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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 82 Edition 169 ©SS 2023 CONTINGENCY EDITION FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2023 Free to Deployed Areas

## US military grounds all Ospreys after crash

**By TARA COPP**  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The military announced late Wednesday it was grounding all of its Osprey V-22 helicopters, one week after eight Air Force Special Operations Command service members died in a crash off the coast of Japan.

The Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps took the extraordinary step of grounding hundreds of aircraft after a preliminary investigation of last week's crash indicated that a materiel failure — that something went wrong with the aircraft — and not a mistake by the crew led to the deaths.

The crash raised new questions about the safety of the Osprey, which has been involved in multiple fatal accidents over its relatively short time in service. Japan grounded its fleet of 14 Ospreys after the crash.

Lt. Gen. Tony Bauernfeind, head of Air Force Special Operations Command, directed the shutdown "to mitigate risk while the investigation continues," the command said in a statement. "Preliminary investigation information indicates a potential materiel failure caused the mishap, but the underlying cause of the failure is unknown at this time."

In a separate notice, Naval Air Systems Command said it was grounding all Ospreys. The command is responsible for the Marine Corps and Navy variants of the aircraft.

The Air Force said it was unknown how long the aircraft would be grounded. It said the shutdown was expected to re-

**SEE OSPREY ON PAGE 6**



PHOTOS BY COREY DICKSTEIN/Stars and Stripes

**Jay Tenison, a former Army tanker who served in Iraq, enters an M1A2 Abrams tank at Fort Moore, Ga., on Tuesday before firing the tank's main gun as his dying wish. Tenison was diagnosed in 2022 with terminal stomach cancer.**

## Parting shot

### Iraq War veteran with terminal cancer fires tank for last time

**By COREY DICKSTEIN**  
*Stars and Stripes*

FORT MOORE, Ga. — The first blast of the M1A2 Abrams tank's cannon sent a 120 mm round exploding into a small, green target in the distance on a remote training range at the Army base.

Inside the tank's turret, the shot sent shockwaves through Jay Tenison's body — something the Iraq

War veteran had not felt in nearly two decades. For just a few minutes on Tuesday, he said firing that tank transported him back to his youthful Army days and back to a time long before a terminal cancer diagnosis would dominate his life.

"I was not prepared for the first boom when I fired my first round, but that's every bit of what I re-



**An M1A2 Abrams tank fires at Fort Moore.**

membered from before, just as awesome — the thunder of doom," Tenison, 39, said shortly after firing the tank's gun at Fort Moore, the former Fort Benning, where Army officials worked for weeks to grant him his dying wish of shooting a tank one last time. "I

was a little bit nervous going into it ... I just wanted to make sure I did a good job engaging those targets and getting weapons fired on the right locations and killing targets.

"It felt wonderful ... knowing I

**SEE SHOT ON PAGE 6**

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## McDonald's testing new CosMc's chain concept

Associated Press

McDonald's is testing a new restaurant format with customizable drinks and treats designed to appeal to afternoon snackers — and grab sales from competitors like Starbucks and Dunkin'.

The company said Wednesday it will open 10 CosMc's restaurants through the first half of next year. One will be near the company's headquarters in Chicago and the rest will be in Texas. The company will study the results for at least a year.

The announcement was one of the most anticipated at McDonald's investor conference. The company also said it expects to open nearly 10,000 McDonald's restaurants worldwide over the next four years — to reach 50,000 restaurants. But beyond that physical expansion, McDonald's is also looking to CosMc's to expand its menu and service times and keep up with other chains.

McDonald's President and CEO Chris Kempczinski said CosMc's is designed to fill in a slump in

sales that the company sees in the midafternoon. But the complexity of the drinks it will offer — like a churro frappe, a pear-flavored slush or a turmeric latte — make it impossible to fit into its existing restaurants. CosMc's — named after a space alien character that McDonald's introduced in the 1980s — will also serve snacks.

McDonald's is also testing systems at the small-format CosMc's restaurants, including drive-thru lanes that manage traffic based on the complexity of orders.

### EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (Dec. 8)	\$1.05	Switzerland (Franc)	.8780
British pound (Dec. 8)	\$1.29	Thailand (Baht)	35.22
Japanese yen (Dec. 8)	144.00	Turkey (NewLira)	28.9310
South Korean won (Dec. 8)	1287.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3769		
Britain (Pound)	1.2548		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3612		
China (Yuan)	7.1347		
Denmark (Krone)	6.9226		
Egypt (Pound)	30.9511		
Euro	.9285		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8142		
Hungary (Forint)	354.23		
Israel (Shekel)	3.7017		
Japan (Yen)	144.51		
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3083		
Norway (Krone)	10.9259		
Philippines (Peso)	55.36		
Poland (Zloty)	4.02		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7506		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3403		
South Korea (Won)	1317.52		

(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.)

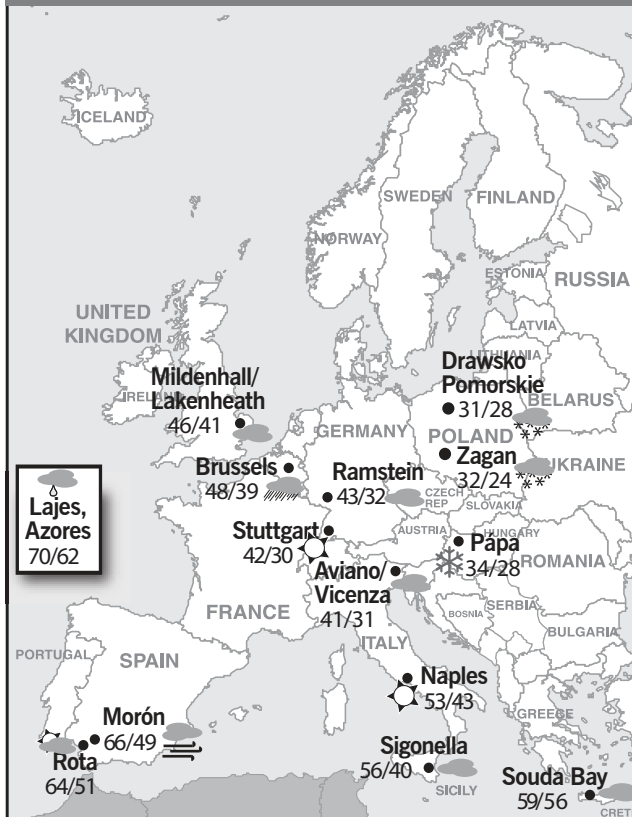
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.25
3-month bill	5.42
30-year bond	4.22

### WEATHER OUTLOOK

#### FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



#### FRIDAY IN EUROPE



#### SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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## MILITARY

# Report lists military health care system issues

## Long wait times, understaffed facilities, lack of access among problems service members face

By ALEX WILSON  
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military community must navigate hurdles to access health care, both at home and abroad, according to a recent report from the Defense Department's Office of the Inspector General.

Among the issues plaguing the military health care system are long wait times for appointments, understaffed facilities and a general lack of access to care, all of which are contributing to complaints and concerns, the Nov. 29 report said.

It recommends that the Defense Health Agency, which oversees all military treatment facilities, conduct a survey of health care providers and patients and use the results to help develop and implement a plan to "bring those provider networks into compliance" with Defense Department requirements.

For its report, the IG collected information from DHA, service audit agencies and inspectors general from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

The results identified health care access issues in a variety of military communities, including Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Lemoore, Calif.; Oak Harbor, Wash.; and Pensacola, Fla.

Smaller military treatment facilities "often only service active duty service members, and send all other beneficiaries, such as family members and retirees, to the TRICARE provider network," according to data provided by the



ALEX WILSON/Stars and Stripes

**Active-duty troops and Defense Department civilians alike are have issues accessing health care at military treatment facilities world wide, according to a recent DOD Inspector General report.**

attorneys general.

Additional data showed that some TRICARE networks "are not robust or adequate to meet this need and beneficiaries may have difficulty obtaining network care," the IG's report said.

Citing Naval Health Clinic Pearl Harbor in Hawaii as an example, the IG said the clinic accepts only active-duty service members and offers only limited specialty care.

Other patients are turned away and sent to the TRICARE network at large; however, the network in Hawaii has limited facilities when compared to places such as San Diego.

Specialty services in Hawaii also have appointment wait times

that exceed DOD's 28-day standard. Gastroenterology services, for example, take an average of 49 days and urology services can take an average of 67 days.

The IG also identified significant health care access issues for overseas military communities, specifically in Japan.

Problems there include the necessity of translation services, the lack of certain U.S. prescription medicines and the fact that medical services may not be available at all.

"Japanese medical facilities routinely and lawfully turn away patients when limited by medical staff, translation support, or when advanced payment cannot be secured, resulting in denial of care,"

the report said.

U.S. insurance is often incompatible with Japan's medical system or not accepted by Japanese doctors, the report said. Upfront payment is often required, making health care "cost prohibitive for some civilians."

The issues aren't just an inconvenience, they're causing some DOD civilians to leave their jobs altogether.

Within a six-month period this year, at least eight Air Force civilian employees requested their tour in Japan be shortened due to health care access concerns, service officials told the IG.

Another three declined job offers and two chose to relocate all together.

## N. Korea calls US stealth bomber 'very serious' nuclear threat

By DAVID CHOI  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — An Air Force stealth bomber that took its maiden flight last month is a "very serious" nuclear threat that demonstrates Washington's willingness to carry out preemptive strikes, a North Korean newspaper reported Thursday.

The state-run Rodong Shinmun article described the B-21 Raider as having the capability to launch

"an unexpected nuclear strike anywhere" and is an example of the United States placing its "nuclear preemptive strike tactics into practice."

"In this instance, anyone can easily guess what it means for the U.S. to conduct a test flight of a new generation of stealth strategic bombers," the report said.

The B-21 took its first test flight Nov. 10 in Palmdale, Calif. The sixth-generation nuclear-capable bomber developed by Northrop Grumman was designed to replace the B-1 Lancers and B-2 Spirits in the fleet, according to the Air Force's website.

The aircraft was in development for over 30 years and is named after the Doolittle Raid, a World War II bombing mission led by Lt. Col. James Doolittle that struck Japanese industrial targets on April 18, 1942.

The Defense Department's policy maintains that "the fundamen-

tal role of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack," according to its 2022 Nuclear Posture Review.

"The U.S. would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners," the review states.

North Korea codified its "irreversible" and non-negotiable nuclear weapons program in September 2022. The law included a provision for a preemptive use of nuclear weapons and broadly says the regime may conduct a nuclear strike if its leaders or nuclear operations are threatened by hostile forces.

American bombers have appeared on and over the Korean Peninsula throughout the year.

On Oct. 17, a nuclear-capable B-52H Stratofortress became the first bomber of its type to land on South Korean soil in at least 30 years. Five days later, the bomber



U.S. Air Force

**The B-21 Raider is unveiled in Palmdale, Calif., in 2022.**

flew alongside fighter jets from South Korea and Japan, marking the first aerial drill between the three nations.

AB-52H flew alongside U.S. F-16 Fighting Falcons and South Korean F-15K Slam Eagles during an escort drill over the peninsula on July 13, a day after North Korea fired a solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missile.

At the Department of Defense Education Activity, which manages base schools, at least 15 Japan-based teachers resigned from positions during the 2022-23 school year, the report said. They cited access to health care as their reason.

In October, the Federal Education Association — a Washington, D.C.-based teachers union that represents DODEA employees — told Stars and Stripes that "a majority of our members in Japan are planning to retire or seek employment elsewhere because of the lack of on-base health care."

FEA represents more than 600 DODEA employees in Japan, spokesman Gary Hritz told Stars and Stripes by email Oct. 11.

Because of these concerns, the IG is asking DHA's director, Army Lt. Gen. Telita Crosland, to conduct surveys at installations worldwide to learn about the concerns of patients and providers alike. Crosland did not provide a response to the recommendations prior to its publication, the report said, despite already receiving an extension to the IG's original deadline.

The IG is asking Crosland to respond by Dec. 29 with details on her planned course of actions or alternative recommendations.

A spokesperson for DHA, headquartered in Virginia, did not immediately respond to Stars and Stripes' request for comment Thursday.

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### Correction

A Dec. 7 op-ed should've said two Heritage Foundation scholars who had signed a manifesto rejecting the market-skeptical tendencies on the new, Trump-era right asked to have their names removed. They did not leave the organization.

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## MILITARY

# US troops in Niger soak up village culture

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The counterterrorism drones are grounded but the camels aren't at the U.S. Air Force's remote base in Niger, where troops still get a taste of the local culture despite a July coup that has ruined their military mission.

On the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, U.S. service members mingled over the weekend with vendors from the town of Agadez, home to the military's western Africa hub known as Base 201.

Traditional African clothing and artwork were among the items for sale at the women's bazaar, which gave a group of female vendors from Agadez the chance to sell their homemade products to troops on base.

Saturday's feel-good gathering, which included camel rides for the troops and raised \$11,350 for the surrounding community, contrasts with the otherwise fraught conditions for the U.S. in Niger.

The coup that ousted President Mohamed Bazoum a few months ago also brought an end to cooperation with the Nigerien military, which was a linchpin to American counterterrorism strategy in the region. The circumstance also raises the question of how long the U.S. can afford to sit on a base that has no op-

erational value.

Since the coup, the U.S. has moved some personnel out of Niger while concentrating its remaining force at the base in Agadez.

For now, those troops are hunkered down because all collaboration with Niger on military missions has stopped, in accordance with U.S. rules that prohibit partnership with military juntas.

The situation amounts to a major blow for the Pentagon's counterterrorism efforts in the region, where Islamic militants have been making steady gains in recent years.

In September, U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa's Gen. James Hecker said the military was looking for alternatives to Base 201, which the Defense Department spent more than \$100 million to develop.

But he didn't specify where else U.S. troops could go or how long the Air Force was willing to wait out things in Agadez.

U.S. officials have urged Niger's military to restore the elected government to power, but there have been no indications that will happen anytime soon.

In the meantime, it's camel rides for the troops.

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PHOTOS BY ROSE GUDEX/U.S. Air Force

**A U.S. service member browses handmade items Saturday at the women's bazaar at Base 201 in Agadez, Niger. The bazaar brought in \$11,350 to support the local economy.**



**A vendor discusses an item for sale with a U.S. airman at the bazaar.**



**A U.S. airman rides a camel during the women's bazaar at Base 201.**

## Navy spy plane passes over Taiwan Strait with Chinese jets in tow

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon flew through the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday, prompting China to scramble fighter jets to monitor its passage.

The maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft flew southwest from the East China Sea to the South China Sea around 12:30 p.m., as part of a routine transit, U.S. 7th Fleet spokeswoman Lt. j.g. Sarah Merrill said by email Thursday.

"U.S. Navy ships and aircraft routinely use the Taiwan Strait to

transit between the two [seas] and have done so for many years," she wrote.

The Poseidon's trip was not in response to any particular event, but such transits do "demonstrate the U.S. commitment to a stable, free and open Indo-Pacific, and confirm that the U.S. Navy flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows," Merrill added.

China, however, said the trip was "publicly hyped" and said it took steps to track the aircraft by organizing "fighter planes to monitor the passage" of the Poseidon, Chinese army Col. Shi Yi

wrote Wednesday on an official Weibo social media account.

"Troops in the theater remain on high alert at all times and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and security as well as regional peace and stability," the post said.

Beijing considers Taiwan, a functional democracy, as a breakaway province that must be reunified with the mainland, by force if necessary. China routinely criticizes U.S. operations in the strait.

Chinese forces hailed the aircraft, Merrill said, but all communications "were consistent with

international norms and did not impact the operation."

The U.S. regularly sends warships, typically destroyers, through the strait. Less frequently, aircraft such as the Poseidon fly through the 110-mile-wide waterway that separates China from Taiwan.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Rafael Peralta, along with the Canadian patrol frigate HMCS Ottawa, made a trip through the strait on Nov. 2.

China's army similarly claimed the joint transit was "publicly hyped" at the time.

China on Nov. 30 said U.S.

weapons sales to Taipei are "turning Taiwan into a weapons depot and a powder keg," The Associated Press reported that day.

The U.S. maintains unofficial and nondiplomatic ties with Taiwan, while abiding by the One China policy.

However, the U.S. is also bound by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act stipulating it will provide enough defense weapons and support so that the island can maintain a "sufficient self-defense capability."

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## MILITARY

# Senate hearing includes call to confirm promotions

By DOUG G. WARE  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Leading members of the Senate Armed Services Committee said Wednesday that senators should not leave for the holiday break next week until all military nominations stalled in the upper chamber are confirmed.

The senators challenged their colleagues during a hearing of the committee's sub-panel on personnel after Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., blocked hundreds of nominations for 10 months to protest a Pentagon policy that reimburses troops who travel to receive reproductive care, such as abortions. The policy was put in place after many Republican states passed laws heavily restricting or banning the procedure.

Tuberville on Tuesday finally agreed to lift his hold on about 425 promotions for officers of three-star rank or lower. His blockade continues, however, for about a dozen four-star generals.

"It was a grave mistake for one senator to hold our military promotion system hostage over his personal disagreement with the Department of Defense policy," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., the personnel subcommittee chairwoman. "We need our commanders in the Pacific to deter China and our service vice chiefs."

"The Senate should not go home for the holidays until we confirm the remaining



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

**Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., attends a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on July 12 in Washington.**

nominees," she added.

Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., who has been supportive of Tuberville and his 10-month blockade, agreed.

"It's resolved except for the four-stars, and I hope what will happen is we'll go through this process quickly," he said. "Some people have some concerns, so let's go through them, let's do cloture, let's get a vote on it as we get this done as quickly as possible and I agree with [Warren]. If we can get it done before we go off on the holidays, we should."

The House and Senate are scheduled for a break that will start Dec. 15 and not return until January.

The hearing on Wednesday was held to examine the ongoing recruiting challenges for the service branches. For 2023, only the Marine Corps and Space Force met their small recruiting goals. The Army, Navy and Air Force, which sought to sign far more recruits, all failed to meet their targets for the year. The Air Force hoped to sign almost 27,000 active-duty recruits but came up about 2,700 short, Brig. Gen. Christopher Amrhein, commander of Air Force Recruiting Service, said a few weeks ago. The Army hoped for 65,000 recruits and missed by about 10,000, while the Navy aimed for almost 38,000 new active-duty sailors and missed by about 7,500.

"If we were assigning grades, those two services got an A. The Air Force earned a B+, the Army got a B- and the Navy a C+," Warren said. "For years now, the military has failed to connect with young people who we need to keep this country safe."

Recruiting commanders at the hearing told the committee that there are various challenges in recruiting troops, including a disconnect between the military and younger Americans and modern challenges such as social media and effects from the coronavirus pandemic. The officers said they also face service-specific challenges.

"Educating the public about what our Navy does, both in conflict and in peacetime, would be helpful," said Rear Adm. Alexis

Walker, who leads Navy Recruiting Command.

"Not everybody is fit to be a Marine," added Maj. Gen. William Bowers, who leads Marine Corps Recruiting Command. "We are not for everybody. We are looking for a select few young men and women of character who are attracted to the ethos and core values of being part of something bigger than themselves."

Maj. Gen. Johnny Davis, who leads Army Recruiting Command, said his service offers so many different mission specialties that it can sometimes be overwhelming for potential recruits, which is something the Air Force is also seeing. Amrhein said some young recruits think every Air Force job involves flying planes.

"We also have medical professionals, civil engineers, doctors, maintainers to be able to generate airpower. Making sure everyone understands there are 200 Air Force specialty codes, jobs, is a key component and, I think, a very big challenge," he said.

The Navy has said its recruiting target for 2024 is about 43,000 active-duty sailors. The Air Force wants to recruit more than 26,000. The goals for the Army and Marine Corps have not yet been announced, but the Army has already said its new target will be lower than last year's.

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## MILITARY

# Shot: Former tank crewman remembers 'thunder of doom'

## FROM PAGE 1

had a large amount of success.”

Tenison went nine-for-nine in hitting his targets, calling his return to an Abrams tank gunner position “like riding a bike.”

“Everything is still in the same position it was before,” he said. “It’s an awesome, very functional and capable machine.”

Tenison, who is from Phoenix, served as a tank crewman on active duty from 2004 to 2008, according to the Army. He last shot a tank in 2005, while stationed in Germany with 1st Armored Division’s 1st Brigade, hitting all but one target with a tank nicknamed Bulletproof. But, as his unit prepared for a deployment to Iraq, Tenison said his days in a tank were short-lived. In 2006, he deployed, spending months fighting in volatile parts of Iraq including Tal Afar and Ramadi. After returning to Germany, Tenison served his final year on active duty at Fort Irwin, Calif., as part of the National Training Center’s opposing force, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

After leaving active duty in 2008 as a specialist, he spent five years in the Army Reserve as an engineer while earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in electrical engineering, he said.

But it was his days in a tank that proved the most significant from his time in the Army. When he was diagnosed last year with terminal, Stage IV stomach cancer, nearly a year after first experiencing pain after eating, he sat down to consider what he wanted to do with the remaining months of his life.

“I realized I really wanted to do

tank gunnery,” he said. “I just really wanted to shoot a tank again.”

He turned to a popular social media chatroom for soldiers and Army veterans on Reddit — asking the Army page in October 2022 if there was a way that anyone could make his dying wish come true.

“I have 12-18 months left to live, according to my oncologist. My weight is slowly dropping, my hair is slowly falling out, and my strength is leaving me,” Tenison wrote. “Before I depart this land of the living, I’d love to feel the thunder of doom inside an Abrams [tank]. Can anybody help this former tanker?”

The response was overwhelming. Hundreds of veterans and current service members chimed in with well wishes and advice on how to make it happen. Despite some solid leads, one year later, Tenison still did not have a date to shoot a tank.

He posted again in October, telling the Army webpage that his doctors had given him about three to six months left, and he still wanted to shoot a tank more than anything.

“I’m not looking for sympathy here,” Tenison wrote. “I’m looking for help.”

And help came.

Officials at Fort Moore got word of Tenison’s request, and they did everything they could to make it happen, said Col. Ryan Kranc, who commands the Army post’s 316th Cavalry Brigade, which trains tankers.

Kranc, who watched Tenison shoot the tank on Tuesday, said they operated under orders to

“make this happen no matter what,” though it had never been done previously.

“I think for a lot of us whose lives have been touched by cancer, this really spoke to us,” he said. “There was a lot of effort and outreach by a lot of different people. I think it was a fantastic team effort. We often call this the ultimate team sport, and I think what you saw today was a giant touchdown by the entire team.”

After getting to know Tenison on Monday, when the veteran arrived at Fort Moore to run through a tank simulator, Kranc said he was not surprised he was able to hit every target during live fire.

“He’s a quick learner and there’s a bit of muscle memory with it,” he said.

After the shoot, Kranc inducted Tenison into the Order of St. George, an honor for high achieving tankers and cavalry scouts. St. George has long been known as the patron saint of mounted warfare, he said.

Tenison said Tuesday would go down as one of his favorite memories. He said the experience helped him remember the things that he loved about being a tanker — the feel of the trigger and the blast and the smell of a spent round.

“That’s a smell I haven’t smelled in a long time,” he said holding one of the shells from a round that he had fired. “I love that smell.”

Tenison planned to include footage of the tank shoot in a video that he is making for his 6- and 8-year-old daughters to watch when they are older. He hopes they will be



COREY DICKSTEIN/Stars and Stripes

**Jay Tenison, a former Army tanker who served in Iraq and was diagnosed in 2022 with terminal cancer, holds a shell he shot from an M1A2 Abrams tank at Fort Moore, Ga., on Tuesday.**

proud of his military service, he said.

“I’m going to tell them that this was every bit about me being a part of the military even though I left” years ago, he said. “I hope I can explain to them that this, today, was a huge thing, and it shows what can happen when a community supports itself.”

With the tank shoot crossed of

his list, Tenison said he was down to two other items skydiving and piloting an ultralight airplane.

“This was something that has left me really awestruck and inspired,” he said. “I feel like I owe a huge debt of gratitude to everybody that made it happen.”

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# Osprey: Length of grounding uncertain

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main in place until the investigation determined the cause of the Japan crash and made recommendations to allow the fleet to return to operations.

In Japan, where U.S. military Ospreys had a non-fatal crash once and a number of incidents, the latest accident has rekindled safety concerns just as the Japanese government builds a new base for its fleet of Ospreys.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters in Tokyo the government has already formally requested that the U.S. military ensure the safety of Ospreys before their flights, but that Tokyo will seek further information from the U.S. side because it also affects the safety of Japan’s own Osprey fleet.

The U.S.-made Osprey is a hy-

brid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter but can rotate its propellers forward and cruise much faster, like an airplane, during flight.

Its unique design has been a factor in multiple incidents. While the investigation into last week’s crash has only just begun, it renewed attention on the aircraft’s safety record, particularly on a mechanical problem with the clutch that has troubled the program for more than a decade. There also have been questions as to whether all parts of the Osprey have been manufactured according to safety specifications.

In August, the Marines found that a fatal 2022 Osprey crash was caused by a clutch failure, but the root cause was still unknown. In its report on the crash, the Marines forewarned that future inci-

dents “are impossible to prevent” without improvements to flight control system software, drivetrain component material strength, and robust inspection requirements.

Air Force Special Operations Command has 51 Ospreys, the U.S. Marine Corps flies as many as 400 and U.S. Navy operates 27.

The Osprey is still a relatively young aircraft in the military’s fleet — the first Ospreys only became operational in 2007 after decades of testing. But more than 50 troops have died either flight testing the Osprey or conducting training flights in the aircraft, including 20 deaths in four crashes over the past 20 months.

An Osprey accident in August in Australia killed three Marines. That accident also is still under investigation.

## MILITARY

# Army employee indicted in theft of \$100M from 4-H fund

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

An Army civilian employee in Texas is accused in a federal indictment of stealing more than \$100 million from a fund meant to help military children.

Janet Yamanaka Mello, 57, was indicted Wednesday in a San Antonio district court on 10 total criminal counts including mail fraud, engaging in a monetary transaction using criminal proceeds and aggravated identity theft.

Federal prosecutors say Mello

used her position as a financial program manager for Child, Youth and School services at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio to steer 4-H Military Partnership Grant program funds into a shell company she controlled.

