger is designed for domestic use but is also set up for global travel. According to the company site, the Zeus 280W charger includes three interchangeable travel adapters (EU, AU, UK) for use in more than 190 countries worldwide. Each foreign adapter slides onto the built-in AC prongs and locks in place.

Chargeasap noted that they are currently working on producing an additional adapter that should be for sale within the next two months. This adapter will let the Zeus charger be connected via a C7 cable instead of being plugged directly into the wall socket.

Online: chargeasap.com; \$219, available in black or white

WEEKEND: MOVIES

They're baa-ack

Re-released movies making a splash in theaters as new content lags

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

When Jennifer Kent's "The Babadook" opened in theaters a decade ago, it played at two cinemas. When it returns to theaters next month, it will be in 500.

"It's strange, but in a wonderful way. I can't quite believe it's been 10 years already. But it's fantastic to go back and be a part of it," Kent says, speaking from Australia. "Considering that it only released on such a small number of screens, I feel proud that it's still enduring."

"The Babadook," a chilling parable of parenthood that ushered in a new era of daring, cinematic horror films, is just one of many movies making an anniversary run in theaters this year. Look at almost any movie theater marquee right now and you'll probably see not just new titles but a smattering of older films, too.

At a time when nearly everything is available at home with a few clicks, nothing is surging on the big screen as much as yesterday's movies. Repertory cinema, once the home of the arthouse, is now in the multiplex, too.

And sometimes, the ticket sales can be eye-popping. In the past two weeks, the beloved 2009 stop-motion Laika Studios film "Coraline," by Henry Selick, has grossed more than \$25 million — a staggering sum for a 15-year-old movie. Earlier this year, Disney's re-release of "Star Wars: Episode One — The Phantom Menace" made \$19.4 million globally.

This fall will see anniversary releases of "Shaun of the Dead," "Paris, Texas," "Whiplash," "Hoop Dreams," "Interstellar" and many more.

It's not uncommon, of course, for restored classics to return to theaters. ("Seven Samurai" and "The Conversation" are among those that have this summer.) But it's a new feature of moviegoing that fairly recent movies are seeing wide re-releases — and that audiences are packing theaters for them.

"The Babadook," a small independent film propelled to cult status by widespread raves — even William Friedkin hailed it as an instant classic — will very possibly outgross the \$1 million it made a decade ago in North America.

"It has grown a new fan base," says Nicole Weis, vice president of distribution for IFC. "The majority of the fans didn't see it theatrically. This strategy of bringing it back was so people could see a film they've fallen in love with as they should, as it was intended to be, on the big screen."

Theatrical hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels. But that's partly due to theaters not having enough movies to show. The number of films released stateside in theaters has lowered for various reasons. The year's movie calendar was significantly altered by last year's prolonged work stoppages.

Partly to help fill such voids, the nation's three largest theater chains — AMC, Regal and Cinemark — in 2005 formed Fathom Events. It distributes, among other things, live broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera and special events like the annual

Studio Ghibli Fest, which brings back classics from the Japanese anime studio. Its release of "Coraline," including 3D screenings, set a new high mark for Fathom.

"The interest in classic movies has really gone up," Ray Nutt, chief executive of Fathom says. "This year we'll see a 75% increase year over year in this category."

When Fathom started out, they mainly looked to play films on quiet days in cinemas, like Mondays and Tuesdays. But they've steadily expanded. One of their biggest hits this year was a run of the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy over Saturday-Sunday-Monday. Upcoming classics includes anniversary showings of "Rear Window," "Blazing Saddles," "Mean Girls" and "The Fifth Element."

"We joke around here a lot about what is the definition of a classic movie," says Nutt. "It used to be something like 50 years or whatever, and now we're talking about 'Coraline' at 15."

Some streaming services tend to hide older films from their home pages. But in such a digital sea of content, how new a movie is can sometimes be less

relevant. ("Titanic" and "The Equalizer" have both charted this summer on Netflix's most-watched lists.) The differential between theater and home is becoming less about what's new and more about the viewing experience. Do you want to see "Jaws" on your couch while flipping through your phone, or on a big screen with an audience collectively on the edge of their seats?

Increasingly, older films are being shown on screens usually reserved for first-run movies. Some of that is out of necessity.

"There's about 20-30% less films being majorly distrib-

uted now than there were just five years ago," says Jeremy Boviard, the general manager of the four-screen Moviehouse in Millerton, N.Y. "There's definitely more holes in certain programming weekends."

Last year, A24 released the 40th anniversary of Jonathan Demme's Talking Heads concert film "Stop Making Sense." The company prides itself on cutting-edge contemporary films, but has begun experimenting with re-releases. "Stop Making Sense" made more than \$5 million domestically.

The trend isn't likely to slow down any time soon. Studios now regularly comb through their archives and patiently await notable anniversaries. For Kent, it's a positive development in what she otherwise calls "a dark age for cinema."

"I feel like people still crave that experience," says Kent. "I went to see (1955 Danish drama) 'Ordet' and (1957 Swedish historical fantasy) 'The Seventh Seal.' Especially in 'Ordet,' it's such a transcendent film. The audience, we were collectively experiencing it. I could hear people crying at the end. It's the reason that we went to the cinema in the first place — to have an experience. Not to sit on our couch while we're looking at our phones watching some sort of content."

"For me," she adds, "I take it very seriously, because I think we need it."

"I feel like people still crave that experience. It's the reason that we went to the cinema in the first place — to have an experience."

Jennifer Kent

Writer and director of "The Babadook"

Noah Wiseman, bottom, and Essie Davis star in the 2014 psychological horror film "The Babadook."

IFC FILMS/AP



WEEKEND: MOVIES

Movie reflects life for Gibson

Actor lived in LA during violent riots depicted in '1992'

BY PETER LARSEN

The Orange County Register

Tyrese Gibson paused when asked how he got the lead role in "1992"; the film is a heist movie set on the first day of the Los Angeles riots that followed the acquittals of LAPD officers in the beating of motorist Rodney King.

"That's a loaded question," says Gibson, who grew up in the Watts neighborhood of South Los Angeles. "When I was 14, April 29, 1992, I was in the streets of Watts, South Central LA, looting and rioting and protesting.

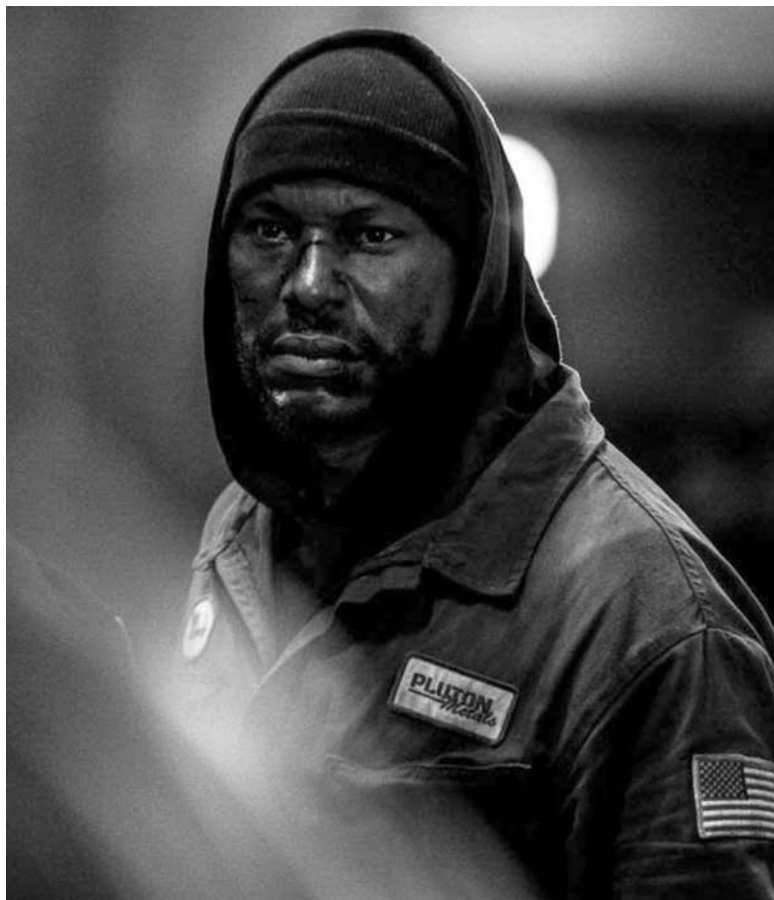
"And so the sense of humor that God has is like, 'Oh, you're going to really do it before you do it,'" he says of living through the reality of that day before reliving it in a feature film. "I had no idea that I'd be a singer or actor, none of the above, let alone I'd be doing a film and be starring in a film that's something that I've seen, heard, felt and experienced in real life."

Director Ariel Vromen says it was the authenticity Gibson possessed as an Angeleno that made him the right choice to play Mercer, a former gang member working to rebuild his life and his relationship with his son after serving time in prison.

In "1992," which arrives in theaters this weekend, Gibson, who portrays the protective father of Antoine (Christopher A'mmanuel), seeks to escape the violence of the riot by taking his teenage boy to the catalytic converter factory where he works as a janitor.

They arrive as a gang of thieves led by Lowell (the late Ray Liotta) and his two adult sons (Scott Eastwood and Dylan Arnold) are breaking into a safe containing millions of dollars' worth of platinum used in the anti-pollution devices. A deadly cat-and-mouse game follows as Gibson captures Eastwood while Liotta holds onto A'mmanuel.

"Tyrese, for me, was an in-



TRIDENT FILMS/TNS

Tyrese Gibson stars in "1992," a new heist thriller set on the first day of the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

teresting choice," says Vromen, an Israeli who moved to Los Angeles in 1999 to pursue a film-making career. "A few names were circulating for the role, and funny enough, I think there were, like, four finalists, and three out of the four did not carry an American citizenship.

"So when I met with Tyrese, when I spoke to him for the first time, and I realized that he is from Watts, South Central, that he grew up in those streets.

"I felt that, you know, John Singleton did 'Four Brothers' and 'Baby Boy' (with Gibson). And then Tyrese moved into 'The Fast and the Furious' and the 'Transformers' and a lot of movies — some of them, you know, with a huge audience following.

"But I felt like he's almost like a Lamborghini left behind in the garage," Vromen says. "And knowing that he actually is from LA, there's no more authenticity."

Vromen says the screenplay by Sascha Penn had floated around Hollywood for a decade before it crossed his desk in 2020.

"I sat down and read that script," he says. "That was just after the George Floyd riots in Minnesota, and LA was still in a mess. But after reading a script, I took the car and went scouting the locations, even before I committed to do the movie. And you can still see the shattered windows and the cardboard, you know, all over the place, and a lot of burned buildings.

"It was almost surreal that I'd just read a script that had a concept and had a really, really interesting idea of combining those two worlds together," Vromen says.

The hybrid nature of "1992," which fused the social justice implications of the King verdict and riots to a heist story and a pair of father-son narratives, was important to both Vromen and Gibson.

"When you approach any storytelling, if there is a certain message you want to convey, it's very difficult because you cannot teach or preach," Vromen says, who says a story must engage the audience. "They're going to be entertained, and at the same time, they're going to get an emotional experience.

"In '1992,' we had to bring that extra element," he says. "Eventually, it resonates between the two families, between the two colors, between the two societies that clash."

"We wanted to tell a story of a person on a day, of a person that already experienced that harsh reality in the past," Vromen says.

The dual father-son stories were particularly important to Gibson, he says, adding textures and emotions that elevated the movie in meaningful ways.

"I was looking to make a specific statement at this point in my life, in my career," Gibson says. "I wanted to do something uncomfortable. And you know you can go Michael Bay and be blowing up and shooting up and have drones with fancy cameras. I've played these games and I've had those elements, and it's been incredible.

"But I was like, you know, It's time to do something to pull at the heartstrings. I was just really praying for a role where people care again, like care about the outcome of what might happen here."

LA setting merely incidental in '1992'

BY KATIE WALSH

Tribune News Service

With the title "1992" and an image of Watts' own Tyrese Gibson on the poster, one would be safe to assume that the 1992 Los Angeles uprising that erupted in the wake of the Rodney King verdict would be central to this B-movie thriller by Ariel Vromen. Instead, the riots feel incidental to the story.

Indeed the film is set on April 29, 1992, a date immortalized in infamy, but the protests that grew into riots that are now considered an uprising are merely background action for a heist movie that pits a crew of professional thieves against a former gang member. Any insights about the events of that specific day in LA won't be found in this vault.

Gibson plays Mercer Bey, known as "OG Merc" to his old compatriots in the hood. He's fresh out of prison, and trying going straight with a factory job manufacturing catalytic converters at Pluton Metals. He's also attempting to be a strong and steady father to his teen son Antoine (Christopher A'mmanuel).

Scott Eastwood co-stars as Riffin, who's assembling one last heist (it's always the last one, isn't it?). He convinces his younger brother Dennis (Dylan Arnold) and friend Copeland (Clé Bennett) to link up for a daring robbery of the platinum vault at Pluton, and then brings his dad Lowell (Ray Liotta) in on the plan. On the day of the uprising, when "no one's minding the shop," they spring into action, taking advantage of the opportunity that the LAPD's attention will be elsewhere.

A series of unfortunate events and dubious decisions leads the entire ensemble to the factory; a series of rash and violent choices leads to tragedy; father against father, a son for a son. It would be positively Shakespearean if it was in the least bit compelling. The problem is that the premise

of the script, by Vromen and Sascha Penn, just feels like a high-concept Frankenstein job, pasting together two ideas ("what if 'Heat' was during the LA riots?") without giving much thought to the deeper themes and ideas at play.

A grizzled Gibson is always a compelling screen presence; the late, great Liotta is appropriately terrifying too. But the rest of the story has muddled motivations and stakes.

It ends up being the better choice for Vromen to swerve away from the uprising in the latter half of the film — what he presents in the first half is cringeworthy: a chintzy and cheesy playacting of the chaos, with any discussion of the issues feeling forced and also extremely retrograde politically. When Antoine expresses frustration that his father has pulled him from the streets, justifiably expressing his rage at the oppression he has witnessed, Mercer scolds his son that rioting is what is expected of them. The perspective feels distressingly old-fashioned in a post-Black Lives Matter America.

But even the look of "1992" feels faded from age and has a shallow focus. Every exterior shot of Los Angeles has a desaturated and yellowed color and every shot seems to have a short depth of field. The look of the film at night and in the factory is much more sophisticated, with the specific use of light and dark in the closed facility coming into play. But the geography and some of the coincidences are as baffling as the messaging.

Despite associating with the 1992 uprising, this film doesn't want to engage with any of the issues or topics at hand. Vromen and Penn would have been better off writing a straightforward father-son heist flick without trying (and failing) to pull off this high-concept maneuver.

"1992" is rated R for violence and pervasive language. Running time: 96 minutes. Now playing at select on-base theaters.



LIONSGATE/TNS

Dylan Arnold, left, and Christopher A'mmanuel in "1992."

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Familiar and shallow

New 'Reagan' biopic mere pop-culture propaganda

By Ty Burr

The Washington Post

If you were a recent arrival from Alpha Centauri and approached the new biopic "Reagan" with no knowledge of America's 40th president, here's what you might learn:

He was an actor who made one notable movie and a lot of TV commercials. He hated communism and Soviet Russia, and the Germans tore down the Berlin Wall because he told them to. He had no domestic policies except trickle-down economics, which worked. He didn't actively parent any children (though he did grieve a daughter who died at birth). His first wife was a drunk. AIDS was just a word on a quilt. Some angry weirdo shot him, but we don't know who he was or why he did it.

For a movie about the Great Communicator, "Reagan" communicates surprisingly little.

Dennis Quaid is an acceptable simulacrum in the title role, apple-cheeked and husky-voiced, but Ronald "Dutch" Reagan had a folksy surface charisma that was a huge part of his appeal, and that proves impossible to replicate. Quaid offers a congenial impersonation with little depth, in part because depth is not what we wanted (or got) from Reagan. The performance is a fitting centerpiece in a movie that plays like an overlong Classics Illustrated version of a biography, or something of which Jack Warner, Reagan's old boss in Hollywood, would approve.

Based on Paul Kengor's 2007 book "The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism," "Reagan" organizes its narrative around its subject's lifelong fight against the Red Menace, which it assumes we know is bad without being told why.

Godlessness, mostly: The script by Howard Klausner ("Space Cowboys") takes Reagan's spiritual beliefs on faith and brings in Kevin Sorbo as an influential pastor to tell young Dutch (David Henrie) "Anybody can be God's people, so long as they choose Him." (The film's producer, Mark Joseph, has made a career of faith-based projects.)

In the movie's most absurd stretch, a framing narrative casts Jon Voight as a retired Russian KGB spy explaining to a younger colleague in the present day why he admires Reagan and why he understood the USSR was doomed. "I knew he was the one who would bring us down, not with missiles or guns or even politics, but with something much greater ... people give their lives for one another, for the freedom to live their lives as they choose and for God. We took that away. The Crusader gave it back to them."

The first half of "Reagan" follows the young actor and head of the Screen Actors Guild as he fights against Communist infiltration of the Hollywood unions in the persons of labor leader Herb Sorrell (a thuggish Mark Kubr) and screenwriter Dalton Trumbo (an effete Sean Hankinson). First wife Jane Wyman (Mena Suvari) scoffs, "Is there anything worse than an actor with a cause?" between swigs of her cocktail; thank goodness Nancy Davis (Penelope Ann Miller) shows up a few scenes later to reluctantly go on a date with the now-divorced Reagan.

Journeyman director Sean McNamara ("Soul Surfer") moves us through Reagan's political life at a dogtrot, emphasizing the Cold War rhetoric and downplaying any mention of Big Government or bureaucratic waste, which the candidate rode to election as governor of California and ultimately two terms in the White



Rawhide Pictures

Dennis Quaid struggles to replicate Ronald Reagan's innate charisma in "Reagan."

House. We hear Reagan briefly disparage tax increases, but nothing pro or con about his administration's dismantling of the social safety net. Blink and you'll miss the 1981 air traffic controllers strike ("A contract is a contract") and the Iran-Contra scandal. To its credit, the film shows Reagan admitting he misspoke when he said the U.S. didn't trade arms for hostages; he also says the Contras "remind me of Washington and the Continental Army."

"Reagan" gives us the public moments ("There you go again" in the 1980 debate with Jimmy Carter; "I will not exploit my opponent's youth and inexperience" four years later against Walter Mondale) but little of actual substance. The film reduces

anyone who opposed Reagan's policies to screaming hippie protesters holding signs that read "God Does Not Exist." At one point, Voight's elderly spy says of the U.S. president, "It became my obsession to understand what was beneath the facade." "Reagan" says that what was beneath the facade was ... more facade.

The faithful for whom "Reagan" was made aren't likely to see that it's a hagiography as rosy and shallow as anything in a Kremlin May Day parade. As pop-culture propaganda, the movie's strictly for true believers. As history, it's worthless.

"Reagan" is rated PG-13 for violent content and smoking. Running time: 141 minutes. Now playing at select on-base theaters.

Though stylish and operatic, 'The Crow' fails to outfly 1994 original

By Mark Kennedy

Associated Press

One of the first things you see in the reimagined "The Crow" is the sight of a fallen white horse in a muddy field, bleeding badly after becoming entangled in barbed wire. It's a metaphor, of course, and a clunky one at that — a powerful image that doesn't really fit well and is never explained.

That's a hint that director Rupert Sanders will have a tendency to consistently pick the stylish option over the honest one in this film. In his attempt to give new life to the cult hero of comics and film, he's given us plenty of beauty at the expense of depth or coherence.

The filmmakers have set their tale in a modern, generic Europe and made it very clear that this movie is based on the graphic novel by James O'Barr, but the 1994 film adaptation starring Brandon Lee hovers over it like, well, a stubborn crow.

Brandon, son of legendary actor and martial artist Bruce Lee, was just 28 when he died after being shot while filming a scene for "The Crow." Lee's movie was finished without him and he never got to see it enter Gen X memory in all its rain-drenched, gothic glory, influencing everything from alternative fash-

ion to "Blade" to Christopher Nolan's "Dark Knight" trilogy.

Bill Skarsgård seizes Lee's role of Eric Draven, a man so in love that he returns from the dead to revenge his and his sweetheart's slayings in what can be best called a sort of supernatural, romantic murderfest.

William Schneider, who co-wrote the screenplay with Zach Baylin, has given the story a near-operatic face-lift, by introducing a devil, a Faustian bargain, blood-on-blood oaths and a godlike guide who monitors the limbo between heaven and hell. "Kill the ones who killed you and you'll get her back," our hero is told.

The first half drags at it sets the table for the steady beat of limbs and necks being detached at the end. Eric and his love, Shelly (played by an uneven FKA Twigs), meet in a rehab prison for wayward youth.

Eric is a gentle loner — tortured by a past the writers don't bother filling in, who likes to sketch in a book (universal cinema code signaling a sensitive soul) and is heavily tattooed (he's often shirtless).

Shelly is more complex, but that's because the writers maybe gave up on giving her a real backstory.

Part of the trouble is that the lead couple cast off very little electricity, offering a love affair that's more teen-like than all-consuming. And this is a story that needs a love capable of transcending death.

There are lots of cool-looking moments — mostly Skarsgård in a trench coat, stomping around the desolate concrete jungle in the rain at night — until "The Crow" builds to one of the better action sequences this year, albeit another one of those heightened show-downs at the opera.

If the original was plot-light but visually delicious, the new one has a better story but suffers from ideas in the films built on its predecessor, stealing a little from "The Matrix," "Joker" and "Kill Bill." Why not create something entirely new?

"The Crow" isn't bad — and it gets better as it goes — but it cannot escape Lee and the 1994 original even as it builds a more allegorical scaffolding for the smartphone generation. To use the first metaphor, it's like the trapped white horse — held down by its own painful past, never free to gallop on its own.

"The Crow" is rated R for strong bloody violence, gore, language, sexuality/nudity and drug use. Running time: 111 minutes. Now playing at select on-base theaters.



LIONSGATE/AP

Bill Skarsgård is a vengeful goth hero in "The Crow."

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



iStock

Author and Cornell University professor James Maas says short naps can “quickly boost your alertness, your concentration, your productivity, your creativity and your mood.”

The science behind the siesta

Experts say short afternoon naps can help reenergize the body and mind, without leaving you groggy

By ALBERT STUMM
Associated Press

Now that she’s working from home, Kendra King takes an early afternoon nap on most days, typically for about 20 to 30 minutes.

“A lot of times, I don’t go in with the intention of taking a nap but instead to lay down and rest,” said King, a writer in Philadelphia. “Then I end up drifting off and wake up feeling energized and fresh to continue on my day.”

King didn’t realize she had settled naturally into the napping routine that sleep experts recommend. Or that researchers say short naps improve motor skills, enhance memory and boost creativity, even though she has felt it.

“I’m definitely more creative after napping,” she said.

That’s because so-called power naps lasting less than 30 minutes allow the brain to rest in a way that makes you more alert, experts say. The naps are not so long that you slip into deeper sleep that would leave you groggy after waking up.

“We know it’s an easy, helpful way to quickly boost your alertness, your concentration, your productivity, your creativity and your mood. It’s a royal flush,” said James Maas, who spent 48 years studying sleep as a Cornell University professor.

Where naps fit into the circadian rhythm

Maas, author of “Sleep for Success! Everything You Must Know About Sleep But are Too Tired to Ask,” said nearly everyone experiences an afternoon lull. It comes down to the body’s circadian rhythm, which includes two periods of drowsiness every 24 hours, once at night

and again between about 2 and 4 p.m.

In a typical night, people go through several 90-minute sleep cycles spread over five stages, from light to deep sleep, with the deepest falling toward the middle. Daytime sleep follows the same cycle, which is why Maas doesn’t recommend hourlong naps. When waking up from such deep sleep, it can take you up to an hour to return to normal, thanks to what’s called sleep inertia.

“It’s like putting yourself into low-power mode just for a little bit and letting your body recuperate.”

Sara Mednick
sleep researcher, author

Shorter naps only include stage-two sleep, which is particularly helpful for alertness and memory, said Sara Mednick, a sleep researcher at University of California, Irvine.

“It’s like putting yourself into low-power mode just for a little bit and letting your body recuperate,” said Mednick, author of “Take a Nap! Change Your Life.”

Her research has found that naps work better than caffeine and a placebo to improve cognitive functioning. In fact, that afternoon cup of coffee is the least effective of all three.

“We showed better effects with the placebo on performance than with the caffeine,” she said. “So if you

think you’re getting caffeine, you’re going to perform better than if you actually get caffeine.”

How to start

Find a quiet, dark and cool space and set a timer for 15 or 20 minutes, which is a good starting point until you see how your body adjusts.

Even if you feel like you haven’t slept, you still get benefits, Mednick said. People don’t feel like they are asleep until they have reached deeper, slow-wave sleep in stage three.

“Your brain is still alerting you to the world around you when you’re in stage-two sleep,” she said. “But that doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re not getting the benefits of sleep.”

Experts say short naps don’t interfere with nighttime sleep, as long as they’re not too late in the day. Aim for taking a nap around 6 or 7 hours after waking up, and try to nap at the same time every day.

Mednick recommended saving longer naps for when you have time to sleep a full 90 minutes. After about half an hour, you enter slow-wave sleep, which helps the body repair muscle tissue. REM, or rapid-eye movement, sleep comes at the end of the cycle; it’s associated with dreams and helps process emotions.

The only people who should avoid napping are those who have trouble sleeping at night, Maas said. Senior citizens in particular should be vigilant because they tend to nap for too long during the day.

Don’t like napping? Mednick’s research also has shown napping is not for everyone. About half the people she has tested didn’t get anything out of it: “I’d say to those people who really don’t like to nap, ‘Listen to your body.’”

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

Towering achievement

Motivational speaker currently holds 181 Guinness World Records

By CATHY FREE
The Washington Post

Motivational speaker David Rush was looking for a way to share a message about perseverance when he came up with a zany idea: He would teach himself to juggle blindfolded, and go for the Guinness World Record.

