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SEAN RAYFORD/AP

Students in the new Army prep course stand at attention after physical training exercises at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C., in August. The Army is launching a sweeping overhaul of its recruiting, aiming to reverse years of enlistment shortfalls.

Selling the service

Army launches sweeping overhaul of recruiting to reverse enlistment shortfalls

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
AND MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

The Army plans to create a new recruiting specialty after missing its enlistment goal for a second straight year as the service aims for a recruiting force styled after talent-acquisition models used by private businesses, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth said Tuesday.

The Army will build the new,

full-time military operational specialty 42T, or talent acquisition specialist, over the coming years, as the service works to bulk up its recruiting apparatus, Wormuth said. The service also will elevate U.S. Army Recruiting Command, or USAREC, from a two-star headquarters to a three-star command and bring U.S. Army Cadet Command, which oversees ROTC programs at U.S. colleges, and the Army marketing team under

10,000

The number of recruits the Army fell short of enlisting in fiscal year 2023 to reach its goal of 65,000

USAREC's control.

Wormuth labeled the moves "transformational changes" in the way that the Army works to bring in new enlisted soldiers. Change is needed, she said, in a world where fewer young Americans are eligi-

ble to join the military and even less have interest in serving.

"Continuing to have the same approach [toward recruiting] but doing it better and harder is not going to get us where we need to be if we're going to get ... to a place where we can reliably bring in, ideally, more than 60,000 young Americans a year," Wormuth told reporters at the Pentagon. "We

SEE RECRUITING ON PAGE 5

DOD warns of low funds to replace aid for Ukraine

BY DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is running low on money to replace the weapons and equipment that have been shipped to Ukraine and defense officials are asking Congress to authorize more funds as soon as possible, the Defense Department's top budgetary official said.

Every time the United States sends emergency military aid to Ukraine, the equipment comes from Pentagon stocks and makes them unavailable for U.S. forces around the world. Of the roughly \$26 billion that Congress previously authorized to replace weapons and equipment for the embattled country, only \$1.6 billion remains, Pentagon Comptroller Michael McCord wrote in a letter to House and Senate lawmakers.

McCord also expressed concern that the stopgap funding approved by Congress on Saturday to avert a government shutdown does not include new funding for Ukraine aid.

"I write to express the Department of Defense's deep concern with the absence of [new] security assistance funding for Ukraine," McCord said in the letter, which was sent to Republican and Democratic leaders in the House and Senate. "[We are] anxious to avoid a lapse in appropriations, but it is important that a [continuing resolution] protect our security interests and uphold our commitments



McCord

SEE FUNDS ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Microsoft CEO: Google's unfair practices led to dominance

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said Monday that unfair tactics used by Google led to its dominance as a search engine, tactics that in turn have thwarted his company's rival program, Bing.

Nadella testified in a packed Washington, D.C., courtroom as part of the government's landmark antitrust trial against Google's parent company, Alphabet. The Justice Department alleges Google has abused the dominance

of its ubiquitous search engine to throttle competition and innovation at the expense of consumers, allegations that echo a similar case brought against Microsoft in the late 1990s.

Nadella said Google's dominance was due to agreements that made it the default browser on smartphones and computers. He downplayed the idea that artificial intelligence or more niche search engines like Amazon or social media sites have meaningfully changed the market in which Mi-

crosoft competes with Google.

Nadella said users fundamentally don't have much choice in switching out of default web browsers on cellphones and computers.

"We are one of the alternatives but we're not the default," he said.

Google's lead litigator John Schmitz questioned Nadella about instances when users switched from Bing to Google even when Microsoft's search engine had default status on their devices.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		
Euro costs (Oct. 4)	\$1.03	
British pound (Oct. 4)	\$1.19	
Japanese yen (Oct. 4)	145.00	
South Korean won (Oct. 4)	1,318.00	
Commercial rates		
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770	
Britain (Pound)	1.2071	
Canada (Dollar)	1.3711	
China (Yuan)	7.2004	
Denmark (Krone)	7.1277	
Egypt (Pound)	30.9000	
Euro	.9556	
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8314	
Hungary (Forint)	370.58	
Israel (Shekel)	3.8382	
Japan (Yen)	150.15	
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3094	
Norway (Krone)	10.9253	
Philippines (Peso)	56.82	
Poland (Zloty)	4.42	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7505	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3734	
South Korea (Won)	1,361.47	
Switzerland (Franc)	.9228	
Thailand (Baht)	37.04	
Turkey (New Lira)	27.4993	

(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.)

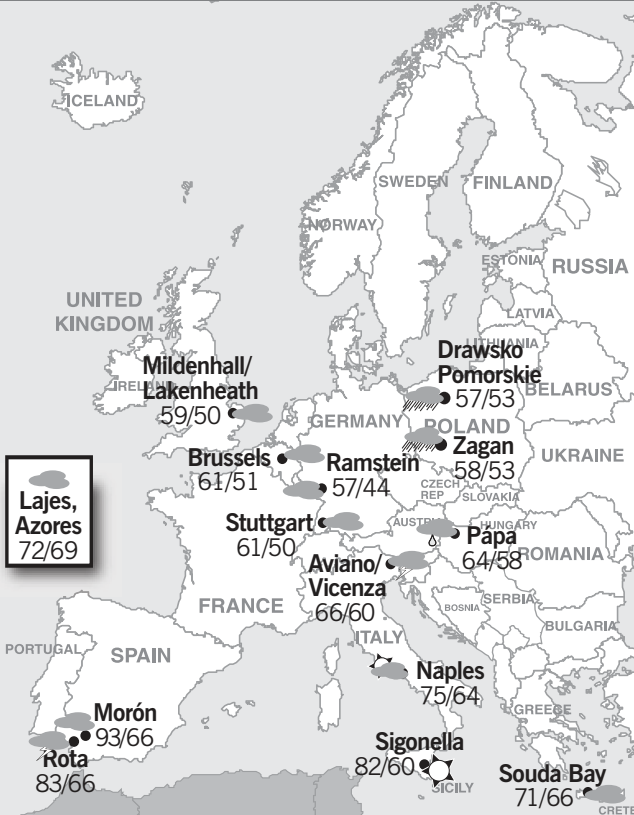
INTEREST RATES		
Prime rate	8.50	
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00	
Federal funds market rate	5.33	
3-month bill	5.51	
30-year bond	4.80	

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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MILITARY

Costliest weapons program now more expensive

Process to develop F-35s will include 6.5% cost increase

By TONY CAPACCIO
Bloomberg News

The world's most expensive weapons program — the US's F-35 fighter jet — got even more costly, according to the Pentagon.

The program to develop and procure the plane will cost a total of \$438 billion, up \$26 billion from the last estimate a year ago, according to the F-35's new Selected

Acquisition Report released Monday. The 6.5% increase is actually relatively modest by the standards of the program, which originally was \$233 billion when Lockheed Martin Corp. won the contract in 2001.

"The cost data in question was driven after accounting for inflation" and readjustment of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps production plans which extend from 2044 to 2049, the program office said in a statement. The new estimate does not change the total number of planned aircraft, which includes 14 development jets and 2,456 production models for the

US, it said.

The so-called per-jet "program acquisition unit cost" that includes development and production dollars when calculated in what budget analysts call inflation-adjusted "then year" dollars has increased to \$179 million a jet from \$166 million in the last year, according to the SAR.

The \$26 billion increase is equivalent to what Congress has appropriated under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative to support Kyiv's fight against Russia's invasion. It also roughly equals this year's budget request for NASA, the space agency.

Separately, the Pentagon said the F-35, which has faced numerous delays, passed a key milestone last month when it completed testing in an advanced Pentagon simulator, spokesman Russell Goemaere said in a statement. The simulations were designed to determine whether the plane is up to countering the top Russian and Chinese air defenses and fighters, and their results counted for 42% of the evaluation needed for a passing grade.

The testing is part of legally required evaluation before Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed can proceed with full-rate produc-

tion. Of a potential fleet of 3,000 or more F-35s for the U.S. and international customers, at least 965 have been delivered. Many of those may need to be retrofitted based on findings from the tests.

The F-35 was supposed to fly the 64-sorties exercise in 2017 but it was postponed for years because of unresolved technical problems in the "Joint Simulation Environment" test facility compounded by the Covid pandemic. The Pentagon test office plans to deliver its test report no later than 90 days after the completion but doesn't plan to publish an unclassified summary, it said.

Sailor with nuclear background takes command at Japan base

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

A Navy captain with a background in nuclear reactors and antisubmarine warfare is now in charge of Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, homeport of an expeditionary strike group led by the USS America.

Capt. Michael Fontaine, a Michigan native, assumed command Friday at Sasebo from Capt. David Adams, who steered the base through two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I set out to build a high-performance organization, an organization that does what's right for the right reasons, an organization that responds to our nation's needs," Adams said in a video of the change-of-command ceremony posted on the base Facebook page.

Adams took command Sept. 25, 2020, in the depths of the pandemic.

A year and five months later, U.S. Forces Japan in January 2022 ordered all Defense Department personnel, including civilian employees, to stay at home for 10 days to curb a wave of the omicron variant of the coronavirus. Sasebo Naval Base that month reported 553 new cases of COVID-19, surpassing by four times the number of cases the base reported the preceding two years.

The stay-at-home order came about after reports of Americans exempt from travel bans in Japan bringing the virus with them on their return from travel abroad.

A native of Beaumont, Texas, Adams said COVID-19's impact on military commands in Japan required "a heavy cleanup" and stringent effort to get clear "of



Adams



QUINTON LEE/U.S. Navy

Capt. Michael Fontaine speaks after taking command of Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, on Sept. 28.

those restrictions that were affecting all of our lives."

Adams received the Legion of Merit at the ceremony from Rear Adm. Carl Lahti, commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan and Navy Region Japan, and the Sasebo Honorary Citizen for International Goodwill Award from Sasebo Mayor Daisuke Miyajima.

Nagasaki prefecture Gov. Ken-ko Oishii congratulated Adams and welcomed Fontaine to Japan.

"To Captain Adams, on behalf of the people of Nagasaki prefecture, I wish you and your family good health, happiness and success at your new place," Oishii said, according to the release. "I would like to extend a warm welcome to Captain Michael Fontaine. We are looking forward to seeking further friendship under your new leadership," he said.

Sasebo Naval Base on Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, is home to more than 7,400 sailors, civilian employees and family members. It's the homeport for the amphibious as-

sault ship America, the lead ship of the America Amphibious Ready Group.

Fontaine comes to Sasebo from the Learning and Development Division at Naval Education and Training Command. He was also the director of current operations at the U.S. 2nd Fleet.

Fontaine enlisted in 1995 as a machinist's mate, earned a bachelor's in mechanical engineering at North Carolina State University and was commissioned through the Nuclear Enlisted Commissioning Program, according to his official biography. He holds a master's degree from Old Dominion University.

He has also served as an anti-submarine warfare and combat information center officer aboard the frigate USS Reuben James and reactor controls division officer on the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, among other assignments, according to the Navy.

snyder.jonathan@stripes.com
@Jon_E_Snyder

Nuclear submarine completes overhaul with ballistic missile launch

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy test-fired a ballistic missile from a nuclear-powered submarine off the coast of California last week as the vessel prepares to return to service, according to the Department of Defense.

Photographs of an unarmed, extended life Trident II D5, launched Sept. 27 by the USS Louisiana and blasting out of the water near San Diego, were released by the DOD the next day.

The test was part of a Demonstration and Shakedown Operation, a final evaluation of the Louisiana's crew and readiness following a 41-month engineered refueling overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Wash., which concluded in March.

The Louisiana is one of 14 Ohio-class submarines that make up the most survivable leg of America's nuclear triad, which includes land and air-launched nuclear weapons, according to the DOD.

"Their stealth design makes finding an SSBN (a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine) an almost impossible task, giving pause to potential adversaries," the DOD states on its website. "The Columbia-class SSBN program will begin to replace the Ohio-class SSBNs starting in the early 2030s."

The Trident II D5 is the latest generation of the Navy's submarine-launched ballistic missiles and was first deployed in 1990, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The service plans to keep the missiles in service under a life extension program into the 2080s, according to the center.

Under the New START agreement, each missile may carry up to eight nuclear warheads, either



KEVIN TANG/U.S. Navy

An unarmed Trident II D5 launches from waters near San Diego on Sept. 27.

100-kiloton W76 warheads or the 475-kiloton W88. Each of the 12 Ohio-class subs always in service carries 20 Trident II missiles, according to the center.

Some motors that supported last week's unarmed flight test were the oldest Trident II D5 motors flown to date, demonstrating their reliability and proven performance, Northrop Grumman said in a news release Monday.

"Northrop Grumman's strategic motors have provided propulsion success for 191 successful test launches since their deployment to the fleet," Wendy Williams, company vice president for propulsion systems, said in the release.

The life-extended Trident II D5 is a three-stage missile also carried by British Vanguard-class submarines and will be carried aboard U.S. Columbia-class and British Dreadnought-class subs in the future, the company said.

Northrop Grumman, under a contract from U.S. defense contractor Lockheed Martin, manufactures solid-propulsion motor systems for all three stages of the missile, the company said.

The company has delivered over 2,000 Trident II D5 motors and made nearly 87 million pounds of propellant since production began in 1985, according to the release.

MILITARY

Army officer stopped by police seeks new trial

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — A U.S. Army lieutenant who was struck, pepper-sprayed and handcuffed during a traffic stop in Virginia asked a federal appeals court on Monday to overturn rulings by a trial judge after jurors found mostly in favor of the two police officers he sued.

Video of the December 2020 encounter between Lt. Caron Nazario and Windsor police officers was viewed millions of times and highlighted Black drivers' fears of police mistreatment.

In a legal brief filed Monday, Nazario argues that the court erred when it found in a pretrial ruling that Officers Joe Gutierrez and Daniel Crocker had probable cause to believe Nazario committed the crimes of eluding police, obstruction of justice and failure to obey an order.

Nazario also contends that the court erred when it dismissed his claims of unreasonable seizure, excessive force and First Amendment retaliation. He also claims the court gave two erroneous jury instructions and is asking for a new trial. He



WINDSOR (Va.) POLICE/AP

Windsor, Va., police body camera footage shows Army Lt. Caron Nazario is helped by an EMT after he was pepper-sprayed by Windsor police during a traffic stop on Dec. 5, 2020.

filed his appeal with the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond.

"We believe that the jury's verdict was in part influenced by some of the rulings the trial court made, and we are asking the 4th Circuit to review those rulings," said Jonathan Arthur, Nazario's lawyer.

Anne Lahren, one of Crocker's attorneys, said the trial court "was

correct in its rulings on every issue that is now up on appeal."

"The Judge and the jury saw the videos, heard witnesses, and overwhelmingly ruled in favor of the officers," Lahren said in a statement.

In January, a federal jury in Richmond largely sided with the police officers, finding in favor of Gutierrez on Nazario's claims of battery,

false imprisonment and an illegal search. The jury also found in favor of Crocker on claims of assault and battery and false imprisonment.

The jury did find Gutierrez liable for assault and awarded Nazario \$2,685 in compensatory damages. Jurors also found that Crocker had illegally searched Nazario's SUV and awarded Nazario \$1,000 in punitive damages.

Nazario, who had sought \$1 million in damages, asked for a new trial, but U.S. District Judge Roderick Young rejected that request in May, finding that Nazario had not shown "that the jury's findings were not within their discretion."

The confrontation between police and Nazario began on Dec. 5, 2020, when officers pulled Nazario over in Windsor, a rural town of about 3,000 in southeast Virginia. The officers said Nazario's Chevrolet Tahoe did not have a rear license plate. Nazario's lawyers said the car dealer had placed temporary tags in the upper right-hand corner inside the rear window.

Video showed Crocker and Gu-

tierrez pointing handguns at a uniformed Nazario, who sat behind the wheel of his SUV while parked at a gas station. The officers repeatedly ordered Nazario to get out of his vehicle.

Nazario, who is Black and Latino, held his hands in the air outside the driver's side window and repeatedly asked why he was being stopped.

Gutierrez went on to pepper-spray him through the open window. Once Nazario got out of the vehicle, the officers ordered him to get on the ground, with Gutierrez using his knees to strike Nazario's legs, Nazario's lawsuit states.

Nazario has developed anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, according to his lawsuit.

Crocker is still on the force, but Gutierrez was fired in April 2021.

Last month, in a separate settlement with Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares, the town of Windsor agreed to independent reviews of any misconduct allegations against its police force and additional officer training.

In 30 images, 70-year alliance between US, S. Korea celebrated

BY CHRISTOPHER GREEN
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — A photo exhibition at the headquarters of U.S. Forces Korea is commemorating the 70th anniversary of the U.S.-South Korea military alliance.

Images on display at Camp Humphreys' library illustrate the groundbreaking ceremony for the relocation of USFK headquarters to Pyeongtaek in 2018, a joint exercise by U.S. and South Korean troops and USFK friendship concerts.

The 30 photos also show parachute jumps, children in traditional clothing and soldiers sharing a meal together and represent the two allies working together or supporting one another.

The exhibit opened Sept. 25 at the Sgt. 1st Class Ray E. Duke Me-

morial Library and continues until Wednesday. The photographs were provided by Camp Humphreys, the Pyeongtaek Culture Center and the Pyeongtaek Status of Forces Agreement Support Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Park Chun-sik, chief of the SOFA support center, designed the exhibition and decided which pictures could tell the story of the alliance's past, present and future.

"Even a pebble has value when threaded," Park said. "We thought that something small could become valuable or important when it is part of a larger or meaningful context."

The exhibit opened the day before Korean Armed Forces Day, which was marked in Seoul by the largest parade of military forces and hardware in decades. About



CHRISTOPHER GREEN/Stars and Stripes

A photo exhibit that celebrates the U.S.-South Korea alliance is seen at the Sgt. 1st Class Ray E. Duke Memorial Library at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Monday.

300 soldiers from the Eighth Army also marched in the event.

The traveling exhibit was previously displayed at Baedari Elementary School in Pyeongtaek, along with the Paengseng and

Buyong elementary schools, the Pyeongtaek Culture Center and five other organizations in the city.

The images move next to Paengseong Elementary School, a

15-minute drive from Humphreys, and then to Buyong Elementary School from Oct. 10-13.

green.christopher@stripes.com
@ChrisJGreen8

Marine held by Japanese police on suspicion of assaulting passerby

BY ALEX WILSON
AND MARI HIGA
Stars and Stripes

Japanese police have arrested a Marine lance corporal on suspicion of throwing a man to the ground and injuring him in a city near Tokyo.

Blake Allen Dequaine, 20, was in the custody of Kanagawa Pre-

fectural Police on Tuesday, a police spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone that day.

Police allege Dequaine threw a passerby, a 43-year-old man, to the ground around 12:30 a.m. Tuesday in the Nakahara ward of Kawasaki city, about 10½ miles southeast of Tokyo.

Dequaine was arrested about 10

minutes later, according to the spokesman. He said the passerby was injured but declined to provide further information.

Some government officials in Japan speak with the media only on condition of anonymity.

Dequaine is a rifleman with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, according to 3rd Marine Division spokeswo-

man Capt. Annika Pearson. He's deployed to the 4th Marines, based at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, as part of the Unit Deployment Program.

Dequaine was in Kawasaki on liberty, Pearson said.

"The Marine Corps is aware of the incident and cooperating with local authorities," she told Stars

and Stripes by email Tuesday. "The alleged misconduct is not aligned with our core values, which the majority of Marines and Sailors uphold."

wilson.alex@stripes.com
@AlexMNWilson
higa.mari@stripes.com
@MariHiga21

MILITARY

Recruiting: Focus will be on formation of recruiting force

FROM PAGE 1

have found that the job market really has changed significantly over the last 20 years, and we have not — frankly, the Army has not changed much in how we approach that job market, while a lot of our competitors have.”