The grant program helps military children participate in projects with 4-H, which is a traditionally farming-focused network of youth organizations administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mello founded Child Health and Youth Lifelong Development in

2016 in order to take grant money from the program, the indictment alleged.

Prosecutors said her business didn't provide services to military members and their families, as Mello said it would.

The \$100 million in grant funds awarded to the business over the past six years instead went toward

high-end jewelry, clothing, vehicles and real estate, prosecutors said.

Mello also is accused of repeatedly falsifying the digital signature of one of her supervisors, the indictment said.

Each of the five fraud charges carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, with the four

spending charges carrying a maximum sentence of 10 years each, and the aggravated identity theft charge mandating at least two years.

Mello is scheduled for an initial court appearance Dec. 14.

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## Clandestine online ops now need senior officials' OK

By ELLEN NAKASHIMA  
AND DAVID DiMOLFETTA  
*The Washington Post*

Following a controversy over the Pentagon's use of clandestine information operations, the U.S. military has eliminated dozens of false online personas it created in recent years and has curtailed the use of such operations overseas, according to senior defense officials.

Clandestine online operations now require signoff by senior Pentagon officials, the CIA and the State Department, according to the officials, who spoke Monday on the condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity.

The new policy follows a review and pause initiated last year by the undersecretary of defense for policy, Colin Kahl, who stepped down in July. His review, first reported by *The Washington Post*, was prompted by an outcry following the publication of an August 2022 report by internet researchers Graphika and Stanford Internet Observatory. The researchers revealed takedowns by platforms including Facebook and Twitter — now called X — of more than 150 bogus personas and media sites, and suggested that the accounts might have been created by the U.S. military.

In the wake of the review, "new levels of oversight — to include coordination within the interagency — is now being applied to the department's MISO activities," said a Pentagon spokesperson, Lisa Lawrence, referring to military information support operations, the Pentagon's term for psychological or information operations.

The Post confirmed with U.S. officials last year that many of the accounts examined by the researchers were indeed used by the U.S. military, and in particular U.S. Central Command, whose area of operations includes the Middle East, North Africa, and Central and South Asia.

Some of the accounts taken down included a made-up Persian-language media site that shared content reposted from the U.S.-funded

Voice of America Farsi and Radio Free Europe. One fake account posted an inflammatory tweet claiming that relatives of deceased Afghan refugees had reported bodies being returned from Iran with missing organs. The tweet linked to a video that was part of an article posted on a U.S.-military affiliated website.

Combatant commands continue to undertake information operations online using identifiable U.S. military accounts. But the practice of deploying sham accounts to attempt to influence overseas audiences has been dramatically reduced, senior Pentagon officials said. "It's nowhere near the volume it was previously now that there's oversight and greater scrutiny given to all of them," said one official.

The operations by CENTCOM, which had taken place within the past several years, did not gain much traction, according to Graphika and Stanford Internet Observatory. The campaigns involved posts, for instance, that advanced anti-Russia narratives and cited the Kremlin's "imperialist" war in Ukraine and warning of the conflict's direct impact on Central Asian countries.

The researchers concluded that the military's overt accounts actually attracted more followers. Such overt, attributed activity forms the bulk of MISO.

Indeed, said the Pentagon officials, military psychological operations "should not go away but we just need to make sure it's being done judiciously and lawfully."

In July, the Defense Department issued an updated information operations strategy, which did not address clandestine activity. In general, it said that "a coherent" information operations strategy "requires a clear understanding of the drivers that shape" audiences' perceptions and that the intelligence community must "gain a better grasp on the motivations that drive behaviors." Only once that is done can "informational power... be effectively applied."

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## MILITARY

# VA sees sexual trauma, homeless link

## Housing program finds many female vets noted abuse during service

By LINDA F. HERSEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Nearly 45% of female veterans in homeless programs offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs in fiscal 2023 had documented histories of sexual trauma in the military.

The finding aligns with growing evidence that “sexual assaults and threatening sexual harassment” factor into a rising rate of homelessness among female veterans, according to Terrence Hayes, VA press secretary.

“Many [military sexual trauma] survivors struggle with readjustment issues and disruptions in core areas of functioning and well-being, including difficulties like homelessness,” he said. “Experts point out that many [military sexual trauma] survivors suffer in silence, feel alone in their experience, and have trouble coping.”

Homelessness among female veterans rose by 10% from 2020 to 2022 as the overall number of veterans experiencing homelessness declined, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which provides an annual report on homelessness to Congress.

“Women veterans deal with unique challenges such as having and caring for children, facing the risk of domestic violence, managing financial independence and ensuring employability. These factors can greatly affect their housing stability and increase the likelihood of homelessness,” said Dr. Charles Weber, a psychiatrist and retired Army lieutenant colonel.

“Untreated or under-treated [post-traumatic stress disorder]



JAIMEE FREEMAN/U.S. Air Force

**Nearly 45% of female veterans in homeless programs offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs in fiscal 2023 had documented histories of sexual trauma in the military, according to VA officials.**

and military sexual trauma can increase the risk for depression, suicide, substance use and the ability to maintain stable employment or relationships,” said Weber, founder of Family Care Centers, which specializes in mental health treatment for military families and first responders.

Women represent 10% of the veteran population, yet they are the fast-growing group in the veteran population, according to the VA. Their numbers are projected to reach 20% of the veteran population by 2040.

Yet female veterans might not readily identify themselves as former members of the armed forces when seeking housing and other services, which can disqualify them for assistance, Hayes said.

It also is common for female veterans not to disclose an immediate need for housing out of fear

they will lose custody of their dependent children, he said.

“Effective strategies to overcome these barriers include employing women veterans as peer support specialists in housing programs to develop rapport and engender trust, and clarifying state and local laws during outreach encounters,” Hayes said.

Depending on where they reside, female veterans with minor children might have difficulty accessing emergency shelter or transitional housing in their communities due to a lack of availability.

“Women also tend to make lower wages than men and have more barriers to full participation in the labor market,” Hayes said.

Women are more likely to serve as primary caregiver for their children than male veterans.

“Women shoulder more of the

costs of child-rearing, particularly as single parents,” Hayes said.

The VA’s supportive services for veteran families will provide emergency housing assistance for up to two months in a two-year period.

The housing assistance is essential to ensuring that female veterans do not fall into homelessness, Hayes said.

Women who moved into permanent housing after homelessness often have successful outcomes, according to the VA.

Statistics show 12% of the 38,847 veterans who secured permanent housing through the VA in fiscal 2023 were women.

Yet they represented only 8.3% of the 1,450 veterans who returned to homelessness after receiving VA assistance.

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## Sailor pleads guilty in child sex video case

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Navy sailor who once was the executive officer of a littoral combat ship pleaded guilty this week to sharing child sexual abuse videos and mishandling classified documents, according to the Justice Department.

Cmdr. Gregory E. McLean, 39, of Jacksonville, Fla., pleaded guilty Wednesday to one count of distributing videos depicting child sexual assault and one count of unlawful retention of classified national defense information, the DOJ said in a statement the same day.

McLean faces up to 20 years in prison for the child exploitation offense and up to 10 years for the classified information conviction, the statement said. A sentencing date has not been set.

McLean held a top secret security clearance and was USS Minneapolis-

Saint Paul’s second-in-command from its pre-commissioning until being relieved of his duties on Nov. 15, 2021, according to a Sept. 21, 2022, report from the Jacksonville Florida Times-Union.

After receiving a tip, Rhode Island state police determined that McLean had used a messaging app to distribute videos depicting sexual abuse of young children, the Justice Department said.

A subsequent Naval Criminal Investigative Service probe revealed other instances in which he did the same thing.

That investigation led to a search of McLean’s home in 2021 and seizure of several electronic devices and storage media.

Authorities found files depicting child sexual abuse and a flash drive on the kitchen counter containing 200 classified documents, according to the statement.

Two of those documents involved national defense information related to the combat aircraft and naval capabilities of foreign governments, the DOJ said.

The investigation also showed that McLean was aware of how to properly handle and protect classified documents, and knew that his home was not an authorized location to store national defense information, according to the statement.



McLean

# Spouse indicted on murder charges in death of son

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The wife of a Fort Eisenhower soldier was indicted on two counts of murder by a federal grand jury in Georgia on Wednesday after she admitted to killing her infant son with a knife to help get the child to “God and Jesus,” according to court documents.

April Evalyn Short, 30, is charged with premeditated murder and felony murder in the Nov. 15 death of the 11-month-old boy, according to Jill Steinberg, U.S. attorney for the southern district of Georgia. Short lived in a home on Fort Eisenhower where her

husband, Staff Sgt. James Short, was assigned as an Army drill sergeant.

On the morning that the boy was killed, at about 8:01 a.m., James Short received a text message from his wife that referenced God and said, “The days of darkness are upon us,” according to court documents. He tried unsuccessfully to reach her for the next 15 minutes, then rushed home where his wife was barricaded in the primary bedroom with the couple’s three children. The other children are ages 11 and 6.

The drill sergeant could not get into the room, so he called 911.

Police officers arrived within five minutes, and April Short exited the room with the two older children and attempted to flee in a vehicle, according to court documents. One police officer attempted to stop her and was partially in the vehicle as the woman began driving away with her children in the back seat. The officer drew his weapon, and she stopped driving.

Police arrested April Short and began to look for the infant. He was found in the bathroom bleeding from his neck and wrapped in a shower curtain. He was taken to Dwight D. Eisenhower Army Medical Center at the base and

pronounced dead at 9:34 a.m.

The other children told police that their mother cut the baby’s neck so he could “be with Jesus and God.” She also threatened to cut the 6-year-old if the child didn’t stop crying, according to court documents.

April Short told investigators she knew what she did and that it was “wrong” and “evil.”

U.S. Marshals took custody of Short on Nov. 30 from Jefferson County Detention Center, according to jail records.

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# WAR IN UKRAINE



CHEYENNE LEWIS/U.S. Air Force

AIM-9M Sidewinder missiles are included in the Pentagon's latest round of military aid to Ukraine.

## US sends \$175M aid package that includes missiles, artillery shells

By DOUG G. WARE  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon announced a new round of military aid to Ukraine on Wednesday worth close to \$200 million that includes mostly rockets and artillery shells and other needed equipment, U.S. officials said.

“Security assistance for Ukraine is a smart investment in our national security,” the Pentagon said in a statement. “It helps to prevent a larger war in the region and deter potential aggression elsewhere.”

The \$175 million in military aid is being provided through presidential drawdown authority, which allows the United States to take the weapons directly from Pentagon shelves on an emergency basis. The funding for the aid was previously authorized for fiscal 2023.

The new aid includes air-defense weapons such as Sidewinder and Sparrow missiles, more ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, 155 mm

and 105 mm artillery shells, Javelin and AT-4 anti-armor systems and more than 4 million rounds of small-arms ammunition, according to the Defense Department.

The aid is the second round that the United States has pledged to Ukraine in the past two weeks and comes as Congress debates funding for fiscal 2024 and a \$105 billion supplemental aid request that would provide more help for Ukraine, Israel and the U.S. defense industry. The military is operating under a continuing resolution that will fund the Pentagon until Feb. 2.

“The United States has provided Ukraine with the capabilities it needs to achieve significant military victories and successfully retake more than 50% of its sovereign territory that Russia seized in its invasion,” the Pentagon said. “Our security assistance packages help Ukraine protect its civilians, cities and infrastructure from Russia’s brutal aerial attacks.”

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022, the United States

has committed roughly \$44 billion in weapons and equipment to Ukraine.

Included in the \$175 million in military aid for Ukraine announced Wednesday:

- AIM-9M and AIM-7 missiles for air defense.
- Additional ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems.
- 155 mm and 105 mm artillery rounds.
- High-speed, anti-radiation missiles.
- Tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided missiles.
- Javelin and AT-4 anti-armor systems.
- More than 4 million rounds of small-arms ammunition.
- Vehicles to tow and haul equipment.
- Demolitions munitions for obstacle clearing.
- Equipment to protect critical national infrastructure.
- Spare parts, maintenance, and other ancillary equipment.

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# \$110B aid effort falters in Senate

## But Biden signals he’s willing to make a deal on border security

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — As Senate Republicans blocked the advance of tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance for Ukraine on Wednesday, President Joe Biden berated their tactics as “stunning” and dangerous. Yet he also signaled an openness to what GOP lawmakers ultimately want: border policy changes.

Biden at the White House warned of dire consequences for Kyiv — and a “gift” to Russia’s Vladimir Putin — if Congress fails to pass a \$110 billion package of wartime funding for Ukraine and Israel as well as other national security priorities. Hours later, Senate Republicans defiantly voted to stop the package from advancing, something that they had threatened to do all week.

“They’re willing to literally kneecap Ukraine on the battlefield and damage our national security in the process,” Biden said.

But even as he lashed Republicans for their stance, Biden stressed that he is willing to “make significant compromises on the border,” if that’s what it takes to get the package through Congress.

That statement has raised at least some hope that progress can be made in the days ahead as the Senate grinds through negotiations on border security, one of the most fraught issues in American politics. Biden’s remarks Wednesday were his clearest overture yet to Republicans and came at a critical time, with a path through Congress for the emergency funds rapidly disappearing and America’s support for multiple allies in doubt.

The president’s statement came hours after he huddled vir-

tually with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and leaders of the Group of Seven advanced democracies, which have staunchly supported Ukraine against Russia’s invasion.

“We need to fix the broken border system. It is broken,” Biden said, adding that he’s “ready to change policy as well.” He did not name specific policy proposals and accused Republicans of wanting a political issue more than bipartisan compromise.

Sen. James Lankford, the Oklahoma Republican who has been leading Senate negotiations over border policy, was encouraged by what he heard, saying it seemed like the president is “ready to be able to sit down and talk.”

Senators of both parties acknowledged they will need to move quickly if a deal is to be struck. Congress is scheduled to be in Washington for just a handful more days before the end of the year. The White House, meanwhile, has sounded the alarm about what would happen if they don’t approve more funding soon, saying Ukraine’s military would be stalled, or even overrun.

“When deadlines come, everybody’s undivided attention is there and we realize: ‘OK. Now it’s time to actually solve this,’” Lankford said.

Democrats involved in the negotiations also said a direct hand from the president, as well as from Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, could be helpful.

So far, McConnell, while an ardent supporter of Ukraine aid, has sided with Republicans who are holding firm against the security package unless it includes changes to America’s border policies.

## UN: Russia intensifies ‘unacceptable’ attacks on energy facilities

*Associated Press*

UNITED NATIONS — Intensifying Russian attacks on Ukraine’s energy facilities are worsening humanitarian conditions across the war-torn country, where heavy snow and freezing temperatures have already arrived, U.N. officials said Wednesday.

Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenca told the U.N. Security Council that Russia’s continuing daily attacks on Ukraine’s critical civilian infrastructure have resulted in civilian casualties, and Moscow

recently escalated its barrages in populated areas including the capital, Kyiv.

“All attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure must stop immediately,” he said. “They are prohibited under international humanitarian law and are simply unacceptable.”

Jenca also raised the risks to all four of Ukraine’s nuclear power plants.

The Zaporizhzhia plant, which is Europe’s largest, suffered its eighth complete off-site power outage

since the invasion on Saturday, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Jenca said. And IAEA staff at the Khmelnytsky plant in western Ukraine reported hearing several explosions close by on Nov. 29.

Ramesh Rajasingham, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator, told the council “the deaths, injuries and level of destruction of vital civilian infrastructure is staggering.”

“Many people have been left without access to heat, electricity and water, particularly in the east

and south,” he said. “Amid freezing temperatures, this damage is particularly threatening the survival of the most vulnerable — among them the elderly and those with disabilities.”

After more than 21 months of fighting since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Rajasingham said, “millions of children, women and men are now faced with the prospect of yet another winter of severe hardship amid the impact of increased attacks on hospitals, electricity transmission systems, and

gas and water supplies.”

U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood reminded the council that last winter “Russia sought to destroy Ukraine’s energy infrastructure and deprive people of heat and electricity at the coldest time of the year.”

Russia’s deputy U.N. ambassador Dmitry Polyansky accused Western nations of calling the council meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine without anything extraordinary happening in order “to spew anti-Russian invective.”

## NATION

# Haley on the defensive in 4th GOP debate

Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Four Republican presidential candidates were given several opportunities Wednesday to criticize former President Donald Trump, who was absent from the debate again. But they mostly targeted each other, with former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley taking the brunt of the attacks as she gets more interest from donors and voters.

With just over a month before the 2024 primary calendar begins, the debate demonstrated how firm Trump's grip remains on the party.

But the focus on Haley reflected how other candidates perceive her as a threat to their chances of taking on Trump directly. Aside from former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, most of the candidates have spent more time in debates going after each other than taking aim at Trump, reflecting the former president's popularity among Republicans and what many see as diminishing returns in attacking him.

The last scheduled debate before Iowa's GOP caucuses on Jan. 15 may have limited impact on the race, airing on a lesser-known television network, NewsNation, from a state Republican presidential candidates have carried since 1980.

Trump remains dominant in national and early-state polls. And after holding counter-programming rallies during the first three debates, he didn't bother this time and instead went to a closed-door fundraiser. His campaign posted an ad during the debate focusing on President Joe Biden as both parties head toward a potential rematch of the 2020 election Trump lost.

Christie repeatedly tore into Trump on Wednesday and challenged Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to answer directly if he believed Trump was fit or unfit to be president again. The crowd at the University of Alabama booed him at one point as he attacked Trump.

"His conduct is unacceptable. He's unfit. And be careful of what you're going to get," warned Christie, who has been alone among leading Republicans in his focus on the race's clear front-runner.



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Republican presidential candidates former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie talks with former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley during a break at a Republican presidential primary debate hosted by NewsNation on Wednesday in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

"There is no bigger issue in this race than Donald Trump," he said earlier.

DeSantis suggested Trump, who is 77, is too old for the job.

"Over a four-year period, it is not a job for someone that's pushing 80," DeSantis said. "We need someone who's younger."

Biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy again raised his hand as a candidate who would support Trump even if he were convicted in any of the four felony indictments he faces. Ramaswamy accused his other opponents of bowing to Trump for years to secure political posts or financial gain, but the closest the 38-year-old ever came to criticizing Trump was to call for a new generation of leadership.

Haley stood silently during the extended discussion, and neither the moderators nor her rivals asked for her opinion.

The debate's brief focus on Trump was a reprieve for Haley, who spent most of the debate on the defensive.

DeSantis accused Haley of backing down from media criticism and Ramaswamy suggested she was too close to corporate interests as she gets new attention from donors. He touted his own willingness to pick high-profile fights with his critics and went after Haley just moments into the debate, reflecting the rivalry between the two candidates reflected in dueling early-state television ads.

They also tussled over China, long an animating issue for conservatives worried about Beijing's influence. Later in the debate, Haley credited Trump for taking a hard line with Beijing on trade but said he was too passive on other fronts, including allowing China to capture American technology for its own military use and purchase American farmland.

Interrupting Haley, DeSantis accused her of allowing Chinese investment in South Carolina when she was governor and suggested her corporate donors would never allow her to be tough on Beijing.

"First of all, he's mad because those Wall

Street donors used to support him and now they support me," Haley retorted before accusing DeSantis of being soft on Chinese investment in Florida.

Ramaswamy, always the most eager to deliver personal barbs on the debate stage, turned a foreign policy discussion into another attack on Haley, seemingly trolling her to name provinces in Ukraine and suggesting she does not understand the country. As he kept piling on, Christie stepped in to declare Haley "a smart, accomplished woman" and dismiss Ramaswamy as "the most obnoxious blowhard in America."

With Trump absent, the atmosphere around the debate lacked some of the buzz sometimes associated with such affairs, especially in ostensibly open primaries. Less than two hours to go before the opening salvo, the media room, which is normally the practice hall for the University of Alabama's Million Dollar Band, was barely half full. The television and radio platforms around the periphery — the spin room, in debate parlance — were noticeably quiet, lacking the high-profile surrogates or campaign staffers who might normally be appearing live on cable news or talk radio to pitch on their candidates' behalf.

Outside Moody Music Hall on campus, more buzz came from state high school football championship games being played in Bryant-Denny Stadium.

The debate may have been hard to find for many prospective viewers. It aired on NewsNation, a cable network still trying to build its audience after taking over WGN America three years ago. NewsNation's Elizabeth Vargas moderated alongside Megyn Kelly, a former Fox News anchor who now hosts a popular podcast, and Eliana Johnson of the conservative news site Washington Free Beacon.

The field of invited candidates has shrunk in half since eight were on the stage at the first debate in Milwaukee in August, as the Republican National Committee tightened the criteria to reach the stage each time. For Tuesday, candidates had to get at least 6% in multiple polls and amass 80,000 unique donors.

## At tribal summit, Biden says he's working to 'move forward'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden told Native American nations gathered for a summit Wednesday that his administration was working to heal the wrongs of the past as he signed an executive order that seeks to make it easier for Indigenous peoples to access federal funding, and have greater autonomy over how to spend it.

Biden also threw his support behind a request to allow Haudenosaunee Confederacy to compete under its own flag in the 2028 Olympics in lacrosse, a sport they invented.

Historically, federal policies attacked Native people's rights to self-governance and caused lasting economic damage. Biden said the actions at the summit were "key steps" that would help usher in a new era of tribal sovereignty.

"A new era grounded in dignity and respect that recognizes your fundamental rights to govern and grow on your own terms," he said.

"It's hard work to heal the wrongs of the past and change the course, and move forward," Biden said.

Yurok Tribal Council Member Phillip Williams described Biden's speech as inspirational.

"It felt like our highest official in the land acknowledges the crimes of the past," he said. "His contribution to society is to help to heal the tribal nations."

Biden signed the order as members of his administration and tribal nation leaders stood behind him on stage at the Department of the Interior. The order in part creates a clearinghouse for Native American and Alaska native tribes to find and access grants and it requests that federal agencies ensure that



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Joe Biden speaks before signing an executive order at the White House Tribal Nations Summit at the Department of the Interior on Wednesday in Washington.

funding is accessible and equitable. It also gives them more authority over how to spend the money.

That news was welcomed by Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, who said the funding they get from

the federal government to help the hundreds of thousands of people on their reservation that extends across Arizona, Utah and New Mexico, can be difficult to spend.

"There's so much policies and things that are attached to it and requirements that are attached to it that sometimes it's just overwhelming to try to get it done," he said.

Tyson Johnston, self-governance executive director for the Quinault Indian Nation in northwest Washington state, who is responsible for coordinating the relocation of their villages in the face of dangerous sea level rise, highlighted the importance of this type of autonomy when it comes to climate change.

In July, the Biden administration announced \$120 million in grant funding for tribes in the U.S. to boost their resiliency to climate change.

## NATION



ERIN HOOLEY/AP

An eight-week-old sea otter rescued from Seldovia, Alaska, peeks out of his enclosure at Shedd Aquarium on Wednesday in Chicago.

## Sea otter pup found in Alaska has a new home at Chicago aquarium

Associated Press

CHICAGO — An 8-week-old arrival from Alaska chirps loudly before devouring ice chips in the nursery at Chicago's Shedd Aquarium.

He is Pup EL2306 — proper name to be determined — a northern sea otter who was found alone and malnourished in the remote town of Seldovia in October and taken to the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward.

Shedd, one of only a few facilities in the United States with the resources to care for rescued otters, was contacted by the SeaLife Cen-

ter and the aquarium's otter team made the cross-country journey with the fluffy brown marine mammal who arrived in Chicago at the end of November.

"Caring for a little otter pup is just like caring for an infant," including round-the-clock feeding, said Lana Gonzalez, a manager of penguins and otter at Shedd. "He also needs to get groomed. Sea otters have a very dense coat — there's anywhere from a 700,000 to a million hairs per square inch, and that's what they use to keep themselves warm. They don't have a

thick layer of blubber or fat like other marine mammals do, so taking care of that coat is very important."

An otter mother would typically teach her offspring to groom. The aquarium team acts in her place to encourage the pup's healthy development.

The pup will remain in Shedd's Regenstein Sea Otter Nursery for a few months, building bonds with the staff, and he will eventually be introduced to the otter habitat and the five other otters at the aquarium.

# Drugmakers told patents at risk over high prices

By AMANDA SEITZ  
AND ZEKE MILLER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is putting pharmaceutical companies on notice, warning them that if the price of certain drugs is too high, the government might cancel their patent protection and allow rivals to make their own versions.

Under a plan announced Thursday, the government would consider overriding the patent for high-priced drugs that have been developed with the help of taxpayer money and letting competitors make them in hopes of driving down the cost.

In a 15-second video released on YouTube on Wednesday night, President Joe Biden promised the move would lower prices.

"Today, we're taking a very important step toward ending price gouging so you don't have to pay more for the medicine you need," he said.

The administration did not immediately release details about how the process will work and how it will deem a drug costly enough to act. White House officials would not name drugs that might potentially be targeted.

There will be a 60-day public

comment period. If the plan is enacted, drugmakers are almost certain to challenge it in court.

It's the latest health policy pitch from a White House gearing up to make its efforts to tackle drug prices a central theme in next year's reelection campaign. Biden frequently talks about the \$35 cap on insulin for Medicare enrollees that went into effect this year, as well as a plan for government officials to negotiate some drug prices paid by Medicare for the first time in history.

The federal government, however, has never taken such a move against patents, a step called "march-in rights." But some Democratic lawmakers, including Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, has in recent years lobbied the Health and Human Services agency to do so with certain drugs.

The conditions for how those "march-in rights" would be used have long been debated. Pharmaceutical companies have pushed back on the idea that prices alone are enough for Washington to act against a drug's patent. The process proposed by the administration would clarify that the drug's patent could be in jeopardy if its price is out of reach for Americans, White House officials said.

## Ex-Army officer killed parents and 4 others in trail of violence

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — A Texas man killed his parents and four others and wounded two police officers in a daylong trail of violence stretching from San Antonio to Austin, authorities said Wednesday.

Shane James, 34, of San Antonio, was charged with two counts of capital murder after separate attacks in Austin and San Antonio that began Tuesday morning and ended with James crashing his car that evening during a police pursuit.

James has a history of mental health problems and a prior arrest on charges of assaulting family members, authorities said.