He'd learned to juggle while he was in college, and it seemed like a fun way to draw attention while also making up for the times he'd tried and failed to juggle while jogging, he said.

Rush practiced juggling while blindfolded for weeks at his home in Boise, Idaho, then in late 2015, he broke the world record with a time of 6 minutes, 34 seconds. It was heady stuff.

Soon he decided that winning one Guinness title wasn't enough. He wanted to break as many records as he could.

His 6½-minute juggling record eventually led to him juggling while blindfolded for more than an hour, and Rush also shattered scores of other Guinness World Records, each one more oddball than the last.

Catch 59 marshmallows in his mouth in less than one minute? No problem. Balance 101 toilet paper rolls on his head? Yes, please.

Earlier this year, after Rush broke his 180th world record for bursting the most balloons with chopsticks in one minute, he decided to go for the ultimate prize. He wanted to break the record of holding the most concurrent Guinness World Record titles.

Although Guinness no longer monitors who tops the record for most broken records, Rush said he knew that Italian serial record breaker Silvio Sabba had also racked up 180 concurrent world record titles.

On Jan. 30, Rush documented his 181st record of smashing 55 vinyl records in 30 seconds, then submitted the evidence and paperwork to Guinness World Records.

He has gotten his records certified in two ways: Either having an official Guinness representative with him on site, which Rush has done a couple of times. Or the more common method, having volunteer timers and witnesses, then submitting official paperwork, videos and photos to Guinness.

Sabba, who lives in Milan, holds more than 200 Guinness records, but about 20 of those were later broken by other people, said Rush, 39. He said it's a

common problem among those who seek fame by excelling at stacking bars of soap or catching table tennis balls with shaving foam on their heads.

In early August, Rush said he received certification from Guinness World Records that he'd won the record for smashing vinyl records. That meant he had topped Sabba's streak, he said.

To celebrate, Rush posted a video on YouTube for his 50,000 subscribers, outlining the hard work that went into achieving his dream.

"I know it's something I'll now have to work to hold on to, but I'm up for it," he said. "It's a great feeling of accomplishment every time I can add another record to the list."

"I love the challenge and the training — it helps get me out of bed in the morning."

David Rush
holder of 181 Guinness
World Records

Rush said he developed his competitive streak early on while growing up in Boise.

"I have two older brothers, and we were always competing against each other at foosball, table tennis and swimming," he said.

"I always came in second or third as a kid, but then one day, I beat my brother Jonathan in a swim race," Rush said. "I'd grown taller than him, and it was the first time I'd ever beaten him at something. I vividly remember being proud of that."

He said he was always competitive academically, graduating in 2007 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and working for several years in the tech industry before becoming a motivational speaker.

While promoting the importance of science, technology, engineering and math in public education, he decided that perhaps the Guinness World Records could be something that sets him apart.

Where others maybe saw goofy tricks, he saw a collection of worthy challenges.

Since 2015, Rush has posted all of his Guinness World Rec-

ord attempts on his website and social media sites, including Instagram and TikTok, where he has 95,000 combined followers.

Employees at Guinness World Records in London took note when Rush showed up at their offices this summer and broke 15 records in one day, including the fastest time to drink a liter of lime juice through a straw. Rush claimed the world title with a time of 13.99 seconds.

"I threw up immediately afterward," he said.

Guinness World Records spokesperson Kylie Galloway confirmed to The Washington Post that Rush is among the most prolific record breakers of all time.

"We believe that joy comes from discovery, empowerment comes from giving your all and happiness comes from sharing your passions," Galloway said in an emailed statement.

Rush said he's not even close to finished.

"I love the challenge and the training — it helps get me out of bed in the morning," he said, noting that he runs up to 1,000 miles a year and eats a whole-grain, high-protein diet to keep him in shape for balancing chain saws, taking wet sponge hits to the face and slicing kiwi fruit while standing on a balance board.

"It makes me feel good to keep my body moving and try something new," he said. "I've always loved a challenge."

His wife, Jennifer Rush, and his three children, Jeremy, 8, Peter, 6, and Felicity, 2, are enthusiastic supporters of his obscure undertakings.

In 2021, Jennifer Rush allowed herself to be wrapped in plastic cling wrap more than a dozen times so her husband could beat his previous world record with a time of one minute, two seconds.

"We love and support each other in everything, and I couldn't be more proud of David," she said.

"It's been a lot of fun, and we've acquired a lot of really weird things, but we've made lots of memories together."

Among the items that now take up space in Rush's basement and garage are: Four unicycles, hundreds of juggling objects, piles of chopsticks, three pogo sticks, a Samurai sword and a water balloon launcher.

"Our house is constantly filled with junk purchased for my latest endeavor," Rush said. "But it does keep life interesting."



David Rush

David Rush broke the world record for toilet paper balancing in 2021.



Michael Whitty

David Rush broke 15 records on June 24 at Guinness World Records headquarters in London.



David Rush

David Rush wrapped his wife, Jennifer, head to toe in plastic cling wrap in about two minutes to win a Guinness World Record.



Jennifer Rush

Rush juggles while blindfolded to set a record in 2015.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

The casual delights of coastal Croatia

I love the knack Croatians have for taking a humble stretch of craggy shoreline and turning it into a wildly romantic bar or café. In the coastal town of Rovinj, several bars and restaurants offer tables atop the town's rocky seawall, and some provide you with a pillow — an invitation to find your own nook in the rocks overlooking the bay. As the sunset fades and the flames from tealight candles seem to brighten, you realize just how easy it is to enjoy a luxurious moment on the Adriatic coast.

The eastern shores of the Adriatic Sea benefit from the Adriatic's counterclockwise prevailing current, which moves clear, warmer water from the central Mediterranean up along the coastline of Croatia. And the craggy geology of the Dinaric Alps, which jut right up against Croatia's coast, mean that this stretch is sprinkled with islands. Not surprisingly, these shores have long been a popular destination for Slavic Europe. Sometimes it's difficult to distinguish this lively-but-easygoing area from Italy.

That's especially true in the northern peninsula of Istria, which borders Italy and where both Italian and Croatian are spoken on a daily basis. Instead of the sheer limestone cliffs found along the rest of the Croatian shoreline, the Istrian coast

has gentle, green slopes, giving it a more serene feel. Though Istria has its share of tacky, touristy beach towns, it also hosts my favorite Adriatic town, Rovinj.

Surrounded by the sea on three sides, Rovinj is like a little hunk of Venice draped over a hill. It's simply romantic. Boats laden with kitschy shells for sale rock in the harbor. The fountain on the main square celebrates the arrival of the water system in 1959. A bell tower with a rickety staircase requires an enduring faith in the strength of wood. From the top, a patron-saint weather vane boldly faces each menacing cloud front that blows in from the sea.



Rick Steves

If you visit, walk through its market to peruse the fresh offerings: figs, cherries, grapes, olive oils, honey and more. Women push grappa, homemade fruit brandies, and curiously flavorful walnut samples on shoppers. The fish market at the back is where locals gather ingredients for their favorite dish, brodet — a stew of various kinds of seafood mixed with olive oil and wine.

Though Istria has become something of a hot spot, it's still not as famous as its



CAMERON HEWITT/Rick Steves' Europe

Rovinj's rocky waterfront is lined with bars perfectly positioned for sunset appreciation.

southern rival, the Dalmatian coast, home to Croatia's top tourist town, Dubrovnik. Its most remarkable feature is the mighty wall that's surrounded the city for centuries, and walking along its ramparts — which offer unforgettably scenic views across a landscape of tiled rooftops, down into narrow cobbled lanes, and out to the blue Adriatic Sea — is its best activity.

Sun worshippers can easily find a pebbly patch along one of Dubrovnik's beaches, but to truly appreciate the coast, it's best to head out to one of the islands. My two favorites are Korcula, with its "mini-Dubrovnik" vibe, and Hvar, a largely sleepy isle but for the chic crowds that converge in its main town to see and be seen.

That main town, also named Hvar, has become a big draw for celebrities and yachters, making it one of the most expensive places to stay in Croatia. But aside from the nightlife scene, activities there are low energy. The main square is a relaxing people zone surrounded by inviting cafés filled with deliriously sun-baked tourists.

Korcula, on the other hand, is generally ignored by the jet set. There's no "scene" here — just an atmospheric medieval town filling a small peninsula on one of Croatia's most beautiful islands.

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.

Have more fall fun by opting for smaller European fests

Lately a lot of travel articles have been devoted to destination dupes, the practice of subbing out a famous tourist destination for a lesser-known city or town with similar attributes. The same principle could easily be applied to some of Europe's best-known fests and mega-events. Cheaper accommodation, lower prices, a greater chance to meet locals and a more laid-back atmosphere are just some of the possible benefits.



Karen Bradbury

Munich's Oktoberfest vs. other autumn beer fests: The 189th edition of Munich's famed Oktoberfest, set to unfold Sept. 21-Oct. 6 in its traditional location, the Theresienwiese, counts its visitor numbers in millions, with a record-breaking 7.2 million attendees having raised their glasses with a Prost! there in 2023.

To experience authentic Bavarian Gemütlichkeit in a less hectic setting, consider attending the Herbstfest Rosenheim, attended by "only" about 1 million fun-seekers annually. From Saturday to Sept. 15, visitors can enjoy much the same beer, attractions and traditionally-clad locals that lend Oktoberfest its enduring appeal. Special events on the program include the opening parade Saturday at 11 a.m.; reduced prices on rides on children's days Sept. 4 and Sept. 11; a religious fest of thanksgiving at the Max-Josefs-Platz at 9:15 a.m. Sept. 8; and a display of fireworks at 9 p.m. Sept. 12. Online: herbstfest-rosenheim.de

Other traditional Bavarian autumn beerfests on the docket include Gillamoos in Absberg (through Sept. 2); Herbstfest Erding in Erding (through Sept. 8); Passauer Dult in Passau (Sept. 6-15) and Sankt-Michaelis-Kirchweih in Fürth (Sept. 28-Oct. 9).

Dürkheimer Wurstmarkt vs. smaller wine fests: It's named after sausage, but make no mistake: at the Dürkheimer Wurstmarkt, it's all about the wine, and the festival's 700,000 visitors annually can attest to that. Those who



iStock

Residents take part in a traditional parade in 2023 at the Herbstfest Rosenheim event in Rosenheim, Germany. This year's festival runs from Saturday to Sept. 15.

don't mind crowds can enjoy sidling up to their new friends Sept. 6-10 and Sept. 13-16.

Those after a smaller and less boisterous affair could try the one promoted as the oldest wine fest in Germany, going strong since 1912. The town of Winningen, on the Mosel, holds its annual Moselfest through Sept. 8. Notable program elements of the present-day wine fest include a wine market beginning at 2 p.m. Sept. 6, activities for children including face-painting, crafts projects and more 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Sept. 7 and 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sept. 8 and fireworks at 10 p.m. Sept. 8. Online: moselfest.com

Other wine festivals of note in the weeks to come include Das Weinfest der Mittelmosel in Bernkastel-Kues through Sept. 2; Stuttgarter Weindorf in Stuttgart through Sept. 8; the Oechsle Fest in Pforzheim through Sept. 8; Winzerfest in Bingen through Sept. 9; and Rotweinfest in Ingelheim Sept. 28-Oct. 6.

Belgian Beer Weekend vs. other Belgian beer festivals: It's hard to imagine a grander place than Brussels' astonishingly Grand-Place, in which Belgium's rich and tasty beer heritage is honored annually. The Belgian Beer Weekend, to be held Sept. 6-8, offers the opportunity to sample more than 500 unique beers from more than 50 breweries. According to The Brussels Times, about 60,000 beer lovers turned out for the event in 2022.

Every bit as tasty, the BXLBeerFest will take place at Brussels' Tour&Taxis event venue from noon-9 p.m. Sept. 28-29. Festival organizers aim to shine the spotlight on craft beers exclusively, be they from Belgium or other parts of the world. Some 30 independent breweries will take part. The BXLBeerFest is partnered with the Eat-Festival, a simultaneously running event in which two teams of chefs, pastry chefs and cheesemakers from Brussels create multi-course meals. An entry ticket valid for both days, along with six sample tokens and a festival tasting glass, goes for 22 euros. Online: bxlbeerfest.com

Almabtrieb in the Alps vs. return of the cattle in Alsace: Throughout many regions of the Austrian, German and Swiss Alps, the return of the cattle or other livestock from the high mountain pastures is cause for celebration. In years when no harm has come to a member of the herd, the return of the cattle is traditionally celebrated with cows wearing headdresses adorned with flowers and ribbons, markets, bands playing traditional folk music and no shortage of beer and schnapps. In Germany's Allgäu region alone, some 30 villages and towns keep these traditions alive. Austria's Tirol region is also known for colorful festivities welcoming the animals home.

A village in France's Alsace region also celebrates the return of its cattle. From 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sept. 15, the Transhumance und Meat Pie Festival puts the folklore and traditions of Munster on display, with activities including a cheese-making demonstration, alpine horn performances and a parade of cows. Online: tinyurl.com/2zxhaw49

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



PHOTOS BY NG HAN GUAN/AP

Tourists climb onto the 130-foot-tall stainless steel statue of Genghis Khan, a national hero who amassed power to become the leader of the Mongols in the early 13th century, on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on July 1.

Warrior-worthy vacation spot

Mongolia making efforts to attract adventurous tourists to landlocked nation

BY OLIVIA ZHANG AND DAVID RISING
Associated Press

With its reindeer sleigh rides, camel racing and stunning landscapes with room to roam, Mongolia hopes to woo visitors who are truly looking to get away from it all.

Like most countries, its tourism industry was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has launched a “Welcome to MonGolia” campaign to win people back. The government has added flights and streamlined the visa process, offering visa-free visits for many countries.

At least 437,000 foreign tourists visited in the first seven months of this year, up 25% over the same period last year, including increasing numbers from Europe, the U.S. and Japan. Visitors from South Korea nearly doubled, thanks in part to the under-four-hour flight.

Despite the gains, Mongolia’s government is still short of its goal of 1 million visitors per year from 2023-2025 to the land of Genghis Khan, which encompassed much of Eurasia in its 13th-century heyday and is now a landlocked nation located between Russia and China.

With a population of 3.3 million people, about half of them living in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, there’s plenty of open space for the adventure tourist to explore, said Eg-jimaa Battsooj, who works for a tour company.

Its customized itineraries include horseback trips and camping excursions with the possibility of staying in gers, the felt-covered dwellings still used by Mongolia’s herders.

There’s little chance of running across private property, so few places are off-limits, she said.

“You don’t need to open a gate; you don’t need to have permission from anyone,” she said, sitting in front of a map of Mongolia with routes marked out with pins and strands of yarn.

“We are kind of like the last truly nomad culture on the whole planet,” she added.

Lonely Planet named Mongolia its top destination in its Best in Travel 2024 report. The pope’s visit to Mongolia last year also helped focus attention on the country. Its breakdancers became stars at last year’s Asian Games. And some local bands have developed a global following, like The Hu, a folk-metal band that incorporates traditional Mongolian instruments and throat singing with modern rock.

Still, many people know little about Mongolia. American tourist Michael John said he knew some of the history about Genghis Khan and had seen a documentary on eagles used by hunters before deciding to stop in Ulaanbaatar as part of a longer vacation.

“It was a great opportunity to learn more,” the 40-year-old said.

Tourism accounted for 7.2% of Mongolia’s gross domestic product and 7.6% of its employment in 2019 before collapsing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the World Bank. But the organization noted “substantial growth potential” for Mongolia to exploit, with “diverse nature and stunning sceneries” and sports and adventure tourism possibilities.

Mongolia tourism ads focus on those themes, with beautiful views of frozen lakes in winter for skating and fishing, the northern lights and events like reindeer sledding and riding, camel racing and hiking.

Munkhjargal Dayan offers rides on two-humped Bactrian camels, traditional archery and the opportunity to have eagles trained for hunting perch on a visitor’s arm.

“We want to show tourists coming from other countries that we have such a way of life in Mongolia,” he said, waiting for customers by a giant statue of Genghis Khan on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar.

Outside the lively capital, getting around can be difficult in summer as the steppes become waterlogged, and there is limited infrastructure, a shortage of accommodation and a deficit of skilled labor in tourism destinations.



A vendor holds up an eagle as he waits for tourists to take photos near the Tereji National Park outside Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on July 3.



Tourists enjoy horseback riding July 3 near the iconic Turtle Rock outcrop at the Tereji National Park.

It is also easy for foreigners to get lost, with few signs in English, said Dutch tourist Jasper Koning. Nevertheless, he said he was thoroughly enjoying his trip.

“The weather is super, the scenery is more than super, it’s clean, the people are friendly,” he said.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Executing justice in Nuremberg

Learn about crime and punishment in the Middle Ages, Renaissance Europe at the Henkerhaus, or hangman's museum

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

Meister Franz Schmidt beheaded, hanged, burned or drowned 361 people deemed criminals while he held the role of municipal executioner in Nuremberg between 1577 and 1617.

Schmidt used torture to extract confessions and maimed lesser offenders with corporal punishment an additional 345 times. His position was thought to be fairly prestigious, though still viewed with derision.

Schmidt documented his gory tenure in the book "A Hangman's Diary," which provided insight into crime and punishment in the Middle Ages and beyond.

Present-day Nuremberg also has a more immersive legacy of Schmidt and his fellow executioners: a residence built for them on the Pegnitz River in 1320.

The Henkerhaus, or hangman's house, offers visitors glimpses into one of medieval and Renaissance Europe's darkest professions. It was home to the municipal executioner until 1806.

The information and imagery at the house, including some lifted from official documents and Schmidt's journal, are spell-binding. There are no axes or tools on display, which made the visit seem more academic than shocking.

The office of executioner developed as the ruling class consolidated power, according to literature at the Henkerhaus. Ancient Roman law influenced the decision to separate sentencing from punishment.

The imperial city of Nuremberg may have had an executioner as far back as 1378, records indicate.

Cells and a torture chamber underneath City Hall were where executioners would extract confessions, a requirement for conviction at the time. Sentences of imprisonment were rare.

Punishments ranged from public humiliation to death. Corporal punishment included branding and mutilation.

"The resulting physical handicap meant a lifelong loss of honor and esteem," the exhibit said.

Murder, rape, robbery, theft and even blasphemy were often punishable by death. Decap-



A visitor enters the Henkerhaus in Nuremberg on July 7.

On the QT

Address: Trödelmarkt 58, Nuremberg, Germany

Hours: Tuesday to Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

Cost: Admission is free for children under 14, 3 euros for most adults, and 2 euros for ages 14 to 18, students and the severely disabled.

Information: Online: henkerhaus-nuremberg.de

Matthew M. Burke

itation was considered the most humane capital punishment, while death on the breaking wheel and being burned alive were far worse.

Hanging was the second-most-used form of public execution. Women were usually drowned, until that practice was abandoned in favor of beheading.

The standout of the experience for me, besides the callous indifference to the loss of life, was seeing the bay window where the executioner's toilet had been, above the swiftly flowing Pegnitz.

In Schmidt's time, the bottom half was left open, allowing excrement to fall into the river. Apparently, merchants weren't the only ones doing business on the Pegnitz.

It's unknown where he cooked and slept, so those mundane aspects of his life are left to the visitor's imagination.

After being damaged during World War II, the Henkerhaus was restored in 1954. It has been a museum since 2007.

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PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

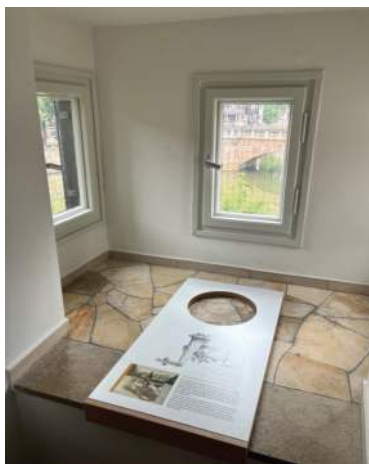
The Henkerhaus Museum, located along the Pegnitz River in Nuremberg, Germany, was once home to the city's municipal executioners and offers a glimpse into medieval crime and punishment.



The museum includes some information taken from official documents as well as from the journal, later book, of Meister Franz Schmidt: "A Hangman's Diary." There are no axes or tools on display, which makes the visit seem more academic than shocking.



A display at the Henkerhaus depicts the gallows, also called the ravenstone, because bodies would often be left for the birds.



The outline of a hole marks the former location of the executioner's toilet above the Pegnitz River in the Henkerhaus.



A pen-and-ink drawing from the judicial record of 1591 depicts executioner Schmidt beheading Hans Froeschel for stealing. A photo of the drawing is among the exhibits on display at the Henkerhaus.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Treats worthy of heavyweight title

Le Strane Delizie in Spilimbergo, Italy, offers megabrioche and megacappuccinos as well as regular-sized Italian bakery standard fare

BY BRIAN ERICKSON
Stars and Stripes

My travels during my assignment to Aviano Air Base in Italy have impressed upon me that for many people here, breakfast is not much more than a brioche and a cappuccino.

That has become my routine as well. I like to frequent a café where I can eat a pistachio brioche and sip a latte macchiato. But the menu at Le Strane Delizie, a pastry shop whose name translates to The Strange Delights, was a revelation for me.

My family and I checked out the shop in Spilimbergo, which is about 30 minutes by car from Aviano.

Simply put, I wish I had found this place sooner. It serves the megabrioche, a mammoth creation that feels like it weighs about 5 pounds, and sells for 25 euros.

It can be paired with the shop's megacappuccino, which is made with almost 34 ounces of milk and eight shots of espresso. The drink is too much for one person to consume, so be sure to have a companion or two along to share if you order it.

We ordered a megabrioche with white chocolate drizzle and cookies on top, and we chose



Le Strane Delizie

Address: Piazza Borgolucido 11, Spilimbergo, Italy

Hours: Wednesday to Monday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.; closed Tuesday

Prices: Brioche range from 2-3 euros, but the megabrioche costs 25 euros; regular espressos and lattes range from 2-4 euros, while a megacappuccino costs 15 euros.

Information: Phone +39 371 599 0847; online: lestranedelizie.it

Brian Erickson

chocolate-and-pistachio filling. I was expecting it to be lightly drizzled, but the chocolate was applied so thickly that our dish barely looked like a brioche.

It was served warm, which really enhanced the creamy consistency of the filling and brought out the indulgent chocolate flavor.

This breakfast item made such an impression that for my next birthday, I think I will ask my wife to get me a megabrioche instead of a cake.

All the rich baked goodness made me long for a drink to wash it down, so it was time to



PHOTOS BY BRIAN ERICKSON/Stars and Stripes

A megabrioche covered in melted white chocolate and cookies served alongside a megacappuccino at Le Strane Delizie in Spilimbergo, Italy, on Aug. 17. The brioche had a chocolate-and-pistachio filling.

take the megacappuccino plunge, which I did after adding six packets of sugar.

I did not come close to finishing the drink, which in retrospect was a good thing.

Beyond the megamadness, there are plenty of other Italian bakery standards on offer, including brioches with jam and small pastries of all kinds, as well as cannoli and bite-size desserts.

The restaurant also advertises "latte art" courses for those interested in the presentation of the perfect cup of coffee. I'll leave the art to the experts for now. But I'm happy to indulge in what they're creating.

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A display case at Le Strane Delizie cafe in Spilimbergo, Italy, is well-stocked with pastries Aug. 17. The name of the restaurant translates to The Strange Delights.

Instant coffee popularity leads to greater reliance on robusta beans

BY DAYANNE SOUSA
AND ILENA PENG
Bloomberg

The world's growing love for instant coffee is keeping roasters reliant on the robusta variety once snubbed by java snobs, even as prices reach the highest in about half a century.

Consumers are enjoying instant and grab-and-go drinks more than ever, and global soluble coffee consumption is on track to hit a record high. That is sustaining demand for robusta beans, even after droughts affecting growers in top producer Vietnam sent prices soaring this year to the highest since the 1970s.

The convenience of instant coffee won over consumers during the pandemic lockdowns, leading to a surge in demand. While growth has since subsided as people began returning to offices and coffee shops, "the public that was conquered remained there," said Aguinaldo Lima, a



MAIKA ELAN/Bloomberg

Packets of ready-to-drink Espresso Cappuccino coffee are piled up at the Tran-Q coffee factory in Dong Nai province, Vietnam. Instant coffee is more popular than ever, contributing to a changing balance in the beans used.

director at Brazil's soluble coffee industry group Abics.

That's led to a greater reliance on robusta, which offers better caffeine extraction for beverages, said Judy Ganes, president

of commodity analytics company J. Ganes Consulting LLC. Even a large supply of arabica beans — long considered higher-quality — and record robusta shipments from Brazil couldn't offset the imbalance.

Elevated robusta demand — and costs — are a big change for an industry that up until recently saw the variety as less desirable. Many roasters also blend robusta and arabica beans, as the robusta bean helps give coffee a fuller body but has been associated with a bitter taste. Adjusting the ratio of the two varieties helps manage costs.

Higher living costs around the world also encouraged a move toward cheaper coffee blends, while a growing consumer base in China drives higher soluble and overall coffee imports. Other robusta-heavy products are also on the rise.

A spike in robusta demand would normally spur roasters to seek cheaper alternatives within the arabica market.

While arabica coffee is considered high quality, not all beans are equal. In the physical market, beans of a smaller size and with more imperfections can cost less. It's these cheaper arabica types that roasters usually tap to replace robusta.

The industry has begun to shift back toward poorer grades of arabica. But "the decrease that we're seeing is fairly small compared to the price increase," said Andre Acosta, Marex Solutions' director of commodities for Latin America, referring to the slight drop in robusta demand.

Volcafe Ltd., one of the world's biggest coffee traders, said this year that robusta demand would need to fall further to ease tight supplies and forecasted a fourth year of shortages in the coming season.