The Army enlisted about 55,000 young Americans in fiscal 2023, which ended Sept. 30, falling about 10,000 enlistment contracts short of its 65,000-recruit goal, Wormuth said. Despite missing its goal, she said she was pleased with her recruiters’ efforts during the fiscal year, which saw a 10,000-recruit increase over fiscal 2022.

The Army secretary labeled her goal of 65,000 recruits for the last fiscal year a “stretch goal,” which the service was always unlikely to meet.

“But it was very important that we needed to send a strong signal to both our own recruiters, our recruiting workforce, to put the pedal to the metal, and also show Congress and the public that we were going to push as hard as we can,” Wormuth said.

The Army’s fiscal 2023 efforts will allow it to meet its congressionally mandated end strength goal of 452,000 active-duty soldiers, the service said. Wormuth said last month that while the service has a large enough force to meet all its operational and training requirements, continued recruiting troubles could eventually lead to an Army too small to fight a war effectively in Europe



SEAN RAYFORD/AP

Students enlisted in the Army prep course work at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C., in 2022.

or the Indo-Pacific region.

Wormuth said Tuesday that the Army will make major adjustments to how it trains recruiters and who it targets to bring into the service.

Recruiters will be instructed to focus less on high school seniors and Americans with no college experience, who for years have made up more than half of the Army’s annual enlistments but account for less than 20% of the eligible potential recruit population, Wormuth said. Recruiters will work to better interact with people who have spent some time in col-

lege or even those with college degrees, aiming to make those individuals at least one-third of the Army’s recruits by 2028, she said.

Meanwhile, the Army will work to transform who serves as recruiters and how it trains them. Wormuth said the service will build a new aptitude test to qualify soldiers to serve in the recruiting profession.

About two-thirds of the Army’s 8,000 recruiters work in that job temporarily, spending a couple years as a recruiter and then returning to their regular Army job. The remaining recruiters are per-

manent recruiters in the military occupational specialty 79R. Wormuth said those 79Rs will serve as the model as the service spends the coming years creating the new 42T military occupational specialty for a fully permanent recruiter workforce.

Those soldiers will be chosen via a unique selection program and will receive more specialized recruiter training, Wormuth said. The Army also intends to build a recruiting warrant officer program, she said.

“Today, we basically use administrative criteria to select our [noncommissioned officers] who recruit. They basically have a background check to make sure that they can work appropriately with young people,” Wormuth said. “We’re going to start using an aptitude test to make sure that the folks that we bring into the recruiting workforce have the kind of skills and attributes to be successful in what is a pretty challenging responsibility.”

In addition to elevating USA-REC to a three-star command, Wormuth said the command’s top general will begin serving four-year stints in the role, as opposed to the about two years recent USA-REC commanders have served there. The reorganization is meant to better sync all the Army’s recruiting and marketing efforts and bring more uniformity across the command.

She said the extended tour for USAREC’s top officer will allow

that general to better understand the job over time, start new initiatives and see them through to implementation. Many recent USA-REC commanders have started new programs only to see them fade away when they leave the job.

“Recruiting is one of the most important missions in the Army, and these changes reflect that importance,” said Gen. Randy George, the Army chief of staff, who spoke alongside Wormuth on Tuesday.

While the Army fell short of its enlistment goal again, the service did get a head start on its efforts for fiscal 2024, Wormuth said. Army recruiters committed some 4,600 recruits to ship to basic training in the coming fiscal year. The Army was not the only service to miss its 2023 recruiting goal. The Navy and Air Force also fell short, while the Marine Corps and Space Force reached their enlistment goals, officials with those services have said.

Wormuth said the Army is always more challenged to meet its annual enlistment goals, as it is the largest military service with the highest annual recruiting target.

The secretary said the service has yet to make an enlistment goal for fiscal 2024. She expected the annual target would be lower than 65,000 for the new fiscal year.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do to implement all of these changes, so I would imagine we settle on something lower than 65,000,” Wormuth said.

Funds: Delay could affect readiness

FROM PAGE 1

and our values.”

New aid for Ukraine was removed from the continuing resolution to ensure enough House Republicans voted for the spending measure. The resolution will keep funding the government until mid-November, giving Congress more than a month to pass the appropriate bills to fund the government through September 2024 and appropriate more aid to help Ukraine fight invading Russian forces.

“We have already been forced to slow down the replenishment of our own forces to hedge against an uncertain funding future,” McCord wrote. “Failure to replenish our military services on a timely basis could harm our military’s readiness.”

The Pentagon reportedly has about \$5.4 billion left in presidential drawdown authority, which allows the military to send weapons quickly from DOD shelves on an emergency basis. But McCord wrote the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative is already out of money. Because weapons sent

through the assistance initiative don’t come from Pentagon stocks, they don’t need to be replaced.

“Without additional funding now, we would have to delay or curtail assistance to meet Ukraine’s urgent requirements, including for air defense and ammunition that are critical and urgent now as Russia prepares to conduct a winter offensive and continues its bombardment of Ukrainian cities,” he wrote. “For example, a lack of USAI funding now will delay contracting actions that could negatively impact the department’s ability to purchase essential additional 155 mm artillery and critical munitions essential to the success of Ukraine’s armed forces.”

Though many congressional lawmakers agree with continuing aid to Ukraine, a growing number of Republicans, particularly those on the party’s far right, are beginning to balk at approving more funds. Many who stress the importance of keeping up aid, including President Joe Biden, have said in recent days that the assistance cannot stop now.

“We cannot under any circumstance allow America’s support for Ukraine to be interrupted,” Biden said Sunday. “The vast majority of both parties ... support helping Ukraine in the brutal aggression that is being thrust upon them by Russia. Stop playing games. Get this done.”

McCord wrote in his letter that cutting off aid to Ukraine would put the Eastern European country in a dire situation — and possibly encourage other nations, such as China, to carry out further acts of aggression.

Beijing has repeatedly expressed a desire to “unify” with Taiwan — a move that could require military force.

“Delays to additional funding would also be perceived by Ukraine as a sign of wavering U.S. support and likely as a betrayal of our previous commitments,” McCord wrote. “It is crucial that the U.S. continues to lead [the] global coalition, and we need the resources to underwrite our leadership role.”

ware.doug@stripes.com

Grain exports deal reached, will shift inspection to Baltic

BY ILLIA NOVIKOV
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania have agreed on a plan they hope will help expedite Ukrainian grain exports, officials said Tuesday, with needy countries beyond Europe potentially benefiting from speedier procedures.

The deal means that grain inspections will shift from the Ukraine-Poland border to a Lithuanian port on the Baltic Sea, according to a statement from the Ukrainian farm ministry.

The move seeks to facilitate the transit of Ukrainian exports through Polish territory, the statement said, without providing further details.

From the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda, where the inspections for pests and plant diseases will take place from Wednesday, the grain can be exported by sea around the world.

While the stated goal is to hasten Ukrainian grain exports, the agreement may also help defuse tensions over grain prices be-

tween Ukraine and Poland a time when some international support for Kyiv’s efforts to throw back Russia’s invasion may be fraying.

Agricultural exports have brought one of the biggest threats to European unity for Ukraine since Russia invaded.

Russia dealt a huge blow by withdrawing in July from a wartime agreement that ensured safe passage for Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea. That has left more expensive overland routes through Europe as the main path for Ukraine’s exports.

Farmers in nearby countries have been upset that Ukraine’s food products have flooded their local markets, pushing prices down and hurting their livelihoods. Sealed freight has helped combat that problem, and sending Ukrainian grain straight to the Lithuanian port may also be an answer.

Poland, Hungary and Slovakia announced bans on local imports of Ukrainian food after a European Union embargo ended in mid-September.

MILITARY

High hopes for collapsible ladder

Pilot's prototype seeks to aid F-16 ingress, egress

BY BRIAN ERICKSON
Stars and Stripes
AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — An airman from the 31st Fighter Wing at Aviano Air Base thinks he has devised a top-rung method of cockpit ingress and egress for F-16 Viper pilots.

Maj. Nicholas Atkins conceptualized a collapsible ladder that fits in the jet's map case, and then he turned to the 9th Training Support Squadron at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona to design it.

A prototype, which was redesigned several times before taking its current form, is being tested now at the installation in Italy.

"Our next step is to work toward approval and certification of the ladder on the aircraft here at Aviano," said Atkins, who is an F-16 pilot and the wing's deputy chief of plans and programs.

Atkins also entered the apparatus for consideration in the annual Air Force innovation competition Spark Tank.

The idea behind the Spark Tank pitch is to seek "Air Force-level support to help expedite that approval process and work to get these ladders out" to airmen throughout the service, Atkins said.

In contrast with pilots of many other aircraft, those who fly the F-16 rely on a ladder that is prepositioned ahead of time to get into and out of the cockpit safely.

But those ladders are bulky and limited in number, so it isn't feasible to put them everywhere ahead of time, Atkins said.

In the Spark Tank submission, Atkins listed two things needed from the Air Force for this project. The first is subject matter experts in agile combat employment.

That's because they are the ones who can certify anything that touched the aircraft, he said.



A prototype collapsible ladder for the F-16 Viper is stored in the cockpit map case. The idea for the ladder came from Maj. Nicholas Atkins, an F-16 pilot at Aviano Air Base in Italy.

ACE is a set of concepts that involves rapid deployment of aircraft from larger overseas installations to groups of smaller, often remote locations with minimal infrastructure support.

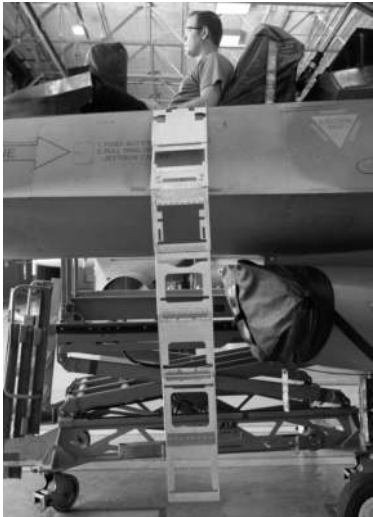
The concept is designed to make it more difficult for adversaries to predict aircraft movements and target those bases in war. The Air Force has been developing and refining ACE training for the past several years.

"Besides all the ACE advantages this ladder helps enable, it would also be an excellent alternative to the current legacy ladder for contingency-type operations," Atkins said.

For example, the hip-pocket ladder offers lots of flexibility in various situations and lets both pilots and crew chiefs avoid the risks of having to climb down the side of the aircraft, according to Atkins.

The other requirement laid out by Atkins is financing. Each ladder costs \$300 for parts and \$1,500 for labor.

The 9th Training Support Squad-



A prototype ladder is draped over the side of the aircraft. It is being tested at Aviano.

ron is providing the labor for free, but it still costs about \$43,000 for 144 ladders, which is the number Atkins said is needed to outfit the eight overseas F-16 squadrons. If labor costs were included, the total would be \$259,000, according to Atkins.

The legacy ladders used now on F-16s cost \$5,200 apiece, Atkins said in the Spark Tank submission.

The plan envisions a rollout starting with 36 ladders for the F-16s at Aviano and then expanding to the rest of the European and Pacific theaters.

That plan would supply the ladders to those "closest to the fight and most likely to immediately ACE," Atkins said in the submission.

Assuming the ladder works as intended and achieves certification, the goal is to make them available for all 936 of the Air Force's F-16s.

The idea for Aviano prototype came about when Atkins saw Lt. Col. Lawrence Dietrich's design of a collapsible ACE ladder for the F-22.

It was born out of the frustration Atkins said he felt during the "numerous times" in his Air Force career he had found himself without a ladder.

erickson.brian@stripes.com
@BrianErickson_

DOD official charged with participating in dog fighting

BY TOM JACKMAN
AND DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

A senior member of the Department of Defense communications staff has been arrested and charged with participating in a dogfighting ring in the Washington, D.C., area for more than 20 years, federal authorities disclosed Monday. The ring regularly trained dogs for fights, ran thousands of dollars in bets on the outcomes and executed dogs that didn't die during matches, court records state.

Frederick Douglass Moorefield Jr., 62, of Arnold, Md., was a deputy chief information officer for command, control and communications for the Secretary of Defense's Chief Information Officer, court records and Moorefield's LinkedIn page show. He was arrested Thursday on a charge of promoting and furthering animal fighting venture, along with a longtime friend who allegedly admitted his participation in dogfighting, Mario D. Flythe, 49, of Glen Burnie, Md.

Investigators found battery jumper cables, which allegedly were used to execute dogs at Moorefield's house, along with five pit bull-type dogs at his house and five pit bull-type dogs at Flythe's house, court records show. The FBI, the Department of Agriculture, and other local and federal agencies raided both houses on Sept. 6, according to a federal affidavit, finding weighted collars and heavy metal chains used to increase fighting dogs' strength. Authorities said they also found "an apparatus that is used for involuntarily inseminating female dogs" and stains "consistent with bloodstains from dog fights."

Both men were released after being arraigned.

Lt. Cmdr. Tim Gorman, a Pentagon spokesman, said in a statement on Monday that the Defense Department was "aware of the criminal complaint" filed against Moorefield in federal district court in Baltimore.

"We can confirm that the individual is no longer in the workplace, but we cannot comment further on an individual personnel matter," Gorman said. He did not say if Moorefield had been suspended, terminated or allowed to retire.

An affidavit written by FBI Special Agent Ryan C. Daly indicated that authorities have been investigating the dogfighting ring, which called itself "the DMV Board," for years. Nine people were indicted in Virginia last year, and eight have pleaded guilty and cooperated with investigators.

Online records maintained by the dogs' owners showed that Moorefield had been involved in dogfighting "since at least 2002," Daly wrote.

VA police officer indicted in man's beating with baton

BY J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

A Veterans Affairs Police Department officer is accused in a federal indictment of striking an already restrained man with a baton dozens of times at a California VA hospital, causing lacerations and bleeding.

Juan Anthony Carrillo, 45, faces charges of deprivation of rights under color of law resulting in bodily injury and assault with a dangerous weapon with the intent to do bodily harm.

The charges stem from his use

of force Jan. 16, 2022, at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center. Carrillo was indicted Thursday in U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. Each charge carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

He will be arraigned in the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

Prosecutors say Carrillo hit a 34-year-old man, identified in the indictment as "R.V.," who had been detained by another VA police officer at the hospital.

Carrillo hit R.V. 45 times in 41 seconds, the Justice Department

said in a statement Friday.

At the time, the other officer was on top of R.V., whom they both outweighed by more than 50 pounds, the Justice Department statement said.

R.V. was bleeding and had lacerations on both legs because of the beating, according to the statement.

Carrillo also tried to justify his use of force by writing in a report that the victim "was violently kicking his legs and refusing to show his hands," prosecutors said, calling his claims false and mis-

leading.

The Department of Veterans Affairs employs a force of about 5,000 police officers at its health care facilities, a 2020 Government Accountability Office report estimated.

VA police officers did not track or record use of force incidents properly, and its records were either incomplete or inaccurate, making oversight limited, the GAO said.

lawrence.jp@stripes.com
@jplawrence3

NATION

Trump trial judge says evidence is not too old

Associated Press
NEW YORK — A New York judge on Tuesday took the air out of the win that former President Donald Trump claimed he scored in the first hours of his civil business fraud trial.
With Trump voluntarily in court for a second day, Judge Arthur Engoron set the record straight about a comment that the ex-president had claimed as an important victory.
The issue: Engoron had suggested on Monday that testimony about Trump’s 2011 financial statement might be beyond the legal time limit applicable to New York Attorney General Letitia James’ lawsuit. It alleges that Trump and his business chronically lied about his wealth on financial statements given to banks, insurers and others.
The relevant statute of limitations bars claims related to activities before a date in 2014, and Trump’s legal team has argued that the time limit cuts off most of the case.
Engoron said Tuesday that “statutes of limitations bar claims, not evidence” and that at the trial’s early stage, he’s inclined to give both sides considerable leeway to connect older evidence to claims in the lawsuit.
“I want to emphasize: This trial is not an opportunity to relitigate what I have already decided,” Engoron said. He ruled last week that all the claims were allowable under the statute of limitations.



Prosecutors make their way into the courtroom for the continuation of the civil business fraud trial against former President Donald Trump at New York Supreme Court, on Tuesday, in New York.

A lawyer for James’ office, Kevin Wallace, went on to suggest that he was using the 2011 document to show that Trump’s financial statements were prepared in the same manner — giving him and his company final say over the valuations — for at least a decade.
After Monday’s sometimes fiery opening statements, Tuesday’s court action centered on the more plodding task of going through years of Trump’s financial documents. An accountant who prepared his financial statements for years was on the witness stand for a second day.
Trump denies any wrongdoing. The Republican former president and current 2024 GOP front-runner claims that James, a Democrat, is wielding the justice system as a political cudgel to hobble his ongoing campaign.
Trump said during a court break that he thought the trial was “going very well.” He reiterated key points of his defense, including that the financial statements bore disclaimers saying that they weren’t audited and that others “might reach different conclusions” about his financial position if they had more information.
“This case is a scam. It can’t be fraud when you’ve told institutions to do their own work,” Trump said Tuesday.
James already scored an early victory when Engoron, a Democrat, ruled last week that Trump committed fraud by exaggerating the size of his penthouse at Trump Tower, claiming his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida was worth as much as \$739 million and putting similar oversized valuations on office towers, golf courses and other assets.

McCarthy defiant as ouster vote looms in House

Associated Press
WASHINGTON — House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is confronting his hard-right critics head-on Tuesday as he faces a historic challenge to oust him from leadership, insisting he will not cut a deal with Democrats to remain in power and setting the stage for an extraordinary and unpredictable showdown on the House floor.
The Republican McCarthy’s fate is deeply uncertain as he faces what’s known as a “motion to vacate” from Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, a strident critic allied with Donald Trump. It would take the support of only a handful of Republicans from his slim majority to remove McCarthy as speaker if Democrats vote in favor alongside the conservative rebels.
Behind closed doors early Tuesday, McCarthy told fellow Republicans: Let’s get on with it.
“If I counted how many times someone wanted to knock me out, I would have been gone a long time ago,” McCarthy said at the Capitol after a private morning meeting.
It’s a stunning moment for the embattled McCarthy that serves as the most severe challenge yet, a potential punishment sparked by his weekend decision to work with Democrats to keep the federal government open rather than risk a shutdown. So far, several hard-right Republicans said they are ready to oppose McCarthy, many of them who fought in January during his prolonged battle to gain the gavel.
At the Capitol, both Republicans and Democrats met privately behind closed doors ahead of what would be a historic afternoon vote.
McCarthy insisted he had not reached across the aisle to the Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries for help with votes to stay in the job, nor had they demanded anything in return. Democrats “haven’t asked for anything,” McCarthy said on CNBC before the meeting. “I’m not going to provide anything.”
During the hourlong meeting in the Capitol basement, McCarthy invoked Republican speaker Joseph Cannon who more than 100 years ago confronted his critics head on by calling their bluff and setting the vote himself on his ouster. Cannon survived that take-down attempt which, until now, was the first time the House had actually voted to consider removing its speaker.
McCarthy received three standing ovations during the private meeting — one when he came to the microphone to speak, again during his remarks and lastly when he was done, according a Republican at the meeting and granted anonymity to discuss it.
At one point, there was a show of hands in support of McCarthy and it was “overwhelming,” said Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., a member of the House Freedom Caucus.
Gaetz was in attendance, but did not address the room.
On the other side of the Capitol, Democrats lined up for a long discussion and unified around one common point: McCarthy cannot be trusted, several lawmakers in the room said. “I think it’s safe to say there’s not a lot of good will in that room for Kevin McCarthy,” said Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass. Still, the Democrats are holding their strategy close, leaving to Jeffries and his team to decide the move ahead as floor voting is set to begin.
Jeffries said afterward that Democrats are willing to work with Republicans but he urged those on the other side of the aisle to — “End the chaos, end the dysfunction, end the extremism.”
But privately, Jeffries told the caucus that Democrats should vote to oust McCarthy as he has proven to be untrustworthy, according to a Democratic aide who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a private meeting. Jeffries also told the Democrats to vote against any procedure motion to delay the effort to oust McCarthy on Tuesday, the aide said.