His parents, Phyllis James, 55, and Shane James Sr. 56, were found dead in their home in the San Antonio area, Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar said at a news conference. Four more people were found dead in two homes in Austin, more than 80 miles away, officials said.

The Austin victims were not im-

mediately identified. James would be charged with murder or capital murder in his parents' deaths as well, Salazar said.

A cyclist in Austin also was shot and wounded, and two police officers were recovering from gunshots, including one who was shot in the leg outside of a high school, Austin interim Police Chief Robin Henderson said.



James

Henderson said it was unclear what, if any, relationship the man had to the victims in the Austin area.

Online jail records did not indicate whether James has an attorney and several people listed as his relatives in public records did not immediately respond to phone messages Wednesday.

James is a former U.S. Army infantry officer who served from February 2013 to August 2015, ac-

cording to Lt. Col. Ruth Castro, Army spokesperson. He had no deployments and his last rank was first lieutenant.

James was arrested in January 2022 on charges of misdemeanor assault of his parents and a sibling and taken to jail. Two weeks later, the family told a victim advocates liaison that he had mental health problems and asked that he be released from jail, Salazar said.

James cut off his ankle monitor the day after he was released, prompting a misdemeanor probation violation warrant, Salazar said. Cutting off an ankle monitor has since been upgraded to a felony.

Deputies went to the parents' house in August when James was reported to be naked in the yard and behaving strangely. They went into the home but did not arrest James because he had barricaded himself in a bedroom, Salazar said. Deputies are limited in their use of forced entry on a misdemeanor warrant, the sheriff

said.

The deputies told the father to call them when James came out and they would come back to arrest him, but the father never called, Salazar added.

"It's always possible we could have done more, had they been able to safely put hands on him," Salazar said. "They were making every effort to avoid a violent confrontation with an unarmed man. That is a no-win situation for them."

Austin police said authorities

did not determine the attacks there were connected until the final one at a home, which happened more than eight hours after a school police officer was shot and wounded in a high school parking lot on the other side of the city.

James' parents were found dead after his arrest. Deputies who went to their residence saw water coming out of the home and forced their way inside, Salazar said. He said the deaths appeared to have occurred before the shootings in Austin.

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# MIDEAST

## UN: No safe places in Gaza as Israel hits southern cities

By NAJIB JOBAIN AND KAREEM CHEHAYEB  
*Associated Press*

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli forces struck the southern Gaza town of Rafah twice, residents said Thursday, sowing fear in one of the last places where civilians have sought refuge after Israel widened its offensive against Hamas to areas already packed with displaced people.

United Nations officials say there are no safe places in Gaza. Heavy fighting in and around the southern city of Khan Younis has displaced tens of thousands of people and cut off most of Gaza from deliveries of food, water and other vital aid. More than 80% of the territory's population has already fled their homes.

Two months into the war, the grinding offensive has set off renewed alarms internationally, with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres using a rarely exercised power to warn the Security Council of an impending "humanitarian catastrophe" and urging members to demand a cease-fire.

The United States has called on Israel to limit civilian deaths and displacement, saying too many Palestinians were killed when it obliterated much of Gaza City and the north. But the U.S. has also pledged unwavering support for Israel and appears likely to block any U.N. effort to halt the fighting.

Israel says it must crush Hamas' military capabilities and remove it from power following the Oct. 7 attack that ignited the war. Troops have pushed into Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest city, which Israeli officials have portrayed as Hamas' center of gravity — something they previously said was in Gaza City and its Shifa Hospital.

Israel has ordered the evacuation of some two dozen southern neighborhoods, rather than the entire region as it did in the north, which the military says shows increased concern for civilians.

But the areas where Palestinians can seek safety are rapidly receding. With northern and central Gaza largely isolated and cut off from aid, Palestinians are heading south to Rafah and other areas along the border with Egypt, where family homes are packed tight and makeshift shelters are overflowing.

Even there, safety has proven elusive, as Israel continues to strike what it says are Hamas targets across the coastal enclave.

A strike late Wednesday leveled a home in Rafah, sending a wave of wounded streaming into a nearby

hospital. Eyad al-Hobi, who witnessed the attack, said around 20 people were killed, including women and children. Another house was hit early Thursday, residents said.

"We live in fear every moment, for our children, ourselves, our families," said Dalia Abu Samhadneh, now living in Rafah with her family after fleeing Khan Younis. "We live with the anxiety of expulsion."

On the other side of the border, Egypt has deployed thousands of troops and erected earthen barriers to prevent any mass influx of refugees. It says an influx would undermine its decades-old peace treaty with Israel, and it doubts Israel will let them back into Gaza.

The military accused militants of firing rockets from open areas near Rafah in the humanitarian zone. It released footage of a strike Wednesday on what it said were launchers positioned outside the town and a few hundred yards from a U.N. warehouse.

The U.N. says some 1.87 million people — over 80% of the population of 2.3 million — have already fled their homes, many of them displaced multiple times.

Israel's campaign has killed more than 17,100 people in Gaza — 70% of them women and children — and wounded more than 46,000, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which says many others are trapped under rubble. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths.

Doctors Without Borders, the international aid group, said another 115 bodies arrived at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah in a 24-hour period.

"The hospital is full, the morgue is full," the group said on X, formerly Twitter.

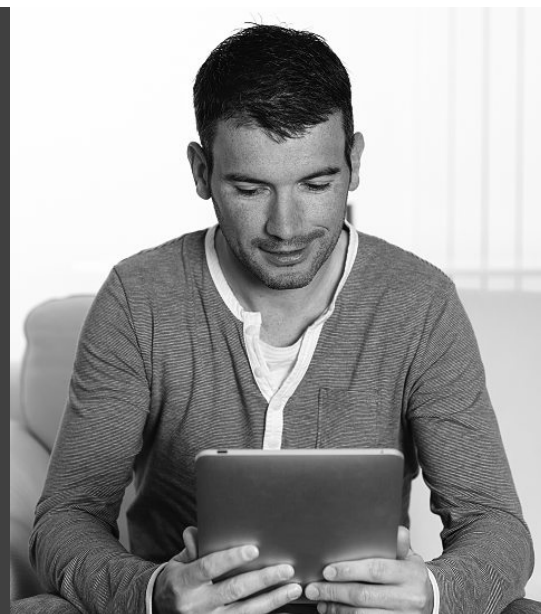
The military said Thursday that it struck dozens of militant targets in Khan Younis, including a tunnel shaft from which fighters had launched an attack. It said two of the attackers were killed.

Hamas and other militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war, and took some 240 people hostage. An estimated 138 hostages remain in Gaza, mostly soldiers and civilian men, after 105 were freed during a cease-fire in late November.

Israel's military says 87 of its soldiers have been killed in the Gaza ground offensive. It also says some 5,000 militants have been killed, without saying how it arrived at its count.

# Mobile

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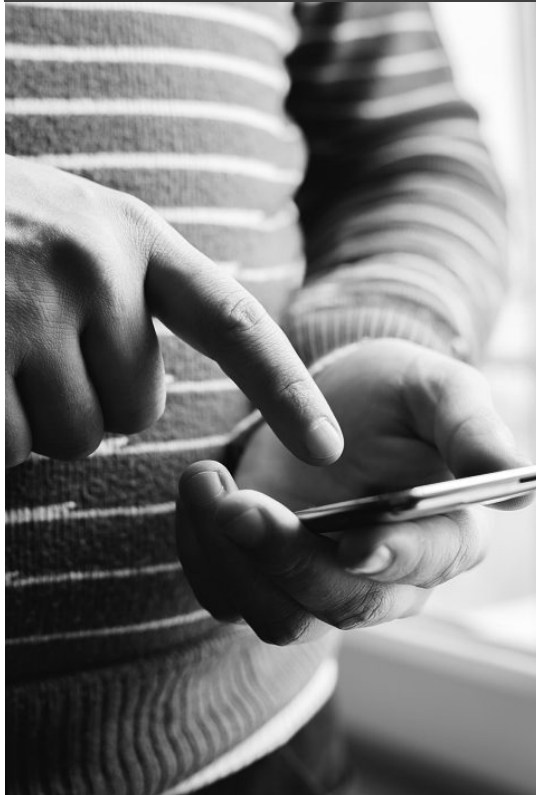
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STARS AND STRIPES

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## HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# The pain of waiting for physical therapy

Economic issues among the many reasons why there is a shortage of movement experts nationwide

By MARK KREIDLER  
KFF Health News

At no point along his three-year path to earning a degree in physical therapy has Matthew Lee worried about getting a job.

Being able to make a living off that degree? That's a different question — and the answer is affecting the supply of physical therapists across the nation: The cost of getting trained is out of proportion to the pay.

"There's definitely a shortage of PTs. The jobs are there," said Lee, a student at California State University, Sacramento, who is on track to receive his degree in May. "But you may be starting out at \$80,000 while carrying up to \$200,000 in student debt. It's a lot to consider."

As many patients seeking an appointment can attest, the nationwide shortage of PTs is real. According to survey data collected by the American Physical Therapy Association, the job vacancy rate for therapists in outpatient settings last year was 17%.

Wait times are generally long across the nation, as patients tell of waiting weeks or even months for appointments while dealing with ongoing pain or post-surgical rehab. But the crunch is particularly acute in rural areas and places with a high cost of living, like California, which has a lower ratio of therapists to residents — just 57 per 100,000, compared with the national ratio of 72 per 100,000, according to the association.

The reasons are multifold. The industry hasn't recovered from the mass defection of physical therapists who fled as practices closed during the pandemic. In 2021 alone, more than 22,000 PTs — almost a tenth of the workforce — left their jobs, according to a report by the health data analytics firm Definitive Healthcare.

And just as baby boomers age into a period of heavy use of physical therapy, and COVID-delayed procedures like knee and hip replacements are finally scheduled, the economics of physical therapy are shifting. Medicare, whose members make up a significant percentage of many PT practices' clients, has cut reimbursement rates for four years straight, and the encroachment of private equity firms — with their bottom-line orientation — means many practices aren't staffing adequately.

According to APTA, 10 companies, including publicly held and private equity-backed firms, now control 20% of the physical therapy market.

"What used to be small practices are often being bought up by larger corporate entities, and those corporate entities push productivity and become less satisfying places to work," said James Gordon, chair of the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy at the University of Southern California.

There's a shortage of physical therapists in all settings, including hospitals, clinics and nursing homes, and it's likely to continue for the foreseeable future, said Justin Moore, chief executive of the physical therapy association.

"Not only do we have to catch up on those shortages, but there are great indicators of increasing demand for physical therapy," he said.

The association is trying to reduce turnover among therapists, and is lobbying Congress to stop cutting Medicare reimbursement rates. The

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services plans a 3.4% reduction for 2024 to a key metric that governs pay for physical therapy and other health care services. According to the association, that would bring the cuts to a total of 9% over four years.

Several universities, meanwhile, have ramped up their programs — some by offering virtual classes, a new approach for such a hands-on field — to boost the number of graduates in the coming years.

"But programs can't just grow overnight," said Sharon Gorman, interim chair of the physical therapy program at Oakland, Calif.-based Samuel Merritt University, which focuses on training health care professionals. "Our doctoral accreditation process is very thorough. I have to prove I have the space, the equipment, the clinical sites, the faculty to show that I'm not just trying to take in more tuition dollars."

All of this also comes at a time when the cost of obtaining a physical therapy doctorate, which typically takes three years of graduate work and is required to practice, is skyrocketing. Student debt has become a major issue, and salaries often aren't enough to keep therapists in the field.

According to the APTA's most recent published data, median annual wages range from \$88,000 to \$101,500. The association said wages either met or fell behind the rate of inflation between 2016 and 2021 in most regions.

A project underway at the University of Iowa

aims to give PT students more transparency about tuition and other costs across programs. According to an association report from 2020, at least 80% of recent physical therapy graduates carried educational debt averaging roughly \$142,000.

Gordon said USC, in Los Angeles' urban core, has three PT clinics and 66 therapists on campus, several of whom graduated from the school's program.

"But even with that, it's a challenge," he said. "It's not just hard to find people, but people don't stay, and the most obvious reason is that they don't get paid enough relative to the cost of living in this area."

Fewer therapists plus growing demand equals long waits. When Susan Jones, a Davis, Calif., resident, experienced pain in her back and neck after slipping on a wet floor in early 2020, she went to her doctor and was referred for physical therapy. Two months later, she said, she finally got an appointment at an outpatient clinic.

"It was almost like the referral got lost. I was going back and forth, asking, 'What's going on?'" said Jones, 57. Once scheduled, her first appointment felt rushed, she said, with the therapist saying he could not identify an issue despite her ongoing pain. After one more session, Jones paid out of pocket to see a chiropractor. She said she'd be hesitant to try for a physical therapy referral in the future, in part because of the wait.

Universities and PT programs graduate about 12,000 therapists a year, Moore said, and representatives of several schools told KFF Health News they're studying whether and how to expand. In 2018, USC added a hybrid model in which students learn mostly online, then travel to campus twice a semester for about a week

at a time for hands-on instruction and practice. That bumped USC's capacity from 100 students a year to 150, and Gordon said many of the hybrid students' professional skills are indistinguishable from those of students on campus full time.

Natalia Barajas received her PT doctorate from USC last year and was recently hired at a clinic in nearby Norwalk, with a salary of \$95,000, a signing bonus and the opportunity to earn more in incentives.

She's also managing a lot of debt. Three years of tuition for the USC physical therapy program comes to more than \$211,000, and Barajas said she owes \$170,000 in student loans.

"If it were about money alone, I probably would have shifted to something else a while ago,"

Barajas said. "I'm OK with my salary. I chose to do this. But it might not be the perfect situation for everybody."



## MOVIES

# Christmas not always jolly

'Silent Night,' 'It's a Wonderful Knife' crews discuss the new holiday horror flicks

By PETER LARSEN  
The Orange County Register

In "Silent Night," the new holiday movie from action auteur John Woo, a grief-stricken, revenge-minded father hunts down the gang members who shot his child on Christmas Eve. In "It's a Wonderful Knife," the teen heroine wishes at Christmas that she'd never been born, and discovers that a serial killer she'd killed in her real life is still very much alive in her alternative timeline.

Yep, it's time for a new slate of Christmas-themed horror films and action movies in theaters or streaming at home. And while it's not exactly a new trend — the holiday slasher flick "Black Christmas" is almost 50 years old — it definitely feels like it's a vibrant one.

In addition to "Silent Night" and "It's a Wonderful Knife," this year's frights include "The Sacrifice Game," "A Creature Was Stirring" and "Santa Isn't Real." They almost makes the old argument over "Die Hard" — Christmas movie or not? — seem quaint. (For the record, "Die Hard" is a Christmas movie, and so is "Lethal Weapon," and "Gremlins" and "Home Alone," all of them some combination of action, horror and comedy.) So let's look at what "Silent Night" and "It's a Wonderful Knife" have wrapped in shiny packages for you this year, and celebrate the fact that there's something other than the romances on the Hallmark Channel to send shivers up your back.

## 'It's a Wonderful Knife'

When screenwriter Michael Kennedy sat down to brainstorm ideas for a Christmas slasher movie, he first thought to look to the past. It worked with "Freaky," his horror-fied adaptation of the classic comedy "Freaky Friday," so why not the holidays, too?

"And immediately I thought of 'It's a Wonderful Life,'" Kennedy says of director Frank Capra's 1947 holiday classic with Jimmy Stewart as George Bailey. "Just because I do love that movie. It makes me cry every time I watch it still."

"It's a Wonderful Knife," the horror comedy that Kennedy wrote and produced, might make the late Jimmy Stewart himself weep, if for different reasons. But to fans of offbeat, alternative holiday fare, it sticks the landing.

Jane Widdop stars as Winnie Carruthers who, despite vanquishing the serial killer on the loose in her quaint small town one Christmas, ends up wishing she, like George Bailey, had never been born. When her wish is granted, she realizes the folly of her ways. In this timeline, the serial killer is still slashing victims.

With Justin Long as the town's ne'er-do-well mayor, Joel McHale as his beleaguered assistant and Winnie's father, and Jess McLeod as Winnie's friend Bertie, the story unfolds in a mix of horror and heart that pays homage to its inspiration.

"It's not like a beat-for-beat remake of 'It's a Wonderful Life,' by any means," Director Tyler MacIntyre says. "It's just using that high concept as a jumping-off point. I have a lot of respect for Frank Capra and what that film has become in terms of a cultural icon."

"Doing a spin on that, I think, is part of the fun of it. It's not a spoof of it. It's just another fun way of sort of framing it in the more macabre form that we want to have."

"We have these horrific, fun scenes, but at the same time, there are some opportunities for satire in there, particularly of other Christmas fare, like Hallmark films and more traditional holiday films."

Both MacIntyre and Kennedy are longtime fans of holiday action and horror movies.

"For me, it was the original 'Black Christmas,'" Kennedy says. "I love the 1974 'Black Christmas.' I loved finding out that it was the same guy that directed 'A Christmas Story' that made that movie. That was when I really got obsessed with horror movies in my teen years."

"It scared the (bleep) out of me. It was like, 'Oh, Christmas is so dark, and Christmas is disturbing.' It was kind of an eye-opener of, like, sure, there's a serial killer and it's a little bit heightened, but it's also a little bit like, Christmas isn't this jolly season for everyone."

For MacIntyre, alternative holiday films started show-

ing up in many different places once he started looking as a young movie fan.

"I know 'Die Hard' gets a lot of press for being the Christmas action movie, but so is 'Lethal Weapon.' That's a Christmas movie," MacIntyre says. "I really liked 'Gremlins' — and how pitch-black is that Phoebe Cates monologue in the middle of that?"

"And then putting together that the guy who wrote 'Gremlins' also directed 'Home Alone' — Chris Columbus just loves Christmas. Those are great movies that are completely separate from each other and both involve Christmas in a very fundamental way."

"I don't think it's any mystery that some of these things get paired together," MacIntyre says of the mixing-and-matching of genre movies with holiday fare. "Because I do think there's something inherently just very satisfying juxtaposing such cheery kind of holiday imagery with things that are a little darker."

## 'Silent Night'

Director John Woo's "Silent Night" opens with actor Joel Kinnaman in a reindeer Christmas sweater, racing on foot after the street gang members whose stray bullets hit and killed his young son on Christmas Eve.

He catches them, which was his goal, and ends up shot through the neck, which was not the plan. As he recovers, his voice lost to the injury, he begins to plan his revenge, targeting Christmas Eve one year later as the day he'll take the gang down, and by down, we mean 6 feet under.

Woo, who made his name in Hong Kong action films such as "A Better Tomorrow" and "The Killer," before jumping to Hollywood for movies such as "Face/Off" and "Mission: Impossible 2," says he was attracted to the film because of what it didn't have: dialogue.

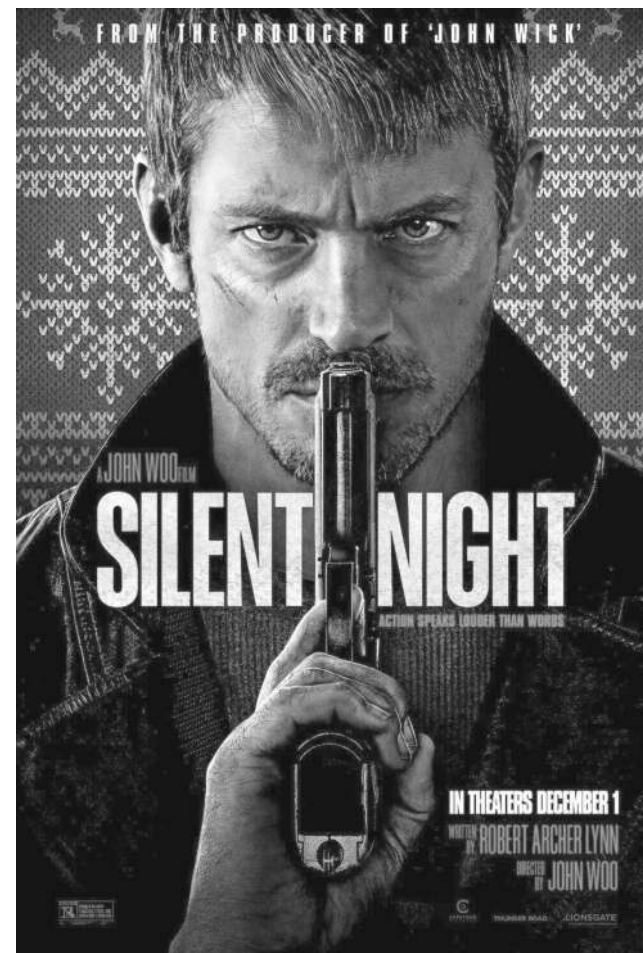
"I thought it was really well written," Woo says. "And by the time I saw there was no dialogue, I thought, 'Oh, OK, yeah.'"

"For me, it was a good opportunity for me because I don't like much dialogue in the movie. I hate using the dialogue to explain images, to explain how actors feel."

Because Brian Godlock (Kinnaman) no longer can talk, he texts with his wife Saya (Catalina Sandino Moreno) and police detective Dennis Vassel (Scott Mescudi, better known as the hip-hop artist Kid Cudi). The gangsters led by Playa (Harold Torres) are also text-loving criminals, so the only words heard in the movie are ambient conversations on police broadcasts or car radios.

Woo says the absence of dialogue was one of the ways in which "Silent Night" differs from many of his previous movies.

"It allowed me to use special features," he says of the different approach he took to the visual look of his film. "I



use the visual, the sound to tell the story. And then it [began] feeling more direct and allowed the audience to look at the expressions on the actors' faces."

In place of the highly stylized action sequences for which he's famed — his shootouts have been described as "bullet ballets" — Woo says he wanted to emphasize the realism of his characters, ordinary people who suffered a terrible loss.

Even the fight scenes were crafted with realism in mind, he says.

As for the Christmas setting of the film, Woo says he thought it helped the movie give people an option for exciting, holiday-themed entertainment in theaters.

"I think it's a good idea," he says. "You know, 'Die Hard' also had Christmas, and of course it was a great movie and people love it."

"They want to see a good movie. They want to see something exciting."

## MOVIES



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Eddie Murphy, left, and Tracee Ellis Ross, center, cast members in “Candy Cane Lane,” and the film’s director Reginald Hudlin pose together Nov. 29 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles. It is the actors’ first film together, but Murphy and Hudlin also worked together on “Boomerang” in 1992.

# Hopeful for a timeless Christmas classic

Murphy, Ross want their new film, ‘Candy Cane Lane,’ to put you in the holiday spirit for years to come

BY GARY GERARD HAMILTON  
Associated Press

**E**ddie Murphy has fond childhood memories of gathering with his family in Brooklyn and being wrapped in the wonder of the season as they watched classic holiday movies. Now, his Christmas wish is that his new film, “Candy Cane Lane,” will create similar memories for others.

“That was in the front of my mind when we chose this script ... we want to do something that’s going to be around forever,” Murphy said. “When I was growing up, we used to watch ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ and ‘How the Grinch Stole Christmas’ and ‘Rudolph’s Shiny New Year’... I think we made a movie like that, that people will watch over and over again.”

The Prime Video release follows Chris Carver (Murphy) who’s obsessed with winning his neighborhood’s annual Christmas decorating contest. Stumbling upon a mysterious store, he unwittingly strikes a deal with a well-intentioned but slightly mischievous elf named Pepper (Jillian Bell) who brings the 12 days of Christmas to life. That turns into a holiday headache for the town and puts Carver at risk of being transformed into a miniature ornament.

“There is the element of magic in the movie, that imagination that children have and all the fantasy of it,” said Tracee Ellis Ross, the “black-ish” and “Girlfriends” star who plays Murphy’s wife. “I’m excited to watch kids watch the movie.”

Ross and Murphy are so dynamic on screen, it’s hard to believe the two actors never worked together before — let



Prime Video

**In “Candy Cane Lane,” Ross’ Carol provides levity to her husband (Murphy)’s extreme Christmas competitiveness.**

alone met. Ross’ Carol is the ultimate spousal teammate, providing levity to her husband’s extreme Christmas competitiveness.

“She’s a comedian and a great actress and all that came together. And she improvises ... you don’t even expect to click with an actor,” said the 62-year-old Oscar nominee. Chuckling, he added, “Most of the time, you have a working relationship and there is no clicking — but there’s a great deal of clicking on this one.”

The film also stars Thaddeus J. Mixson, Ken Marino and David Alan Grier, along with an ensemble that includes Nick Offerman, Robin Thede and Chris Redd, whose figurine characters are past victims of Pepper’s antics.

The film was written by Kelley Younger, whose family grew up on Candy Cane Lane in El Segundo, Calif. — a neighborhood known for competitive holiday decorating. While there are plenty of feel-good moments in the story, the movie is also packed with action scenes.

“I wanted a movie that had everything I like in it. I love

Christmas movies. I love Christmas music. I love the colors. But I also love action movies ... So, I said, why not put everything you like into one movie?” explained director Reginald Hudlin, whose 1990 flick “House Party” starring Kid ‘n Play was added to the National Film Registry last year. “Christmas movies are surprisingly elastic.”

“Candy Cane Lane” is Murphy’s first holiday film and his first reunion with Hudlin since their 1992 classic “Boomerang.” The uber-popular romantic comedy helped Murphy expand beyond comedy-first roles and action films, allowing him to flourish in new Hollywood territory as a debonair ladies man.

“I love that ‘Boomerang’ has the legs that it has. I love that it still works,” said Murphy of the film, which also starred Halle Berry, Robin Givens, Martin Lawrence and Grier. “I love that all the people that were in it went off and did amazing things and yeah, I’m proud of that film.”

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Murphy planned a return to his stand-up comedy roots, but as the global health crisis upended much of the world, he pivoted to making movies again. He recently wrapped shooting “Beverly Hills Cop: Axel Foley,” the fourth installment of his blockbuster franchise, nearly 30 years after the last chapter.

“It’s not something that I would rule out and say I would never do,” Murphy said about stand-up.

But what Murphy and Ross are aiming to do is give friends and loved ones yet another reason to spend time together during not just this holiday season, but future ones as well.

“That is the hope, that we’ve made a timeless classic,” Ross said.

Murphy, a father of 10 and a grandfather, echoes Ross’ sentiments: “Christmas movies have a built-in audience — your family’s all together and they want to look at something that they can all watch together ... if you do a good job, you watch them forever.”