Coffee makers risk getting "squeezed" between high input costs and the reluctance of retailers to raise prices for fear of hurting sales, said Bruno Giestas, who works for Brazil's roaster Realcafé.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

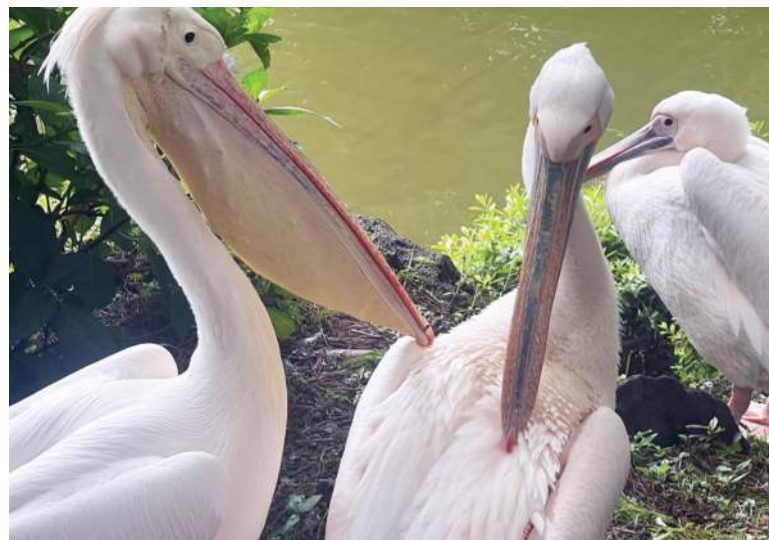


PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

A meerkat poses at Izu Shaboten Zoo in Ito, Japan. The zoo contains 140 species.



Peacocks roam free, as do squirrel monkeys, on the zoo's grounds.



Above: Pelicans socialize in their area of the zoo. Below: A capybara relaxes at the zoo. Guests may pay to feed the creatures, which are the world's largest rodent.

Plant, animal paradise

See and feed animals, select your own cactus at Izu Shaboten Zoo on Japan's Izu Peninsula within driving distance from greater Tokyo

BY KELLY AGEE
Stars and Stripes

Get to know some friendly animals on a day trip from Tokyo to a zoo full of friendly, exotic animals.

Donkeys, llamas and capybaras are among the 140 species at Izu Shaboten Zoo, less than a three-hour drive from U.S. bases near the Japanese capital.

Founded in 1959, the zoo and botanical garden in Ito, a city on central Japan's Izu Peninsula, is right next to Mount Omuro, a 1,900-foot-high cinder cone volcano.

The most notable exhibit is Capybara Rainbow, an enclosure where visitors can pay 200 yen, or about \$1.40, to feed grass to them. The area is fenced much like a petting zoo and equipped with benches so guests can relax and wait for the capybaras to come to them. It was nice to relax among the capybaras, who are very well behaved, soft and adorable.

The capybara, typically twice the size of a beaver, is the world's largest rodent. A native of northern and central South America, it's a strong swimmer and adapted by evolution for a part-time aquatic life.

The zoo accommodates that by providing the Original Capybara Open-Air Bath, which is open every year from late November to early April.

Elsewhere on the grounds is a greenhouse with examples of more than 1,000 cactuses from Mexico, Madagascar, South America and Africa. Cactuses and succulents are sold at the cactus-hunting work-

shop at the greenhouse entrance, where visitors can pick their own pot and cactuses or succulent and take them home.

The zoo is alive with birds, rodents and monkeys. There is a bird enclosure in the park, which features ducks, pink flamingos, macaws, black swans and bicorn hornbills, a large Indo-Pacific bird that sports a yellow helmet.

I liked that the zoo doesn't have tiny cages; the animals look well taken care of. Some walk freely in the parks, including squirrel monkeys and peacocks.

Several peacocks spread their feathers on the trail, which made for amazing photos.

The zoo has several activities, including a boat tour around the monkey area. Guests can interact and feed lemurs.

Throughout the day, the zoo puts on animal shows featuring dogs, parrots and monkeys. Showtimes are posted outside the venue.

Guests can also bring their pets if they are on a leash; they are prohibited in the free-roaming areas.

The zoo has several restaurants and a gift shop where guests can buy souvenirs.

The main restaurant is Gibbontei, also called the Forest Animal Restaurant. Try animal-themed dishes, including a capybara-shaped hamburger with a side salad and chips for 1,480 yen and duck omuhayashi, or rice omelet, shaped like a duck's face for 1,500 yen.

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On the QT

Directions: 1317-13 Futo, Ito, Shizuoka, 413-0231; less than 3 hours drive from all U.S. bases in the Tokyo area.

Times: Open daily, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Costs: Weekday admission is 2,700 yen, or about \$18.80; 1,300 yen for elementary school students; 700 yen for infants. Expect to pay a bit more on holidays.

Food: An onsite eatery, Gibbontei, serves various animal-shaped dishes.

Information: Online: izushaboten.com

Kelly Agee

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STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Graze near a tropical garden

Enjoy breakfast or lunch surrounded by exotic plants in Darwin, Australia

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes
A former Wesleyan Church that survived the World War II bombing of Darwin provides a shady spot for a bite to eat beneath a lush green canopy in Australia's Northern Territory.

Eva's Café occupies the old church. The wooden building was moved to George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens in 2000.

The church was designed in Adelaide, South Australia, and shipped to Darwin in 1897. During World War II, it served as the chapel at the former HMAS Melville naval base and survived the port's bombing by Japanese aircraft in February 1942.

Eva's is next to the garden entrance and parking lot, just north of Darwin's city center and a short walk from Mindil Beach, which hosts a popular weekend market.

The café has a selection of sandwiches, baked goods, salads, fruit juices and more, with the option of eating inside or on one of two large patios.

Eggs on toast for \$14.50 Australian dollars — about \$9.84 — with a flat white coffee (\$4.90) and a green smoothie (\$9) provided a tasty lunch during a break from covering drills at the nearby Royal Australian Air Force Base Darwin in late July.

The toast was made with fresh brown bread, the coffee was expertly brewed and the smoothie included healthy ingredients such as avocado and honey.



Eva's Café occupies a building that served as the chapel at the former HMAS Melville naval base and survived Darwin, Australia's bombing by Japanese aircraft in February 1942.

Alcohol is an option. Beers cost \$8.50 and cocktails are \$16.

You can walk off your meal on one of the shady trails that traverse the gardens, which were established on their present site in 1886. You can learn about the plants growing in the gardens at a nearby information center.

There's a pond with fountains next to the café where you might see some unusual Australian birds.

The gardens, named for former Darwin Mayor George Brown, contain a collection of Northern Australian flora, including mangroves and vines as well as introduced tropical plants such as palms and gingers.

The trails in the gardens and nearby streets provide a shaded running track that links up with trails along the coast.

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PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens contain a collection of Northern Australian flora, including mangroves and vines as well as introduced tropical plants such as palms and gingers.



Eva's Café

Location: George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, Gardens Road, Darwin, Australia
Hours: Open 8 a.m.-3 p.m. on weekdays and 7 a.m.-3 p.m. on weekends.
Prices: Breakfast and lunch options max out at \$25.
Dress: Casual
Directions: Just inland of Mindil Beach and north of central Darwin. Electric scooters and bicycles are available for rent throughout the city.
Information: Online: botanicgardens-cafe.com.au

Seth Robson



Eggs on toast with a flat white coffee and a green smoothie at Eva's Café in Darwin, Australia. Guests may eat inside or outside on a patio.



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WEEKEND: TRAVEL



CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

The Old Lahaina Luau reopened in March. The luau features dinner and an hourlong performance, including hula dancers, on the waterfront in West Maui.

A delicate dance on Maui

Travel to the island requires tact, respect a year after catastrophic Lahaina wildfire

BY CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS
Los Angeles Times

Five hundred feet outside the Lahaina burn zone, the tourists receive their leis.

As the torches of the Old Lahaina Luau flicker, bartenders mix mai tais and hula dancers get ready. After dinner, dancer and emcee Niki Rickard gathers the performers in a circle and asks the audience for “a moment of silence ... to acknowledge all we have lost.”

A year after the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century, which killed at least 102 people and leveled 2,200 structures, this is what passes for business as usual in West Maui. Though 98% of the island carries no visible signs of the fire, most of the city of Lahaina was leveled and remains behind roadblocks as crews begin the transition from cleanup to reconstruction.

In the first two weeks after the fire, most of the city’s 12,700 residents moved into hotels, with FEMA footing many bills. Since then, amid ferocious debate about the island housing shortage and how to

rebuild, most fire survivors have moved to longer-term housing or left the island. Many are back at work now, tending to tourists.

This tangle of mourning, recovery and tourism has many travelers wondering if it’s possible or respectful to spend a vacation on Maui now.

The answer is yes, according to every resident, worker and visitor I asked in three days on the island. But tourism lags about 25% behind pre-fire levels, and the situation can seem as layered as a Maui onion. While the average hotel room rents for more than \$500 per night, residents scramble for housing and equilibrium.

It’s easy to spend a week on the island in full vacation mode without setting foot in Lahaina. Conversely, the island’s recovery campaign includes a variety of “voluntourism” options (detailed below) for those who want to dedicate half a day or more to pitching in.

But some curious visitors fall between those extremes. Tourism workers say this can lead to hard feelings, especially when



GOV. JOSH GREEN, ZUMA PRESS WIRE/TNS

The historic town of Lahaina was devastated by the fast-moving fire. Destroyed homes and buildings are shown on Aug. 11, 2023, in the aftermath of the fire.

visitors try to photograph damage or ask intrusively about lost homes and loved ones. That’s when many Mauians turn away, get angry or post signs at the end of their block reading, “Locals still grieving. Show Respect. No tourists.”

“Be sensitive,” said Siobhan Wilson,

co-owner of the Maui Butterfly Farm in Olowalu. “Don’t go up and ask people, ‘What did you see and what happened?’ If people want to talk, they will.”

“Come with aloha. Leave with aloha,”

SEE DELICATE ON PAGE 27

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Delicate: Many sobering sights as Maui reopens to tourism

FROM PAGE 26

said longtime resident George Pali, sitting at a Wahikuli Wayside Park picnic table near some long-term tents. “You guys (in California) have wildfires all the time, right? So you have some idea.”

Here’s an update for anyone considering travel to Maui, including reasons why you might or might not want to include a stop in Lahaina.

What’s open in Lahaina, and what’s gone

Most of Front Street, Lahaina’s commercial backbone, is no more. Little remains to remind visitors that this was the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom in the 19th century under King Kamehameha II. But the flames didn’t claim everything.

At the north end of the street, a handful of restaurants and a dive shop are largely intact, including the Old Lahaina Luau, despite its thatched roofs. It reopened in March and attracts up to 350 guests nightly, many of them happy to be adding dollars to the diminished local economy.

When Niki Rickard takes the microphone before those luau audiences, she doesn’t mention her story. But it’s a potent one, and it hints at the experiences of many survivors.

Both of her parents are longtime employees of the luau, which started in 1986. Beginning about age 4, Rickard dreamed of dancing there, then landed a job doing just that. Now 30, she also handles sales and emcee duties, summarizing the island’s history of migration, colonization, whaling, plantations and resilience in diplomatically measured tones.

Last August, she had just returned from maternity leave when the fire broke out.

Neither Rickard, her husband or their daughter was injured, but their home burned.

“My daughter was 3 months old,” Rickard said in an interview.

Since the fire, Rickard has been among the thousands of residents dealing with temporary housing, an island-wide child care shortage and plenty of government and insurance red tape.

“A lot of people in the community are not so happy with the government,” she said carefully.

The luau’s director of public and cultural relations, Kawika Freitas, also acknowledged “a lot of negative feelings” from those who believe the island reopened to tourism too soon. But people need work, Freitas said, and the luau employs about 160 people.

Many more reopenings are expected in the coming weeks and months, giving visitors more reasons to stop and perhaps spend. Meanwhile, because of Maui’s layout, many others will be driving through on their way north.

The drive along Lahaina Bypass highway

The August fire, which began near downed utility poles amid drought conditions and gusting winds, blackened 6,721 acres in Lahaina and the up-country area near Kula. It didn’t reach Maui’s east coast (which includes the famed road to Hana) or the southwest coast (which includes the city of Kihei and the Wailea resort area) or the northern coast (which includes Kahului airport).



CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS, LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

A cautionary sign hangs near a residential neighborhood in Lahaina, Maui, where cleanup and reconstruction continue.

Nor did flames get to the west coast hotels and condos that begin with Ka’anapali, just a mile north of Lahaina.

But to reach those resorts, visitors drive the Lahaina Bypass highway. Just before the highway passes over Lahainaluna Road, those visitors see a sobering roadside shrine on their right — scores of crosses and photos, strewn with leis. (Having been warned that many residents see the memorial as a place for victims’ families and survivors only, I didn’t approach on foot.)

In the next mile, as drivers transition from the highway to Keawe Street and Honapiilani Highway, signs thank first responders, exhort the community to be strong and call for tourists to show respect. Only a few charred ruins are visible from the road. Six-foot-high roadside screens shield many properties from view.

Visitors won’t see Waiola Church, Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, the historic Baldwin Home or popular restaurants like Kimo’s, Fleetwood’s on Front Street or Cheeseburger in Paradise, all burned. The city’s iconic banyan tree, damaged but recuperating, remains off-limits.

FEMA reports that by July 31, cleanup crews had cleared 319,000 tons of fire debris, nearly 34 tons of asbestos and 3,000 fire-damaged cars, with 47 rebuilding permits issued by Maui County.

Recently, utility company Hawaiian Electric, the state of Hawaii and five other defendants announced a \$4 billion settlement agreement with fire victims, pending court approval. Total damages have been estimated at \$5.5 billion or more.

One Maui resident, asking to be unnamed, told me he’d just finished a six-month job in the burn zone, wearing a Tyvek suit and respirator, waiting for blessings before stepping onto home sites, scraping ash and asbestos, finding class rings, guns, jewels and puddles of melted aluminum.

Yet just north of Lahaina, a visitor enters the Maui seen on postcards and screensavers.

If you go**What to eat**

Old Lahaina Luau, 1251 Front St., Lahaina; (808) 667-1998. Lavish dinner al fresco with open bar, followed by an hourlong show with hula, drumming and chanting. Adult admission: \$230.37, including gratuity.

Aloha Mixed Plate, 1251 Front St., Lahaina; (808) 661-3322. Patio restaurant (moved down the street since the fire) offering breakfast, lunch and dinner. The Chow Funn noodle bowl (ground pork, bean sprouts, green onions; \$15) makes a tasty lunch.

Mala Ocean Tavern, 1307 Front St., Lahaina; (808) 667-9394. Brunch and dinner. Perhaps the most elegant restaurant you’ll find with a tin roof and walls. Website includes a link for donations to staff. The signature cocktail is a Makai Tai (\$18). Dinner main dishes \$28-\$61.

Ulu Kitchen, Westin Ka’anapali, 2365 Ka’anapali Pkwy., Lahaina; (808) 868-0081. Breakfast, lunch and dinner on the beach in Ka’anapali. Main dishes \$28-\$69.

Where to stay

Outrigger Kaanapali Beach Resort, 2525 Ka’anapali Pkwy., Lahaina; (808) 661-0111. A three-star hotel on a coastline of mostly four-star resorts, its location is impeccable, with a whale-shaped pool. Rates start at about \$370, plus a \$35 daily resort fee.

Things to note

In the high country at the south end of Maui, Haleakala National Park’s popular Crater Road and summit area have been closed periodically because of nearby brushfires. Check the park website before planning a visit.

To volunteer on Maui, don’t rely on last-minute suggestions from your hotel’s concierge or activities desk. Make a plan in advance. The website mauiinistrong.info includes many volunteering options, as does the website of the Hawaiian Tourism Authority. Malama Kula operates in the up-country area. Napili Noho runs the emergency services hub in Napili Park. Maui Cultural Lands runs programs to protect cultural resources, plant native vegetation and battle invasive species, with volunteer workdays every Saturday in the Honokowai Valley above Ka’anapali. Similar work happens Wednesdays and Thursdays at Kipuka Olowalu, south of Lahaina.

The Lahaina Cannery and Lahaina Gateway malls are open, and more Lahaina businesses are reopening every month.

Los Angeles Times

What West Maui’s resorts look like and what they cost

In the morning, catamarans glide up to the beach, kids line up for surf lessons and golfers head to the courses at Kapalua. At day’s end, legions gather to watch the sunset as daredevils leap from the Black Rock Beach boulders to the sea.

Though the Royal Lahaina and Outrigger resorts in Ka’anapali housed many fire survivors as recently as early July, state and federal officials say the vast majority have moved on to intermediate or permanent housing.

In June, Hawaii’s state tourism statistics show, visitor arrivals to Maui were down 21.8% from the year before, with spending down 27.1%.

The average Maui County hotel rate that month: \$554 per night, down 10.5% from

the year before, with a third of rooms empty.

The average vacation rental cost less — \$401 per night, with a 44% vacancy rate. But that may soon change. Maui Mayor Richard Bissen has proposed converting 7,000 condo units from short-term use to long-term within three years, creating more housing for residents.

“We’ve been coming here for years, and I have never seen the [Ka’anapali] walkway so clear,” said Russ Hill of Santa Clarita, Calif., who has a West Maui timeshare.

A moment later, he strapped into a parasailing rig, zoomed 500 feet above Ka’anapali Beach and saw exactly what he wanted to see: island slopes under clear blue skies, a line of hotels along the beach, a few leaping dolphins and no reminders of the fire except the boat captain’s “Maui Strong” T-shirt.

How visitors become volunteers

Napili Noho, an emergency service hub in Napili Park, stands about three miles north of Ka’anapali. It didn’t exist before the fire. Now it often gets 200 guests in a day. They browse a free store stocked with food, shoes and hygiene items, sit for meals (prepared with help from other charities) or step into the lomi lomi tent, where masseurs and chiropractors give free treatments.

Most days, at least one short-term volunteer visitor shows up, having signed up online. On the Tuesday I arrived it was Tom Fox, 81, a semiretired real estate agent from Pleasanton, Calif.

For years, Fox and his wife have been visiting West Maui to play golf and lie low. They were at their Napili condo when the fire struck and wound up inviting their housekeepers to stay in the condo for several weeks.

Now the housekeepers have moved on, Fox said, and he’s found that he’s not as good as his wife is at keeping busy.

“So I found out about this place and came on down,” Fox said.

Around him, other workers were breaking down bulk packages of salt, soap and other goods, including another volunteer from off-island, a 38-year-old man who goes by the name Savage.

“I was supposed to be here five days,” he told me.

Until last August, Savage said, he was working as a health-focused life coach in Las Vegas. After the Maui disaster, he joined an island-bound group of volunteers from his church.

Once he arrived, Savage, who said he has Dakota Sioux heritage and is an Air Force combat veteran, found that “this was very familiar to me.”

Eleven months after arriving, Savage moves from task to task in his flip-flops, walkie-talkie in hand, four days a week, helping displaced residents feed families and cope with makeshift living situations. He’ll be here “until I’m at peace that it’s time to move on.”

The key, Savage said, is offering comfort without giving advice or trying to counsel anyone. That might mean “asking aunts for cooking recipes,” he said. “Just talking story. Our community may not need to shop as much as they need distractions from life. They might not know where they’re going to be next week.”

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Right at home



Lainey Wilson discusses career as she looks forward with new album

BY MARIA SHERMAN
The Associated Press

It's late July. Lainey Wilson is somewhere in Iowa, holding a real road dog — her French bulldog named Hippie — close to her chest. She's on her tour bus, zipping across the Midwest, just another day in her jet-set lifestyle. She's closing in on the Aug. 23 release of her fifth studio album, the aptly named "Whirlwind," a full decade after her debut record. Today, like every day, she's just trying to enjoy the ride.

"It's been a journey," she reflects on her career. "I've been in Nashville for 13 years and I tell people, I'm like, it feels like I got there yesterday, but I also feel like I've been there my whole life."

Wilson is a fast talker and a slow success story. She grew up on a farm in rural Baskin, La. As a teenager, she worked as a Hannah Montana impersonator; when she got to Nashville in early adulthood, she lived in a camper trailer and hit countless open mic nights, trying to make it in Music City. It paid off, but it took time, really launching with the release of her 2020 single, "Things a Man Oughta Know," and her last album, 2022's "Bell Bottom Country" — a rollicking country-rock record that encompasses Wilson's unique "country with a flare" attitude.

"I had always heard that Nashville was a 10-year town. And I believe 'Things a Man Oughta Know' went No. 1, like, 10 years and a day after being there," she recalls. "I should have had moments where I should have packed it up and went home. I should have went back to Louisiana. But I never had those feelings. I think there's something really beautiful about being naive. And, since I was a little girl, I've

SEE WILSON ON PAGE 29

Lainey Wilson is a Grammy winner, the first woman to win CMA entertainer of the year since Taylor Swift in 2011 (she won the same award from the Academy of Country Music), she's acted in the hit television show "Yellowstone" and, in June, she was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry.

Red Light Management



WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

‘Short n’ Sweet’ is flirty, fun, unserious Sabrina Carpenter

BY KIANA DOYLE
Associated Press

Say you can't sleep? Sabrina Carpenter knows. That's that her espresso.

The 25-year-old pop sensation's smash hit of the summer, "Espresso" — with its grammatical mystery of an earworm line, "That's that me espresso" — gave listeners a taste of her newest album, "Short n' Sweet." The former Disney Channel actor's sixth studio album follows an explosive year marked with successes, from opening for Taylor Swift on her Eras Tour to performing at Coachella.

She's confident, she's radiant, and she'll air out all your dirty laundry in a breakup song if you wrong her.

In the flirty, fun and wholly unserious "Short n' Sweet," Carpenter's soprano vocals take humorous jabs at exes and drop innuendos with an air of cheeky innocence. Sugary songs like "Taste" and "Juno" incorporate enough NSFW references to have listeners blushing almost as much as the rosy-



cheeked singer.

There's a country twang to some tracks, like "Slim Pickins," an acoustic number bemoaning the difficulties of finding a good man and having to settle for a guy who "doesn't even know the difference between 'there,' 'their' and 'they are.'"

Carpenter shows a more vulnerable side with ballads like "Dumb & Poetic" and "Lie to Girls," in which she drops her carefree front to sing unguarded lyrics airing out grievances against an ex.

"Don't think you understand," she sings in "Dumb & Poetic." "Just 'cause you act like one doesn't make you a man."

But it's when pop tracks blend into R&B that Carpenter really shines. Her breathy vocals work so well on such tracks as "Good Graces" and "Don't Smile," reminiscent of Ariana Grande or Mariah Carey.

Which direction will she take next? Only Carpenter knows. Isn't that sweet? Carpenter guesses so. That is, after all, that her espresso.



AMY HARRIS/AP

Sabrina Carpenter performs at Outside Lands Music Festival on Aug. 10 in San Francisco.

Beabadoobee

This Is How Tomorrow Moves (Dirty Hit)

This should be automatic. An effortlessly cool English alt-pop performer who has opened for Taylor Swift releases an album produced by the legendary Rick Rubin, and the rest falls in place. But the best-laid plans sometimes fall short and beabadoobee's third studio album, "This Is How Tomorrow Moves," doesn't quite move the needle.

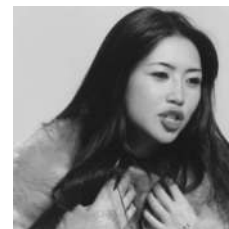
Beabadoobee, whose real name is Beatrice Kristi Laus, worked with Rubin in his legendary Shangri-La studio in Malibu, Calif., for the 14-track aural exploration — a far cry from the London bedroom where she started her career. The album covers themes of self-acceptance and personal growth. While the songwriting is smart, the delivery feels a bit disconnected and vexed. Often, her voice is too slight against the sounds around her.

The good stuff begins on "One Time," "Tie My Shoes" and "Girl Song." Here, beabadoobee hits her sweet spot. "One Time" is a medium-paced track wherein the songwriter casts a bit of shade and judgment about a paramour who faked it a little too much. She sings out here, loudly, and it sounds more earnest in emotion than the preceding tracks mired in a wall of guitar.

"Girl Song" could be brushed aside as a low-rung soft piano ballad, but it deserves a deeper listen. It's slow, it's introspective and it is guaranteed to unleash a tear or two.

This is an OK album with some excellent songs and a fair bit of filler. At the end of it all, beabadoobee remains a musical force to be respected.

— Ron Harris
Associated Press



Fontaines D.C.

Romance (XL)

Listening to Irish post-punk band Fontaines D.C.'s latest album feels a lot like watching a movie about a complicated, sometimes painful, love story — albeit one with an edgy flair à la "Sid and Nancy."

They enlisted a new collaborator in producer James Ford, known for his work with pop-infused rock groups like the Gorillaz, Arctic Monkeys and, more recently, the critically acclaimed, up-and-coming rock band The Last Dinner Party.

"Romance" begins with its titular and maybe most compelling song, a sonic journey that offers glimmers of hope clouded by unnerving fear. A haunting melody is interrupted by a heavily distorted, menacing guitar that captures the frightening sensation of falling in love.

"Starburster," the album's lead single, takes a hip-hop-infused turn in which lead singer Grian Chatten lusts for "momentary blissness" in the chorus while gasping for air. The song was inspired by Chatten having a panic attack in London, where the group is now based.

A tonal shift hits with the third track, "Here's The Thing." It's almost as if whatever afflictions plague the album's protagonist are finally starting to melt away — or at least be shared and understood — as this newfound lover brings hope and order to chaos. "I feel your pain / It's mine as well," Chatten longingly croons.

The remaining tracks vacillate between joy and longing or sadness, feeling like being in a volatile relationship with an uncertain future.

— Krysta Fauria
The Associated Press



Wilson: Singer looks to bring 'a little bit of peace' with new album

FROM PAGE 28

always had stars in my eyes."

These days, she's a Grammy winner, the first woman to win entertainer of the year at the CMAAs since Taylor Swift in 2011 (she took home the same award from the Academy of Country Music), she's acted in the hit television show "Yellowstone" and, in June, she was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry.