Hunter Biden pleads not guilty to 3 charges

Associated Press
WILMINGTON, Del. — Hunter Biden pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to three federal firearms charges that emerged after his earlier deal imploded, setting the case on a track toward a possible trial in 2024 while his father is campaigning for reelection.
President Joe Biden’s son has been charged with lying about his drug use in October 2018 on a form to buy a gun that he kept for about 11 days. He could face up to 25 years in prison if convicted. When asked by Magistrate Judge Chris-

topher Burke if he understood the charges against him, he said, “Yes, Your Honor.”
His lawyer Abbe Lowell said in court he plans to file a motion to dismiss the charges, challenging their constitutionality.
“Mr. Biden pleads not guilty to the three counts that have been brought against him,” Lowell said to the judge.
Hunter Biden has acknowledged struggling with an addiction to crack cocaine during that period in 2018, but his lawyers have said he didn’t break the law.
Gun charges like these are rare, and an appeals court has found the ban on drug users having guns violates the Second Amendment under new Supreme Court standards.
On Tuesday, the judge noted Hunter Biden had been repeatedly tested for drugs and is negative.
Hunter Biden’s attorneys are suggesting that prosecutors bowed to pressure by Republicans, who have insisted the Democratic president’s son got a sweetheart deal, and that the charges were the result of political pressure.

Exploring the Beauty of the Pacific

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STARS AND STRIPES

New court term: Mulling ‘and,’ denying appeals

Case could trim drug dealer sentences; blanket rejections include Trump lawyer

BY MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court opened its new term Monday with a case about prison terms for drug dealers and rejections of hundreds of appeals, including one from an attorney who pushed a plan to keep former President Donald Trump in power.

The court turned away attorney John Eastman’s effort to have a lower-court ruling thrown out that said Eastman and Trump had “more likely than not” committed a crime by trying to keep Congress from certifying President Joe Biden’s victory in the 2020 election.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who once employed Eastman as a law clerk, did not take part in the court’s consideration of Eastman’s appeal.

The only case argued Monday concerns the meaning of the word “and” in a federal law dealing with prison terms for low-level drug dealers. The length of thousands of sentences a year is at stake.

“I think this is a very hard case,” Justice Amy Coney Barrett said during 90 minutes of arguments that did not suggest how the court might rule.

The term is shaping up as an important one for social media as the court continues to grapple with applying older laws and rulings to the digital age.

Several cases also confront the court with the continuing push by conservatives to constrict federal regulatory agencies. On Tuesday, the court was to hear a challenge that could disrupt the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The court also is dealing with the fallout from major rulings a year ago that overturned *Roe v. Wade* and expanded gun rights. A gun

case will be argued in November. Limits on mifepristone, a drug used in the most common method of abortion, could be before the court by spring.

Among the bigger unknowns is whether any disputes will reach the court involving the prosecution of Trump or efforts to keep the Republican off the 2024 ballot because of the Constitution’s insurrection clause.

Apart from cases, the justices are discussing a first-ever code of conduct, though disagreements remain, Justice Elena Kagan said recently.

The push to codify ethical standards for the justices stems from a series of stories questioning some of their practices. Many of those stories focused on Thomas and his failure to disclose travel and other financial ties with wealthy conservative donors, including Harlan Crow and the Koch brothers. But Justices Samuel Alito and Sonia Sotomayor also have been under scrutiny.

On Monday, Thomas did not explain his decision to stay out of Eastman’s case, which involved emails that Eastman was trying to keep from the House committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Some of those emails, since made public, are between Eastman and another lawyer, Kenneth Chesebro, in which they mention Thomas as their best hope to get the Supreme Court to intervene in the election outcome in a case from Georgia.

Trump, Eastman and Chesebro are among 19 people who have been indicted in Fulton County, Ga., for their efforts to overturn the 2020 election.



JOSH EDELSON/AP

New polling finds that America’s college campuses are seen as far friendlier to liberals than to conservatives when it comes free speech.

Poll: College campuses favor liberals over conservatives

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Americans view college campuses as far friendlier to liberals than to conservatives when it comes to free speech, with adults across the political spectrum seeing less tolerance for those on the right, according to a new poll.

Overall, 47% of adults say liberals have “a lot” of freedom to express their views on college campuses, while just 20% said the same of conservatives, according to polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and the University of Chicago Forum for Free Inquiry and Expression.

Republicans perceive a stronger bias on campuses against conservatives, but Democrats see a difference too — about 4 in 10 Democrats say liberals can speak their minds freely on campuses, while about 3 in 10 Democrats say conservatives can do so.

“If you’re a Republican or lean Republican, you’re unabashedly wrong, they shut you down,” said Rhonda Baker, 60, of Goldsboro, N.C., who voted for former President Donald Trump and has a son

in college. “If they hold a rally, it’s: ‘The MAGA’s coming through.’ It’s: ‘The KKK is coming through.’”

Debates over First Amendment rights have occasionally flared on college campuses in recent years, with conflicts arising over guest speakers who express polarizing views, often from the political right.

Stanford University became a flashpoint this year when students shouted down a conservative judge who was invited to speak. More recently, a conservative Princeton University professor was drowned out while discussing free speech at Washington College, a small school in Maryland.

At the same time, Republican lawmakers in dozens of states have proposed bills aiming to limit public colleges from teaching topics considered divisive or liberal. Just 30% of Americans say states should be able to restrict what professors at state universities teach, the poll found, though support was higher among Republicans.

Overall, Republicans see a clear double standard on college campuses. Just 9% said conservatives

can speak their minds, while 58% said liberals have that freedom, according to the polling. They were also slightly less likely than Americans overall to see campuses as respectful and inclusive places for conservatives.

“If they don’t like it, they can get up and walk out,” said Linda Woodward, 71, a Democrat in Hot Springs Village, Ark.

Officials at PEN America, a free speech group, say most students welcome diverse views. But as the nation has become more politically divided, so have college campuses, said Kristen Shahverdian, senior manager for education at PEN.

“There’s this polarization that just continues to grow and build across our country, and colleges and universities are a part of that ecosystem,” she said.

The poll of 1,095 adults was conducted Sept. 7-11, 2023, using a sample drawn from NORC’s probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points.



RICH PEDRONCELLI/AP

A pharmacist holds a bottle of the antibiotic doxycycline hyclate.

CDC: Antibiotic can be ‘morning-after pill’ against STDs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. health officials plan to endorse a common antibiotic as a morning-after pill that gay and bisexual men can use to try to avoid some increasingly common sexually transmitted diseases.

The proposed CDC guideline was released Monday, and officials will move to finalize it after a

45-day public comment period. With STD rates rising to record levels, “more tools are desperately needed,” said Dr. Jonathan Mermin of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The proposal comes after studies found some people who took the antibiotic doxycycline within three days of unprotected sex were far less likely to get chlamy-

dia, syphilis or gonorrhea compared with people who did not take the pills after sex.

The guideline is specific to the group most studied — gay and bisexual men and transgender women who had an STD in the previous 12 months and were at high risk to get infected again.

There’s less evidence that the approach works for other people,

including heterosexual men and women. That could change as more research is done, said Mermin, who oversees the CDC’s STD efforts.

Doxycycline, a cheap antibiotic that has been available for more than 40 years, is a treatment for health problems including acne, chlamydia and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

NATION

Is US seeing 'Punitive Panda Diplomacy'?

Departure of pandas may signal wider Chinese pullback

BY ASHRAF KHALIL
AND DIDI TANG
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Wearing a "I Love Pandas" T-shirt and clutching a panda-covered diary, Kelsey Lambert bubbled with excitement as she glimpsed the real thing. She and her mother, Alison, had made a special trip from San Antonio, Texas, just to watch the National Zoo's furry rock stars casually munching bamboo and rolling around on the grass.

"It felt completely amazing," Kelsey, age 10, said Friday. "My mom has always promised she would take me one day. So we had to do it now that they're going away."

The National Zoo's three giant pandas — Mei Xiang, Tian Tian and their cub Xiao Qi Ji — are set to return to China in early December with no public signs that the 50-year old exchange agreement struck by former President Richard Nixon will continue.

National Zoo officials have remained tight-lipped about the prospects of renewing or extending the agreement, and repeated attempts to gain comment on the state of the negotiations did not receive a response. However, the public stance of the zoo has been decidedly pessimistic — treating these remaining months as the end of an era. The zoo just finished a weeklong celebration called Panda Palooza: A Giant Farewell.

The potential end of the National Zoo's panda era comes amid what veteran China-watchers say is a larger trend. With diplomatic tensions running high between Beijing and a number of Western governments, China appears to be gradually pulling back its pandas from multiple Western zoos as their agreements expire.

Dennis Wilder, a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Initiative for U.S.-China Dialogue on Global Issues, called the trend "punitive panda diplomacy," noting that two other American zoos have lost their pandas in recent years, while zoos in Scotland and Australia are facing similar departures with no signs of their loan agreements being renewed.

Beijing currently lends out 65 pandas to 19 countries through "cooperative research programs" with a stated mission to better protect the vulnerable species. The pandas return to China when they reach old age and any cubs born are sent to China around age 3 or 4.

The San Diego zoo returned its pandas in 2019 and the last bear at the Memphis, Tenn., zoo went



PHOTOS BY JOSE LUIS MAGANA / AP

Visitors watch giant panda Xiao Qi Ji as he eats bamboo Thursday in his enclosure at the Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington.



JOSE LUIS MAGANA / AP

Stuffed pandas are for sale at the National Zoo's gift shop.

home earlier this year. The departure of the National Zoo's bears would mean that the only giant pandas left in America are at the Atlanta Zoo — and that loan agreement expires late next year.

Wilder said the Chinese possibly could be "trying to send a signal."

He cited a litany of Chinese-American flashpoints: sanctions imposed by the U.S. government on prominent Chinese citizens and officials; restrictions on the import of Chinese semiconductors; accusations that Chinese-made fentanyl is flooding American cities; suspicion over Chinese ownership of the social media platform TikTok; and the uproar early this year over the Chinese balloons floating over America.

Beijing, Wilder said, is convinced that "NATO and the United States are lining up against China."

The panda-related tension has even spilled into the U.S. Senate. Last week, Pennsylvania Democrat John Fetterman complained about China buying up American farmland and added, "I mean,

they're taking back our pandas. You know, we should take back all their farmland."

That animosity has been at least partially shared by the public in China, where anti-American sentiments are on the rise. Those sentiments developed into a perfect panda storm earlier this year when Le Le, a 24-year-old male panda on loan to the zoo in Memphis, died suddenly in February. Pandas generally live 15 to 20 years in the wild, while those in human care live to be around 30.

Le Le's unexpected death prompted an explosion on Chinese social media platforms like Weibo, with widespread allegations that the Memphis zoo had mistreated the bear and its female companion, Ya Ya. The campaign gained intensity when photos circulated on the internet of Ya Ya looking dirty and gaunt (by panda standards) with patchy fur.

An online petition on Change.org demanded Ya Ya be returned immediately, alleging malnourishment and deprivation of proper medical care. Slogans such as "the panda's life matters"

surfaced in China's social media along with emotional memes pleading with authorities to rescue the bear.

The heat grew so intense that the Memphis Zoo released a statement responding to what it called "misinformation" about its pandas and stating that Ya Ya has "a chronic skin and fur condition" that "makes her hair look thin and patchy," and Le Le died of natural causes.

Even an official Chinese scientific delegation that visited Memphis and announced that Le Le was not mistreated and died of a heart condition failed to quell the outrage. Ya Ya was returned to China on schedule in April when the loan agreement expired and received a celebrity's welcome at Shanghai's airport.

The Chinese government, which gifted the first pair of pandas — Hsing Hsing and Ling Ling — to the U.S., now leases the pandas out for a typical 10-year renewable term.

The annual fee ranges from \$1 million to \$2 million per pair, plus mandatory costs to build and maintain facilities to house the animals. Any cub born to the pandas belongs to the Chinese government, but can be leased for an additional fee until it reaches mating age.

Over the 50 years of American panda loan agreements, the arrangement has hit more than one rough patch. In 2010, Daniel Ashe, then head of the federal Fish and Wildlife Service, traveled to China to help resolve a technical bureaucratic issue that was threatening the renewal of the National Zoo's agreement. The problem was quickly resolved and the agree-

ment extended.

"But the situation now is completely different," said Ashe, now CEO of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. "What we're seeing now is tensions between our governments at a much higher level, and they need to be addressed and resolved at that level."

Observers are holding out hope that exactly this sort of 11th-hour high-level intervention will come through.

Wilder pointed to the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco in November as a potential forum for President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping to make headlines by breaking the deadlock.

But for now, panda-philos of all ages are making pilgrimages to Washington for a last glimpse at the bears.

At the zoo last Friday, amid the chatter of children, was an adult couple with a baby on the way — each wearing matching panda-ears headbands. Colleen Blue and John Nungesser came from outside Philadelphia to see the pandas; this was Blue's third time.

Blue said she broke into tears and "had a temper tantrum" when she found out that Washington's pandas would be leaving. The couple is already making plans, after their baby is born, to take the infant to see the pandas in Atlanta next summer before they leave.

And Alison Lambert, Kelsey's mom, said she remains optimistic that both sides will work out an agreement simply because it's mutually beneficial. And if they don't, Kelsey is already developing Plan B.

"We could always fly to China," she said. "That works, too."

NATION

Court reviews gun-carry restrictions

NM governor used public health data to test boundaries

By MORGAN LEE
Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Restrictions on carrying guns in public that are tied to an emergency public health order are going under the legal microscope Tuesday in New Mexico, where the Democratic governor is testing the boundaries of her authority and constitutional law in response to violent crime in the state's largest metro area.

The standoff is one of many in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision last year expanding gun rights, as leaders in politically liberal-leaning states explore new avenues for restrictions.

A court hearing is scheduled on legal challenges to the public health order from Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham that suspends the right to carry firearms in most public parks and playgrounds in and around Albuquerque.

Advocates for gun rights have filed a barrage of challenges to the 30-day health order, which originally included broad restrictions on carrying guns in public.

The governor will reissue orders on gun violence and drug abuse for an additional 30 days, Lujan Grisham spokeswoman Maddy Hayden said Monday. She said the urgent approach is spurring arrests and reining in gunfire. The orders include directives for monthly inspections of firearms dealers statewide, reports on gunshot victims at



Albuquerque residents Michael Caldwell, left, and his wife, Natasha Caldwell, attend a Second Amendment Protest in response to New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's recent public health order suspending the conceal and open carry of guns in and around Albuquerque for 30 days, on Sept. 12, in Albuquerque.

New Mexico hospitals and wastewater testing for illicit substances.

U.S. District Judge David Urias ruled last month that gun restrictions in the governor's original order were likely to cause irreparable harm to people deprived of the right to carry a gun in public for self-defense and granted a temporary restraining order blocking it until Tuesday's hearing.

The governor has tied the suspension of some gun rights to a statistical threshold for violent crime that applied only to Albuquerque and the surrounding area.

Urias said in a recent court filing that restrictions on gun activity at playgrounds and other places

where children play "may very well be constitutional."

State police briefly would have authority under the order to assess civil penalties and fines of up to \$5,000 for infractions. The sheriff and Albuquerque's police chief had refused to enforce it.

The order has energized advocates for gun rights, including Republican lawmakers who have threatened impeachment proceedings against Lujan Grisham.

Some influential Democrats and civil rights leaders warn that the governor's move could do more harm than good to overall efforts to ease gun violence, and the Democratic state attorney general has

urged her to reconsider.

Other states including California, Washington, Colorado and Maryland have passed gun laws this year that face legal challenges.

Last week California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed nearly two dozen gun control measures, including ones banning the carrying of firearms in most public places while doubling taxes on guns and ammunition sales.

Newsom has acknowledged some of the gun measures might not survive in the courts. Last month a federal judge struck down a state law banning guns with detachable magazines that carry more than 10 rounds.

Drugmakers OK talks on 10 drugs' cost to Medicare

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration said Tuesday that the manufacturers of all of the first 10 prescription drugs it selected for Medicare's first price negotiations have agreed to participate, clearing the way for talks that could lower their costs in coming years and giving the White House a potential political win heading into next year's presidential election.

The drugs include the blood thinner Eliquis, which the White House said was used by more than 3.7 million Medicare enrollees from June of last year through this past May and had an average out-of-pocket cost of \$608 per enrollee for 2022. Also included is diabetes treatment Jardiance, which was used by nearly 1.6 million Medicare enrollees and had a 2022 out-of-pocket cost per enrollee of \$490.

In all last year, 9 million seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries paid more than \$3.4 billion on these 10 drugs alone, the White House said.

How much prices could fall is not yet known. Prices negotiated for the first set of drugs participating won't go into effect until 2026.

Still, promises to lower prescription drug costs are a key part of Biden's reelection pitch to voters — even as the Democratic president has so far struggled to convince the public that his administration's policies have lowered health care expenses and cut other everyday costs. In announcing that price negotiations will go forward, the White House noted that the program was created under the Inflation Reduction Act, which Congress passed last year without any Republican support, and that Big Pharma has continued to work to stop Medicare from haggling with pharmaceutical companies.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced in August the first 10 drugs selected for the negotiation process and said manufacturers had until Monday to agree to participate and submit manufacturer-specific data.

Even with Tuesday's announcement, the process could still be complicated by lawsuits from drugmakers and sharp criticism from Republicans. The White House noted that the drug manufacturers' agreeing to participate followed a decision by a federal court in Ohio allowing Medicare price negotiation plans to move forward.

Mich. school shooter's parents cleared to stand trial

Associated Press

DETROIT — The Michigan Supreme Court turned down an appeal Tuesday, clearing the way for the parents of a teenager who killed four fellow students in a shooting at Oxford High School to face trial on involuntary manslaughter charges.

James and Jennifer Crumbley are accused of making a gun available to Ethan Crumbley and ignoring his mental health needs.

The state appeals court in March said the couple could face trial, and the Supreme Court said it would let that decision stand.

The shooter killed Madisyn Baldwin, Tate Myre, Hana St. Juliana and Justin Shilling at Oxford High, about 40 miles north of Detroit, in November 2021. Six students and a teacher were also wounded.

Ethan Crumbley pleaded guilty to terrorism and murder. A judge last week said he is eligible for life



Buck Myre, left, and Sheri Myre, parents of slain son Tate Myre, listen to testimony as their son's killer, Ethan Crumbley, appears in court on Aug. 18, in Pontiac, Mich. James and Jennifer Crumbley will face trial on involuntary manslaughter charges. Prosecutors say they made a gun available to their son and ignored his mental health needs.

in prison without parole.

Attorneys for the parents insist the school shooting was not foreseeable. They acknowledge that

bad decisions were made but not ones that should rise to charges of involuntary manslaughter.