## MUSIC

# 'It's music, it's real, it's honest'

The War and Treaty set to perform at four bases this month

BY COLIN MCGUIRE  
*Stars and Stripes*

**B**efore the conversation starts, Michael Trotter Jr., one half of the Grammy Award-nominated country/Americana duo The War and Treaty, insists on offering a disclaimer: "From being in the military and the Army, Stars and Stripes has been one of my dreams to talk to," he says. "This is the first time we have talked to anyone from there, so thank you."

He comes by his appreciation for the armed services honestly. Not only did Trotter serve in Iraq as part of the U.S. Army, but he, along with the other half of The War and Treaty, his wife Tanya, is set to perform for the troops four times this month. Beginning Dec. 14 at Camp Casey in South Korea, their short slate of shows will take them to Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Dec. 15, Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, on Dec. 16 and Naval Station Guam on Dec. 18.

We recently caught up with husband and wife to talk about how they inspire each other, their writing process, being excited to return to base, the importance of music in the military and, of course, how Michael might just be dreaming of one day being the next Bob Hope.

**SEE TREATY  
ON PAGE 17**

**Tanya and Michael Trotter, the married couple who perform as The War and Treaty, will play for service members in Korea and on Guam from Dec. 14-18. Michael Trotter is an Army veteran who served in the Iraq War.**

Austin Hargrave





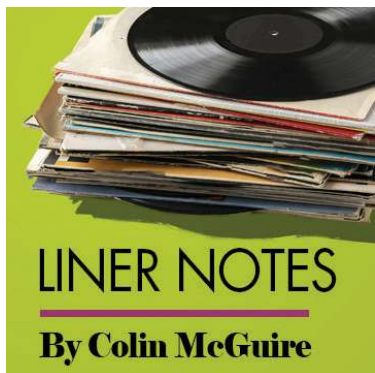
## MUSIC

# Tour voting ends; Phish, Ringo add '24 dates

As the final touring update for 2023 commences, it feels like a good idea to remind everyone that Pollstar, the leading media outlet that covers this stuff and also provides a chart we outline each month here, has voting open for what they call the Major Tour of the Year. To vote, head to [www.pollstar.com](http://www.pollstar.com), and yes, the deadline is 8 p.m. EST today (Dec. 8). Among the finalists are, you guessed it, Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, Beyoncé's Renaissance World Tour and Morgan Wallen's One Night At A Time Tour. In a year where live music seemed more prominent than it has been in a long time, the way this shakes out could be a lot of fun to watch.

Or, well, who am I kidding? Taylor Swift is going to win this thing. But it's fun to dream!

Anyway, speaking of dreaming



and Pollstar, the most recent Live 75 chart, which the website curates, has a new addition this time around: RBD. The Latin pop group called it quits back in 2006, but with the news of their recent dreamy reunion, they top the list, which compiles worldwide active tours by average tickets sold for shows performed over the past 30 days.

In this case, RBD managed to move an average of about 17,000 tickets. Latin flavor dominated the top three spots on the chart as Peso Pluma (16,500) came in second while Enrique Iglesias/Pitbull/Ricky Martin finished third (about 14,000).

Ms. Lauryn Hill and The Fugees slipped in at No. 10 with a little more than an average of 12,000 tickets sold over the past 30 days — and that doesn't even come with a promise that any of their shows will actually happen. Hey-yo!

When it comes to newly announced tours, jam band stalwarts Phish announced last week that they will be the latest act to take residency at Las Vegas' infamous Sphere. The tour (or, well, mini-tour-ish-thing) will only last from April 18-21, but imagine the special effects that

will be in play for that one.

Keeping with the aforementioned Latin theme, hitmaker J Balvin announced last week that he will be hitting the road next year for the Good To See You Again Tour. Kicking off in April in Frankfurt, Germany, the European run will hit Switzerland, Italy, France and Lithuania before wrapping on June 5 in London.

Elsewhere, hard-rockers Avenged Sevenfold noted recently that they will continue their Life Is But A Dream Tour with Poppy and Sullivan King next year. That outing begins March 6 in Buffalo, N.Y., and concludes in New Jersey on March 31. In a neat wrinkle, the group will continue to use TicketPass, an event entry system that they created and is designed to airdrop a token to concert-goers in what they

said is “an environmentally-friendly blockchain.”

And then there's Ringo. The Beatles drummer announced last week that he will take his All Starr band back on the road in the spring. This time around, the cast will include Edgar Winter, Colin Hay and Gregg Bissonette, among others. The trek will kick off at The Venetian in Las Vegas on May 22 and it will stay there for six days before heading to Mexico City in June, where the short run will wrap on the sixth of the month. No word on how many dates Paul McCartney plans to join Starr for what would surely be a memorable (perhaps for all the wrong reasons) take on the Fab Four's latest single, “Now & Then.”

Hey. What's up with that music video?

Anyway, happy concert-ing!

## Treaty: Singer looking forward to being back on base for 1st time

### FROM PAGE 16

The following is edited for clarity and space.

**I want to start with this upcoming string of performances. Will this be the first time you've been back on base, Michael?**

**Michael:** Yes, it is. It's my first time.

**Are you excited?**

**Michael:** I'm feeling a lot of emotions. Excitement is one. Anxiety is another. I feel reverent because I know we're going at a time when troops really need to feel some love and some home — some kind of normalcy. So, to be able to go back and offer what I've learned and what I've done to the nation's greatest is a dream come true. It's emotional, too, because the holiday season isn't always a happy time for troops. For me, I remember the first Christmas I had after losing two battle buddies, I was at war and I thought about what their families were doing that year. They didn't have them to hold and they didn't have them to send gifts to. The ultimate sacrifice was paid, so there's a lot of reflection taking place. The one thing I feel more than anything is grateful.

**This being your first time back on base, going back to entertain, can you talk about how it feels to go back to give something back?**

**Michael:** It feels so surreal because I dreamed about this. I acted it out when I was sweeping the helipads in Iraq. The lights on the helipads remind me of the flood lights on the Ryman (Auditorium) stage (in Nashville). For me to return and share with the troops a dream come true feels really good. But also to come and share with troops that I was hav-

ing a hard time and I found the love of my life and she helped heal me and she became my caretaker — that's something I look forward to. We have a love story to share and it's in our music.

**How important was music to you while you served? How important do you think these performances will be for the troops? Can you speak to the role music plays while serving?**

**Michael:** My story is very unique. It's like God himself catered it for moments of despair, moments of disbelief, moments of shock, moments of feeling very depressed or forlorn. God gave me the gift of music to deliver to troops who feel like that, too. My first song after two individuals were killed in my unit in Iraq — Capt. Robert Scheetz and Sgt. Aaron Elandt — I was allowed to present my song during the memorial that we had out there.

My song brought a lot of healing for the troops. ... Music was providing a way to escape. It also provided peace and tranquility. Music saved my life and the war brought me music. It's the same music and the same songs that led me straight to my wife, so music has delivered everything good to me in my life. I'm a servant to music.

**Was a career in music always something you wanted? Did you grow up singing?**

**Michael:** Yes, it was something I always wanted. I did grow up singing. I come from a musical family. My grandmother played piano. My uncle was a great pianist and my mom and all her sisters sing, so once I learned I

could carry a tune, I definitely wanted to be a singer. Somewhere in the '90s, I actually wanted to be a rapper. I got influenced by Notorious B.I.G. and 2Pac, Busta Rhymes. I just wanted to be a rapper. Thank God I got some sense because I can't rap a lick. But the only thing greater than music to me is Tanya and our children.

**I'm glad you brought that up. I've interviewed a lot of couples who have done music together in the past, but watching you guys perform, you look so in love. For you, what's it like to be able to share the music and the group with your wife? How important is the music to your relationship, love and family?**

**Tanya:** I think the relationship is what makes the music the important part. The music is kind of the cherry on top to what we do every day in our home, with our family and our friends. It's an extension of who we are and what we do together. The people who listen to our music have a peek into the window of our lives. It's honest and what we do anyway. It just so happens we're on stage for 90 minutes sometimes and everybody gets to experience it. It comes from a very honest and vulnerable place.

**You guys are associated most with country music, but there's so much soul in it, too. Would you categorize your music in any one form? Is it country? Soul? I even hear a little R&B in there.**

**Michael:** Before we met, I used to be influenced by gospel. I used to be influenced by jazz, rock and roll, R&B, soul. You're probably tired of hearing me say this, but I'm influenced by the way I'm

loved. I'm loved by this woman and our love sometimes sounds like the sacredness of gospel, or the spirituality of the spirituals. Sometimes, our love has the storytelling of country music, sometimes, it has the heartbreak of blues. Sometimes, it has the sexuality of R&B or the guts of soul. Whatever it is, it's music and it's real and it's honest.

**If you don't like to be boxed in, would you say the inspiration when you write is really just looking at each other? It feels like you're in such a zone when you perform together. It feels like there's nobody out there watching you and the rest of the world stops. Do you feel that yourself when you perform together?**

**Tanya:** Yeah. I actually do (laughs). There are moments where we just get lost and we realize, “Oh, there's a crowd and they're watching us perform.” I think that's part of the relationship we have with our audience. They want to see that and we want to give that. It's honest and it comes from a pure place. We take those moments on stage. If we want to cry or reminisce on our journey and what we've come through, we do that. We take that breath and live in that moment. Sometimes, it feels like an out-of-body experience, but at the same time, we realize this is really our dream and we're living it. I think it's a good thing to be able to pause on stage and let people see and feel that moment with us.

**How long ago did you decide you wanted to go over and play these shows and do this for the service members? I'm assuming**

**this is something you've wanted to do for a while now, right?**

**Michael:** I have a name and that should give you a general idea for how long I've wanted to do this: Bob Hope. I'm just one of those kids who watched every year. The class, dignity, joy and moment he would bring to the troops. Robin Williams, Billy Crystal, Whoopi Goldberg, and there's so many others who do it now on a much lower scale, but to be bold, my intention is to one day pick up one of those mantles. And to be bold, be courageous and be loud about my love for the USO and our soldiers, our troops, our Marines, Navy members, Air Force and even Space Force. Whatever we got. This is truly the best of the best for us and our country — men and women who sacrificed for this country. Tanya and I are really truly honored to go on this journey and do this for the USO.

**What is the thing about serving the country you can most apply to the music world?**

**Michael:** My wife said something to me the other day, and since I met her in August 2010, she's been saying the same thing over and over again. She says I'm a servant. She said the greatest thing that anyone could ever do is be a servant, and that is something I actually learned in the military.

It's part of the Army core values. One of them is selfless service. It has impacted the way I write music. Whatever message you want to get out, we do it with our music.

That's the correlation I make between my military service and my civil service to our country.

## GADGETS &amp; TECHNOLOGY



PepsiCo

A Smooth Technology employee tests out Doritos Silent. Although the Doritos Silent software was designed for Doritos, it can work with other crunchy foods such as chips, crackers and vegetables.

# Silencing the crunch

Doritos software removes sound of chewing from PC voice chat, calls

BY SYDNEY PAGE  
The Washington Post

The noise of someone chomping on chips can be irritating, especially if it's directly in your ear, on, say, a voice chat or a Zoom call.

Voices — and crunching — are amplified when people are using headsets, which are often worn by gamers, many of whom spend hours at a time playing multiplayer video games.

So the chip brand Doritos created Doritos Silent, a crunch cancellation software that removes the sound of chewing from voice chat, Zoom or any call that uses headphones. But it was really created for gamers.

"It works on anything that accepts a microphone," said Dylan Fashbaugh, lead developer at Brooklyn-based Smooth Technology, which worked with Doritos to create the free app that launched last month.

It can be used on any PC, and the company says it will eventually be expanded to other devices.

Fashbaugh has been a gamer for about 20 years, and said he is familiar with the annoyance of fellow gamers chewing loudly on chips.

"Crunch is one of the most distracting features that could throw someone off their game," said Mustafa Shamseldin, chief marketing officer of international foods at PepsiCo, which owns Doritos.

Doritos surveyed more than 3,000 people — including in China, India, Portugal, Britain and the United States — and found that gamers like to snack while playing, but they also think the sounds of other people snacking is distracting.

Of the 200 people surveyed in the United States, 90% snack while gaming, and the majority said chips make the most bothersome noise when another gamer is eating them.

Research also showed that the crunch of Doritos is part of what people like about them, said Fernando Kahane — the head of global marketing for the chip brand.

"There is something about the crunch that has to do with it, funnily enough," he said.

Many people crave crunchy foods because they are more stimulating to eat than soft foods, which is why chips are a go-to snack.

"That's one of the reasons Doritos is so popular

with gamers," Kahane said.

Knowing the crunch was a draw for the eater and a drawback for the listener, they came up with a workaround for what they call a "pain point."

"Instead of having to launch new Doritos, we could actually solve that pain point with a technology," Kahane said.

The prospect of making a less crispy Doritos chip surfaced several years ago, and was widely mocked.

In 2018, the former chief executive of PepsiCo claimed Doritos was developing a "chip for women," which was intended to be a low-crunch alternative, with reduced orange finger dust. There was backlash online, and PepsiCo later said it was a misunderstanding, and it was not, in fact, releasing a specific Doritos product for women.

To address the crunch issue in the gaming community, Doritos turned to technology.

"That's always been a distraction for me," Fashbaugh said of the chomping in his headphones. "I'll lose my focus when one person starts eating. That sound of crunching can just take you out of the experience, but you still want to enjoy your snack because realistically, snacking and gaming go hand-in-hand."

He and his team began the process by researching and testing out various noise cancellation techniques. Then, "we got a lot of people to crunch Doritos into a microphone," Fashbaugh said.

About 500 people were recorded munching on Doritos, and those recordings were used to simulate 5,000 different crunch sounds.

"Then, we took sounds of lots of us talking and other people talking, and mixed those together with the crunch sounds so we could generate an AI that could learn the sound of crunching and voicing," Fashbaugh said. "We needed to make something that could really separate the sounds of voices and crunches."

While the artificial intelligence software is "trained exclusively on Doritos," he said, it actually works on some other crunch sounds, including different types of chips, crackers and raw vegetables.

"I think it's going to have an impact," said Fashbaugh, adding that it was designed to keep voice chat clear.

## GADGETS

## MiCreator Studio, Motion 300 offer big audio in small form

BY GREGG ELLMAN  
Tribune News Service

Austrian Audio's recently launched MiCreator Studio pocket-sized microphone delivers pro-quality audio. The \$199 plug-and-play microphone is easy to set up and use for any type of recording, including the exciting test I tried recently.

The flexible and directional condenser microphone has a solid build with an all-metal housing. It can be aimed in almost any direction and records from the front and back. There's a thread on the bottom for attaching it to compatible mounts, such as a mic boom or platform stand, although the MiCreator Studio stands up fine on its own with non-split padding on the bottom.

Onboard controls on the front include a volume knob and a high/low/mute microphone sensitivity switch. Austrian Audio states the low gain setting can handle up to 130 decibels SPL. Controls on the back include a high/low button and 3.5 mm ports for in/out.

My test was interesting: Since the mic is so portable, I connected it to my laptop and placed it by my front door, where my two dogs love to sit in the sun and bark to no end at people walking by. The audio file was as clear as it could be. Listening to it on my stereo system, you would have thought the dogs were barking live if you didn't know it was a recording.

The MiCreator Studio also proved itself during a recent Zoom call. I used a MacBook Pro with the MiCreator Studio, but with the right cables, it can be used with other laptops (Mac or PC), iPads and smartphones.

For more advanced recordings, where multiple microphones are needed, a satellite MiCreator microphone (\$99) can be connected to the main MiCreator Studio, which will function as the home base microphone. The combination of the two allows for multi-tracking and stereo recordings.



AUSTRIAN AUDIO/TNS

The Austrian Audio MiCreator Studio microphone records from both the front and back.

The MiCreator Studio mic comes with two red faceplates (in addition to the black ones) for the front and back, a connection cable, a USB-C cable, a can MCTA thread adapter and a soft carrying pouch. The satellite mic has faceplates, the MCTA thread adapter and connection cables.

Online: [austrian.audio/microphones](http://austrian.audio/microphones)

Soundcore's new **Motion 300 portable Bluetooth 5.3 speaker** is solid, with excellent sound for its size and all the features needed to rock on the go. So many similar speakers are available, but this one has everything you need. And it's only \$79.99!

The brick-sized Motion 300 has a pair of 15 mm speakers behind its metallic grill and 30 watts of broadcast power. It's built with rounded corners, enabling it to lay flat or stand on either side. Soundcore made the Motion 300 so that its equalizer automatically adjusts to the direction and orientation of the speaker.

The wireless Hi-Res sound was evident at all volume levels in all types of music and sporting events. In fact, it was my audio choice for the last game of the World Series. A detachable carrying strap makes the portable speaker even more convenient.

The internal 4900 mAh USB-C rechargeable battery gives the speaker 13 hours of playback time, which can vary based on the volume level. It has an IPX7 rating, so it's ready for the beach, pool and unexpected rain showers.

Among the buttons for controlling the Motion 300 is a bass up button to quickly increase or decrease the amount of bass available. The Soundcore app (Android and iOS) works well for personalizing the sound and other features. The Motion 300 also works as a hands-free speakerphone with a built-in microphone.

If authentic stereo sound is needed, purchase a second Motion 300 Bluetooth 5.3 speaker: Two can be paired to achieve surround sound.

Online: [us.soundcore.com](http://us.soundcore.com)



SOUNDCORE/TNS

The Soundcore Motion 300 automatically adjusts the sound based on the speaker's direction and orientation.

# CROSSWORD AND COMICS

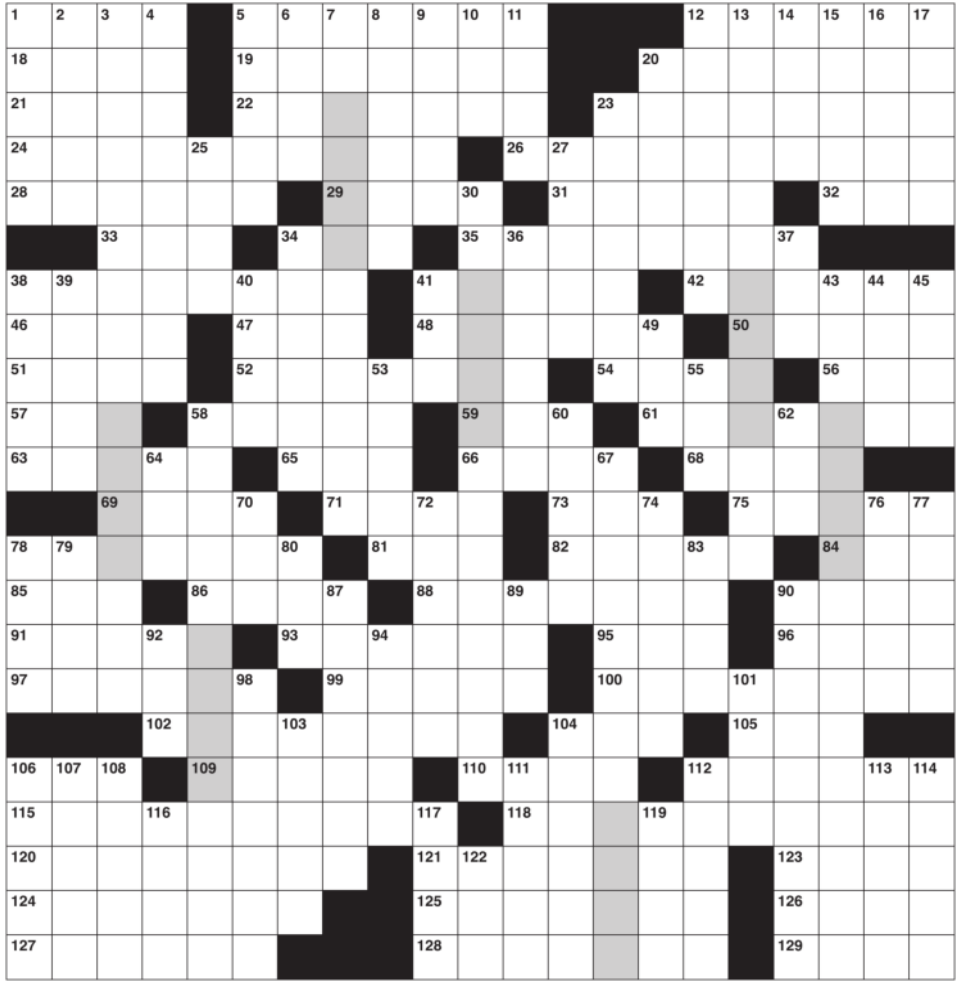
## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### GROWTH SPURTS

BY ADAM WAGNER AND MICHAEL LIEBERMAN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Adam Wagner, of Oakland, Calif., is a creative lead at Patreon, a monetization platform for content creators. Michael Lieberman, of Washington, D.C., is a consumer-protection lawyer at Fairmark Partners. They're also each dads of fastgrowing toddlers, which is what inspired this puzzle. Adam sent the title to Mike, who sent back what became 3- and 13- Down . . . and they were off and running. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Sweeties
  - 5 Heaven on earth, to the ancient Greeks
  - 12 International pizza chain founded in Brooklyn
  - 18 Pipsqueak
  - 19 "We're not ready to joke about this yet?"
  - 20 Caps that lack brims
  - 21 Apt name for a Whirlpool salesman?
  - 22 Trying to get a rise out of
  - 23 Gut
  - 24 Deserved
  - 26 "Don't believe one word of that!"
  - 28 Visibly scornful
  - 29 Reptile with a big bite, informally
  - 31 Surprise and delight
  - 32 Slip up
  - 33 One of the seven in "Se7en"
  - 34 Agcy. that oversees the Secret Service
  - 35 One's natural habitat
  - 38 Sequin-covered undergarment popularized by Lady Gaga
  - 41 Permitted
  - 42 Place to rest your head
  - 46 Musician Parks or Guthrie
  - 47 \_\_\_ cit. (footnote abbr.)
  - 48 They're just over two feet
  - 50 Lake on the Malawi-Mozambique border
  - 51 Subatomic particle
  - 52 Release, as a trailer
  - 54 Campus military grp.
  - 56 "Your" of yore
  - 57 "Monday Night Football With Peyton & \_\_\_"
  - 58 "The results \_\_\_\_\_"
  - 59 Japanese "yes"
  - 61 Showy flowers native to Mexico
  - 63 Thrills
  - 65 Political org. with a quadrennial convention
  - 66 Website with info about the stars
  - 68 Well, in both French and Spanish
  - 69 Get by
  - 71 "Top Chef" judge Simmons
  - 73 Bother, with "at"
  - 75 Classic name in wafers
  - 78 One who doesn't have a prayer?
  - 81 Producer of sketches, in brief
  - 82 Addis \_\_\_
  - 84 When doubled, fake laugh
  - 85 "Yellowjackets" network, for short
  - 86 Subscribe again
  - 88 Fox-hunting shout
  - 90 Where the proverbial buck stops
  - 91 Actress Hedren
  - 93 Mississippi city in a Neil Simon title
  - 95 Marathoner's wear
  - 96 World capital near the 60th parallel
  - 97 How a Broadway star might break out
  - 99 What a stiffed server receives
  - 100 Football rival of the Brigham Young Cougars
  - 102 20-sided shape
  - 104 Question of introspection
  - 105 Upper-left keyboard key
  - 106 Fertility-lab supply
  - 109 Most mountainous Caribbean nation
  - 110 Cry of faux-surprise
  - 112 French brothers
  - 115 Reasons to wear socks post-vacation
  - 118 Resort offering that might include a lift ticket
  - 120 Ones catching waves?
  - 121 "Impossible!"
  - 123 Poet Pound
  - 124 Behind
  - 125 One might improve a pupil's performance
  - 126 Hurl with gusto, in Gen Z slang
  - 127 One of a record-setting 3,234 for Sue Bird
  - 128 Wraps up in fabric
  - 129 Some old jets, for short
  - 9 1982 Stevie Wonder hit
  - 10 It's never free of charge
  - 11 Home-services website
  - 12 Fully divests one's stake
  - 13 Yao Ming, before joining the N.B.A.?
  - 14 Actress Taylor-Joy
  - 15 Search (through)
  - 16 Show again
  - 17 Blender brand
  - 20 Doozy
  - 23 Detector of nonsense, informally
  - 25 Toymaker Rubik
  - 27 Language that gave us "mulligatawny" and "patchouli"
  - 30 Peruvian road sign?
  - 34 Spoke monotonously
  - 36 English philosopher William of \_\_\_
  - 37 Go by air
  - 38 Shirley Bassey and Agatha Christie, for two
  - 39 Gloater's words
  - 40 Photo-editing option
  - 41 Midback muscle
  - 43 Reasons that South American furniture stores have super-long lines?
  - 44 Org. concerned with plant-based well-being?
  - 45 Methods
  - 49 Nursery purchase
  - 53 Historic quinoa cultivators
  - 55 Amount owed
  - 58 Things like "What do we want?" "Headache relief!" "When do we want it?" "Now!?"
  - 60 Best-case
  - 62 California congresswoman Barbara
  - 64 Fawn's mother
  - 67 Affectionate squeeze of an infant's bottom?
  - 70 Language suffix
  - 72 Altogether
  - 74 Setting for many Gauguin works
  - 76 The \_\_\_ Honors (annual picture-book awards)
  - 77 Black-and-white cookies
  - 78 Italian wine region
  - 79 Flimsy
  - 80 Where you might get into hot water
  - 83 Bubble tea
  - 87 Things that kids are encouraged to break
  - 89 Sass
  - 90 Items exchanged when a relationship gets serious
  - 92 Polynesian food
  - 94 Access an account
  - 98 Bit of soccer or hockey equipment
  - 101 Nickname for a muscly Disney protagonist
  - 103 Plucked instrument
  - 104 Start of a famous Kennedy quote
  - 106 Tennis's Naomi
  - 107 Roof toppers
  - 108 The opposition
  - 111 Yoga pose
  - 112 Destinies
  - 113 Everglades wader
  - 114 What tickets may afford
  - 116 Comedian Lydic of "The Daily Show"
  - 117 Virtual replications, for short
  - 119 North or south end
  - 122 One might be spotted on a farm

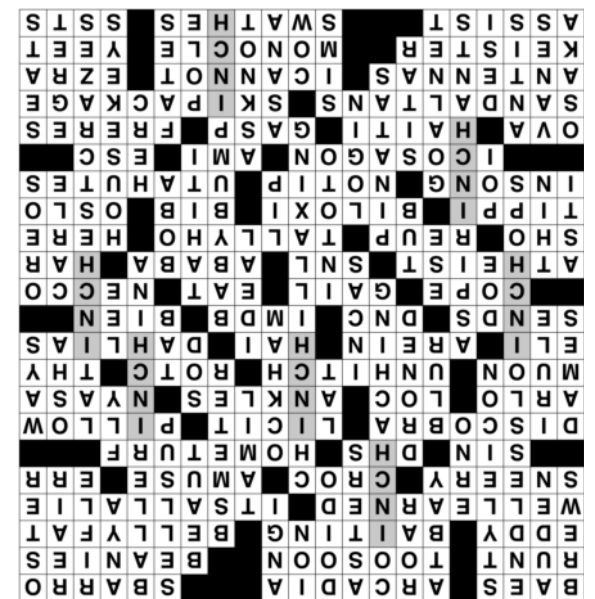


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## FACES

# Acting, music and destiny

Barbra Streisand discusses the major elements of her memoir

By HILLEL ITALIE  
Associated Press

For Barbra Streisand, long one of the most private of superstars, opening up about herself is an ongoing challenge. But, as she explains in her memoir, “My Name is Barbra,” she felt an “obligation to the people truly interested” in her work, in the process behind her work “and perhaps the person behind the process.”