"I was 9 years old when I went to the Opry for the first time. I remember who was playing. It was Little Jimmy Dickens, Bill Anderson, Crystal Gayle, Phil

Vassar, and I remember where I was sitting. I remember looking at the circle on stage and being like, 'Man, I'm going to, I'm going to play there. I'm gonna do this,'" she recalls.

Becoming a member is the stuff dreams are made of, and naturally, it connects back to the album.

"The word that I could use to describe the last couple of years is whirlwind," she says. "I feel like my life has changed a whole lot. But I still feel like the same old girl trying to keep one foot on the ground.

"And so, I think it's just about grasping on to those things that truly make me, me and the artist where I can tell stories to relate to folks."

If Wilson's life looks different now than it did a decade ago, those years of hard work have created an ability to translate the madness of her life and career to that of everyone else's: Like on "Good Horses," the sole collaboration on "Whirlwind."

It features Miranda Lambert, and was written on Lambert's farm, an uplifting track about both chasing dreams and coming

home.

Or "Hang Tight Honey," an ode to those who work hard for the ones they love.

Wilson has leveled up on this record, bringing writers out on the road with her as she continued to tour endlessly. That's evident on the sonic experiment of "Ring Finger," a funky country-rock number with electro-spoken word.

Or "Country's Cool Again," a joyous treatise on the genre and Western wear's current dominance in the cultural zeitgeist.

"I think country music brings

you home," she says of its popularity. "And everybody wants to feel at home."

Here on the back of the bus, Wilson is far from home — as she often is. But it is always on the mind, the place that acts as a refuge on "Whirlwind." And that's something everyone can relate to.

"I hope it brings a little bit of peace to just everyday chaos, because we all deal with it," she says of the album. "Everybody looks different, but we all put our britches on the same one leg at a time, you know?"

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Game Science

The Destined One, the martial arts monkey hero inspired by Sun Wukong in the Chinese novel “Journey to the West,” uses three stances for staff attacks, adding verticality and bounce to what could have been boring attack-and-dodge action. Some spells can be augmented by transformation abilities that allow the hero to turn into his defeated enemies.

Black Myth: Wukong beautiful but bland

Though its combat is fluid and the set design stunning, it's hard to get excited about another cryptic, dead fantasy world

BY GENE PARK

The Washington Post

Four years ago, a small studio in Hangzhou, China, dazzled the games industry with a stunning trailer for *Black Myth: Wukong*.

As that trailer promised, the game is filled with luscious battle animations and otherworldly beasts and biomes set against the tropes of the 16th-century Chinese epic novel “Journey to the West,” with combat encounters inspired by FromSoftware’s *Dark Souls* series. *Black Myth: Wukong* was released Aug. 20, two years after *Elden Ring* elevated the standard for this genre, and two months after that game’s stunning *Shadow of the Erdtree* chapter.

I need to preface that I’ve played only four hours of this game, and this is all based on first impressions. But after everything that’s happened since 2020, including so many other games of this type being released, it’s hard to find what makes *Black Myth: Wukong* unique and interesting. Even *Stellar Blade*, another debut game released this year from a small Asian studio with similar combat, set itself apart with its sexualized cyberpunk aesthetic.

Wukong gets the most important and hardest aspect right: The combat is fluid and has many interesting features not found in other games. The Destined One, the martial arts monkey hero inspired by the novel’s Sun Wukong, uses three different stances for staff attacks, adding verticality and bounce to what could’ve been boring attack-and-dodge action. A variety of spells are augmented by transformation abilities that let him turn into different defeated enemies. It’s not quite the wide array of possibilities offered in a role-playing game, but *Wukong* allows for a surprising amount of customization. It was a simple but inspired choice to make players craft



Aggro Crab

Aggro Crab’s *Another Crab’s Treasure* offers a lively, bright take on the *Dark Souls* formula. The crab game has a coherent, consistent and distinct vision and does things even FromSoftware games have never done.

armor instead of just finding it, lending a sense of ownership and agency to what we wear; impressive cloth and fur physics allow materials to sashay with the action.

But the fights can be hit or miss. Veteran Souls players will understand: In certain games there are certain enemies that seem like they’re from other games. One of the end battles in *Sekiro* felt like an enemy from *Bloodborne*, and many claim the infamous Malenia battle in *Elden Ring* is lifted from the frenetic sword fights of *Sekiro*. It’s usually an odd one-time deal in these other games, but in *Wukong*, that feeling is constant. In an effort to make every boss battle feel unique, too many of them feel at odds with the speedy and light player action. Combat also feels weightless and often lacks a satisfying punch, with

staff hits sailing through enemies as they barely flinch.

I’m still compelled to play more, especially since the skill list looks exciting to unlock despite a linear progression. Plus the game isn’t too tough, particularly since the only punishment for failure is a checkpoint respawn. But it’s hard to get too excited when so much of it feels familiar. The set design is stunning, but actually navigating these spaces isn’t particularly exciting, especially when they’re just more echoes of dead, cryptic fantasy worlds. For me, fatigue for this vibe was already beginning to set in as I finished *Erdtree* two months ago.

Am I just tired of this style of action?

As a test, I decided to buy indie studio Aggro Crab’s latest game, *Another Crab’s Treasure*, a far more deliberate *Dark Souls*-like game with punishing deaths. It’s about a hermit crab forced to venture into the ocean to find his shell. Even after just two hours of playing, the crab game does things even FromSoftware games have never done.

Kril, our crab hero, discovers an ocean with an established caste system, a governing body with a market economy fueled by taxes and even an underwater city with parks, shops and buildings. There are clever touches everywhere: Different nations, for example, repurpose discarded sauce packets as state flags. Despite its vast world and rich history, *Elden Ring* doesn’t come close to demonstrating a world full of vibrant life. Aggro Crab immediately reminded me what a game can look like with a coherent, consistent and distinct vision.

Wukong scratches an itch I’ve been clawing at for years. If it’s still a satisfying space for you, I’d read and watch other reviews before settling to scratch it with this monkey’s paw.

Platforms: PC, PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X/S
Online: heishenhua.com

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

REVIEW

‘Only Murders in the Building’ doubles down

New season packed with doppelgängers, shadows, stand-ins

BY LILI LOOFBOUROW
The Washington Post

The new season of “Only Murders in the Building” picks up exactly where the third season left off: with podcasting trio Charles (Steve Martin), Oliver (Martin Short) and Mabel (Selena Gomez) celebrating solving the murder of Ben Glenroy (Paul Rudd) while their friend Sazz Pataki (Jane Lynch) dies — shot through a window in Charles’ apartment while fetching the gang a precious bottle of malbec.

Sure, it’s grim. But the death of a relatively important character puts a new spin on a plot that might otherwise feel a bit like a reprise of the show’s meta-meditations on fame. In the quaint Hulu hit’s fourth season, the amateur sleuths helming “Only Murders in the Building” find themselves once again experimenting with microcelebrity and becoming fodder for a vampiric — and potentially deadly — entertainment industry. That’s not exactly new terrain for them or for the series: The doughty podcasters spent much of the comedy’s second season fighting podcast superstar Cinda Canning’s (Tina Fey) allegations (on her own sensational podcast) that they were in fact the murderers.

But if the wacky detectives have to endure being grist for the content mills, at least they’re (mostly) happy about it this time: There’s going to be an “Only Murders in the Building” movie! Better still (for Oliver, anyway), all three of them are going to be played by real-life Hollywood actors!

Not since “Arrested Development” has a comedy been this good-naturedly self-referential. Some of “Only Murders”’ best jokes come at its own expense. In a nod to how implausible it initially seemed that Gomez, playing a deadpan millennial, would gel well with Short and Martin, the in-universe bit is that Hollywood, personified by Molly Shannon as a slightly unhinged executive, felt they needed a glow-up. The studio cast Eva Longoria as an older and substantially peppier, more confident Mabel, Zach Galifianakis as an aged-down Oliver and Eugene Levy as Charles. The actors are charged with following the trio around so as to better understand how to play them in the movie.



Disney photos

From left, Steve Martin as Charles-Haden Savage, Selena Gomez as Mabel Mora and Martin Short as Oliver Putnam in Season 4 of Hulu’s “Only Murders in the Building.”



Zach Galifianakis, Eva Longoria and Eugene Levy are cast as Oliver, Mabel and Charles, respectively, in the Hollywood movie based off of the trio’s podcast.

That this effectively makes the sleuths the ones being shadowed starts to feel like a theme. The new season is packed with doppelgängers, shadows and stand-ins. There’s the murder victim, Sazz, Charles’ longtime stunt double who died in his kitchen while dressed exactly like him. (Was she the intended victim? Or was Charles the target all along?) The directors of the “Only Murders” movie are a terrifying, artsy pair of twin sisters. Rudd, who last season played murder victim Ben Glenroy, is back, this time as Glenroy’s stuntman. Addled and bereft, he haunts a bar called Concussions, where stand-ins in the biz convene to bond over their injuries, mourn their dead, and grouse about their “faces” — the people whose dangerous stunts they thanklessly perform.

Other doublings include the “Westies,” a group of down-on-their-luck Arconia residents who live across the courtyard from Charles. They include a Christmas-themed influencer (Kumail Nanjiani), an eye patch-wearing loner (Richard Kind) and an eccentric family (Desmin Borges, Lilian Rebelo and Daphne Rubin-Vega). Devotees of the show will no doubt connect a ham-radio subplot to some remarks Sazz made before she was murdered, and even the ham is punned on and doubled: There is, in addition to a literal ham, a small and charismatic pig. On the forensics side, body parts are confusingly redundant. (You might say doubled.) There’s even a surreal moment when Charles’ sister — a deliciously unstable empty nester played by Melissa McCarthy — attacks Oliver’s

girlfriend, Loretta (Meryl Streep), while wearing a pair of braids just like hers.

As doppelgängers proliferate, so do the cameras. By the show’s seventh episode, “Only Murders” has featured footage from an impressively wide range of devices and run through an improbable number of framing techniques. There are, in short, too many storytellers. Even Howard’s (Michael Cyril Creighton) long-standing thirst for the spotlight might be abating; he seems increasingly willing to settle behind the mic (and the lens).

The plot mechanics range from outlandish to silly; the revelation that Charles may have been the intended target propels a number of charming, not-quite-logical plots, including one in which the Hollywood trio successfully tracks the original trio to a hide-

out and assists with the investigation. The welcome inclusion of fan favorites such as Da’Vine Joy Randolph (as the long-suffering detective), Jackie Hoffman (as Uma) and even Streep (as Loretta) feel a little more wedged in than organic, but this is obviously Lynch’s season to shine, and shine she does — mainly, though not exclusively, as Sazz’s ghost, who keeps Charles company as he wrestles with whatever role he may have accidentally played in his stand-in’s death (and with how much of her health and well-being she sacrificed for his career).

If that sounds like kind of a downer (for a cozy murder show), it should. The death of Sazz, given how well viewers knew her, feels like a tone shift for the generally upbeat series. This is certainly the saddest “Only Murders” has ever been.

The new season’s most intriguing development, however — and I can’t comment on the outcome, because critics were given only seven episodes — is the show’s startling declaration, a few episodes in, that it plans to return to its origins and address all the plot holes plaguing Season 1.

That’s a big ask. I’d call it ambitious and perhaps even unnecessary. I’ve long held that one of the comedy’s most lovable faults is its inability (or unwillingness) to produce a mystery that can hold up to any kind of scrutiny. That felt like part of the lightly satiric lens the show takes to everything and everyone, and of a piece with its self-deprecation. Oliver’s show, “Death Rattle Dazzle,” in which the three murder suspects were babies, felt like the show was owning up to — and owning — its inability to come up with a decent whodunit.

I look forward to seeing how it all comes together, but closing loopholes isn’t, in the end, what “Only Murders” is for. The murder comedy will be studied in future years not for its intricate plots, but for the meta-dissertation it delivers on various strains of benign fraudulence, all via grace notes and asides that cover things such as Broadway, Hollywood and why Oliver Putnam might confuse Zach Galifianakis — the man hired to play him — with “that poor boy from ‘Home Alone.’” We watch not for the clues, but for the show’s genial brand of cluelessness.

The first episode of “Only Murders in the Building” Season 4 is now streaming on Hulu. Episodes air weekly.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Ultraprocessed and ultraconvenient

Nutrition experts offer their thoughts on regulation, consumption of foods high in sodium, fat, sugar

By **JONEL ALECCIA**
Associated Press

Whether they know it or not, most Americans don't go a day — or often a single meal — without eating ultraprocessed foods.

From sugary cereals at breakfast to frozen pizzas at dinner, plus in-between snacks of potato chips, sodas and ice cream, ultraprocessed foods make up about 60% of the U.S. diet. For kids and teens, it's even higher — about two-thirds of what they eat.

That's concerning because ultraprocessed foods have been linked to a host of negative health effects, from obesity and diabetes to heart disease, depression, dementia and more. One recent study suggested that eating these foods may raise the risk of early death.

Nutrition science is tricky, though, and most research so far has found connections, not proof, regarding the health consequences of these foods.

Food manufacturers argue that processing boosts food safety and supplies and offers a cheap, convenient way to provide a diverse and nutritious diet.

Even if the science were clear, it's hard to know what practical advice to give when ultraprocessed foods account for what one study estimates is 73% of the U.S. food supply.

The Associated Press asked several nutrition experts and here's what they said:

What are ultraprocessed foods?

Most foods are processed, whether it's by freezing, grinding, fermentation, pasteurization or other means. In 2009, Brazilian epidemiologist Carlos Monteiro and colleagues first proposed a system that classifies foods according to the amount of processing they undergo, not by nutrient content.

At the top of the four-tier scale are foods created through industrial processes and with ingredients such as additives, colors and preservatives that you couldn't duplicate in a home kitchen, said Kevin Hall, a researcher who focuses on metabolism and diet at the National Institutes of Health.

"These are most, but not all, of the packaged foods you see," Hall said.

Such foods are often made to be both cheap and irresistibly delicious, said Dr. Neena Prasad, director of the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Food Policy Program.

"They have just the right combination of sugar, salt and fat and you just can't stop eating them," Prasad said

However, the level of processing alone doesn't determine whether a food is unhealthy or not, Hall noted. Whole-grain bread, yogurt, tofu and infant formula are all highly processed, for instance, but they're also nutritious.

Are ultraprocessed foods harmful?

Here's the tricky part. Many studies suggest that diets high in such foods are linked to negative health outcomes. But these kinds of studies can't say whether the foods are the cause of the negative effects — or whether there's something about the people who eat these foods that might be responsible.

At the same time, ultraprocessed foods, as a group, tend to have higher amounts of sodium, saturated fat and sugar, and tend to be lower in fiber and protein. It's not clear whether it's just these nutrients that are driving the effects.

Hall and his colleagues were the first to conduct a small but influential experiment that directly compared the results of eating similar diets made of ultraprocessed versus unprocessed foods.

Published in 2019, the research included 20 adults who went to live at an NIH center for a month. They received diets of ultraprocessed and unprocessed foods matched for calories, sugar, fat, fiber and macronutrients for two weeks each and were told to eat as much as they liked.

When participants ate the diet of ultraprocessed foods, they consumed about 500 calories per day more than when they ate unprocessed foods, researchers found — and they gained an average of about

2 pounds during the study period. When they ate only unprocessed foods for the same amount of time, they lost about 2 pounds.

Hall is conducting a more detailed study now, but the process is slow and costly and results aren't expected until late next year. He and others argue that such definitive research is needed to determine exactly how ultraprocessed foods affect consumption.

"It's better to understand the mechanisms by which they drive the deleterious health consequences, if they're driving them," he said.

Should ultraprocessed foods be regulated?

Some advocates, like Prasad, argue that the large body of research linking ultraprocessed foods to poor health should be more than enough to spur government and industry to change policies. She calls for actions such as increased taxes on sugary drinks, stricter sodium restrictions for manufacturers and cracking down on marketing of such foods to children, the same way tobacco marketing is curtailed.

"Do we want to risk our kids getting sicker while we wait for this perfect evidence to emerge?" Prasad said. Earlier this year, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Robert Califf broached the subject, telling a conference of food policy experts that ultraprocessed foods are "one of the most complex things I've ever dealt with."

But, he concluded, "We've got to have the scientific basis and then we've got to follow through."

How should consumers manage ultraprocessed foods at home?

In countries like the U.S., it's hard to avoid highly processed foods — and not clear which ones should be targeted, said Aviva Musicus, science director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which advocates for food policies.

"The range of ultraprocessed foods is just so wide," she said.

Instead, it's better to be mindful of the ingredients in foods. Check the labels and make choices that align with the current U.S. Dietary Guidelines, she suggested.

"We have really good evidence that added sugar is not great for us. We have evidence that high-sodium foods are not great for us," she said. "We have great evidence that fruits and vegetables which are minimally processed are really good for us."

It's important not to vilify certain foods, she added. Many consumers don't have the time or money to cook most meals from scratch.

"I think foods should be joyous and delicious and shouldn't involve moral judgment," Musicus said.



WEEKEND: FAMILY



COMIC RELIEF US/AP

The wizard-led quests of *Game to Change the World* take place on the social gaming platform Roblox. They're part of Comic Relief US' second annual Kids Relief campaign to raise funds and build charitable habits.

Game building community virtually, in everyday life

Charity launches new Roblox title meant to appeal to parents and kids

BY JAMES POLLARD
Associated Press

The notion that online gaming could help players develop charitable habits seemed bold when the anti-poverty nonprofit Comic Relief US tested its own multiverse on the popular world-building app Roblox last year.

As philanthropy wrestles with how to authentically engage new generations of digitally savvy donors, Comic Relief US CEO Alison Moore said it was “audacious” to design an experience that still maintained the “twinkle” of the organization that’s behind entertainment-driven fundraisers like Red Nose Day.

But the launch was successful enough that Comic Relief US is expanding the game this year. Kids Relief’s second annual *Game to Change the World* campaign features a magical new Roblox world, an exclusive virtual concert and a partner in children’s television pioneer Nickelodeon.

The goal is to instill empathy and raise money through a scavenger hunt across various realms, including *SpongeBob SquarePants* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Users travel through portals to collect magical tools that will improve their surroundings. The net proceeds from in-game purchases will be donated.

The community-building inherent in collaborative gaming is intended to subtly encourage off-screen acts of kindness.

“It’s a little bit like me helping you, you helping me — all of us together. I love the idea of doing that in a game space,” Moore told *The Associated Press*. “It’s not meant to be a banner ad or a sign that says, ‘Do Good.’ It’s meant to be emblematic in the gameplay itself.”

Nickelodeon is also promoting an instructional guide for kids to start their own local projects in real life such as backpack drives.

Quests are delivered from wizards voiced by “Doc-

tor Who” icon David Tennant, “*Veep*” star Tony Hale and “*Never Have I Ever*” actress Maitreyi Ramakrishnan. One wizard invites users to “embark on an enchanted journey to awaken the heart of your community.”

The campaign will culminate in a weekend music festival on Roblox beginning Sept. 13 that features rock band *Imagine Dragons*, whose lead singer Dan Reynolds has focused his philanthropy on LGBTQ+ causes. Virtual acts also include Conan Gray, Poppy, d4vd and Alexander Stewart — all musical artists who got their big breaks on YouTube.

Moore said she was “blown away” by last year’s numbers. The inaugural game has been played for more than 32 billion minutes, and one performance received the highest “concert thumbs up rating” ever on Roblox, according to Comic Relief US.

Charitable donations are increasingly being made through gaming, according to business strategist Marcus Howard.

The fit comes naturally, he said, considering that young people value experiences such as gaming over the material possessions that past generations might have bought at a charitable auction.

“It just makes sense,” Howard said.

But he finds that partners must overcome the negative stigma associated with online chat rooms. To its credit, Howard said, Roblox combines the creativity of popular competitor *Fortnite* with less “toxicity” because of its emphasis on cooperation over competition.

Comic Relief US kept in mind the need to build a game that appeals to both children and their parents, Moore said.

To navigate that tricky balance, the nonprofit has adopted a mindset that she credits Nickelodeon with originating: Include parents in the conversation, but speak to their children.

“Good games are good games,” Moore said. “Good games that make me feel good are good things.”

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Left behind and now the center of attention

Their eyes were locked on me, reading my every thought, prying at my secrets, peering uninvited into my soul. The light over the table swayed, uncomfortably bright. Beads of cold sweat sprouted along my hairline. I braced myself for the inevitable interrogation ...

“How do you like the roast, Dumpling?” Mom asked, with a nonchalance that belied her intrusive stare.

“Delicious, Mom,” I sputtered between cheekfuls of beef and potatoes, hoping the compliment might end my ordeal.

“So, what happened at school today?” my father pressed.

Wide-eyed and hunched in a self-protective posture at our kitchen table, I muttered the one word that had allowed me to avoid my parents’ attention for so many years: “Nuthin’.”

“Well, something must’ve happened at school today. Here, I’ll help you out. So, you stepped off the bus, and then ...?” he badgered, mercilessly. So it went, night after night.

My brother, Tray, had gone off to the U.S. Naval Academy, leaving me home alone with my parents. For so many years, I’d flown under the radar. But now my only sibling was gone.

As the firstborn, Tray had always carried the entire burden of my parents’ expectations for their offspring. I’d been merely the unremarkable little sister of *The Golden Boy*, *The Favorite*, *The Apple of Their Eye*. Tray not only fulfilled but exceeded their hopes — he was a popular top athlete with gifted math and science skills who went on to become a Navy jet pilot. His obvious superiority left me free to drift contentedly through childhood, bouncing unnoticed between mediocre and above average.

Wearing ratty Converse Chucks, hand-me-down jean cut-offs and a camp T-shirt, I’d ride my yellow Schwinn through our neighborhood. On rainy days I’d stay in my room, lost in elaborate imaginary scenarios, or I’d play my mother’s old records on my Fisher-Price record player.

As a child, I didn’t resent Tray for getting all my parents’ attention. Quite the contrary, I relished my quiet, comfortable, ignored existence.

But then he left home, and the jig was up.

It was as if my parents, Durwood and Diane, looked through the unexpected void left by my brother’s absence and noticed, “Who’s that there? Is that the little chunky one? What’s her name again ...? Oh yes! It’s Lisa!”

I was entering 10th grade, and suddenly I was the subject of my parents’ undivided attention. Mom was now interested in what I wore, my social behavior and how I did my hair.

My dad, who had no previous interest in my athletic accomplishments, started showing up to all my high school swim meets. My teammates, who knew this sudden change in attention made me nervous, would alert me when Dad appeared in the stands: “Heads up, Lisa! Durwood’s here!”

Night after agonizing night, I was interrogated, forced to reveal my likes, dislikes, social pursuits, academic achievements, ambitions, disappointments, hopes and dreams. Durwood and Diane took an unprecedented interest in me, having long talks about life, taking photographs of me before dances and bragging about me to their friends.

It was like I was their kid or something. Weird.

Decades later, our youngest child, Lilly, sat defensively crouched in her chair at our dinner table, as if we were about to pummel her with dinner rolls. Hayden had been away at college for a couple of years, and Anna had left for college the week before. Lilly’s instinct was telling her, the jig is up.

But I let Lilly know there’s nothing to fear. I’d lived through it myself and was there to tell the tale about how those left behind suddenly become the center of attention.

The strange people who ignored you all these years? Don’t worry, they won’t hurt you. They are simply your parents, and they’ve finally realized you are pretty darned interesting after all.

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com and in Lisa’s book, “*The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com.*” Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT

BY REBECCA GOLDSTEIN AND WILL NEDIGER / EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

Rebecca Goldstein is a research scientist living in Albany, Calif. Her co-constructor, Will Nediger, is a professional crossword constructor based in London, Ontario. They connected over D.M.s, and after settling on this idea, went through countless iterations to achieve the cleanest fill. Both love Sunday themes like this one — Will likened it to “a charcuterie plate where there’s a little bit of everything.”