The teen and his parents met

with school staff on the day of the shooting after a teacher noticed violent drawings, but no one checked his backpack for a gun. He was allowed to stay.

The 17-year-old, who was 15 at the time of the shooting, will be sentenced Dec. 8. The judge will have an option of giving him a prison term that would make him eligible for parole in the decades ahead.

Colin King, a psychologist who has met with the teen, has described him as a "feral child" who was neglected by his parents.

Judge Kwamé Rowe said his home life was "not ideal," with his parents often drinking alcohol and arguing, but "not terrible."

The teen "appeared to have a loving and supportive family," Rowe said Friday. "He went on family vacations, owned several pets and had visits from family. ... In defendant's own words, his childhood was 'good.'"

NATION

Locals hail neighborhood that survived Maui fires

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER
Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii — Shaun “Buge” Saribay felt like giving up. Hours of makeshift firefighting with garden hoses and buckets of water across Lahaina didn’t stop flames from consuming his house, his rental properties and thousands of other structures in his beloved hometown.

Drained, dirty and delirious, he continued anyway, pedaling a bicycle he found during the apocalyptic night of Aug. 8 to one Lahaina neighborhood he was determined to save as a symbol of enduring Hawaiian heritage.

Although Native Hawaiians including Saribay live throughout Lahaina, the Villages of Leiali’i is the only community in West Maui exclusively for Hawaiians. Part of a program Congress passed in 1921 to give Hawaii’s Indigenous people land to live on, Leiali’i and other so-called homestead communities have become not just key to economic self-sufficiency, but reserves of Hawaiian culture and traditions as well.

Just two of the neighborhood’s 104 homes were lost to the fire, an

immense relief amid a disaster that destroyed more than 2,000 buildings and killed at least 97 people. Many of the homesteaders have taken in friends and relatives who lost homes nearby. Some homes suffered smoke damage. Water in the neighborhood, like much of Lahaina, remains unsafe to cook with or drink.

“So much of Lahaina went burn,” Saribay said in Hawaii Pidgin. “We no need lose Hawaiian homes.”

Homestead communities across the state, which also are referred to as Hawaiian Homes, represent one of the most valuable benefits available to those with Hawaiian ancestry: land at almost no cost.

Those with at least 50% Hawaiian blood can apply for a 99-year lease for \$1 a year. There are about 29,000 people on a waitlist for 99-year residential or agricultural land leases.

Knowing that many Hawaiians have died waiting for a lease motivated Saribay to try to save Leiali’i.

“How long Hawaiians was waiting for Hawaiian Homes? Choke years,” the lifelong Lahaina resident said. “Many years.”

The fire that swept through Lahaina was mostly out by midmorn-

ing on Aug. 9. But it still threatened houses in Leiali’i when Saribay and a group of his tenants arrived at the 16-year-old Lahaina homestead community.

Most residents had evacuated as wind-whipped fire spread from the hillsides and surrounded the neighborhood, which is one of the newer subdivisions developed by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

Saribay, who livestreamed his actions for hours on Instagram, focused on flames taking down a house just outside Leiali’i. His group connected garden hoses and he broke down a homesteader’s fence to keep the fire out of the community, he said.

It’s not clear how much the efforts of Saribay and others contributed to the neighborhood’s survival.

Some residents have credited it to a combination of factors. Among them are the willingness of locals such as Saribay to risk their lives fighting the flames; the use of newer, more fire-resistant construction materials, such as composite siding, than was used in older parts of Lahaina; underground utility lines, which did not snap and spark



MENGSHIN LIN/AP

A child rides a bicycle on in the Villages of Leiali’i, a Hawaiian homestead community, on Sept. 25 in Lahaina, Hawaii.

in the high winds as above-ground utility poles did; and the grace of “akua,” which is Hawaiian for a divine or spiritual force.

Keola Beamer, a famous slack key guitarist who lives in Leiali’i, found significance in the neighborhood’s name. “Lei” can mean garland in Hawaiian and “alii” refers to chiefs or royalty.

“We think that our ancestors joined hands and formed a lei of alii around our homes, protecting us from the ensuing flames,” Beamer said. “It jumped over us.”

The home Saribay helped protect by knocking down a fence belongs to Archie Kalepa, a well-known surfer, lifeguard, Polynesian voyager and proponent of traditional Hawaiian canoe surfing. In the ensuing days, the home became

a hub for distributing donated relief supplies, including generators, cleaning products and canned food.

Workers with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands erected a temporary black screen to protect Kalepa’s house from any potentially toxic dust that might blow over from a house that burned just outside the homestead’s boundary.

The tragedy would have been compounded if the homestead burned, too, Kalepa said.

“If Hawaiian Homes didn’t exist, all these families — who, most of them, are nine, 10, 12, 15 generations from Lahaina — would have been gone,” he said. “Their genealogy ... their children, their grandchildren. They’re all here. And that would have been lost.”

Chicago is keeping hundreds of migrants at airports

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Hidden behind a heavy black curtain in one of the nation’s busiest airports is Chicago’s unsettling response to a growing population of asylum-seekers arriving by plane.

Hundreds of migrants, from babies to the elderly, live inside a shuttle bus center at O’Hare International Airport’s Terminal 1. They sleep on cardboard pads on the floor and share airport bathrooms. A private firm monitors their movements.

Like New York and other cities, Chicago has struggled to house asylum-seekers, slowly moving people out of temporary spaces and into shelters and, in the near future, tents. But Chicago’s use of airports is unusual, having been rejected elsewhere, and highlights the city’s haphazard response to the crisis. The practice also has raised concerns about safety and the treatment of people fleeing violence and poverty.

“It was supposed to be a stop-and-go place,” said Vianney Marzullo, one of the few volunteers at O’Hare. “It’s very concerning. It is not just a safety matter, but a public health matter.”

Some migrants stay at O’Hare for weeks, then are moved to po-



ERIN HOOLEY/AP

Run by a private firm hired by the city, migrants stay in a makeshift shelter at O’Hare International Airport on Sept. 20 in Chicago.

lice stations or manage to get into the few shelters available. Within weeks, Chicago plans to roll out winterized tents, something New York has done.

Up to 500 people have lived at O’Hare simultaneously in a space far smaller than a city block, shrouded by a curtain fastened shut with staples. Their movements are monitored by a private company whose staff control who enters and exits the curtain.

Sickness spreads quickly. The staffing company provides limited first aid and calls ambulances. A volunteer team of doctors visited once over the summer and their supplies were decimated.

Chicago offers meals, but only at specific times and many foods are unfamiliar to the new arrivals. While migrants closer to Chicago’s core have access to a strong network of volunteers, food and clothing donations at O’Hare are limited, due to airport security concerns.

Most of the 14,000 immigrants who have arrived in Chicago dur-

ing the last year have come from Texas, largely under the direction of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott.

As more migrants arrived, the city’s existing services were strained. Officials struggled to find longer-term housing solutions while saying the city needed more help from the state and federal governments. Brandon Johnson took office in May and has proposed tents.

Many migrants are from Venezuela, where a political, social and economic crisis in the past decade has pushed millions of people into poverty. At least 7.3 million have left, with many risking an often-harrowing route to the United States.

Maria Daniela Sanchez Valera, 26, who passed through Panama’s dangerous, jungle-clad Darien Gap with her 2-year-old daughter, arrived at O’Hare days ago. She fled her native Venezuela five years ago for Peru, where her daughter was born. After her daughter’s father was killed, she left.

“We come here with the intention of working, not with the intention of being given everything,” she said. A recent Biden Administration plan to offer temporary legal status status, and the ability to

work, to Venezuelans doesn’t apply to her because she arrived after the deadline.

She tries to keep the toddler entertained with walks around the terminal. On a recent day, a staff member told Valera to make her daughter stop running or else they would be kicked out. The company, Favorite Healthcare Staffing, said employees treat new arrivals with respect and it would investigate further.

Chicago began using the city’s two international airports as temporary shelters as the number of migrants arriving by plane increased. Nearly 3,000 people who have arrived by plane since June have sought shelter.

A handful live at Midway International Airport. When they need clothes or services, they walk 2 miles to a police station, volunteers say.

At O’Hare, migrants have spread out beyond the curtain for more space, sleeping along windows. Travelers wheeling suitcases and airline staff catching buses whiz by, some stopping to take pictures.

Chicago officials acknowledge using O’Hare isn’t ideal, but say there aren’t other options with a crisis they inherited.

WORLD

UN approves mission aimed at battling crime to Haiti

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI
Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya — Kenya's president on Tuesday welcomed the U.N. Security Council's resolution to send a Kenya-led multinational armed force to Haiti to help combat violent gangs and pledged that it will "not fail the people of Haiti."

President William Ruto's remarks came hours after Monday's vote at the United Nations, marking the first time in almost 20 years that a force would be deployed to the troubled Caribbean nation where gang violence has escalated dramatically with killings, kidnappings and rape.

Ruto said the Kenya-led force "will provide a different footprint in the history of international interventions in Haiti."

"We shall succeed in Haiti," he said. "We must not fail the people of Haiti."

The resolution, drafted by the United States and Ecuador, authorizes the force to deploy for one year, with a review after nine months. The non-U.N. mission would be funded by voluntary contributions, with the U.S. pledging up to \$200 million.

It wasn't immediately clear how big the force would be. Kenya's government had earlier proposed 1,000 police officers. Ruto did not

specify when they would be deployed, but Foreign Minister Alfred Mutua on Monday night said it would happen "within a short time."

Earlier, Mutua had said Kenya was waiting for the vote at the Security Council but that logistics planning was underway and that key Kenyan officers were taking French lessons to bridge the language barrier between Kenyans and Haitians.

Kenya's Inspector General of Police Japhet Koome on Friday expressed optimism that the peacekeeping mission would be a success. "Yes, we are going to Haiti, we shall lead that mission," he

said. "We have never failed."

However, Kenyan police have long been accused by watchdogs of corruption, use of deadly force, torture and other abuses.

An ex-police officer considered by many to be Haiti's most powerful gang leader — Jimmy Chérizier, known as "Barbecue" — has warned that he would fight any international force deployed to the country if it committed any abuses.

Kenya offered to lead the Haiti mission, citing its history in global peacekeeping missions.

The vote at the U.N. Security Council came nearly a year after Haiti's government requested the

immediate deployment of an armed force to quell a surge in gang violence and restore security so Haiti can hold long-delayed elections.

Haiti's National Police has struggled in its fight against gangs with only about 10,000 active officers in a country of more than 11 million people.

International intervention in Haiti has a complicated history. A U.N.-approved stabilization mission to Haiti that started in June 2004 was marred by a sexual abuse scandal and the introduction of cholera, which killed nearly 10,000 people. The mission ended in October 2017.

Armenia parliament votes to join the International Criminal Court

Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia — Armenia's parliament voted Tuesday to join the International Criminal Court, a move that further strains the country's ties with its old ally Russia after the court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin over events in Ukraine. Moscow last month called Yerevan's effort to join the ICC

an "unfriendly step," and the Russian Foreign Ministry summoned Armenia's ambassador. Countries that have signed and ratified the Rome Statute that created the ICC are bound to arrest Putin, who was indicted for war crimes connected to the deportation of children from Ukraine, if he sets foot on their soil.

Armenian officials have argued

the move has nothing to do with Russia and was prompted by Azerbaijan's aggression against the country.

Lawmakers voted to ratify the Rome Statute by a vote of 60-22. Armenia's president must sign off on the decision, which will come into force 60 days after the vote.

Armenia's relations with Russia have frayed significantly in recent

years.

In 2020, Moscow brokered a deal that ended a six-week war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It mandated that Yerevan cede to Baku large swaths of territory in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, a part of Azerbaijan with a predominantly Armenian population.

Russia then sent some 2,000 peacekeepers to the tumultuous

region and Armenia has accused the troops of failing to prevent recent hostilities by Azerbaijan that led to Baku taking full control of the region.

The Kremlin, in turn, has accused Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of precipitating the fall of Nagorno-Karabakh by acknowledging Azerbaijan's sovereignty over the region.

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WORLD

Three physicists win Nobel for work on electron movement

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in physics on Tuesday for their work on how electrons move around the atom during the tiniest fractions of seconds, a field that could one day lead to better electronics or disease diagnoses.

The award went to Pierre Agostini, Ferenc Krausz and Anne L’Huillier for their study of the tiny part of each atom that races around the center and that is fundamental to virtually everything: chemistry, physics, our bodies and our gadgets.

Electrons move around so fast that they have been out of reach of human efforts to isolate them, but by looking at the tiniest fraction of a second possible — one quintillionth of a second known as an attosecond — scientists now have a

“blurry” glimpse of them and that opens up whole new sciences, experts said.

“The electrons are very fast and the electrons are really the work-force in everywhere,” Nobel Committee member Mats Larsson said. “Once you can control and understand electrons you have taken a very big step forward.”

Their experiments “have given humanity new tools for exploring the world of electrons inside atoms and molecules,” according to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which announced the prize in Stockholm.

They “have demonstrated a way to create extremely short pulses of light that can be used to measure the rapid processes in which electrons move or change energy.”

At the moment, this science is about understanding our uni-



From left, French scientist Pierre Agostini, scientist Ferenc Krausz and French-Swedish physicist Anne L’Huillier won the Nobel Prize in physics on Tuesday for studying how electrons zip around the atom.

verse, but the hope is that it will eventually have many practical applications.

L’Huillier, who is only the fifth woman to receive a Nobel in physics, said she was teaching when she got the call that she had won. She joked that it was hard to finish the lesson.

“This is the most prestigious and I am so happy to get this prize. It’s incredible,” L’Huillier, of Lund University in Sweden, told the news conference announcing the prize. “As you know there are not so many women who got this prize so it’s very special.”

Agostini is affiliated with Ohio State University in the U.S. and

Krausz with the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics and Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany.

The Nobel Prizes carry a cash award of \$1 million. The money comes from a bequest left by the prize’s creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, who died in 1896.

Last year, three scientists jointly won the physics prize for proving that tiny particles could retain a connection with each other even when separated.

The phenomenon was once doubted but is now being explored for potential real-world applications such as encrypting information.

Tropical Storm pelts Caribbean

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Tropical storm Philippe dropped heavy rains in the northeast Caribbean on Tuesday, forcing governments to close schools in the region as forecasters warned of flash flooding.

The storm was located about 70 miles northwest of Anguilla on Tuesday morning and had winds up to 45 mph. It was moving northwest at 10 mph, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

A tropical storm warning was still in effect for Anguilla after Philippe made landfall in Barbuda late Monday. A tropical storm watch was in effect for the British Virgin Islands.

Forecasters warned that the strongest winds and rains would be felt by islands located south of the storm’s center as Philippe moves north of the Leeward Islands on Tuesday. Philippe was expected to turn north-northwest late Tuesday and then take a path north into open waters.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

State enacts sweeping gun control legislation

CT HARTFORD — Connecticut’s most wide-ranging gun control measure since the 2013 law enacted after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting took effect Sunday, with proponents vowing to pursue more gun legislation despite legal challenges happening across the country.

The new law, signed by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont in June, bans the open carrying of firearms and prohibits the sale of more than three handguns within 30 days to any one person, with some exceptions for instructors and others.

Immediately after it was passed, the law was challenged in court by gun rights supporters. Connecticut’s landmark 2013 gun law, passed in response to the 2012 elementary school shooting in Newtown that claimed 26 lives, is also being contested in court.

Phoenix experiences driest monsoon season

AZ PHOENIX — After a summer of extreme heat, Arizona’s most populous city is in the record books again. This time Phoenix is notching a record for dry heat.

The National Weather Service said the monsoon season this year in the arid Southwest dropped only 0.15 inches of rainfall from June 15 to Sept. 30. That’s the driest since the agency began keeping records in 1895. The previous mark was 0.35 inches in 1924.

Phoenix’s average rainfall during a monsoon season is 2.43 inches. Arizona gets less than 13 inches of average annual rainfall as America’s second driest state behind Nevada, which meteorologists say averages less than 10 inches of rain per year compared to the national average of about 30 inches.

7-day wait set for trans youth to get medications

NE LINCOLN — Nebraska is requiring transgender youth to wait seven days to start puberty blocking medications or hormone treatments under emergency regulations announced Sunday by the state health department.

The regulations also require transgender minors to undergo at least 40 hours of “gender-identity-focused” therapy that are “clinically neutral” before receiving any medical treatments meant to affirm their gender identities. A new law that took effect Sunday bans gender-affirming surgeries for trans youth under 19 and also required the state’s chief medical officer to spell out when and how those youth can receive other care.

The new regulations remain in effect while the department takes public comments on a permanent set of rules. The agency said it



JOHN LOCHER/AP

Sphere view

People take pictures during the opening night of the Sphere, Friday in Las Vegas. The legendary rock band U2 performed for two hours inside the massive, state-of-the-art spherical venue with crystal-clear audio. Throughout the night, there were a plethora of attractive visuals — including kaleidoscope images, a burning flag and Las Vegas’ skyline, taking the more than 18,000 attendees on U2’s epic musical journey.

plans to release a proposed final version by the end of October and then have a public hearing on Nov. 28 in Lincoln, the state capital.

Muscogee Nation judge rules for freedmen

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — A judge for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma ruled in favor of citizenship for two descendants of Black slaves once owned by tribal members, potentially paving the way for hundreds of other descendants known as freedmen.

District Judge Denette Mouser, based in the tribe’s headquarters in Okmulgee, ruled last week in favor of two Black Muscogee Nation freedmen, Rhonda Grayson and Jeff Kennedy, who had sued the tribe’s citizenship board for denying their applications.

Mouser reversed the board’s decision and ordered it to reconsider the applications in accordance with the tribe’s Treaty of 1866, which provides that descendants of those listed on the Creek Freedmen Roll are eligible for tribal citizenship.

Freedman citizenship has been a difficult issue for tribes as the U.S. reckons with its history of racism. The Cherokee Nation has granted full citizenship to its freedmen, while other tribes, like the Muscogee Nation, have argued that sovereignty allows

tribes to make their own decisions about who qualifies for citizenship.

Heat forces cancellation of long-distance races

MN MINNEAPOLIS — A forecast that record high temperatures and humidity would create “extreme and dangerous” conditions prompted organizers to cancel two long-distance races Sunday in Minnesota’s two largest cities that were expected to draw up to 20,000 runners.

The Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon from Minneapolis to neighboring St. Paul had been expected to draw up to 8,000 runners when organizers called it off early Sunday. The organizers, Twin Cities in Motion, also canceled a separate 10-mile race drawing 12,000 runners.

Airbnb guest ties up, robs homeowner at gunpoint

GA BUFORD — Police say a man who used Airbnb to rent a room in Georgia ended up robbing the home’s owner at gunpoint.

A homeowner in the metro Atlanta suburb of Buford called Gwinnett County police saying an armed man who had rented his basement through the room-sharing app had fled after stealing his

wallet.

According to a police report, the renter checked in late Tuesday and within an hour sent a text message to the owner upstairs saying the toilet was leaking. The homeowner told officers he was checking the toilet when he turned to see renter pointing a gun at him.

He said the renter bound his hands and feet with zip ties and fled with his wallet, which contained cash and credit cards, according to police.

Woman who fled Maui wildfire on foot dies

HI HONOLULU — A woman who escaped Hawaii’s Lahaina wildfire by running through a flaming field has died after spending more than seven weeks in a hospital burn unit.

Laurie Allen died Friday at Straub Medical Center in Honolulu, according to a gofundme page set up for her and her husband, Perry Allen.

“Laurie slipped away peacefully. Her heart was tired, and she was ready,” her sister-in-law, Penny Allen Hood, wrote on the website.