“I thought writing a book would be easier than making a movie, but boy, was I wrong,” she writes.

Published in early November, “My Name is Barbra” is a nearly 1,000-page memoir that covers one of the epic narratives in modern show business — her uncompromising rise from working-class Brooklyn in the 1940s and ‘50s to global fame. Streisand’s records have sold more than 100 million copies worldwide and her honors range from multiple Emmys and Grammys to a lifetime achievement award from The American Film Institute to a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Publishers had sought her life story since at least the 1980s, when then-Doubleday editor Jacqueline Kennedy lobbied in vain to sign up Streisand, who felt she wasn’t ready. But starting in the late 1990s, Streisand began writing down memories — in long-hand, because she couldn’t type. She agreed to a book deal with Viking in 2015, and notes that a manuscript she expected to finish

in two years ended up taking a decade, a delay she was relieved to learn is not uncommon in publishing.

“I always wonder about that,” Streisand, 81, says during the interview. “Like, great authors, if it takes them a long time, how do they make a living?”

It helps to have outside income.

In her memoir, Streisand shares vivid, detailed memories of her breakthrough Broadway and film roles in “Funny Girl,” of recording such chart-topping albums

as “People” and “Guilty” and making such signature Streisand films as “The Way We Were,” “A Star Is Born” and “Yentl,” which marked the beginning of her unique achievements as a woman who produced, directed and starred in her own movies. She also looks back on her eight-year marriage to Elliott Gould, her affairs with Ryan O’Neal and Don Johnson among others and her enduring relationship with James Brolin, whom she married in 1998.

“Nothing’s impossible,” is how she begins the book’s epilogue.

“My Name is Barbra” reached the top five on the New York Times bestseller list and has re-

ceived the kinds of reviews her films and albums inspired: “At heart this is a story so bursting with life, fury, unbelievable ambition and food (Streisand loves to eat) that you come away from it exhausted but smiling,” wrote the Guardian’s Emma Brockes.

During her recent interview, Streisand reflected on her tastes in music, the films she made and those she enjoys and her sense of destiny, dating back to childhood.

## A path set at a young age

She recalled seeing “The Diary of Anne Frank” on stage in the 1950s. Even then, she just knew she could do it.

“I said to myself, ‘I’m 14. I’m Jewish, and I can play that part.’ Well, how did I know that? I don’t know. So there’s a part of me that’s very self-sufficient or believes in myself.”

But there’s another part, too, a negativity, a doubt — “don’t know if it’s just people who are artistic,” she says, but it’s a dichotomy.

“And then there’s the part that knows from your soul, from my DNA, from my father, maybe even my mother, that tells you ‘You can do it.’ I don’t know how to describe it. It doesn’t come in a bottle.”

## Singing came naturally

Her father passed away when she was in infancy. She was known as “the girl with no father,” she recalls, and for having “a good voice.” More inspired as a teenager by the soundtrack to “Guys and



AP

Barbra Streisand, shown performing in Toronto in 2006, published a nearly 1,000-page memoir last month called “My Name is Barbra.”

Dolls” than by the latest hit from Elvis Presley or Chuck Berry, she preferred Broadway musicals to rock ‘n’ roll.

“I looked for the lyrics first. If I relate to the lyric, I can sing the song. I took for granted my voice.”

“They (show songs) came from Broadway musicals. There is a character playing those parts and singing those songs. So there’s something to act. There’s a beginning, a middle and an end. (With rock songs), you just repeat the phrase. There’s a phrase and then there’s a bridge and then there’s the phrase. And I don’t know.

They just never appealed to me.”

## Early and late ambitions

Looking back at her career, Streisand recalls a framed photo she had in her old home, before she moved to Malibu, Calif. It was of an interview she did at age 19.

“They asked me, ‘What do you want to be?’ It was like, ‘Well, I want to do lots of things. I want to act, sing.’ Oh, I even said I would like to direct an opera someday. Which I always thought I’d like to do. I never got around to that. Although it’s possible that’s something I could do.”

# Cameron issues fan-pleasing new 4K remaster of ‘Titanic’

By JEN YAMATO  
Los Angeles Times

Near, far, wherever they are, what are the most extreme lengths a “Titanic” fan has gone to in their love for James Cameron’s epic 1997 disaster romance?

Some have set out to clock thousands of lifetime viewings of the 11-time Oscar-winning Leonardo di Caprio-Kate Winslet starrer, says the filmmaker. “I think there’s one fellow that has set a goal to see it 10,000 times,” Cameron tells The Times. “It’s a long film, so I don’t know. He might not live long enough to pull that off.”

Then there’s Grammy- and Oscar-winning recording superstar Adele, who made a special request of Cameron and producer Jon Landau for her “Titanic”-themed 30th birthday celebration in 2018.

“We loaned the Heart of the Ocean to Adele for her birthday,” says Landau of the blue diamond prop necklace Rose (played as an old woman by Gloria Stuart) drops into the ocean at the end of the film. Of Adele’s party, he says, “They built a grand staircase, all these things. That’s right up there for me.”

More than 25 years later, “Titanic” love goes on so strong that Cameron took about a



TNS

Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet played the now-iconic roles of Jack and Rose in 1997’s “Titanic.”

week out of his packed “Avatar” franchise schedule this year to oversee a 4K remastering of his groundbreaking modern classic, a fictionalized retelling of the famous 1912 sinking that cost \$200 million to produce. A two-disc 25th anniversary 4K Blu-ray and limited edition box set hit shelves this week.

The long-awaited remaster is presented in Dolby Vision HDR and Atmos audio and is the first of six Cameron films heading to shelves in 4K, including “The Abyss,” “True Lies,” “Aliens,” “Avatar” and “Avatar: The Way of Water.”

Speaking on Zoom with his Lightstorm Entertainment partner Landau ahead of the 4K home video release, Cameron flashed back to the making of “Titanic,” for which a 800-foot-long full-scale replica ship was partially constructed in Rosarito, Mexico — a set the “Avatar” auteur says he would create very differently with today’s technology, using smaller set pieces extended via CGI.

But at the time “Titanic” was the most expensive film ever made, owing to the unprecedented physical scale of sets and sequences that required complex engineering and massive resources to mount. “We never panicked,” Cameron says with a laugh. “The studio panicked. It’s our job not to panic.”

Opening in theaters Dec. 19, 1997, the film became the highest-grossing film of all time — until Cameron beat his own record with “Avatar” in 2009.

A limited-edition box set further immers-

es “Titanic” fans into the world of the film. It includes sheet music for Celine Dion’s juggernaut theme “My Heart Will Go On,” replicas of the actual boarding pass and ship menus given to passengers on the ill-fated journey, and notes written by Rose to Cal and from Jack to Rose in the film.

Among the 5 hours of bonus and legacy features in the two-disc set are new in-depth peeks at how Cameron pulled off “Titanic,” combining real footage with miniatures, green screen and other filmmaking techniques.

Perhaps most important of all, Cameron has included the intriguing 2023 NatGeo special “Titanic: 25 Years Later With James Cameron,” in which he took to a hypothermia lab in New Zealand with a team of scientists and two stunt performers to settle the question once and for all: Could Jack have fit on that floating door?

“I was tired of people banging on year after year,” says Cameron, who put Jack and Rose through every conceivable scenario in freezing temperatures to see if they both could have survived. “The funny thing is, people are still arguing about this 25 years later,” he says. “I guess that’s a good problem to have.”

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Airline settles female pilots' discrimination suit

**CO** DENVER — Frontier Airlines has settled a lawsuit filed by female pilots who accused the airline of discriminating against pregnant or breast-feeding employees.

In the agreement announced Tuesday, Frontier will let pilots pump breast milk in the cockpit during "noncritical phases" of flights. The Denver-based airline also agreed to let pilots who are breastfeeding reduce their flying time and treat pregnancy and breastfeeding the same as other medical conditions if they make pilots unable to fly.

The settlement was announced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The agency lodged charges against Frontier in 2018, after several pilots sued the airline.

Frontier's vice president for labor relations, Jacalyn Peter, said advances in wearable lactation technology made it possible to reach a settlement that maintains safety.

## Pastor gets 15 years for child exploitation attempt

**WI** GREEN BAY — A Wisconsin pastor accused of sexually exploiting children from Venezuela and Cuba was sentenced Monday to 15 years in a federal prison.

Cory Herthel, 40, pleaded guilty in August to one count of attempted sexual exploitation of a child.

The church where Herthel served, Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Green Bay, contacted the FBI in May to report that it had received information that Herthel was trading sexually explicit videos with a 15-year-old in Venezuela, according to court documents.

Herthel acknowledged he met the child begging on the streets in Ecuador, kept in touch with him after he and his mother returned to his native Venezuela, and exchanged sexually explicit videos with him, according to prosecutors and court documents. Investigators also learned that Herthel was allegedly exchanging sexually explicit videos with two children in Cuba.

## Family sues Panera, says drink led to man's death

**FL** FLEMING ISLAND — The family of a 46-year-old Florida man has filed a wrongful death and negligence lawsuit against one of the biggest fast-casual restaurant chains in the U.S., claiming Panera Bread Co.'s caffeine-filled lemonade drink led to his death.

David Brown had high blood pressure and didn't drink energy drinks, but the lawsuit said he believed the Panera Charged Lemonade was safe since it was not advertised as an energy drink. It was offered in the same place as the restaurant chain's non-caffeinated



LM OTERO/AP

## Better than a sleigh ride

**Roanoke, Texas, Fire Chief Chris Addington, left, drives Santa Claus atop a restored fire truck for a Speedway Children's Charities tree lighting event at the Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth on Tuesday.**

or less-caffeinated drinks, according to the lawsuit filed Monday in Superior Court in Delaware, where Panera is registered.

The lawsuit states that on Oct. 9, Brown had the drink three times during a visit to the Panera location in Fleming Island, Fla. On his walk home, he suffered cardiac arrest and died a short time later.

## Former pilot indicted on endangerment charges

**OR** PORTLAND — The former Alaska Airlines pilot accused of trying to cut the engines of a Horizon Air flight has been indicted on 84 endangerment charges, but is no longer charged with attempted murder, authorities said Tuesday.

The district attorney's office in Oregon's Multnomah County, home to Portland, announced the grand jury's indictment. Joseph Emerson is to be arraigned on 83 charges of recklessly endangering another person — for each person who was on the plane — and one charge of endangering an aircraft. Prosecutors have accused Emerson of trying to cut the engines on an Oct. 22 flight from Everett, Wash., to San Francisco while riding in the extra seat in the cockpit. The plane was diverted to Portland, where it landed safely.

According to charging documents, Emerson told Port of Portland police following his arrest that he had been struggling with

depression, that a friend had recently died and that he had taken psychedelic mushrooms about 48 hours before he attempted to cut the engines.

Emerson remains in custody.

## Governor: Chants outside restaurant 'antisemitic'

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — Protesters marching in Philadelphia against the bombardment of Gaza chanted about genocide Sunday outside an Israeli-style restaurant, leading Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro to call the demonstration "antisemitic."

In Philadelphia's Center City and University City neighborhoods, hundreds of people marched to criticize Israel's military actions in Gaza, The Philadelphia Inquirer reported. A video of demonstrators outside of Goldie Falafel depicted people chanting, "Goldie, Goldie, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide."

Shapiro first addressed the protest on X, formerly Twitter. Later at an event, the governor said he told one of the restaurant's owners that he supported him and his staff.

Michael Solomonov is a prominent Israeli chef who has co-authored three cookbooks and received several James Beard awards. He and Steve Cook, the co-owner, are Jewish.

Goldie Falafel is a vegan kosher restaurant.

In a statement, organizers of the protest, Philly Palestine Coalition, called for a boycott of the company's restaurants. They criticized Solomonov's role as a culinary ambassador to Israel, and his recent donation efforts.

## US wants ships to anchor farther from pipelines

**CA** HUNTINGTON BEACH — Federal officials on Tuesday recommended increasing the distance from undersea pipelines that vessels are allowed to anchor in Southern California, citing a 2021 oil spill they said was caused by ships whose anchors were dragged across a pipeline after a storm.

The leak occurred in a ruptured pipeline owned by Houston-based Amplify Energy. National Transportation Safety Board officials concluded damage to the pipeline had been caused months earlier when a cold front brought high winds and seas to the Southern California coast, causing two container vessels that were anchored offshore to drag their anchors across the area where the pipeline was located.

The October 2021 spill of 25,000 gallons sent blobs of crude washing ashore in Huntington Beach and nearby communities, shuttered beaches and fisheries, coated birds with oil and threatened area wetlands.

The Beijing and MSC Danit had

displaced and damaged the pipeline in January 2021, while a strike from the Danit's anchor caused the eventual crude release, officials said.

The NTSB concluded that the pipeline rupture was likely caused by the proximity of anchored shipping vessels.

## Officials: Detroit on track for big drop in homicides

**MI** DETROIT — The city of Detroit is on track to see its fewest yearly homicides in nearly six decades, officials said Monday.

Through Nov. 30, Detroit had recorded 228 homicides — an 18% decrease over the same period last year. In 2018, Detroit had 261 homicides, the fewest number since 1966, when there were 214 homicides.

Officials credit a partnership between the city, Wayne County and the state that improves coordination among agencies and courts. It also has resulted in a 36% drop in carjackings and 13% decrease in non-fatal shootings, they said.

The coalition was formed in 2021 by County Executive Warren Evans and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan to improve the local criminal justice system following disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic.

From The Associated Press

Bizarro

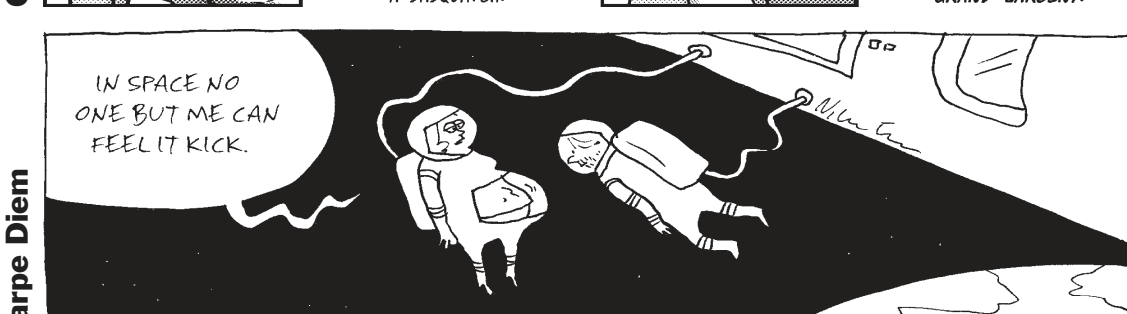
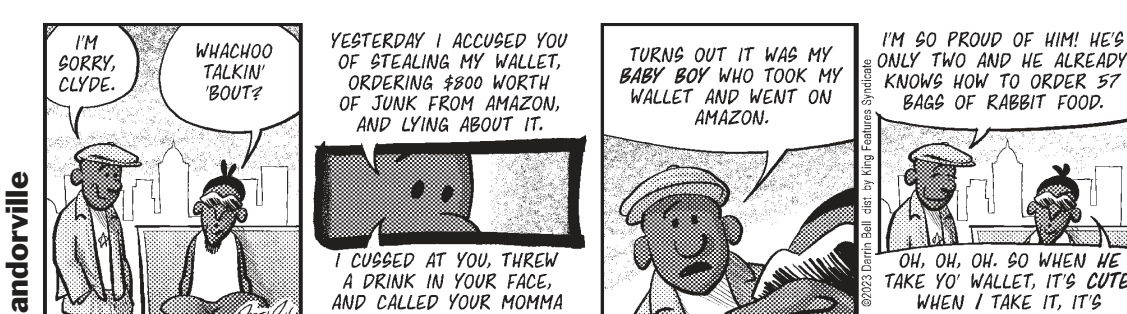
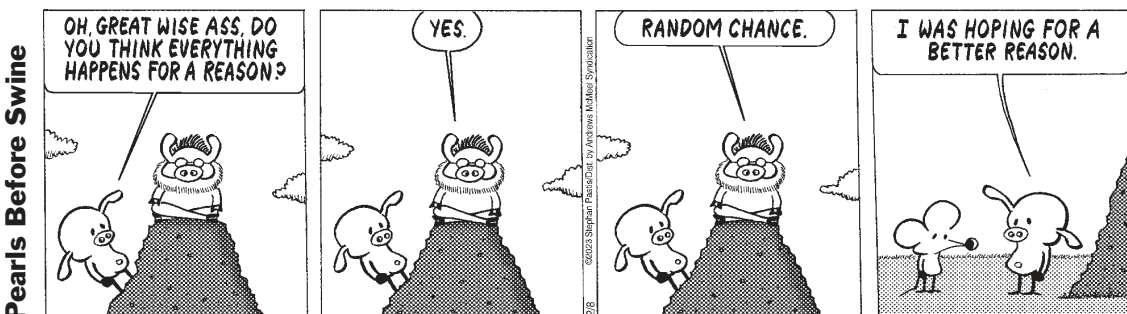
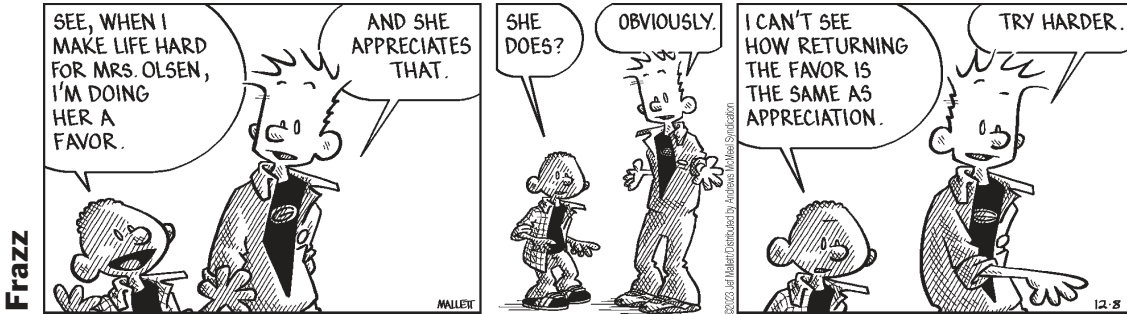


Loose Parts



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19								
20			21		22				23	24	25	26
			27	28				29	30			
31	32	33						34				
35					36			37				
38					39	40			41	42	43	44
					45				46			
48	49	50	51								52	
53								54			55	
56								57			58	



ACROSS

- 1 Peach center
- 4 Addams cousin
- 7 Humidor item
- 12 — Jima
- 13 Actress Long
- 14 Two-tone cookies
- 15 Noon, on a sundial
- 16 Goalies' protectors
- 18 Under the weather
- 19 Maine college town
- 20 "Frozen" snow queen
- 22 "— was saying ..."
- 23 Atlas pages
- 27 Airline to Sweden
- 29 "New World Symphony" composer
- 31 Capital of Belarus
- 34 Pisa's land
- 35 Like native llamas
- 37 Nursery cry
- 38 Bitty biter
- 39 Clean air org.
- 41 Bridge coup
- 45 Opera legend Beverly
- 47 Before
- 48 Humiliating fall
- 52 Berlin's country (Abbr.)
- 53 Early calculators

DOWN

- 1 Sprite
- 2 Volunteer's words
- 3 Works hard
- 4 Data
- 5 Royal crowns
- 6 Mexican entrees
- 7 Crooner Perry
- 8 Nest egg letters
- 9 Some fridges
- 10 Fine, at NASA
- 11 Blog feed
- 17 Wife of Geraint
- 21 Plus
- 23 Fluttery insects
- 24 Altar in the sky
- 25 Bud
- 26 Cloud setting

- 28 Alias abbr.
- 30 By way of
- 31 Periodical, for short
- 32 Hostel
- 33 Secret-protecting doc.
- 36 Astronaut Armstrong
- 37 Brownie ingredient
- 40 Location
- 42 Permitted
- 43 Sports setting
- 44 Concert goods, informally
- 45 Roasting rod
- 46 Fr. holy women
- 48 Distant
- 49 Rushmore face
- 50 Upper limit
- 51 Green prefix

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	S	H		P	U	M	A		S	A	U	L	
P	E	A		A	M	O	S		U	C	L	A	
T	E	L	E	C	A	S	T		N	A	E	S	
		F	R	I		T	O	D	D	I	E	S	
A	R	M	A	N	I		R	O	I				
B	A	A		O	K	S		M	A	C	E	S	
B	U	S	T		E	B	B		L	O	S	E	
A	L	T	E	R		A	A	S		N	A	T	
				A	D	S		H	I	A	T	U	S
P	R	E	P	A	I	D		E	R	R			
T	I	V	O		R	U	N	S	P	A	S	T	
A	B	E	T		E	D	I	T		S	K	I	
S	S	N	S		S	E	L	A		T	A	X	

12-8

CRYPTOQUIP

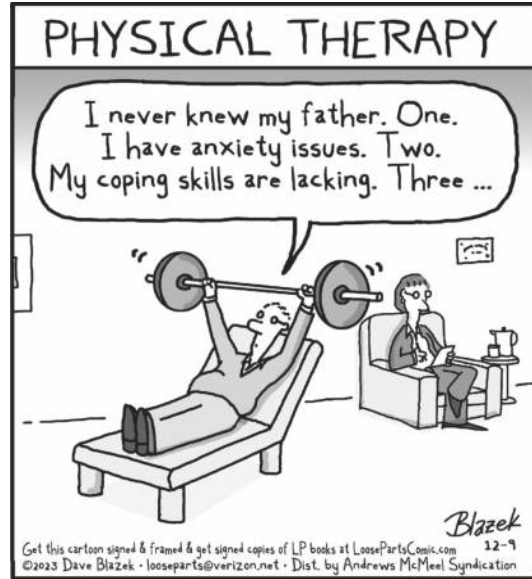
NUFM KTS'G JFBIK IOZF  
 AT LBZF B DCSOG DABJA  
 IBSRUOMR, NUBA LORUA AUBA  
 JFCSOJF? AFM AOWZIFD.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MY UNCLE DISLIKES SWEETS BUT LOVES VEGETABLES, SO THIS YEAR WE'RE GETTING HIM A BIRTHDAY CUKE.  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals Q

**Bizarro**

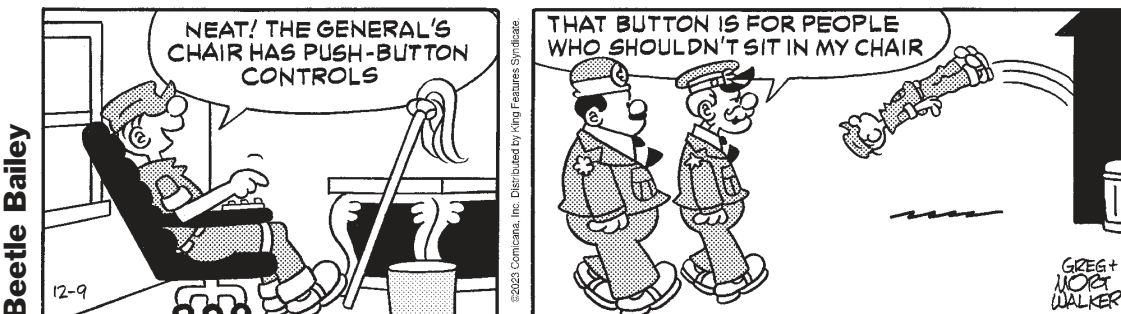
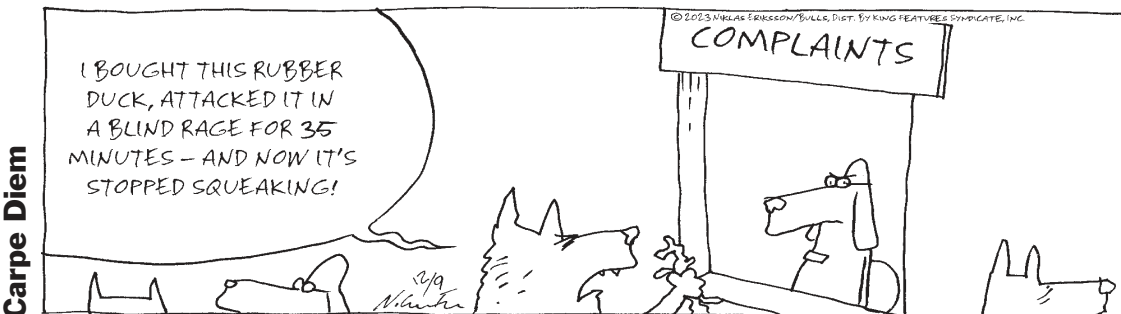
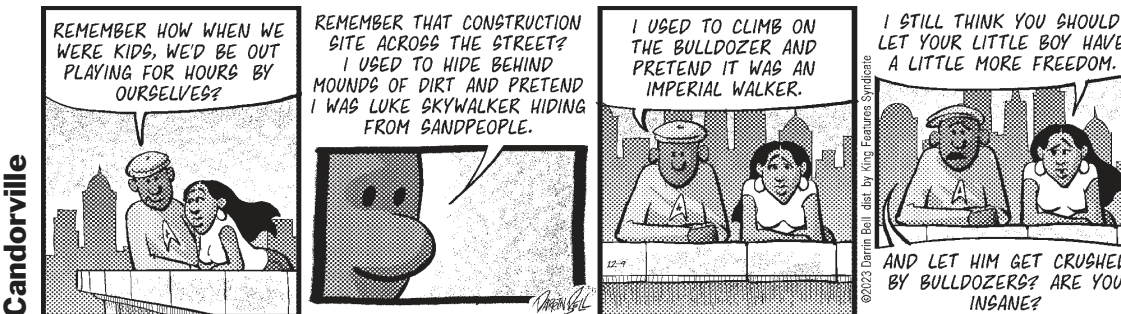
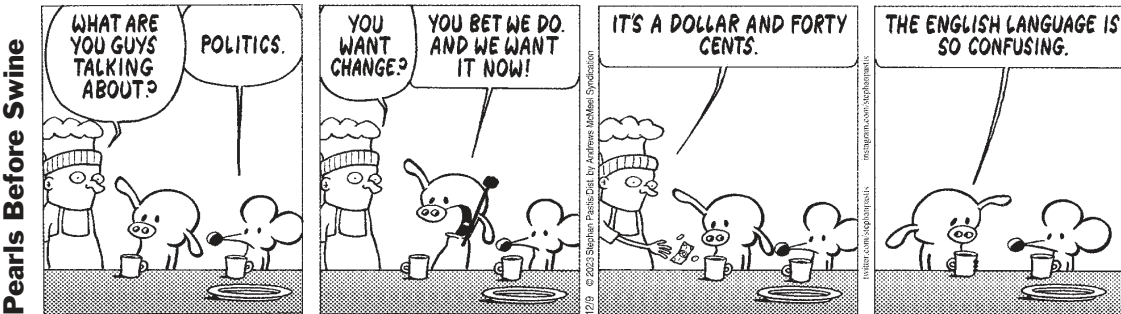