ACROSS

- 1 9 or 10, but not 11 or 12
- 5 Forming the bottom level
- 10 Metallic sound
- 15 Quick second?
- 19 Thickening substance obtained from seaweed
- 20 Mega-
- 21 Trash-loving Muppet
- 22 Election-year focus
- 23 Its name comes from Japanese for “to fight”
- 24 Spacious
- 25 Amusement-park attraction depicted above and below this answer
- 27 Cry following a countdown
- 30 ___ vez (this time: Sp.)
- 31 Sewer scurrer
- 32 Prof’s helpers
- 33 Molecule studied by 2023 Nobelist Katalin Kariko
- 34 Be a cast member of
- 36 N.Y.C. home of “Christina’s World”
- 37 “Three o’clock”
- 39 Hawaiian-pizza topping
- 42 “Fiddler on the Roof” matchmaker
- 44 Titled widows
- 46 Two thumbs up?
- 48 Glass-tube illuminant
- 49 Start to despair
- 50 About 3.26 light years

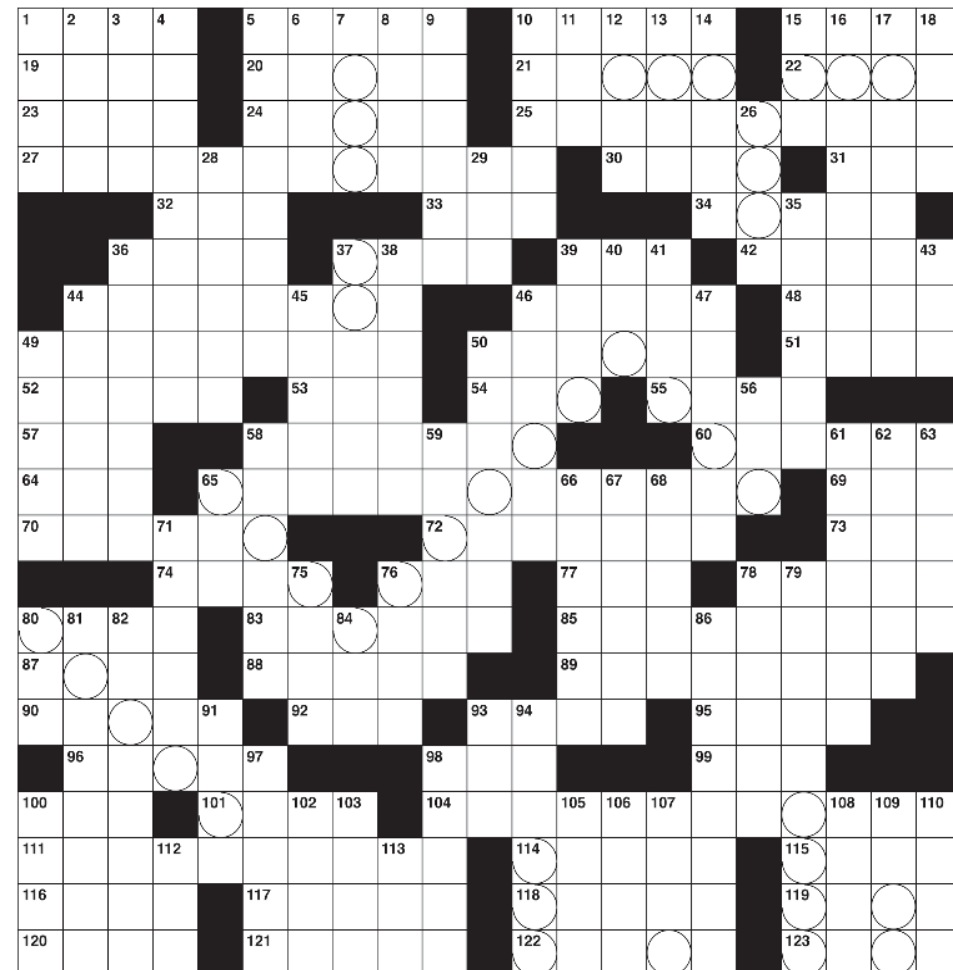
- 51 “Her Kind” poet Sexton
- 52 Capital on the Gulf of Guinea
- 53 Insignificant amount
- 54 “I’ve cracked it!”
- 55 Suffix with cyclo-
- 57 Genre influenced by calypso
- 58 “The Shape of Water” director
- 60 Consumers
- 64 Trip, with “off”
- 65 Amusement-park attraction depicted weaving through this answer
- 69 “Kidding!”
- 70 “Likewise!”
- 72 Appear again after being killed, in a video game
- 73 Burnisan lead-in to body
- 74 React to something hilarious
- 76 Dweller in the cracks of a sunken ship, maybe
- 77 A+ service?
- 78 Ingvar Kamrad or Ingmar Bergman, e.g.
- 80 Dwindle
- 83 Canadian N.H.L. team
- 85 Prominent feature of Tom Selleck or David Hasselhoff
- 87 Total headache
- 88 Showy garden flower
- 89 Sour-grapes drink?
- 90 Dating-app success
- 92 Digs in the mud
- 93 Mega-
- 95 Lapel attachments
- 96 Dendrologist’s study
- 98 Letter before omega
- 99 Egg cells

- 100 Sub domain
- 101 Things you might pray on
- 104 Vital component of the global refugee process
- 111 Amusement-park attraction depicted above this answer
- 114 People that call New Zealand “Aotearoa”
- 115 Crumbled dessert topping
- 116 Last word before eating, sometimes
- 117 Nickname for the Los Angeles Angels
- 118 Set of pipes?
- 119 Not firm
- 120 “Hey, you! Yeah, you!”
- 121 Does a whole lot of nothing
- 122 Mammal whose name is spelled using only the letters of “mammal”
- 123 Biblical father of Kenan

DOWN

- 1 Take one’s profits, with “in”
- 2 Bebida en una taqueria
- 3 Parking-garage feature
- 4 Amusement-park attraction depicted to the right of this answer
- 5 Participate in a Lakota smudging ceremony
- 6 Succulent genus
- 7 Pack
- 8 With 29-Down, insect that conducts raids

- 9 Sensible clothing for the Bay Area’s climate
- 10 A gilded one is seen on King Tut’s crown
- 11 Baton Rouge sch.
- 12 Zenith
- 13 Goes down for a while?
- 14 Actress Lee of “Past Lives”
- 15 Part of a circumference
- 16 Designer of noted terminals at Dulles and J.F.K.
- 17 “The Office” setting
- 18 Trial
- 26 Risqué
- 28 Maker of pianos and motorcycles
- 29 See 8-Down
- 35 Apartment dweller
- 36 Fruity Italian wine
- 37 Jazz pianist Garner
- 38 Perceptive
- 39 Goddess whose name fills in this fact: Hephaestus once made ___ magical throne
- 40 Equus africanus, e.g.
- 41 Get together
- 43 Brussels-to-Berlin dir.
- 44 Removed, as points
- 45 Oil platform?
- 46 Boorish sorts
- 47 Assist in a pick-and-roll
- 49 Yogurt-based beverage
- 50 Brown-paper packages tied up with strings
- 56 Shell tool
- 58 The Four Knights’ genre
- 59 Solar-system model



- 61 Groups of nine
- 62 One hopping on the band wagon?
- 63 Direct
- 65 Pooh’s pal
- 66 Indigenous people with a First Moccasin ceremony
- 67 Louis who wrote “Holes”
- 68 Aviary sound
- 71 Consequently
- 75 Says what isn’t so
- 76 Itty-bitty

- 78 Fight (for)
- 79 Amusement-park attraction depicted in and around this answer
- 80 Typing stat: Abbr.
- 81 The Albuquerque Isotopes and Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp, for two
- 82 Compounds in cured meats
- 84 Destiny
- 86 Kind of coarse flour

- 91 Munich “mister”
- 93 Mileage, so to speak
- 94 Pepto-___
- 97 Part of an omakase meal
- 98 Word with French or free
- 100 Substitute
- 102 Pleased
- 103 Common spot for a houseplant
- 105 Title in Parliament
- 106 Draped garment

- 107 Aerial transport across New York’s East River
- 108 Actress Moriarty
- 109 Finding ___ Submarine Voyage (Disneyland attraction)
- 110 At most
- 112 Audiologist’s colleague, in brief
- 113 Agcy. overseeing public schools

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

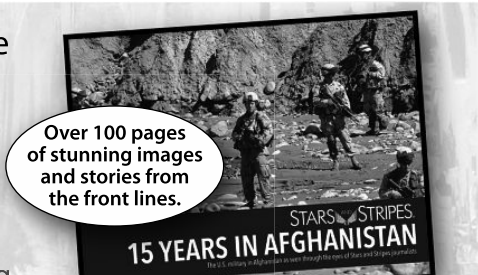
RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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FACES



JOEL C RYAN, INVISION/AP

Angelina Jolie greets fans and photographers Thursday at the Venice Film Festival in Italy. Jolie was on hand for the premiere of “Maria,” which focuses on the final week of opera singer Maria Callas’ life.

Singing her praises

Jolie shares at Venice Film Festival premiere how much she loved portraying legendary opera soprano Callas in ‘Maria’

BY LINDSEY BAHR AND LOUISE DIXON

Associated Press

For Angelina Jolie, portraying the famed opera singer Maria Callas meant more to her than she can put into words.

“I felt such a privilege to feel like I got to know this woman and got to be inside her skin a moment. I really care for her deeply,” Jolie told The Associated Press on Thursday, a few hours the film’s world premiere at the Venice International Film Festival. “I think I’ll carry that like a friend.”

Chilean filmmaker Pablo Larraín called on Jolie to take on the role as the legendary soprano in “Maria,” which was recently acquired by Netflix for distribution. The film focuses on the final week of her life in 1977, in Paris. She is deeply isolated, with only her butler (Pierfrancesco Favino) and housemaid (Alba Rohrwacher) looking after her — concerned about her health, the drugs and the devastating ripple effects of her diminished voice.

Larraín, a Venice regular, continues to explore the lives of very famous women with tragic narratives attached to them. In 2016, he came to the festival with his Jackie Kennedy portrait, “Jackie,” starring Natalie Portman as the first lady in the aftermath of her husband’s assassination. In 2021, he returned with Kristen Stewart playing Princess Diana in “Spencer.” Both films earned their leads best actress Oscar nominations.

“Maria” is the so-called conclusion to this trilogy of historical women, though Callas may be a bit less known to younger generations who weren’t around for the headlines and scandals. Born Maria Kalogeropoulos to Greek parents in New York, the singer made her professional debut in Athens at age 17.

During her brief life, she became one of the greatest opera singers of all time with her unparalleled voice and stage presence. But the accolades also came with the intense scrutiny of her life in the public eye, whether it was her exacting demands and “diva” behavior, her weight or her romantic life. Callas famously had a relationship with shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis who left her for Jackie Kennedy.

She died in Paris at age 53 after a heart attack.

“When I put her big glasses on and her Greek hair and I sat in my little robe as an older lady, I felt a (Maria) that felt like the private (Maria) that the world

didn’t know,” Jolie said. “And I connected to her first and, and kind of loved her.”

Jolie was reluctant to compare fame in Callas’ time to the present moment.

“I didn’t live then. I guess hard in different ways, easy in different ways,” Jolie said. “She was celebrated as one of the most wonderful artists, and she also had food thrown at her and insulted and lied about. So I don’t know. She must have felt ... she must have felt very alone.”

Jolie trained for nearly seven months to prepare for the role. The singing in the film is a blend of actor and the real thing.

“My first days, [Larraín] was very good to me in that we started in a more intimate first with very few crew members,” Jolie said. “And we ended at La Scala with everyone. So I had a little time to get my nerve. But this is the hardest thing I’ve ever done. I was terrified.”

Larraín said it was “the only way to do it.”

“Opera requires a very particular style of singing — in the pitch, the color, the breathing, the posture,” he said. “Sometimes it’s a tiny bit of Ange and mostly Maria, and then sometimes it’s more, but it’s always there. We needed to do that because it’s the only way that she could properly prepare the character, play it right and then create the right illusion.”

Jolie has twice been nominated for acting Oscars. She won for her supporting role in “Girl, Interrupted,” and was last nominated for her leading role in Clint Eastwood’s “Changeling.” Netflix has not announced specific release plans for “Maria,” but Jolie’s performance already has awards buzz behind it.

Jolie was asked Thursday if there were surprising ways she related to Callas. “There’s a lot I won’t say in this room that you probably know, or assume,” Jolie said. But, she said, she feels they do both share a softness and a vulnerability.

The film also made her reconsider her idea of the word “diva.”

“I’ve relearned that word through Maria,” she said. “And I have a new relationship to it.”

Larraín added: “Whatever we think about a diva, a diva would never exist if there wasn’t excellence in what she does.”

“Maria” is among the 21 features competing for the festival’s awards, which will be announced on Sept. 7.

Oasis adds 3 shows to its 2025 tour as fans clamor for tickets

From wire reports

Oasis has added three more dates to its reunion tour of Britain and Ireland, citing “unprecedented demand,” as fans of the Britpop behemoths braced for a rush to secure tickets that start at about 74 pounds (just under \$100).

The new shows announced Thursday are at Heaton Park in the band’s home city of Manchester, England, on July 16, 2025, at London’s Wembley Stadium on July 30 and at Edinburgh’s Murrayfield Stadium on Aug. 12.

The Britpop-era rock band is now scheduled to play 17 gigs in Cardiff, Manchester, London, Edinburgh and Dublin starting at Cardiff’s Principality Stadium on July 4.

Oasis was one of the dominant acts of the 1990s Britpop era, producing hits including “Wonderwall” and “Don’t Look Back in Anger.” Its sound was fueled by singalong rock choruses and the combustible chemistry

between guitarist-songwriter Noel Gallagher and his brother Liam, the band’s singer.

Oasis split in 2009, with Noel Gallagher officially leaving the band after a backstage dustup with his brother at a festival near Paris.

While the Gallagher brothers haven’t performed together since, both regularly perform Oasis songs at their solo gigs. They’ve also each fired off criticisms of the other in the press.

Announcing the reunion on Tuesday, the band said fans would experience “the spark and intensity” that occurs only when they appear on stage together.

The tour will begin July 4 and 5 at the Principality Stadium. Oasis will also perform in Manchester, on July 11, 12, 16, 19 and 20; in London on July 25, 26 and 30 and Aug. 2 and 3; in Edinburgh on Aug. 8, 9 and 12; and Croke Park in Dublin on Aug. 16 and 17.

Tickets go on sale Saturday.

Slipknot rocker Wilson details injuries from fiery explosion

Rocker Sid Wilson will look a little different after badly burning his face last week.

The Slipknot DJ and keyboard player singed off his eyebrows and “melted” much of his skin after a bonfire exploded while he was working on his farm. He said he isn’t expecting to need surgery or skin grafts to deal with the wounds but isn’t yet sure how he will don the heavy metal band’s iconic face masks and costumes during its ongoing tour.

According to Slipknot’s website, the band is scheduled to play a show on Sunday in Pryor, Okla., and he vowed to return to the stage despite his wounds.

The 47-year-old has been chronicling his gruesome recovery on Instagram, first describing the injuries Friday while hooked up to various medical devices while medi-

cal professionals dressed his wounds and took his health history. He said he had “serious burns” to his face and arms.

“I’m allergic to fire apparently,” he said in an Aug. 23 video.

The musician said that the explosion occurred after he added gasoline to a wood burn pile on his farm in Iowa, where he lives with girlfriend Kelly Osbourne and their 1-year-old son, Sidney.

Other news

■ South Korean singer **Taeil** has left K-pop band NCT after being accused of an unspecified sexual crime, his label announced Wednesday. His agency, SM Entertainment, released a statement on X, saying the NCT member will depart from the boy band after learning he has been “accused in a criminal case related to a sexual crime.” The label did not specify the nature of the crime.

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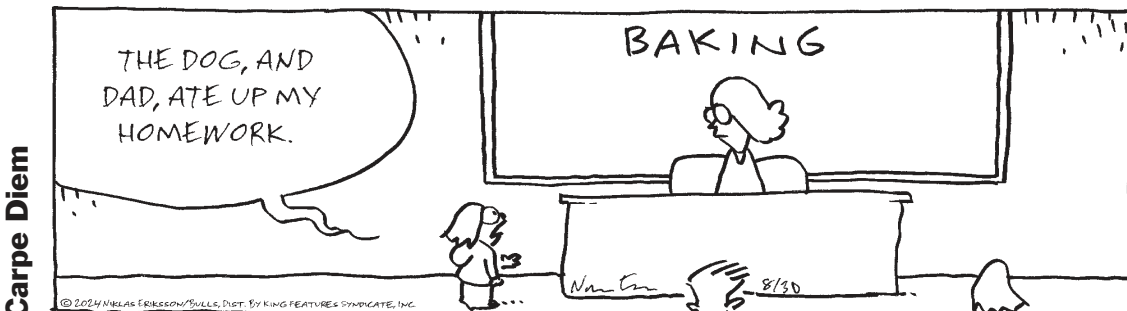
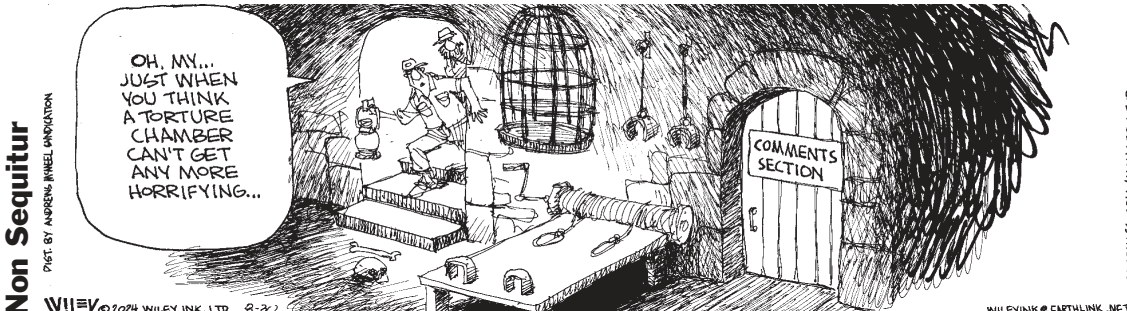
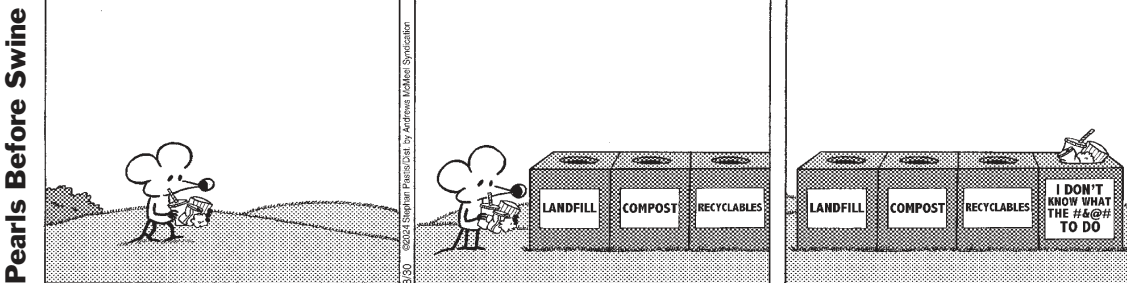
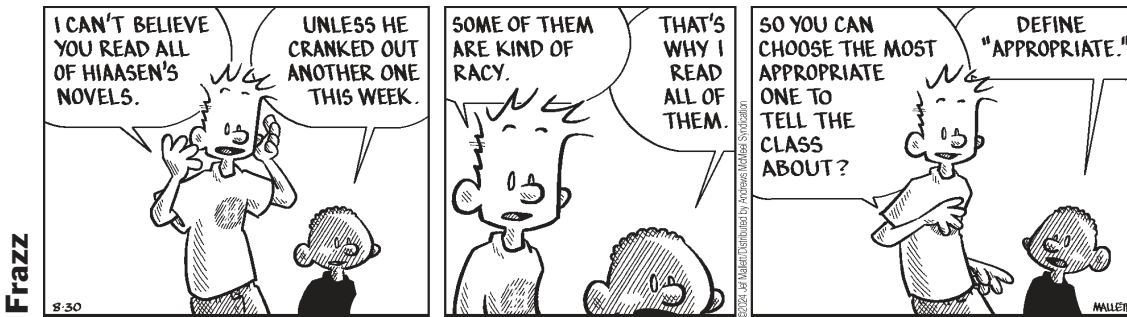


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
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			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		



ACROSS

- 1 Xenon, for one
- 4 "Go no further!"
- 8 Caboose
- 12 Toward the stern
- 13 Engine noise
- 14 City on a fjord
- 15 Sham
- 17 Head, to Henri
- 18 Mogadishu resident
- 19 Latin 101 word
- 21 Business letters
- 22 Rug
- 26 Curved moldings
- 29 Bashful
- 30 Deluge refuge
- 31 Tiers
- 32 Snoop
- 33 Advertising award
- 34 The Browns, on scoreboards
- 35 "Entourage" agent
- 36 Domesticates
- 37 Steep-roofed home
- 39 Schedule abbr.
- 40 PC program
- 41 Dueling sword
- 45 Taxi alternative
- 48 Maxims
- 50 Gambling game
- 51 Aachen article
- 52 Off-roader (Abbr.)

- 53 Algerian port
- 54 June 6, 1944
- 55 Fist bump

- 25 Boxing stats
- 26 Killer whale
- 27 Yani Tseng's game
- 28 Ornamental jug
- 29 Lanka lead-in
- 32 Got ready (for)
- 33 "— diem!"
- 35 Music booster
- 36 Actress Ullman
- 38 "Hammerin' Hank"
- 39 Sports venue
- 42 Apple tablet
- 43 Jazzy James
- 44 Wedding invitation letters
- 45 Martian-mobile
- 46 Tavern
- 47 Historic time
- 49 Free (of)

DOWN

- 1 Openings
- 2 Hendrix hairdo
- 3 Goblet feature
- 4 Hexes
- 5 Roman garment
- 6 Choice words?
- 7 Didactic
- 8 Copter blade
- 9 Language suffix
- 10 PC key
- 11 Caviar base
- 16 Yarns
- 20 Potentially will
- 23 Coconut provider
- 24 Pennsylvania port

Answer to Previous Puzzle

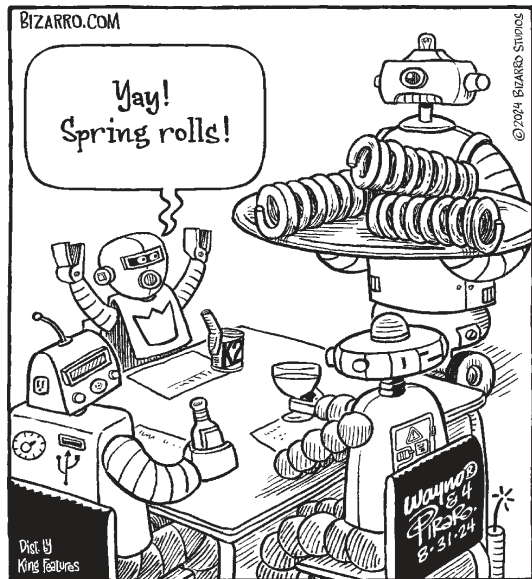
L	I	R	A		E	T	C	H		T	A	D		
A	D	O	S		L	A	R	A		E	M	U		
M	E	D	S	C	H	O	O	L		D	A	D		
A	S	S	I						L	I	L	T	S	
				S	I	T	O	S	C	A				
L	G	B	T		B	U	B		E	S	S	O		
S	E	E			A	B	E			S	O	N		
D	O	D	O		L	A	Y		S	O	L	O		
				F	U	J	I	S		D	I			
S	Y	R	I	A					O	U	T	S	E	T
T	E	A			R	E	D	P	E	P	P	E	R	
A	T	M			E	D	I	T		A	U	R	A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

8-30

CRYPTOQUIP

H D I K R B H T E M W M F R E I
 B H T M F M H E B H Z R H F I N R D D
 B R D D M E T Z M D H Y Y R H N, K R
 F N M R Z, "Z R Q N H - F H Z H Q N H!"
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHY DO RUSSIAN NESTING DOLLS ALWAYS COME OFF AS VERY EGOTISTICAL? THEY'RE FULL OF THEMSELVES.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals G

Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

Grid for Eugene Sheffer Crossword with numbered squares 1-57.

ACROSS

- 1 Breakfast strip
6 Analyzes grammatically
12 Melodious
13 Muse of astronomy
14 Ember
15 Arizona resort
16 Head, to Henri
17 Recipe meas.
19 Spider's creation
20 German river
22 Annex
24 Rushmore face
27 In — (shortly)
29 Overnight —
32 "Amen to that!"
35 Sitarist's music
36 Spumante source
37 Cry
38 Pinafore letters
40 "Star Wars" villain Ren
42 Dundee denial
44 Wife of Geraint
46 Arm bone
50 And others, in Latin
52 Gender-neutral
54 Zealous
55 California desert
56 Glues
57 Chatter

DOWN

- 1 Party cheese
2 "— She Sweet"
3 Software writer
4 Sugary suffix
5 Arm of the Atlantic
6 "— in Boots"
7 Venezuelan corn patty
8 "Awesome, dude!"
9 Winter "no school" times
10 Aachen article
11 Swedish car
12 Play part
18 Cold beer, casually
21 Dubai's country, for short
23 Homer's lament

- 24 Football filler
25 Cote cry
26 Intellectuals
28 Trash disposal site
30 As well
31 Long lunch?
33 Zodiac animal
34 Up to
39 Parisian river
41 Mystical board
42 Tide variety
43 Gillette razor
45 D.C. baseball team
47 Future atty.'s exam
48 Actress Campbell
49 Chopper
51 Permit
53 Neither mate

Answer to Previous Puzzle

Grid for Answer to Previous Puzzle with words like GAS, STOP, REAR, AFT, PURR, OSLO, etc.

CRYPTOQUIP

OYXH B LQNRAH AMNVNBE
YBR FA RFNQ B PNR YX'R
VAAJNHZ, N QXVJAH YX RYATEP
TRX B OBQPXH RLAH.