Allen’s husband, two brothers, a sister and other relatives were at her side.

Allen was among at least 98 people killed by the fire Aug. 8 that devastated historic Lahaina on the west coast of Maui. The fire was

the deadliest in the U.S. in more than a century and destroyed 2,200 buildings, most of them homes.

Attempt to pass tanker may have led to crash

IL SPRINGFIELD — The tanker truck crash in central Illinois that killed five people may have started when another vehicle tried to pass the chemical-laden truck, a federal transportation official said Sunday.

The tanker truck was carrying caustic anhydrous ammonia when it jackknifed Friday night, and hit a utility trailer parked just off the highway, according to Tom Chapman, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board. The tank carrying anhydrous ammonia hit the trailer hitch of the other vehicle, which punched a six-inch hole in the chemical container, Chapman said during news conference Sunday.

Chapman said the tanker truck’s driver pulled to the right and ran off the road as it traveled west on U.S. 40 in Teutopolis.

The crash spilled roughly half the truck’s 7,500 gallon load. The rest was drained and moved to a “secure location” for the NTSB’s investigation, authorities said late Saturday, as area evacuees were allowed to return to their homes.

FACES



MATTEL/TNS

Stevie Nicks' Barbie doll, priced at \$55, sold out in a day.

Nicks' Barbie doll a big hit on release

Fleetwood Mac singer Stevie Nicks is the latest celebrity to have one of the most iconic dolls to be made in her likeness. And, less than 24 hours after its release, Stevie Nicks Barbie sold out. Nicks unveiled the doll during her Sunday night concert at New York City's Madison Square Garden and it debuted on Mattel's site Monday morning. By Monday afternoon, the item was not available for purchase on the site.

Adorned in Nicks' signature "Rumours"-era get-up — velvet black dress with long flowing chiffon sleeves, platform heel boots and a tambourine adorned with streamers — the doll is priced at \$55 and, according to Mattel, is a "collectible doll that emulates her signature spellbinding style."

"My Stevie Barbie has been with me now for several months," Nicks shared on X, formerly known as Twitter. "When Mattel came to me asking if I would like to have a Barbie made in the 'Rumours' cover style, I was very overwhelmed. Of course, I questioned, 'Would she look like me? Would she have my spirit? Would she have my heart?'"

The "Rhiannon" singer continued: "When I look at her, I see my 27-year-old self. All the memories of walking out on a big stage in that black outfit and those gorgeous boots come rushing back — and then I see myself now in her face. What we have been through since 1975 — the battles we have fought, the lessons we have learned together. I am her, and she is me. She absolutely has my heart."

Other icons in the Music Series Barbie collection include Gloria Estefan, David Bowie, Elvis Presley, Elton John and Tina Turner.

Other news

■ **Matty Healy** insists that while The 1975 might be taking a break, they are not breaking up. The frontman told the audience during a show in San Jose, Calif., that he "didn't mean to scare any hardcore fans by insinuating that we were splitting up or anything like that," Rolling Stone reports. "That's not happening. Don't worry about that," the British singer confirmed.

From wire reports

Becky G shows off roots on 'Esquinas'

BY BERENICE BAUTISTA
Associated Press

Growing up on the border between Mexico and the United States, Becky G spoke English, but sang corridos, boleros and mariachi in Spanish. All her life, she dreamed of an album that would honor her family's roots and delve into those genres that she enjoys so much.

"A lot of the times they would tell me that I am too Mexican to be American or too American to be Mexican and that you can't be in the middle. Why would I have to give up a part of myself to be accepted here and the other way around?" said Becky G from New York in a recent video call interview conducted in English and Spanish.

Now, that album is finally here: "Esquinas" was released Sept. 28. Becky described it as "a love letter to my abuelitos, to my younger self and hopefully to the future generations."

"It's like the cross streets of two flags, two cultures, two languages," said the singer, who was born in California and thinks of her identity as 200%: 100% Mexican, 100% American.

The album was produced by the Latin Grammy nominee Édgar Barrera. Initially, Becky wanted to do something very traditional to show she was capable of dabbling in Mexican genres, so she incorporated elements such as trumpets, tololoche and acoustic guitar. She included covers of classics she listened to when she was younger, such as "Un puño de tierra" ("A handful of soil") by Ramón Ayala —



CHARLES SYKES, INVISION/AP

Becky G's latest album, released Sept. 28, was inspired by regional Mexican music.

dubbed "the king of the accordion."

As the project evolved, it allowed for alternative sounds and collaborations with the new generation of regional Mexican music artists: Iván Cornejo on "2ndo Chance," DannyLux with "Cries in Spanish" and Peso Pluma with "Chanel."

While this is her third Spanish-language album, she said the release of "Chanel" as a single was the first time fans heard her use "a tone of voice that was a little more different."

"It's because regional music is a little more organic, it has more acoustic elements and it's a lower tone of voice for me, but I love it," Becky said. "I think when we recorded that song it literally took us an hour to write it; a guitar and the two of us, me with the melodies and him with the story."

New this week: Drake, 'Fair Play,' last Friedkin film

Associated Press

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Music

■ Drake is no stranger to an inventive roll-out: the OVO rapper has a preference for surprise drops (last year's "Honestly, Nevermind" is evidence enough). But this year, he gave fans a bit of a heads up for his highly-anticipated "For all the Dogs" album. At select dates, on stage at his massively popular "It's All A Blur" Tour, Drake teased collaborations with Nicki Minaj and Bad Bunny. The latter marks the duo's first collaboration since 2018's "MÍA," where Drake's Spanish-language singing was heard 'round the world.

■ By the time '90s country had reached its apex, Reba McEntire was already a giant of her genre for her countless, consistent chart-toppers — including a famous cover of Bobby Gentry's feminist anthem "Fancy." Now, she's preparing to release a collection of acoustic covers of her greatest hits, cleverly titled "Not So Fancy." The songs transform in this format, notably due to the richness of McEntire's voice. A standout: Dolly Parton taking the place of Linda Davis on "Does He Love You."

■ The funny thing about being in a boy band is becoming a man and figuring out what comes next. For Louis Tomlinson, the cheeky, edgy member of the British (and 1/5 Irish) boy band One Direction, the journey hasn't been an easy one. In his documentary, "All of Those Voices," available to stream on Paramount+



Drake will release "For all the Dogs" on Friday.

on Wednesday, Tomlinson, 31, navigates extraordinary circumstances with a charismatic ordinariness. Grief, parenthood, identity and artmaking are explored with such meticulous and realistic care, you'd almost think he was once in the biggest group on the planet.

— AP Music Writer Maria Sherman

Movies

■ The corporate thriller "Fair Play" stars Phoebe Dynevor ("Bridgerton") and Alden Ehrenreich ("Solo") as analysts at the same hedge fund in a secret relationship. The workplace environment — sexist, cutthroat — is not exactly healthy for romance. In Chloe Domont's film, that turns out especially true after Emily (Dynevor) gets a promotion Luke (Ehrenreich) expected for himself. "Fair Play," which begins streaming Friday on Netflix, was a hit out of the Sundance Film Festival for its steamy scenes and thorny gender dynamics.

■ William Friedkin died in August but the legendary filmmaker of "The French Connection" and "The Exorcist" left one movie behind: "The Caine Mutiny Court Martial," which premiered at Venice in September. The movie, which streams Friday on Showtime and Paramount+, adapts Herman Wouk's oft-revived 1950s play, a courtroom drama about mismanagement and mutiny aboard a U.S. Navy destroyer. Friedkin transplants the story from World War II to post-9/11 America. It stars Kiefer Sutherland, Jason Clarke and the late Lance Reddick.

■ With the calendar turning to October, a long line of horror films is dutifully making its way to screens. "The Haunted Mansion," now available on Disney+, slides in on the spookier (rather than the scary) end of the spectrum. The film, based on the Walt Disney theme park attraction, is directed by Justin Simien ("Dear

In "Querido Abuelo" ("Dear Grandpa"), she talks about her roots, her family and the people she loves most. Since childhood, she had talked with her grandparents about a project "totally inspired by regional Mexican music." She decided it was finally time to focus on that project after the death of her grandfather Miguel, to whom she dedicated the track.

"He was a great inspiration to me, very hard-working. He was a very humble man who was always available to help every person in his community," she said. "He always had somewhere for them a place to sleep, food to give, he always had love to share."

Becky co-directs the video for "Querido Abuelo," in which she features multiple home clips on a ranch and of her maternal and paternal grandparents, with filmmaker Elías López.

"This project has a lot of content that is very personal," she said of the visuals accompanying the album. "Even the album cover was inspired; it's a photo my mom took for my birthday, when I was about two years old."

Becky said she planned to have a party with her family for the album release. She's having the biggest party with her fans during the current Mi Casa, Tu Casa Tour, her first headliner tour in the U.S.

"I feel very lucky and honored to celebrate this milestone, with my third studio album," she said. "We are going to be able to sing the music live with the fans and see in real time which songs they are most connected to, which songs are their favorites."

White People") and stars LaKeith Stanfield as an inspector called on to investigate a haunted house. Rosario Dawson, Owen Wilson, Danny DeVito, Tiffany Haddish and Jamie Lee Curtis round out the cast.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

Television

■ Season two of "Quantum Leap" premieres Wednesday on NBC. It takes place 30 years after the original Scott Bakula version and stars Raymond Lee as Ben, a physicist studying a time travel project called Quantum Leap. When Ben travels back in time, he's unable to return, but leaps around in the past, inhabiting different bodies. The series also shows Raymond's colleagues working to bring him back to the present. Episodes also stream on Peacock the next day.

■ Paramount+ taps into the appeal of Korean-produced TV shows with "Bargain." Adapted from an award-winning short film, the series begins at a faraway motel where men go to meet prostitutes. It's then revealed the men have been tricked to seek out the motel as a trap for a live black-market sale of human organs, and they're the ones up for auction. Then an earthquake hits, kicking off a fight for survival. All six episodes drop Thursday.

■ Omar Sy returns as France's favorite charming professional thief in a seven-episode installment of Netflix's "Lupin." Sy plays Assane, a man with a gift for disguise and deception, who targets those he believes deserve it. Assane has modeled himself after the protagonist in a book of stories called "Arsène Lupin, Gentleman Burglar." The series began with Assane scheming to avenge the wrongful conviction and death of his father. In season three, debuting Thursday, his mother needs his help.

— Alicia Rancilio



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EDITORIAL

Robert H. Reid, Editor in Chief
reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com

Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor
pinson.ann@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast
Erik Slavín, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific
Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington
Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com
(+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
David Schultz, District Manager
schultz.david@stripes.com
xsscirculation@stripes.com
+49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

Europe
Carlo Aquino, Circulation Manager
aquino.carlo@stripes.com
memberservices@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583.9136

Pacific
Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington
tel: (+1)202.886.0003
633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters
letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts
stripes.com/contactus

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OPINION

US deserves better vaccine rollout than this

By LISA JARVIS
Bloomberg Opinion

The rollout of this fall’s COVID vaccine has been frustrating. When CDC authorized the COVID shots for everyone 6 months and older on Sept. 12, the expectation was they’d be available within days. That hasn’t proven to be the case. Instead, appointments seem readily available, only to be canceled at the last minute; surprise bills for vaccines touted as free abound; and the littlest children seem left out altogether.

Avoiding a tripledemic this winter hinges on public health officials striking the right message to consumers, one that emphasizes both the new COVID booster and a flu shot — and, for those eligible, one of the new RSV vaccines. But convincing people to roll up their sleeves won’t help without a shot ready to sink into their arms.

So what has gone wrong? A confluence of factors, some clearly avoidable. For one, pharmacies seem to have flubbed scheduling, allowing people to sign up when either shots or pharmacists weren’t available.

A few hitches were perhaps to be expected this year — it’s the first time insurers, rather than the government, are paying for the shot. But not every site accepts every form of insurance, and some insurers have yet to offer the needed billing codes for the vaccine.

It’s hard not to wonder if it all could (and should) have gone better.

Public health authorities in the U.S. already faced an uphill battle this season. Last year, only 17% of the population got the updated COVID booster, and CDC data shows just 46.9% of adults got their flu shot. And a new survey conducted by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases found that just 40% of adults in the U.S. planned to

get the new COVID shot, while 43% said they were unsure or did not plan to get a flu shot.

The pandemic offered Americans a rare glimpse of a world where vaccines could be distributed efficiently and access is relatively simple — the shots had one distributor (the government), were free for everyone at every site, regardless of insurance, and, for the initial rounds of boosters at least, were generally widely available within days of being authorized. Now we’re back to our old, too often clunky system. “COVID has conditioned us to expect very rapid and efficient rollouts of an intervention into a very complex health care system,” says Larry Kociolek, medical director of infection prevention and control at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago. “That leads to some expectations that are difficult to meet.”

The challenge of finding a COVID vaccine has been particularly acute for parents. Nearly all of the roughly 300 kids signed up for seasonal vaccines at Elias Kass’ pediatric primary care practice in Seattle were supposed to get both COVID and flu shots. But the pediatric COVID shots have yet to arrive, and he’s spent hours trying to figure out when they will come in. The state’s department of health attributes the problem to a delay with the distributor, McKesson, but Kass says no one is offering clear guidance on when vaccines will become available or how many doses his practice will initially get.

Parents’ urgency comes as hospitalizations from COVID hit a recent peak. And while children are at low risk of the most serious outcomes of the disease, parents worry their kids will get the virus before the vaccine is finally available.

Being able to receive both shots at once

Sycamore Gap tree’s butchering offers broader lessons

By LARA WILLIAMS
Bloomberg Opinion

On Thursday, the U.K. lost two national treasures. One was Michael Gambon, the actor who played Dumbledore in many of the Harry Potter movies, who died at 82 after a bout of pneumonia. The other was a tree.

The Sycamore Gap tree stood proudly in northeast England next to Hadrian’s Wall, an ancient boundary that once divided Roman Britannia and Caledonia. Framed beautifully by rising hillsides, the sycamore was likely one of the most photographed natural landmarks in the U.K., if not the world. It even had a starring role in the 1991 movie “Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves.” But on the morning of Sept. 28, the tree was found in two pieces. It had been felled overnight in what the police believe was a deliberate act of vandalism.

It has rightly been met with an outpouring of grief and anger. Two people have been arrested. There are two things we should take away from the tragedy, though. The first is a reminder of nature’s importance in our lives. The second is a call to action: Nature’s decline in the country goes far beyond Sycamore Gap.

Reading the messages of those mourning the tree, it’s clear just how much it means to people. Some proposed to their partners there. Others scattered the ashes of their

loved ones nearby. For some, it was a place of healing after long illnesses and times of stress or simply the background for many happy memories with friends and family. This isn’t unique to Sycamore Gap or the U.K. Trees have given meaning to humanity for millennia, whether the holy banyans in India, Japan’s shinboku or the sacred groves found around the globe.

Immersion in nature has been proven time and again to benefit our mental and physical well-being. A study of 20,000 people by researchers at the University of Exeter found that people who spent two hours a week in green spaces were substantially more likely to report good health than those who didn’t. The psychological welfare of a population is linked to its proximity to nature and trees in both urban and rural settings. Research has linked experiences in nature with happiness, social cohesion, a sense of meaning, cognitive function, impulse inhibition and children’s school performance. So it’s no wonder we are drawn to places like Sycamore Gap.

Unfortunately, the same day of the massacre of the tree, a new report detailing the state of Britain’s natural landscapes was published. It should provoke the same emotional outpouring.

The study found that the U.K. is one of the most nature-depleted nations in the world. One in six species are at risk of extinction. Forty-three percent of British

matters to families, Kass says. Beyond the inconvenience of scheduling multiple outings — like missing work and taking kids out of school or day care — there’s also “all of the drama” that comes with coaxing sometimes fearful children to roll up their sleeves, he says. And while pharmacies seem to have some supply, the lions’ share of kids tend to get their vaccines at their doctor’s office. Many states do not allow children under age 3 to be vaccinated at a pharmacy counter.

That leaves parents, particularly those with toddlers, in a frustrating limbo. Many have been told their best bet is to keep calling their pediatrician’s office or refreshing the provider’s website in hopes that appointments will magically appear.

Even more vexing, the situation might not feel much better next year. Distribution and insurance coverage should be more routine by then, but COVID continues to bedevil the world with its refusal to settle into a seasonal pattern. “You can be very confident that the flu is going to start sometime between November and February every single year,” Kociolek says. That provides some wiggle room if the fall flu shot rollout is delayed. Without that same predictability for COVID, vaccine supply could routinely arrive out of sync with demand. And that doesn’t bode well for improving uptake.

That would be a real shame. Vaccines that combine COVID and flu into a single shot could be one solution to the messiness, but are still several years away. Until then, more transparency about the status of the vaccine supply would help.

Lisa Jarvis is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering biotech, health care and the pharmaceutical industry. Previously, she was executive editor of Chemical & Engineering News. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

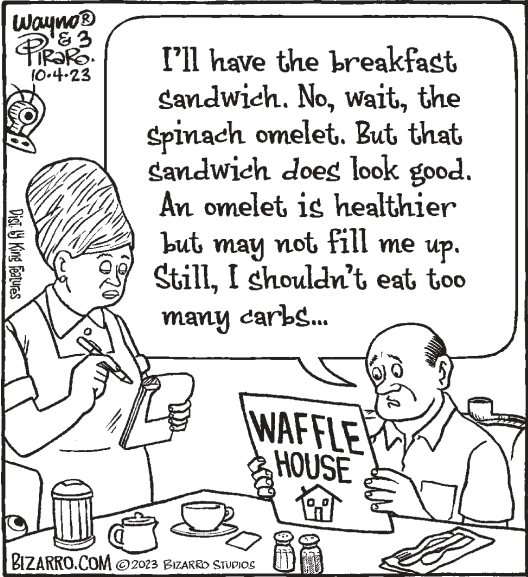
birds are threatened, with skylarks dropping 59% in abundance since monitoring began in 1970. Pollinating insects, such as bees, have decreased by 18% on average, while more than half of our flowering plants, mosses and relatives have disappeared from areas where they used to thrive. It’s a sobering assessment of a countryside struggling with the effects of intensive farming, unsustainable fishing practices and climate change. Indeed, it’s worth noting that the butchered sycamore tree, a non-native species, once stood among many others.

Unfortunately, such depletion is repeated across the world. The stock of natural capital per person declined by nearly 40% between 1992 and 2014, while produced capital per person doubled.

Now, I could talk about the importance of nature to economies and its place in the fight against the climate crisis. But, ultimately, people aren’t drawn to spend time or locate significant life events at Sycamore Gap or places like it because of its carbon sequestration properties or financial contribution to the U.K. They do so because nature is beautiful and makes us feel good. Let that be reason enough to preserve, protect and restore our wild spaces.