**Loose Parts**



**Eugene Sheffer Crossword**

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
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23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31				32			
33				34					35			
			36				37					
38	39	40					41			42	43	44
45						46				47		
48						49				50		
51						52				53		



**ACROSS**

- 1 Search for gold
- 4 1920s art style
- 8 Sugar or starch, for short
- 12 "Hail!"
- 13 Human rights lawyer Clooney
- 14 KOA patron
- 15 "Unstoppable" singer
- 16 Three feet
- 17 Unctuous
- 18 "Person of Interest" actress who played a mathematician in 38-Across
- 21 Texter's guffaw
- 22 Pub pint
- 23 Esau's brother
- 26 NBC sketch show
- 27 Satchel
- 30 Shrek, for one
- 31 Owned
- 32 Extra-long
- 33 The "G" of LGBTQ
- 34 Police officer
- 35 Bargains
- 36 Priestly garment
- 37 Moving day rental
- 38 Oscar-nominated film about NASA
- 45 Vicinity
- 46 Gymnast Korbut
- 47 Granada gold

- 48 Genie's home
- 49 Prosperous period
- 50 Decks in the ring
- 51 Getting the job done
- 52 Crime lab fluids
- 53 GI entertainers

**DOWN**

- 1 Bygone days
- 2 Athletic shoe brand
- 3 Close
- 4 Nine-to-five gig
- 5 Cybermessage
- 6 Kvetch
- 7 Seasoned vet
- 8 Witch
- 9 Rara —
- 10 Move, in Realtor lingo
- 11 — Mawr
- 19 Balm ingredient
- 20 Right angle
- 23 Warm-up run
- 24 Turkish title
- 25 Sob
- 26 Potential syrup
- 27 Sheepish remark
- 28 Rocker Rose
- 29 USO patrons
- 31 Mingles
- 32 Diner handout
- 34 Cavs, on scoreboards
- 35 Explorer Vasco —
- 36 Fight extinction
- 37 Vitality
- 38 Angelic ring
- 39 Tehran's country
- 40 Actress Moore
- 41 Drifting ice
- 42 Video-streaming brand
- 43 Love god
- 44 Mediocre

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

P	I	T		I	T		C	I	G	A	R		
I	W	O		N	I	A		O	R	E	O	S	
X	I	I		F	A	C	E	M	A	S	K	S	
I	L	L		O	R	O	N	O					
E	L	S	A		A	S	I		M	A	P	S	
			S	A	S		D	V	O	R	A	K	
M	I	N	S	K				I	T	A	L	Y	
A	N	D	E	A	N		W	A	H				
G	N	A	T		E	P	A		S	L	A	M	
					S	I	L	L	S		E	R	E
F	A	C	E	P	L	A	N	T		G	E	R	
A	B	A	C	I		C	U	E		A	N	C	
R	E	P	O	T		E	T	S		L	A	H	

**12-9**

**CRYPTOQUIP**

RM TNQ NDVIJUIA S PXRIM  
 VCSPKXRCE VNHI AIURKIV  
 MJNH SC SBBZI VPNJI, ONQZA  
 TNQ DI SC RORPCIVV?

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** WHEN YOU'D REALLY LIKE TO MAKE A SQUID START LAUGHING, WHAT MIGHT THAT REQUIRE? TEN TICKLES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: E equals G

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Ernie Gates

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## OPINION

## Any way you slice it, war on Big Sandwich is crummy

BY GEORGE F. WILL

*The Washington Post*

Although not all worrywarts are progressives, all progressives are worrywarts. They believe that there are evermore things urgently in need of their supervision — things to ban or mandate or regulate to help society shimmy up the pole of progress.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., is progressivism incarnate. The former Harvard Law School professor should possess, if there were such, a Ph.D. in Advanced Worrying. She represents the cutting edge of modern fretting, forever anxious lest something, somewhere, escapes the government's improving attention. So she has Xed (tweeted, for those who are not au courant) her joy that the Federal Trade Commission recently preoccupied with the menace of Big Tech is turning its disapproving squint at Big Sandwich. (This delicious phrase is from the Washington Examiner's Tom Joyce.)

Roark Capital, a private equity firm, owns or otherwise supports various fast-food chains (Arby's, Sonic Drive-In, Jimmy John's, McAlister's Deli, Schlotzky's) that serve sandwiches. (Maybe. The government disagrees with itself about the definition of "sandwich.") Now, Roark reportedly plans to purchase the Subway chain for \$9.6 billion. The FTC evidently shares Warren's worry that this might create, what she calls, "a sandwich shop monopoly." Well.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "monopoly" as the "exclusive possession or control of the trade in a commodity, product, or service; the condition of having no competitor in one's trade or business." But for the FTC-Warren posse, there are difficulties.

Can there be a monopoly in the provision of something that millions of parents make to put in their school-age children's backpacks? Something a 9-year-old can produce?

Subway is basically a brand. Its sandwich stores are small businesses owned by people who buy one or sometimes several franchises, and who benefit from the chain's national advertising.

Some Subway shops inevitably compete with nearby Jimmy John's shops or other sandwich sellers. Can a monopoly be riven by internal competitions, while surrounded by external competitors?

Sandwiches (Oxford dictionary: "an item of food consisting of two pieces of bread with a filling between them") seem to have been around long before the 18th century, when the fourth Earl of Sandwich, loath to leave a gambling table, was said to have snacked on meat that was sandwiched (as we now say) between pieces of bread. He, however, made these light meals fashionable, and today anti-aristocratic Americans eat billions of them annually.

Perhaps to inflate the specter of a sandwich shop monopoly, the FTC is considering diminishing the number of such shops by semantic fiat — by decreeing that a sandwich made of beef or chicken is not a sandwich if the meat is not served cold. Thousands of McDonald's and Chick-fil-A's would be defined out of the sandwich business. And scores of thousands of other shops selling hamburgers, and chicken or fish sandwiches would disappear from the calculations. The Agriculture Department, however, says that hamburger or chicken between bread is — drum roll — a sandwich.

America is so thickly planted with fast food

stores that in many places you cannot fling a brick without hitting one. In addition, there are about 43,000 U.S. food trucks, according to IBISWorld industry research, many of them selling what even the FTC would recognize as sandwiches. Most of New York City's approximately 13,000 bodegas (aka, corner grocery stores) sell them.

Sandwich vendors also compete with sellers of pizzas, tacos and items from Chopt, Panda Express, etc. Yet Warren surveys the crowded landscape of U.S. sandwich commerce and trembles about a potential monopoly.

Her evident belief — mystifying but actual — is that if Roark Capital buys Subway, competition in the sandwich market will somehow shrivel, leading "to higher food prices." She might not know that many states, including Massachusetts, forbid the owners of brands like Subway to dictate prices to franchisees. Their pricing is dictated, in part, by the proximity of many competitors.

By urging the FTC to devote resources to fending off a sandwich shop monopoly, Warren contributes to the public stock of harmless hilarity, making busybody progressivism more amusing than annoying. And she encourages the FTC to divert to Big Sandwich some meddlesomeness that might otherwise be used for more consequential mischief.

The current FTC's apparent belief, and Warren's, is that when an enterprise (Apple, Google, etc.) becomes big by satisfying many customers, these customers have created something worrisome. Hence the itch to combat the chimera of Big Sandwich, even though there is not, and can never be, any such thing.

## US must do more to counter China's military buildup

BY WILSON BEAVER

*The Heritage Foundation*

Our National Defense Strategy identifies China as the primary challenge to the United States. To confront this threat successfully, our military needs more warships, aircraft and munitions. Now.

But the Biden administration's spending does not match its defense strategy. The president's Emergency Supplemental Request made this clear by asking for \$61.4 billion for Ukraine, but only \$5.4 billion for the Indo-Pacific. In addition, the administration has made no attempt to cut spending elsewhere in the budget to help fund any part of the supplemental.

There are many ways money can be saved within the Defense Department, from programs that could be cut altogether, to reforms that would make DOD spend money more efficiently. Non-defense spending from within research and development, politicized spending on climate change and DEI, and wasteful bureaucratic bloat are all examples of Pentagon funding that needs to be reallocated toward building actual military capacity.

While some of the money necessary to pay for the military systems we need to deter China can be found within the Defense Department's budget, there's far more available elsewhere — in the wasteful spending that occurs across the federal budget.

What should this money go toward? Virginia class submarines, for starters. These subs have been identified as one of the most important assets needed to deter China in the West-

ern Pacific. But they don't come cheap. In fiscal year 2023, they cost around \$3.4 billion each. (The cost varies depending on additional systems installed. Moreover, the cost per unit goes down if more than one is purchased at a time).

The new Constellation class of guided missile frigates are also crucial to the mission in the Indo-Pacific. They cost around \$1.1 billion each, depending on the same variables.

If Congress is serious about funding a military capable of deterring China, plenty of big-ticket items outside the defense budget could be cut and reallocated to real military capacity.

For fiscal 2024, the Biden administration requested \$3.9 billion for the Department of Homeland Security's climate resilience programs, \$10 billion in mandatory funding for a new First Generation Down Payment Assistance program to "help address racial and ethnic home ownership and wealth gaps," \$3 billion for the State Department's Green Climate Fund and Clean Technology Fund within the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (climate change money for foreign countries), \$3 billion in Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants, etc. etc.

This administration's Department of Homeland Security is paying \$2.5 billion to house illegal immigrants, while spending only about \$56 million to maintain family housing facilities for service members. That money would be better spent on submarines or frigates.

Within the Defense Department budget itself, for fiscal year 2024 the Biden administration requested \$5.1 billion to "mitigate climate

risk." Jamming this sort of non-defense, politicized spending into the defense budget is especially egregious. The department's mission is to protect American national security interests, and these wasteful initiatives distract the military from carrying out its core mission.

Clearly, the administration thinks some things are worth the money. They'll willingly request \$113 billion for Ukraine and many billions more to other countries all around the globe. They'll spend billions more on DEI and climate-change initiatives, and they'll reward politically aligned left-wing groups with generous grants paid for by taxpayer dollars.

If the administration can throw around this kind of money for these kinds of causes, why can't it find the funds needed to assure America's Navy and Air Force can counter the greatest military threat to our nation?

There's plenty more the U.S. could and should be doing to build a military manifestly capable of safeguarding the security of American citizens. The issue is a lack of political will, seriously misguided priorities and an astounding mismanagement of resources.

Today's U.S. military is stretched thin across multiple theaters and forced to spend billions on politicized initiatives that don't enhance its ability to effectively wage war in the interests of the American people. Funding should flow from strategy, and strategy dictates that the U.S. focus its military spending on capabilities relevant to deterring China: warships, aircraft and munitions.

Wilson Beaver is a senior policy analyst in the Center for Defense Policy at The Heritage Foundation.



# SCOREBOARD

### COLLEGE FOOTBALL

**Schedule**  
**Saturday, Dec. 9**  
**EAST**  
 Navy (5-6) vs. Army (5-6) at Foxborough, Mass.

**Bowl schedule**  
**Saturday, Dec. 16**  
**Myrtle Beach Bowl**  
**Conway, S.C.**  
 Georgia Southern vs. Ohio  
**Celebration Bowl**  
**Atlanta**  
 Howard vs. Florida A&M  
**New Orleans Bowl**  
**New Orleans**  
 Jacksonville St. vs. Louisiana  
**Cure Bowl**  
**Orlando, Fla.**  
 Miami (Ohio) vs. Appalachian St.  
**New Mexico Bowl**  
**Albuquerque, N.M.**  
 New Mexico St. vs. Fresno St.  
**LA Bowl Hosted**  
**Inglewood, Calif.**  
 UCLA vs. Boise St.  
**Independence Bowl**  
**Shreveport, La.**  
 California vs. Texas Tech  
**Monday, Dec. 18**  
**Famous Toastery Bowl**  
**Charlotte, N.C.**  
 W. Kentucky vs. Old Dominion  
**Tuesday, Dec. 19**  
**Frisco Bowl**  
**Frisco, Texas**  
 UTSA vs. Marshall  
**Thursday, Dec. 21**  
**Boca Raton Bowl**  
**Boca Raton, Fla.**  
 USF vs. Syracuse  
**Friday, Dec. 22**  
**Gasparilla Bowl**  
**Tampa, Fla.**  
 Georgia Tech vs. UCF  
**Saturday, Dec. 23**  
**Camellia Bowl**  
**Montgomery, Ala.**  
 Arkansas St. vs. N. Illinois  
**Birmingham Bowl**  
**Birmingham, Ala.**  
 Troy vs. Duke  
**Armed Forces Bowl**  
**Fort Worth, Texas**  
 No. 24 James Madison vs. Air Force  
**Famous Idaho Potato Bowl**  
**Boise, Idaho**  
 Georgia St. vs. Utah St.  
**68 Ventures Bowl**  
**Mobile, Ala.**  
 South Alabama vs. Eastern Michigan  
**Las Vegas Bowl**  
**Las Vegas**  
 Utah vs. Northwestern  
**Hawaii Bowl**  
**Honolulu, Hawaii**  
 Coastal Carolina vs. San Jose St.  
**Tuesday, Dec. 26**  
**Quick Lane Bowl**  
**Detroit**  
 Bowling Green vs. Minnesota  
**First Responder Bowl**  
**Dallas**  
 Texas St. vs. Rice  
**Guaranteed Rate Bowl**  
**Phoenix**  
 Kansas vs. UNLV  
**Wednesday, Dec. 27**  
**Military Bowl Presented**  
**Annapolis, Md.**  
 No. 23 Tulane vs. Virginia Tech  
 Class:  
**Duke's Mayo Bowl**  
**Charlotte, N.C.**  
 North Carolina vs. West Virginia  
**Holiday Bowl**  
**San Diego, Calif.**  
 No. 16 Louisville vs. Southern Cal  
**Texas Bowl**  
**Houston**  
 No. 22 Oklahoma St. vs. Texas A&M

**FCS playoffs**  
**Quarterfinals**  
**Friday, Dec. 8**  
 Montana (11-1) vs. Furman (10-2)  
**Saturday, Dec. 9**  
 South Dakota St. (12-0) vs. Villanova (10-2)  
 Idaho (9-3) vs. UAlbany (10-3)  
 South Dakota (10-2) vs. North Dakota St. (10-3)  
**Semifinals**  
 South Dakota St.-Villanova-winner vs. Idaho-UAlbany-winner  
 South Dakota-North Dakota St.-winner vs. Montana-Furman-winner  
**Championship**  
**Saturday, Jan. 7**  
 Semifinal winners  
**NCAA Division II playoffs**  
**Semifinals**  
**Saturday, Dec. 9**  
 Harding vs. Lenoir-Rhyne  
 Colo. Sch. of Mines vs. Kutztown  
**Championship**  
 Semifinal winners  
**NCAA Division III playoffs**  
**Semifinals**  
**Saturday, Dec. 9**  
 Wartburg vs. North Central (III.)  
 Randolph-Macon vs. Cortland  
**Championship**  
 Semifinal winners

### PRO FOOTBALL

#### NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Miami	9	3	0	.750	384	266
Buffalo	6	6	0	.500	328	227
N.Y. Jets	4	8	0	.333	171	251
New England	2	10	0	.167	148	254
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	8	4	0	.667	285	259
Houston	7	5	0	.583	281	249
Indianapolis	7	5	0	.583	300	296
Tennessee	4	8	0	.333	213	255
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	9	3	0	.750	324	187
Cleveland	7	5	0	.583	258	245
Pittsburgh	7	5	0	.583	192	229
Cincinnati	6	6	0	.500	246	273
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	8	4	0	.667	275	208
Denver	6	6	0	.500	263	302
L.A. Chargers	5	7	0	.417	275	258
Las Vegas	5	7	0	.417	202	256

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	10	2	0	.833	329	288
Dallas	9	3	0	.750	388	220
N.Y. Giants	4	8	0	.333	159	292
Washington	4	9	0	.308	261	395
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	6	6	0	.500	226	240
New Orleans	5	7	0	.417	257	255
Tampa Bay	5	7	0	.417	233	245
e-Carolina	1	11	0	.083	191	313
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	9	3	0	.750	327	286
Green Bay	6	6	0	.500	258	243
Minnesota	6	6	0	.500	263	242
Chicago	4	8	0	.333	242	296
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	9	3	0	.750	352	189
L.A. Rams	6	6	0	.500	268	253
Seattle	6	6	0	.500	264	290
Arizona	3	10	0	.231	230	331

e-Eliminated from playoffs  
**Thursday's game**  
 New England at Pittsburgh  
**Sunday's games**  
 Carolina at New Orleans  
 Detroit at Chicago  
 Houston at N.Y. Jets  
 Indianapolis at Cincinnati  
 Jacksonville at Cleveland  
 L.A. Rams at Baltimore  
 Tampa Bay at Atlanta  
 Minnesota at Las Vegas  
 Seattle at San Francisco  
 Buffalo at Kansas City  
 Denver at L.A. Chargers  
 Philadelphia at Dallas  
 Open: Arizona, Washington

**Monday's games**  
 Green Bay at N.Y. Giants  
 Tennessee at Miami  
**Thursday, Dec. 14**  
 L.A. Chargers at Las Vegas  
**Saturday, Dec. 16**  
 Minnesota at Cincinnati  
 Pittsburgh at Indianapolis  
 Denver at Detroit  
**Sunday, Dec. 17**  
 Atlanta at Carolina  
 Chicago at Cleveland  
 Houston at Tennessee  
 Kansas City at New England  
 N.Y. Giants at New Orleans  
 N.Y. Jets at Miami  
 Tampa Bay at Green Bay  
 San Francisco at Arizona  
 Washington at L.A. Rams  
 Dallas at Buffalo  
 Baltimore at Jacksonville  
**Monday, Dec. 18**  
 Philadelphia at Seattle

#### NFL calendar

**Jan. 13-15** — Wild Card playoff games.  
**Jan. 20-21** — Division playoff games.  
**Jan. 28** — AFC and NFC championship games.  
**Feb. 11** — Super Bowl 58 at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas.  
**Feb. 27-March 4** — Scouting Combine at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.  
**April 25-27** — NFL Draft in Detroit.

### COLLEGE BASKETBALL

#### Wednesday's men's scores

**EAST**  
 Brown 67, Rhode Island 64  
 Bryant 67, Siena 51  
 Canisius 87, Robert Morris 80  
 Colgate 115, Northern Vermont-Lyndon 37  
 Dartmouth 76, New Hampshire 64  
 Duquesne 85, Marshall 72  
 Fairfield 75, Yale 71  
 Hofstra 62, Iona 57  
 La Salle 62, Loyola (Md.) 61  
 Maine 74, Boston U. 65  
 Maryland 81, Penn St. 75, OT  
 Morgan St. 92, UMBEC 80  
 NJIT 80, Fordham 77  
 Penn 111, FDU-Florham 57  
 Pittsburgh 80, West Virginia 63  
 Saint Joseph's 69, American 53  
 St. Bonaventure 94, Niagara 60  
 St. John's 85, Sacred Heart 50  
 Stony Brook 81, Stonehill 63  
 Temple 85, Bloomsburg 55  
 Towson 81, UMass 71  
 Vermont 73, Northeastern 71  
 Wagner 62, Coppin St. 59  
**SOUTH**  
 Belmont 72, Lipscomb 71  
 Clemson 72, South Carolina 67  
 Davidson 62, Campbell 50  
 Florida A&M 65, Presbyterian 60  
 Memphis 85, VCU 80, OT  
 Miami 97, LIU 49  
 NC State 93, Md.-Eastern Shore 61  
 San Francisco 73, Vanderbilt 60  
 South Alabama 83, Mercer 62  
 UCF 94, Jacksonville 52  
 Wake Forest 76, Rutgers 57  
 William & Mary 84, Old Dominion 79  
 Wofford 81, Gardner-Webb 66  
**MIDWEST**  
 Ball St. 68, Detroit 65  
 Cent. Michigan 71, Valparaiso 67  
 Drake 75, Saint Louis 69  
 Fort Wayne 70, S. Indiana 57  
 Illinois St. 62, N. Kentucky 59  
 Marquette 86, Texas 65  
 Minnesota 76, Nebraska 65  
 N. Iowa 78, Richmond 73  
 Ohio St. 84, Miami (Ohio) 64  
 SE Missouri 95, Harris-Stowe 45  
 SIU-Edwardsville 78, Green Bay 69  
 St. Thomas (MN) 75, Milwaukee 71  
 Toledo 69, Oakland 68  
 W. Illinois 80, Coe 58  
 Youngstown St. 78, Ohio 72  
**SOUTHWEST**  
 Houston 75, Rice 39  
 Houston Christian 95, SW Adventist 58  
 N. Arizona 78, Abilene Christian 76  
 Texas A&M 89, DePaul 64  
 Texas Rio Grande Valley 76, Texas A&M-CC 74  
 Texas Tech 87, Omaha 58  
 Texas-Arlington 74, North Texas at Dallas 37  
**FAR WEST**  
 Arizona St. 76, SMU 74  
 Cal St.-Fullerton 60, Pepperdine 55  
 Colorado St. 90, Denver 80  
 Long Beach St. 88, Life Pacific 66  
 Nevada 80, UC Davis 68  
 New Mexico 84, UC Santa Barbara 61  
 Portland St. 104, Lewis & Clark 60  
 Utah St. 108, San Diego 81  
 Utah Tech 72, Cal Baptist 69  
 Washington St. 86, UC Riverside 49

#### Wednesday's women's scores

**EAST**  
 Albany (NY) 56, CCSU 37  
 Boston College 95, UMass 57  
 Bryant 63, Loyola (Md.) 54  
 Columbia 76, Memphis 66  
 Delaware St. 108, Wilmington (DC) 39  
 Drexel 51, Marist 36  
 Fairleigh Dickinson 86, Bloomfield 38  
 Maine 79, Harvard 61  
 Monmouth (NJ) 72, American 60  
 New Hampshire 68, Stonehill 41  
 Princeton 79, Quinnipiac 70  
 Providence 51, Rhode Island 50  
 Sacred Heart 57, NJIT 48  
 Stony Brook 81, Yale 66  
 Towson 68, George Washington 60  
 UConn 90, Ball St. 63  
 Vermont 62, Army 42  
 Wagner 69, St. Peter's 67  
**SOUTH**  
 Alabama 88, Coastal Carolina 46  
 Belmont 70, Lipscomb 46  
 E. Kentucky 85, Miami (Ohio) 55  
 ETSU 79, Charleston Southern 52  
 Furman 124, Bob Jones 44  
 Georgia 86, Troy 70  
 Middle Tennessee 73, Tennessee 62  
 Minnesota 76, Kentucky 57  
 North Carolina 81, UNC-Greensboro 66  
 Northwestern St. 59, Tarleton St. 51  
 Presbyterian 68, Queens (NC) 60  
 South Carolina 104, Morgan St. 38  
 Tulane 90, New Orleans 63  
 UNC-Asheville 88, Warren Wilson 33  
 Virginia 78, Rider 51  
 Virginia Tech 98, LIU Brooklyn 50  
**MIDWEST**  
 Cleveland St. 87, Niagara 56  
 Detroit 62, W. Michigan 59  
 Fort Wayne 57, Bellarmine 46  
 IUPUI 81, Evansville 75  
 Illinois 74, N. Kentucky 52  
 Iowa 67, Iowa St. 58  
 Kansas 79, Houston Christian 57  
 Kansas St. 101, McNeese St. 39  
 Missouri 81, Missouri St. 63  
 Notre Dame 96, Lafayette 42  
 Purdue 83, SE Missouri 57  
 S. Illinois 77, SIU-Edwardsville 53  
 Saint Louis 89, S. Indiana 53  
 Toledo 69, Michigan 46  
 UMKC 84, Bellevue 34  
 Youngstown St. 53, Akron 52  
**SOUTHWEST**  
 North Texas 73, Ark.-Pine Bluff 66  
 Texas 106, Long Beach St. 62  
 Texas A&M 83, Lamar 51  
**FAR WEST**  
 Boise St. 87, CS Bakersfield 66  
 Cal Baptist 78, Utah Tech 69  
 Cal St.-Fullerton 77, Fresno St. 68  
 Idaho St. 54, Utah Valley St. 50  
 Montana 82, Loyola Marymount 68  
 N. Arizona 96, Pacific 65  
 Weber St. 57, Nevada 55

### TENNIS

**Montevideo Open**  
**Wednesday**  
**At Carrasco Lawn Tennis Club**  
**Montevideo, Uruguay**  
**Purse: \$115,000**  
**Surface: Red clay**  
**Women's Singles**  
**Round of 16**  
 Ylena In-Albon, Switzerland, def. Daria Lodikova, Russia, 6-2, 7-6 (4).  
 Julia Riera (4), Argentina, def. Ipek Oz, Turkiye, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.  
 Robin Montgomery, United States, def. Martina Capurro Taborda (3), Argentina, 6-1, 6-3.  
 Miriam Bianca Bulgaru (6), Romania, def. Eva Vedder, Netherlands, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2.