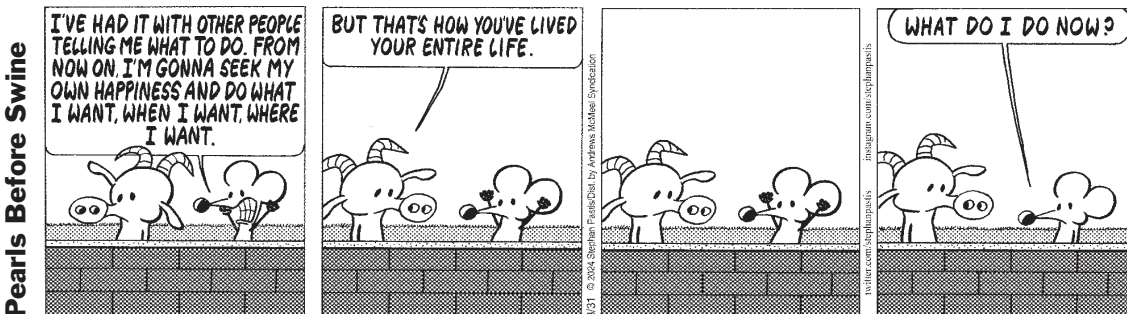
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AS THE MAGNIFICENT MAGICIAN MADE ACTRESS MESSING DISAPPEAR, HE CRIED, "DEBRA-CADABRA!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals S

Frazz



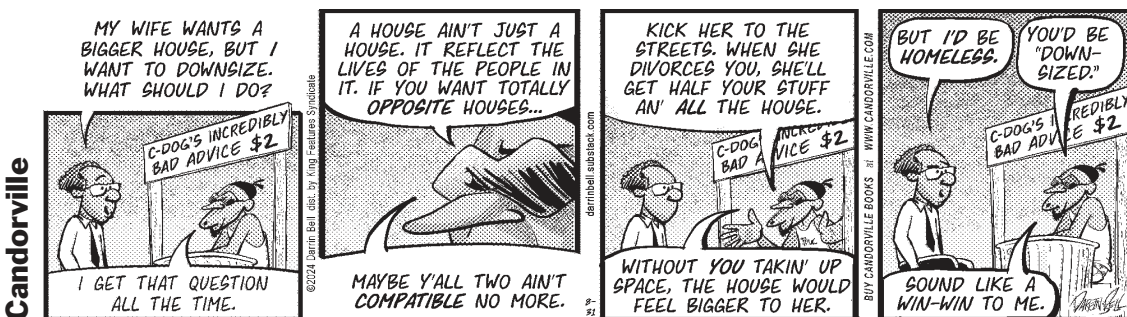
Pearls Before Swine



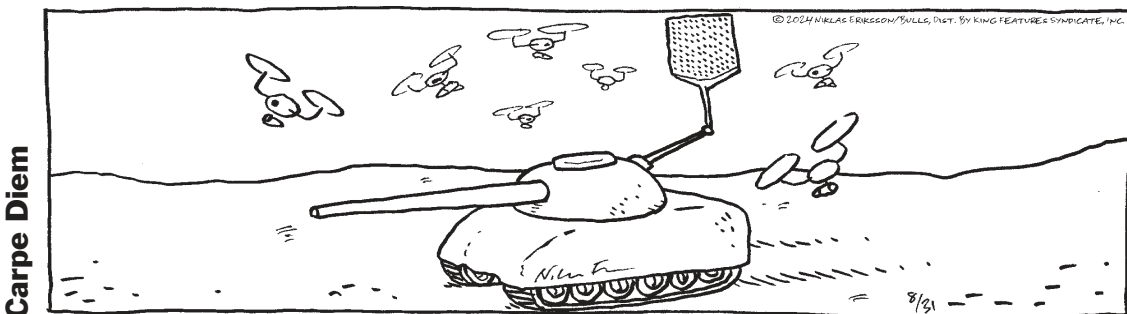
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



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Jacqueline Smith

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OPINION

Why candidates' calls for unity are wrong

BY JONAH GOLDBERG

Tribune Content Agency

The single most abused, misused and misunderstood word in American politics is “unity.”

All presidential candidates vow to unite Americans. Nearly every pundit and public intellectual laments the lack of unity.

“When America is united, America is totally unstoppable,” Donald Trump declared in his inaugural address. “With unity, we can do great things. Important things,” insisted Joe Biden in his. Kamala Harris proclaimed in her acceptance speech at the Democratic convention that “in unity, there is strength.”

Such statements get to the first problem with the cult of unity: It’s an appeal to power. There is strength in unity, sure, but strength is an entirely amoral concept. Strength to do what?

Lynch mobs are unified, which is why they are terrifying. The namesake of fascism, the fasces, was a bundle of rods representing the idea of strength in numbers.

I’m not saying unity is necessarily bad, but its goodness depends entirely on what you do with it. If politicians routinely used the term “power” instead of “unity,” more people might understand that skepticism is warranted when politicians demand or claim it for their agenda.

Second, our infatuation with unity runs against the grain of the Constitution. Presidents often talk as if they are running for prime minister in a parliamentary system. They promise to do things on “Day One” of their administration that a president cannot do alone under our system.

Trump vowed to be a “dictator” on Day One of a second administration (with specific regard to immigration and oil drilling). In 2019, Harris promised that if elected president, she would repeal the Trump tax cuts on “Day One.” Presidents can issue (often dubious) executive orders on Day One, but they cannot pass or repeal laws. That’s Congress’ job.

And Congress isn’t elected to follow the president’s orders. The often cockamamie idea of electoral mandates for presidents is irrelevant. Legislators are answerable to their own voters and constituents.

If Trump wins the election, Democrats aren’t going to feel particularly obliged to rubber-stamp his agenda. And if Harris wins, Republicans won’t reflexively defer to hers. A president can tell senators or representatives, “Look, I was elected to do X” all they like, but at least some can fairly respond, “Yeah, and I was elected to try to stop you.”

This is a constitutional feature, not a bug. My American Enterprise Institute colleague Yuval Levin underscores this point in “American Covenant,” the best book on the Constitution I’ve read. The Constitution was designed to foster political competition—between the executive and legislative branches, among and within the states, and between the federal government and the states. The separation of powers, the structure of Congress and constant elections are intended to create conflict and tension — “productive tension,” in Levin’s words.

This competition is supposed to yield better and more democratically legitimate policies through vociferous disagreement. The

Constitution’s goal is disagreement, not superficial agreement forced by populist appeals to unity.

The most beneficial form of unity is consensus reached by fierce but good-faith argument. The only other form of unity that should be expected or demanded of Americans is fidelity to the Constitution’s rules on how these arguments are conducted and how officials use the power granted to them. No president can be a dictator on any day so long as the Constitution remains in force.

I dislike the asininity and demagoguery that polarization produces as much as anybody. But the problem is not disagreement so much as an inability to disagree better. Indeed, much of what drives our acidic disunity is the partisan desire to steamroll political opponents with forced unity and power not granted by the Constitution.

Politicians’ frequent assertions that “the time for debate is over” amount to an undemocratic insistence that “my critics need to shut up and get with my program.” Sometimes critics are well advised to shut up, but only if they have decisively lost the argument. And even then, our system protects dissent because the founders recognized that free speech is indispensable to a free society and that the majority sometimes gets it wrong.

When that happens, the dissenters should be able to say, “We told you so.” I’m hoping to live long enough to say exactly that when we return to the system of productive political disagreement enshrined in the Constitution.

Jonah Goldberg is editor-in-chief of The Dispatch and the host of The Remnant podcast.

The real reason Harris needs media scrutiny

BY JASON WILLICK

The Washington Post

One lesson of the Donald Trump era is that politicians will ignore political convention to the extent they can get away with it. And Vice President Kamala Harris has so far paid little price for her historically cloistered presidential campaign.

The week before the first swing state sends out mail ballots, Harris has not held a news conference. Her campaign finally announced, after weeks of anticipation, that she would be interviewed for the first time as a 2024 presidential candidate by CNN’s Dana Bash — not by herself but with her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz. At this rate, it might be her only interview until October.

The reason for this avoidance is no mystery, of course: Harris wants to win. Her unscripted moments as vice president and as a 2020 candidate often hurt her politically. President Joe Biden’s late decision to step aside gave the Harris campaign a unique opportunity to minimize media scrutiny of her policy views by running out the clock. But in the process, the public is losing something important — commitments from Harris that could help constrain her in office.

It’s worth going back to the basics. Why should a candidate for office need to regularly answer questions publicly, anyway? Sure, it’s a small-d democratic “norm” — a long-standing expectation of the American political process. But that’s not much of an argument in a time when norms are regularly set aside in a ruthless quest for political advantage.

Or perhaps, norm or not, Harris should

submit to normal media questioning because the electorate demands it. The New York Times’ Patrick Healy argued that Harris “needs to start proving herself outside her comfort zone” to win voters’ trust. Does she? Harris has pulled into a national polling lead despite being less accessible to the media than Biden was before dropping out. Enough voters might prefer a candidate to whom they have had relatively little exposure when the alternative is Trump.

A final reason might be that even if Harris can cruise to the White House in a lightning campaign while avoiding policy questioning, her governance would suffer for it. As the Economist put it, “governing is better if its winning mandate contains a programme.” True, but a vague mandate is better than no mandate at all, and Harris’ campaign has clearly calculated that exposing her to the media in a traditional way is a path to defeat.

The only compelling argument against Harris’ media-shielding strategy, then, is that she must answer questions so she will be constrained if she wins. The real damage might not be to abstract political norms, or to her campaign, but to the American people once she is in office.

For example, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., told the Dispatch that the Harris campaign told him it was “precisely aligned” with his “term limits” plan that would kick Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Clarence Thomas off the Supreme Court in an unconstitutional power grab.

Harris ought to be asked about this claim by Whitehouse — the same way Trump has been forced to respond to Project 2025 and other ideas developed by his co-partisans —

so the public can keep her in check. If Harris says Whitehouse’s claim is accurate, it might hurt her electorally. But if she disavows Whitehouse’s bill, then opponents can use that statement against her if she pushes something similar to tamper with the judiciary during her presidency.

Think of the media not as a co-participant with candidates in the electoral process, but as a representative of the American people against political candidates. When reporters ask politicians about abortion, for example, and the politicians offer moderate-sounding assurances, the media is helping to box candidates in — making sure they don’t seize more power than voters meant to hand them.

Of course, this doesn’t always work: Politicians renege on commitments. But when they do, their campaign comments can be fodder for political accountability, allowing the opposition to paint them as dishonest.

The mainstream media has significant power to shape the behavior of Democratic presidential candidates, as the frenzy that expelled Biden from the race showed. If liberal outlets could embarrass Biden into stepping aside, they could also embarrass Harris into engaging in a modicum of policy discussion.

But it’s important to be clear-eyed about the reason such discussion is urgent and necessary: To box Harris in, extracting commitments not only of what she would do, but of what she wouldn’t. Of course Harris is not interested in having her mandate limited in this way, but with political guardrails eroding, that’s precisely the purpose of a free press.

Jason Willick is a Washington Post columnist focusing on law, politics and foreign policy.

SCOREBOARD

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Schedule		
Friday's games		
EAST		
Lehigh (0-0) at Army (0-0)	Colgate (0-0) at Maine (0-0)	
SOUTH		
Elon (0-0) at Duke (0-0)		
MIDWEST		
FAU (0-0) at Michigan St. (0-0)	W. Michigan (0-0) at Wisconsin (0-0)	
SOUTHWEST		
Temple (0-0) at Oklahoma (0-0)		
FAR WEST		
TCU (0-0) at Stanford (0-0)		
Saturday's games		
EAST		
Kent St. (0-0) at Pittsburgh (0-0)	Bucknell (0-0) at Navy (0-0)	
Penn St. (0-0) at West Virginia (0-0)	Va. Lynchburg (0-0) at Wagner (0-0)	
UConn (0-0) at Maryland (0-0)	Davidson (0-0) at Georgetown (0-0)	
E. Michigan (0-0) at Umass (0-0)	Ohio (0-0) at Syracuse (0-0)	
Stony Brook (0-0) at Marshall (0-0)	Delaware St. (0-1) at Sacred Heart (0-0)	
Holy Cross (0-0) at Rhode Island (0-0)	LIU Brooklyn (0-0) at Albany (NY) (0-0)	
SOUTH		
Georgia (0-0) vs. Clemson (0-0) at Atlanta		
Virginia Tech (0-0) at Vanderbilt (0-0)	Austin Peay (0-0) at Louisville (0-0)	
Chattanooga (0-0) at Tennessee (0-0)	Miami (0-0) at Florida (0-0)	
ETSU (0-0) at Appalachian St. (0-0)	Boise St. (0-0) at Georgia Southern (0-0)	
Old Dominion (0-0) at South Carolina (0-0)	North Texas (0-0) at South Alabama (0-0)	
Campbell (0-0) at Liberty (0-0)	Norfolk St. (0-1) at East Carolina (0-0)	
The Citadel (0-0) at Charleston Southern (0-0)	Richmond (0-0) at Virginia (0-0)	
Samford (0-0) at West Georgia (0-0)	MVU (0-0) at Tennessee St. (0-0)	
E. Kentucky (0-0) at Mississippi St. (0-0)	SC State (0-0) at Florida A&M (1-0)	
Ave Maria (0-0) at Stetson (0-0)	Morgan St. (0-0) at Hampton (0-0)	
Bethune-Cookman (0-0) at South Florida (0-0)	Nevada (0-1) at Troy (0-0)	
W. Kentucky (0-0) at Alabama (0-0)	Furman (0-0) at Mississippi (0-0)	
Tennessee Tech (0-0) at Middle Tennessee (0-0)	North Alabama (0-1) at Memphis (0-0)	
Alabama A&M (0-0) at Auburn (0-0)	Southern Miss. (0-0) at Kentucky (0-0)	
Georgia St. (0-0) at Georgia Tech (1-0)	Nicholls (0-0) at Louisiana Tech (0-0)	
Grambling St. (0-0) at Louisiana-Lafayette (0-0)	James Madison (0-0) at Charlotte (0-0)	
Southern U. (0-0) at McNeese St. (0-1)	MIDWEST	
Illinois St. (0-0) at Iowa (0-0)	St. Francis (Pa.) (0-0) at Dayton (0-0)	
Indiana St. (0-0) at Purdue (0-0)	Upper Iowa (0-0) at Butler (0-0)	
Towson (0-0) at Cincinnati (0-0)	UTEP (0-0) at Nebraska (0-0)	
Akron (0-0) at Ohio St. (0-0)	Miami (Ohio) (0-0) at Northwestern (0-0)	
W. Illinois (0-0) at N. Illinois (0-0)	North Dakota (0-0) at Iowa St. (0-0)	
FIU (0-0) at Indiana (0-0)	Valparaiso (0-0) at N. Iowa (0-0)	
UT Martin (0-0) at Kansas St. (0-0)	Fresno St. (0-0) at Michigan (0-0)	
SOUTHWEST		
S. Dakota St. (0-0) at Oklahoma St. (0-0)	Kennesaw St. (0-0) at UTSA (0-0)	
Colorado St. (0-0) at Texas (0-0)	Tarleton St. (1-0) at Baylor (0-0)	
Sam Houston St. (0-0) at Rice (0-0)	Cent. Arkansas (0-0) at Arkansas St. (0-0)	
UNLV (0-0) at Houston (0-0)	Texas Southern (0-0) at Prairie View (0-0)	
N. Colorado (0-0) at Incarnate Word (0-0)	Abilene Christian (0-0) at Texas Tech (0-0)	
Notre Dame (0-0) at Texas A&M (0-0)	Lamar (0-0) at Texas State (0-0)	
Houston Christian (0-0) at SMU (1-0)	FAR WEST	
Portland St. (0-0) at Washington St. (0-0)	Merrimack (0-0) at Air Force (0-0)	
Lincoln University (CA) (0-0) at N. Arizona (0-0)	UC Davis (0-0) at California (0-0)	
Idaho St. (0-0) at Oregon St. (0-0)	Idaho (0-0) at Oregon (0-0)	
UCLA (0-0) at Hawaii (1-0)	Robert Morris (0-0) at Utah St. (0-0)	
S. Illinois (0-0) at BYU (0-0)	Texas A&M Commerce (0-0) at San Diego St. (0-0)	
Cal Poly (0-0) at San Diego (0-0)	SE Missouri (1-0) at New Mexico St. (0-0)	
Missouri St. (0-0) at Montana (0-0)	Montana St. (1-0) at Utah Tech (0-0)	
New Mexico (0-1) at Arizona (0-0)	Wyoming (0-0) at Arizona St. (0-0)	
Weber St. (0-0) at Washington (0-0)	Sunday's games	
SOUTH		
NC Central (0-0) vs. Alabama St. (0-0) at Miami Gardens, Fla.	FAR WEST	
Southern Cal (0-0) vs. LSU (0-0) at Las Vegas		
Monday's game		
SOUTH		
Boston College (0-0) at Florida St. (0-1)		

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-New York	26	6	.813	—
x-Connecticut	22	8	.733	3
Indiana	15	16	.484	10½
Chicago	11	19	.367	14
Atlanta	10	20	.333	15
Washington	9	22	.290	16½
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Minnesota	23	8	.742	—
Seattle	19	11	.633	3½
Las Vegas	18	12	.600	4½
Phoenix	16	16	.500	7½
Dallas	8	22	.267	14½
Los Angeles	7	24	.226	16
x-clinched playoff spot				
Tuesday's games				
Dallas 93, Las Vegas 90				
Wednesday's games				
Indiana 84, Connecticut 80				
Washington 74, Chicago 70 (1)				
Minnesota 89, Phoenix 76				
Los Angeles 94, New York 88				
Seattle 85, Atlanta 81				
Thursday's games				
No games scheduled.				
Friday's games				
Indiana at Chicago				
Minnesota at Dallas				
Atlanta at Las Vegas				
New York at Seattle				
Saturday's games				
Connecticut at Washington				

PRO SOCCER

MLS						
EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Inter Miami CF	17	4	5	56	58	39
Cincinnati	15	8	3	48	44	35
Columbus	13	4	7	46	48	22
New York	10	4	12	42	43	32
NYCFC	11	9	6	39	38	32
Charlotte FC	10	8	8	38	31	28
Orlando City	9	10	7	34	39	41
Toronto FC	10	14	3	33	35	47
Atlanta	7	12	7	28	35	38
Philadelphia	6	11	9	27	45	43
CF Montréal	6	11	9	27	34	54
New England	8	14	2	26	28	47
Chicago	6	12	8	26	32	44
Nashville	6	12	8	26	26	41
D.C. United	6	12	8	26	38	54
WESTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
LA Galaxy	15	5	7	52	52	36
LAFc	14	5	5	47	48	30
Real Salt Lake	12	6	8	44	51	36
Colorado	12	9	5	41	50	43
Seattle	11	8	7	40	37	31
Vancouver	11	8	5	38	43	35
Portland	10	9	7	37	54	46
Houston	10	8	7	37	35	31
Austin FC	9	10	7	34	30	37
FC Dallas	9	11	6	33	42	42
Minnesota	9	11	6	33	42	44
Sporting KC	7	14	6	27	44	52
St Louis City	4	10	12	24	36	50
San Jose	5	19	2	17	33	61

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday, Aug. 24		
Seattle 3, Minnesota 2	New York 1, Charlotte FC 1, tie	
FC Dallas 4, D.C. United 3	Miami 2, Cincinnati 0	
New England 5, CF Montréal 0	Chicago 2, New York City FC 2, tie	
Toronto FC 1, Houston 0	Sporting Kansas City 3, Orlando City 0	
Austin FC 2, Nashville 0	San Jose 2, Real Salt Lake 0	
LA Galaxy 2, Atlanta 0	St Louis City 4, Portland 4, tie	
Wednesday's game		
Columbus 1, Philadelphia 0		
Saturday's games		
Atlanta at Charlotte FC	CF Montréal at Cincinnati	
New York City FC at Columbus	Philadelphia at New York	
Nashville at Orlando City	D.C. United at Toronto FC	
Vancouver at Austin FC	Miami at Chicago	
Colorado at FC Dallas	New England at Real Salt Lake	
Houston at Los Angeles FC	Seattle at Portland	
Minnesota at San Jose	Sunday's game	
LA Galaxy at St Louis City		

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL schedule	
Thursday, Sept. 5	
Baltimore at Kansas City	
Friday, Sept. 6	
Green Bay vs Philadelphia at Sao Paulo	
Sunday Sept. 8	
Arizona at Buffalo	Carolina at New Orleans
Houston at Indianapolis	Jacksonville at Miami
Minnesota at N.Y. Giants	

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Designated RHP Dillon Tate for assignment. Claimed 2B Forrest Wall off waivers from Miami Marlins.
BOSTON RED SOX — Sent RHP Liam Hendriks to Worcester (IL) on a rehab assignment.
CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Sent RHP Steven Wilson to Charlotte (IL) on a rehab assignment. Appointed RHP Matt Foster from Charlotte to serve as the 27th player for game 2 of a doubleheader. Returned RHP Matt Foster to Charlotte.
CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Designated CF Anthony Gose for assignment. Selected the contract of LHP Erik Sabrowski from Columbus (IL).
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Placed RHP Michael Lorenzen on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Steven Cruz from Omaha (IL).
OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Placed 3B Miguel Andujar on the 10-day IL retroactive to August 25. Recalled SS Nick Allen from Las Vegas (PCL). Assigned 3B Abraham Toro outright to Las Vegas.
MINNESOTA TWINS — Optioned RHP Caleb Boushley St. Paul (IL). Reinstated RHP Michael Tonkin.
NEW YORK YANKEES — Sent RHP Clarke Schmidt to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL) on a rehab assignment.
SEATTLE MARINERS — Reinstated SS J.P. Crawford from the 10-day IL. Optioned RF Dominic Canzone to Tacoma (PCL).
TEXAS RANGERS — Recalled RHP Jack Leiter from Round Rock (PCL).
National League
CINCINNATI REDS — Transferred OF Stuart Fairchild to the 60-day IL. Optioned RHP Casey Legumina to Louisville (IL). Selected the contract of LHP Evan Kravetz from Louisville.
COLORADO ROCKIES — Sent RHP Antonio Senzate to Hartford (EL) on a rehab assignment. Optioned RHP Roddey Muñoz to Jacksonville.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Sent RHP Yoshinobu Yamamoto to Oklahoma City (PCL) on a rehab assignment.
MIAMI MARLINS — Recalled RHP Xzavion Curry from Jacksonville (IL). Recalled LHP Austin Kitchen from Jacksonville. Optioned LHP Jonathan Bermúdez to Jacksonville.
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Reinstated 3B Weston Wilson from the paternity list. Optioned 3B Buddy Kennedy to Lehigh Valley (IL).
WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Placed RHP Joan Adon on the 15-day IL retroactive to August 25. Recalled RHP Orlando Ribalta from Rochester (IL).
FOOTBALL
National Football League
ARIZONA CARDINALS — Signed WR Andre Baccellia, LB Markus Bailey, LB Kryston Barnes, OL Jackson Barton, RB Michael Carter, WR Dan Chisena, CB Jaden Davis, OL Marquis Hayes Jr., OL Keith Ismael, WR Tejaun Palmer, QB Desmond Ridder, DL Ben Stille, CB Divaad Wilson, LB Julian Okwara to the practice squad.
ATLANTA FALCONS — Signed WR Chris Blair, CB Natrone Brooks, WR Dylan Drummond, DL Demone Harris, DT Zion Logan, DL LaCale London, WR Jesse Matthews, OL Andrew Stueber, RB Carlos Washington Jr., S Dane Cruikshank, OL Julián Davenport, CB Kevin King, TE John FitzPatrick, DL Kenny Ognini to the practice squad.
BALTIMORE RAVENS — Signed T Corey Bullock, RB Chris Collier, CB Bump Cooper Jr., WR Malik Cunningham, G Darrian Dalcourt, OLB Joe Evans, CB Ka'dar Hollman, TE Qadir Ismail, RB John Kelly, WR Keith Kirkwood, QB Devin Leary, WR Anthony Miller, DE C.J. Ravenell, ILB Josh Ross, WR Dayton Wade to the practice squad.
BUFFALO BILLS — Signed QB Mike White, RB Frank Gore, Jr., WR Deon Cain, WR K.J. Hamler, WR Tyrell Shavers, TE Zach Davidson, OL Richard Gougeau, OL Will Clapp, OL Mike Edwards, DE Kingsley Jonathan, DE Kameron Cline, DT Eli Ankou, DT Brandon Deen, CB Daequan Hardy, CB Te' Cory Couch, S Kareem Jackson to the practice squad.
CAROLINA PANTHERS — Signed TE Jordan Matthews, RB Mike Boone, DB Alex Cook, LB Chandler Wooten, DLs T.J. Smith and Walter Palmore, LB Kenny Dyson, OL Mason Brooks, and QB Jack Plummer to the practice squad.
CHICAGO BEARS — Signed LB Micah Baskerville, OL The Benedit, TE Stephen Carlson, DL Byron Cowart, OL Jake Curhan, WR Collin Johnson, DB Quindell Johnson, LB Carl Jones, DL Jamree Kromah, DL Dashawn Mallory, DB Tavarius Moore, QB Austin Reed, DB Reddy Stewart, DB Ro Torrence to the practice squad.
CINCINNATI BENGALS — Signed CB Nate Brooks, WR Cole Burgess, OT Devin Cochran, DT Dominique Davis, CB Jalen Davis, TE Cam Grandy, LB Shaka Heyward, C Trey Hill, WR Shedrick Jackson, S PJ Jules, WR Kendrick Pryor, QB Logan Woodside to

New England at Cincinnati	Pittsburgh at Atlanta
Tennessee at Chicago	Denver at Seattle
Las Vegas at L.A. Chargers	Dallas at Cleveland
Washington at Tampa Bay	L.A. Rams at Detroit
Monday, Sept. 9	
N.Y. Jets at San Francisco	
Thursday, Sept. 12	
Buffalo at Miami	
Sunday, Sept. 15	