Lara Williams is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering climate change. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

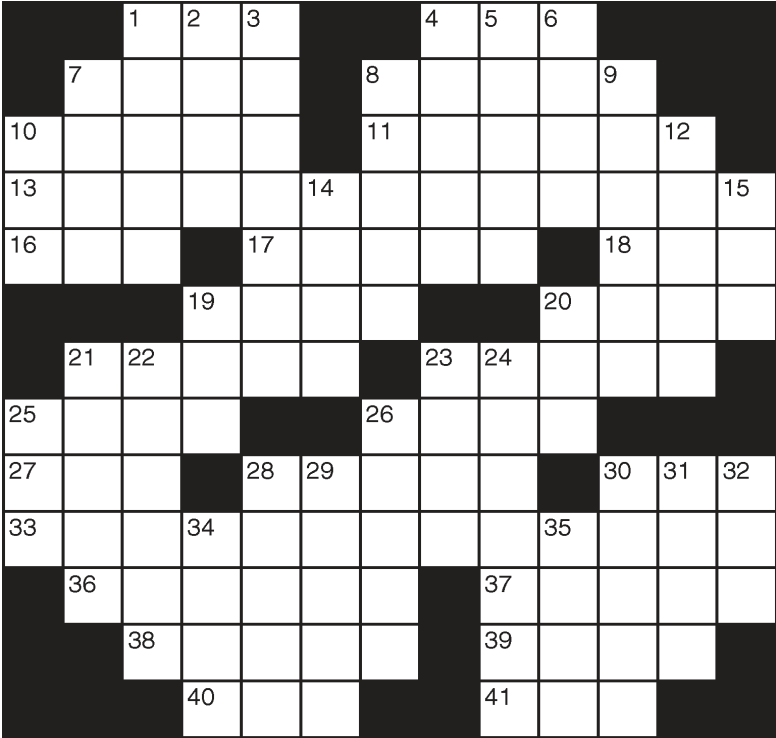
Bizarro



Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 "Butter"
K-pop band
4 — de plume
7 Avocado dip, for short
8 Blogger and "Tribes" author Seth
10 Concert venue
11 Handsome guy
13 Some heads of households
16 Commotion
17 Well-versed folks?
18 Consume
19 Clothing store section
20 Wild revelry
21 Cash drawers
23 Brief rest
25 Kid's plea
26 Ale measure
27 Jackson 5 hit song
28 Daredevil's feat
30 Do something
33 Colorful post-rainstorm sight
36 Baltimore bird
37 Dutch cheese
38 Stylish wrap

- 39 Online craft shop
40 CIA operative
41 Born abroad?

- 15 Pigs' digs
19 Roman 1051
20 "Shoo!"
21 Forbidden
22 Acquires, as debts
23 — colada
24 Immunity trigger
25 Scoundrel
26 Liquefy
28 Sailing vessel
29 Boob tube, to a Brit
30 Mistreat
31 Wyoming city
32 Former Delta rival
34 Morsels
35 Part of a chord

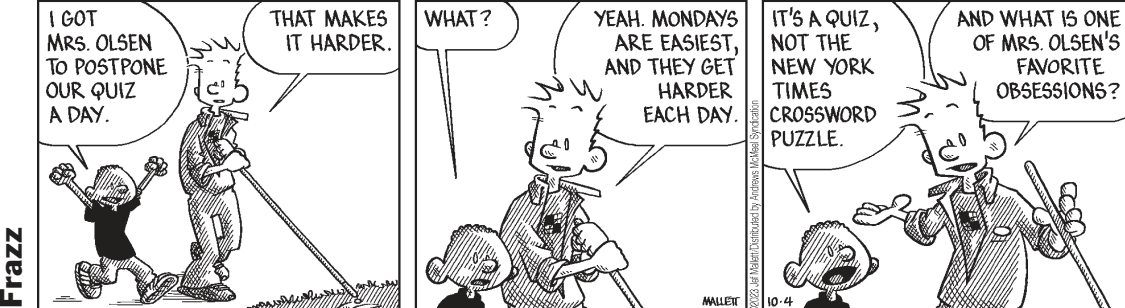
DOWN

- 1 Good, in Guadalajara
2 Tart flavor
3 Surgeon's tool
4 Greet silently
5 Aromas
6 Ore source
7 Crossword diagram
8 Stares stupidly
9 Calif. NFL team
10 Simile words
12 Put on a show
14 Eternities

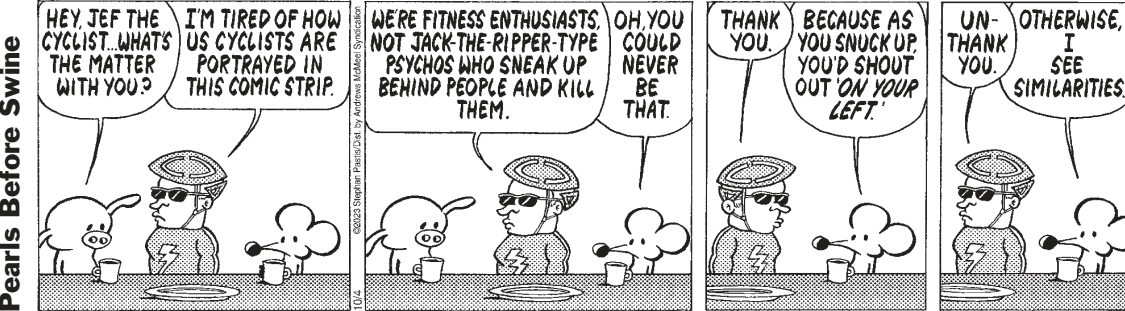
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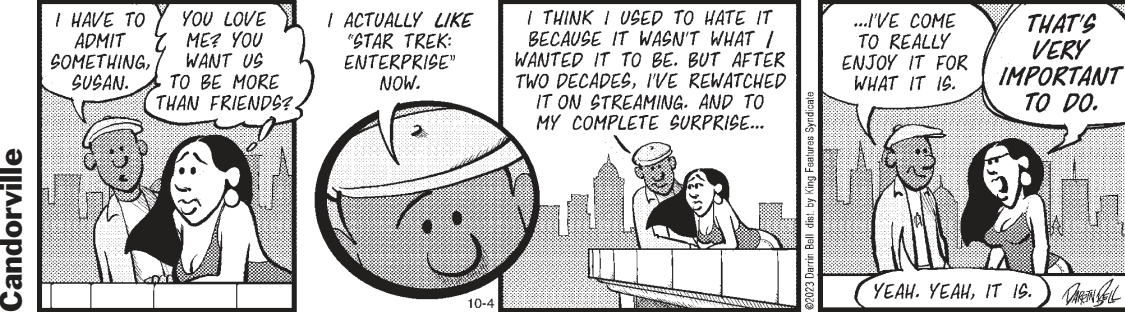
Pearls Before Swine



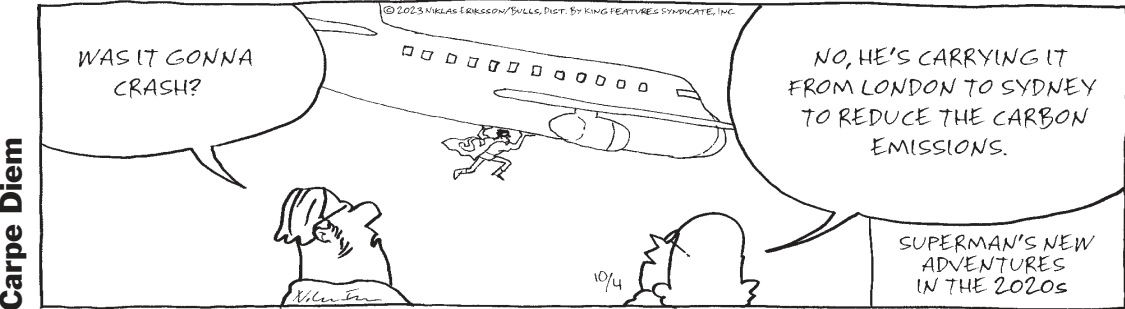
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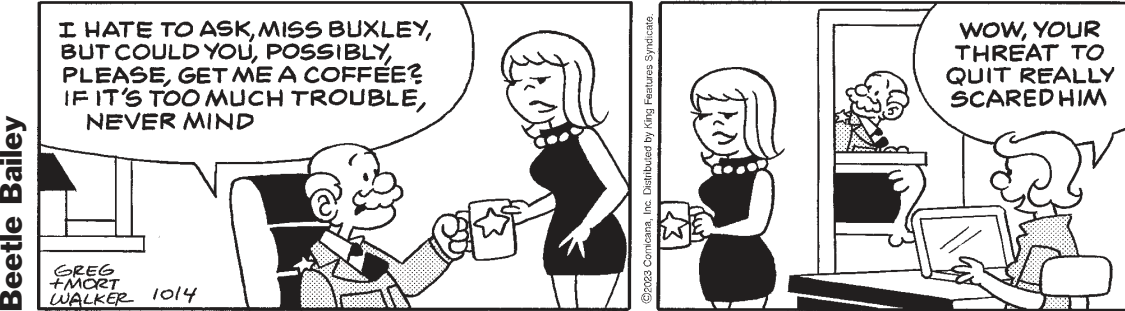
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



10-4

CRYPTOQUIP

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MWIKW EIH YCG GMRBCZCWN
JLGXAHR, OIQSB RIQ OLSS
YCJ L OYQXCWN GXLH?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NEW YORK CITY BOROUGH THAT'S KNOWN FOR ITS PRODUCTION OF SUPERIOR GLOSSY FABRIC: SATIN ISLAND.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals G

SCOREBOARD/NHL

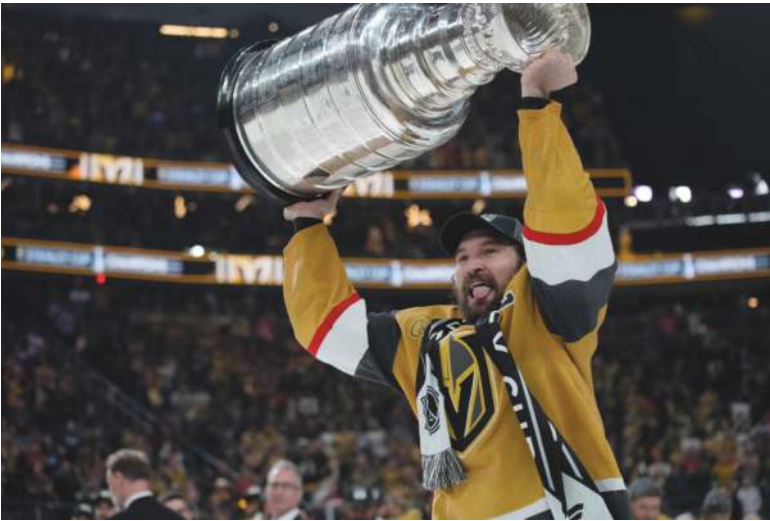
COLLEGE FOOTBALL
Schedule Wednesday's games SOUTH Jacksonville St. (4-1) at Middle Tennessee (1-4) FAR WEST FIU (3-2) at New Mexico St. (2-3) Thursday's games SOUTH Sam Houston St. (0-4) at Liberty (4-0) W. Kentucky (3-2) at Louisiana Tech (3-3) Friday's games EAST Cornell (2-1) at Harvard (3-0) MIDWEST Nebraska (2-3) at Illinois (2-3) SOUTHWEST Kansas St. (3-1) at Oklahoma St. (2-2)
PRO BASKETBALL
WNBA playoffs x-if necessary Finals (Best-of-five) No.1 Las Vegas vs. No. 2 New York Sunday: at New York Wednesday, Oct. 11: at New York Sunday, Oct. 15: at Las Vegas x-Wednesday, Oct. 18: at Las Vegas x-Friday, Oct. 20: at New York

DEALS

Monday's transactions BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Reinstated RHP Felix Bautista from the 15-day IL. Recalled SS Joey Ortiz, CF Kyle Stowers, RHP Bryan Baker and LHP Nick Vespi from Norfolk (IL). BOSTON RED SOX — Reinstated 1B Triston Casas and 3B Luis Urias from the 10-day IL. Reinstated LHPs Joely Rodriguez and James Paxton and RHP Chris Martin from the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Zack Weiss, Bryan Mata, Justin Garza and Logan Gilaspie, LHPs Brandon Walter and Joe Jacques and SS David Hamilton from Worcester (IL). CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Reinstated RHPs Jesse Scholtens, Michael Kopech and Gregory Santos from the 15-day IL. Reinstated OF Luis Robert Jr. from the 10-day IL. Recalled OF Oscar Colas, 3B Bryan Ramos, OF Adam Haseley, RHPs Nicholas Padilla and Edgar Navarro, OF Clint Frazier and SS Jose Rodriguez from Charlotte (IL). CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Reinstated C David Fry from the paternity list. Reinstated SS Gabriel Arias from the 10-day IL. Reinstated LHP Logan Allen from the 15-day IL. Recalled SS Angel Martinez, RHPs Hunter Gaddis, Michael Kelly and Cody Morris, LHP Tim Herrin and Joey Cantillo, SS Juan Brito, OF George Valera and 3B Jhonkensy Noel from Columbus (IL). DETROIT TIGERS — Reinstated RHPs Mason Englert and Matt Manning from the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Spencer Turnbull, C Donny Sands, SSS Ryan Kreidler and Eddys Leonard and RHP Brendan White from Toledo (IL). Recalled RHP Sawyer Gipson-Long and SS Wenceel Perez from FCL Tigers. HOUSTON ASTROS — Reinstated RHP Ryne Stanek from the paternity list. Recalled LHPs Matt Gage Parker Mushinski and RHPs Ronel Blanco, Shawn Dubin, Enoli Paredes, Brandon Bielak and Forrest Whitley OF Corey Julks, C Cesar Salazar and SS David Hensley from Sugar Land (PCL). KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Reinstated RHPs John McMillon, Brad Keller and Brady Singer from the 15-day IL. Recalled 2B Samad Taylor, OF Diego Hernandez, RHPs Jonathan Heasley, Max Castillo and Dylan Coleman, Cs Tyler Cropley and Nate Eaton and OF Bubba Thompson from Omaha (IL). LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Declined option on manager Phil Nevin's contract. Reinstated LHPs Tyler Anderson and Patrick Sandoval and RHP Shohei Ohtani from the 15-day IL. Reinstated 1B C.J. Cron from the 10-day IL. Recalled SS Livan Soto, OF Jordyn Adams, LHPs Johnathan Diaz and Luca Ingram, RHPs Victor Mederos and Jose Marte, 1B Jared Walsh and 3B Trey Cabbage from Salt Lake (PCL). MINNESOTA TWINS — Recalled LHP Brent Haddock and RHPs Jordan Balazovic, Cole Sands, Ronny Henriquez and Simeon Woods Richardson from St. Paul (IL). NEW YORK YANKEES — Reinstated LHP Anthony Misiewicz, RHPs Jonathan Loaisiga, Luis Severino, Tommy Kahnle and Albert Abreu from the 15-day IL. Reinstated OF Billy McKinney from the 10-day IL. Recalled OF Franchy Cordero, RHPs Ron Maricao, Randy Vasquez and Yoendrys Gomez and LHP Matt Krook from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL). OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Reinstated RHPs Angel Felipe and Austin Pruitt from the 15-day IL. Recalled LHPs Kirby Sneed, Sam Long,Hogan Harris and Easton Lucas, RHPs Tayler Scott, Chad Smith and Devin Sweet, 3Bs Buddy Kennedy and Jonah Bride and SS Kevin Smith from Las Vegas (PCL). SEATTLE MARINERS — Reinstated C Tom Murphy from the 10-day IL. Recalled RHPs Adam Oller, Ryan Jensen, Darren McCaughan and Ryder Ryan, OFs Cade Marlowe and Taylor Trammell and Cs Cooper Hummel and Brian O'Keefe from Tacoma (PCL). Recalled RHP Eduard Bazarzo from ACL Mariners. Recalled OF Jonatan Clase and RHPs Ty Adcock and Prelander Berroa from Arkansas. TAMPA BAY RAYS — Sent RHP Erasmo Ramirez outright to Durham (IL). Reinstat-	
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TENNIS	China Open Monday At National Tennis Center Beijing Purse: \$3,633,875 Surface: Hardcourt outdoor Men's Singles Quarterfinals Daniil Medvedev (2), Russia, def. Ugo Humbert, France, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1. Alexander Zverev (8), Germany, def. Nicolas Jarry, Chile, 6-1, 6-7 (5), 6-3. Carlos Alcaraz (1), Spain, def. Casper Ruud (7), Norway, 6-4, 6-2. Jannik Sinner (6), Italy, def. Grigor Dimitrov, Bulgaria, 6-4, 3-6, 6-2. Women's Singles Round of 64 Lesia Tsurenko, Ukraine, def. Zhu Lin, China, 6-0, 3-0, ret. Caroline Garcia (9), France, def. Kateryna Baindl, Ukraine, 6-2, 6-4. Iga Swiatek (2), Poland, def. Sara Sorribes Tormo, Spain, 6-4, 6-3. Wang Xinyu, China, def. Vera Zvonareva, Russia, 6-4, 6-3. Ons Jabeur (7), Tunisia, def. Ashlyn Krueger, United States, 6-3, 6-4. Daria Kasatkina (11), Russia, def. Mayar Sherif, Egypt, 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8). Coco Gauff (3), United States, def. Ekaterina Alexandrova, Russia, 7-5, 6-3. Elena Rybakina (5), Kazakhstan, def. Zheng Qinwen, China, 6-1, 6-2.
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Round of 32 Jelena Ostapenko (13), Latvia, def. Linda Noskova, Czech Republic, walkover. Anhelina Kalinina, Ukraine, def. Daria Saville, Australia, 6-2, 7-6 (5). Jasmine Paolini, Italy, def. Yuan Yue, China, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4. Magda Linette, Poland, def. Jennifer Brady, United States, 3-1, ret. Liudmila Samsonova, Russia, def. Petra Kvitova (12), Czech Republic, 6-4, 7-5.	Astana Open Monday At National Tennis Center Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan Purse: \$1,017,850 Surface: Hardcourt indoor Men's Singles Semifinals Sebastian Korda (5), United States, def. Hamad Medjedovic, Serbia, 6-7 (8), 7-6 (2), 7-6 (3). Adrian Mannarino (6), France, def. Sebastian Ofner, Austria, 6-4, 6-2. Men's Doubles Semifinals Mate Pavic, Croatia, and John Peers (4), Australia, def. Robin Haase and Botic Van de Zandschulp, Netherlands, 6-2, 6-1. Nathaniel Lammons and Jackson Withrow (2), United States, def. Ariel Behar, Uruguay, and Adam Pavlasek, Czech Republic, 6-3, 2-6, 10-4.
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JOHN LOCHER/AP

Right wing Mark Stone returns as captain after helping lead the Golden Knights to the Stanley Cup last season.

Vegas can't use Bolts' playbook

Repeating will have to follow different plan

By MARK ANDERSON
Associated Press
 LAS VEGAS — The Golden Knights don't have to look far to find inspiration when it comes to trying to repeat as Stanley Cup champions.

Vegas' problem is it can't copy what the Lightning accomplished just two seasons ago because Tampa Bay's repeat was achieved in a much different fashion than what the Knights are trying to do.

The Knights are trying to go back to back after a short offseason, following the NHL's more traditional timeline.

Tampa Bay won the 2020 Cup in the bubble in Edmonton, Alberta, in September of that year after the end of the season was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lightning's 2021 championship came after that season didn't begin until January and was reduced from 82 to 56 games.

But the Knights also have the advantage of bringing back nearly their entire roster. Reilly Smith is the only player who skated in Vegas' five-game title series victory over the Florida Panthers who isn't back. Captain Mark Stone, Conn Smythe Trophy winner Jonathan Marchessault and Jack Eichel return as does goalie Adin Hill, who won 11 of 14 starts in the postseason after an injury put him in the net.

Salary-cap issues forced the Lightning to make some tough decisions, including exposing and losing Yanni Gourde to the Seattle Kraken in the expansion draft, watching Blake Coleman depart in free agency and waiving Tyler Johnson. Tampa Bay not only overcame those losses to repeat, but almost made it three in a row, appearing in the 2022 Final as well

before losing to the Colorado Avalanche in six games.

"The salary cap and to a certain extent the NHL Entry Draft is set up to level the playing field, prop up some teams and make it harder for some teams to sustain success," Lightning general manager Julien BriseBois said.