**Open Angers Arena Loire**  
**Wednesday**  
**At Arena Loire**  
**Angers, France**  
**Purse: Euro 100,000**  
**Surface: Hardcourt indoor**  
**Women's Singles**  
**Round of 32**  
 Erika Andreeva, Russia, def. Nuria Parri-zas Diaz, Spain, 7-5, 6-3.  
 Cristina-Andreea Mitu, Romania, def. Anastasiya Soboleva, Ukraine, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.  
 Alize Cornet (2), France, def. Gabriela Knutson, Czech Republic, 7-5, 7-6 (1).  
**Round of 16**  
 McCartney Kessler, United States, def. Francesca Curmi, Malta, 6-4, 6-3.  
 Dayana Yastremska (6), Ukraine, def. Raluca Georgiana Serban, Cyprus, 6-4, 6-3.  
 Clara Burel (2), France, def. Mona Barthel, Germany, 6-2, 7-6 (5).  
 Cristina Bucsa (3), Spain, def. Lea Boskovic, Croatia, 6-3, 4-6, 6-1.

### COLLEGE SOCCER

**NCAA Men's Tournament**  
**Semifinals**  
**Friday, Dec. 8**  
**At Lynn Family Stadium**  
**Louisville, Ky.**  
 No. 5 West Virginia vs. No. 9 Clemson  
 No. 2 Notre Dame vs. Oregon St.  
**Championship**  
**Monday, Dec. 11**  
**At Lynn Family Stadium**  
**Louisville, Ky.**  
 Semifinal winners

### PRO SOCCER

**MLS playoffs**  
**Semifinals**  
**Saturday, Nov. 25**  
**Eastern Conference**  
 Columbus 2, Orlando City 0  
 Cincinnati 1, Philadelphia 0  
**Sunday, Nov. 26**  
**Western Conference**  
 Houston 1, Sporting Kansas City 0  
 Los Angeles FC 1, Seattle 0  
**Conference Finals**  
**Dec. 2-3**  
 Columbus vs. Cincinnati  
 Houston vs. Los Angeles FC  
**Championship**  
**Saturday, Dec. 9**  
 Conference Finals winners

### GOLF

**World rankings**

**Through Dec. 4**

1.	Scottie Scheffler	10.69
2.	Rory McIlroy	9.13
3.	Jon Rahm	8.31
4.	Viktor Hovland	6.94
5.	Patrick Cantlay	5.92
6.	Xander Schauffele	5.73
7.	Max Homa	5.00
8.	Matt Fitzpatrick	4.80
9.	Brian Harman	4.51
10.	Wyndham Clark	4.25
11.	Tom Kim	4.08
12.	Tyrrell Hatton	4.02
13.	Tommy Fleetwood	3.93
14.	Collin Morikawa	3.90
15.	Keegan Bradley	3.67
16.	Jordan Spieth	3.65
17.	Brooks Koepka	3.45
18.	Cameron Young	3.37
19.	Jason Day	3.36
20.	Sepp Straka	3.36
21.	Tony Finau	3.30
22.	Sam Burns	3.29
23.	Cameron Smith	3.28
24.	Rickie Fowler	3.19
25.	Russell Henley	3.12
26.	Justin Thomas	3.07
27.	Sungjae Im	2.89
28.	Ryan Fox	2.85
29.	Kurt Kitayama	2.78
30.	Lucas Glover	2.77
31.	Sahith Theegala	2.76
32.	Ludvig Aberg	2.69
33.	Will Zalatoris	2.52
34.	Corey Conners	2.47
35.	Min Woo Lee	2.45
36.	Denny McCarthy	2.45
37.	Shane Lowry	2.39
38.	Emiliano Grillo	2.39
39.	Justin Rose	2.34
40.	Harris English	2.27
41.	Eric Cole	2.20
42.	Hideki Matsuyama	2.17

### DEALS

#### Wednesday's transactions

**BASEBALL**  
**Major League Baseball**  
**American League**  
**BALTIMORE ORIOLES** — Agreed to terms with RHP Craig Kimbrel on a one-year contract.  
**BOSTON RED SOX** — Acquired RHP Justin Slaten from the New York Mets in exchange for minor league LHP Ryan Ammons and cash considerations.  
**KANSAS CITY ROYALS** — Acquired RHP Carlos Mateo from Houston in exchange for RHP Dylan Coleman.  
**NEW YORK YANKEES** — Acquired OF Juan Soto and Trent Grisham from San Diego in exchange for RHPs Michael King, Jhonny Brito, Randy Vasquez and Drew Thorpe and C Kyle Higashioka.  
**TEXAS RANGERS** — Agreed to terms with RHP Kirby Yates on a one-year major league contract.  
**National League**  
**COLORADO ROCKIES** — Released RHP Connor Seabold.  
**LOS ANGELES DODGERS** — Agreed to terms with RF Jason Heyward on a one-year contract.  
**NEW YORK METS** — Agreed to terms with RHP Michael Tonkin on a one-year contract. Traded RHP Justin Slaten to Boston in exchange for LHP Ryan Ammons.  
**ST. LOUIS CARDINALS** — Name Yadier Molina special assistant to the president of baseball operations.  
**FOOTBALL**  
**National Football League**  
**NFL** — Suspended Indianapolis DL Al-Quadin Muhammad for six games for violating the league's performance-enhancing drugs policy.  
**ARIZONA CARDINALS** — Signed WR Dan Chisena to the practice squad.  
**ATLANTA FALCONS** — Designated DL La-Cale London to return from injured reserve to practice.  
**BUFFALO BILLS** — Designated TE Dawson Knox and CB Kairi Elam to return from injured reserve to practice.  
**CAROLINA PANTHERS** — Signed WRs Cam Sims and Jalen Camp to the practice squad.  
**CLEVELAND BROWNS** — Designated CB Cameron Mitchell to return from injured reserve.  
**DALLAS COWBOYS** — Reinstated TE Peyton Hendershot from injured reserve. Place TE Sean McKeon on injured reserve. Designated OT Matt Waletzko to return from injured reserve to practice.  
**DENVER BRONCOS** — Signed LB Durrell Nchali to the practice squad.  
**HOUSTON TEXANS** — Signed DB Adrian Amos and DB Kris Boyd.  
**LAS VEGAS RAIDERS** — Designated DB Brandon Facyson and LB Kana'i Mauga to return from injured reserve to practice.  
**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS** — Designated WR Josh Palmer to return from injured reserve to practice.  
**LOS ANGELES RAMS** — Signed K Mason Crosby to the practice squad.  
**MIAMI DOLPHINS** — Signed DT Justin Ellis to the practice squad. Released S Verone McKinley III from the practice squad.  
**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS** — Declined to activate OT Riley Reiff from injured reserve.  
**NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** — Placed S Marcus Maye and DT Malcolm Roach on injured reserve. Reinstated LB Monty Rice off waivers from Tennessee. Signed DT P.J. Mustipher.  
**NEW YORK GIANTS** — Re-signed QB Matt Barkley to the practice squad.  
**NEW YORK JETS** — Placed TE C.J. Uzomah on injured reserve. Reinstated TE Kenny Yeboah from injured reserve.  
**PHILADELPHIA EAGLES** — Waived LB Christian Elliss. Signed WR Greg Ward to the practice squad. Signed LB Shaquille Leonard.  
**SEATTLE SEAHAWKS** — Signed RB SaRodrick Thompson to the practice squad.  
**TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS** — Signed DT C.J. Brewer to the practice squad.  
**TENNESSEE TITANS** — Signed P Ty Zentner and LB Jojo Domann to the practice squad. Promoted LB Otis Reese from the practice squad to the active roster.  
**HOCKEY**  
**National Hockey League**  
**ARIZONA COYOTES** — Recalled D Patrick Koch and C Ryan McGregor from Tucson (AHL).  
**BUFFALO SABRES** — Returned C Brandon Biro to Rochester (AHL). Acquired LW Eric Robinson from Columbus in exchange for a 2025 seventh-round draft pick.  
**CAROLINA HURRICANES** — Recalled F Blake Murray from Florida (ECHL).  
**COLORADO AVALANCHE** — Recalled F Oskar Olausson from Colorado (AHL).  
**MINNESOTA WILD** — Loaned C Caedan Bankier to Iowa (AHL). Reassigned D Kyle Masters and RW Pavel Novak from Iowa (ECHL) to Iowa (AHL).  
**NEW JERSEY DEVILS** — Reinstated D Brendan Smith after his two-game suspension.  
**OTTAWA SENATORS** — Assigned D Donovan Sebrango from Belleville (AHL) to Allen (ECHL).  
**SAN JOSE SHARKS** — Reassigned G Magnus Chrona from San Jose (AHL) to Wichita (ECHL).  
**TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS** — Recalled G Martin Jones from Toronto (AHL).  
**SOCCER**  
**Major League Soccer**  
**FC CINCINNATI** — Exercised contract options on D Ian Murphy and F Arquimides Ordenez. Declined contract options on Ds Santiago Arias and Ray Gaddis, Fs Dominique Badji and Yuya Kubo and M Harrison Robledo.  
**ORLANDO CITY SC** — Terminated M Mauricio Pereyra's contract.  
**VANCOUVER WHITECAPS FC** — Signed M Sebastian Berhalter to a two-year contract.

## NHL

# Still a ways to go with rebuild

Bedard living up to hype, but Blackhawks remain one of worst teams in the league

By JAY COHEN  
Associated Press

Asked how he processes losing, Connor Bedard recalled one of his seasons with the Regina Pats — his junior hockey team in Canada.

He didn't have to look back very far. After all, the rookie center just turned 18 in July.

"I remember my 16-year in Reg, we didn't make playoffs and had a slow patch, kind of similar to what we've had right now just at the start of the year," he said. "It was pretty slow. We had a losing streak and stuff. It sucks. You never want to lose games."

"We know we're a better team than what our record shows. We just got to keep coming to the rink every day and being positive and trying to get better, and hopefully that shows in the win column."

While Bedard has lived up to the considerable hype he brought with him to Chicago, he can only do so much. The Blackhawks still look like a team at the beginning of a rebuilding project, albeit with a budding offensive star and a handful of promising defensemen.

Chicago has dropped four straight and 10 of 12 overall after Tuesday night's 4-3 shootout loss to Nashville. It is off to a 7-16-1 start after it was 7-13-4 through its first 24 games last season.

"Every guy in here wants to do well," forward Nick Foligno said. "I think that's the hard part is we're not getting results."

The biggest problem for Chicago is its lack of scoring punch,

even with Bedard in the fold. Heading into Wednesday's NHL slate, the Blackhawks ranked 30th in the league with 59 goals, and its power play was 29th at 10.7%. They have scored six times during their current slide.

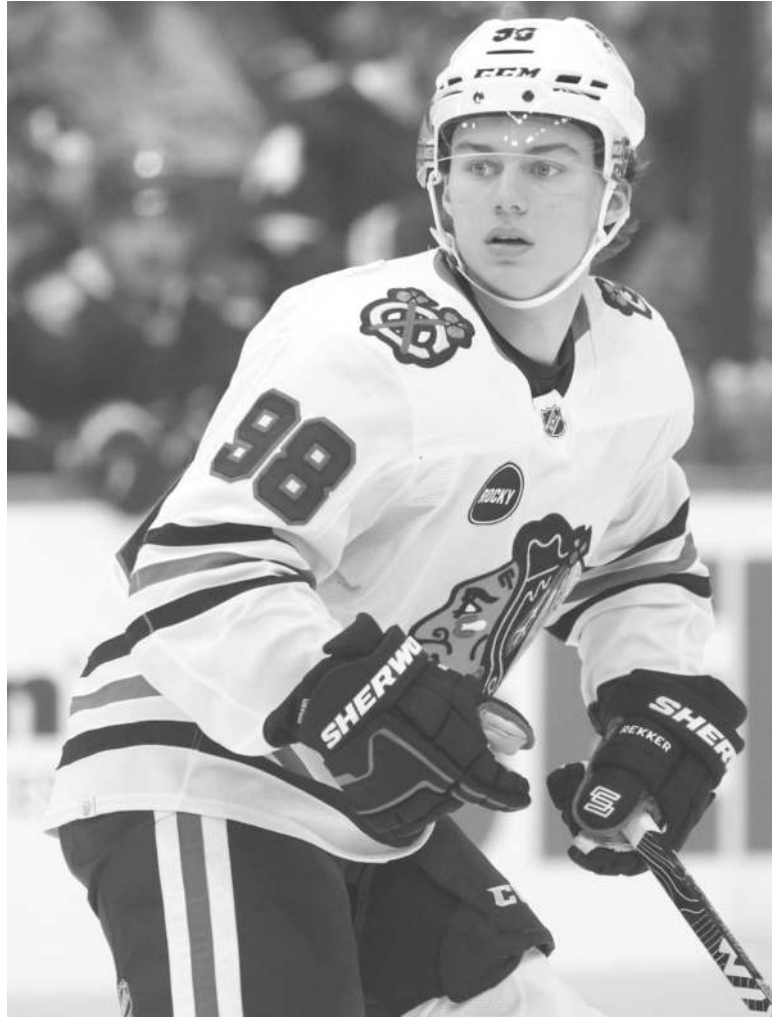
The Blackhawks tried to address their lines in the offseason, bringing in veteran forwards Taylor Hall, Corey Perry and Foligno. But Hall is out with a season-ending knee injury and Perry was cut for violating team conduct policies.

Andreas Athanasiou, who had 20 goals and 20 assists for Chicago last season, is on injured reserve with a groin injury. Lukas Reichel, a first-round pick in the 2020 draft, is off to a disappointing start with two goals and four assists in 23 games.

"We've started out some games, we've had some good O-zone and sometimes a little bit too much on the outside," coach Luke Richardson said. "We want to make sure we're not just tossing pucks into the net, and I think that starts at the back end shooting pucks more and a little quicker."

Of course, all is not lost for Chicago. Not with Bedard looking every bit the player the Blackhawks thought he would be when they took him with the No. 1 overall pick in the draft.

Bedard leads all NHL rookies with a team-high 11 goals and 20 points. From his awareness, vision and playmaking ability to his un-



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Chicago Blackhawks center Connor Bedard, the No. 1 draft pick, leads all NHL rookies with a team-high 11 goals and 20 points.

flappable demeanor in the face of enormous attention off the ice, he appears to be well on his way to becoming one of the league's biggest stars.

He has displays of frustration — like when he broke his stick and punched the back of the boards during a 5-1 loss at Detroit last week — but he seems to be able to

move on quickly.

"We're competitive athletes and that's going to happen," he said. "But for sure, you don't want to show too much. It's something maybe the last few games I could get better at, but everyone has their moments."

A smiling Bedard then remembered a time when he was "a bit of a baby" when things didn't go his way on the ice.

"But I was really young, so my parents just said, 'Stop,'" he said.

Beyond Bedard, the hope for the Blackhawks extends to a group of young defensemen led by Kevin Korchinski. The 19-year-old Korchinski, another first-round pick, has two goals and five assists in 24 games. He looks as if he could be a mainstay on Chicago's blue line for years to come.

In the meantime, the Blackhawks have been plagued by inconsistency in several areas — something they talk about a lot, but can't seem to translate to the ice.

"In order to move the needle to where we need it to, we've got to show sustained flashes. We've got to show that we can do that the whole game," Foligno said. "Even a whole period right now is what we need."

"It's there. It's like when your kid acts out," he continued. "You know they can behave, but they do the other thing."

## Scoreboard

### Eastern Conference

#### Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	24	17	4	3	37	81	59
Florida	25	15	8	2	32	77	66
Detroit	24	14	7	3	31	91	71
Tampa Bay	27	12	10	5	29	90	94
Toronto	22	12	6	4	28	76	74
Montreal	25	11	11	3	25	72	89
Buffalo	26	10	14	2	22	74	90
Ottawa	20	10	10	0	20	70	65

#### Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Rangers	24	18	5	1	37	82	66
Carolina	25	14	10	1	29	83	83
Philadelphia	25	13	10	2	28	74	70
N.Y. Islanders	24	10	7	7	27	69	79
Washington	22	12	8	2	26	52	65
New Jersey	23	12	10	1	25	85	88
Pittsburgh	25	11	11	3	25	74	66
Columbus	27	8	14	5	21	77	92

### Western Conference

#### Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	25	16	7	2	34	90	73
Dallas	24	14	7	3	31	83	71
Winnipeg	24	14	8	2	30	77	66
Arizona	24	13	9	2	28	82	68
St. Louis	25	13	11	1	27	73	80
Nashville	25	13	12	0	26	80	80
Minnesota	23	9	10	4	22	75	82
Chicago	24	7	16	1	15	59	89

#### Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	27	17	5	5	39	89	64
Los Angeles	22	15	4	3	33	85	53
Vancouver	26	16	9	1	33	101	70
Calgary	25	10	12	3	23	73	87
Seattle	26	8	12	6	22	70	92
Edmonton	23	10	12	1	21	80	80
Anaheim	25	10	15	0	20	69	87
San Jose	26	7	17	2	16	52	106

**Note:** Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

#### Wednesday's games

Tampa Bay 3, Pittsburgh 1  
Florida 5, Dallas 4  
Vegas 6, St. Louis 3  
Edmonton 6, Carolina 1

#### Thursday's games

Buffalo at Boston  
Los Angeles at Montreal  
San Jose at Detroit  
Toronto at Ottawa  
Columbus at N.Y. Islanders  
Dallas at Washington  
Tampa Bay at Nashville  
Anaheim at Chicago  
Carolina at Calgary  
Philadelphia at Arizona  
Winnipeg at Colorado  
Minnesota at Vancouver  
New Jersey at Seattle

#### Friday's games

Pittsburgh at Florida  
St. Louis at Columbus  
Minnesota at Edmonton

#### Saturday's games

Arizona at Boston  
New Jersey at Calgary  
Vegas at Dallas  
Montreal at Buffalo  
N.Y. Rangers at Washington  
Nashville at Toronto  
Ottawa at Detroit  
Los Angeles at N.Y. Islanders  
St. Louis at Chicago  
Philadelphia at Colorado  
Carolina at Vancouver  
Tampa Bay at Seattle

#### Sunday's games

Florida at Columbus  
New Jersey at Edmonton  
Los Angeles at N.Y. Rangers  
Nashville at Montreal  
Washington at Chicago  
Winnipeg at Anaheim  
Minnesota at Seattle  
San Jose at Vegas

#### Scoring leaders

##### Through Wednesday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Nikita Kucherov, TB	26	17	27	44
J.T. Miller, VAN	26	14	25	39
Artemi Panarin, NYR	24	16	21	37
Quinn Hughes, VAN	26	9	27	36
David Pastrnak, BOS	24	14	22	36
Cale Makar, COL	23	7	27	34
Nathan MacKinnon, COL	25	9	25	34
Elias Pettersson, VAN	26	10	24	34
Jack Hughes, NJ	18	10	23	33



JAY LAPRETE/AP

Beyond Bedard, Chicago's hope for the future extends to a group of young defensemen led by Kevin Korchinski, above. The 19-year-old, another first-round pick, has two goals and five assists in 24 games.

# NBA

## Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	15	5	.750	—
Philadelphia	13	7	.650	2
New York	12	8	.600	3
Brooklyn	11	9	.550	4
Toronto	9	12	.429	6½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	14	7	.667	—
Miami	12	9	.571	2
Atlanta	9	11	.450	4½
Charlotte	6	13	.316	7
Washington	3	17	.150	10½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	15	6	.714	—
Indiana	11	8	.579	3
Cleveland	12	9	.571	3
Chicago	8	14	.364	7½
Detroit	2	19	.095	13
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	12	8	.600	—
New Orleans	12	10	.545	1
Houston	9	9	.500	2
Memphis	6	14	.300	6
San Antonio	3	17	.150	9
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	16	4	.800	—
Oklahoma City	13	7	.650	3
Denver	14	8	.636	3
Utah	7	14	.333	9½
Portland	6	14	.300	10
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	13	9	.591	—
Sacramento	11	8	.579	½
Phoenix	12	9	.571	½
L.A. Clippers	10	10	.500	2
Golden State	10	11	.476	2½

**Tuesday's games**  
**In-Season Tournament quarterfinals**  
 Milwaukee 146, New York 122  
 L.A. Lakers 106, Phoenix 103

**Wednesday's games**  
 Memphis 116, Detroit 102  
 Philadelphia 131, Washington 126  
 Cleveland 121, Orlando 111  
 Minnesota 102, San Antonio 94  
 Brooklyn 114, Atlanta 113  
 Houston 110, Oklahoma City 101  
 Chicago 111, Charlotte 100  
 Dallas 147, Utah 97  
 Miami 112, Toronto 103  
 Golden State 110, Portland 106  
 L.A. Clippers 111, Denver 102

**Thursday's games**  
**In-Season Tournament semifinals**  
 Milwaukee vs Indiana  
 L.A. Lakers vs New Orleans

**Friday's games**  
 Atlanta at Philadelphia  
 Detroit at Orlando  
 Toronto at Charlotte  
 New York at Boston  
 Washington at Brooklyn  
 Cleveland at Miami  
 Golden State at Oklahoma City  
 Minnesota at Memphis  
 Chicago at San Antonio  
 Houston at Denver  
 Sacramento at Phoenix  
 Dallas at Portland  
 L.A. Clippers at Utah

**Scoring leaders**  
**Through Wednesday**

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Embiid, PHI	17	184	176	562	33.1
Doncic, DAL	19	208	114	605	31.8
Durant, PHO	19	202	141	589	31.0
Fox, SAC	14	150	83	424	30.3
Antetokmpo, MIL	20	234	127	604	30.2
Gil-Alex., OKC	19	209	130	571	30.1
Curry, GS	19	169	120	554	29.2
Jokic, DEN	21	236	102	601	28.6
Mitchell, CLE	16	153	88	442	27.6
Tatum, BOS	20	194	103	552	27.6
Young, ATL	19	157	145	517	27.2
Haliburton, IND	17	158	74	458	26.9
Maxey, PHI	19	179	93	512	26.9
Edwards, MIN	18	161	96	463	25.7

## AROUND THE NBA

# Spurs, Pistons have long road ahead

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
*Associated Press*

There was so much promise six weeks ago. San Antonio was reveling in the debut of Victor Wembanyama, the No. 1 pick who arrived with amazing fanfare. Detroit had a new coach in Monty Williams — just two years removed from taking Phoenix to the NBA Finals — and a roster featuring five top-five draft picks from the last five years.

The Spurs started 3-2 and had a 21-point lead in the third quarter of their sixth game. The Pistons started 2-1, the only thing keeping them from a 3-0 start was a missed straightaway jumper by Cade Cunningham at the buzzer of their opener in Miami. So much promise, for both teams.

And nothing since. Nothing. As the inaugural NBA In-Season Tournament moves to the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas for its Final Four — capped Saturday by the awarding of a new trophy and the winning team's players splitting about \$8 million — the Spurs and Pistons are at the other end of the spectrum, already mired at the bottom of the league.

The Spurs have lost 15 in a row, just one away from a franchise worst amid a 3-17 start. The Pistons have lost 18 in a row, that streak and their 2-19 record at this point both already the worst in franchise history.

For his part, Wembanyama isn't showing any signs of worry or frustration. The way he sees it, the Spurs are coming to work every day, doing their job and moving closer to figuring things out.

"Everybody knows where we're going," Wembanyama said. "Most of the people here have been



The San Antonio Spurs' Victor Wembanyama and Zach Collins celebrate a play during the first half against the Atlanta Hawks on Nov. 30 in San Antonio. Despite the hype surrounding Wembanyama as the No. 1 overall pick in the draft, the Spurs have the second-worst record in the NBA at just 3-17.

through everything before. We're good. We're in good hands."

The Pistons are doing something that the NBA has never seen. Each of these 18 consecutive losses has come with Detroit having scored at least 100 points; no team has ever scored 100 points in at least 18 straight games and come away with exactly zero wins. The offense hasn't been the problem.

Lots of other things have. The

Pistons just finished the second-worst November in NBA history, going 0-15. Only Philadelphia has been worse; the 76ers were 0-16 in November 2015, part of a 1-30 start to a season where they finished 10-72.

"We have to have people that honor the organization and the jersey by competing at a high level every night," Williams said after a loss last week, tapping his finger firmly on the table where he was sitting for added emphasis. "Not talking about execution. Just competing."

The Pistons' reason for hope might be this: they don't get blown out too much. Of their 19 losses so far, 13 of them have come by 12 points or less.

The Spurs' reason for hope might be this: they have built big leads — they just lose them. They've lost games after leading by 10 points eight times already this season, lost four after leading by at least 18 points. It's typically just a three- or four-minute stretch where things go haywire.

"During those stretches," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said, "either we don't score or our defense sucks."

Wembanyama said he's been through worse. He thinks a soccer team that he once played for lost more games in a row than the Spurs have. He was the goalie of

that team. He insists he was a good goalie. The losing streak might suggest otherwise.

"I swear it wasn't my fault," Wembanyama said.

He's been dealing with a little bit of hip soreness, his first official NBA injury issue. A few days off thanks to the tournament's knockout round — no teams played Sunday, only the quarterfinalists for the tournament were playing Monday and Tuesday — might make him feel better. Either way, the break gives both the Spurs and Pistons a little time to practice, work on things and figure out what's missing.