DEALS

the practice squad. Released RB Trayveon Williams. Claimed DL K.J. Henry off waiver from the Washington Commanders.
CLEVELAND BROWNS — Signed DT Jonwon Briggs, CB Tony Brown II, WR Jaelon Darden, S Christopher Edmonds, CB Justin Hardee Jr., T Germain Ifedi, T Sam Kamara, T Roy Mbaeteka (International Player Pathway Program), WR James Proche II, LB Winston Reid, LS Rex Sunahara, T Lorenzo Thompson, WR Michael Woods II to the practice squad.
DALLAS COWBOYS — Signed RB Malik Davis, DE Carl Lawson, OL Josh Ball, WR Jalen Cropper, DB Josh Butler, TE Princeton Fant, CB Kemon Hall, WR Kelvin Harmon, LB Darius Harris, DB Emany Johnson, LB Brock Mogensen, C Dakoda Shepley, LB Nick Vigil, DT Denzel Daxon to the practice squad. Released DL Al-Quadin Muhammad.
DENVER BRONCOS — Signed RB Tyler Badie, WR Michael Bandy, FB Mike Burton, OL Nick Gargiulo, DL Matt Henningsen, WR Lil'Jordan Humphrey, DB Tanner McCalister, DL Jordan Miller, DB Quinton Newsome, OL Will Sherman, WR David Sills, DB Reese Taylor, OL Calvin Throckmorton, LB Dondrea Tillman and TE Thomas Yassmin to the practice squad.
DETROIT LIONS — Signed LB Mitchell Agude, C Kingsley Eguakun, QB Jake Fromm, RB Jermar Jefferson, T Jamarco Jones, WR Tom Kennedy, TE James Mitchell, S C.J. Moore, DL Pat O'Connor, WR Tim Patrick, DL Kyle Peko, WR Allen Robinson, DL Chris Smith, DL Isaac Ukwu, TE Shane Zylstra to the practice squad.
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed DL Deshaun Alexander, QB Sean Clifford, DL James Ester, K Alex Hale (NFL International Player Pathway program), WR Julian Hicks, G/T Donovan Jennings, CB Kalen King, RB Nate McCrary, RB Ellis Merriweather, CB Robert Rochell, G/C Lecitus Smith and TE Messiah Swinson to the practice squad. Released K Greg Joseph.
HOUSTON TEXANS — Signed DE Solomon Byrd, T Cameron Erving, DE Malik Fisher, FB Troy Hairston, DT Marcus Harris, WR Johnny Johnson III, CB D'Angelo Ross, T David Sharpe, RB J.J. Taylor, LB Max Toohey, LB Ezekiel Turner, T Kilian Zierer to the practice squad.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Claimed DB Samuel Womack III off waivers from the San Francisco 49ers. Waived DB Darrell Baker Jr. Signed LB Austin Ajiake, LB Liam Anderson, DE Genard Avery, QB Jason Bean, S Marcel Dabo, RB Evan Hull, CB Chris Lammons, WR D.J. Montgomery, CB Jaylin Simpson, CB Ameer Speed, WR Laquon Treadwell to the practice squad.
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — Signed TE Shawn Bowman, CB Christian Braswell, WR Joshua Cephus, DE D.J. Coleman, WR Elijah Cooks, TE Josiah Deguara, S Terrell Edmunds, CB Tre Flowers, DE Joe Gaziano, RB Jalen Jackson, OL Steven Jones, LB Tanner Muse, QB E.J. Perry, WR Austin Trammell to the practice squad.
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Signed RB Emani Bailey, LB Swayze Bozeman, S Deon Bush, LB Cole Christiansen, TE Baylor Cupp, DT Matt Dickerson, DT Neil Farrell, RB Kabonay Ingram, DE Truman Jones, DT Fabian Lovett, OT Lucas Niang, WR Nikko Remigio, WR Justyn Ross, CB Keith Taylor, WR Montrell Washington, OT Chukwuebuka Godrick to the practice squad.
LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed DL David Aogo, WR Alex Bachman, QB Carter Bradley, OL Ben Brown, DL Matthew Butler, WR Jaley Guyton, RB Sincere McCormick, OL Will Putnam, DB Phalen Sanford, TE John Samuel Walker, DL Charles Snowden, OL Dalton Wagner, CB Sam Webb, WR Kristian Wilkerson to the practice squad. Signed DB Darnay Holmes to the active roster. Placed DB Brandon Facyson on injured reserve.
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Signed OL Karsen Barnhart, TE Luke Benson, LB Andrew Farmer II, TE Tusker Fisk, DB Matt Hankins, DL Christopher Hinton, LB Jeremiah Jean-Baptiste, WR Cornelius Johnson, WR Jaylen Johnson, DB Robert Kennedy, OL Alex Leatherwood, LB Tre'Mon Morris-Brash, DL CJ Okoye (NFL International Player Pathway program), LB Shaq Queartman, RB Isaiah Spiller to the practice squad. Waived DB J.T. Woods.
LOS ANGELES RAMS — Signed DL Neville Gallimore to the active roster. Claimed DB Cody Schrader off waivers from the San Francisco 49ers. Waived DT Cory Durden. Placed T Conor McDermott on injured reserve. Signed OL A.J. Arcuri, OL Justin Dedich, TE Miller Forristall, DB Tanner Ingle, DB Shaun Jolly, TE Nikola Kalinic, DB Cam Lampkin, DT Tuli Letuliglasenoa, OL Mike McAllister, WR Xavier Smith, WR Drake Stoops, DB Jason Taylor II, OLB Keir Thomas, WR Sam Wigtusz, RB Zach Evans, LB Zach VanValkenburg to the practice squad.
MIAMI DOLPHINS — Claimed WR Grant DeBose off waivers from the Green Bay Packers. Released OL Jack Driscoll. Signed DB Jordan Colbert, WR Erik Zukanma, DL Jonathan Harris, OL Chasen Hines, LB Dequan Jackson, DB Isaiah Johnson, OL Bay-

ron Matos, RB Anthony McFarland Jr., DB Nik Needham and TE Hayden Rucci to the practice squad.
MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Signed TE N'Keal Harry, RB DeWayne McBride, RB Myles Gaskin, DB Jaylin Williams, DB Nahshon Wright, CB Bobby McCain, LB Andre Carter II, OL Henry Byrd, OL Tyrese Robinson, WR Lucky Jackson, WR Jashaun Jones, TE Robert Tonyan, WR Thayer Thomas, DL Jonah Williams, LB Dallas Gant, LB Bo Richter, TE Sammis Reyes (International Player Pathway) to the practice squad.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed T Liam Fornadel, RB Kevin Harris, RB Terrell Jennings, WR Matt Landers, DE Jotham Russell, DB A.J. Thomas and TE Mitchell Wilcox to the practice squad.
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Signed S Jonathan Abram, S Ugo Amadi, WR Kevin Austin Jr., S Millard Bradford, T Josiah Ezirim, TE Mason Fairchild, G Kyle Hergel, LB Khaleke Hudson, TE Michael Jacobson, RB Jacob Kibodi, DE Niko Lalos, G/C Shane Lemieux, C Charlie Smyth, LB Isaiah Stalbird, WR Equanimeous St. Brown, DT Kendal Vickers to the practice squad.
NEW YORK GIANTS — Waived DL Ryder Anderson, DB Mario Goodrich, DL Ovie Oghoufo, and DB Gervarius Owen. Signed LB Curtis Bolton to the active roster. Placed LB Dyontae Johnson on injured reserve. Signed LB Ty Summers, WRs Isaiah Hodgins and Miles Boykin, TE Lawrence Cager, TE/FB Jakob Johnson, Ts Joshua Miles and Marcelous Johnson, LBs Tomon Fox and K.J. Cloyd, RB Dante Miller, DT Casey Rogers, DBs Raheem Layne and Alex Johnson, C Jimmy Morrissey, and K Jude McAtamney to the practice squad.
NEW YORK JETS — Signed LB Sam Eguavoen, OL Obinna Eze, TE Anthony Firkser, OL Jake Hanson, DL Bruce Hector, DL Jalyon Holmes, S Jaylen Key, TE Zack Kuntz, OL Kohl LeVao, QB Adrian Martinez, LB Marcelino McCrary-Ball, WR Lance McCutcheon, S Jarius Monroe, CB Kendall Sheffield, WR Brandon Smith, CB Tre Swilling, RB Xzavian Valladay to the practice squad. Waived WR Jason Brownlee.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Signed LB Oren Burks, OL Dylan McMahon, WR Paris Campbell, WR Marcus Rosemy-Jackstin, RB Tyrion Davis-Price, DB Andre' Sam, OL Nick Gates, LB Brandon Smith, QB Will Grier, DB Caleb Sterns, DL Gabe Hall, TE Jack Stoll, TE E.J. Jenkins, OL Laekin Vakalahi to the practice squad.
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Signed OL Isaac Alacron (NFL's International Pathway Program), DL Evan Anderson, DL Alex Barrett, DL Jonathan Garvin, OL Sebastian Gutierrez, CB Chase Lucas, S Jaylen Mahoney, WR Tay Martin, DL T.Y. McGill Jr., QB Tanner Mordecai, OL Drake Nugent, TE Mason Pline, WR Trent Taylor, S Tracy Walker III, TE Brayden Willis to the practice squad. Placed CB Ambry Thomas and OL Jon Feliciano on injured reserve. Signed CB Rock Ya-Sin, OL Ben Bartch and TE Eric Saubert to the active roster.
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Signed LB Michael Barrett, DT Kyon Barrs, S Marquise Blair, CB Artie Burns, T McClendon Curtis, T Garret Greenfield, RB George Holani, DE DeVere Levelston, TE Tyler Mabry, LB Patrick O'Connell, S Ty Okada, G Raiqwon O'Neal, T Max Pircher, WR Cody White, WR Easop Winston Jr. to the practice squad. Waived DL Sam Okuyinonu.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANERS — Claimed OL Royce Newman off waivers from the Green Bay Packers. Waived T Brandon Walton.
TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed DT Abdulah Anderson, C Corey Levin, DB Tre Avery, DB Anthony Kendall, DE Khalid Duke, DT Isaiah Iton, DB Gabe Judy-Lally, WR Mason Kinsey, WR Bryce Oliver, RB Jabari Small, G Cole Spencer, T Leroy Watson to the practice squad. Placed LB Cedric Gray on injured reserve with a designation to return. Acquired a 2026 seventh-round draft pick from the L.A. Chargers in exchange for DB Elijah Molden.
WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Signed RB Kazmeir Allen, CB Chigozie Anusiem, G Julian Good-Jones, QB Sam Hartman, DE Andre Jones Jr., DT Haggai Nduhuisi, RB Chris Rodriguez Jr., WR Mitchell Tinsley, WR Brycen Tremayne, TE Cole Turner, DE Carlos Watkins, RB Michael Wiley to the practice squad. Signed WR Noah Brown to the active roster.
BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
CLEVELAND CAVALIERS — Signed F Luke Travers to a two-way contract.
SOCCER
Major League Soccer
D.C. UNITED — Signed F Christian Benetke to a contract extension.
NEW YORK RED BULLS — Transferred MF Bento Estrela to Sporting Clube de Portugal for an undisclosed transfer fee.
SEATTLE SOUNDERS — Signed MF Georgi Minoungou to a first team contract.
National Women's Soccer League
UTAH ROYALS FC — Redesignated D Danielle O'Brien as an injury replacement player. Placed D Luren Flynn on the season-ending injury list.

MLB/NFL



JOHN McDONNELL/AP

The Washington Nationals' Dylan Crews watches his first major league home run during the first inning against the New York Yankees on Wednesday in Washington. Crews is 4-for-11 to start his MLB career.

Crews looking like star for Nationals after just 3 games

BY BEN NUCKOLS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Even with Aaron Judge, Juan Soto and the New York Yankees in town, Dylan Crews was the main attraction at Nationals Park.

The 22-year-old rookie had a fantastic debut series for Washington, getting his first two hits Tuesday night and then bashing a leadoff homer and an RBI double Wednesday as the rebuilding Nationals took two of three from the AL-best Yankees.

“Growing up, I was a little bit of a Yankees fan. You know, loved (Derek) Jeter,” Crews said. “Playing against them and seeing Judge and Soto on the other side, it’s been awesome to compete against those guys and be on the same field as them. And, you know, take two out of three from them. So it’s been a great starting week for me, honestly.”

With school in session in the Washington area and the Nationals out of playoff contention, crowds of more than 30,000 filled the ballpark each night of the series to watch Judge try to add to his major league-leading 51 homers and give warm cheers to Soto, who starred as a 20-year-old on the Nationals’ 2019 World Series-winning team.

But Soto went 0-for-12 in the series and Judge had his first three-game stretch without a homer in more than two weeks.

Crews, who won a College World Series title in 2023 with LSU, filled the void with a performance that suggested the Nationals have a young core that could contend in the near future.

“He’s got this kind of inner

energy that he brings, you know, every day, and it’s fun to watch,” Washington manager Dave Martinez said.

The third-ranked prospect in baseball and the second overall pick in last year’s amateur draft — just after teammate Paul Skenes — Crews went 0-for-3 in his debut Monday night. A day later, he hit a loud line drive off the base of the wall in left field for a double in his first at-bat. He added an infield single later in Washington’s 4-2 win.

On Wednesday, he batted lead-off for the first time as Martinez gave All-Star shortstop CJ Abrams the night off. James Wood, another top Nats prospect who debuted in July, was second.

Two pitches into the game, he took Carlos Rodón deep to left-center and became the second player in Nationals history to hit a leadoff homer for the first of his career, joining Steve Lombardozzi on June 3, 2012.

In the fourth inning, Crews lined a first-pitch fastball from Rodón 105.8 mph to left for an RBI double as his father danced in the stands next to his mother.

“They’ve been here all three games. Yeah, it’s been awesome. They’re having a great time, as they should,” Crews said. “I love the support and love the energy they bring every day, so I’m gonna cherish it.”

Three games into his career, Crews is 4-for-11 with a homer, two doubles, two RBIs, two runs scored and a stolen base.

“Luckily I was able to get some results out there, put a number up next to the average and get all that out of the way,” he said.

MLB scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	78	56	.582	—
Baltimore	77	57	.575	1
Boston	69	64	.519	8½
Tampa Bay	66	67	.496	11½
Toronto	65	70	.481	13½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	76	58	.567	—
Kansas City	75	59	.560	1
Minnesota	72	61	.541	3½
Detroit	68	66	.507	8
Chicago	31	103	.231	45
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	71	62	.534	—
Seattle	68	66	.507	3½
Texas	62	71	.466	9
Oakland	58	75	.436	13
Los Angeles	54	79	.406	17

National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	78	55	.586	—
Atlanta	73	60	.549	5
New York	69	64	.519	9
Washington	61	73	.455	17½
Miami	48	85	.361	30
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	76	56	.576	—
Chicago	68	66	.507	9
St. Louis	66	67	.496	10½
Cincinnati	63	70	.474	13½
Pittsburgh	62	71	.466	14½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	79	54	.594	—
Arizona	76	57	.571	3
San Diego	76	59	.563	4
San Francisco	67	67	.500	12½
Colorado	50	84	.373	29½

Wednesday's games
Chicago Cubs 14, Pittsburgh 10
Cleveland 7, Kansas City 5
Houston 10, Philadelphia 0
Seattle 6, Tampa Bay 2
Texas 3-4, Chicago White Sox 1-3
Detroit 3, L.A. Angels 2
Oakland 9, Cincinnati 6
Washington 5, N.Y. Yankees 2
Boston 3, Toronto 0
Atlanta 5, Minnesota 1
St. Louis 4, San Diego 3
Milwaukee 5, San Francisco 3
Colorado 8, Miami 2
Arizona 8, N.Y. Mets 5
L.A. Dodgers 6, Baltimore 4

Thursday's games
L.A. Angels at Detroit
Texas at Chicago White Sox
San Francisco at Milwaukee
San Diego at St. Louis
Miami at Colorado
N.Y. Mets at Arizona
Oakland at Cincinnati
Atlanta at Philadelphia
Toronto at Boston
Kansas City at Houston
Baltimore at L.A. Dodgers

Friday's games
Milwaukee (Rea 12-4, TBD) at Cincinnati (TBD), 2
Atlanta (López 7-4) at Philadelphia (Suárez 11-5)
Boston (Houck 8-9) at Detroit (TBD)
Chicago Cubs (Imanaga 10-3) at Washington (Irvin 9-10)
San Diego (Pérez 3-5) at Tampa Bay (Bradley 6-8)
St. Louis (Fedde 8-7) at N.Y. Yankees (Stroman 9-6)
Pittsburgh (Falter 6-7) at Cleveland (Lively 11-8)
Oakland (Sears 10-9) at Texas (Gray 5-5)
Kansas City (Lugo 14-8) at Houston (Valdez 13-6)
N.Y. Mets (Megill 2-5) at Chicago White Sox (Cannon 2-8)
Toronto (Gausman 12-9) at Minnesota (López 12-8)
Baltimore (Suárez 6-4) at Colorado (Gomber 4-9)
Seattle (Kirby 9-10) at L.A. Angels (Fulmer 0-5)
L.A. Dodgers (Kershaw 2-2) at Arizona (Gallen 10-6)
Miami (Oller 1-1) at San Francisco (Snell 2-3)

Calendar

Sept. 29 — Final day of regular season.
Oct. 1 — Wild Card series begin.
Oct. 5 — Division Series begin.

Steelers giving offense to veteran QB Wilson

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Steelers are going to let Russell Wilson cook.

Coach Mike Tomlin announced the nine-time Pro Bowler as the starter Wednesday, putting an end to a largely perfunctory quarterback competition with Justin Fields in which the 35-year-old Wilson held the “pole position” as Tomlin put it for months and did little to cede ground to Fields.

“It was a difficult decision, but not difficult in a negative way,” Tomlin said. “The decision was difficult because of what they’re capable of doing.”

Wilson will be the fourth different Week 1 starting quarterback in as many seasons for the Steelers, who have bounced from Ben Roethlisberger to Mitch Trubisky to Kenny Pickett and now to Wilson, who flamed out in two seasons in Denver but practically sprinted to Pittsburgh in hopes of reviving his career.

“I came here to help us win,” Wilson said. “That’s the focus.”

The Steelers revamped their offense in the offseason, flipping the quarterback room entirely and hiring former Atlanta head coach Arthur Smith as offensive coordinator.

Wilson, who signed a one-year deal on the first day of free agency, will be tasked with trying to goose up production for a unit that is the main reason Pittsburgh has failed to win a playoff game in eight years, the franchise’s longest drought since the “Immaculate Reception” in 1972.

That dry spell is one of the reasons the Steelers made such an abrupt shift at the most important position on the field. Tomlin and general manager Omar Khan said

repeatedly over the winter that they were all-in on Pickett, a first-round pick in 2022.

Things changed quickly — very quickly — after Wilson was brought in to provide competition. Pittsburgh traded Pickett hours after bringing in Wilson. The Steelers then acquired Fields, who endured three uneven seasons in Chicago.

While Fields is a decade younger and is far more mobile than Wilson, Wilson provides experience, an ability to take care of the ball and a reputation as one of the best big-game quarterbacks of his generation.

“Russ’ résumé is a unique one in terms of length and success,” Tomlin said. “That tends to play a factor in the decision-making, not from a decision-making perspective, that’s just the fruit of his labor. He’s seen a lot and done a lot, and I think it was reflected in the way he played and conducted himself.”

A calf injury slowed Wilson during training camp, giving Fields more practice reps with the starters.

Tomlin’s decision to play coy fueled idle speculation that Fields had a chance to supplant Wilson, but the reality is Tomlin placed Wilson atop the depth chart to start training camp and Fields never came close to unseating him.

The competition such as it was ended in Detroit last Saturday when Wilson led a quick four-play touchdown drive that included a pretty 26-yard flip to George Pickens.

Fields, who like Wilson has said and done all the right things since coming to Pittsburgh, could be featured in certain packages to take advantage of his skillset.



JOSE JUAREZ/AP

Russell Wilson signed a one-year contract with the Steelers on the first day of free agency after two uneven years with the Broncos.

NFL



JOHN AMIS/AP

Quarterback Ryan Tannehill had a 30-13 record as the starter for the Tennessee Titans from 2019-21. He has remained unsigned since his contract expired but says he's ready if called.

Notable free agents could be next comeback player of year

BY ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

Joe Flacco watched football from his couch last season before joining the Cleveland Browns in November, leading them to the playoffs and earning the AP Comeback Player of the Year award.

Several accomplished free agents are in a similar position waiting for a call this season.

Ryan Tannehill, who went 30-13 while leading Tennessee to the postseason from 2019-21, has remained unsigned since his contract with the Titans expired. The 36-year-old quarterback started eight games last season and said last month that he's staying in shape and will be ready if the right situation comes along.

Trevor Siemian, who was 2-1 in three starts for the New York Jets last season, also has been available for months.

Deshaun Watson began last season as Atlanta's starting quarterback. The 2022 third-round pick was released by Arizona on Tuesday after failing to beat out Clayton Tune for the backup job behind Kyler Murray.

Mike White, Bailey Zappe and Brett Rypien also are among the QBs who became available when rosters were trimmed to 53 players on Tuesday.

The Dallas Cowboys decided not to wait until mid-season to sign one of the notable veterans, agreeing to a contract with four-time Pro Bowl running back Dalvin Cook on Tuesday.

The addition of Cook gives the Cowboys another option at a position in flux even with the return of two-time rushing champion Ezekiel Elliott.

Here are some of the top remaining free agents:

Xavien Howard: A four-time Pro Bowl cornerback, Howard is another player who could help Dallas. The Cowboys lost All-Pro cornerback DaRon Bland for up to eight weeks and they let Stephon Gilmore walk away in free agency. Trevon Diggs is still working back from an ACL injury and the Cowboys are inexperienced at both outside cornerback spots. The 31-year-old Howard played his first eight seasons in Miami.

Donovan Smith: Two teams won Super Bowls with Smith protecting their quarterback's blind side. Smith was the starting left tackle for Tom Brady and the Buccaneers in 2020 and Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs last season. He's 31, has started 136 games and is still waiting for a call. Smith committed 29 penalties over the past four seasons so that's a problem.



TERRANCE WILLIAMS/AP

Cornerback Xavien Howard played eight seasons with the Miami Dolphins and could fill in for several teams in need of help in the secondary.

Still, he could step in and play for any team that needs help on the offensive line.

Yannick Ngakoue: A team that needs a pass-rush specialist could turn to Ngakoue at any point this season. He's bounced around the league, playing for five teams over the past four years. But Ngakoue has a knack for getting to the quarterback. He had at least eight sacks in each of his first seven seasons before recording four in 13 games with the Bears last year. Ngakoue is only 29 and should still have plenty of juice to chase QBs.

Patrick Peterson: The eight-time Pro Bowl cornerback is 34 and not the same shutdown player who was a four-time All-Pro in Minnesota. Still, Peterson started 16 games for the Steelers last year and 17 for the Vikings in 2022. He's been durable, having played every game in 11 of his 13 seasons. Peterson wants to play and it would be a surprise if he doesn't get that chance.

Micah Hyde: The two-time second-team All-Pro safety is another veteran defensive back who can provide depth and experience. Hyde started 14 games for the Bills last season. Hyde has battled neck problems over the past two years but Bills general manager Brandon Beane said over the summer he's staying ready for the right opportunity.

New direction for Washington

Commanders regime keeps purging remnants of roster built by Rivera

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — Minutes before leaving the team facility prior to the Washington Commanders' first practice after cutdown day, general manager Adam Peters made one more trade.

While the move that sent depth defensive tackle John Ridgeway to New Orleans for a swap of late-round picks was far from earth-shattering, it removed yet another player from the roster who was a holdover from the previous regime overseen by Ron Rivera. When the dust settled, the initial 53-man roster included just 12 of the 33 draft picks from Rivera's four years in charge, counted among the 16 total players his front office acquired from 2020-23 who are left.

Peters and new coach Dan Quinn downplayed so thoroughly cleaning house, a process that included cutting five of the seven members of Rivera's final draft class last year, but the roster turnover of nearly 60% speaks volumes about making wholesale changes.

"We're trying to win," Peters said Wednesday. "We're recalibrating. We're trying to build for the long term and win championships year in and year out, but we're also trying to win right now."

They would like to win more than the four games the Commanders did last season, clinching the second pick in the draft, sealing Rivera's firing and paving the way for new ownership to put its stamp on the organization. What followed were the hires of Peters, then Quinn, then offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury and the drafting of Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Jayden Daniels to build around as the new face of the franchise.

Only three players without existing contracts were brought back.

"It's almost like being on a new team, really," said safety Jeremy Reaves, a 2022 All-Pro special teams player who was one of those three re-signed. "When we got new ownership, it was bound to happen. Change is inevitable. When you want to be great, you have to adapt. And this building, this locker room, everything has changed. It's different guys, it's different energy, it's a different atmosphere — it's everything."

A vast majority of the cornerstone players remaining, including top receiver Terry McLaurin and defensive tackles Jonathan Allen



NICK WASS/AP

Commanders coach Dan Quinn said the roster makeover was to find players that fit his scheme.

and Daron Payne, were brought in between 2017-19 by former executive Bruce Allen and coach Jay Gruden.

Quinn called it a matter of finding players who better fit his scheme.

"We're always going to make what we think is the best decision for the team," he said Tuesday on a conference call with reporters. "There's no 'ours' or 'theirs,' or any of that kind of good stuff. Once I was here, man, I connected with lots of players here. So yeah, no looking at it as anything other than just what do we need to do best for the team and really that's where it starts and ends."

Starting from nearly scratch — only 22 players on the active roster are back from last season — was a unique opportunity for Peters, a former assistant GM in San Francisco who traces his roots back to New England, where his first Patriots personnel manual read, "We're not collecting talent, we're building a team."

The team he built was one that almost entirely left Washington's recent past behind, even while praising McLaurin, Allen, Payne, running back Brian Robinson Jr. and offensive lineman Sam Cosmi by name for embracing this whirlwind of change.

"It's good for me to have a fresh set of eyes, but it's good for the players that were here to have us having a fresh set of eyes on them and evaluate them for what we see," Peters said.

Quinn has talked about the team as a 70-man roster, counting the practice squad, and Peters pointed out that the initial practice squad includes the return of some 2023 draft picks and undrafted free agents.

US OPEN/COLLEGE FOOTBALL



KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AP

Barbora Krejcikova, of the Czech Republic, returns a shot to Elena-Gabriela Ruse, of Romania, during the second round of the U.S. Open on Wednesday in New York. Ruse won to advance to the third round.

American men Tiafoe, Shelton to meet again

Wimbledon women's champ Krejcikova eliminated

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Frances Tiafoe is getting the rematch he wants, a second shot at Ben Shelton at the U.S. Open.

But there won't be a second straight Grand Slam title for Barbora Krejcikova.

The Wimbledon champion was knocked out in the second round Wednesday, defeated by Elena-Gabriela Ruse 6-4, 7-5.

The No. 8-seeded Krejcikova won her second Grand Slam singles title this summer, but then didn't play after the Olympics. She acknowledged not knowing where her level of play was.

Turns out, it wasn't good enough.

"I mean, winning Wimbledon is amazing. It's a great, great, great result, I'm very proud about it and how I was able to handle everything there," said Krejcikova, who hadn't played a tournament on hard courts since February.

No woman has won Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in the same year since Serena Williams in 2012.