"I think (the cap) does bring a certain level of parity right now ... a competitive balance that we haven't seen before."

As different as the situations are for Vegas and Tampa Bay, Knights GM Kelly McCrimmon said the way Lightning put together their roster hits home.

"Great top-end forwards, really strong on defense and then — not the same group for each of their two championships — but really well-defined bottom-six forwards that really help that team play to an identity," McCrimmon said. "I think that we're constructed in a lot of respects somewhat similarly."

Knights coach Bruce Cassidy spoke with Lightning coach Jon Cooper about what to expect after a championship, but said the two situations were too different to glean much information.

Even though a repeat champion was accomplished fairly recently, it's not a common occurrence in the NHL's salary-cap era, which began with the 2005-06 season. The Pittsburgh Penguins in 2017 are the only other team to pull it off. So the Knights don't have recent history in their favor nor any examples they can follow. But they are the reigning champions, and the Knights have no intention of simply handing over the trophy.

AP sports writer Fred Goodall contributed to this report.

NBA

Stars already have Paris Olympics in mind

BY TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

Kevin Durant just got done with his summer vacation. He's planning to go to France for work next summer, and plenty of other big NBA names hope to join him.

Stephen Curry is among them. Durant — along with many other top players, including Curry, the all-time three-point king — said Monday at media days being held around the league that he plans to play for his country at next summer's Paris Olympics, when the Americans will try for a fifth consecutive gold medal. If he plays and the United States wins, Durant would be the first men's player with four basketball golds.

"I will play in the Olympics next year," Durant adamantly said at Phoenix's media day. Curry essentially said the same, because if he wants to play, it's certain that USA Basketball will find him a spot.

"Definitely want to be there," Curry said at Golden State's media day. "Definitely want to be on the team."

Others expressed the same sentiment: Bam Adebayo has said he's committed to the team, while DeMar DeRozan, Devin Booker, Bradley Beal, Jaylen Brown, Donovan Mitchell, Khris Middleton, Julius Randle, Zach LaVine, Aaron Gordon, Fred VanVleet and Brook Lopez are among those who indicated they would play if asked. Kyrie Irving said the same at Dallas' media day last week, and Draymond Green previously indicated that he wants another Olympic opportunity.

This much is clear: There are 12 roster spots and a lot more than 12 interested players. It's a wonderful problem for USA Basketball to



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry could join his head coach, Steve Kerr, center, at the Paris Olympics. Kerr is set to coach the U.S. men's national team and Curry has said he wants to be on the team.

have.

"From the players that we have here off the top of my head that could fill that roster up, I don't think it would be too much of a physical toll," said Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, the NBA's all-time scoring leader confirming that he's interested in another shot at gold. "I wouldn't have to do much. Rebound a little bit, pass a little bit, defend, block some shots, you know? But we'll see. We'll see what happens."

Also planning to play in the Olympics: Joel Embiid. The uniform he'd wear is still a mystery.

Embiid isn't a man without a country, but rather a man who just hasn't chosen a country yet. He would be eligible to play for France or the U.S. because he has dual citizenship — and his birth country, Cameroon, still has a shot at qualifying for the Paris Games as well.

"My goal is to play in the Olympics," Embiid said. "I love all three options. Cameroon, I'm born there, I'm from there and I always want to represent my country. But the goal is also to play in the Olympics. If we had a chance, or if we would qualify for the Olympics,

that will be an easy decision. But that's still up in the air. And I really do want to play in the Olympics."

When will Embiid decide? "Probably going to make that decision in the next few days," he said.

Others who revealed they have interest in playing included Zion Williamson, Paul George, Kawhi Leonard and Kyle Kuzma. Among those who haven't ruled it out: Jimmy Butler and Anthony Davis.

"Playing for USA Basketball, I think there's no greater honor," Brown said. "Playing for your country, coming from my community, coming from where I

come from, where the majority of our demographic comes from — having an opportunity to represent that, your community, your outer community, the ones that support you is part of it as well. So being able to participate would be great."

The U.S. finished fourth at this summer's World Cup, yet did enough to reclaim the No. 1 spot in the FIBA world rankings and earn a berth in the Paris Olympics.

"I am proud of the World Cup Team and all they did to qualify USA Basketball for Paris 2024," said USA Basketball managing director Grant Hill, who along with men's national team director Sean Ford and coach Steve Kerr of Golden State will pick the team in the coming months. "We are thrilled there is interest and excitement going into next summer, and are looking forward to going through the process of naming the 2024 Olympic Team."

They will have tough decisions to make. Let the lobbying begin.

"It's something I've always dreamed of experiencing since I was a little kid," Milwaukee center Brook Lopez said. "I'm absolutely for it. I asked Steve Kerr while I was subbing into a game last year, I didn't ask, I told him I was free this coming summer of '24. Hopefully this will help remind him."

Durant could join six women, all of them Americans, with four Olympic basketball golds. Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi each have five Olympic golds, while Teresa Edwards, Lisa Leslie, Tamika Catchings and Sylvia Fowles are four-time Olympic champions.

Some might play for their first Olympic gold. Curry has never been to the Olympics, and he hopes that's finally about to change, with him saying "it's the one thing I haven't done."

Antetokounmpo praises Bucks for Lillard trade

BY STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo praised the Milwaukee Bucks for showing a commitment to winning another championship by acquiring Damian Lillard, but added that it still doesn't make financial sense for him to sign a contract extension right now.

Antetokounmpo is eligible to sign a three-year extension totaling about \$170 million, but he can make significantly more by waiting until next summer to do so. Antetokounmpo's contract runs through the 2024-25 season, though he also has a player option for 2025-26.

"I said that it did not make sense to sign the contract right now because money's not impor-

tant — a lot of money is important. So I'm going to sign it next year," Antetokounmpo said with a laugh. "But, no, at the end of the day, again, it doesn't make sense. It does not make sense for me to sign it right now. I've got to always look at what's best for me and my family, for my situation."

"But at the end of the day, I want to be a Milwaukee Buck for the rest of my career, as long as we are winning. It's as simple as that."

Antetokounmpo had told The New York Times this summer that he wanted to make sure the Bucks were committed to winning another championship before deciding whether to sign his extension.

The Bucks have since added Lillard as part of a three-team trade in which they gave up two-

time All-Star Jrue Holiday, guard Grayson Allen and plenty of draft capital. In Lillard and Antetokounmpo, the Bucks now have two of the 75 players selected on the NBA's 75th anniversary team.

"Definitely I feel like the team has shown they're committed to winning a championship," Antetokounmpo said. "So I'm happy."

So is Lillard, who had requested a trade from the Portland Trail Blazers because of his interest in competing for a title.

"I don't think it's a secret how much I want to win," Lillard said. "That's how we got here today. They want to win equally as bad as I do. I couldn't be more excited. I couldn't be more thankful for this opportunity, to be part of this organization, to play alongside the best player in the league."



MORRY GASH/AP

The Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard pose for a picture during media day in Milwaukee on Monday.

NFL

Debate continues over controversial call

Jets still furious about flag that negated late interception, gave Chiefs first down

By DENNIS WASZAK JR.
Associated Press

It's the holding call heard 'round the NFL. And the debate over whether it was even a penalty continues to rage.

Jets cornerback Sauce Gardner was penalized for defensive holding on Chiefs wide receiver Marquez Valdes-Scantling on a third-and-20 play late in the fourth quarter Sunday night — a decision by referee Frank Steratore that negated an interception by Michael Carter II and gave the ball back to Patrick Mahomes.

Kansas City worked the clock the rest of the way and held on for a 23-20 victory over New York.

A livid Jets coach Robert Saleh shouted at Steratore after the call, and again on the final play of the game. Gardner was also angry, saying he was stunned — and that he didn't hold Valdes-Scantling. Chiefs coach Andy Reid agreed with the call, and so did Mahomes.

On Monday morning, the NFL had "Chiefs are 2-0 as Swifties" in its social media profiles. That, of course, spun the conspiracy theorists into a tizzy since pop superstar Taylor Swift was at the game at MetLife Stadium to watch Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce. Swift was also at the Chiefs' home win over the Chicago Bears last week at Arrowhead Stadium after Kelce invited her.

"Lmaoo maybe if I was a swiftie, the ref wouldn't of threw the flag," Gardner said in a post on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. Last season's AP Defensive Rookie of the Year then edited the



post to say: "Lmaoo maybe if I was a swiftie then ...nvm." The post was later deleted.

The NFL also removed the reference to Swift from its social media profiles.

Saleh was asked about his opinion on the call Monday after he had time to calm down and watch replays.

"I'm just going to leave that one alone until I get a chance to get clarification (from the league)," Saleh said after pausing briefly.

The situation kicked off conversations about the call on sports radio in the New York area as well as on ESPN and NFL Network.



BRYAN WOOLSTON, ABOVE, AND FRANK FRANKLIN II, LEFT/AP

Above: New York Jets coach Robert Saleh, shouts at an official during the second half of Sunday's game against the Kansas City Chiefs in East Rutherford, N.J. The Chiefs won 23-20 after a controversial defensive holding call against the Jets on third-and-20 which gave the Chiefs a first down. Left: Jets cornerback Sauce Gardner was called for the hold that also negated an interception by Michael Carter II.

Mahomes supported the call in an interview with 610 AM Sports Radio in Kansas City on Monday.

"I mean, at the end of the day, you get your hands around the guy's neck like 15 yards downfield, they're going to call something," the Chiefs quarterback said. "If it's going to be holding or illegal contact, it's just not allowed. Once I saw him grab him, I threw it up there to give Marquez a chance, kind of knowing the flag was going to come.

"You could see it from my position. I mean, I understand people want to let teams play and stuff like that, but you can't get your hands

around guys' necks like that."

Gardner quote-tweeted a post from the radio station that included Mahomes' comments.

"Since we are commenting, let me say it from my perspective," Gardner wrote with a laughing emoji. "For starters, this was around 5-7 yds from the LOS... not 15. 2. I extended my arms and he made the choice to lean on me with all of his weight which caused my hand to slide to the back of his pad; not his neck.

"I did not grab him, I actually made a conscious effort to remove my right arm as you can see in the video. He then tried to swim with

his right hand and I pushed his arm down with my left hand lmaoo.. There yall have it. It was not a holding or illegal contact. Ohh my fault, it was holding bc he threw the flag."

Dean Blandino, a rules analyst for Fox Sports who previously served as the NFL's vice president of officiating, said officials made the correct call.

"Valdes-Scantling tries to break to the inside and Gardner reaches across his body and grabs the left shoulder and restricts his ability to get downfield," Blandino said in a video posted on X by The 33rd Team. "It was properly called."

Expectations: Hurts rallied Philadelphia from 10-point deficit

FROM PAGE 24

win this way," Eagles coach Nick Sirianni said.

Hurts played his first turnover-free game of the season, throwing for 319 yards and two TDs to lead Philadelphia back from a 10-point deficit.

"I think it is reassuring for us," Hurts said. "When you feel those moments, they build so much character for you. ... No one is satisfied. No one is ever satisfied. I'm never satisfied, but winning is the only thing that matters and we'll enjoy those wins because we earned them and we know what winning can do if you take it in the right way, so we just want to keep that hunger, keep the eagerness to get better, just keep growing."

The Bills have won three in a row following a season-opening loss to the Jets on the night Aaron Rodgers' season ended. Their 48-



MATT SLOCUM/AP

Philadelphia quarterback Jalen Hurts, left, had his first turnover-free game of the season, throwing for 319 yards and two touchdowns.

20 win over Miami (3-1) was most impressive. Josh Allen and Co. sent a clear message that the AFC

East still goes through Buffalo. The Dolphins came in unbeaten off a 70-point outburst.

"Every week is a different week," Allen said. "It doesn't matter what you did last week or what you're going to do next week."

Allen, who had a perfect 158.3 passer rating after throwing for 320 yards and four touchdowns, wants to see the Bills improve.

"I still think we have more," Allen said. "We're gonna have to learn a lot from this tape and find ways to get better, but we left a lot out there and we're all focused on correcting those things."

The Cowboys, coming off a stunning loss to Arizona, earned their third dominant win of the season, 38-3, over the Patriots. It was the worst loss in Bill Belichick's career. Dallas has outscored its opponents 108-13 in three wins, but the offense still hasn't hit its stride.

"Pretty efficient but still not to

our standard, honestly," QB Dak Prescott said. "To have as many opportunities as we had in the red zone and (just) have some field goals. ... A lot of good comes from it and a lot of great comes from it when you win a game 38-3. So, it's a lot easier to get better with a win like this and a score like that."

The 49ers pulled away from the Cardinals in the fourth quarter of a 35-16 win. Brock Purdy improved to 11-0 in games he starts and finishes without injury. Christian McCaffrey has been outstanding on an offense filled with playmakers and the defense has been stingy.

Next week, the Cowboys visit the 49ers.

The Dolphins, Ravens and Buccaneers also are 3-1 and the Seahawks matched that record with a 24-3 win over the Giants on Monday night.

NFL

Scoreboard

American Conference							
East							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Buffalo	3	1	0	.750	139	55	
Miami	3	1	0	.750	150	119	
N.Y. Jets	1	3	0	.250	62	84	
New England	1	3	0	.250	55	97	
South							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Houston	2	2	0	.500	96	79	
Indianapolis	2	2	0	.500	97	99	
Jacksonville	2	2	0	.500	80	82	
Tennessee	2	2	0	.500	72	70	
North							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Baltimore	3	1	0	.750	99	58	
Cleveland	2	2	0	.500	76	60	
Pittsburgh	2	2	0	.500	62	100	
Cincinnati	1	3	0	.250	49	94	
West							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Kansas City	3	1	0	.750	101	60	
L.A. Chargers	2	2	0	.500	110	104	
Denver	1	3	0	.250	100	150	
Las Vegas	1	3	0	.250	62	101	
National Conference							
East							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Philadelphia	4	0	0	1.000	118	90	
Dallas	3	1	0	.750	124	41	
Washington	2	2	0	.500	89	120	
N.Y. Giants	1	3	0	.250	46	122	
South							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Tampa Bay	3	1	0	.750	84	68	
Atlanta	2	2	0	.500	62	77	
New Orleans	2	2	0	.500	62	76	
Carolina	0	4	0	.000	67	102	
North							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
Detroit	3	1	0	.750	106	83	
Green Bay	2	2	0	.500	100	96	
Minnesota	1	3	0	.250	90	95	
Chicago	0	4	0	.000	75	137	
West							
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	
San Francisco	4	0	0	1.000	125	58	
Seattle	3	1	0	.750	111	91	
L.A. Rams	2	2	0	.500	98	85	
Arizona	1	3	0	.250	88	102	
Sunday's games							
Jacksonville 23, Atlanta 7							
Baltimore 28, Cleveland 3							
Buffalo 48, Miami 20							
Denver 31, Chicago 28							
Houston 30, Pittsburgh 6							
L.A. Rams 29, Indianapolis 23, OT							
Minnesota 21, Carolina 13							
Philadelphia 34, Washington 31, OT							
Tampa Bay 26, New Orleans 9							
Tennessee 27, Cincinnati 3							
L.A. Chargers 24, Las Vegas 17							
Dallas 38, New England 3							
San Francisco 35, Arizona 16							
Kansas City 23, N.Y. Jets 20							
Monday's game							
Seattle 24, N.Y. Giants 3							
Thursday's game							
Chicago at Washington							
Sunday, Oct. 8							
Jacksonville vs Buffalo at London							
Baltimore at Pittsburgh							
Carolina at Detroit							
Houston at Atlanta							
N.Y. Giants at Miami							
New Orleans at New England							
Tennessee at Indianapolis							
Cincinnati at Arizona							
Philadelphia at L.A. Rams							
Kansas City at Minnesota							
N.Y. Jets at Denver							
Dallas at San Francisco							
Open: Cleveland, L.A. Chargers, Seattle, Tampa Bay							
Monday, Oct. 9							
Green Bay at Las Vegas							
Thursday, Oct. 12							
Denver at Kansas City							
Sunday, Oct. 15							
Baltimore at Tennessee							
Carolina at Miami							
Indianapolis at Jacksonville							
Minnesota at Chicago							
New Orleans at Houston							
Seattle at Cincinnati							
San Francisco at Cleveland							
Washington at Atlanta							
New England at Las Vegas							
Arizona at L.A. Rams							
Detroit at Tampa Bay							
Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets							
N.Y. Giants at Buffalo							
Open: Green Bay, Pittsburgh							

Seahawks' defense stuffs Giants

Team-record 11 sacks, Witherspoon's 97-yard pick-6 portend a new Boomtown

By TOM CANAVAN
Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — With all the points the Seattle Seahawks were scoring this season, it was easy to overlook their defense. They were excellent against the run but the pass defense was horrible.

A new Legion of Boom appeared on Monday night and wreaked havoc on Daniel Jones and the New York Giants. Rookie cornerback Devon Witherspoon scored on a 97-yard interception return late in the third quarter and the Seahawks tied a team record with 11 sacks in a 24-3 victory over the struggling and offensively inept Giants.

“We’re just getting going,” Seattle coach Pete Carroll said. “We’re just putting it together. A night like this for our defense to play that explosively... I can’t remember seeking double digit sacks.”

Geno Smith threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to DK Metcalf late in the first quarter after a strip-sack by defensive end Mario Edwards Jr. set up a short drive and Kenneth Walker III scored on a 1-yard run just before halftime as the Seahawks (3-1) won their third straight.

A fourth-quarter interception by Quandre Diggs set up a field goal by Jason Myers as Seattle improved to 6-0 at MetLife Stadium, including the franchise’s only Super Bowl win, a 43-8 decision over Denver in 2014.

Besides the sacks, Seattle held New York, which played without star running back Saquon Barkley (ankle) for the second straight game, to 248 yards in total offense, 6-for-16 on third down and forced three turnovers.

Bobby Wagner, Jordyn Brooks, Witherspoon and Uchenna Nwosu each had two sacks.

“I think we needed it. Easy game defensively,” said Wagner, who also had 17 tackles. “We’ve been getting better. We’ve done a good job stopping the run but the thing was applying pressure. The last game we had a lot of pressures but not as many sacks. I think this game we turned those pressures into sacks.”

Graham Gano kicked a 55-yard field goal for the Giants (1-3), who have played one good half in four games this season and have looked nothing like the team that made the playoffs last year for the first time since 2016.

“I mean give credit to their defense,” Jones said after another inept performance by New York’s offense. “They rush hard and play well together, but I’ve got to do a better job getting through my reads, getting the ball out of my hand, and making quick decisions,



PHOTOS BY ADAM HUNGER/AP

Seahawks defensive end Mario Edwards Jr. forces a fumble on a sack of Giants quarterback Daniel Jones during the first quarter on Monday. It was one of 11 sacks for Seattle and led to its first touchdwn.



Seahawks defensive tackle Jarran Reed, right, and linebacker Bobby Wagner celebrate during the third quarter after a play against the Giants. Wagner finished with two sacks and 17 tackles.

so I’ll definitely look to work on that.”

Seattle was clinging to a 14-3 lead late in third quarter when the Giants moved from their 43 to the Seahawks 5. On second-and-goal, Daniel Jones tried to hit Parris Campbell and the receiver seemed to stumble. Jones’ pass went to Witherspoon, the No. 5 overall pick in the draft, and he scored almost untouched crossing from the right side of the field to the left to make it 21-3.

“It was a play that we had seen

on film formation,” Witherspoon said of his first NFL interception. “He ran basically a return route. I jumped it. He threw the ball and just tried to get to the box. That was my whole mindset.”