Detroit resumed play Wednesday and lost to Memphis. After that, the Pistons' next five games are all against teams with winning records. It's not an easy stretch. San Antonio also returned to the court Wednesday, losing to Minnesota. Defense has to be prioritized; the Spurs allowed 120 or more points 14 times in their first 19 games.

"The advice I get from great, successful people, it all revolves around the same thing," Wembanyama said. "They always tell me to take my time and to be patient, but at the same time to not lose focus on the goal. It's going to be hard. The season is very long. But that struggle every day is what makes us better."



Guard Cade Cunningham talks to Detroit head coach Monty Williams, who is just two years removed from taking Phoenix to the NBA Finals.

CARLOS OSORIO/AP

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Mindset may be key for even Army-Navy matchup

By BILL WAGNER

The Annapolis Capital

Saturday's showdown is here.

Last week was about installing the game plan and preliminary preparation for the 124th Army-Navy Game. Game week is about dialing down on specific elements and getting players into the right mental mindset.

So, what is the right mindset, and how does one get his team to peak on the biggest stage?

"We just have to be the best version of ourselves. It doesn't take a miracle to win this game. It doesn't take playing outside of yourself," first-year Navy coach Brian Newberry said. "In fact, it's the opposite of that. It's about doing your job as best you possibly can and not letting the moment get to you.

"We don't have to get our guys up for this game. You just have to make sure they're level-headed and are in a good place mentally going into the game."

This will be the fifth Army-Navy Game for Newberry but his first as leader of the program after he spent the previous four preparing the defense as the coordinator.

Speaking to the media Monday, Newberry acknowledged his game day assignment has changed dramatically. He must now worry about decisions such as whether to go for it on fourth down, calling timeouts and clock management.

"There was a certain amount of pressure I felt as a coordinator calling the plays and making sure I put our guys in the best possible position to be successful. It's a different kind of pressure now. I have to make sure we're on point in all three phases," he said. "It's no more important to me now than it was. I wanted to win this game just as badly as a coordinator as I do as



Army (5-6) vs. Navy (5-6)

AFN-Sports

9 p.m. Saturday CET

5 a.m. Sunday JKT

a head coach. My approach and desire to win this game does not change at all."

This is the first time "America's Game" will be played in New England.

Gillette Stadium is home to the New England Patriots, whose legendary coach will not be an unbiased observer Saturday. Bill Belichick grew up around Navy football as his father was the longest-tenured assistant coach in program history.

Belichick has remained close to the Navy football program over the years. Newberry said this week that Belichick has agreed to address the Midshipmen after the



DANIEL KUCIN JR. / AP

Quarterback Xavier Arline is expected to start his fifth straight game for Navy on Saturday.

team dinner Friday night.

"Coach Belichick has always been very supportive of the program," Newberry said. "It's great to have a guy like that to reach out to for advice and he's glad to give it."

Army and Navy come into the contest with 5-6 records and very similar offensive statistics. The Black Knights rank ninth nationally in rushing offense (208 yards per game) while Navy is 13th (200).

The two option practitioners rank 128th and 129th out of 130 Football Bowl Subdivision schools in passing offense — to no surprise.

Both teams have struggled to score points, with Navy standing 119th nationally (18.3 points) and Army not much better at 108th (20.8). The Black Knights and Midshipmen are also at the bottom of FBS in total offense.

Senior Xavier Arline is expected to make his fifth straight start at quarterback for Navy, which is 2-2 with him under center. The Midshipmen are coming off a 59-14 shellacking at the hands of SMU, the American Athletic Conference champion.

Navy coaches spent less time than usual reviewing the SMU loss as Newberry's message to the squad was to "flush that game and move on."

"We can't have a hangover from that game. We can't let SMU beat us twice. I think our kids will bounce back," he said.

Army last played on Nov. 18 against Coastal Carolina. The Black Knights are riding a three-game winning streak that began with an uplifting 23-3 upset of Air Force in Colorado Springs.

Army is led offensively by junior quarterback Bryson Daily, who has amassed 817 rushing



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Army quarterback Bryson Daily has run and passed for more than 800 yards this season after the Black Knights changed their offense.

yards and 859 passing yards. Coach Jeff Monken made a major decision during the offseason by scrapping the traditional triple-option offense.

Monken hired Drew Thatcher away from Nebraska-Kearney to install a different style of option offense that features shotgun formation and zone blocking schemes. However, Army dusted off the "flexbone" option against Coastal Carolina and rolled up 365 rushing yards.

Newberry expects to see a combination of Army's old and new offenses and noted that Daily functions equally well operating under center or out of the shotgun. He described the revamped offense the Black Knights employed this season as a "different way to run the triple [option]" with a focus on getting the ball to the perimeter more often.

"There are still triple-option elements within their offense. I think they're similar to us in that they're looking to evolve their offense and are trying to figure out the best way to do that with their

personnel," Newberry said. "You see a lot of similarities in what they're doing out of the gun to what they've done in the past under center."

Navy has already exceeded its win total from the past three seasons. Beating Army would substantiate Newberry's belief the program made progress this season, and mean the Midshipmen kept the Black Knights from winning the Commander in Chief's Trophy outright.

"There's no better momentum going into the offseason than beating Army. This is a season that hasn't gone the way we wanted it to or hoped it would, but a win in this game certainly makes you feel better about your season even if you didn't hit certain goals," Newberry said.

Navy leads the all-time series 62-54-7, an advantage created by a historic 14-game winning streak from 2002 through 2015. Army has won five of the seven meetings since 2016. Seven of the last nine games have been decided by seven points or less.

## Proposal to pay some NCAA athletes praised, questioned

By RALPH D. RUSSO

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A day after NCAA President Charlie Baker made an aggressive and potentially groundbreaking pitch to allow some schools to pay their athletes, his proposal was met with praise, caution and questions from around college sports.

"I think Charlie has indicated his intent for that to begin a discussion," Southeastern Conference Commissioner Greg Sankey said Wednesday during an appearance at the Sports Business Journal's Intercollegiate Athletic Forum. "There's certainly a lot of content included from which to begin a discussion."

On Tuesday, Baker laid forth an aggressive and potentially groundbreaking vision

for a new NCAA subdivision at the very top of college sports in a letter he sent to the more than 350 Division I schools.

Baker said his proposal to allow the most highly resourced schools in Division I to pay athletes through a trust fund is just a starting point as he tries to shift the association to be more proactive than reactive.

"We need to be able to anticipate where conversations are going and to try to get this big, huge, diverse 180-committee with 2,000 members — like oh, my God! — to a place where they're talking about stuff that's common, and not just responding and reacting to other people's agendas," Baker said during his 30-minute session at the forum.

Baker's proposal would require schools that want to be a part of a new tier of D-I to

commit to paying their athletes tens of thousands of dollars per year on top of athletic scholarships.

He also suggested all Division I schools should bring name, image and likeness compensation for their athletes in-house through group licensing and remove limits on educational benefits schools can provide for athletes.

"Some people are going to say you're going too far and people will say but you're not going far enough," Baker said. "I promise you that's going to be where most of the dialogue on this will be in the short term."

Big 12 Commissioner Brett Yormark called Baker's proposal "directionally correct."

"We hired Charlie to lead and he's lead-

ing," Yormark said.

Baker said the proposal was formed from an amalgamation of conversations he has had with administrators and athletes from across college sports.

Sankey noted he did not see Baker's letter until it went out Tuesday.

Sankey said any attempt to reform college sports will be addressed in five arenas: the courts, Congress, state legislatures, conferences and the NCAA.

"All of those have to be part of the solution," Sankey said.

There are 133 schools in Division I football's highest tier, the Football Bowl Subdivision. Baker's proposal seems targeted at about half of the schools that compete in the five power conferences.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL/MLB

# LSU's Daniels selected AP player of year

BY BRETT MARTEL  
Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. — LSU quarterback Jayden Daniels is The Associated Press college football player of the year, the school's second winner in the past five seasons.

Daniels received 35 of the 51 first-place votes and 130 total points from AP Top 25 poll voters. The Heisman Trophy finalist finished comfortably ahead of Washington quarterback Michael Penix, who was second with 15 first-place votes and 97 points.

Oregon QB Bo Nix was third, with Ohio State receiver Marvin Harrison fourth and Oklahoma State running back Ollie Gordon II fifth. Nix received the other first-place vote. USC quarterback Caleb Williams, the 2022 AP Player of the Year and last year's Heisman winner, did not receive votes this season.

Daniels, Penix, Nix and Harrison are the finalists for the Heisman, which will be presented in New York on Saturday. The winner of the AP award has differed from the Heisman winner just twice in the past two decades.

The last LSU player to be named AP Player of the Year was Joe Burrow in 2019, when he also won the Heisman.

Daniels, a San Bernardino, Calif., native who transferred to LSU from Arizona State in 2022, has led the nation in total offense this season with 4,946 yards in 12 games (412.2 yards per game). He has passed for 3,812 yards, which ranks third nationally. His 40 TDs



MATTHEW HINTON/AP

**LSU quarterback Jayden Daniels led the nation in total offense this season with 4,946 yards in 12 games (412.2 yards per game). He has passed for 3,812 yards, which ranks third nationally.**

passing ties for first nationally with Nix, who has played in one more game than Daniels.

The 6-foot-4, 210-pound Daniels rushed for 1,134 yards and 10 TDs. His 50 touchdowns rushing and passing combined, along with a 2-point conversion on a passing play, has made him responsible for a nation-high 302 points.

As a youth athlete, his nickname was "Smooth," he said in an inter-

view with The Associated Press, "because it looks like I'm not running fast or running hard ... but I'm moving faster than what most people think."

As productive as Daniels has been as a passer, his elusiveness and breakaway speed as a scrambler have distinguished him. During a 52-35 victory over Florida, Daniels became the first Football Bowl Subdivision QB to pass for

more than 350 yards and rush for more than 200 in a game.

"His ability to run when things are not there is unique," LSU coach Brian Kelly said. "His speed, his durability, his toughness, puts him up there with the great ones."

Daniels rushed for touchdowns of 85 and 51 yards against Florida, and said the latter exemplified his instinctive approach to scram-

bling. He said he read a linebacker's eyes before darting behind him and then weaving his way to the end zone.

"It's just all instincts," Daniels said. "It's not something that I think about pre-snap."

His approach comes with risk and puts a premium on toughness.

A big and arguably late hit at Missouri briefly forced Daniels out of that game with a deep bruise in his ribs. He returned to lead LSU to a comeback victory, highlighted by his 35-yard scoring run. The rib injury bothered him for two more games.

"My pain tolerance is high," Daniels said. "I was able to go out there and deal with it."

LSU (9-3) was knocked out of contention for an SEC title when it lost to Alabama, a game in which Daniels spent most of the fourth quarter on the sideline with concussion symptoms after a penalized hit by linebacker Dallas Turner. Until that point, Alabama's defense had struggled to contain Daniels.

"That still burns me," Daniels said. "Obviously, we lost to a very good team, but I felt like it would have been a whole different story if I was in there."

Daniels said it's important to him to credit his team's role in any individual accolades he receives, from the offensive line to the running backs and his pass-catchers.

"Without them, I wouldn't be in a position like this where I was receiving any type of award," Daniels said. "That's my thing, is to make sure they feel a part of it."

## Bound: Yankees have dynamic duo

FROM PAGE 32

up. New York went 82-80 last season, narrowly avoiding its first losing record since 1992, and finished 29th among the 30 major league teams in batting average.

Soto joins a Yankees outfield that projects to have fellow All-Star Aaron Judge in center and newly acquired Alex Verdugo in the other corner. Soto has a 1.274 OPS in nine career games in the Bronx.

"Soto and Judge are Gotham's new dynamic duo," agent Scott Boras said.

Yankees executives will travel to California to meet Monday with free agent Yoshinobu Yamamoto, a person familiar with the planning told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because details were not announced. The 25-year-old right-hander was 16-6 with a 1.21 ERA this season for the Orix Buffaloes of Japan's Pacific League.

Soto, like Verdugo, adds a left-

handed bat to a lineup that was righty heavy for several seasons. Yankees lefties had 55 homers and 171 RBIs last year while righties had 164 homers and 479 RBIs, an imbalance for a team that usually takes advantage of Yankee Stadium's short porch in right.

"They were aggressive," Preller said. "They had a need and Juan is an incredible player and fit the need really well. When you have two teams that line up, and you have a team that's calling you consistently, you usually get a feel that this is something that has a chance to happen and hopefully it's a deal that works out for both sides."

San Diego appears to be slashing payroll by as much as \$50 million after flopping last season and missing the playoffs. The Padres also have a need for starting pitching after NL Cy Young Award winner Blake Snell, Michael Wacha and Seth Lugo became free agents.

Soto's relatively young age at free agency will be comparable to that of fellow Boras client Bryce Harper, who was 26 when he signed a \$330 million, 13-year contract with Philadelphia ahead of the 2019 season. In six major league seasons, Soto has a .284 batting average with 160 homers, 483 RBIs and a .946 OPS. He won a World Series title with the Nationals in 2019.

San Diego sent a bevy of promising prospects to Washington — including shortstop CJ Abrams and starting pitcher MacKenzie Gore — for Soto and first baseman Josh Bell. The Padres said the deal was worth it because they'd have Soto for three playoff runs. He helped the team reach the NL Championship Series in 2022, but the Padres underwhelmed last season despite also having stars Manny Machado, Fernando Tatis Jr. and Xander Bogaerts.

Wilson reported from San Diego.



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## NFL

# Ravens look stronger after bye week

Baltimore returns healthy, with bigger lead in AFC North

BY NOAH TRISTER  
Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — John Harbaugh admitted he was rooting against the Browns and Steelers last weekend. So in that sense, the Baltimore coach got his wish.

“Absolutely, you root against all the teams that are in your way,” he said. “So that’s what we did. We had a good day.”

The Ravens had their bye last week, and they returned in an even better position than before. Pittsburgh’s loss to lowly Arizona, and Cleveland’s to the Los Angeles Rams, left Baltimore with a two-game lead atop the AFC North. Kansas City and Jacksonville — two teams competing with the Ravens for the top spot in the conference — lost as well.

So if it wasn’t obvious before, it is now: The Ravens (9-3) have quite an opportunity down the stretch, starting with this weekend’s home game against the Rams.

“It comes with the same thing that we’ve been doing for the first 12 games,” receiver Odell Beckham Jr. said. “Finding ways to win football games, finding ways to be elite.”

The Ravens will be tested. After this game against Los Angeles (6-6), they finish the season against Jacksonville (8-4), San Francisco (9-3), Miami (9-3) and Pittsburgh (7-5).

Of course, two of those teams



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

**Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson is tackled by Los Angeles Chargers defensive tackle Sebastian Joseph-Day on Nov. 27 in Inglewood, Calif. The Ravens have a two-game lead in the AFC North.**

now have big health concerns at quarterback after Trevor Lawrence of the Jaguars and Kenny Pickett of the Steelers sprained ankles.

It’s been that kind of season in the NFL. Pickett’s injury means Baltimore is currently the only team in the division with its No. 1 quarterback available at the moment. Ravens fans may not have much sympathy after losing star QB Lamar Jackson toward the end of each of the past two seasons.

“We don’t want to see injuries happen in the league. We want everybody to go out there and give it

their all, and when we play against teams, just have their best,” Jackson said. “But it’s part of the game. I went down last year, the year before. It happens in football.”

Not only has Jackson been available all season, but the rest of the Ravens appear to be coming out of the bye week in pretty good shape.

Of the players on the 53-man roster, only receiver Rashod Bateman (illness) missed practice Wednesday. Defensive tackle Justin Madubuike (concussion) and linebacker Malik Harrison (groin) were limited.

Cornerback Marlon Humphrey

(calf) was a full participant after missing two straight games. Tackle Ronnie Stanley (knee) wasn’t listed on the injury report at all.

By the time they take the field against the Rams, Baltimore will have played only one game in the previous 23 days.

“It’s been good for us. Our guys are in good spirits,” Harbaugh said. “The time off will be good for us physically and mentally as well. But it’s part of the National Football League. We have a big challenge in front of us Sunday, and that’s what everybody is focusing on.”

## Last games crucial for Bears’ Fields, Eberflus

BY ANDREW SELIGMAN  
Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Justin Fields isn’t sweating it.

The Chicago Bears’ quarterback knows a big decision looms about his future and is also sure of something else.

“If I’m here next year, if I’m not, football doesn’t define who I am as a person,” he said Wednesday. “My happiness will still be in the same place, will still be in God. And really just football-wise, life stuff in general, I think my faith in God, my hope in God is just so much more than anything that can be thrown at me on this earth.”

The final five games could go a long way toward determining whether the Bears stick with Fields and, for that matter, coach Matt Eberflus. If this stretch coming out of a bye is a final audition, it starts with a visit from the NFC North-leading Detroit Lions (9-3) on Sunday.

Fields comes in with 1,587 yards



ABBIE PARR/AP

**Chicago Bears head coach Matt Eberflus greets quarterback Justin Fields as he walks off the field. Both Eberflus and Fields have uncertain futures in Chicago after this season.**

passing with 12 touchdowns, six interceptions and a 92.3 passer rating that ranks 14th in the NFL. He has also run for 400 yards and a score.

Fields struggled in the early going, then missed four games because of a dislocated right thumb

just as he was starting to show growth as a passer. The season hasn’t exactly gone the way he hoped, and the Bears have some things to figure out.

For one, they have to decide whether to pick up his fifth-year op-

tion for 2025. Chicago could also be in position to draft Caleb Williams or Drake Maye with their own first-round pick or the one it got from Carolina in the trade for DJ Moore last spring.

Then there’s Eberflus.

At 7-22 in two seasons, he has the worst record of any Bears coach. But there has been progress.

The Bears have played .500 ball since an 0-4 start this year and might be 6-3 in their past nine games if not for two big collapses against Denver in Week 3 and Detroit three weeks ago. The defense — Eberflus’ specialty — has also made some big strides, going from 29th overall to 11th since a Week 5 win at Washington.

“Certainly you want to be optimistic, but you also have got to see who you are and where we can improve to go ahead and close those games out that we didn’t get done,” Eberflus said Wednesday. “And that’s every week in the NFL, right?”

### On AFN



**Los Angeles Rams (6-6)  
at Baltimore Ravens (9-3)**

AFN-Sports  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT



**Philadelphia Eagles (10-2)  
at Dallas Cowboys (9-3)**

AFN-Sports  
2:20 a.m. Monday CET  
10:20 a.m. Monday JKT



**Jacksonville Jaguars (8-4)  
at Cleveland Browns (7-5)**

AFN-Sports2  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT



**Seattle Seahawks (6-6)  
at San Francisco 49ers (9-3)**

AFN-Sports  
10 p.m. Sunday CET  
6 a.m. Monday JKT



**Detroit Lions (9-3)  
at Chicago Bears (4-8)**

AFN-Atlantic  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT



**Buffalo Bills (6-6)  
at Kansas City Chiefs (8-4)**

AFN-Sports2  
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET  
6:25 a.m. Monday JKT

## NFL



ABBIE PARR/AP

Minnesota Vikings quarterback Joshua Dobbs (15) takes part in practice drills in Eagan, Minn., on Monday.

# Vikings to stick with Dobbs after bye week assessment

By DAVE CAMPBELL  
Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — Joshua Dobbs and the Minnesota Vikings finally had an opportunity to catch their breath after a whirlwind arrival, a storybook start and two buzz-killing losses before their bye week.

He's still the quarterback for now. Their job is to provide enough support to keep him in his starting role — while maintaining positioning for the playoffs that has taken a precarious turn.

Vikings coach Kevin O'Connell announced Wednesday that Dobbs will remain the starter this week, after he threw four interceptions — three of them off a variety of deflections — during a damaging 12-10 defeat at home to Chicago on Nov. 27.

O'Connell acknowledged after that game he considered benching Dobbs to give the offense a spark.

"The conversation was smooth and open," Dobbs said before practice. "I plan on making the most of this opportunity and bouncing back from the last time on the field."

O'Connell decided Dobbs was the best option for the game at Las Vegas on Sunday and that he deserved another start, but the coach left wide open the possibility of a future switch.

"Our offense and our staff's



Minnesota Vikings (6-6)  
at Las Vegas Raiders (5-7)  
AFN-Atlantic  
10 p.m. Sunday CET  
6 a.m. Monday JKT

ability to evolve and help Josh thrive is our plan," O'Connell said. "We're very confident in him."

The Vikings (6-6) have been scrambling ever since Kirk Cousins tore his Achilles tendon in the game at Green Bay on Oct. 2. Dobbs was a valuable find in a trade with Arizona, but the seventh-year veteran — trying to get up to speed on his third different playbook this season — has shown his limitations and vulnerabilities.

Off-the-mark throws are one thing. Six turnovers over the past two games — losses by a combined three points — are another. Over his first two games, both Vikings victories, Dobbs had no interceptions and two lost fumbles. He also totaled 110 rushing yards on 15 attempts in those games. In the past two outings, he took off 10 times and netted only 32 yards.

"Obviously it's a process when you come in and you're en-

trenched in a new offense very quickly and as they try to learn me and areas I'm able to thrive at, as well as me as I continue to learn the ins and outs of an offense," Dobbs said.

Soon after the Chicago game, Dobbs sent a text message to O'Connell with a request to review the film together. Quarterbacks coach Chris O'Hara joined them.

"There was a lot of growth moments for him in those discussions and for me as well," O'Connell said.

Nick Mullens will be the backup this week. He's still returning to full strength from a lower back injury that kept him sidelined for more than a month. Rookie Jaren Hall, who was the first post-Cousins starter before a concussion forced him out and sent Dobbs in at Atlanta, will be third string.

Dobbs will get a big boost from the return of wide receiver Justin Jefferson, who was activated last week from injured reserve. The 2022 AP NFL Offensive Player of the Year has missed the past seven games with a strained hamstring.

"He happens to be an extremely friendly target with his catch radius and his ability to do pretty dynamic things with the ball after the catch," O'Connell said. "We'll try to put together a plan that maximizes that."

# Wilson: Broncos still ready for playoff push after Houston letdown

By ARNIE STAPLETON  
Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The Denver Broncos are aiming to go on another winning streak like the one that ended with a thud last week in Houston

At 6-6, the Broncos are still alive in the playoff picture but their margin for error is much slimmer after coming up short 22-17 to the Texans on Sunday, which snapped their AFC-best five-game winning streak.

Russell Wilson is coming off his worst game of the season, one in which he was picked off three times, underthrew receivers several times and bypassed a wide-open Jerry Jeudy for a walk-in touchdown and instead scrambled for the first down in a series that ended with a field goal.

Coach Sean Payton peppered his Monday comments with what many perceived as digs at his quarterback, including this nugget when addressing that play in which Jeudy was left wide open: "If you watch all of it, holy cow, there are about two or three of those plays."

Wilson took the opportunity at his weekly news conference Wednesday to remind everyone — maybe his coach, included — that the sky wasn't exactly falling on the Broncos (6-6).

"We've been 5-1 over the last six games," Wilson offered. "We can't forget that, too. We've got five games to go. We went 5-1. We've got a lot of confidence in this locker room in who we are and what we're going to do and how we can go about it. And so, I believe that's who we are over the past six games, and I believe we can be even better and that's the best part about it."

Maybe that was an inspirational message to his teammates, or perhaps it was a veiled retort to his coach.

Either way, the Broncos' loss to the Texans narrowed their path to the playoffs, where they haven't been since winning the Super Bowl in Peyton Manning's farewell game in February 2016.

Although they're 2½-point underdogs Sunday against the Chargers in Los Angeles, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, Denver should be favored in most of its remaining games.

Wilson said now is not the time to radically change anything on offense even though it's sputtered for stretches this season and again Sunday.

"I think we're closer than you guys may know, that's what I believe," Wilson said. "I mean, there's some plays in there that we could have had, we almost had. The second play of the game Courtland (Sutton) almost makes a big play for us. I mean, that's a 50-yard big play for us."

So, too, could have been Marvin Mims Jr.'s deep route if not for Wilson underthrowing him and the defender tackling him before the ball got there on a play that wasn't flagged.

"Maybe I put it out there another foot," Wilson said. "Jerry had another one, Jerry had a deep one where I had to get it out of my hand quickly, unfortunately. But he was going to be open."

"There's three or four plays in there that the game's completely different," Wilson added. "That's why when you watch the film you understand that there's a lot of great opportunity, a lot of good stuff. And I think we've just go to stay the course and trust."



ERIC CHRISTIAN SMITH/AP

Denver Broncos quarterback Russell Wilson runs for a first down as Houston Texans linebacker Christian Harris tries to tackle him. At 6-6, Denver is still just two games back in the AFC West.

## SPORTS



**Renewal of the rivalry**  
Army, Navy prepared to square off  
for 124th time » **College football, Page 28**



MLB

# Bound for the Bronx

Padres trade Soto to Yanks in 7-player blockbuster deal

By RONALD BLUM AND BERNIE WILSON  
*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Juan Soto is headed to the New York Yankees in their first big move following the team's worst season in three decades.

They hope at least one more will follow.

New York acquired Soto and Gold Glove center fielder Trent Grisham in a blockbuster trade with the cost-cutting Padres on Wednesday night. San Diego received right-handed pitchers Michael King, Jhony Brito, Randy Vásquez and Drew Thorpe along with catcher Kyle Higashioka.

It was the second monster deal involving the 25-year-old Soto in less than two years. The three-time All-Star slugger has one season of team control left and is likely to get a salary around \$32 million after batting .275 with 35 homers, 109 RBIs and a .930 OPS in his only full season with the Padres.

San Diego obtained Soto from Washington on Aug. 2, 2022, after he turned down a \$440 million, 15-year offer from the Nationals.

Padres general manager A.J. Preller said his team needed pitching and the swap gives San Diego young arms who will be with the franchise for several years.

"It's very difficult to make a deal where we're trading a player the caliber of Juan Soto, but if we did that we wanted to make sure we shored up a bunch of needs. We were able to get some depth, with quality," Preller said at a late-night news conference in Nashville, Tenn., where baseball's winter meetings were wrapping



Preller

SEE BOUND ON PAGE 29

Left fielder Juan Soto only spent one full season with the San Diego Padres after they acquired him from the Washington Nationals. Now he's headed to New York to play for the Yankees.

GREGORY BULL/AP

**Spurs, Pistons have long way to go to be competitive** » NBA, Page 27