Tiafoe had short work on the steamiest day of the tournament thus far, with temperatures in New York surpassing 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Three men's matches ended when an opponent stopped playing, the last one sending defending champion Novak Djokovic to the third round when Laslo Djere retired early in the third set with what appeared to be pain

Scoreboard

US Open

Wednesday
At New York
Purse: \$26,440,000
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Seedings in parentheses
Men's Singles
Second Round

Grigor Dimitrov (9), Bulgaria, def. Rinky Hijikata, Australia, 6-1, 6-1, 7-6 (4).
Tallon Griekspoor, Netherlands, def. Sebastian Baez (21), Argentina, 6-1, 2-0, ret.
Brandon Nakashima, United States, def. Arthur Cazaux, France, 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.
Jiri Lehecka (32), Czechia, def. Mitchell Krueger, United States, 6-7 (5), 0-6, 6-4, 6-4, 7-5.
Tomas Martin Etcheverry, Argentina, def. Francisco Cerundolo (29), Argentina, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 1-6, 6-3.
Frances Tiafoe (20), United States, def. Alexander Shevchenko, Russia, 6-4, 6-1, 1-0, ret.
Alexander Zverev (4), Germany, def. Alexandre Muller, France, 6-4, 7-6 (5), 6-1.
Alexei Popyrin (28), Australia, def. Pedro Martinez, Spain, 6-2, 6-4, 6-0.
Junheng Shang, China, def. Roberto Carballes Baena, Spain, 6-2, 6-3, 7-6 (2).
Francisco Comesana, Argentina, def. Ugo Humbert (17), France, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.
Andrey Rublev (6), Russia, def. Arthur Rinderknech, France, 4-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2.
Ben Shelton (13), United States, def. Roberto Bautista Agut, Spain, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.
Lorenzo Musetti (18), Italy, def. Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 7-5.
Taylor Fritz (12), United States, def. Mat-

teo Berrettini, Italy, 6-3, 7-6 (1), 6-1.
Casper Ruud (8), Norway, def. Gael Monfils, France, 6-4, 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 (3).
Novak Djokovic (2), Serbia, def. Laslo Djere, Serbia, 6-4, 6-4, 2-0, walkover.

Women's Singles Second Round

Elise Mertens, Belgium, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 6-3, 6-2.
Jule Niemeier, Germany, def. Moyuka Uchijima, Japan, 6-4, 6-0.
Paula Badosa (26), Spain, def. Taylor Townsend, United States, 6-3, 7-5.
Elena-Gabriela Ruse, Romania, def. Barbora Krejcikova (8), Czechia, 6-4, 7-5.
Madison Keys (14), United States, def. Maya Joint, Australia, 6-4, 6-0.
Zheng Qinwen (7), China, def. Erika Andrejeva, Russia, 6-7 (3), 6-1, 6-2.
Wang Yafan, China, def. Diane Parry, France, 6-0, 6-4.
Marta Kostyuk (19), Ukraine, def. Harriet Dart, Britain, 7-6 (10), 6-1.
Aryna Sabalenka (2), Belarus, def. Lucia Bronzetti, Italy, 6-3, 6-1.
Ekaterina Alexandrova (29), Russia, def. Iva Jovic, United States, 4-6, 6-4, 7-5.
Emma Navarro (13), United States, def. Arantxa Rus, Netherlands, 6-1, 6-1.
Donna Vekic (24), Croatia, def. Greet Minnen, Belgium, 7-5, 6-1.
Victoria Azarenka (20), Belarus, def. Clara Burel, France, 6-1, 6-4.
Coco Gauff (3), United States, def. Tatjana Maria, Germany, 6-4, 6-0.
Elena Svitolina (27), Ukraine, def. Anhelina Kalinina, Ukraine, 6-1, 6-2.
Peyton Stearns, United States, def. Daria Kasatkina (12), Russia, 6-1, 7-6 (3).

near his hip after they played for more than two hours across the first two sets.

"You know, in the end, not the kind of finish that we players or crowd wants to see, but I think it's probably due to that physical battle that we had in the opening two sets," No. 2-seeded Djokovic said.

Tiafoe, the No. 20 seed, won the first two sets before his opponent, Alexander Shevchenko, retired after the first game of the third set.

Shelton, the No. 13 seed, later beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. He ousted Tiafoe last year in the quarterfinals, stopping him from what would've been a second straight trip to the U.S. Open semifinals.

"Obviously he's very much like me in how excited and energetic he is on the court," Tiafoe said, "and has such a big game and big shots and serves big and gets the crowd going."

Healthy again, Irish CB Morrison focused on making more plays

BY CURT RALLO
Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — Notre Dame cornerback Benjamin Morrison allowed himself one off-season distraction while preparing for Saturday's season opener at No. 20 Texas A&M.

Morrison wanted to see how the EA Sports College Football 25 video game portrayed him.

The game served its purpose as a fleeting fascination from his main focus — recovering from off-season shoulder surgery and proving he's healthy enough to maintain his status as one of the nation's top defensive playmakers.

"I made an impulsive decision," Morrison said. "I don't play video games, but being in the game, I decided to go buy a PS5. I plugged it in one time, played the game one time and I haven't plugged it in since. I'm mad I spent that money, but I had to get it. As a kid, you dream of things like that to see your hard work pay off a little bit."

Morrison hopes to see even bigger dividends from his work ethic starting this weekend.

The quest begins for the seventh-ranked Fighting Irish in one of college football's toughest pressure cookers, a Kyle Field crowd topping 102,000 fans who pride themselves on making sure Texas A&M retains its status as home of the 12th Man — especially in coach Mike Elko's debut.

The good news for Notre Dame is defensive backs coach Mike Mickens already sees Morrison getting back to his old ways.

"He's approached the game as a pro," Mickens said. "He worked hard in his rehab and he hasn't missed a beat since he got out (of rehab)."

Morrison had arthroscopic surgery in March. Expectations remain high as Morrison lines up against promising Aggies quarterback Conner Weigman and a receiving corps that could be one



No. 7 Notre Dame (0-0)
at No. 20 Texas A&M (0-0)

AFN-Sports
1:30 a.m. Sunday CET
8:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

of the SEC's most dangerous.

"Having that injury was a little setback for me but understanding I can get back to full go before game one was big for me," Morrison said. "Once I learned that information, I just attacked every single day and put my head down and worked."

In 2022, he had six interceptions in his last five games including two against Clemson, the second an electrifying 96-yard pick he took for a touchdown, and three against Boston College.

Morrison was so good he earned freshman All-American honors from multiple media outlets, Pro Football Focus and the Football Writers Association of America. And he was so good, quarterbacks became wary of testing the 6-foot, 190-pounder last season.

Still, he picked off three passes and led the FBS' top pass-efficiency defense with 10 breakups. He limited Biletnikoff Award winning receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. of Ohio State to 32 yards.

"I love it when I get to go against the best cornerback in the country," Notre Dame receiver Jayden Thomas said, referring to practice. "It's competitive. We talk in the locker room, like, what coverage was that, what could I have done better, what our weaknesses are, what our strengths are. It's nice to get to go against a guy like 'B-Mo' just to get better."



DOUG MCSCHOOLER/AP

Notre Dame cornerback Benjamin Morrison warms up before a game against Central Michigan on Sept. 16 in South Bend, Ind.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Reactions split on helmet communication

By GARY B. GRAVES

Associated Press

Louisville coach Jeff Brohm looks forward to being that voice in his player's ear — much like he enjoyed hearing one as an NFL quarterback in the late 1990s.

Brohm just didn't expect college football to take 30 years to follow suit with in-helmet communications.

"The NFL has used them ever since I played, which was a long time ago," the second-year Cardinals coach recalled. "So it should have been put into place. But I do think it's time, and you've just got to figure out the best way to utilize it."

After years of debate over cost and equity, the NCAA approved widespread use of helmet communication in April for the Bowl Subdivision, giving 134 teams at the top of the sport the option to use it beginning this season. It will officially debut during this week's full slate of openers and join traditional methods such as huddles, hand signals, wristband play scripts and those clever sideline signs bearing emojis and animation to call plays.

Teams have spent the past four months preparing how to use coach-to-player helmet communications though it's not clear how many will use it. Some programs experimented with it during bowl season last year, but it was optional then and still is.

A single player on offense and a single player on defense will be able to hear from a coach; communication will be turned off with 15 seconds remaining on the play clock or when the ball is snapped, whichever comes first. Designated players will sport a green dot on their helmets.

"On offense, it's seismic," Nebraska coach Matt Rhule said. "You are able to remind the quarterback not just of the play but also the situation. Just the thought process, right? 'Hey, it's third-and-7, two downs, take the check down if it's there and it gives us fourth-and-3.'"

There is anticipation that the new technology will impact offensive pace and execution and help the defense respond.

"It's definitely an advantage, being able to have that communication with (QB's coach and play-call-



RICK BOWMER, LEFT, AND TIMOTHY D. EASLEY, RIGHT/AP

The implementation of helmet communication will go into effect for college football this season. Some are strongly opposed to the change, such as Texas Tech coach Joey McGuire, left, while others like Louisville coach Jeff Brohm, right, have welcomed it.

er Joe) Sloan, making sure we're in the correct play, running the right thing," LSU quarterback Garrett Nussmeier said.

Defense-minded Kentucky coach Mark Stoops said, "It helps us with subtle movements up front on things that we do, from where we shade guys, where we move things compared to the formation and what we think we're getting. It helps remind them and essentially makes some checks in that regard, even if they're subtle or big changes."

Long time coming

Years of discussion about cost and equitable use delayed approval of an electronic system similar to the NFL, which implemented transmitters between coaches and QBs in 1994 and then defensive players 14 years later. The Pro Football Hall of Fame says the innovation was introduced in 1956, when Ohio inventors John Campbell and George Sarles developed an audio receiver and pitched it to Cleveland Browns owner Paul Brown for quarterback George

Ratterman. The Browns used it in an exhibition and several games before NFL Commissioner Bert Bell banned it.

Dallas Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy recalled the NFL's approval to helmet communication decades later as "a transition" from signals and pointed to different parts of his body to demonstrate the gyrations done to relay calls. He also remembers working with many QBs who had different preferences.

"My experience is some guys, they want a lot of information," said McCarthy, who coached the Green Bay Packers to a Super Bowl title in the 2010 season, "Some guys want as little as possible. Like Rich Gannon, you couldn't get off quick enough. Brett Favre, you could talk to him all the way down to 15 seconds. So, I mean, just certain guys are different, so that's what I found was the biggest transition going from signals to the helmet speaker because it's different."

Mixed responses

Like any changes in sports, reac-

tions on college football's top tier have already varied between yay and nay. Texas Tech coach Joey McGuire's disapproval featured numerous adjectives along with a reminder that old habits will remain.

"It's an absolutely horrible rule," he said. "It's really, really comical. You're still going to see everybody signal. ... We actually experimented with letting a linebacker that has it on tell the other linebacker and then they were going to communicate to the two levels. We got lit up like a Christmas tree. It was a fiasco."

"So please, for all the other coaches we play, don't signal. Have one guy trying to communicate it to everybody on the field whenever you're playing college football in tempo."

Approval of the communication came in the wake of allegations last fall of sign-stealing and impermissible scouting by Michigan, which the NCAA is investigating. The NCAA does not ban efforts to decipher an opponent's sideline signs on game days — advanced, in-per-

son scouting is banned — and that practice is likely to continue. It just becomes a little harder with players hearing plays straight from coaches' mouths.

What to expect

It remains to be seen which side of the ball will benefit most from the technology. At the very least, plays could feature more clarity with perspectives that could benefit many positions.

Although Auburn coach Hugh Freeze hinted at throwing the communications "on the ground" earlier in fall camp as he adapts, he appeared intrigued about how it may streamline the pre-snap process — if not spark debate over whether to say more or less.

"I think everybody's trying to maneuver around that," he said. "You know, do we hold it until 15 seconds so that the defense can't, and then you put it all on (Rebels quarterback) Payton (Thorne) or do we try to start with 30 seconds talking to him and knowing that they still could change with 15. We're all dealing with that."



Temple (0-0)
at No. 16 Oklahoma (0-0)
AFN-Sports
1 a.m. Saturday CET
8 a.m. Saturday JKT



No. 8 Penn State (0-0)
at West Virginia (0-0)
AFN-Sports2
6 p.m. Saturday CET
1 a.m. Sunday JKT



Akron (0-0)
at No. 2 Ohio State (0-0)
AFN-Sports2
9:30 p.m. Saturday CET
4:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



Fresno State (0-0)
at No. 9 Michigan (0-0)
AFN-Atlantic
1:30 a.m. Sunday CET
8:30 a.m. Sunday JKT



Wyoming (0-0)
at Arizona State (0-0)
AFN-Sports2
4:30 a.m. Sunday CET
11:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Tide title holdovers aim to add another

BY JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Malachi Moore watched Alabama's last national championship triumph from the sidelines as a freshman stand-out with an injury.

It was way back in January 2021, and now the fifth-year safety is one of only a handful of Crimson Tide players still around from the title team that beat Ohio State 52-24 in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Moore, Tim Smith, Jah-Marien Latham and Quindarius "Que" Robinson are trying to bookend their careers with a second title during coach Kalen DeBoer's own debut season.

"After we won the first one, I'm thinking, I know I'm going to win two or three more before I leave," Moore said. "We came up short for a couple of years, but it makes me hungry again to have that feeling of being the best team in the nation at the end of it all."

That's why exhausted players motivate each other at the end of those August practices by saying things like: "This is the last play in the natty."

No. 5 Alabama hasn't had that top-of-the-world feeling since then but starts this and every season expecting no less. DeBoer can only hope to start his Tide career — which opens Saturday night against Western Kentucky — with the kind of outcome Moore and three of his players had in their first seasons.

DeBoer replaced Nick Saban, who brought six more national titles to Tuscaloosa during a 17-year run. But even Saban's last three teams fell short.

The Tide have made the College Football Playoffs eight times, more than any other team. They won titles in 2015, 2017 and the Covid-shortened 2020 season.

Most of the four holdovers' recruiting class has moved elsewhere. The remnants have taken differing paths but hope to get back



Western Kentucky (0-0)
at No. 5 Alabama (0-0)
AFN-Sports2
1 a.m. Sunday CET
8 a.m. Sunday JKT

to where their first season ended: the top.

The team captain

Moore made an instant impact as a freshman, starting the first 11 games and earning second-team All-Southeastern Conference honors. But a stress fracture in his back sidelined him from the playoffs.

He has played in 52 games and was voted a captain by his teammates.

Hoping to finish strong

Latham and Robinson have both worked their way into potential starting jobs finally as seniors. Latham only played in one game on that 2020 title team, and Robinson didn't see action. They've both seen gradually increased playing time and seem in line for their biggest roles yet.

Latham has been competing for the starting job with Texas A&M transfer LT Overton. Robinson could start on the edge.

DeBoer's turn

Now, it's DeBoer approaching his first season. And Moore and the players are convinced his aspirations are just as high. Alabama high.

"He's about winning," Moore said. "When we are not executing at a high level, he's upset as any coach would be. He's hard on us just like Coach Saban was and he's very demanding of us to be at our best each and every day."



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Alabama defensive back Malachi Moore, returning an interception, was sidelined with an injury when Alabama won its last national title by beating Ohio State 52-24 in January 2021.



MICHELLE HAAS HUTCHINS/AP

Florida cornerback Jason Marshall Jr., right, grew up in Miami but knows little about the once-heated rivalry between the Gators and Hurricanes. The two teams haven't played since 2019.

Miami, Florida square off for first time since 2019

BY MARK LONG
Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Even though he grew up in Miami and kept close tabs on the Hurricanes, Florida cornerback Jason Marshall knows little about the once-heated rivalry involving the two Sunshine State teams.

The Florida Flop? The Peach Pelting? The Bourbon Street Brawl?

Marshall hasn't heard of any of them. He knows the Gators won two of the last three matchups, in 2008 and 2019. Much of his knowledge comes from watching highlights designed to educate Florida players on the history of the game that peaked as one of the nation's best in the 1980s.

What stood out?

"I would say just the nastiness that both teams have toward each other," Marshall said. "Like, there's hate there."

No. 19 Miami and Florida will open their seasons in Gainesville on Saturday, ushering in a new chapter in a series that provided several instant classics and plenty of hard feelings over eight-plus decades.

Many believe it should be an annual occurrence, a debate ignited every time they land on each other's schedule.

"This is the real deal, the good ol' days," former Miami center and longtime radio broadcaster Don Bailey Jr. said. "When it was going every year, it was the most important game on the schedule. Period."



No. 19 Miami (0-0)
at Florida (0-0)
AFN-Sports
9:30 p.m. Saturday CET
4:30 a.m. Sunday JKT

It's been one-sided of late, with the Hurricanes winning seven of nine and 12 of 17.

No one on either roster played in the last meeting five years ago, so even though most of them crossed paths in high school and on recruiting trails, they share little animosity. And the coaches, Miami's Mario Cristobal and Florida's Billy Napier, are friends who spent four years as offensive assistants together at Alabama (2013-16) under Nick Saban.

The rivalry has a rich history, complete with cakewalks, comebacks and controversy.

The 2003 game was one for the ages. Brock Berlin rallied Miami from a 23-point deficit to stun the Gators. It ranks right up there with right-hander George Mira's left-handed pass to beat Florida in 1961 and fullback James Jones' falling-backward, one-handed TD catch in the closing minutes to seal a victory for the Gators in 1982.

The Florida Flop, the Peach Pelting and the Bourbon Street Brawl have their place in series

lore, too. With Florida leading 45-8 late in the 1971 season finale, defenders dropped to the ground and let the Hurricanes score so quarterback John Reaves could have the ball back and get the 15 yards he needed to break Jim Plunkett's NCAA record for career passing yards.

Miami coach Fran Curci refused to shake hands with Florida's Doug Dickey afterward, calling it a "bush-league stunt." Adding insult to Miami's misery, several Gators jumped into the Orange Bowl pool that housed Miami Dolphins mascot Flipper during NFL games.

The rivalry grew even more bitter in 1980, when Florida fans — angry that the Gators trailed Miami 28-7 late in Gainesville — threw oranges, tangerines, peaches and ice cubes at the Hurricanes, who were headed to the Peach Bowl. Miami coach Howard Schnellenberger was furious and ordered a field goal to add to the final margin.

Florida coach Urban Meyer repaid the Hurricanes in 2008 by sending Jonathan Phillips on to kick a 29-yard field goal with 25 seconds left to punctuate a 26-3 victory.

Florida and Miami played again in the 2001 Sugar Bowl. Just a few nights before Miami's 37-20 win, a handful of players from both teams mixed it up on Bourbon Street.

It's been relatively quiet since, although a new wrinkle is always looming. The teams are scheduled to play in Miami next year.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

No. 13 LSU set to debut new passing game

By **BRETT MARTEL**
Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — Kyren Lacy is arguably the most accomplished receiver on No. 13 LSU's roster now.

His 826 yards receiving in two seasons with the Tigers after transferring from Louisiana-Lafayette are little more than half of what LSU all-time receiving leader Malik Nabers had last season alone.

"The whole offense is different," Lacy said. "We have a new identity."

Lacy is the only returning starter from a 2023 LSU passing game that was headlined by Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Jayden Daniels (3,812 yards and 40 touchdowns passing), an All-America selection in Nabers (1,569 yards, 14 TDs) and receiver Brian Thomas (1,177 yards, 17 TDs).

Now Garrett Nussmeier is the starting QB as LSU heads into its 2024 season opener against 23rd-ranked Southern California in Las Vegas on Sunday.

The Tigers' trio of starting receivers was expected to be Lacy, Chris Hilton and Liberty transfer CJ Daniels.

Hilton, however, has been trying to recover from an unspecified bone bruise that has left him questionable this week, LSU coach Brian Kelly said.

"I know he wants to play," Kelly said Wednesday. "I know he's working towards playing on Sunday and we'll just see how the



GERALD HERBERT/AP

LSU wide receiver Kyren Lacy has 826 yards receiving over two seasons since transferring from Louisiana-Lafayette. He's the only returning starter in the Tigers' receiving corps.

week goes."

Hilton is a fourth-year player who had 225 yards and two TDs receiving last season. He, like Lacy, is looking for a major spike in production now that both have risen to the top of LSU's depth chart at their position. Daniels, meanwhile, is eager to see how his production at Liberty last season — 1,067 yards and 10 TDs — translates in the SEC.

If Hilton cannot play, second-year player Kyle Parker, who has

no career catches, would slide into his spot, Kelly said.

"He's had a great camp," Kelly said. "We feel really good about what he can do for us. All of these guys that we recruit to LSU are going to have the skill sets necessary to play in the SEC. It's really about this consistent performance level, play in and play out, practice in and practice out, that gives us the trust and confidence that we're going to get that when it's time to perform. That's what

Kyle has shown us."

Nussmeier doesn't hedge when he talks up the talent on LSU's current receiving corps, which also includes Zavion Thomas and Aaron Anderson, both of whom could see additional time on the field if Hilton cannot play.

"They're all very talented," Nussmeier said. "They're all going to do very special things."

Unlike Jayden Daniels, who also led LSU in rushing last season, Nussmeier is more of a traditional



**No. 13 LSU (0-0)
vs. No. 23 Southern Cal (0-0)
at Las Vegas**
AFN-Sports
1:30 a.m. Monday CET
8:30 a.m. Monday JKT

pocket passer. He has waited three years to become a starter and spent the past two as Daniels' backup.

But he has a pedigree: his father is former NFL player and current Philadelphia Eagles QB coach Doug Nussmeier.

"Just having him to be able to give feedback and bounce different ideas off of is unreal," said the younger Nussmeier, noting that he speaks with his father virtually every day. "He helps me through some of the things that I struggled with that day and things like that."

Nussmeier also has shown potential. At the end of last season, Nussmeier started the ReliaQuest Bowl, passing for 395 yards and three touchdowns in the Tigers' 35-31 victory over Wisconsin.

This season, he'll be playing behind an experienced offensive line which is projected to be among the nation's best in both the running and passing game, giving the Tigers the type of balance than can make a QB's life a lot easier.

Shot: Clemson's string of playoff appearances ended in 2021

FROM PAGE 48

"We're not the underdog. We're just laying low right now," said tight end Jake Briningstool, despite Clemson coming in a 13½-point underdog, according to BetMGM Sportsbook.

Changing path

Carter was a freshman when Clemson opened against Georgia in 2021, fresh off the Tigers' sixth straight Atlantic Coast Conference title and CFP appearance.

Led by quarterback DJ Uiagalelei, the team again looked like it would steamroll the league and get another crack at the national title.

Instead, Georgia's defense shut down Uiagalelei and the Tigers in a 10-3 victory. While the Bulldogs went on to win the first of two straight national titles, Clemson lost twice more by mid-October to fall from contention.

After winning the ACC in 2022 but missing the CFP, Clemson imploded amid way too many mistakes by first-year starting quarterback Cade Klubnik and critical



JACOB KUPFERMAN/AP

Tight end Jake Briningstool says Clemson isn't the underdog, even though BetMGM Sportsbook has Georgia favored by 13½ points.

injuries to players like tailback Will Shipley and receivers Beaux Collins and Antonio Williams. The Tigers were 4-4 before November.

Some have seized on Swinney's reluctance to use the transfer portal to shore up areas of need like receiver and offensive line from

last year.

Swinney has stood firm in his stance to rely on his recruits and how he and his staff develop them.

"If something happens, he's not just going to bring somebody in," safety R.J. Mickens said this summer. "He's going to wait on some-

body and give somebody a chance that's been there and not been able to play."

Swinney said he looked at some offensive linemen in the portal, but nothing materialized. "They've got to love you, too," he quipped.

Georgia coach Kirby Smart agrees with Swinney in portal principle. "If I could keep my entire roster my roster, I'd be all for keeping my roster my roster," Smart said this week.

But Smart acknowledges that's "not realistic" in today's college football world.

Preparing players

Swinney has liked how his roster has prepared this summer. The players understand that Georgia is the national title favorite for a reason and his team will need to match all that the Bulldogs have to pull off the upset.

"I think we've got a committed team," said Swinney, who starts his 17th season as Clemson coach.

Swinney also drove home the message that the season won't



**No. 14 Clemson (0-0)
vs. No. 1 Georgia (0-0)
at Atlanta**
AFN-Sports
6 p.m. Saturday CET
1 a.m. Sunday JKT

hinge on what happens this week. The Tigers, even in defeat, can still win the ACC and earn a CFP berth.

Carter is seeking much more. The junior from Suwanee, Ga., assisted on a tackle in his first college game against the Bulldogs three seasons ago.

This time, he has bigger plans. "Just ready to put Clemson back to the top," he said. "We have to take it week by week, day by day. Can't look too far ahead. But that's the ultimate goal. Be back on top of the mountain."

SPORTS



Already making his mark
Nationals rookie Crews goes 4-for-11 over first three games » **MLB, Page 42**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Clemson takes its big shot

No. 14 Tigers hoping to change trajectory against No. 1 Georgia

By **PETE IACOBELLI**
Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Barrett Carter came to Clemson for championships, not to listen to narratives of a fading program no longer capable of national titles.

The All-American linebacker can't wait for the 14th-ranked Tigers' chance to put that to rest when they open against No. 1 Georgia in Atlanta on Saturday.

"Tired of the disrespect," said Carter, who leads a defense that finished eighth nationally a season ago. "Tired of all the negative stuff. Just ready to show what we know we can do as a team. We're ready to showcase that."

Carter and the Tigers realize the strides they can make on Saturday. Win and the group is an instant big-picture contender closer to the powerhouse that made six straight College Football Playoffs from 2015-2020 and won it all after the 2016 and 2018 seasons.

Lose and the outside perception from many about Clemson's downward spiral continues — a program whose best days are done and a coach in Dabo Swinney who can't (or won't) adapt to the sport's rapid changes.

Carter and his teammates believe they can get themselves back among the preeminent programs in the game.

SEE SHOT ON PAGE 47



JACOB KUPFERMAN, ABOVE, AND LYNNE SLADKY, LEFT/AP



Above: All-American linebacker Barrett Carter says he's tired of hearing comments about Clemson's demise and looks forward to helping put the Tigers back on top. Left: Clemson coach Dabo Swinney has been criticized for failing to adapt to the changing landscape in college football by not using the transfer portal. Swinney prefers to use players he recruited.

Some notable free agents are still available » NFL, Page 43