The Giants’ offense has really struggled the past two games without Barkley and left tackle Andrew Thomas missing his third straight game with a hamstring injury.

“No excuses, we didn’t get the job done,” Giants coach Brian Daboll said.

The Seahawks didn’t do a lot against the Giants’ defense. The only real drive they had was seven plays, 75 yards just before half-time that was engineered by backup Drew Lock, who replaced Smith after he tweaked a knee and needed X-rays. The drive included a 51-yard pass to Noah Fant.

Smith, who returned for the second half, finished 13-for-20 for 110 yards. A battered Jones was 27-for-34 for 203 yards. He ran 10 times for 66 yards.

This was the Giants’ second home game this season and both have been ugly. There were mostly Cowboys fans in the stands after a 40-0 season-opening loss and the fans left at the end of this one wore Seahawks colors.

“I’d be upset, too, if I was the fans,” Daboll said. “So there’s a lot of things we’ve got to do better and that’s what we’re going to do.”

Strange start

Seattle’s first offensive play from scrimmage took about five minutes. Walker took a handoff and headed right. Inside linebacker Bobby Okereke broke through and seemingly made a tackle for a 2-yard loss. For a moment everyone on the field stopped.

Walker felt his body never touched the turf and he got up and ran 20 yards downfield, stopped and then to the end zone, where an official ruled touchdown.

There was a long review of the scoring play and videotape showed Walker’s elbow hit the turf. The touchdown call was reversed.

MLB

Mets, Yankees face uncertain offseason

High payrolls not enough to make playoffs in nightmare season for New York teams

By MIKE FITZPATRICK
Associated Press

For the first time in nine years, baseball's postseason won't include a New York team.

Neither one even came close, really.

Back in March, such a monumental flop by the Mets and Yankees would've been difficult to envision. After combining for 200 regular-season wins in 2022, both clubs were coming off playoff appearances and both added big-name talent in the offseason.

With stars like Aaron Judge and Justin Verlander on each side of town — not to mention the two largest payrolls in the majors — the highly anticipated 2023 campaign shaped up as one of the most exciting in the city's history.

But by August, all anyone in the Big Apple was talking about was football, as both tattered, top-heavy teams played out the string in front of empty seats. Following parallel nightmare seasons, they headed home early for the winter to watch the playoffs on television.

What in the name of Nelson Rockefeller happened here?

The \$275 million Bronx Bombers batted .227 — only lowly Oakland was worse — and ranked 25th in runs despite replacing hitting coach Dillon Lawson with Sean Casey at the All-Star break. They finished fourth in the AL East at 82-80, narrowly avoiding the franchise's first losing season since 1992.

Pete Alonso and the Mets, with a \$355 million roster on opening day that was by far the most expensive in big league history, came in fourth in the NL East, nearly 30 games behind division champion Atlanta. After winning 101 games last year, second-most in team history, they fell to 74-87 — the largest drop-off in the majors this year.

Manager Buck Showalter was fired Sunday, clearing the way for new president of baseball operations David Stearns to pick the next Mets skipper. Stearns was formally introduced Monday at a Citi Field news conference.

"When things aren't going well in

New York, things happen and they happen quickly," center fielder Brandon Nimmo said. "It's just our job as players to try and not let these things happen."

Injuries played a damaging role, no doubt.

Mets closer Edwin Díaz missed the entire season after blowing out his knee while celebrating a victory with Puerto Rico in the World Baseball Classic. That exposed a thin bullpen, while the back of a remade rotation collapsed when Verlander, Max Scherzer and José Quintana were sidelined at various times early in the year.

All-Star right fielder Starling Marte, meanwhile, was a shell of himself following double groin surgery last offseason and played only 86 unproductive games.

Up in the Bronx, \$162 million newcomer Carlos Rodón didn't make his Yankees debut until July 7 because of forearm and back issues. Once he did, he never found his form on the mound and went a miserable 3-8 with a 6.85 ERA in 14 starts.

A slew of other veterans also drastically underperformed during injury-interrupted seasons, including first baseman Anthony Rizzo, designated hitter Giancarlo Stanton, center fielder Harrison Bader, third baseman Josh Donaldson, catcher Jose Trevino and pitchers Luis Severino and Nestor Cortes.

Domingo Germán threw a perfect game in late June, then entered inpatient treatment for alcohol abuse in early August.

Of course, the most glaring injury was to Judge, who tore a ligament in his right big toe when he crashed into the outfield fence while making a terrific catch June 3 at Dodger Stadium.

The following day, the Yankees moved a season-high 11 games over .500. They were 54-48 and still in the middle of the wild-card chase when the reigning AL MVP returned to the lineup July 28, only to go 8-20 in their next 28 games while essentially falling out of the race.

"We can talk about injuries, we can talk about missed opportunities, but I think it comes down to us as players not showing up when we



NOAH K. MURRAY/AP

New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone talks to umpire Lance Barrett against the Toronto Blue Jays on Sept. 20 in New York. Boone is expected to return despite leading the team to its worst season since 1992.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

The New York Mets' DJ Stewart tosses his bat and helmet after striking out against the Miami Marlins on Thursday in New York.

needed to," Judge said.

Similarly, the Mets were 30-27 on June 1 after a three-game sweep of defending NL champion Philadelphia and appeared poised to go on a run with Verlander and Scherzer both healthy on the mound. But they dropped their next seven games and 19 of 25 during the June swoon that wrecked their season.

Seven games under .500 on July 26, the Mets shifted their focus to the future and executed a stunning sel-

loff in the days before the Aug. 1 trade deadline. They parted with Scherzer, Verlander and four other useful veterans in deals to obtain minor league prospects that restocked the farm system.

When he returned to Citi Field with the Texas Rangers in late August, a mystified Scherzer was asked how on earth the Mets unraveled so badly?

"That's a billion-dollar question," he said.

Now what?

Yankees

After setting an American League record with 62 home runs in 2022, Judge became a free agent but stayed with the Yankees when they signed him to a \$360 million, nine-year contract. He had 37 homers, 75 RBIs and a 1.019 OPS in 106 games this season.

Now the captain needs a lot more help.

The Yankees must find a way to get younger and less injury-prone while adding protection for Judge in the lineup. Free-agent third baseman Matt Chapman could be a fit.

Prized prospect Jasson Domínguez provided an encouraging spark with four homers and a .980 OPS in eight major league games after getting called up Sept. 1, but the 20-year-old center fielder then had Tommy John surgery on his throwing elbow that's expected to sideline

him until at least July.

With Domínguez down for now, the Yankees must decide if they want to pursue a multiyear contract with a high-profile free-agent outfielder like Cody Bellinger.

Mets

Alonso (46 homers, 118 RBIs) can become a free agent following the 2024 season and the Mets might make a critical choice this winter — trade him for future assets or sign him to a long-term contract.

Stearns did a terrific job unearthing good-quality pitching when he was running the Milwaukee Brewers, and he takes on a similar challenge with the Mets.

Blake Snell, Aaron Nola and Jordan Montgomery are among the attractive starting pitchers set to hit the free-agent market after the World Series. Both teams in New York figure to be interested in Shohei Ohtani, although the two-way superstar isn't expected to pitch in 2024 following elbow surgery.

The Mets have a group of promising prospects who ended the season at Double-A Binghamton. Rookie hitters Francisco Álvarez, Brett Baty, Mark Vientos and Ronny Mauricio all flashed impressive raw power in the majors this year, but none of them had an on-base percentage higher than .296, and defense remains a question mark across the board.

Nevin out as Angels manager after second losing season

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Phil Nevin will not return as the Los Angeles Angels' manager next season.

The Angels announced Monday that they are declining their contract option for 2024 on Nevin, who ran the dugout for the last 1½ seasons. Los Angeles will have its fourth manager in six seasons since the departure of Mike Scioscia, who had the job for 19 years.

Nevin went 119-149 in his first major league managerial job while both of his



Nevin

teams missed the playoffs. He managed this season on a one-year contract while owner Arte Moreno explored a sale of the team, only to take it off the market.

Nevin was promoted to the Angels' top job in June 2022 when Joe Maddon was fired in the middle of a 14-game losing streak. Nevin, who had only joined Maddon's staff as his third-

base coach in November 2021, became the first Orange County native to manage the Angels.

As a former elite infielder and No. 1 overall pick who still carries himself like a ballplayer, Nevin appeared to be well-liked by his players. But the Angels didn't win for him, finishing 46-60 after he took over in 2022 and going 73-89 this season for the franchise's eighth straight losing record.

"I know it didn't go the way we wanted, but I'm proud of the way that room held togeth-

er," Nevin said Sunday. "It wasn't fun. It's not fun ending the way we did, but it's a great group in there. There's a lot of great things that are on the horizon here with the young players and the guys coming back. Good future."

Although the club didn't formally confirm it, general manager Perry Minasian is apparently staying for a fourth season with the Angels. In the news release announcing Nevin's firing, the Angels also said Minasian would address the media Tuesday.

MLB



ERIN HOOLEY/AP

Rookie hitters like the Minnesota Twins' Royce Lewis helped make the 2023 class the most productive ever.

Prolific rookie hitters made their mark fast this season

By Dave Campbell
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Royce Lewis has played in 70 games for the Minnesota Twins. He has five grand slams.

The AL Central champion Twins haven't had a rookie so ready for major league stardom since Joe Mauer nearly two decades ago. Despite a decided lack of live games over the last three seasons due to injuries and the pandemic, Lewis entered the lineup after finishing his ACL rehab and immediately hit like he'd been there for years.

"An impact on our team that we can't really measure, except to say we're a significantly better team when he's out there," manager Rocco Baldelli said.

Lewis is just one of dozens of first-year position players crushing it at the plate for contending teams, many of them with a postseason place clinched. By at least one key measure, this is the best class of rookie hitters the major leagues have ever seen.

Call this the year of the instant hit.

According to FanGraphs data, the advanced metric Wins Above Replacement total for all rookie hitters in 2023 (75.5) is the best since 1900, entering the final weekend of the regular season slightly ahead of the 2015 group (75.1) headlined by Kris Bryant, Francisco Lindor, Carlos Correa and others.

Corbin Carroll (Arizona Diamondbacks), Yainer Diaz (Houston Astros), Gunnar Henderson (Baltimore Orioles) and James Outman (Los Angeles Dodgers) are some of the most prominent and productive first-year standouts guaranteed of more games in the postseason this month.

The 2023 rookies, who had a run-

ning start on the new rules regarding the pitch clock and pickoff limits in the minor leagues, have also blown away every other rookie class in modern major league history with their total — through Thursday — of 825 stolen bases. The next closest class (1977) had 691. Esteury Ruiz (Oakland Athletics) and Carroll each topped 50 steals.

Carroll, even by comparison to so many other dazzling debuts, is the clear front-runner for the National League Rookie of the Year award.

"He's an unbelievable talent, and he brings a certain edge to the game because of his precision and because of his athleticism, but he combines it all and goes out there and makes plays and does things and times it right," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said. "He's just gotten even better with the timing of everything that he does, and that's hard to do for a 22-year-old player. He can carry us."

Major league pitching in this rocket-armed era is as hard to hit as it's been in decades. So why are these rookies raking like they are these days? The 2022 class has the third-best WAR (54.9) of all time, according to FanGraphs, followed by 2019 (49.5).

"A lot of what we do at the major league level, process-wise, is more similar at the Triple-A level than ever before," Baldelli said. "We try to make it resemble what they are going to see when they get here. I think a lot of those small things add up to really help players in a big way."

That includes immersion in everything from pitcher scouting reports to advanced statistical data to video swing analysis.

"Hitting coaches in the minors are really good, and they commun-

icate with the big-league hitting coaches as well," Diaz said through an Astros interpreter. "So it goes all the way down."

Lewis, who was recently sidelined by a hamstring strain, has a .921 on-base-plus-slugging percentage. That's the best in baseball this season for rookies with more than the 130 at-bats that disqualify them from that status for 2024.

The first overall pick in the 2017 draft likely would've been ready to join the Twins sometime in 2020 had there been a full schedule. The following winter, he tore his ACL during a workout. After more than a year of rehab, Lewis played 12 games for the Twins in 2022 before another ligament tear in the same knee.

Growing up in the Los Angeles area, he routinely faced strong pitching in high school, a trend that is not going to end anytime soon with the prevalence of one-sport specializing that puts teenage prospects in year-round training mode.

Another factor in accelerated development is major league teams inviting more prospects to spring training, exposing them earlier to elite pitching in exhibition games. Front offices also appear more willing to promote their rising stars faster through the farm system rather than subscribe to the old-school ethos of minor leaguers earning their stripes.

"When you perform, I think you should just go," Lewis said. "I think that's finally how they're going about it, and it's fun to watch all the young guys come up. At the same time, if I was a veteran, I would probably be saying, 'Hey, I think you should take your time.' But as a young guy now, it's fun to watch."

Average game time drops 24 minutes due to pitch clock

By Ronald Blum
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The average time of a nine-inning major league game dropped to 2 hours, 40 minutes in the first year of the pitch clock, a 24-minute decrease in a season of change that resulted in a spike in batting average and the most stolen bases in nearly 40 years.

Left-handed hitters benefitted from the new restrictions on defensive shifts, runners took advantage of the slightly decreased distance between bases and average fastball velocity set another record.

The average game time dropped to its 1985 level after passing 3 hours for the first time in 2016. It reached a record 3:10 in 2021 before the introduction of the PitchCom electronic pitch-calling device helped bring it down to 3:04 last year. Over the objections of the players' association, MLB instituted a pitch clock set at 15 seconds with the bases empty and 20 seconds with runners on base.

"It took some getting used to, but once you get used to it the game's a lot faster," Minnesota shortstop Carlos Correa said. "There's not wasted time. The pace was great, so I think it's here to stay."

There were nine 3½-hour games, down from a record 390 in 2021.

"I think it's gone smoothly," Los Angeles Dodgers catcher Will Smith said. "It's nice for you to get home a bit earlier. You don't have the 4-hour games anymore."

Miami had the fastest average at just under 2:35, while Baltimore and San Diego topped the majors at 2:44.

MLB's clock will remain the same for the postseason, which averaged 3:23 for nine-inning games last year.

"There are bigger moments, bigger times where we do need to

Scoreboard

Playoffs	
x-if necessary	
WILD CARD SERIES	
(Best-of-three)	
American League	
Minnesota vs. Toronto	
Tuesday:	Toronto at Minnesota
Wednesday:	Toronto (Berrios 11-12) at Minnesota (Gray 8-8), AFN-Sports2, 10:30 p.m. Wednesday CET; 5:30 a.m. Thursday JKT
x-Thursday:	at Minnesota
National League	
Tampa Bay vs. Texas	
Tuesday:	Texas at Tampa Bay
Wednesday:	Texas (TBD) at Tampa Bay (Eflin 16-8), AFN-Sports2, 9 p.m. Wednesday CET; 4 a.m. Thursday JKT
x-Thursday:	at Tampa Bay
National League	
Milwaukee vs. Arizona	
Tuesday:	Arizona at Milwaukee
Wednesday:	Arizona (Gallen 17-9) at Milwaukee (TBD), AFN-Sports2, 1 a.m. Thursday CET; 8 a.m. Thursday JKT
x-Thursday:	Arizona at Milwaukee
Philadelphia vs. Miami	
Tuesday:	Miami at Philadelphia
Wednesday:	Miami (Garrett 9-7) at Philadelphia (Nola 12-9), AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Thursday CET; 9 a.m. Thursday JKT
x-Thursday:	at Philadelphia
DIVISION SERIES	
(Best-of-five)	
American League	
Baltimore vs. Tampa Bay-Texas winner	
Saturday:	at Baltimore
Sunday, Oct. 8:	at Baltimore
Tuesday, Oct. 10:	at Tampa Bay-Texas winner
x-Wednesday, Oct. 11:	at Tampa Bay-Texas winner
x-Friday, Oct. 13:	at Baltimore
National League	
Houston vs. Minnesota-Toronto winner	
Saturday:	at Houston
Sunday, Oct. 8:	at Houston
Tuesday, Oct. 10:	at Minnesota-Toronto winner
x-Wednesday, Oct. 11:	at Minnesota-Toronto winner
x-Friday, Oct. 13:	at Houston
National League	
Atlanta vs. Philadelphia-Miami winner	
Saturday:	at Atlanta
Monday, Oct. 9:	at Atlanta
Wednesday, Oct. 11:	at Philadelphia-Miami winner
x-Thursday, Oct. 12:	at Philadelphia-Miami winner
x-Saturday, Oct. 14:	at Atlanta
Los Angeles vs. Milwaukee-Arizona winner	
Saturday, Oct. 7:	at Los Angeles
Monday, Oct. 9:	at Los Angeles
Wednesday, Oct. 11:	at Milwaukee-Arizona winner
x-Thursday, Oct. 12:	at Milwaukee-Arizona winner
x-Saturday, Oct. 14:	at Los Angeles

step back and think about something we just did or think about something that we're going to be doing pitch-wise or swing-wise," said Zack Wheeler, who started Philadelphia's playoff opener against Miami on Tuesday. "I'm not a big fan of the pitch clock, but it is what it is."



TERRANCE WILLIAMS/AP

The Orioles' Adley Rutschman takes an at-bat as the pitch clock winds down against the Colorado Rockies on Aug. 26 in Baltimore.

SPORTS



Doing some soul searching
Yankees, Mets have decisions to make after nightmare seasons » **MLB, Page 22**

ANALYSIS

Meeting expectations



Above: In keeping San Francisco unbeaten at 4-0, quarterback Brock Purdy improved to 11-0 in games he starts and finishes without injury. Right: Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen had a perfect 158.3 passer rating after throwing for 320 yards and four touchdowns in a 48-20 rout of Miami.

Four games in, NFL favorites are who we thought they were

By Rob Maaddi
Associated Press

The NFL's top preseason contenders played like it in the first quarter of the season. Defending champion Kansas City (3-1), Philadelphia (4-0), San Francisco (4-0), Dallas (3-1) and Buffalo (3-1) are 17-3 combined. The Chiefs, Eagles, 49ers, Cowboys and Bills are, in Dennis Green's words, who we thought they were.

Of the six teams with the best Super Bowl odds entering the season, only the Bengals (1-3) haven't lived up to expectations. Cincinnati is struggling because Joe Burrow is playing hurt. A calf injury has severely limited the NFL's highest-paid player.

If Burrow can get healthy and get the Bengals going, they can't be counted out because they've won road playoff games against Kansas City and Buffalo in the past two years.

Most of the frontrunners are winning despite not playing their best football.

The Chiefs barely escaped with a 23-20 victory over the New York Jets on Sunday night.

Their only loss came against the Lions (3-1) in the season opener — a game played without Travis Kelce and Chris Jones.



Mahomes

Patrick Mahomes posted the fourth-lowest passer rating (63.6) of his career against New York's tough defense, but the two-time

Super Bowl MVP made critical plays with his legs on a final drive to ice the win.

"It's not always going to be a pretty four quarters, especially against a good defense, but it's about, when the opportunity arises, going down and finishing," Mahomes said.

The Eagles needed overtime to beat the Commanders 34-31 behind Jalen Hurts' best game of the season. They're undefeated even though they haven't hit their stride. Philly's passing attack took four weeks to click. The defense has been spotty. The Eagles face the Rams and Jets the next two weeks, so they have an opportunity to work out the kinks before the schedule gets tougher.

"When you can win different ways — you're going to be put in all these scenarios through a long season, right? And so, it just builds confidence that, OK, we've been here before, we know how to

SEE EXPECTATIONS ON PAGE 20



Giannis praises Bucks for acquiring Lillard » **NBA, Page 19**

